

HERESIES

A FEMINIST PUBLICATION ON ART AND POLITICS \$5.50

ART IN
UNESTABLISHED

CHANNELS

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#2



Special thanks to Bronx River Gallery for presenting an exhibition of works by the contributors to this issue. The show, "Art in Unestablished Channels," took place November 7–December 23, 1987.

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Heresies is an idea-oriented journal devoted to the examination of art and politics from a feminist perspective. We believe that what is commonly called art can have a political impact and that in the making of art and all cultural artifacts our identities as women play a distinct role. We hope that **Heresies** will stimulate dialogue around radical political and aesthetic theory, as well as generate new creative energies among women. It will be a place where diversity can be articulated. We are committed to broadening the definition and function of art.

Heresies is published by a collective of feminists, some of whom are also socialists, marxists, lesbian feminists, or anarchists; our fields include painting, sculpture, writing, anthropology, literature, performance, art history, architecture, filmmaking, photography, and video. While the themes of the individual issues will be determined by the collective, each issue will have a different editorial staff, composed of members of the mother collective and other women interested in that theme. **Heresies** provides experience for women who work editorially, in design, and in production. An open evaluation meeting will be held after the appearance of each issue. **Heresies** will try to be accountable to and in touch with the international feminist community.

As women, we are aware that historically the connections between our lives, our arts, and our ideas have been suppressed. Once these connections are clarified, they can function as a means to dissolve the alienation between artist and audience, and to understand the relationship between art and politics, work and workers. As a step toward the demystification of art, we reject the standard relationship of criticism to art within the present system, which has often become the relationship of advertiser to product. We will not advertise a new set of genius-products just because they are made by women. We are not committed to any particular style or aesthetic, nor to the competitive mentality that pervades the art world. Our view of feminism is one of process and change, and we feel that in the process of this dialogue we can foster a change in the meaning of art.

SPECIAL DONATIONS The Heresies Collective is grateful to all our contributors. We want to especially thank these contributors of \$25 and more: Adele Blumberg, Frances Pohl, Yvonne Rainer, and Linda Swackhamer.

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ISSUE 22

ART IN UNESTABLISHED CHANNELS

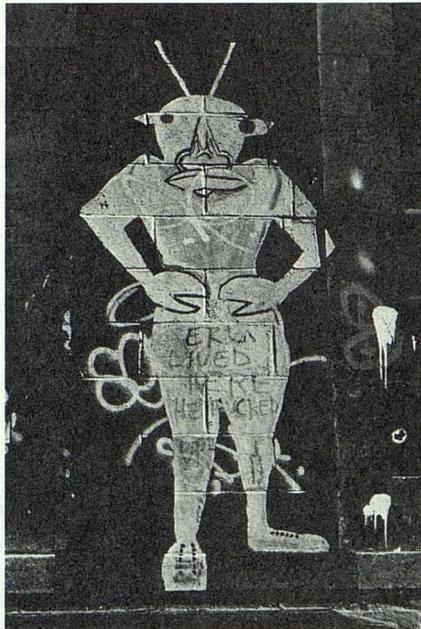
In the process of working on this issue, we were increasingly aware of the shifting parameters of our positions as professional artists grappling with complex notions of community. If "Community Art" has traditionally been perceived as clearly marked territory, we did not find this to be true. More characteristic in this collection is work by women who are actively defining community art in new ways.

Many artists have asserted their indifference to an art world founded on a market economy by doing work that engages a specific community. Well aware of artistic activity outside the mainstream, we were not always able to access the self-contained communities which nevertheless served as a motivating force for this collective.

While our individual differences were as great as the work which we received, our collective interests were often peculiarly similar. We found ourselves most drawn to work by artists who stepped out of bounds, pushing the limits both of the art object and of the communities that make and/or receive it. We kept up an ongoing discussion as to the nature of marginality in relation to a mainstream, but as we pursued this dichotomy, a multiplicity of artistic centers appeared. We engaged the issues of political, racial, economic and art world boundaries, yet rather than focus on being locked in, we have looked for work that created its own context, superseding the given spectrum of validation.

The work that we received lifted the confines of art viewing both geographically and demographically, taking its cues

from the dumpsters of Vancouver, Canada, as well as the strip-mined hills of Pennsylvania. Collaborative pieces and individual projects—some modest, some visionary—propose to us new channels for artistic production. Collectively these artists have brought to our attention works by and for many diverse audiences, thereby revealing fresh motivations for making art.



This photo is part of a larger body of work entitled "The Anarchistic Eye."

CORINNE WHITAKER: A doer. A dreamer. A weaver of fables and gossamer tales. A gentle stream that haunts the leaves of yesterday. A harp that plucks the echoes from the breeze. A memory of tomorrow.

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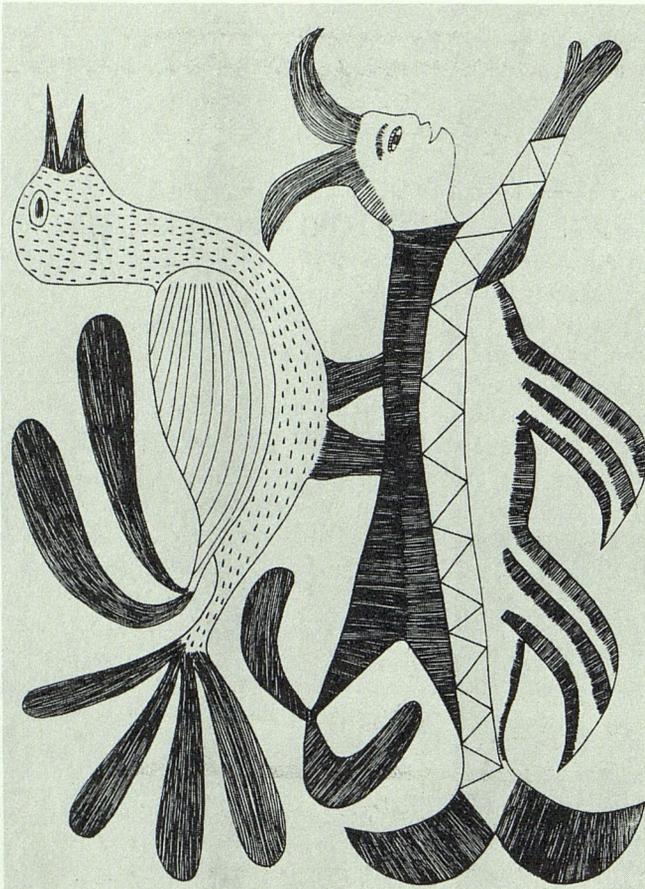
Looking Into Community Arts

BETTI-SUE HERTZ

The title community arts as used in this article refers to art produced for a group that is rooted in a common experience distinct from the outside world. The group's common bonds or continuity through geographic boundaries and/or cultural ties are shared by its members. Deep connections between community members help create distinct artistic forms that are representative of the depth and history of the group's traditions. The relationship formed by individual artists and the community at large shapes the development of acceptable forms. Dominant forms are ones sanctioned by a large percentage of the population represented. Alternative forms (often made by another distinct group within the community) respond to subterranean values or experiences. Communities create their own network for cross-fertilization of ideas using a group's internal systems as a primary resource. Sometimes a segment of a population will appoint itself the official voice for the community. This is especially true of homogeneous communities, such as new immigrants or isolated, traditional societies. Examples are the Yiddish theater of newly immigrated Jews (1900's and 1940's), or the rush and straw baskets of Gullah Blacks living on the Georgia and Carolina Sea Islands. Established art styles can co-opt or inhibit more idiosyncratic approaches. The official art, i.e. Navajo rugs or Mexican masks, becomes the overriding symbolic forms for members of the intended community (i.e. the tribe) as well as a larger undefined audience through the world. Tracing the roots of a deep tradition can be difficult. Contemporary art informed by those roots is at risk in a marketplace where traditional forms are exaggerated into commodity icons or kitsch objects.

In areas of the U.S. where people from several traditional backgrounds live, aesthetic conflicts can create new artistic forms. Involuntary proximity of groups with differing styles, traditions and values plays a part in artistic production in many urban, geographically bound communities. In an inner-city environment people living in "culturally diverse" communities hold on to their identities through their art. Both culturally diverse communities and homogeneous communities produce artists who are traditional and/or idiosyncratic. These artists are in the process of evolving contemporary and cultural idioms that are unique to the conditions of community-influenced experience. In evolving art practices, the artist emerges out of necessity, an individual personality responding to a particular sociological structure.

The relationship between communities and the artist outsider raises questions about cross-cultural, cross-geographic artistic exchange. Outsider artists enter the arena for a variety of reasons, often to teach a community new skills and expose it to new images, or to learn an art form or technique from a resident. The



Kenojuak SEA GULL WITH SEA SPIRIT

artist is looking for an exchange of cultural, geographic or class-bound information. Often the artist will be initiated into the community through a contact person. The contact brings the best of her/his resources to the artist and the artist is treated like an ambassador from another world.

When I was in Appalachia in the early '70s, people were instantly suspicious of me. I got to know the folk artists because they were highly visible in the community. Although my stay in Hyden, Kentucky was short, I did learn how to make white-ash egg-shaped baskets. My contact (someone who had been identified by the Frontier Nursing Service, an agency for which I was volunteering) took me and a few other young women up the mountain and taught us how to look for and chop down a white ash tree, roll it down the mountain, split it and weave in into a basket. I bought two rocking chairs from one person, a quilt and a tree branch chair from another family, and two quilts from another person. Selling art to outsiders is still heavily practiced. A number of people who have gotten to know artists living in the South Bronx through the Bronx River Art Center, where I was director (1983–87), have bought art or commissioned art from local artists. The Art Center links up artists from inside and outside the areas to motivate artistic exchange. Purchases have taken place because of artist to artist dialogue. How does money affect the discourse between artists from parts of our society that have been kept apart? How does money compound differences between class and race? Even when artists have an exchange which is mutual and respectful, class and race differences do affect each artists' experience and perception of the other artist. Mutual access allows the "otherness" to surface and be explored.

Graffiti artists have been able to mainstream into the dominant system much better than other community-based artists. Minority graffiti artists are able to jump class lines, "sort of." They are ambassadors of their group or class. As youth is synonymous with the future, graffiti artists represent the restless spirit of urban adolescence. They are daring and adventurous, rebelling against both the conditions of poverty and their personal state of being locked out of the system. Graffiti's wide-ranging effect on our culture has



Clarine Edwards FAMILY GATHERING AT CHRISTMAS TIME

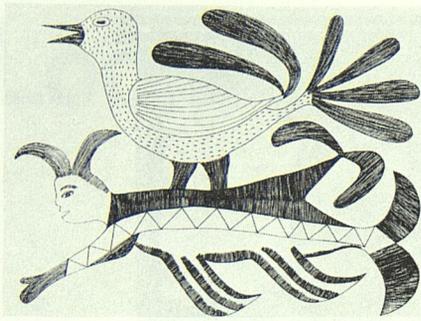
created a double bind for some graffiti artists. They have ended up caught between the ghetto and high-class society, feeling inadequate and out of place but able to survive by playing the part of "bad boy." An example is BRIM, who still lives near his family in the South Bronx. Yet he has traveled to London and given workshops and lectures, and he wants to go to art school and learn about Picasso so he can be on a better footing with his art dealers.

The acceptance and absorption of graffiti into our culture is unique. It has been better received than community art of other cultural sub-groups, possibly because it can be seen as part of the youth culture phenomenon.

However, interest in various forms of community-based art, folk art, and outsider art, is on the rise. Increased mainstream interest reflects a widening split between the top and bottom of American society, the top categorizing and separating presentation of art made by "other classes." Unfortunately, these forms are framed and packaged for mainstream consumption as exotica, archaic or quaint reflections of our past, or our lost innocence, or something soon to die out. The speed of change in technology, communication systems and societal trends, mobility and shrinking cultural boundaries make us nostalgic for forms created by artists working in homogeneous communities, or communities on the fringe of society. How these artists are treated by the mainstream is a reflection of the way others in these groups are treated and perceived.

How are artists treated in their own communities? Are they upheld as heroes for their vision and creative talents? Several of the artists I have met in the South Bronx function within a small support system, often a service organization such as a senior center, mental health clinic or church. These organizations provide important conditions for artistic survival. The artists may be supported financially or display works, or they may be given opportunities to share their skills and talents. Acceptance and pride encourages art. The community setting encourages production within its limited means. If an artist is "discovered" by an artist or arts administration/curator from outside the community, the artwork may travel. However, the artist most often continues to live and work within the well-defined setting comfortable for her or him.

Excerpts from a book on Inuit artist Kenojuak, from West Baffin Island, Canada, illustrates some of my points about outside influences and their dramatic effect on the life of a community artist. For this book, Kenojuak told her life story to Patricia Ryan, a nurse who first met Kenojuak in 1965. "Being a settlement nurse gave me a chance to meet all the camp Inuit, because the nursing station was one of their first stops in Dorset." (Pg. 7.) Kenojuak works in a traditional Inuit style but has been set apart from other Inuit artists because of her 'originality.' Kenojuak's "aesthetic interests far outweigh the subject. Unconstrained by representation concerns, she can make a woman with animal heads extending off



her body, a bird with three heads or no body, or an owl surrounded by long feathers." (Pg. 75.) "While Kenojuak was in the hospital in 1954, Harold Pfeiffer worked with patients making arts and crafts; this not only helped them pass the time but also gave them some pocket money when their articles were sold through the hospital." (Pg. 32.) She welcomes new techniques that white artists introduced to her: "Engravings from Cape Dorset were first released following a period of experimentation and instruction under James Houston, Terry Ryan and Alex Wyse, an artist who spent a year in the community." (Pg. 52.)

The last section of Kenojuak's autobiography reflects her life changes during this transitional time for the Inuit, and as a recipient of the 1967 "Order of Canada."

The trip to receive the order was to be my first excursion to Southern Canada ... (in) more than 10 years ... The Canadian government had commissioned ... a carved wall mural for the Canadian pavilion at the 1970's World's Fair in Osaka, Japan ... We lived in an apartment ... Back in Cape Dorset, we were able to buy a new canoe and motor ...

By that time, nearly all the Inuit had abandoned their traditional coastal camps ... They had moved into Cape Dorset for the subsidized housing, the educational opportunities for their children, and the medical facilities. Our lives changed ... The same year, 1970, a Canadian stamp bearing one of my designs was issued. We also chose surnames ... (Pg. 23.)

Kenojuak and her people made transitions into both non-traditional, assimilated materials and social conditions during her productive years. In the National Film Board's film about her, she states "our snowhouse ... was made out of styro-foam. ... " (Pg. 22.)

Community-based artists are sometimes integrated members of their group but they can also be isolated by accident or

choice. "Outsiders" often re-enter the established community through their artist status. As a white artist living and working in a black urban neighborhood, Kea Tawana is in many ways a foreigner in her own community. However, she is an artist who has internalized the shared values of her community. She has recently run into problems with official and unofficial opinions about the huge art she built in a church lot in Newark, N. J., opposite a site scheduled for re-development. Although many of her neighbors have supported her efforts for years, an artist from within a community struggles with her own conflicts, too. If the work or location of the work threatens financial interests, the work may be threatened. For monetary reasons, officials will often align themselves with outside developers, and against a local artist.

For communities, the concept of artist can stray from typically accepted parameters. Members of the community identify anyone who makes things that are not useful or things that are useful in an "old fashioned" or eccentric way as an artist. Or, it will be because a person is committed to a project that has objects and ideas as its outcome that s/he will be named an artist. The project does not have to involve artmaking in the traditional sense and can be aligned with scientific inventions or avid collecting, for example. This naming can be self-generated or community initiated. The person is then given a special freedom by his/her peers to explore, invent and create. This special opportunity is respected by those who are not engaged in the activity. Initially the peer group protects the artist and her/his creative work from disruptive influences. Later it promotes the activity to a broader audience. The interdependence of artist and community is evident in this situation.

Mainstreamers have to be careful in deciphering meaning for works created in communities. The mainstream has a habit of defining everything that is not it, in terms of itself—the other, the tribal, the folk, the community—all is perceived in relation to what the mainstream defines as super, ultra modern. I will broaden the context of my discussion for a moment here. A classic example of inventing an aesthetic for a body of "newly discovered art" goes back to the reception of African art by the early 20th-century European avant-garde. In *Observers Observed: Essays*

on *Ethnographic Fieldwork* edited by George W. Stocking, Jr., James Clifford's article "Power and Dialogue: Marcel Griaule," refers to ethnographer Michel Leiris who "evokes an historically specific problem of intercultural translation. He begins by tracing the discovery of 'art negre' among the Europeans inventing an African aesthetic for their own purposes. ... The apparent unity of black art forms inheres only in a perception of the common ways they differ from those to which a European is accustomed." (Pg. 152.) Because the avant-garde is uninitiated in terms of African art, their perception of this art is distorted and misguided.

Community arts and the people it represents are kept on the fringes of contemporary cultural life as a result of a polarization of attitudes between the rich and the poor. The interpreter must respect the artist's intention and response to the audience, the artist's self-knowledge and experience. How is the artist's path affected by a foreign audience? The artist from outside a particular community (either a mainstream artist or an artist from another community) brings new information to the artistic scene. This "intrusion" "disrupts" the status quo reception of the work. As the artist enters the arena for reception a new relationship starts. Interpreters must adopt a cautious approach for an empathetic understanding of the works. They must keep the artist's relationship to her/his primary audience in mind. When the work is presented in a mainstream context, it is seen out of context. The support structure for reading the work's meanings fragments as it is marketed and removed from the original conditions of production. The work becomes vulnerable. How can we trace the reading of this work? How is it different for the makers of it and the viewer from outside the community? This is important considering that middle-class art is both created and made public within a consistent setting. Interpretation of community-based art must be put in its rightful place within the big picture of contemporary art production. We must be cautious in calling this work something that arises out of an "authentic will." The artists are responding to various pressures: who their audience is, what their financial rewards will be, how best to express themselves, and what group values they are trying to convey. In my experience very few people

really good understanding of how it works and feels. Community residents contextualize art within their ongoing experience with it, that is, their combination of needs.

Artists from inside and outside communities are extremely interested in sharing skills and ideas. For the middle-class artist, traditional rootedness to something that mainstream culture cannot offer adds a welcome new perspective to the event. The community is constantly weighing that perspective against the dominant values. Many people buy mainstream values. Many people are confused. But for most, the need to mix traditional and contemporary views persists.

Community art has become an ideal showcase for the mainstreamer hoping to satisfy her/his curiosity about what it's like for "them." As important, the whole project of community arts continues to be re-defined by the artists who are directly affected. Educators, a vocal group in poor communities, want to control community arts projects that are school related.

Culturalists are interested in pride and "representative images." Everyone is searching for positive symbols. The language of cultural anthropology has permeated the perceived spectrum of artist/public interaction. Mainstreamers view community art as a fringe form; the flip side of popular mass culture, (i.e. Rambo and romance novels, etc.) Also, any one community's values often conflict with status quo values. In poor communities the struggle to survive has created vital and practical new expressions: popular survival art forms include graffiti, indigenous house building, religious altars, and "found object" art.

The nagging questions of divisionism and classism will continue to permeate the critical interpretation of these works. However, these communities will also continue to generate their own artworks for their own purposes. The outside observer needs to find ways of accepting community art as part of a more generalized interaction of ideas and values.

1. "Outsider art" is produced by people who are extremely deviant in relation to prevailing cultural standards. Outsider artists have a severe mental disorder such as psychosis or are socially deviant, for example, isolates. They often use images derived from fantasy with a fixed obsession on pre-rational content. For more information on "outsider art" see: *Outsiders: An Art Without Precedent or Tradition* (exhibition catalogue). London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1979. Essay by Roger Cardinal.

2. *Kenojuak*, Jean Blodgett, Firefly Books, Toronto, 1985.

3. "Power and Dialogue: Marcel Griaude," James Clifford, in *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr., University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

BETTI-SUE HERTZ is a painter and sculptor living in NYC and currently Program Director at the Bronx Council on the Arts.



ROBIN MICHALS

Doña Carmen stands before the altar in her garden at Avenue C and Eighth Street, New York City. Doña Carmen built and maintains the garden for the enjoyment of the elder members of the neighborhood.

KEA TAWANA'S ARK OF NEWARK

SUSAN HOENIG

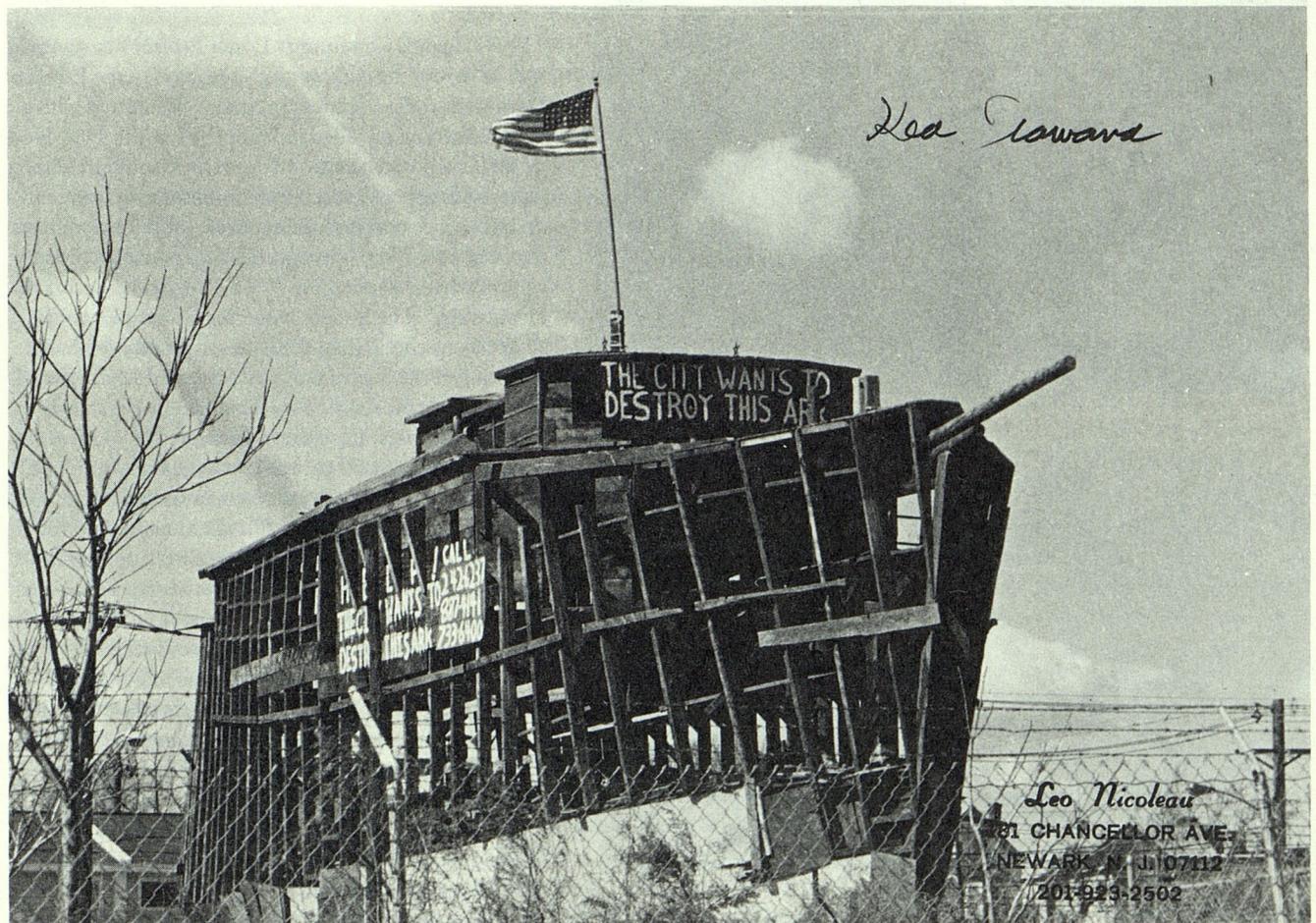
Kea Tawana's Ark is a work of art, a monument of unique proportion, situated in the urban landscape of Newark, New Jersey. This structure reflects Ms. Tawana's unique vision, which draws on a range of myths and symbols from the Judeo-Christian tradition.

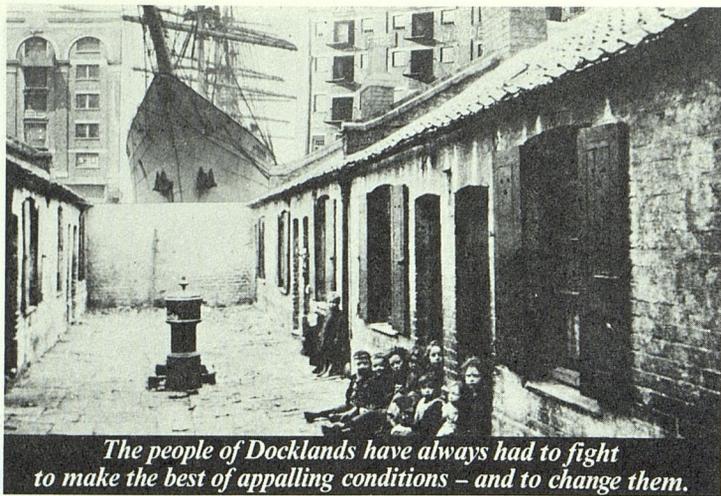
Known as Kea's Ark, the ship stands three stories tall in a church parking lot by the Humanity Baptist Church at 235 Bergen Street. Quite a site in the midst of Newark's Central Ward. Kea Tawana is struggling to create her ark. City officials say it is an eyesore that detracts from the business of urban renewal in a devastated neighborhood. They threaten to have it demolished.

Arising from the ruins of the Central Ward, the ark's hand-hewn keel and ribs are made of salvaged timbers. Ms. Tawana, a self-taught structural engineer, has for the past four years shaped the timbers by hand, drilled and chiseled mortises and tenons so they fit together. Ms. Tawana said that she studied 19th-century ship building and developed her own technology for the ship's special framework. "By marine design the ark is a vessel capable of sailing in the high seas. The ark is to be a museum for Newark and the people who built it."

Ms. Tawana was a welder in the early '70s, working in the basement of what was once a blacksmith shop in 1680. "The museum would show the truth about Newark and its building, about the slavery that existed and how the black iron workers built the city for three hundred years." Ms. Tawana found chains and other artifacts under the floor in the shop and traced old deeds and records. She said that "in three years, the galleries on the ark would be open to viewers." The plans for the ship museum include a chapel, ward rooms, museums of industry and culture, a historical library containing hundreds of books, (some dating to the 1700's), and living quarters for a caretaker.

The symbolic power of the ark's interior is as monumental as the ark's exterior imagery. Finished, the framework would be clad in plywood with an additional layer of diagonal tongue-and-groove boarding to form the monumental hull. Painted with marine paints, the ark will be a poetic inspiration in a city needing a deepened knowledge of its history. This work of art should be the inspiration and center for a new vision, a new neighborhood, not doomed only to enterprises that fit the categories controlled by local ordinances and boundaries.





The people of Docklands have always had to fight to make the best of appalling conditions – and to change them.



THE DOCKLANDS COMMUNITY POSTER PROJECT

is a cooperative of six:

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PETER DUNN

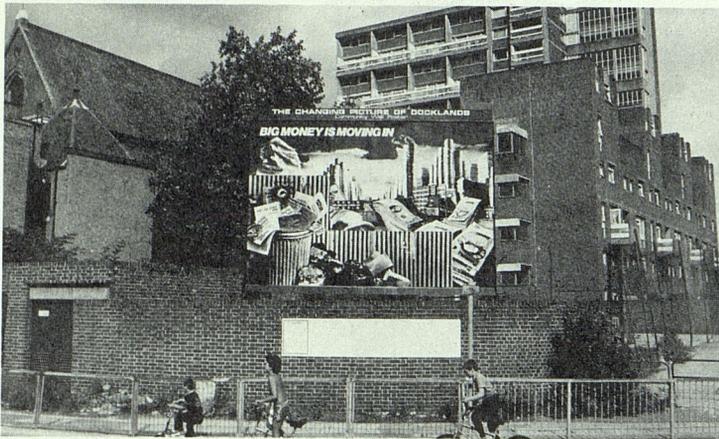
SONIA BOYCE

SARA MCGUINNESS

SANDRA BUCHANNAN

and ROBERT EVANS

The Docklands Community Poster Project was set up in 1981 as part of the community's response to the London Docklands redevelopment program. We started with a single hoarding unveiled in Wapping Lane in 1981. Now we have six hoarding sites all over Docklands circulating fourteen images, 45 meters of exhibitions for loan, and a design service to meet local requests for publicity material. The role of the photomurals is to present a broad view of what is happening—"The Changing Picture of Docklands." The Project's steering committee guides all decisions concerning the issues to be dealt with and the siting of the hoardings. They are sited where they can be seen repeatedly by local people, rather than by passing motorists. Each mural measures 18 x 12 feet and is a hand-colored photographic enlargement of an original photomontage. Each enlargement is divided into 18 panels which are replaced a few at a time so that the picture is constantly changing, revealing different aspects of an issue or relationships between issues. As a set of panels is removed from one site it moves onto another, so forming a circuit of photomurals throughout Docklands, as well as in two locations in bordering boroughs. Posters, banners, newsheets and exhibitions all play an important part in campaigning. The real value of the Project's work is achieved through its interaction with the wider network of tenants' and action groups. Our steering committee ensures the formal links, but it is by working together, providing complementary skills and pooling our resources, that these links have real life.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DOCKLANDS COMMUNITY POSTER PROJECT

THE PARIS PROJECT

AND THE ART OF LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS

DEBORAH SHERMAN

The Paris Project theater group was brought together by Stephanie Glickman in October, 1980. Those who committed themselves to work on the play, The Paris Project, were: Yvonne Fisher, Margot Fitzgerald, Rhea Schnurman, Eileen Jones, Linda Adamian, Antonia Felichetti,* Deborah Sherman, and Noreen O'Shaughnessy. Stephanie Glickman was the director and writer, Carol Bay co-wrote the play, Roberta Kosse composed the music, Flavia Rando was the art director, Erika Schenker was the pianist and Roberta Raeburn was the stage manager. The acting group gave several performances (1981–83) on themes of eroticism, romanticism, and women's history. In May 1983 The Paris Project was performed. Following that production, the group reorganized to create and perform: Women and Power, 1983; Mothers and Daughters: Staying and Leaving, 1984; Images of Resistance, 1984; Women's Relationships, 1984; The Hour of the Wolf, 1985; Not That I Can Remember, 1986. The group stopped working together in the spring of 1987.*

*These women did not perform in the production.

"Women interested in creating a theater piece based on the life of Natalie Barney, who have a background in theater or other arts, please call," read the ad in *Womanews* in September 1980.

I had read about Natalie Barney and her circle in numerous biographies, essays by Colette, the poetry of Renee Vivien, Djuana Barnes' satires, Radcliffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, and historical articles on the literary scene in Paris circa 1920. I was curious about the women in her circle because they were out as lesbians. And I was curious about Natalie Barney, whose celebrity rested chiefly on her assertion of her lesbianism and her right to lead her life independent of men. These women wrote about each other, painted each other, lived in each other's houses, loved, hated and were friends with each other. They created a life, a time and a place for themselves as a community. I admired, respected and yearned for all of this.

I answered the ad. I was a poet and

had also been a dancer. Stephanie Glickman described her vision to me: She wanted to create a theater piece in collaboration with a group; she would direct both the group and the play. She was interested in Natalie Barney's life as an American expatriate and lesbian living in Paris from 1900 to 1960.

Natalie Barney was at the center of a flourishing community of lesbians who were artists or who simply, creatively, lived the most independent lives they could. Her community included Renee Vivien, poet; Romaine Brooks, painter; and Gertrude Stein, writer. Stephanie wanted to bring together a group of lesbian artists who would improvisationally recreate the lives of this circle of women. She wanted us to explore our lives in relation to the "facts" of theirs—the historical written material left by them or written about them. Stephanie wanted to use an experimental theater structure to research and create a play with us.

I was interested but hesitant, because I was not an actress. Stephanie told me that reflections on my life as a poet and lesbian would help to understand the life of another lesbian poet who lived until 1930—Renee Vivien. "Just think of what you struggle to express in your writing, the issues you do and don't write about, your sense of identity as a writer and a lesbian. Don't you think she thought about these things too? You could have a dialogue across time, across generations, about the things that are most important in your life." I was intrigued and agreed to come to a meeting of women who wanted to work on the project.

At that first meeting there were about fifteen women. They were teachers, therapists, waitresses, counselors; one worked for the phone company, another for a small jewelry business. Most of them had a background in experimental theater; some were musicians, writers, and dancers.

We began to meet Saturday afternoon for workshops in a women's karate studio on Bleecker Street. Each workshop started

with a movement lesson taught by Eileen Jones who based her teaching on Laban movement principles. The movement classes encouraged our evolving sense of both group and individual identity:

Journal entry, January 1981

I thought I was going crazy in the movement work today. My body was tremendously sensitive and following its own rhythms, doing very erratic, jolting, out-of-step movement. I felt the group move around me like water, like a current of energy and each woman in it an electrical knot. I felt my own body as glacier surfaces, holding angles and sides up against the water, bobbing along from one spin of the current to the next. I tried to yield. I could not move like them, could only approximate their speed by spinning in one place. My hands filled at one point and rose above my head, holding all of the room's electricity at once. They were alive and floating over my head. I felt then my power as a transmitter, a symbol standing high and still. I wanted to cry from the fragility, but my hands drained and I dropped my arms slowly.

These movement sessions let us know each other on levels that conversation does not bring us to, giving us a bodily flexibility and openness that support the vocal and thematic explorations. Stephanie would have us lie on the floor and guide us through breathing exercises designed to root our voices more deeply, so that we could speak from the diaphragm or belly rather than from the throat. Her image for this was to let our breath "touch sound." This image did not make sense to me for months. But as I worked with it, I experienced how a hum could vibrate up from my belly through my lungs and throughout my lower and upper back. This particular learning was important because with it I began to believe that I could experience something first and "understand" it later. In a way, this was the basis of all of our work: we were taking the facts of Natalie Barney's life and believing that with our experience and imaginations we could fill in theirs. We were not analyzing

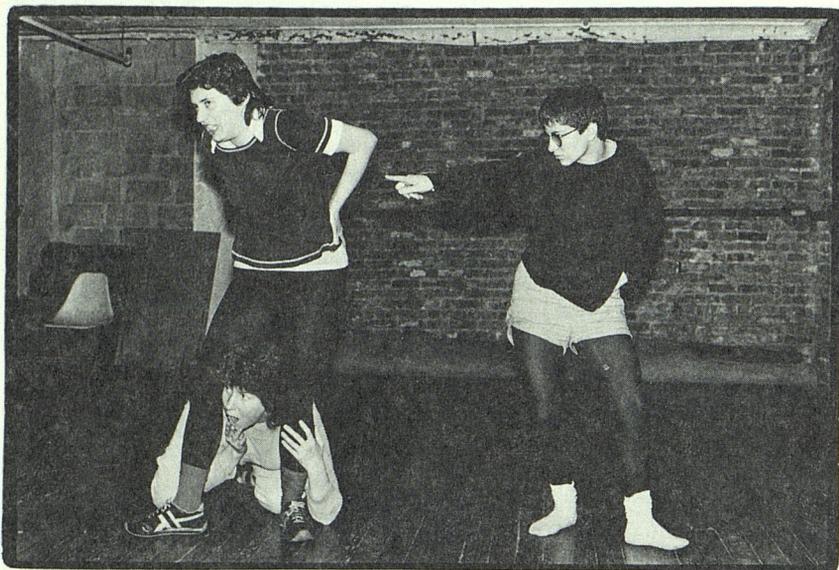
her but trying to bring her to life.

Through this process each of us created the role of Natalie (or Romaine or Gertrude) many times from our individual point of view. Each of us got a chance to “be” Natalie in a particular situation and to enact what we thought she would do or say. Of course this meant bringing fully to

myself to that studio and sometimes in the middle of workshops I’d be overcome by sleep.

Journal entry, December 1980

Today I saw that this learning is the whole point—not performing for everyone else—but discovering something myself alone.



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life our own imaginations, feelings, and memories. We were speaking to the Paris lesbians through each other and our collective imagination made it possible for the group to know more than any one of us could have known individually.

*Discussion of our work, March 1981—
Eileen Jones*

I get up with my idea of Natalie in a certain situation and behave as I think she would and other people in the group respond to what I started and elaborate that response. Then my notion of the character of Natalie is expanded into something that I wasn’t able to see or show.

The group acts as a mirror for that one image and it is suddenly opened up in nine ways, into nine pieces which I wasn’t able to show but which I can take in. Next time I get up I have ten pieces of that characterization to work with instead of one.

I, who had never done experimental theater or creative movement, was alternately shocked, delighted, terrified, and fascinated by the work and the women in the group. I recall that I often had to drag

That the point of art at this stage, creative development, is NOT THE AUDIENCE but the person/artist/me. Stephanie calls this “inner research.” Inner? With other people watching? It’s very hard. This is why I write—it’s an art in which I’m alone during the creation. It forces me at the beginning to be without an audience.

This makes me realize something about separatism. Separatism means I no longer feel this audience of men constantly around me. I don’t have to perform for them. My every thought and feeling is not a performance.

I began to dream about Natalie Barney and her friends. I also dreamed about the women in the Paris Project. I wrote poems about Natalie and Romaine. I began to think my life was really my own.

We ended each workshop with a “go-around.” Each of us had a chance to talk about the workshop, react to Stephanie’s exercises, and speculate on the evolving themes of the play. Each woman’s time was limited but uninterrupted. It was understood that she could ask questions of anyone, express anything, and the person

she addressed could choose whether to respond directly when her turn came. The go-around was an integral and necessary part of our work. There we could “resurface” after an intense session. We could speak to each other as individuals, integrating the feelings of the characters we’d played or the memories we’d evoked. It was necessary, too, to talk about what we’d just done and how it affected us when we walked out of the studio back into our daily lives.

That summer we worked together every weekend at a house in upper New York State. There we worked on their relationships and our relationships. We explored the triangles that had formed in Natalie Barney’s circle, her long relationships and short ones, her philosophy of non-monogamy, her love affairs and friendships.

Journal entry, June 1981

Huge shadow of eroticism, Eileen said “You’re so big, can you get bigger?” Margot raised her arms. Eileen, standing before the shadow, stretching out her arms, “Can you get as wide as this?” Margot bends flat, her body horizontal, so her shadow fills Eileen’s arms. Eileen is pressed against the wall, arms out, crying. Crying, “Are you still there?” Margot, standing up on a crate, straightening up, “I’m here.” Eileen, “I thought you went away.” Margot, “I’m still here.” The image: Eileen in a T-shirt, white, tears dropping off her chin, profile, the muscles in her arms standing out, she says, “Why do I feel like crying when you speak to me? You don’t speak to me often. Maybe I didn’t know you spoke to me at all. You’re very still, powerful. You look immobilized. That makes me cry. You know, there’s this tree: I’m in love with it. Every time I go to teach a class at the Home, I visit it. It’s very big and has copper leaves.” I stand facing the wall, arms up, shadow of a tree. Stephanie stands behind me, reaching toward Eileen, saying “But what about me?”

That spring I went to Paris and dreamed of walking through cemeteries, of statues of women coming to life. I saw images of art museums, poetry manuscripts, notebooks, the endless production and expression of our lives—lives as we lived them, lives as they lived them. The dialogue had taken hold.

Journal entry, March 1982

We got the first half of the script tonight. The scenes between Natalie and Renee scare

me—the tugging and pulling between them is so familiar. Renee's grief and passionate vengefulness against Natalie for her friend Violet's death. The depth and terror and pain in Renee's regret moves me, scares me, reminds me of how I block myself from being close to Laura or anyone by regretting some lost passion, lost love, lost... what did I lose and when?

At this point we had begun to take singing classes. One of us fell in love with our teacher and left the group. This was a shock because, after the initial weeding out, no one had left in the two years since the project began.

Our commitment was enacted every time we worked together. It was a commitment to be present in each moment to each other and in this way to be in each other's lives. The group had been able to stay together thus far because it was elastic enough to allow people to be very close to each other, to fight, to move away from each other. The only demand was that each of us maintain her ability to stay open to the group and our work. It was difficult for me to understand how Tonia, who had been so much a part of our work, could leave it. It was also difficult for me to let her do it.

Journal entry, April 1982

Tonia has left the theater group. Just let that sentence stand alone like I guess Tonia wants to do. Why is she doing it like this? Cutting off her nose to spite her face. I feel somewhere inside she must be crazy not to stick with us. Insanity, that kind of insanity, comes out as arbitrary control, like a chopping blade coming down, cutting you right off—it's terrifying. She said once in a workshop that there were two Tonias, one in the light, one in the darkness. Now her hands wave in front of her face and nothing is there, nothing. I bent her glasses the last time we worked together. I sat on them, by mistake. Oh, Tonia, don't do this. Why do I fear you won't survive, that you'll die? Because I would if I left? Because you are always wanting and can never see when you get anything? The huge dissatisfaction in you unnerves me. "I want, I want" should involve you, but it has cut you off, hasn't it?

The following summer Stephanie and Carol had a draft of the script, taken directly from the improvisation scenes of the workshops. We began to go through

the script scene by scene, improvising on the lines, creating the scenes first this way, then that. We spent the month of August living together in New Paltz where the university had given us their theater to rehearse in. This rehearsal work came after lines were set but before the final blocking of the piece. We had the skele-

you? Is it because she was "immoral" or "too" free?)

Why were you such a snob? Why didn't you associate with the lesbians in the Paris bars who cross-dressed, who passed as men, who were poorer than you?



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ton, that month we gave it a body. We gave it numerous bodies, in fact, with numerous perspectives on each one. We questioned ourselves and our characters, for questions were our way of opening up the picture, of showing the myriad views one could take of a situation or a person. It was often said about our work that we did not make statements so much as reveal the complexity of any one statement. Our questions, then, did not look for answers but showed different ways of seeing the world. They acknowledged that each of us creates her own word which we somehow live in together.

Some of our questions to Natalie Barney:

What were you doing during World War II? In Paris? In Italy? (To myself: What would I have done?)

Did you really love all of those women? Each one, truly, genuinely, or was it just for sex? (To myself: What does it matter if she really loved them? What does really loving someone mean anyway? What if it was just for sex—why does that bother

(To myself: Who do I not associate with? Why are all of my friends and lovers white? How do I feel about very butchy women? How do I feel when my hair is very short and I get called "son" or "sir"?)

Why didn't you call yourself an Artist? How could you say, "My life is my art, my writing is but the result?" What does that mean? Were you afraid? (To myself: Why do I have to define myself as an artist? Why can't I be as relaxed as she was about it? Do I even want to be?)

During that month I also fell in love. It had been long coming on, having begun the summer before. I didn't admit I was in love—I worked with her, was inspired by the group, by our work, by her, and by my own evolving sense of strength and freedom.

Journal entry August 12, 1982

The last light of day in the sky, the edge of red through the pines, the sun gone down long ago. Bats fly from tree to tree. The sky loses light. The trees grow black and deep-shaded against it.

There is a sense of waiting about the

house tonight. Outside a lot is going on: crickets calling and answering each other, changing their rhythms and sounding again insistently. They scream out from two sides of my corner room. I do like having this room to myself. I leave my loneliness here and the room is plenty big enough for it. It's always here when I come back, which I only do at

August 17—Linda is snoring. Yvonne and Stephanie are talking and laughing in their room. Eileen just left the bathroom. Margot and Carol have been quiet for some time now. Yvonne asked me today if I'm attracted to Eileen. I said "Yes, of course," and then proceeded to fall all over myself trying to explain what I meant. That I felt her sensi-



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night. Now Linda will come and where will it go? I'm growing sleepy with the admission of, not loneliness, but aloneness. Eileen got a complicated letter today. I wish I'd get a complicated letter. Aloneness and some absence of intense intimacy with anyone. I want that. Here there is a general intimacy which buoys me up most of the time, but sometimes I just feel teased and frustrated. Some inability to ... some unwillingness for ... what? Contact. More contact than is already happening. I feel frightened that Eileen is the one I've been with the most these days. I don't want it to stop, only I feel my need, desire, intensity, getting closer to the surface, feel danger and the possibility of what? What do I do with these feelings? Use them in the work?

I easily feel so tender towards her. I show it by staying with her in silence, reading, laughing and hitting the shuttlecock, bringing her tea, listening and asking questions. She shows it too and I get confused, frightened, happy, on edge. Sounds like I have a crush on her. But I know her too well for that. Does it make a difference? I suppose I'll get very angry and hateful about her sooner or later.

tivity and the communication with her at times was so clear, but I don't know what all of that has to do with being attracted. I guess it has more to do with falling in love but I couldn't explain that to Yvonne. Or to anyone else, probably. My feelings seem to go from tender admiration and pleasure to painful confusion in the blink of an eye. That experience reminds me of being in love. Will it ever "take"? NO. Michelle told me about her most intense relationship, being with an Italian woman for 9 years and it never being sexual. Huh. I'm not the type. But Eileen is. A "romantic friendship"?

August 25—Made love with Eileen last night. I'm happy.

Our relationship as lovers began and ended in the context of the group. Much of the passion, terror, excitement and joy that I'd found in this group and our work was in my relationship with Eileen. The bond between us carried echoes of our work together, our fears and ambitions for ourselves and this group, this play. It was also a love affair. We were never a "couple," for that is not how our relationship

began or developed. We were drawn together, loved each other, couldn't stay together, drew apart, and continued to work on the play. The group and its work were our pivot, the commitment which held us together when our relationship came apart.

In the winter of 1983 the project was close to the end—we would perform the play in May. The roles had been cast and each of us began to work more exclusively on her own character. Despite these new focuses, the play continued to be a complex interweaving of the whole group's vision. Each of us knew where every line by every character had originated. We all had stories, wells of images and feelings, as a base for every scene and each character's point of view.

Our rehearsals were taken up with staging scenes, trying on costumes, learning harmonies, memorizing choreography. It was a time of great excitement and stress. I think each of us, separately, doubted that she could pull it off.

Journal entries, September and October 1982

I wonder if my dreams last night had to do with my growing awareness that I will in fact begin to perform again and how very different it will be from when I used to dance. This will be a conscious me on stage. Dancing, I was alone with the music, my body, the space, the darkness. There wasn't much audience contact, but now I remember that when I danced, as soon as I got comfortable out there on stage, I'd look for the audience, try to see their faces and eyes. I wanted that contact but it scared me. I dreamed all night of the "Lifting Belly" song. I was very affected, shot through with it—seduction and passion, but I felt disturbed too, very restless. I kept waking up, running my hands over my body, slapping a humming mosquito away from my ear. The trees outside made a rushy, rusty sound like people turning around against their mattresses.

Awful rehearsal tonight—the opening and closing in my chest and all I can feel (when I do feel) is the rock, the rock inside me. I get close, walk right up to it and scratch it speculatively, stroke it hesitantly. But when I slow down my flailing arms and unsteady knees, I just want to stop, sit down, be anywhere but here—because I can't do it, I just cannot do it, there isn't enough protection. I feel exposed and just want to shriek and disappear. I can't tolerate being pushed by

Eileen—I'm so angry most of the time. When I feel pushed, it's a real effort for me to stay there in any way, shape or form.

Through all of this there was a thread of memory for me —this was a commitment not only to produce a theater piece, but to understand what it meant that this community of lesbians had come before us, that there were many communities of lesbians who had defined themselves before us, and what that meant to us and our community now.

Evidently the production was important to others besides us. We had investors; people volunteered to make sets, sew costumes, assist in direction, make slides, do promotion and stage manage. It meant something to many people that this was a lesbian play with lesbians acting in it. We were saying: this was important enough to put three years of our lives into. We were saying that lesbian relationships were important enough and common enough to be the subject of our play.

During that time I was internally preoccupied with the character I played —Renee Vivien. She seemed to me a beautiful, sensitive, romantic, pathetic, masochistic, sometimes talented, writer. She was also a “lost soul,” alcoholic and anorexic. She had a preoccupation with death. She ruined her relationship with Natalie Barney that way. She died young at age thirty-one. I felt drawn by this character into a realm of intense sensation and emotion —what I saw, smelled, touched and felt were my world. True to the integration of our lives and the play, lines I wrote inspired by Eileen months before were used as Natalie's farewell speech to Renee:

The first time I saw you, I knew who you were, what came surging to your eyes, bubbling to your lips—a kind of life-blood, some gold, some give. I knew you would show me how to live in this world. You knew I would remember everything: that your face would imprint itself on my heart and my heart would pour and pour, that I would ache with your beauty and mine, that I would want to meet you again and again like the first time. You knew my love would pour out in memories and finally that I would capture it, hold it, press it to me, freeze it into words, that I would fix it forever in the pages of my poems.

I was writing a lot of poetry at that time and most of it was about denial, repression and loss. I had to remind myself that all lesbians were not tragic, all artists not too sensitive to live in this world, all women not suicidal or self-destructive. I reminded myself: “She's dead and you're alive. She left this world,

again? Were we holding on to it only to condemn it to a life “on the shelf”? Our composer wanted her music sung again; we wanted our words spoken again.

We never gave up the option. We didn't have the heart to give someone else control over a play that had been taken so directly from our own lives. We also did



ROBERTA RAEURN

you have not.” It was the end of a three-year dialogue and relationship with these women. Finally, it was a separation; our imaginations had brought us close to them, then back to the present, to our own lives.

The play was reviewed; we were euphoric; we fought with each other; we were exhausted. We performed *The Paris Project* twelve times. When it was over, we had plans. We thought we would get big investors to put it on off-Broadway, thought we'd get more vocal and dance training, a bigger cast, a better theater, we thought ... a lesbian play on Broadway! None of that happened.

The first act was rewritten. We read it for various investors and potential directors. We haggled over the producers' conditions. One pair of men wanted to produce it if they could get a ten-year option on all proceeds, including memorabilia, such as T-shirts and record albums. And, of course, they wanted the option to re-cast the play.

We discussed this endlessly. Did we want to give up our rights to the play? Did we want to risk its never being produced

not do the necessary fundraising or grant writing to produce the show again. We wanted to create and perform. So the group left the play behind and went on to do new pieces.

Finally, we created in our work a world in which lesbians were at the center —where we were human beings, not outsiders defined by the mainstream as “queer.” We continued as a performing group for the next four years, developing theater based on our lives.

The Paris Project ended with these lines of Gertrude Stein's:

“Let it be remembered that one and once. Let it be remembered. It is not remembered. Let it be remembered that without its being good enough, let it be remembered at once.” (Paraphrase from *A Comedy Like That*.)

As a group, we did remember, and remembered well.

DEBORAH SHERMAN has been writing poetry since 1980. A trained dancer, she works in the dance/creative movement and counselling fields.

INTERVIEW

HARRIET A. HIRSHORN
and TRINH T. MINH-HA

Harriet—How did you become involved in filmmaking? Can you give some general background about yourself, tell how and where you grew up, and describe your education?

Minh-ha—I was educated for the most part in Vietnam, then in the Philippines, in France, in the U.S., and since I learned more than what I taught during my three-year stay in Dakar, I can also add, in Africa. I left Vietnam for the U.S. in 1970 at the age of seventeen and was mainly trained in comparative literature, and music: composition, ethnomusicology, and applied music—piano, organ, percussion and Vietnamese zither. I also painted for many years, and my interest in cultural anthropology dates back to the time in Vietnam when I discovered, with much bewilderment, the feeling of being “other,” through reading about myself as a cultural entity offered up in writings by the European colonial community. My involvement in film came much later. It is difficult to say when exactly I first got interested in it. It would be easy to find some details in my childhood that would account for a precocious inclination for this field, but such myth-building practice easily generates complacency. Depending on who is asking and in what context, it is difficult to talk about one’s individuality without finding questionable the general tendency to determine a work mainly through the particularities of the filmmaker’s personality.

H—So, what compelled you, inspired you, to make the kinds of films you make? What was life like for you in Vietnam?

M-h—It’s a vast question. I would join a number of Vietnamese women in saying that “if equality consists of being poor together, then the Vietnamese society in its non-corrupted sectors is truly egalitarian!” Those of us who were town-dwellers were and still are “uprooted on our own land,” so thoroughly upset were we in our way of living. We all shared the insecurities of war. The burden has been such that it accounts for the profound and widespread silence that many Vietnamese still live with in regards to this war and its aftermath. What inspired me to make films like *Reassemblage* and *Naked Spaces*? Certainly Africa. But why Africa? In looking at these films, I would say that they lie somewhere between the very gratuitous and the highly-motivated shores. On one hand, if they are so difficult for the audience as well as for myself to summarize (“What is the film really about?”), it’s partly because they have no single story to tell, they do not build up around a center—be it a subject of documentation, a fiction with plot, or an individual hero’s/heroine’s achievement. They deal with a notion of film as

critical process without a main or single motive. A perceptive critique of *Reassemblage* by the writer Alberto Moravia in *L’Espresso* described the film as “an amorous invasion.” However possessive it can be in its proferring, a love relationship does not allow one to speak *about* the subject filmed as if one can objectify it or separate oneself from it unproblematically; hence this statement at the outset of the film: “I do not intend to speak about/Just speak near by.” On the other hand, these films are also strongly motivated by an experience that I lived through in formerly colonized Vietnam and that I clearly recognized, shared and re-lived in Africa; hence the necessity to make films that would always point to the process of constructing not truth, but meaning, and to myself as an active element in that process, both as a foreign observer of a specific culture and as a member of the general cultural zone and non-aligned bloc of countries known as the Third World.

H—Who were your mentors? Who inspired or influenced you?

M-h—No mentors. What inspires me most are usually people’s sayings, music in villages, environmental sounds, and non-monumental “architecture.” If I am to mention a few inspirational works, then I will say the poetry of Ho Xuan Huong (a Vietnamese woman poet), Thich Nhat Hanh, Basho, Aime Cesaire, Ezekiel Mphahlele, and the prose of Assia Djebar, Clarice Lispector, Zora Neale Hurston. But these do not include many works of Euro-American artists and writers, which may or may not have an impact on me, despite my inclination for them. In film, I used to like Kurosawa, Ozu, Marker, Vigo, Mizoguchi, Godard, Satvjit Ray, Bresson. Today, I would rather see a film by Chantal Ackerman, Valeria Sario, Yvonne Rainer, or Sally Potter—recent encounters that have no influence on my film work. With a cross-cultural interdisciplinary background, it’s difficult to single out a name or even a few names that have had a major impact on my work. The list is so long that I am afraid it would sound like name-dropping more than it would illuminate. In any case, naming is always a political choice: one gives the names one likes to be associated with or judged upon according to the times, often for the purpose of validation. On the other hand, there is no such thing as a one-way influence. What I do influences my understanding of others’ doings, and vice-versa; and I never understood certain aspects of the films I previously liked as well as now that I make films myself.

H—When did you realize you wanted to merge experimental with documentary filmmaking? Why?

M-h—I have never viewed them as being separated. ‘Experimental’ for me is not a genre nor an approach in filmmaking. It is, in a way, the process of unmaking ready-mades, or more commonly put, of making visible what remains invisible (ideologically, cinematically) to many, including to oneself; what does

not correspond to the established codes and is not always known in advance to the spectators as well as to the filmmaker. If 'experimental' is a constant questioning of the relationship between the filmmaker and filmmaking, then it cannot be separated from the material, whether one chooses to call this material documentary or fiction. Some people may find such questioning 'unnecessary.' Well, I can't blame such a reaction; in this 'one-dimensional' society, it is not always easy to draw the line between tracking down the oppressive mechanisms and aiding their spread. But for me, there is a certain naivete in believing that one could bring about changes in consciousness without challenging or uncovering the ideology of mainstream cinematic expectations. Realism, as practiced and promoted by many, consists of ignoring one's constant role as producer of realities (as if things can just speak by themselves without the intervention of the one who sees, hears and 'makes sense' out of them) and, therefore, of taking one's view as immediately objective and absolute ("This is *the* reality"). With the continually growing feminist and Third-World awareness, there is a strong necessity to make film politically, instead of settling down with making 'political' or 'non-political' films that remain oblivious to the workings of

dominant ideology. Repression is as much in the *what* as in the *how*, and the two cannot be separated. Such a convenient opposition as—'political' versus 'non-political'—dwells on a dualistic view of art and politics, art and science, art and life.

H—In *Naked Spaces—Living is Round* you identified the voices in the soundtrack by giving them specific categories of things to say which were consistent even when overlapping. I liked the way you included yourself in the film you made—it was neither a heavy-handed signature nor an erasure of self in the pretense of objectivity. Why is it important for you to include yourself and to identify the sources of what is said?

M-h—You give me a good opportunity to exemplify what I said earlier. In having three women's voices speak in relation to the music and the images, I was not so much concerned with specific categories of things to be said as with foregrounding problems of interpretation and translation. Whoever has attempted to 'capture' an event and to make it accessible (if not entirely comprehensible) to others knows how delicate such an undertaking is, if one does not want to smother it under the omniscient voice of

Photographs in the article are stills from Trinh T. Minh-ha's NAKED SPACES—LIVING IS ROUND.



culture. In communicating what you have understood from a culture, where do you trace the line between what is specifically African (and within African, what is Joola as differentiated from Serer, Mandingo, Peul, Bassari and so on), what is specifically Asian, and what is specifically Euro-American? Words, like images and sounds, connote different things when they are said differently. One cannot be so complacent as to claim that “This is what they said” or “This is how they see it” when one is content with translating the *content* of what one hears or sees, while remaining oblivious of oneself as translator, as inheritor of a different (verbal and aural) tradition, a different mentality. In my case, my pluralistic cultural background makes it even more problematic; as I wrote elsewhere, translation consists of grafting several languages, cultures and realities onto a single body. If it is important to involve my own subjectivity in my work or, as you said, “to identify the sources of what is said,” it’s because it is necessary to point to what has always been there but has almost never been outwardly acknowledged as such. There will be much less arrogance, much less it-goes-without-saying assumptions, much less taken-for-granted dominance of the First-World-Third-World/man-woman relationships, if the making subject is always vulnerably exposed in his or her making process. In *Naked Spaces* I work at differentiating the African/Euro-American/Asian personal voices without, however, opposing them, so that the viewer hears them not so much as contradictions or as separate entities, but as differences within the same subjectivity.

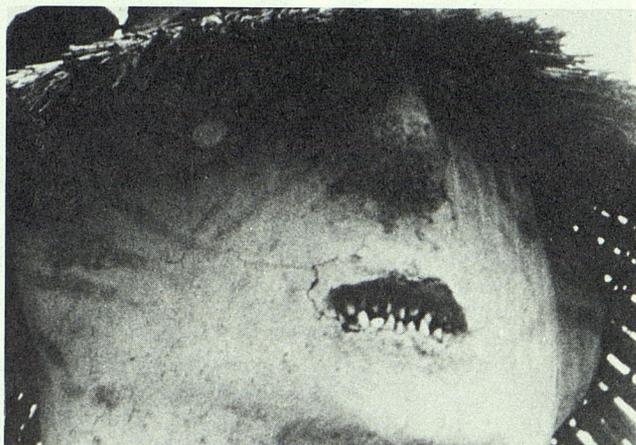
H-I noticed in *Naked Spaces* that the soundtracks tended toward the universal: i.e., about human nature, approaches to living, and theories of creation, yet the images in the film focused on women, women’s world and experience, with the exception of the dance scenes. Can you comment on this juxtaposition?

M-h—Women and the Universal! Very interesting; one kind of giggles because women have always been confined to the realm of the Personal. In working with a notion of difference that is not synonymous with opposition or segregation, the apartheid notion of difference, I focus on the relationship between women and living spaces (or, women and architecture) as the very site of difference on which both the Universal and the Particular (historical, cultural, political) are at play. As a statement in the film says, “the world is round around the round being”; women

are the active producers and guardians of the roundness of life, literally as well as figuratively speaking. In many African societies, elder women inhabit round-shaped houses, which usually happen to be the more ancient ones of the village, compared to the squarish or rectangular buildings occupied by men or young couples. These houses have no angularities in their exterior as well as interior forms. All the elements that I see as being consistently attributed to women’s domain and have foregrounded in the film—wall painting and sculpture; (curved) built-in features of enclosed spaces; pots and calabashes that contain their belongings, the water they fetch, or the food they cook; the general inside, inhabitable realms—are elements that diversely emphasize the womb-image of the house. As several statements in the film suggest, not only spaces named after the human body, but their decorations insist on the house as fertility site, as life-giving force. Woman being juxtaposed with approaches to living and theories of creation is hardly surprising in this context. For some viewers it might be difficult to associate what they relegate to the ‘domestic’ realm with views of the world that they usually attribute to the ‘philosophical’ realm. But the film brings forth the tight relationship between woman, house and cosmos. Even the dances which evolve around the circumcised young men are shot so as to show the circles they form and the participation of women in fertility rituals; the film ends on one of these dances, but the last sounds and images are those of the women dancers and their voices in chorus.

H—Can you comment about yourself and your work in terms of feminism and how you view yourself in that context?

M-h—I make a distinction between an alienating notion of otherness (the Other of man, the Other of the West) and an empowering notion of difference. As long as Difference is not *given* to us, the coast is clear. We should be the ones to define this difference, even if, as I said in *Naked Spaces*, “all definitions are devices.” And this, for me, is one way of summarizing how feminism could be understood and practiced. One cannot rely on essences (the essence of being a woman and/or a non-white) and do away with the dialectic or problematics of things. In a way, a feminist always has at least two gestures at the same time: that of pointing insistently to difference, and that of unsettling every definition of woman arrived at. As a Zen saying goes, “never take the finger pointing to the moon for the moon it-



self.” While rendering Difference visible and audible in my films (as well as in my books and poems), I also have to move on, repeating what is shown or said earlier in different contexts, so as to remind the viewer that the not-quite-not-yet-not-yet-it is always present. Thus, my films have no single message, no wrapped-up package to offer to the viewer (hence also, as I mentioned earlier, the difficulty of saying what the films are really about). The messages foregrounded are necessarily plural as the film/filmmaker looks critically at itself/herself unfolding before the viewers. Being truthful to oneself and to one’s making is, as said in another statement of the film, “being in the in-between of all definitions of truth.”

H—What does this exploration of truth and fact mean to you?

M-h—It’s not because one accumulates facts that one mechanically arrives at some truth; I don’t see truth as something defined by a sum of facts. When one realizes the aberrations carried out in the name of truth, one is compelled to question the objectivity of any notion—of truth as well as the search for truth itself and its absolutism. If it sounds quite common to challenge facts vis-a-vis truth, it is quite uncommon to see this incorporated in documentary practice. I am thinking here of the numerous films that claim (in their tone and in the way they offer information more than in any explicit statement) to give us a scientific view of the ‘natives.’ What is considered ‘scientific’ or ‘objective’ is often no more than the adaptation of a number of film codes and of an established approach in documenting, in other words, a question of ideology. Reality is necessarily always adaptive. With the spread of these films in popular consumer programs on television, it becomes more and more difficult for many of us not to confuse fact with truth; hence these statements in *Naked Spaces*: “The diagnostic power of a fact-oriented language”; “Truth or fact”; or “reality and truth: neither relative nor absolute.” To the culturally/sexually dominant mind everything not qualified as “factual” is relegated to the realm of Instinct, Superstition or the Supernatural. The questioning of truth and fact is another way of dealing with the notion of difference as explained earlier in relation to feminism.

H—I loved the editing in *Naked Spaces*. You used the overlaying of images very sparingly—why did you use it when you did? I noticed in certain segments a real building of images that would resolve sort

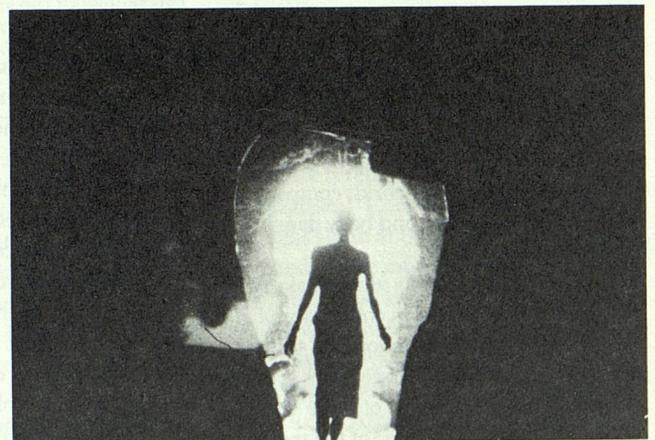
of in the same way a circle closes. What were your concerns while editing *Naked Spaces*, both artistic and political/ethical?

M-h—Many viewers have used the term ‘fluid’ with regards to the editing of the film. I guess what I was preoccupied with is a fluidity of montage that does not rely on slick visuals or on smooth transitions, in other words, that does not bear the ‘professional’ seal. The intent is not to settle down in a comfortably convenient relationship between sound, image and text (and further, between this statement and that statement, between this image and that image, and so on). If you remember, there is a comment on African music at the start of the film that says: “It [the music] does not simply ‘play’/In such a way as *not* to impinge on the viewing.” The illustrative relationship usually found in film between sound, image and text; the cosmetic role often attributed to music; and the exclusively informative function assigned to environmental sounds as well as to people’s talking lull the viewers into a falsely secure world that is fabricated so as to give them the comforting illusion that they know where they go; they know what to expect, and can even foresee what the outcome will be. In incorporating silence as one determining element in the film, I often remind the viewers of the flat reality of film, while not denying them the somewhat surreptitious pleasure of losing themselves in the flow of compelling images and sounds. The editing plays, therefore, with the viewers’ expectations; the music is often cut off abruptly, thereby pulling them out of the atmosphere they have been bathed in, while the visuals incorporate casual jump-cuts, out-of-focus shots, and, as you have noticed, one or two seemingly “ill-placed” superimpositions. The latter are inserted more as a tease, although the images chosen are that of a woman’s reflective face overlaid with that of a woman at work.

H—Are you working on another film? What is it about?

M-h—Yes, but as you can guess, I can’t really talk about it. As I pointed out earlier, the film does not exist before its making.

HARRIET HIRSHORN is a photographer and filmmaker living in New York City. She recently returned from Mexico where she had been documenting the campesino and student movements.



MUSIC, DANCE, AND SONG

WOMEN'S CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN MAKING THEIR OWN MUSIC

BATYA WEINBAUM

The creation of women's music festivals are positive outgrowths of women's community arts, rather than negative "give women a chance" second-rate operations meant to compensate for discrimination.¹ The festivals have grown over the last ten years, originally being events organized by women producers that brought together women musicians and gathered audiences of women. Gradually, because labor was needed and the producers were operating on short budgets, the audience-community at these festivals began to participate in creating the festivals and building a community. In this article, I'll consider the relation of women's music and women's communities.

For centuries women have been deprived of their own community arts, which had originally taken the form of the communal dancing and singing rites common to primitive tribes and natural-world peoples—meaning, of course, “primitive” in the positive sense, not lesser or inferior.²

For example, in the islands of Hawaii, the dance known as the hula had once been performed as part of the ritual of everyday living, for celebratory and communal purposes. Women danced in blocks as large as two hundred, as did the men. The European conquerors of the Hawaiian islands drew pictures of large blocks of women dancing together, imitating waves and other natural forms.³ These dances were misinterpreted as performances for audiences, since the outsiders had no other tradition to interpret what they saw. The dance was seen as erotic and suppressed,⁴ and later was commercialized. Individual women were sketched in erotic poses, broken off from the block of dancing women.⁵ This pattern of eroticizing and then suppressing women's dance has been reproduced all over the world; compare Indian temple dancing and belly dancing to the hula's history.⁶

The history of women's music making can be traced similarly. In collections of primitive peoples' “mythologies,” universal references are made to women's discovery of music.⁷ As some of these myths go, women heard the music of the reeds,

the singing of the trees, the whispers of ponds. They fashioned natural material instruments, directly derived from natural forms, and started making music. Then men, jealous of the women's natural ability, stole the instruments, made men's houses, and allowed music to be made only within those male walls. (Unless women's music was purely functional, like singing to genitalia during lovemaking or chanting the birth chant to help the drop of the child from the womb.)

Women were often banned from music making because their music was thought to be destructive to men and male civilization in general, as witnessed in commonly held myths of women's destructive power—the singing of the Sirens that lured men to crash on the rocks of the Siren's island home, the singing of the Ishtar cults in Egypt that purportedly caused men to flagellate themselves, and so on.⁸ Once music was bound to an organized patriarchal religion that superceded goddess worship, women lost the collective use of their own bodies simultaneously with the loss of their voices. For instance, consider the male cantors and male-only singing in the synagogues; the all-male Gregorian chanters in the medieval church; and the replacement of women's voices by those of choir boys and castrati.

From the perspective of this historical pattern, the rise of women's music festivals where all the arts re-emerge is disruptive to the world at large; or perhaps reformative to the world at large and disruptive to its current civilization. At these festivals, craftwomen, psychics, costume makers, tarot readers, and tattoo artists, acting as traders and sellers, encourage a tribal decorativeness in group symbols and a matriarchal consciousness absent since women controlled sacred space. As Jane Harrison has noted in *Ancient Ritual into Art*, all the arts were derived originally from ritual, which created the space for a culture to take form. Indeed, ethnomusicologists have noted that cultures have

actually been created by sound—a certain sound rings out and people gather to create their culture, by which is meant the nitty-gritty, the ins and outs of everyday life.

Thus it is more than coincidental that the women gathering in modern music rituals are creating a culture in which, at least temporarily, women are in control and able to rediscover their own bodies, to dance unobserved, and to make loud public music. There arguments are held about where and what to eat, and about the creation and relative importance of rules. The experience of creating culture is more than the passive consumption of culture created by those “others” schooled in the arts. Women are creating the context of symbolic exchange, as a community and in public—or at least in a short-term public made by temporarily excluding onlookers (men).

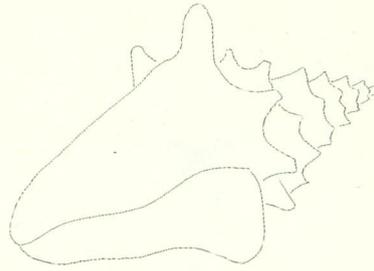
Thus it is ironic that women's culturalists are often not understood as political by those who remain outside of the phenomenon. Other formations of a lifestyle centered around particular musicians and bands (like the Dead Heads around the Grateful Dead) similarly restore music makers to their original shamanistic status, recapturing them from “show business.” The arts are an integral part of the transformative process and are not just entertainment. The critics of women's culture seem unaware of the active process of revitalization that occurs at these festivals. The process can be compared to the revitalization based on the re-emergence of songs and dances that accompany or predate nationalistic political movements, such as the famous Ghost dance campaign of native American Indian resistance.⁹

Women whose lives have been changed by participating as festival creators have staged spontaneous political happenings such as making waves of sound in front of military bases or in the streets, which cause people to turn around and listen. It is no accident that in modern times street

music and loud street sound were made illegal and music limited to the restricted area of concert halls. Denial of the right to make sound has much to do with the spread of current imperialistic civilization, which outlawed chants, dances, and indigenous musical instruments as part of its mechanism of conquest. So we have to rediscover our own sound as women, even if we don't find the chord that makes men lose their minds or that brings the walls of Jericho down. Anything we can do to change the context of sound creation can help loosen the grip of patriarchal civilization.

The creation of women's music and festival communities should be seen as part of the retribalization tendency of America's oppressed groups in the '60s and '70s. And what kind of communities have women evolved? And does this community allow for the emergence of a specifically women's music?

Stanley Diamond, in his book *In Search of the Primitive*, discusses certain positive characteristics of the organization of primitive communal societies that have been lost in modern civilization. Some of these same characteristics are seen in women's festival "civilization." For example, there is a different relation to the body, that is, public nudity, which appears at these gatherings of women. Second, there is a public ethic that values subjectivity as much as objectivity when formulating policy and rules (seen in the workers' meetings). Third, culture, especially primitive culture, functions to create shared meanings, which can be seen as new areas of organization developed in response to the more complex needs of the growing community: at the festivals the healing/medical unit is called "The Womb," not the disembodied and remote name, "clinic"; the safe zone for emotionally overwhelmed women is not called the "psychiatric unit" or "special care" as it is in modern hospitals, but "Oasis." These healing names actually attract women to the spaces rather than repel them. Thus, they are more often and more easily utilized by women in need. Fourth, schooling and training involve a primary process and not an institutionalized learning situation. Women volunteer to work in areas in which they might have aptitude but not formal training. In fact, this seems to be one of the drawing cards that entices women to work; they can expand to a fuller view of them-



selves than allowed in the sex-rolled external work situation. They can participate in a work culture which the anthropologist Edward Sapir might call genuine instead of spurious. Last, primitive economies rest on bartering, trade, and gifts, and this communal economy also emerges at festivals (but only insofar as it does not conflict with the producers' economic needs in terms of external cash flow).

As might be expected, at some point there is a breakdown of the analogy between primitive and women's civilization. After all, the festival communities are only temporary pockets of a new civilization operating in an advanced capitalist realm. One of the characteristics of primitive civilizations Diamond cites is that there is no body of law which stems from alienation, from us vs. them. Within contemporary women's culture, as within any rising civilization, the creation drama stabilizes at some point and alienation does set in. National women's festivals now seem to require a lengthy orientation of first-time participants to the previously created rules. The content of these rules punctures the romantic, mini-revolutionary bubble from which these festivals might be viewed; one hears arguments reminiscent of debates in Soviet Russia during the '20s and '30s, when it was argued that communism couldn't be pure yet because trade was necessary with the outside, capitalistic world in order for the internal economy to keep going. A "bureaucracy" appears in the festivals, just as the "State" did in Russia. Arguments over space allocation reduce the rulemaking to a house-keeping event rather than an exciting immersion in participatory democracy.

But the alienation that comes from receiving rather than making rules can be positive. That alienation leads to spin-off festivals, when women frustrated over one issue or another go on to create smaller, more participatory festivals of their own, generally on a regional basis (e.g., KWANZAA in Vermont, the proposed

festival at the Peace Encampment, etc.).

Now to consider the women's music and the musicians. It has been pointed out that music makers are ahead of their times, are eccentrics and even deviants.¹⁰ Chris Williamson, for example, is without a doubt a cultural deviant. Appearing as she and others do in a totally institutionalized setting, where participants are dependent on the environment to shelter and feed them, such "star" deviants channel participants in a positive deviant direction (though these festivals surface neither in literature on countercultures nor in feminist sociology or anthropology). But if "women's music" means only or even primarily the stars recorded on the Olivia label, restricting itself to white lesbian soloists performing for white audiences, participation as performer or audience is limited and pressures to guard the performer/audience distinction rise. At the long-established festivals, performers and audiences are separated by a security force of women who seem to act out a repressed "cop" mentality, enforcing a hierarchy that has the feel of being of their own devising.

Call the security force feminist fascism or what you will, but the makers of women's music can hardly be blamed, since they continue to operate in a western context and are unaware that women's sounds could actually be shattering, and even more unaware of the male nature of their instruments (see box) or of the patriarchal stage context in which their new stardom is emerging. But with the struggle for democracy going on within the subculture, including the branching off of "satellites" differentiated from the "mother festivals" on the basis of egalitarianism, space is being created for matriarchal/primitive consciousness and reemerging aspects of the tribal lifestyle Diamond cites.

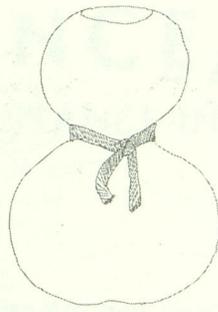
This changing social structure will affect the form the sounds take, since it has been observed by anthropologists that social structure is reflected in the sound of a civilization.¹¹ Concretely, social change is brought about at the festivals by protests demanding the music of women of color—protests that led to such things as Edwina Lee Tylor's drumming on earth brought in trays to the stage or to workshops where women of all races are taught matriarchal African rhythms. And social change is seen when some local festivals

focus so much on the tribal village concept that no specialized musicians ever appear and no stages are erected. With enough newly sacred space for experimentation with music, dance, and song, the ancient sounds buried since women were suppressed within patriarchal civilization will no doubt resurface.

And what would women's own music be like if it did? Composer Kay Gardner, who for several years intentionally did not listen to men's music, suggests that women's compositions are different from men's, that women's are cyclical rather than linear and tend to wind down rather than end with an orgasmic crescendo. On the other hand, Pauline Oliveros, another leading woman composer, holds that women have not composed as much music or with the same forcefulness as men because they are not socialized to tell others what to do. Like similar debates (do women write differently than men, make art differently, etc.) these discussions stem from the "are women innately different" debate. Perhaps women's minds are just as analytical and linear as men's, and hence their compositions would also be so if they had had an equal opportunity to compose or perform . . .

And what if we did have equal access to musical practice? What does my research in music history and ethnomusicology, as well as my experiences as a musician, reveal would be necessary to reconnect with women's own musical process? First, women would have to have the freedom to take their clothes off and create music uninhibited by imposed social and material forms. In Hawaii, a society once more matriarchal than our own (having female deities, for instance), women and men chanted in the same tonal range, from *D* above middle *C* to *A* below it; husbands and wives chanted only a half note apart. Hawaiian women's voice range would be considered "a man's" in our culture. These women were more centered in their bodies, unhindered by the tight clothing subsequently imposed by the missionaries.

Clothes are formally connected with the music of a particular period. By the nineteenth century, when women were once more allowed to make music in public, they performed in the tight corsets and objectified, form-creating clothes, emitting the high "feminine" trills of the European opera singer or of Brahms's women's choruses. Stripping ourselves of role-



creating female clothing and reembedding our sounds in our bodies would be a precondition to rediscovering a natural women's sound. Even women who have adopted male clothing might discover a female vibratory pattern if allowed to experience creation in a nude state; then they could don whatever costume seemed appropriate for channeling their new musical vibration.¹²

A second suggestion would be to play from emotional impulse and color visualization, rather than by reading abstract written scores as black and white as the costumes donned by orchestra players in western civilization. I suggest this to tap into women's own musical process; when it comes to preserving their work, abstract notation can still be done as a later step in the process. It should be recognized that in the sign system of modern western music, which arose with patriarchal civilization, we have in the treble clef the eternal feminine cycle (albeit with a line through the middle) attached to the staff, the grid of male linear thinking. Taking the free-flowing magic of nature once again and fixing it in male dominant form.

But notation was not always black and white. In the beginning of the linear notation of music, color was also used, at least as a coding system. Only gradually did written music become an analytical abstraction, creating a tendency toward composing by mental gymnastics;¹³ and some of the most flowing music by men (Eric Satie, Scriabin) was created by color and poetic visualization.

To create from erotic, sensuous and emotional stimulation would be to draw from what has become popularly known as right brain, metaphoric or synesthetic thinking. Here again we connect with the "primitive" (and in no way inferior) source of sound: tribal singing used to create music tied with visualization and emotion. For example, mourning ritual among the Kahuli entails singing about an ancestor as last seen or remembered in a favorite

landscape or habitat: a waterfall, or sacred space in the jungle. The musical visualization is intended to bring about a catharsis judged successful by the lyric's ability to bring out emotion.¹⁴ Or, again to refer to Hawaii, a lover would visualize the loved one and sing a strain designed to reach him or her; these songs were the vibratory medium through which lovers contacted each other before the telephone. To recontact our own sources of sound we can use what has been dismissed in our civilization as "like a woman," "childlike," or "primitive."

A third route to our own music would be to use forms more common in matriarchal civilization such as rotation of parts and instruments (even if we use western instruments). African drumming, for example, has several parts: each drummer learns all the parts, and those parts are rotated among the players. How might this apply in our search for the matriarchal ear and sound? We might use the instruments of the traditional western orchestra, but in matriarchal ways that overcome ranking and specialization. The harpist could move to the chair of the first violin; the flautist could move to the seat of the oboist, and so on: a circular game of musical chairs. There is no need to be a purist about the instruments we use, although purity has been argued for by Women Against Rock, most recently at the Alliance for Cultural Democracy conference in Boston. There one of the participants answered back that even though men have created rock's electronic technology, it is in women's best interests to claim the form that broadcasts best in this culture.

All my suggestions about how we might recover our own voices have been made to keep women experimenting in a collective search for women's true vibrations. For it is in locating our own clear vibe that we find our strength and in that strength our music. Or, perhaps, the other way around?

NOTES

¹ This is how separate women's spheres in music such as female leagues and orchestras have sometimes been viewed. See *Women in American Music: A Bibliography of Music and Literature*, Greenwood, 1979.

² See Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, Transaction Books, Rutgers, 1974, who conceptualizes the devolution rather than evolution of civilization since primitive times.

³ See J. Robinson, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific and Around the World*, 1973, Vol. III, pp. 39–42.

North Pacific and Around the World, 1973, Vol. III, pp. 39–42.

⁴See, for example, Darwin's introduction to *Pele and Hiiaka; A Myth from Hawaii*, for missionary condemnation of the hulas as immoral, along with goddess worship. Charles Tuttle, Rutland, VT, 1978.

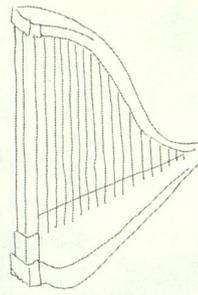
⁵The sexist western interpretation is depicted in James Michener's novel, *Hawaii*, in which dancers are sent by their fathers to men of other tribes to ward off wars.

⁶See Daniella Gioseffi, *Earth Dancing: Mother Nature's Oldest Rite*, Stackpole Books, 1980; and Frederique Marglin, *Wives of the God King: The Ritual of the Devadasis of Puri*, Oxford University Press, 1985.

⁷See K.A. Gourlay, "Sound Producing Instruments in Traditional Society: A study of esoteric instruments and their role in male-female relations," *New Guinea Research Bulletin* #60, 1975.

⁸For more, see Barbara Walker, *Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*, Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1983.

⁹For an astute defense of women culturalists, see *Women's Culture Renaissance of the Seven-*



ties, edited by Gayle Kimball, Metuchen, NJ, and London, 1981.

¹⁰See discussion on music, J.M. Yinger, *Cultures*, Free Press, London, 1982.

¹¹See for example, Marina Roseman, "The Social Structure of Sound: The Temiar of Peninsular Malaysia," *Ethnomusicology*, September, 1984; and Stephen Feld, "Sound Structure as Social Structure," *loc. cit.*

¹²See Elizabeth Tatar, *Nineteenth Century Chant*, Bishop Museum Publication, Honolulu, for voice ranging. *The Naturist* is a good publication explaining the radicalism of nudity.

¹³See Peter Hamel's distinction between magi-

cal, mythical and mental consciousness in *Through Music to the Self*, Shambala Press —though the latter he does not correlate with the social dominance of the male. For a long time I was troubled by why what I read about women's music, eastern music, and primitive music sounded the same, as compared with the music of white male western civilization. Then, the more I read about eastern, primitive, and people's of color cultures, the reason became clear to me: these cultures still had matriarchal aspects predominant in their civilizations. See Christopher Small, *Whose Music Is It?*

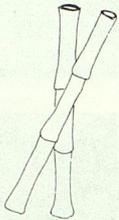
¹⁴See Stephen Feld, *Poetics of Song*.

BATYA WEINBAUM is a composer and writer who has attended many women's festivals over the years.

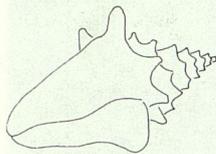
On the Question of Instruments

Oceanic Myth (Paul Hamlyn, London) gives the summary of a myth from Irian Jaya that recounts how women hear winds playing in the bamboo stems, that is, that bamboo made music by itself. So the women made flutes from the bamboo. When their husbands heard the sound, they killed the women and took the flutes for their secret society, where together with gongs, bull roarers and other "distorting devices," they were used to produce the voices of monsters.

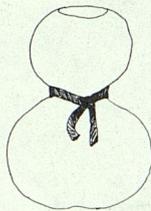
Some anthropologists say that in societies without esoteric instruments, without instruments that women cannot touch, there is no sexual antagonism. I have often explained in my workshops just how much our western instruments represent the conquering of the women's naturally discovered form, of their own bodies, in fact.



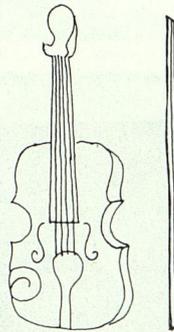
Bamboo sticks, Hawaii, untouched form.



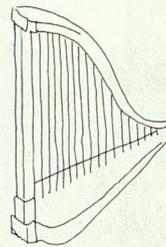
Conch shell, Hawaii, untouched form.



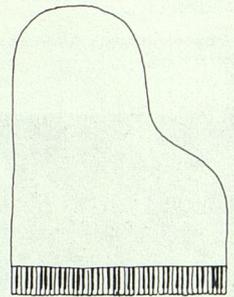
Ibu, Hawaii, made from gourd, with the addition only of a braided handle.



Violin, western civilization, like a tightly corseted women's body. What is played? The added strings across a vaginal opening, stroked by the phallic bow.



Harp, Celtic. Played by stroking the symbolic female triangle.



Piano, western civilization, derived from the form of the triangular harp and further abstracted by black and white keys. Played by "diddling" the keys.

The player of western instruments plays as if "playing a woman," i.e., pressing for sound as if for other sexual responses.

That is why I recommend for women to become the active players, no matter what the instrument. To play and not be played.

JILL POSENER



JILL POSENER is a British photographer and the author of two books, *Louder Than Words* (Pandora Press, 1986) and *Spray It Loud* (RKP, 1982), both documenting billboard graffiti in England and Australia.

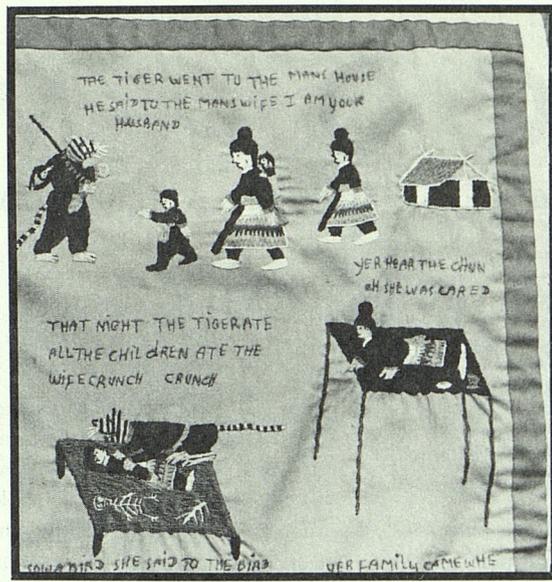
M I A X I O N G

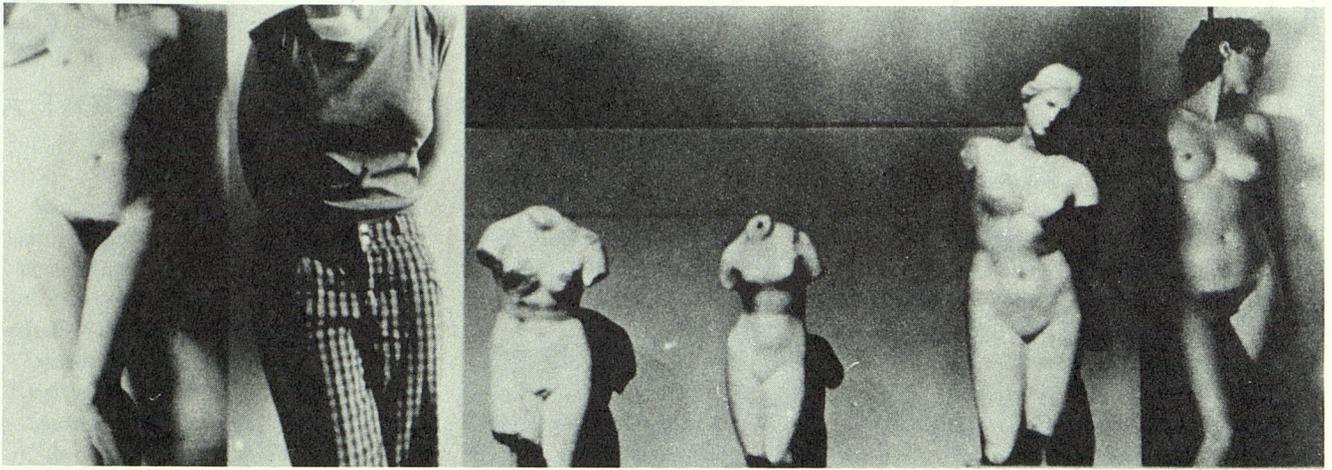
STORY CLOTH, 1985, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

This story cloth depicts a Hmong folktale. The Hmong are a tribal group that has immigrated from their homelands in the high, remote mountains of Laos to the United States since the end of the Vietnam War. Story cloths are an innovation in Hmong needlework that came about since their arrival in the West. They record everyday events in Laos as well as folktales and legends. The men and women in this cloth are depicted in their traditional dress and in their homeland.

The story: Any year ago, a man killed a monkey, but a tiger saw the man. The tiger killed the man and ate him. The tiger put on the man's clothes and went to the man's wife and said, "I am your husband." The wife didn't know it was a tiger. The little sister, Yer, said, "This is not a man, this is a tiger." She hid upstairs. That night the tiger ate the wife and all the children, CRUNCH, CRUNCH. Yer heard the crunching and she was scared. She threw pepper in the tiger's eyes. "Oww!" the tiger said and he ran to the

river to wash his eyes. Yer saw a bird and said to the bird, "Go to my family, tell them the tiger ate my brother-in-law, my sister and all the children. Tell my family to come now." So the bird went. Yer's family came. "Where's the tiger?" they asked. "Down at the river," answered Yer. "I'll call him." "Tiger, tiger," Yer called. "My family is here; they want to talk to you; I'll be your wife." "Good," answered the tiger. The brothers walked with the tiger. The tiger walked in the middle, only the tiger walked on the path. The tiger fell in the hole, and the brothers killed him.





Susan Daboll's work is concerned with the relationship of the female body as experienced to the female body as culturally constructed. She sets up an interplay of the tensions between the two by juxtaposing photographs of her own body and others' with imagery from sources such as art history, pornography, and magazine photos.

COMMUNITY

AND THE ALLOWANCE OF DIFFERENCE

KAREN SHASHA

*Here is not history
not revolution
not pattern
not trend
here is presence.*

If one rejects the conventional idea of community, one must find or create another point of reference. The earth and our bodies are among things that are always here. And these things are present in constant transformation. There are tides, there is sleeping and waking, there is land forming and eroding, there is breathing, there is hunger and there is thirst. And the rhythms are not even constant, things flow at varying rates, things turn and return.

A community is generally defined by the likeness of its members. Members are associated either closely or loosely because of common traditions or interests or for political advantage. Membership is appealing because it can give a sense of security, of belonging, of protection. For those who are accepted and wish to be included, these are the benefits.

But just as some are included, some

are excluded; a community depends by definition upon a polar "us" vs. "them." I have always found more access to what is valuable in people when they are part of the "them," that is, when they are apart from groups, apart from associations of people by their generalized likeness, religion, politics or sex. One's qualities as a member of a group exclude the particular qualities of the individual. Likeness is a concern of groupings and communities. Difference is often excluded or displaced.

So what of the aspects of ourselves that are excluded, socially taboo, or simply different? If artists in particular need to value these aspects, can the ordinary notion of community make sense for them/us? Isn't it possible to be comfortable as an outsider, a foreigner, or a stranger? To make a community of the excluded, that is, to try to make a mainstream of outsiders, is to sacrifice the value in their outside status and to focus on their likenesses rather than their differences.

Eugenie Najjar and I put together a show, called *With Her Body In Mind*, of photography and video by women working with some notion of the (their) female body, allowing differences among the artists and how they see themselves. We did not intend to provide a fixed structure of interpretation for the work and chose work that relates to the focal issue of the female body in very different ways. We wanted to allow many readings at once.

Conventional representation of the female body overwhelmingly forces the viewer into the position of regarding an object of desire, often, as a shell separate from anything spiritual that may go along with it. But the body itself can be experienced spiritually, and we found the conventional opposition of body and spirit irrelevant, even artificial, in this work. These artists work variously with humor, with risk, with power and pleasure, with strain and resistance. Some seek an origin for female being through ritual, through return, through

memory, through having survived violence and abuse. The body is differently present for each artist. We hoped the combination of works might persuade people to avoid a single conclusion or view of what they see. Each artist is doing something that matters in its difference from what each other artist is doing. As a result the unique experience of a viewer matters in attempting to understand the work.

Any thing or phenomenon has its unique presence to another. And one can begin with that presence as a point of departure, as a simple starting place for meaning. Presence, as the manifestation of being, then becomes the basis for meaning. And things, people, and the world have meaning in immediate experience. This starting place suggests a way of being, one to another, that allows each person his or her full humanity, not in conformity but in uniqueness, an essential condition of exchange and spiritual growth. In a true exchange between me and another we are each faced with the other's presence. And if the other is an artist's work, I am faced with the presence of the work to the extent that I am present in perceiving it.

The aspects of oneself and one's experience that are uniquely understood are commonly eclipsed by a community that values sameness. In any meaningful exchange I have with anyone, it is his or her difference from me that matters. Taking presence as the point of departure means beginning with a look inward, and valuing what is found there enough to have it matter when we look outward.

KAREN SHASHA is an artist working in photography and installations. She lives in New York City.

My art is grounded in the belief in one universal energy which runs through everything: from insect to man, from man to spectre, from spectre to plant, from plant to galaxy. My works are the irrigation veins of this universal fluid. Through them ascend the ancestral sap, the original beliefs, the primordial accumulations, the unconscious thoughts that animate the world. There is no original past to redeem: there is the void, the orphanhood, the unbaptized earth of the beginning, the time that from within the earth looks upon us. There is above all the search for origin.

1983 Ana Mendieta





• THE • IMPORTANCE OF BEING VISIONARY

WOMEN AND ART DURING THE CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

CHRIS HEINDL

Remain where you are and submit to the decrees of heaven.
—Confucius

*I will become a storm
I will become a thunder that shakes the nine heavens!*
—Hsi-erh from *The White Haired Girl*

I have been inspired and moved by a lot of art by and about men, but as a woman artist, I find it difficult to know how to begin expressing what is mine, or rather, what is ours, in my own work. While I have more access to women's work than the previous generation of women artists had, I think it is doubtful that our work will become a part of mainstream culture or that changes in the representation of women will be seen until there have been some basic changes in western society.

Recently when I saw several model opera and ballets from the Chinese Cultural Revolution, I was complete jarred; they left me with lots of questions and moved me to tears. For the first time I

saw art made under the assumption that women had power. Women were depicted as catalysts and forces in the world. I wondered what kind of struggle it took to make these films. I also wondered whether questions of feminism had been discussed during the production. All the revolutionary operas and ballets have women as strong characters. How did Chinese women feel about these images and in what way did the works relate to their culture as a whole?

I also had critical questions about the forms, which seemed to be strange choices for revolutionary art. Wasn't it true that both ballet and opera were steeped in western capitalist traditions? How could a country just liberated from years of binding women's feet put forth women heroes on pointe? This is possibly a superficial question, but to me it was a strong and surprising image.

The films of Chinese model operas and ballets look strange to us as well: the colors are extraordinarily bright, and the action appears simple and a bit overwrought. We are not used to seeing filmed stage plays, hence the settings are not as "realistic" as in our western films. We are stuck on the outside, looking in at another culture. Coming from this perspective, I've tried to understand and find out about the changes Chinese women experienced after the revolution and how these model works were made.

In two films that I saw "Red Detachment of Women" and "The White-Haired Girl," the main characters were women who had been severely oppressed under Feudalism. Both women, through a different series of events, fight back first through flight and then through individual acts of revenge against those who have harmed them. In these two plays, the heroines come to believe that they will not become liberated alone and so they join in the revolution. They are characters of survival who become transformed into characters of resistance and vision.

The revolution in China brought great changes for women. The marriage laws were changed in 1950, one year after liberation, insuring the right to divorce and freely choose a husband. Footbinding and prostitution were outlawed, and peasants, both women and men, were taught to read for the first time in history. Also for the first time (at least since the rise of Confucianism),

women gained the right to a name of their own and to hold land under that name. There were campaigns throughout the 1950s, '60s and '70s to get men to help with the housework and to provide day-care for children so that women would have more freedom to leave the home.

The arts were drastically revamped. Throughout the revolution and especially after liberation, theatre and dance in particular were seen as a means of communicating with the large numbers of people who were still overwhelmingly illiterate. Theatre troupes traveled from the cities to the most remote areas of the country performing and gathering new ideas for their art. There were many different forms of theatre including skits, "living newspapers," storytelling, circuses, shadow plays, dramas, operas, ballet, acrobatics and song. The purposes of theatre ranged from informing to entertaining to providing a new "high" art for "ordinary" people.

Art was used as a way to get input from people about how they viewed the revolution and envisioned a new society. Ho Ching-Chi, one of the first writers of "The White-Haired Girl" writes:

When we sat with an audience ... we often heard the most unrestrained, genuine and valuable comments. The people are our teachers and it was they who taught us how to work. The new art serves the masses and reflects their lives, and the masses are the characters, and the critics, sometimes the creators, too, of this art.¹

Jack Beldon, an American who saw an early production of "The White-Haired Girl," talks about some of the reactions at the performance he saw:

The bitter reality of the play was not lost on the women in the audience, many of whom, as I found out later, had undergone similar experiences. At several points in the play I saw women, old and young, peasant and intellectual, wiping tears from their eyes with the sleeves of their jackets. One lady near me wept loudly through nearly the whole play.²

Women who had experienced repression under the rules of feudal society not only gained new freedom, but began to express it in forms that were heretofore reserved for privileged people, mostly men. An example of this is the play "The River Frozen for More Than a Thousand Years Has Thawed." It was written and per-

formed by former prostitutes after the brothels were shut down. The play describes their personal histories and the exploitation they suffered, and exposes the behind-the-scenes traffic in women that existed in the years before. It was said that "the actresses, themselves former prostitutes, wept as they acted their parts."³

Things changed quite swiftly for individual artists and performers as well. There are many stories like that of the acrobat Hsia Chu-hua, who when she was only seven years old was sold into the circus. She had been forced to perform dangerous acts such as "hanging in the air by the pigtail" and was given only the necessary minimum for survival while being denied medical care even for such serious injuries as a broken collar bone. After the revolution, Hsia Chu-hua became part of a state-sponsored acrobatic troupe for whom food, clothing, medical attention and pensions were provided. She took a leading role in running the organization, and she was taught to read and write. "All this!" says Chu-hua, "is a matter of course for acrobats today, but for me, then just emancipated, it was unimaginable!"⁴

Were all these changes women experienced real? How far did they go? Most importantly, was the impetus to involve women in the struggle a purely pragmatic one? In other words, if women were not involved in the actual fighting and building of the new society, would it pose a critical threat to victory? Women have been used before to further what was later revealed to be just another fight for the rights of men only. I wondered if China might be another example of this syndrome.

I discovered that these questions were addressed by the Cultural Revolution itself, which was launched in 1966 after seventeen years of revolutionary rule. This was a struggle, started within the Communist Party, that concerned where and how far the revolution was to go. Iris Hunter addresses this period in her book *They Made Revolution Within the Revolution*:

After the proletariat seizes power, the new socialist society doesn't emerge clean and pure. It has remnants of what Marx would call "the birthmarks" of the old society. Such things as the commodity system, differences in income, the division of labor, can be described as "bourgeois right." ... Unless these divisions are consciously narrowed and bourgeois right consciously restricted under social-

ism, the divisions will not only persist, but increase.⁵

The fight for the liberation of women was contained in this struggle, with the family viewed as a mirror or a microcosm of society at large. The father, in his traditional patriarchal role, exemplified the oppressive forces in society.

The saying "Women hold up half the sky" was popularized more and more throughout the Cultural Revolution, and there were many more programs that addressed and broadened the status of women. Barefoot doctors—women who traveled in the countryside providing medical care—revolutionized health care. More women's cooperatives were formed, such as the "iron girls" detachments, construction groups composed entirely of women. There was also an increase in the numbers of women who worked in brigades and construction crews with men, exemplified by the Red Flag Canal project in which 90,000 of 250,000 workers were women. In the arts, women literally took center stage.

The arts, in fact, are perhaps where women's liberation was most "visible." Before the revolution, and even afterwards in certain parts of China, women's roles in theatre were all played by men and the characters were generally the passive "ladies" of aristocratic society. But, as Lois Wheeler Snow writes:

In the communist areas, female leads were generally played by women. And it is quite a moving thing to see women with bound feet who hitherto had not been outside the home, toddling around on stage and acting





*the part of an emancipated female.*⁶

The model works were produced during the Cultural Revolution. There were many new dramas, ballets and operas, but until 1971, "Red Detachment of Women" and "The White-Haired Girl" were the only finished theatre pieces. Both have long histories dating from before the revolution and they were both adapted from true stories. I will concentrate here on "The White-Haired Girl" as it is particularly illustrative of the changes in art both formally and in terms of content.

"The White-Haired Girl" is a ballet with song which combines Russian-style ballet with Chinese folkdance and acrobatic movement. It is the story of a peasant woman, Hsi-erh, whose father is killed by a landlord and who then is taken captive in the landlord's house, where she is forced to work as a servant. With the assistance of an older woman servant, she escapes and begins an odyssey alone in the wilderness where her hair turns white from malnutrition and hardship. People in the area believe her to be a "hungry ghost" or a goddess and make sacrifices to her in the belief that she could harm them. When revolutionaries in the area hear of this, they investigate and discover that she is not a ghost, but only a peasant woman. They bring her back to their camp where she is told of the struggle for liberation. There, she joins with them to fight for an end to her suffering and the system that has caused it.

"The White-Haired Girl" was originally a true story which quickly developed into a living myth with many variations.

Two members of the Lu Hsun Academy of Literature and Art first wrote it as a short story in 1945. It was made into songs and several film versions were produced, which traveled throughout the country.

The theme of the hungry ghost comes from Chinese folklore. A hungry ghost could be the spirit of some unfulfilled person or a person who died through strange circumstances. Rituals were developed to appease these ghosts. In overseas Chinese communities (such as Hong Kong) there is still an annual celebration to "Feed the hungry ghosts" by the presentation of food at shrines.⁷ The play, while retaining this folkloric origin, ushers in a new kind of story which is based in the real world and has at its core the ideology of class consciousness.

Work on the final three-stage production began in 1964 under the direction of Chiang Ching, Mao's wife and an accomplished actress. There was much struggle over how the play should be produced. Peking Opera was a major battle ground between what were called "the two roads": those who wished to restore capitalism and those who wanted to promote communism. The production of "The White-Haired Girl" and other model operas and ballets came under attack by those known as revisionists because it endeavored to portray class consciousness and communist spirit instead of such "eternal" themes as love and death. These same people fought against combining the new content with traditional and foreign forms, asserting that they were not appropriate to express present-day life. To this the new artists answered with Mao's dictum "make foreign things serve China." They felt that even though ballet was developed by and for the West, it could be transformed for a different purpose. They didn't want to "give up" ballet.

Traditional ballet was changed and molded to fit this new content. National dance steps such as Yang Ko, a Northern Chinese peasant dance associated with harvest time, and folkdance steps of the Li people in the south were integrated into the model works. Traditional Peking Opera gestures and acrobatics combined with ballet to form a new "hybrid." Often the native movements could be seen in the gestures of the upper body while the leg work was more like conventional ballet.⁸

The style of the model theatre has

been criticized for being too "black and white" with few "middle characters." It seems, however, that this juxtaposition of opposites is actually very typically Chinese. Traditional Peking Opera is highly stylized and as Lois Wheeler Snow puts it, "The total projection of evil and virtue is a custom."

In its final form, "The White-Haired Girl" was intended to express the ideological questions of the time. Hsi-erh's father fought the landlord and was murdered by him rather than having committed suicide as he had done in earlier versions, and at one point Hsi-erh throws an incense burner (a symbol of superstition) at the landlord. The characters defend themselves rather than submit to brutality. Both of these changes were made during the Cultural Revolution despite objections by the revisionists who thought that the piece was being made unrealistic and that the characters should not be so clear cut. After Mao's death and the coup in China the earlier version, which portrays more passive resistance, became popularized.

These works of the Chinese Cultural Revolution have given me inspiration as well as a deeper understanding of the problems and possibilities for art and culture involved with the struggle for liberation and for a people's art. The right to a name and the right to create and be heard are things that Chinese women fought for and won. Like all great art, these works express the needs of real people, their dreams, their conflicts and their visions. They have made me feel less alone and have given me a glimpse of the future.

¹ Snow, Lois Wheeler, *China On Stage*. Random House, 1972, p. 201.

² Beldon, Jack, *China Shakes the World*. Monthly Review Press, pp. 210-11.

³ Macciocchi, Maria, *Daily Life in Revolutionary China*. Monthly Review Press, 1972, p. 358.

⁴ Pen, Chi, ed., *Chinese Women in the Fight for Socialism*. Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1977, pp. 102-107.

⁵ Hunter, Iris, *They Made Revolution Within the Revolution*. RCP Publications, 1986, p. 12.

⁶ *Op. Cit.*, Snow, p. 199.

⁷ Ebon, Martin, *Five Chinese Communist Plays*. John Day, 1975, p. 29.

⁸ *Op. Cit.*, Snow, p. 209.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 36.

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PAGE ART BY SABRA MOORE WITH JOSELY CARVALHO



We are enclosing a xerox of the introductory statements & "conversation" in the xerox edition of 150 ARTISTS BOOK, a collaborative bookwork comprising original pages by 150 women artists from the United States & Brazil. 150 ARTISTS BOOK was part of CONNECTIONS PROJECT/CONEXUS, an exhibition of artwork by 16 pairs of women artists from the two countries on eight themes of social concern. The 32 core artists selected the 118 additional artists for the book.

We are also enclosing xeroxes of the installation at The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MOCHA) in NYC last January + sample pages from the 150 ARTISTS BOOK. While CONNECTIONS PROJECT/CONEXUS was NOT presented in an "unestablished" place, its method of organization and production of the book work used "unestablished" channels:

- we based the show on the female tradition of letter writing & the grade school notion of "pen pals"
- we developed the show by a multiplication of "pairs" starting with our friendship, expanding to our selection of the 15 additional pairs & the selection of the 118 by those 32.
- we tried to turn "private" into "public" by "polling" the artists & asking each artist to work on a public theme.
- we purposely reversed the artworld values of an exhibition by insisting on the primacy of subject matter as a criteria and context for looking at the artwork.

Sabra Moore Josely Carvalho

Pages from 150 ARTISTS BOOK. Top to bottom, clockwise: Sumiko Arimori, Mimi Smith, Susan Crowe, Marina Gutierrez, Liora Mondlak, Nancy Spero, Faith Wilding; covers by Sabra Moore and Josely Carvalho, artists-organizers of CONNECTIONS PROJECT/CONEXUS, a collaborative art project between 16 pairs of women artists from Brazil and the United States, and a collaborative bookwork of 150 women artists from the two countries.

THE WOMEN'S CIRCUS TRIP TO NICARAGUA

SUSAN SEIZER

Thousands of North Americans have travelled to Nicaragua in the past seven years to offer their skills and labor to harvest and rebuild Nicaragua in opposition to United States foreign policy. The Women's Circus performing tour of Nicaragua was one such brigade. Our skills included juggling, stilt-walking, unicycle riding, dancing, devil-sticks, clowning, mime and rope-walking. For musical accompaniment we had an accordian, flute, trombone, saxophone, clarinet and congo drum.

We were inspired by the dream of a non-sexist, non-commercial circus in which women would be more than pretty assistants to mostly male-designed feats of strength. We aspired to be the collective creators of work that would use our varied skills to express ideas we believed in. This is how we envisioned the first women's circus-theatre ensemble.

Motivated by a desire to express solidarity with the Nicaraguan people, we planned a three-month trip: two months of rehearsal in Mexico and a three-week tour of Nicaragua. The seven performers and musicians who made up The Women's Circus met in Mexico on January 8, 1987. We chose to meet in Mexico for several reasons. First, it was relatively neutral ground for work, being none of our homes; second, the warm weather allowed us to rehearse outside in winter and avoid the high cost of U.S. studio rentals; third, we knew of a beautiful Mexican town complete with resident international theatre and women's communities; and finally, it provided us with a way to begin to familiarize ourselves with Latin American culture and the Spanish language on a daily basis. Our cultural disorientation, and the fact that we were gringas in a Third World country, were realities that we became more and more aware of.

The performers were Debbie Davis, Sara Felder, and Christina Lewis from San Francisco, and Jennifer Miller and Susan Seizer from New York City. The musicians were Leslie Lind from San Francisco and Camilla Saunders from London, England. (Delfin, whom we met in Tepoztlan, Mexico, joined us on tour as our videographer. A tape of her video documentation of the trip is forthcoming.) Of the performers, two had previously worked as professionals in U.S. circuses. The other three performers held their primary skills in dance, theater and mime. Two had been to Nicaragua previously, in 1983 and 1984. Within the group, there were prior working relationships, but for each of us in the group, there were at least two other members whom we had never met before. We agreed to make all decisions collectively with no director.

Creating the show together was difficult for some interesting reasons. First, we were restricted in our ability to include verbal material by the fact that none of us was truly fluent in Spanish. We weren't

conversant enough to emcee our show or to interject comments or dialogue within pieces. The more theatrical pieces had to be non-verbal, which severely narrowed our aesthetic options. Secondly, cross-cultural performing of material that is meant to be humorous can be tricky. (Does a physical comedy bit about a vacuum cleaner communicate the same thing in Nicaragua as in California?) Thirdly, we didn't know who our audience would be. Our itinerary was being planned by a sponsoring organization in Nicaragua, and we hadn't been able to contact them during our time in Mexico (phones, like vacuum cleaners, were not to be taken for granted.) We hoped we'd be performing for kids, families, women's groups, and political and cultural groups. We wanted our show to offer something to each of these audiences and to provide new images of women to Nicaraguan women and girls. We also didn't know where we'd be performing—outdoors, indoors, in cities or rural areas—nor did we know what kind of ground or floor we would be performing on. And finally, we were working under time pressure. A true collective ensemble takes many years to develop; and we were starting from scratch in creating a group aesthetic, with only two months to do it.

Ultimately, the show never took on one solid form, but, rather, was a loose collection of pieces some or all of which we performed on any given day according to circumstances. Its shape, however, remained approximately the same. We began with a parade entrance of stilts and music, hoola-hoops, ribbon twirling, crystal balls, etc. Then began a series of smaller-group pieces, all accompanied by live and mostly original music. A sweet clown mimes loves-me-loves-me not. Three playful kids do a club-juggling act. There's a street kid whose radio turns into cigar boxes that hang magically in the air. Then our most fluent Spanish speaker presents a theatrical/political text, with juggling imagery in the background, which tells about unionizing in a cannery. There's a manic clown who rushes in on a unicycle only to be attacked by her own hand, and a sleepy clown who does a slack-rope act with a ballerina. Our dancer presents a classical Bharatanatyam prayer dance from India, and then a two-headed juggler and her dog appear. The order of these pieces often changed, and there was frequently a dixie-

land tune or two somewhere in between. We ended with a fiery finale of torch juggling, torch swinging and burning devil-sticks set to the music of drums and wood flute. Our encore was a short, original three-part harmony verse sung in Spanish articulating our political position.* Whenever possible, we asked the audience to share a song with us after the show, and several ballads were sung in this way.

We presented preliminary versions of this show in Tepoztlan and Mexico City, both indoors and outdoors, before we took it on the tour. These performances were well received by children and the theatre community alike. At the Zocalo Plaza in Mexico City we encountered a phenomenon which later became familiar. When we performed outdoors, people were as fascinated by our presence there as they were by our show, and they gathered to watch us set up, stayed for as long as it took and remained for the entire show. This is very different from street performing in New York City where it's hard to keep an audience for more than ten to fifteen minutes no matter what you're doing. Here, *we* were the event.

The day after our Zocalo Plaza show, The Women's Circus flew to Nicaragua. We were met by our sponsoring organization, the Asociacion Sandinista de Trabajadores Culturales, or ASTC (Sandinista Cultural Workers Association). The ASTC sponsors many cultural groups and maintains a small hotel to house them during their visits—the "Hotelito" in Managua. These were much more luxurious conditions than we'd expected. In a big dorm-style room we had air conditioning and a private bathroom. There was a swimming pool in the yard. We were served three meals a day of beans and rice, with additional protein for lunch and occasionally for breakfast in the form of meat or eggs. I had imagined being housed by families, or Nicaraguan cultural workers. Instead, we were in a place occupied exclusively by foreigners. It was then that I began to realize the enormity of the burden the presence of *internationalistas* places on this small country. (The total population of

Nicaragua is equal to that of San Diego.) There are not enough beans and rice to feed the Nicaraguans these days and we were being fed regularly, yet we were there because we agree that the U.S. should get out—that Nicaraguan resources should be used for Nicaraguan lives. The irony was an uncomfortable one.

We stayed at the Hotelito for two to three days getting acclimated (which means we gradually came to accept the 110° temperatures) before we went out to perform at army bases for the next two weeks. This itinerary came as a surprise to us. We had said to the ASTC in our original communications that we would perform wherever we were needed, though we made a point of mentioning the kinds of groups we saw as particularly appropriate for our show: "hospitals, UPE's (collectives), schools and childcare facilities, women's militia training centers." We had expected the fact that we were an all-women's group to be understood as a feminist statement and taken into consideration when scheduling our tour. I don't think any of us were psychologically prepared for two weeks of that most traditional of male-separatist institutions: the military. Our sponsors never saw our show before they sent us out, though they said they wanted to. The shortage of gasoline and the constantly changing nature of all scheduling due to surprise Contra attacks seemed likely causes. Yet none of this was really discussed with us. We were told, for example, that we'd be picked up at 10:00 a.m. to do a show; then no one would come by or call for us all day. We spent several such interminable days of waiting in Managua, during which time we could have been organizing things on our own had we known we would not be performing through ASTC channels.

We finally set out for the army bases on March 10. We performed an average of one show a day to groups of soldiers that ranged in number from 30 to 700. These were almost exclusively male audiences, over 75% of whom were teenagers. The standard occupations for women in the Sandinista army seem to be cook or cook's helper.

The group of 700 soldiers, one of our largest audiences of the entire tour, was also one of the most memorable. These soldiers had just returned from two years stationed in the mountains, were to be picked up by their families the next day,

and came to our show accompanied by all species of mountain animals they had tamed: spotted deer, a baby wild boar, and a full-sized macaw. The soldiers I spoke to that evening were all glad to be going home the next day. But they were prepared to come back and fight whenever they were next needed. They reiterated the 1987 Sandinista slogan I'd seen stenciled on so many walls all over Nicaragua: "Aqui no se rinde nadie," (loosely translated, "We don't give up.") There were other interactions with soldiers, however, that were less pleasant—the typical cat calls, and the general feeling that we were being looked upon as another species. I frequently felt like a Bob Hope USO showgirl, the trucked-in entertainment for the troops. And yet we were doing exactly what we'd wanted to do—perform a show of our own creation for the Nicaraguan people. The conflict stemmed mostly from how isolated we felt in the all-male environment of the military bases and camps. Moreover, we felt frustration and sorrow finding that seven years after the revolutionary triumph so much energy was having to be spent training Nicaraguan youth to be fighters for a military defense, the work of creating a post-revolutionary society seemingly put on indefinite hold. In terms more specific to our show, we found that certain numbers we'd prepared for a general audience were rendered inappropriate by this military reality. Some pieces were simply too "feminine" to perform in an environment that wasn't feminist. Some of our work explored a sensual quality of movement that, unfortunately, proved too difficult to present.

During our two weeks of army touring, we did perform four shows for civilian audiences—though after a while the distinction began to seem like a strange one, since many of the soldiers were so clearly boys just off the farm, while many of the civilians had been all too intimately involved with war. What made the greatest difference was performing once again for people of all ages and both genders in public spaces. The shows took place in a town dance hall on a Saturday night, a town meeting hall on a Sunday morning, outdoors on a town commons mid-week, and in a park on a Sunday evening. These audiences contained children who had never seen any form of theatrical entertainment, live or on film. They were challenging and appreciative audiences who

* *Nicaragua, Nicaragua querida*
Su lucha inspira nuestra lucha
Adelante, hermanas, hermanos
No permitimos la intervencion
¡Viva! ¡Viva Nicaragua Libre!
¡Viva! ¡Viva Nicaragua Libre!

responded quite differently than U.S. audiences, with a quality of rapt attention and no pre-defined code of interaction/non-interaction with us as performers. The park show was a completely wild affair, with jugglers popping up here, a unicyclist there, musicians and stilt-walkers parading in yet another area and kids surrounding us at every turn. This was really the only show of the whole tour where we just let our structures completely burst open and just used our circus skills in spontaneous interactions.

On our tour, we were free to talk with anyone we met. We were limited only by our own command of the language. These conversations were the source of most of our information on the trip, as we did not have, as many foreign brigades do, pre-arranged meetings or informative talks or tours with officials or workers planned into our agenda.

In this way, our situation sharply contrasted with the experiences of American educational brigades we met. These were mainly professionals—doctors, professors, nurses, journalists, a smattering of students and the retired wealthy—who paid an American organization in the States for their trips in advance, and traveled with guides. They had tightly scheduled visits to hospitals, schools, cultural facilities, and government officials every day, and frequently heard speeches while being served iced drinks. They were treated like people for whom it was important to provide many views of Nicaraguan life. Their questions were addressed from many different angles.

Our trip was very different in nature, as we were a performing brigade whose express purpose was to give people an entertaining break from their daily worries, not to ask them to entertain us. However, while we were there we felt that it would have been to everyone's advantage to have had some educational outreach planned for us, or at least some scheduled contact with other cultural workers. Our disappointment was that we were treated solely as entertainers rather than cultural workers in a broader sense. Certainly, as politically conscious artists, our voices back in the States would reach as many if not more people than those of the American professionals on the educational tours. Was it a question of money again? The international pressure on Nicaragua to favorably impress the wealthy of Amer-

ica is indeed tremendous. However, it is the more marginal leftists who have been their most stalwart supporters, and it seems to me important not to alienate this group.

Another small theatre brigade staying at the Hotelito at the same time as we shared these feelings and experiences. We went somewhere and waited. We asked questions and didn't get answers. We wandered the streets looking for places to buy food. We exchanged money on the black market. We spoke without translators. And the information we gleaned came in a rhythm that was entirely unfamiliar to us. On the other hand, the tour brigades organized their itineraries themselves, from the States, and ended up getting just what they'd started out thinking they would get. Though it might have seemed and felt otherwise at the time, I suspect that in the final analysis the picture they got was less complete. For as far as I could tell, their trip gave them nothing of the feeling of what it's like to live in a different culture.

During our third and final week, also filled with much waiting, we performed in Managua at three public schools, kindergarten through junior high levels. These were large, co-ed audiences where the sheer numbers of children made workshops we'd originally intended virtually impossible. We did, however, manage to give ten or so children a chance to walk on stilts. And after much group conflict over how to give material aid, we left a supply of over fifty balls with the school at which we presented our final performance, a school for orphans of the war and psychologically disturbed children. We wished throughout that we'd had an unlimited supply of such material aid to distribute after every performance; the fact that we didn't brought up some more political issues. A few of us, myself included, felt it was better to give something to some than nothing at all. Others felt that unless we could give equally to all, we'd be recreating a capitalist scenario of haves and have-nots. Again, I think the issue centered around a cultural assumption, in this case, that the children we gave balls to would not share, that they would see them as their own, and hoard them. That's a particular common way that North American children behave. But unless we have confidence in the children's abilities to work out ball-sharing amongst themselves, in an environment largely free of consumerist propaganda, we might as well

give up on the more anarchistic openings in our theory. Those who were opposed to giving a little to several groups wanted instead to give all the material aid at one time to a central organ for distribution (a notion that never convinced me that any of the kids we'd met and juggled for would ever see one of our balls again in their town). Evidently, when the two of our group had last been in Nicaragua some years before, they had felt there was a strong party line related to this question. It is my pleasure to report that in 1987 no such strict "party line" exists, and that when asked, our ASTC chaperone said he thought it would be nice for the kids to get any amount of balls from us, directly, and that that way they might connect the gift more clearly to our visit.

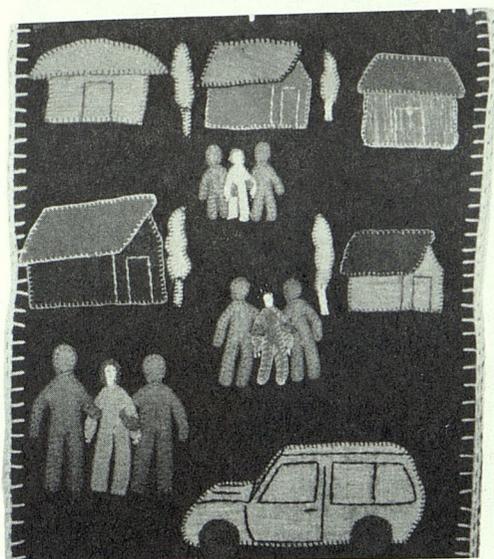
All during our stay the bulk of our gear was housed in buildings on the site of the Nicaraguan National Circus, which provided us with sporadic opportunities to view the extremely talented members of this circus in rehearsal. A circus union was created after the triumph in 1979 that incorporated the best of the small family circuses into one National Circus. There were three Soviet professors taking charge of acrobatic, gymnastic and clown training, and we were duly impressed with what we saw. We presented the more circus-specific components of the material aid we'd brought to the Nicaraguan circus: devil sticks, juggling clubs, lacross balls, a rope, and an acrobatic mat.

We ended our tour on March 28. The vision of a Women's Circus that had inspired our disparate group and bonded us together for three months had seen its first realization. The question of future incarnations is a debatable one. However, the work of solidarity brigades to Nicaragua is continuing, and our active support of the Nicaraguan people's right to be self-governing—and self-determining—continues to be a matter of urgent importance.

SUSAN SEIZER is currently a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Chicago. She formerly lived in NYC, performing and choreographing circus theater.

ARPILLERAS OF CHILE

USING ART AS A TEACHING TOOL



MARJORIE AGOSIN

The arpillera is a unique phenomenon in Latin American popular culture. Exclusive to Chile, it arose because of the conditions imposed by the Pinochet government. The arpillera is a small tapestry with a burlap backing. To this burlap cloth, the women applique small, simple figures of varied colors. The significant aspect of the arpilleras is their content. The women who make the arpilleras are victims of repression, work shortages and misery. Somehow they manage to recreate their daily lives in these tapestries.

The subjects of the arpilleras are many and range from the arrest and disappearance of loved ones to the lack of electricity in the villages. Through the anonymous hand that creates it, each arpillera reflects the feelings and daily lives of these women who, for the most part, are the wives of men who have disappeared or are political prisoners.

The arpilleras (women who make arpilleras) began as a very small group of approximately thirteen or fourteen women who met sporadically to share their pains and joys. With the help of the Vicaria de la

Solidaridad, they began to work out their pain through cloth as a type of catharsis and exorcism.

Close to 300 members strong, these valiant women have formed approximately forty workshops in and around urban Santiago.

Having been an educator for many years, I have found that these anonymous tapestries made by anonymous hands have an incredible power to evoke all of the feelings of a divided family and a divided country, and to express what it is like to live under a totalitarian government.

Once I develop the social theme of the arpilleras with my students, be they college age or grade-schoolers, I move on to discuss it in a political context. This is the part of my presentations that carries the greatest impact, allowing one to introduce the political history of Chile and of the other Latin American countries that live under repressive governments.

Interpreting the arpilleras in order to point out the theme of the disappeared is very simple. In general, it is reflected by a figure being taken prisoner with a question mark above his/her head. It is also common to find a dining room full of family members with an empty seat, the seat of the disappeared one.

My experiences in the classroom with the subject of the disappeared, political prisoners and the role of the families of these individuals have resulted in courageous conversations and discussions among students. Through the themes expressed in the arpilleras, we can approach various ideological themes such as the freedom of each human being and his or her right to justice.

To obtain an arpillera, send a check for \$26.00 to:

Vicaria de la Solidaridad
Plaza de Armas 444, 2 Piso
Santiago de Chile

The author can also provide slides to show in classrooms.

Proceeds from Marjorie Agosin's book, Scrap of Life, are given directly to the arpilleras. Scrap of Life can be obtained from:

*Red Sea Press, Inc.
556 Bellevue Avenue
Trenton, N.J. 08618*

MARJORIE AGOSIN is a Chilean poet and literary critic who just published a book on the arpilleras, *Scrap of Life*, published by the Red Sea Press.

I R I S H W O M E N

A DAILY STRUGGLE



PHOTOS BY PAULA ALLEN

H E R E S I E S 34 T W E N T Y T W O

MARY JANE SULLIVAN

I began to take stock of what was happening in the area at large. And particularly the women who'd struggled so hard and were true to the men and true to their cause. They were treated badly. They were battered wives.

These are the words of Josephine, one of the women we met and had the opportunity to film in Northern Ireland. We, who attempt to construct our own realities beyond the limits of the nuclear family, witness this scenario of silent frustration with a silence of our own. How can the language that we use, the art that we make, speak of this silence: the quiet oppression of being politically and socially negated. We are called upon to question our use of the media as a voice which claims to speak for others. Our visual/literary language must embody the lives of ordinary women, allowing their stories to speak for themselves, becoming a reference point for those women to hear themselves speaking.

For the last three years, Laura Flanners and I have been travelling back and forth between Belfast, Northern Ireland, and New York City with super 8mm cameras and simple audio equipment. Our work has been compiled into an hour-long tape entitled *What's the Difference Between a Country and a House?* Initially, we went to understand the conflict there—what caused the division between those who desire self-sovereignty and independence from Britain and those who need to keep Ireland loyal to the crown? Further, we wanted to know what it was like to live in Northern Ireland and what the day-to-day lives of the women were about.

This conflict has been dismissed as an ancient battle. International headlines play up bombings and deaths in Ulster. It might be Protestant, Catholic or unspecified: superficial reportage sets the course for superficial understanding. Amidst all the bombings and killings that are shown, somehow we know that life goes on in this “terrorist state.” Communities are irrec-

oncilably divided along religious lines. But what is the meaning of this conflict?

The fact is that a fundamentalist religious sectarianism implies a social structure of inequality supported by moral edict. This holds true in Belfast as it does in the right-wing pulpits of American religious/political leaders. Thus the religious dimension sanctifies life as it is, implying a spiritual necessity to social, economic, political, and sexual injustice, implying also that this conflict must be indefinitely sustained.

What becomes of the people caught in this manipulated conflict, in this instance, the women of Northern Ireland? We thought some answers might be found in the streets and in the homes; we thought the stories of these women might reveal some threat that merited the conspiracy of silence imposed by the media on their so-called common, everyday lives. We share their struggle for liberation only at a distance. How do we make a language through film to record their spontaneous moments, their conversations? Our filming became an instrument for the women to speak through, as they struggled with their own silence, with the silence imposed from outside.

During the first days in Belfast, we walked down from South Belfast through the reinforced army-patrolled iron gates of the city center. This is where everyone shops. We walked on to West Belfast, always looking through the focused eye of the camera. We took in the streets and observed the people—watching their faces and how, in their rapid stride, they dismiss the presence of the security forces, army and police. No one bothers to ask if you are Protestant or Catholic in this area.

We met and spoke with women and children in working-class neighborhoods and ones with severe unemployment. Most of the days inside the community centers and on the playgrounds were spent listening and asking questions. How did they deal with the fear caused by the military presence in their lives? How can one be Irish and British at the same time? Is there a relationship between the political situation and domestic violence? How did they make it through the day? What issues were of concern to them—how were they affected by the cutbacks, the lack of community and child-care facilities?

They learned to trust us as women sharing our own experiences of living in

Reagan's America. Though we certainly have differences, there are similarities in our struggles, as in our desires and dreams. Here is our major point of connection, discovered through countless discussions: state militarism, with all its hostility and factional violence, is as intact in Belfast as it is in the urban core cities of the States. We are women looking beneath the public and ideological surface, looking for stories of women who experience violence in their daily lives, whether in Belfast or in our own country. These women expressed a sense of immediacy and passion in their efforts to enact social change, as they take a stake in the very survival of their community, redefine their own participation, and move to create lives for themselves and their children.

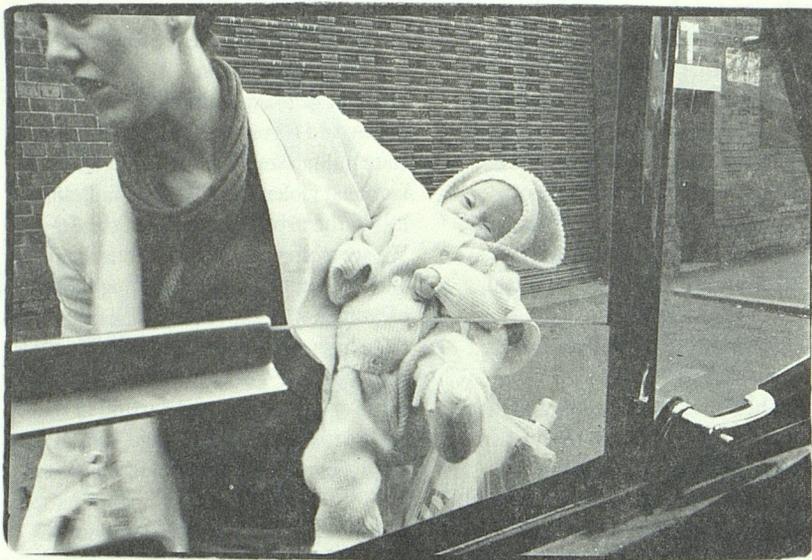
Both Republican Catholic women and Loyalist Protestant women have seen their husbands imprisoned, in some cases as members of either the Irish Republican Army or the loyalist Ulster Defence Force, both state-outlawed paramilitary forces. Based on these alliances, their views of the struggle were radically different.

For the most part, the Protestant women accepted the status quo. They preferred to let the state take care of the troubles, although, of course, they wanted their men out of prison. They saw Catholics as irresponsible and useless, sponging off the state.

Catholic women, those associated with Sein Fein in particular, felt more of a need to take a political role and educate themselves. Alienated by government cutbacks and the constant surveillance of their lives by the army, they were taking hold of housing issues, jobs, health care and providing their children with alternatives to the violence in the streets. After all, this was a generation of children growing up knowing only violence. To present them with a different reality was to help free the country.

Josephine tells of her struggles to make life better for herself and her children:

They did offer courses at the family center—they were very basic. They taught you how to be a better wife, how to cook better, sew better, etc. But I wanted more than that. The family center in this area is run by the Catholic church and serviced by the Catholic church. And they didn't ex-



acily want working-class women stepping outside their traditional roles of wife, mother, whatever, to improve anything or take anything for themselves. And so I found that I came up against a lot of red tape in the family center itself. They more or less tried to force us back into the leisure-time classes.



Soon after, we met women not aligned with any political parties who were active in the progressive radical feminist and lesbian community in Northern Ireland. Some were editors of the feminist monthly *Womeneews*. Others were active in women's aid and local housing issues or small women's groups within their communities. They came together with other women (Protestant and Catholic) in the women's information group, a country-wide attempt to bring women from both sides of the struggle together once a month to discuss issues of significance to them that were not being addressed by the government. Our ideas about how to bring these stories together were beginning to take shape. The possibilities are restricted when women feel they can't speak for themselves, or fear censorship or intentional misquotation. Women in Belfast are weary of seeing a misrepresentation of their lives as governed by terrorism. In order for them to open up to us, they first had to trust us. They had to be assured that we appreciated their sensibilities and that, as writers and filmmakers, we would responsibly use the media that so often distorts their reality. The testimonials and visual images we recorded became a way for them to express themselves to women on the other side of the Atlantic, to show that Belfast is not just a war zone.



Inequality and some of the worst living conditions in western Europe, coupled with British domination and racism, have brought the violence into the home. Domestic violence exists there as it does all over the world, but we found women in Belfast taking hold of it in a way that becomes particularly important in the struggle for Irish liberation. To leave the home for a temporary shelter provided by women's aid has given many working-class women a way to see themselves for the first time as individual women, independent and thinking for themselves. Women were living together who, because of their religious beliefs, had never met or talked with

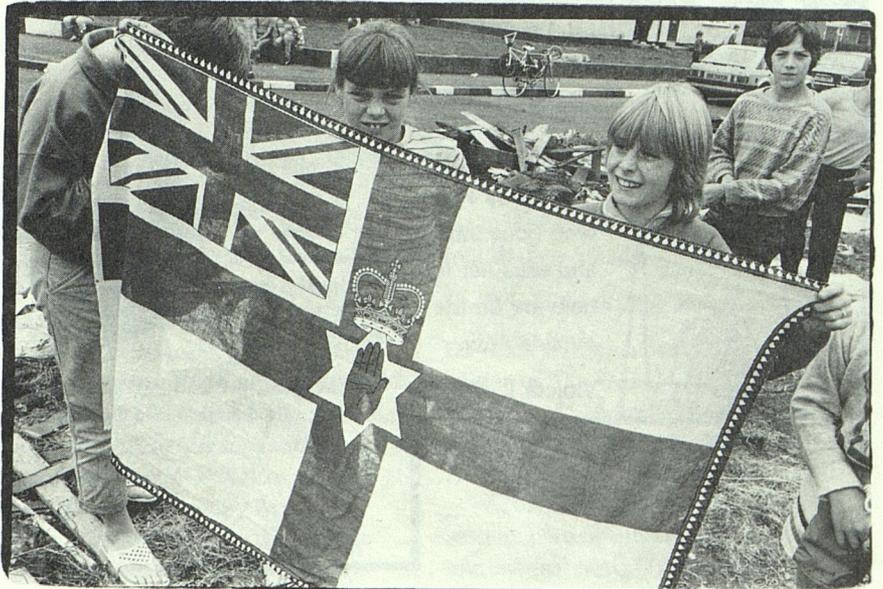
each other. Previous ideologies fall by the wayside or are interpreted with a clearer sense that the political situation has manufactured a divisiveness.

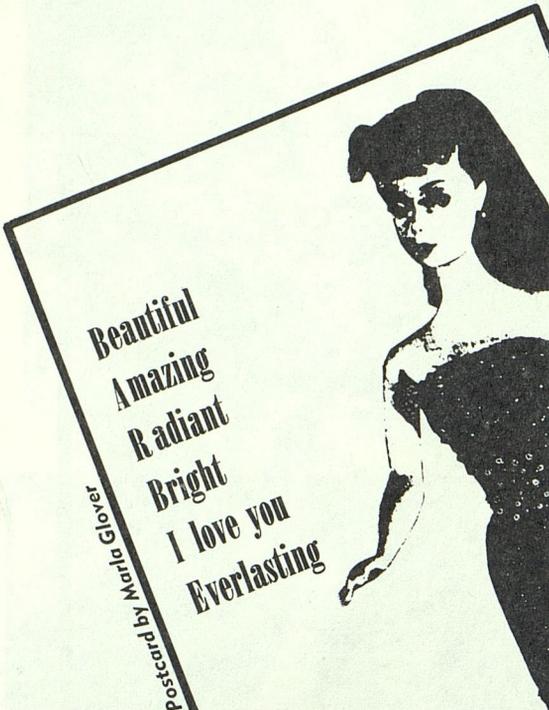
Contemporary Irish women's history needs to be acknowledged. The women themselves recognize the language they speak. It is a language in process, a way of learning how to communicate with each other that is affirming; a language which radically denies the fragmentation caused by a verbal militarism whereby the images around them are fixed. This recognition is important for us as filmmakers because it affects how we use the camera. The tool itself becomes a mechanism for further dialogue and image breaking. After much talking and discussing these women were ready to tell their stories on camera and to trust that a true dialogue through the camera is taking place between us. The judgment belongs to those who view the piece and to the women themselves.

If there is one thing that we have to acknowledge after working on this piece, it is that these women are creating a political history. The struggle in Northern Ireland is no longer just a battleground for elected officials who somewhere along the way forgot the game plan and the needs of the people; these women are leaving their homes and the jails with a different sense about social change. The Irish battleground is not an isolated situation. As a friend of mine said to me in a letter: "If a woman must learn to walk away from violence in her own home, then she must learn to walk away from violence in her country." It is up to us to decide how we, as women, will respond to our own issues during a time of war.

For further information about *What's the Difference*, contact Now Productions, 48 Duffield St., Brooklyn, NY 11201, (718) 625-3756.

MARY JANE SULLIVAN is a filmmaker and published poet. She is co-producer of a documentary film in progress on the nuclear naval port in New York Harbor.



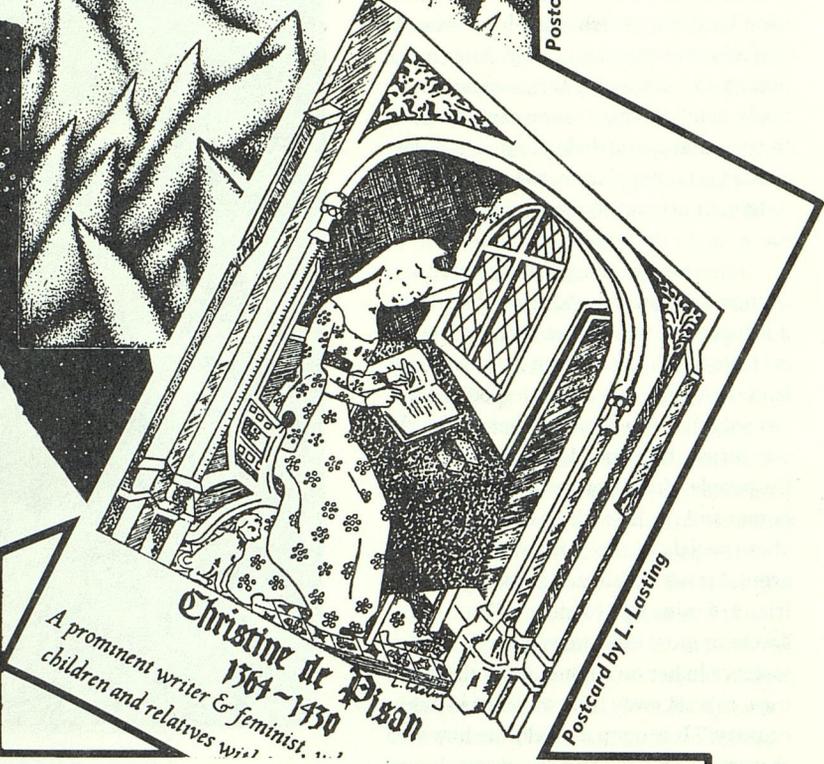


Beautiful
Amazing
Radiant
Bright
I love you
Everlasting

Postcard by Maria Glover

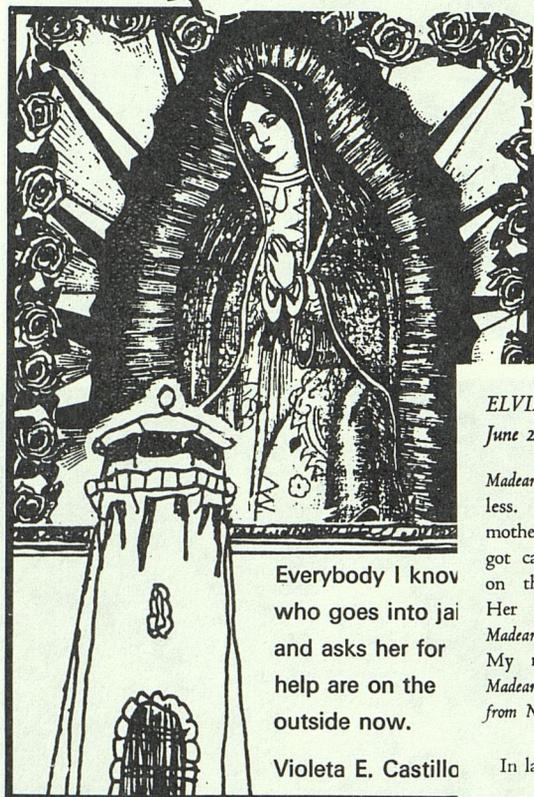


Postcard by Y. Yudell



Christine de Pison
1364-1430
A prominent writer & feminist...
children and relatives with...

Postcard by L. Lasting



Everybody I know
who goes into jai
and asks her for
help are on the
outside now.

Violeta E. Castillo

Postcard by Violeta E. Castillo

ELVIRA JOHNSON PENNINGTON
June 20, 1911 - April 29, 1983

Madear was fear-
less. Defied her
mother once and
got caught dancin
on the Sabbath.
Her sisters ran;
Madear stood firm.
My mother says:
Madear didn't run
from Nobody!



PAIRLEE PILOT HAGGERTY
June 25, 1894 - September 30, 1959

Mamo went bare-
foot in Texas in
Summertime. Got
snakebit twice that
daddy knew of;
killed both snakes
all by herself.
My daddy says:
Mamo wasn't scared
of Notbin!



In later years, sickness-filled, each woman expressed the same contempt for bland meals and prescription pills: *If I can't do like I want, it ain't worth livin'!*

MY GRANDMOTHERS

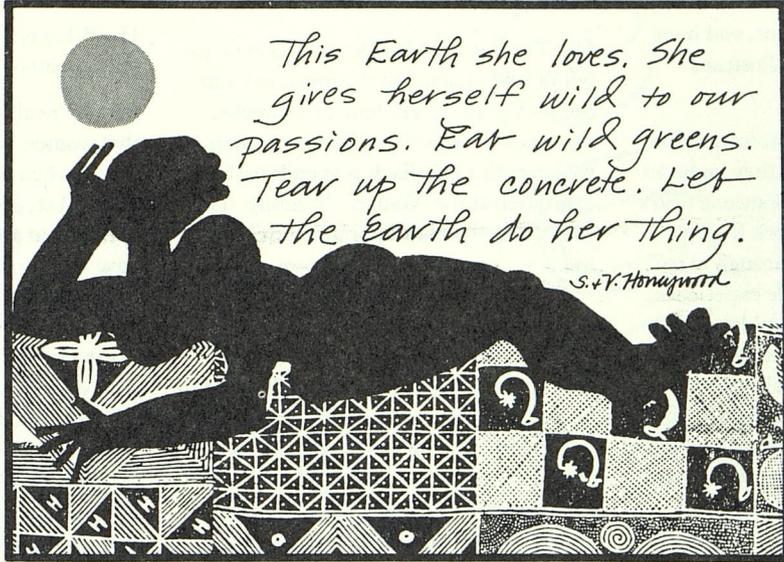
Family by marriage ...
Blood-kin through Black Woman Spirit.

Family Tales:1
Tecaral Haggerty

Postcard by Tecaral Haggerty

THE POSTCARD PROJECT

AN
INTERVIEW
WITH
PERFORMANCE
ARTIST



CHERI
GAULKE

Postcard by S. & V. Honeywood

LINDA LIEFF

Linda Lieff—How did you choose the theme “heroines”?

Cheri Gaulke—Politically, it’s really important for us to make heroines visible. Our culture has double standards about heroines and heroes.

Heroes can be bad boys (so-and-so discovered something great, but he beat his wife). Whereas for women, it’s a lot harder. Joan Crawford was a great actress but a terrible mother. Our standards are so high for women that no one ever measures up.

That’s one of the things I like to dispel from the start: I’m not looking for women whom we can put on pedestals. I’m not looking for the Virgin Mary. Heroines are human. There are things we hate and love about them. But we need to honor those women who have made a difference in our lives.

LL—Why did you choose the postcard format?

CG—A lot of people have a love affair with

postcards. People buy them, collect them. The idea of creating your own postcard is really exciting to a lot of people.

And it’s a multiple artwork—not a one-of-a-kind artwork. More than one person can see it, can own it. It’s an art form that can be shared. It can be disseminated. You can mail it, you can give it away, sell it.

Postcards are also an intimate form of communication. They are small-scale. It’s a lot less intimidating to make a postcard than to take on the job of making a poster. I wanted the project to appeal to non-artists as well, to serve the whole community.

LL—How did you choose the letterpress process?

CG—The idea came out of an assessment of what parts of the Women’s Graphics Center were not being used. [Along with traditional letterpress printing, the Graphics Center at the Woman’s Building does commercial typesetting for a variety of clients, including MOCA, Los Angeles’ Museum of Contemporary Art.]

The question was, how could we design a project that would fit within my skills and teach people something they

could do here and continue to do here.

We realized that the letterpress is always underused. I learned letterpress at the Woman’s Building. I’ve always loved letterpress printing. It’s the original form of printing and is not taught in that many places. I love working with high-tech processes such as video on the one hand and doing letterpress, invented in the Middle Ages, on the other.

LL—How has the project been received?

CG—Very well. About 150 people made cards the first year. In the second year I’ve hardly done any publicity and it’s going practically by word of mouth. The people the first year had such a good time, they told all their friends.

LL—What is being done with the cards?

CG—Last year, each participant printed an edition of 100. We kept 25; the participants kept 75. A few of the 25 we kept went into the Woman’s Building archives. About 10 of each card were sold.

At the exhibitions at the end of each session, participants also traded postcards like baseball cards. They loved it.

The second year, we upped the edition

to 125. The Woman's Building now keeps 50. We want to be able to do more things with them. I'm going to be designing some portable exhibitions. There have been lots of requests from community centers and women's studies programs in schools that would like to display the cards.

LL—How did you get the grant, and how much does it cost to run the Postcard Project?

CG—Part of the reason the California Arts Council funds this project is they know art can empower people. When someone who's not an artist creates an artwork from a beginning idea all the way through to its end, that's such an incredible experience.

It's a printed work. It's public. It's published. I've seen people empowered by the process. And there's also the fact that they've paid tribute to someone who might just be an ordinary person—it might be their mother, someone that the culture is never going to celebrate.

The California Arts Council Artists-In-Residence program is an artist-generated program. Each artist applies, with a sponsor lined up.

The Council pays three-fourths of my \$1,200-month salary, with the Woman's Building paying the remainder and supplying the facilities and supplies. Some of the supplies are donated.

The Artist-in-Residence program has also sponsored artists in communities, schools, and social institutions. One artist is producing art books with women in prison. Another is creating art books with children in the Long Beach Public Library. A performance artist is doing street theater along Skid Row with the homeless.

LL—How do you see the Postcard Project relating to your own work as a performance and video artist?

CG—The grant came after I finished a big performance at MOCA. I was completely burned out on every level. I took a year off from my performance work. During that year, I threw all my art energy into this project.

I'd been really productive for twelve years and had never taken a year off and it was really scary. I thought, the world's going to forget who I am and I'll never perform again. But this project validated me on another level. It helped me build up my confidence.

A lot of people say artists should get their grants only to do their own work. But, as an artist with political and social values, I think it's really important that artists interact with people who are not in the mainstream art community.

LL—Can you sketch how the project has worked?

CG—The Postcard Project started in October of 1985. Each year it runs from October to August. Every four to six weeks, three new groups start. The last session will start this fall. Each year ends with an exhibition at the Woman's Building. This year we're planning a portable exhibition, too.

The first step in the class is to have writing exercises and produce a list of women. Sometimes the sessions produce a feeling of bitterness about our schooling for not teaching us about women in history.

The illustration part is sometimes intimidating to non-artists. But I teach the participants to employ a variety of techniques, including simple things such as using a Xerox machine or tracing things.

Everybody chooses paper stock, ink colors. Then the type is hand-set, letter by letter.

And we print.

LL—Who were the heroines selected by participants?

CG—The choices ranged from women in someone's family to women in history to allegorical, mythological women. Some just dealt with the concept of the heroine.

LL—What is the mix of people taking the class?

CG—It's been a goal of the Woman's Building for many years now that the participants be diverse. This project has been one of the most diversely attended. The theme appeals to a cross-section of people. There have been artists, non-artists.

We've had mostly women, but even a few men. We've had all ages: the youngest was a twelve-year-old girl; the oldest a woman in her seventies.

LL—Do you want participants to take what they learned there to the outside?

CG—There are limits to that because you do need a press. It's not like learning painting skills, which you can do on your own. But we've had women come in and rent out time on the press. One woman

did announcements for a baby shower. Another woman, a dock worker, printed bumper stickers for her union when they went out on strike.

The Woman's Building also offers classes in fundamentals. Participants can go further. I would like to see people go the next step with it. Get experimental.

LL—What effect has the project had on participants?

CG—We're all sort of numbed to the role that women have played in history. Sometimes, when you first start this, start making the list, everybody thinks of a bunch of men that are famous and wonderful and have done great things. So you conclude that women haven't played a role.

But when you're suddenly sensitized to the fact that women have played a role, then you start seeing it everywhere.

When we make the list during a session—and I suggest women in science, women in sports, whatever—you might not be able to think of something right away. But that week, if you read in the paper about a woman doing work in science, you're going to notice that in a way you wouldn't have before.

I've been thinking about changing the theme next year, but I haven't come up with another theme I feel would be as strong. There is no end to the women who can be celebrated. People are always bringing in new ideas.

LINDA LIEFF is a New York City artist who participated in "The Postcard Project."

CHERI GAULKE is an artist working in performance, video and graphics. She has performed and exhibited her work in Los Angeles, New York and Europe.

ARLENE GOLDBARD AND
DON ADAMS

Introductory note: Community arts in the United States have always had identity problems. In this country the rubric “community arts” has often been used to describe the work of local arts agencies—the Anytown Arts Council or the Some City Arts Commission—which can include things as far-ranging as publishing a community calendar of events, maintaining a gallery or theater, offering classes, giving grants, and providing equipment and advice for local arts events. In the Reagan era, this usage has been dying out. Local arts agencies have been persuaded that the word “community” smacks too much of funkiness, amateurism, even social relevance. They’ve taken to calling themselves “local arts agencies” (or “LAAs”), as we do in this essay.

The label “community arts” has another usage, however. It refers to the work of artists who align themselves with a defined community, who see their work as the product of collaboration with non-artists, and whose aim is as much to involve people in building and asserting their own cultural identity as to create a particular work of art. In contrast, more conventional artists may see their roles in terms of creating works—pictures, objects, environments, plays, songs, dances—and other people’s roles as consuming or experiencing these works. Certain forms are associated with community arts work because they are public and, for the most part, collaborative. These include murals, posters, street art, street theater, oral history, demonstrations, participatory theater, community festivals. But there is no form of arts work that is intrinsically community art. What defines community art is the approach.

It is in this second sense that the British refer to community arts, as do people in most other English-speaking countries. It is also in this sense that we use the phrase “community arts” in the following essay.

Community arts practice in the United States is in a disastrously weakened condition. Even in good times, community arts work has been difficult and unremunerative. Its deep and rewarding compensations are paid in the currency of spiritual, political and personal satisfaction. Recently, an unfortunate confluence of events has made an always problematic situation desperate. To understand why, we have to begin with the contradiction at the heart of community arts practice.

Who Pays?

Community arts work is like a cart being pulled by two horses with different routes in mind. It is simultaneously *oppositional*

and *prefigurative*, encouraging people to be critical of the dominant culture and at the same time to envision and begin to build the cultural life they want, in essence behaving as if it had already come into being.

For instance, consider the example of a community arts group working with a tenants' association in a public housing project. The tenants' association complains of apathy. Its leaders want to get more people involved. They want the housing project to have a collective cultural life that's pleasurable and interesting for residents of all ages. Part of the community artists' work on this

project will be helping tenants articulate their grievances, perhaps collecting stories about life in the housing project and using them to create a play in which members of the tenants' association act, build sets, and collaborate on the production. Perhaps the play will be performed as part of a holiday celebration or at an organizing meeting.

But if the play comprises only a collection of complaints, it will backfire, reinforcing people's feelings of demoralization. This could lend credence to the idea that the housing authority has all the power and that all tenants can do is gripe or suffer in silence.

LEE SAMPSON



The Young Artists' Painting Workshop painted this mural in 1985 at the corner of Bridge and York Streets in Brooklyn. The class is taught at the Dr. White Community Center and serves the children ages 7 through 14 from the Farragut and Fort Green Projects. The program is run by local residents Susan Leopold and Pamela Crimmins.

SUSAN LEOPOLD is a sculptor and set designer who lives in Brooklyn.

PAMELA CRIMMINS came to Brooklyn in 1985 from Morocco where she worked as a photographer.

The community arts group has to get beyond this, encouraging residents to envision the sort of community in which they'd like to take part and making sure that the play links people's complaints to their hopes for the future. For their work to have real meaning and lasting impact, community artists must help residents learn the skills of community cultural development for themselves: how to speak with one's own voice, to respect other's contributions, to work together democratically, to share power and stand up for one's belief—to recognize their power to bring about the changes they desire.

Community artists must also make a living while they're doing this. It should come as no surprise that finding support for such work is not easy. Whether community artists work with tenants' groups or groups of elders, youth clubs or political movements, most of the complaints they help people to articulate will focus on the powers-that-be: the housing authority, the Social Security Administration, the school administration, national foreign policy, or the abuses of multinational corporations. These targets of criticism also happen to be the people who have the most money—government agencies, businesses, and foundations endowed by private wealth. They are obviously reluctant to fund their own opposition, even in the best of economic times.

Better Days

Community arts' days of expansion in this country came at two periods when the public outcry for change outweighed the establishment's self-protective impulses. The first boom was during the '30s, when the federal cultural programs of the New Deal were created to soften the effects of the Great Depression. The second was during the '60s and '70s, when the federal government invested large sums of money in social programs designed to stave off "urban unrest" and alleviate unemployment.

During both periods, community arts programs were seen as good expenditures of public money: artists' unemployment was astronomical. Artists were grateful to have useful work for small salaries; they were resourceful and inventive and made a big splash without much in the way of equipment and supplies. The resulting programs involved a lot of people; they made visible differences in community life; and they generated lots of good-looking products like murals and plays.

Unfortunately, community artists were so glad to get the money that they didn't really notice that these funding programs kept them from thinking about the future. The money came in dribs and drabs with lots of paperwork attached. No one got enough to build for the future—just enough to keep a particular project going for a few months, even a year or two, and to keep people busy filling out applications and reports.

Both these periods were also times of great social ferment. All kinds of issues and causes flourished, and each one had a cultural dimension that gave community arts work meaning and purpose. During the '30s, labor and political organizations provided an infrastructure that supported cultural work, with publications, theaters, camps, and film projects. Money was hard to come by, but living was cheap in that depressed period.

Strong links with civil rights and peace movements characterized community arts work during the boom of the '60s and '70s. For instance, the women's movement understood that the cultural dimension of its work was as important as any other: it was necessary to redefine aesthetic standards, to purge language of its

sexism, to legitimate the public telling of formerly private stories; and community arts work had a vital part to play in these tastes. Civil rights movements in Black, Asian, Latino and Native American communities were also saturated with cultural action and cultural struggle. And the peace movement was wedded to a counterculture based on the same two fundamental ideas that fuel community arts today: opposition and prefiguration. The impoverishment of the dominant culture necessitated construction of humane alternatives, brick by brick. Again, people didn't have a lot of money, but inflation hadn't hit yet either. Groups could find modest resources through government-financed social service and employment programs; communal living cut their costs; and movement values helped keep them honest about how they spent the money.

Enter the '80s

Today's situation couldn't be more different. The Left is weak and in disarray. It has declined into single-issue organizing, usually leaving artists with very subsidiary decorative roles to play—performing at benefits, designing colorful publicity materials, creating props for demonstrations. There is no alternative infrastructure to support community arts work. The unions which contribute to cultural work can be counted on one hand. Not even five fingers are needed to add up the movement organizations that offer anything more than a chance to work for free on packaging a worthy cause.

But the worst blow has been the withdrawal of government money since Reagan took office, foreshadowed by "belt-tightening" measures such as California's Proposition 13, which cut funds for education, libraries and arts work along with money for housing, roads and other elements of physical infrastructure.

The problem is that community arts is naturally and ideally a public responsibility. By and large, it doesn't turn a buck. It doesn't offer business patrons the chance to associate their images with red plush and champagne. It is far less likely to touch the lives of the rich than to reach the people who feed, clothe and clean up after them. Its benefits are collective and communitarian. Even the benefits that an individual derives from community arts are reached through collective action.

The Right is fond of talking about the private sector and its responsibility to support "non-essential" enterprises like community arts work. In the abstract it might make sense to say there are other "market niches" for community arts besides government funding—why not earn the money by selling products and services? But in reality, our economy makes it very difficult to compete with nationally distributed commercial culture for earned income.

Untold dollars, often exceeding the cost of production, are spent on advertising designed to make the latest movie or song a household word and symbol of peer group belonging. The individual's cost in consuming these cultural products is tiny because it is multiplied millions of times by other consumers making the same expenditures. At most, community arts groups could try turning themselves into small-scale commercial ventures, but the price they pay is the diversion of their attention away from the process and toward the product, away from the collaborative relationship and toward the market relationship, away from the work itself and toward its market trajectory.

What about foundations and corporations? Most community

arts groups approach these funders but with much less success than is enjoyed by establishment arts institutions such as ballet companies and museums. Only a small proportion of U.S. foundations make arts support of any kind a priority; very few of these focus on community arts work at all. Like the program officers of most government arts agencies, arts philanthropies' staffs and decision-makers are part of what one friend of ours calls the "culture-industrial complex," in which people work for a while at an arts institution, shift to a better job at a funding agency, then climb another rung of the career ladder to a bigger and more prestigious institution, and so on. Only the rare influential individual in these funding agencies is really conversant with and sympathetic to community arts work. With foundations that specialize in social services, community arts projects are in a losing competition with "harder" issues—childcare, housing, health concerns, environmental action.

The Perils of Survival

The times are tough indeed. And the one strategy that has been touted as a rescue for community arts has been short-sighted and wrong-headed. "Institutionalization" is the medicine most often prescribed. The prescription has been couched in language peppered with calls for "stability" and "professionalization." It is a bankrupt strategy, not because it's wrong to build institutions but because the actual aim of the institutionalization campaign has been to saturate leading community arts groups with a whole set of values that co-opt and transform the work, burying its essential commitments to opposition and prefiguration.

The "institutionalization" campaign has worked liked this. Funds, both public and private, have offered community arts groups the chance to compete for relatively substantial grants—substantial as the usual financing of the field goes. Very few of these grants are awarded, and the application process is always time-consuming and labor-intensive, so even the decision to apply necessitates a change in direction.

Institutionalization grants are intended to subsidize major steps toward "stability" and "professionalization." For instance, a collective might use the money to transform itself into a more standard arts organization, paying salaries to a development director and a marketing director. Or theater that has had a more personal relationship with its community might adopt the conventional season-subscription approach, spending the money on glossy direct-mail pieces and paid advertising. Along with the grant comes a load of management consulting assistance provided by the fund and aimed at helping the grantee adjust to the new rules and build a new organizational culture.

Whatever the specifics, entering the institutionalization arena means accepting certain dominant values traditionally anathema to community arts. You must pledge allegiance to the corporate model of organization. Collectives and cooperatives are out, boards of directors are in—with bankers, corporate executives and other establishment types the preferred additions to the board.

Thus the price of receiving this life-saving money is to allow the organization's purpose to be reshaped—however subtly—by people who have probably had no prior contact and no sympathy with the radical ideas from which the organization grew.

Entering the institutionalization arena also means seeing marketing as the paradigm for your relationship with community members, whereas organizing had generally been most groups' original

model. Good organizing is human-to-human. The marketing relationship is by definition alienated. People who are trying to sell us something see us as part of a "market segment": they try to predict our preferences and susceptibility to sales pitches from such crude indicators as race, age and income, or else by a bunch of pseudo-psych conjectures about our attitudes and beliefs.

Community artists who swallow this establishment orthodoxy are crippled. They sacrifice their ability to assert their own values, to invent their own language and to define their own criteria for success. Instead, they are compelled to struggle to justify their work by the funding agencies' criteria, to use the feeble and tendentious tool of the funders' language to build woefully inadequate self-descriptions, and to give every appearance of adopting the values of establishment arts institutions.

This has many pernicious consequences, but probably the worst is getting caught in the establishment arts trap of an adversarial relationship with the audience—seeing potential audience members either as benighted individuals who don't know what's good for them and need to be told or as "marks" who must be manipulated or fooled into subscribing.

Community artists who aspire to join this club must serve an extended apprenticeship to the interests of its senior members: the big symphony orchestras, ballet companies, nonprofit theaters, opera companies and arts museums. Dozens of times in the last few years we've seen community arts groups, acting from a naive desire to be friendly, helpful, and savvy, being persuaded to join traditional arts advocacy groups. Once brought aboard, they are almost always used by establishment arts groups as window dressing for public subsidy requests, with the false assurance that "a rising tide raises all ships."

The irony of this depressing situation is this: The whole point of good community arts work is to help people envision themselves as active agents of culture-building, to find their own words, voices, and stories. This can't be accomplished by organizations which have adopted the language, values and techniques of the red-carpet arts. There is still a strong core of artists and groups who believe in the radical democracy underlying community arts, and who are struggling to live and work by culturally democratic principles. For them the way forward seems clear.

Money and politics work in cycles, and there's a strong chance that situations conducive to community arts' growth will come around again when there is a somewhat more liberal and generous government in power that brings renewed hope for fueling social movements. This next time it would behoove us to remember that short-sightedness is suicidal. Money will continue to come with strings attached—baroque paperwork attempts to alter the structure and aims of the work—but we have no one to blame but ourselves if we get tangled up in them all over again.

It will take organization and discipline to demand funding programs that really meet the standards of good community arts work and to refuse to accept conditions that subvert them. It will take dedication to think about the future when the demands of the present seem so urgent. But we see no alternative. The community arts movement, led by those who haven't forgotten its commitments, needs to take some of its own medicine.

ARLENE GOLDBARD and DON ADAMS are consultants in California who specialize in helping cultural organizations and public agencies create policy, programs and plans.

• AT THE • POW WOW

MARIE CARTIER

Wyoming dust blows dreams big as rodeo brahma bulls.
She fingers tin horns, ivory braiding beads, round stones.
Long, grey braids rest on heavy breasts,
stretching a purple dotted blouse across her chest.
“How much?” she holds up a hank of pink string beads.
“Six dollars.”

She sets them down.

“Where did you get these?” she asks, holds up
a bag of perfectly round stones.

The merchant says he traded them in Oregon.

She fingers the bag, “How much?”

“Two fifty.”

“Oh.” She sets them down. “Do you know
what these *are*?”

He shakes his head.

She says, “When the big wind comes,
if you have a round stone on your person,
you will not be swept away. Neither will your possessions.
You should give one to each person you love.”

She pats the bag of round stones.

“Amazing *you* have these.”

He blinks.

She counts out tin horns—one hundred,
fingering each one.

She will make jewelry—bright orange, red,
seed bead danglers, shot with gold.

In her ears hang silver and turquoise.

Around her neck, a giant eagle

spans the space between her breasts.

She takes up the tin horns, the tiny silver cones for beading.

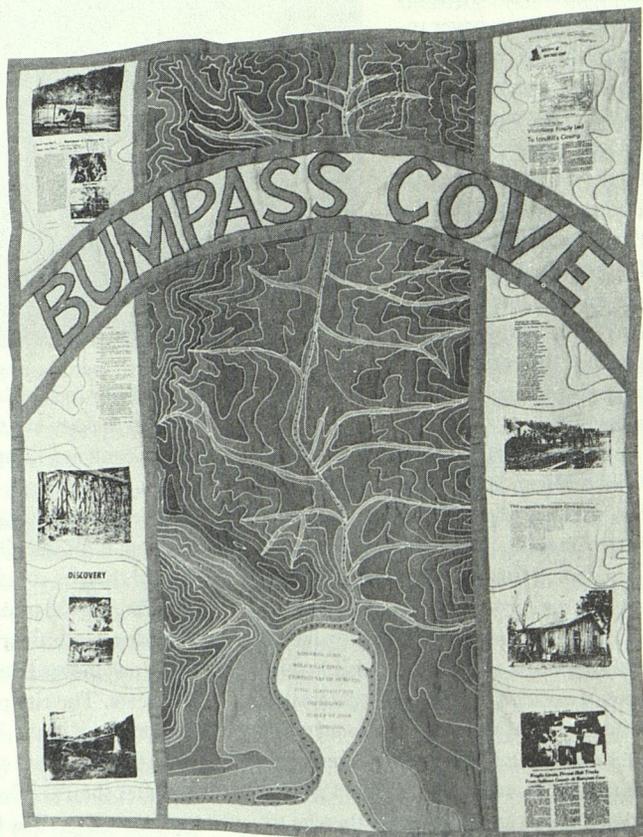
Turns, to do her magic.

The round stones lie restless with the merchant.

MARIE CARTIER poet/playwright & teacher, has also published in
Focus, *Kalliope*, *Eidos*, *Black Maria*, *Eve's Legacy*, *Puddiz* and
Central Park, among others.

Photo by

PAT ARNOW



Tapestry by Margaret Gregg is a silk, 6' x 9' hanging.

PAT ARNOW is a writer and photographer in Johnson City, Tennessee.

HARRIET FEIGENBAUM

Reclamation art is by definition different from all other forms of outdoor sculpture—including the idea of using strip-mined lands for environmental art—because these sites are such a mess. This is not reclamation in an environmental or ecological sense but a form of development which may be the best and only option available for particular situations. Reclamation art involves making the land itself life supporting as well as structurally safe, and this combination is by no means always possible. The problems of each site are unique and usually varied. There is a tremendous difference in the reclamation potential when approaching abandoned strip mine sites, which can never reclaim themselves, and land being reclaimed in conjunction with mining, the procedure mandated by the 1977 Mining and Reclamation Law. Nor will the same solutions work for any situations even within the same category. Any artist's project necessitates the participation of engineers, soil scientists, and other specialists.

Early in 1980, I made trips to the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area of Pennsylvania, with the idea of finding sites in need of reclamation, working out a project, then raising funds to implement it. I took local buses everywhere in Lackawanna and Luzern counties and became familiar with the worst of the highly visible mining scars. I decided to focus on a site visible from a popular and busy route and quickly began running into an unexpected problem. After locating what seemed to be a possible project site, I would then go to the assessor's office to locate the owner-of-record. The owner-of-record would turn out to be, not the current owner at all, but one from a few property transfers back. This was especially true where a coal company had gone bankrupt and sold off its properties (Glen Alden). The area had and still has a problem of hidden ownership of scarred and hazardous land. I attempted thereafter to revise my method;

that is, go to a known land owner, private or public, and ask to see what was available.

June 3, 1981, I visited the Jeddo Highland Coal Company in Hazelton, Pennsylvania, the largest active anthracite strip mine. I spent the entire day riding around this mine and saw no evidence whatsoever of reclamation (as mentioned earlier, reclamation in conjunction with mining is mandated under the 1977 law). Later that week I met with the owner of the company and asked about the use of a site for a reclamation art project. When I explained that I wanted the project to be permanent he said he could not go along with the idea because "although some sites may seem idle, an owner must be in a position to get a return on his investment."

I met with Wilkes-Barre city planner Jack Varaly on November 12, 1981. He



was happy to show me several possibilities within the city limits, one of which was a culm bank at a location known as Miner's Mills. Here the city leased the usable coal refuse to a local company which was removing it for sale. The soil and waste would then be compacted and graded, creating a good opportunity for a project. I made a preliminary proposal for a serpentine vineyard dependent on results of soil tests. The city planner then presented my proposal to the Wilkes-Barre Fine Arts Commission, an agency that was set up after the 1972 flood as part of a redevelopment effort. The Commission was interested in the idea and invited both me and the local press to their next meeting where a full presentation of my proposal was made, followed by discussion and a vote on whether to support the project. The commission voted for support which meant applying for grant money, and the local press carried the story, giving residents of the area a chance to respond. The proposal then went to the City Council where

a commission representative was informed that the city had a few good offers from developers which it could not afford to refuse. Although this particular project did not go through, I was impressed by the openness of the whole procedure and the willingness of a group of citizens to listen to a proposal for an unfamiliar kind of artwork.

On May 17, 1982, a representative of the Soil Conservation Service showed me several sites in Lackawanna County. This was arranged by Leslie Mercuri, then director of the Lackawanna County Commission on Cultural Affairs, a local group similar to the one in Wilkes-Barre. Among the sites shown to me was a large tract known as the Storrs Pit, between U.S. Route 6 and Main Street on the Scranton/Dickson City border. The Storrs Pit comprises several thousand acres, most of which are owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; 160 acres abutting U.S. 6 is private property. From the highway I noticed a grading operation in process on the crest of a long steep slope about a quarter of a mile into the pit. This meant that there was some reclamation in process.

In July, 1982, I was introduced to Dan Siniawa, owner of the 160-acre private tract in the Storrs Pit. He wanted his land reclaimed and that afternoon we walked through the site. Siniawa thought I should also see the huge hazardous pit in the process of being graded by the Department of Environmental Resources (DER). This was the operation I had seen from the highway. From the crest of the spoils bank above the pit I saw a hideous scar being converted into a beautiful valley. This site was twenty-five hundred feet long and enclosed on two sides by sixty-foot banks. The highway boundary of Siniawa's land sloped down into the Storrs Pit in the form of a hundred-foot highwall parallel to the banks being reclaimed by the DER. Both sites, together comprising three long banks, were visible from U.S. 6. I decided to try to do complementary projects for the valley and single slope. On the private site I would have the opportunity to design both the grading and planting, on the public site just the plantings.

The most expensive part of any reclamation project, particularly of an abandoned mine site, is the cost of grading the land, that is, the cost of bringing in big earth moving equipment. The Rural Abandoned Mine Project (RAMP), set up under the 1977 Mining and Reclamation Law, stipulates that private owners of strip mined land who are not responsible for creating the scars may apply for assistance to reclaim up to 175 acres. Siniawa was eligible for assistance and agreed to apply to the program, while I tried to get permission for the valley project.

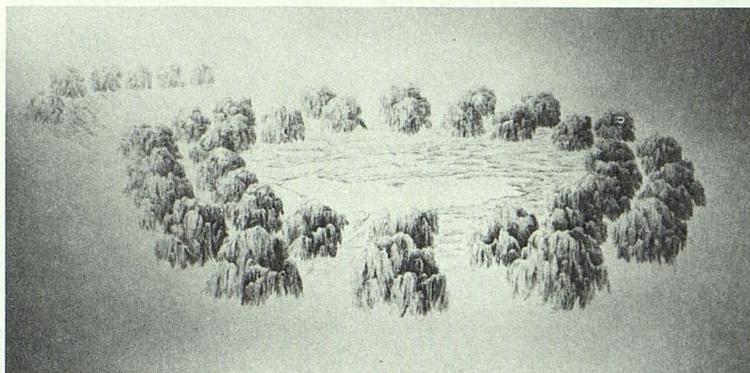
I designed a serpentine vineyard for the Siniawa site similar to what I had hoped to do at Miner's Mills in Wilkes-Barre, and a complementary serpentine pine forest for the two slopes that formed the long valley. Deciding on species for the valley plantings was neither quick nor easy. The plant species must work aesthetically as well as ecologically. I decided on four thousand white pine trees and four thousand Austrian pine trees. Linked arcs of trees would run diagonally across the slopes, with the species alternating every five rows. This design prevents soil erosion while at the same time creating an optical illusion of rolling terrain. In the fall of 1982 "Valley of 8,000 Pines" was given the go ahead, and, at the same time, I was offered a second public site five hundred feet south of the valley.

On November 23, 1982, the local committee of the Rural Abandoned Mine Program met at Siniawa's site. I was invited to the meeting which consisted of walking through the site looking for hazards. RAMP has a priority system of "the worst first" and with funds for most of this program currently being withheld by Congress, only those sites that contained immediate public hazards were being approved. Siniawa's land was voted highest priority by the RAMP committee because among the hazards were an open deep mine shaft and an open crawl space easily accessible to local children. RAMP would cover the cost of reclaiming all 160 acres exclusive of the grape vines and trellises. The timing, though, was a bit depressing: while I could plant my pine trees in the

spring of 1983, the local director of RAMP informed me that it would be at least the spring of 1985 before the Siniawa site could get started. The reclamation cost for 160 acres of scars and hazards would be approximately \$850,000 as of the time of the RAMP meeting.

Meanwhile my own expenses continued. To help defray the mounting costs of pursuing this project, the Lackawanna County Cultural Commission received a planning grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. The commission agreed to seek support for the vineyard once RAMP funds were on a schedule. The Scranton Area Foundation approved a grant for the Storrs Pit plantings on public property.

On April 27, 1983, I started planting "Valley of 8,000 Pines." The trees were



two-year seedlings acquired from the state through the Bureau of Forestry. Seedlings, aside from making the project affordable, offered the best chance of survival on steep slopes: larger trees have a more difficult time establishing themselves and are likely to blow over in strong winds. It took four people to plant the eight thousand trees over a two-week period. We were not permitted to use motor vehicles on the slopes; all planting had to be done by hand.

The planting of "Valley of 8,000 Pines" was completed on May 13, 1983. As the trees grow, the cover crop of wheat, clover, and mixed grasses will begin to brown out and the pattern emerge. During planting I revised my original grid plan and varied the distances and angles between rows to give the project a wilder, more natural effect which will increase in time as the maturing trees produce seedlings. The valley project, as opposed to the vineyard, will have to fend for itself, since no maintenance program is intended. Dur-

ing the summer of 1983 I monitored the progress of the pine trees with the district forester. By fall the survival rate was determined to be nearly ninety-five percent. Then came drought which, along with dirt bikes, reduced survival to seventy percent. It is generally expected that twenty-five percent of the seedlings will have to be re-planted when working with difficult land.

In the fall of 1983, I concentrated on the design and species for the second hazardous pit five hundred feet south of the valley. There were to be no steep slopes on this site but, instead, rolling terrain that gently directed the flow of water runoff. I decided on a radiating spiral made of two thousand black walnut trees to reforest an area fourteen hundred feet by seven hundred feet. The outer circle diameter would be five hundred feet and the radiating lines brought to the limits of the project site. Black walnuts were selected not only for their visual beauty but because, to date, hardwoods have a better survival rate on strip-mine spoils than do most other species. The planting of "Black Walnut Forest" was completed May 10, 1984.

In the fall of 1984 I began the quest for another project site, this time armed with a grant from the N.E.A. Among the new possibilities was a silt pond shown to me by the Lackawanna County district forester. Formerly part of the Greenwood Colliery, the pond is the property of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce. It is dramatically situated below a mine access road and is framed on one side by a semicircular ninety-five-foot highwall. I decided to make a proposal to the Chamber of Commerce for reclamation of the silt pond. It turned out that this site adjoined that of the Chamber's new office park just getting under way. The pond was to become a wetlands area and they were very much interested in a proposal for it. My project "Erosion Control Plan for Red Ash and Coal Silt Area—Willow Rings," called for a double ring of willows for the pond area and an accent arc of willows above the semicircular wall (scar). This time I would start with ten-to-twelve-foot trees. The Chamber enthusiastically

supported the idea and later asked if I would design the grading of the scar. The entire project, now planted, is to be maintained as permanent wetlands for wildlife.

As a result of the Willow project, the

Chamber of Commerce has asked me for proposals for other sites, including several for the office part itself. The Storrs Pit projects have also inspired new opportunities for sites on scarred public land.

HARRIET FEIGENBAUM is an environmental artist who lives in New York City.

VINCE ABBATELLO



THE URBAN GARDENER

HERESIES 48 TWENTYTWO

PEGI BALLISTER HOWELLS

Gardening in small urban spaces is an art as well as a science. The considerations of color, composition, symmetry and balance are further complicated by the use of a living medium. The plant material chosen must be able to survive under less than ideal conditions. Since their appearance changes constantly, highly visible gardens must have appeal even in the dead of winter.

My position as Agricultural Agent in Middlesex County, New Jersey, demands my working a great deal in an urban environment as well as serving the agricultural community in the southern end of the county. Having both my office and home in New Brunswick, I have become intensely involved in a beautification project as part of the revitalization of the city.

A large display of annual flowers brightens the entrance to the city under the "Welcome to New Brunswick" sign. The shape of the garden is an extremely elongated triangle. As a background, an enormous mural covers the wall of an old PSE&G building. The impression is given that one can go from the garden, through elegant archways, into a magnificent courtyard.

One of the victims of urban renewal will be this building with its lifelike mural. The street is scheduled for widening and the garden will become more blacktop. As heartbreaking as this is, it becomes another variable to consider in the garden plan.

This is our second season on the site and we may even squeeze out a third, but this is not sufficient time to make an investment in shrubs worthwhile. Our limited budget (another variable) would be quickly dissipated on woody ornamentals which, just as they had become established, would have to be pulled up. Not knowing if there would even be a suitable place to relocate shrubs if we established them, it seems wisest to work only with annuals at this location.

In order to create depth, the beds have been mounded and sculpted for a more pleasing appearance. Bisecting the garden is a winding path of *Bluestone slate* with the beds rising up slightly to either side. A few yellowish boulders are in key places to

help draw the eye through the garden and provide winter interest.

The only permanent planting is a Harry Lauder's Walking Stick (*Corylus avenella "contorta"*). This wonderful small tree is what we are using as a trademark of our gardens. It is related to the Hazelnut but has a twisted, weeping growth habit that makes all the branches look like corkscrews. In the summer, while covered with leaves, it is full and lush. It blends in nicely without detracting from the blasts of color provided by the annuals. In the winter, it stands alone and comes into its own glory. The spiraling, weeping branches are tipped with dangling catkins. The small tree becomes the dominant focal point, clearly drawing the eye away from the bareness of the rest of the garden.

While planting the annuals, variation in height, color and durability must be considered. The amount of sunlight is a factor of major importance. Shade loving

plants wither away in intense sun and the reverse is just as disastrous. Also, plantings close to the curb must be able to tolerate the additional stresses of automobile pollution and heat generated from the street.

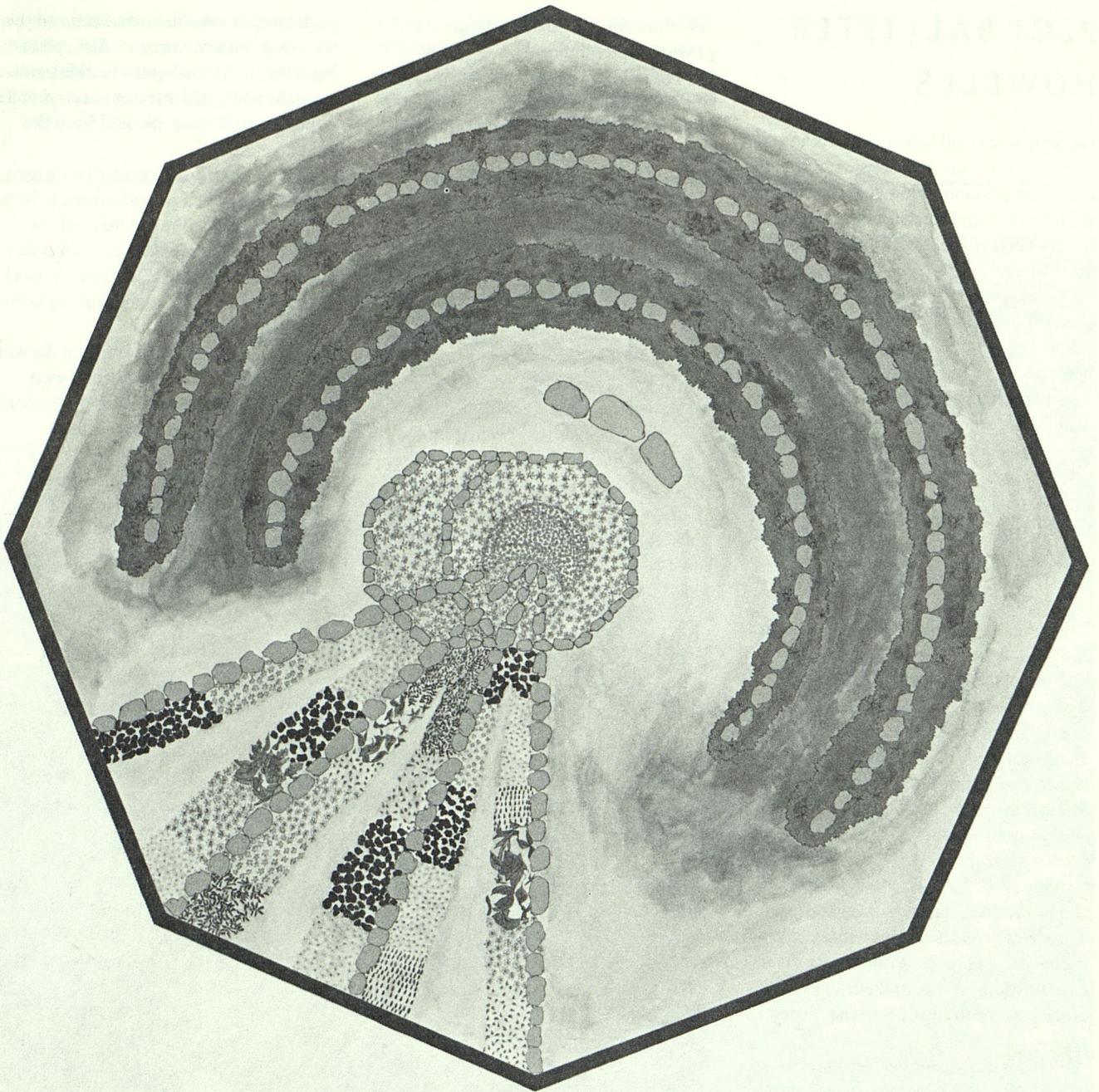
These same principles are being used in the planting of a second garden in New Brunswick where the site may only be available for two seasons. The soil at this site is particularly poor, so trying to work under these difficult conditions has been of primary concern.

This space is perfectly rectangular with buildings bordering the east and west sides, but completely exposed on the north and south. Also, the lot is used as a shortcut connection a parking lot to a main street, so a pathway through the garden is essential to avoid trampling.

PEGI BALLISTER HOWELLS is one of only five Agricultural Agents in New Jersey.



VINCE ABBATIello



Susan Hoenig GARDEN SCULPTURE 1987, ink, watercolor, acrylic. 22" x 22"

This octagonal-shaped centerpiece is the site for a garden sculpture at the Bronx River Community Garden, 180th and Devoe Streets, Bronx, New York. I will work with the West Farms Community Gardeners embedding stones and planting flowers, herbs and ground cover within the octagon, a design of ever-changing movement and color. At the center is an eclipsing crescent of purple allysum. In early spring, a white flowered perennial, candy tuft, will appear surrounding the crescent. Just when the white flowers fade, the purple-toned allysum will appear. Radiating out from the crescent are lines, rays of more flowers and herbs, sea pink armeria, low dwarf chives, thyme and basil. A path circumvents the area in a horseshoe shape emphasized by embedded stones. Low-growing blue rug juniper will weave in and out of the stones forming a slight mound.

SUSAN HOENIG is an ecological sculptor living in New Jersey.

TEMPLE OF THE VESTIGIAL VIRGINS

DOCUMENTATION OF AN INSTALLATION · TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK, NYC

CAROLYN MOSKOWITZ

A—There is a fountain in the park. Well, it was a fountain, once, enshrined in a sturdy stone structure, with four solid columns supporting a peaked roof. On each architrave, an admonition: Faith, Hope, Charity, Temperance. She imagines what it looked like then, with a proud stream of water ejecting continually from that massive cylindrical form. The fountain, an emblem of confidence. Cocksure. Now the fountain is broken and no longer functional. And the four columns are covered in graffiti. She likes the graffiti. It makes the building somehow vulnerable, as if the structure involuntarily bears witness to caprice and rebellion, and transitory things like that. She thinks of the new lipstick she bought, that stains everything her lips touch Cerise Red. The glass in the coffee shop at breakfast. The edge of the teacup. The end of her pencil where she sucks it. Cerise Red between the black hairs on her lover's back. She enjoys leaving those almost anonymous traces of where her lips have been. It's about as close to being immortal as she would care to be. Her boyfriend thinks she lacks ambition.

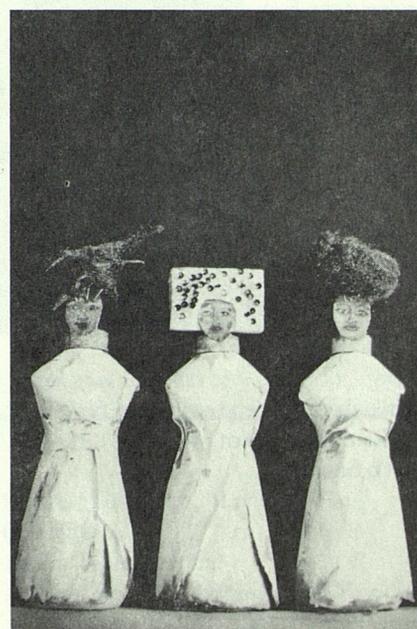
B—It's early. The rain has let up for a while, but the park is wet, muted and misty. There are no leisurely strollers, no socializers aside from the men who have slept in the park the night before. There are only men to be seen in the park now. No women. Quextale and Joe come to the fountain. He's from Mexico, his friend's an Indian from James Bay in Quebec. They live in the park when they can. Joe asks me for spare change. He tells me he's a lawyer. Later he says he's a filmmaker. After he tell me some stories I tell him he is a better filmmaker than a lawyer. Quextale and Joe sit at the base of the stone building.

A—She drapes gauze curtains of the palest yellow between the columns, on three of the four sides. Now the space inside feels more private, personal. The curtains billow, and the border between outside and inside is ambiguous. Each time you think you've defined the boundary, the wind changes it. There are drawings of women on each curtain. Sometimes the curtains seem almost opaque, making what's going on inside or outside. Sometimes they're almost transparent, making the drawings on them ghostlike and illusory.

B—"You have made this a temple," Quextale says. "There are souls who live under this spot. You must burn an offering to them. Anything. You don't have to spend money. Just anything that burns." I put part of a brown paper bag in the center of the fountain and set it on fire. It burns for a good while. The souls are placated. Quextale and Joe make themselves comfortable, talk to me of their religions, their homes, nature. I tell Joe I know about James Bay, about the Hydro plant (and I think of how it displaced the Dene people there). "Do you speak French?" "Yes," I say. "Je t'aime," says Joe. "No, you don't." "Je t'aime, je t'aime." They each take a fortune cookie: *What we call a temple is actually the abstraction of a grove; the thicket of columns recalls the thicket of trees.¹ I seldom feel in harmony with interior decoration of any kind. Only sometimes with people.²* All day, these men keep a watch over the temple. I keep overhearing Quextale tell people he made it. He and Joe grasp my hand in turn, thanking me. Then Joe comes back and takes my hand again. "You should write down what everybody says who comes to this temple. Listen to them. Write down their thoughts. Temples are important."

A—She places the plastic dolls between the broken fountain and one curtain wall. There are five little women with inscrutable doll-like faces and bodies made of detergent bottles covered with paper bag togas. She calls them the vestigial virgins. They are supporting a pediment. Their platform is supported by two broom columns which rise out of a base covered in plastic forks. She thinks the plastic forks are beautiful, with lush daubs of red and gold and yellow paint over them. She thinks of mouths, hundreds of mouths, one for each fork. And then she looks at all the tines of all the forks, and they look like weapons.

B—"Hey, yo! That you did this thing? That woman there tell me this be a voodoo thing—them dolls voodoo dolls. Some kinda black magic. That be true? Hey, mind if I have a fortune cookie?" *Twirl a wrung-out but wet towel around the room a few times.³*

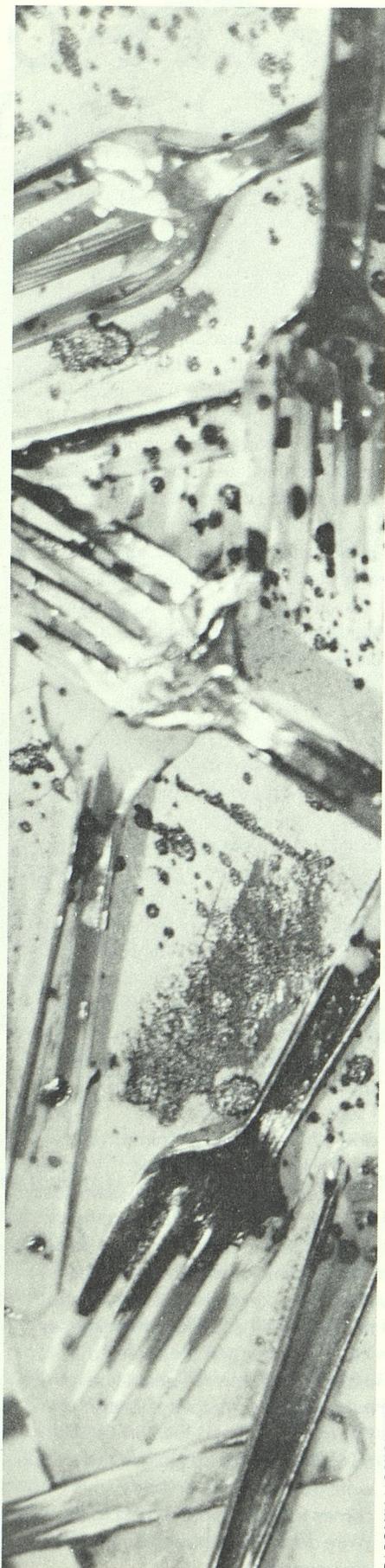


CAROLYN MOSKOWITZ

A—She fills the plastic colanders, red and gold, with fortune cookies. She wants people to come here and take part of the temple away with them. She also likes to feed people. In front of each colander she places a brick with a nest of steel wool on it. Fetish objects for the pagan temple. She likes the circle of the nest on the rectangle of the brick. And she likes the fact that you can't stack bricks up when they've got nests of steel wool on them. She wonders if this information will ever be useful to her. The steel wool makes her think again of her lover's body, almost covered with little wiry hairs. His hair is one of the most fascinating things about him. She has always been embarrassed about her own body hair. She knows that's wrong. She keeps meaning to stop shaving her legs, but then she forgets that she meant to stop.

B—It's bright and sunny, and here come all the strollers. Today is Sunday, Mother's Day. They come together, he and she. She reads her fortune: *There is no mark on the wall to measure the precise height of women.*⁴ She stands up taller. He looks at his fortune, gets flustered, gives it to her, saying, "This isn't mine. It must be for you." She looks: *If your scent tends to fade too fast, try sprinkling perfume on small cotton puffs and tucking them in your bra when you go out.*⁵ "Well, it's yours now. You never know what hand life will deal you."

Three people go inside the curtains, take fortunes. "Oh, I hope this is a good one. It's so depressing getting a bad fortune. My horoscope for today was devastating.": *It can be helpful to think of them eating their favorite foods and occasionally throwing up and getting bits stuck in their noses.*⁶ She giggles. "Ugh." The man unravels his fortune: *The Monolith spares the outside world the agonies of the continuous changes raging inside it.*⁷ He doesn't blink. The other woman reads hers: *Looking into his eyes was like walking into a large municipal building.*⁸ She stares down at her feet. "Let's go get a beer."



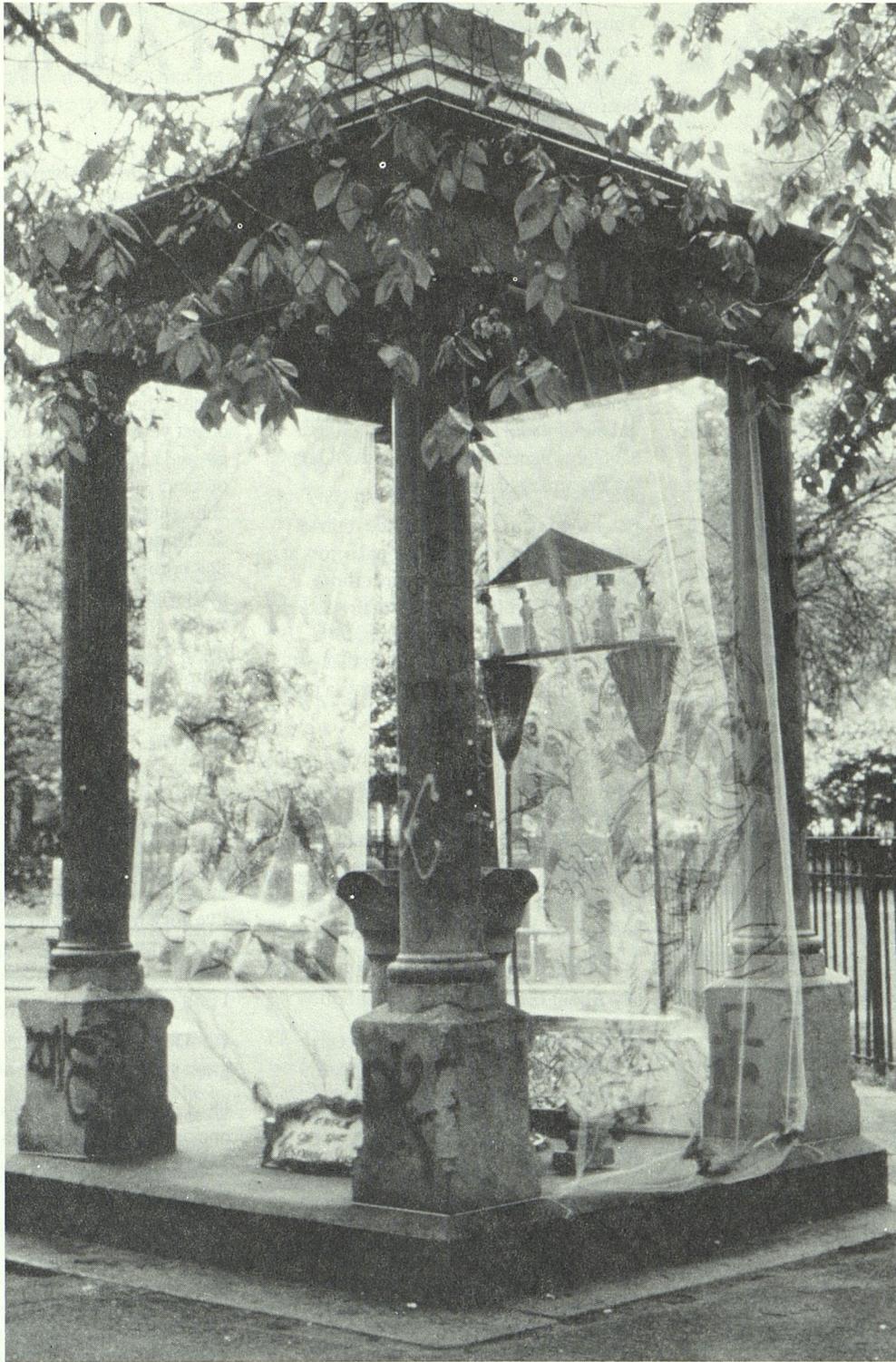
A—She has transformed the stone fountain into a temple. She walks out of the structure, to give others more room to go in and to be able to watch them. She thinks of the millions of people all over the city who are, at this moment, either entering or leaving buildings. She imagines watching them all, like a great choreographed dance, or like a football game with millions of players on each team. Some of the buildings that they move in and out of are so huge. Monumental. Imposing. Massive blocks of concrete and metal and glass. Some of them are both frightening and silly at the same time. Like heads of state. Their forms, their facades, are visual metaphors for power. She yawns, then stretches, and turns her gaze back to the plastic statues on the brooms in the temple. People have started to congregate there, to meditate or to talk or to laugh, and to read their fortunes.

B—A woman approaches the structure. She is wearing an almost faded tee-shirt, with the words, "Kiss Me, You Fool" just barely visible. Her neck and her hands and her feet are caked in dirt. She circles the temple several times, hopping lightly from one foot to another like a boxer, always facing the fountain as if it were her opponent. Her lips move silently, outlining the words of a private conversation. An old man notices her and hands her a cookie: *You wake up dreaming you're asleep in the fridge, / there's so much white space beside you.*⁹ The woman eats the cookie. Then she scrunches up the paper into a little ball and puts it, too, in her mouth.

Another woman walks right into the temple. She is very tall and black and moves like a dancer or a queen. She leans over and takes a fortune cookie: *My whole life is like making a name for myself in a foreign country.*¹⁰ As she leaves, she dips her hand in the colander for one more cookie. One for the road. As she reaches the edge of the park, before stepping out onto the street, she reads it: *What Noah needed was reinforced concrete. What Modern Architecture needs is a flood.*¹¹ She rocks back on her large feet and laughs.

CAROLYN MOSKOWITZ

CAROLYN MOSKOWITZ is an artist living in New York.



CAROLYN MOSKOWITZ

1. Bernard Rudofsky, *The Prodigious Builders*.
2. Françoise Sagan.
3. *The Almanac of Household Hints*.
4. Virginia Woolf.

5. *The Almanac of Household Hints*.
6. Jenny Holzer/Peter Nadi, *Eating Friends*.
7. Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*.
8. Laurie Anderson, *Words in Reverse*.

9. Susan Glickman, "Living Alone," *Complicity*.
10. Roo Borson, *Rain*.
11. Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*.

CRYSTAL

FRAN BASKIN

Fran Baskin—What made you decide to go into theater?

Crystal Field—I was a choreographer and we did concerts. In 1960 I did a piece called “The Clock” that was funny, and at the first performance the audience laughed hysterically every minute but at the next performance they hardly laughed at all, and I thought maybe it was the way I was performing and maybe I needed to take acting lessons. From the minute I started to study acting I realized it was much more exciting to me than dance.

FB—What was the impulse that made you want to have your own company?

CF—I think the idea of having my own theater came from my dance background. I always thought I would be a dancer for a certain amount of time and then I would go into choreography and have my own company and when I got old I would teach. You know repertory is a wonderful idea although it hasn’t caught hold in this country as yet.

FB—There’s more than there used to be.

CF—Oh yes, but we [at Theater for The New City] do not have a repertory company as yet because we do not have the money to pay the actors’ salaries.

FB—You have a kind of company. I’ve been to a number of performances and I tend to see the same people.

CF—Yes, we have a kind of company. Actually, we have two things. One is the indoor theater and the other is the street theater company and that one is a company. This is our 17th year and there are people who have been with us in street theater for 17 years. There are people who have been with us for ten years, five years, three years, two years—all those ranges. There’s hardly anyone who comes for just one year, but of course there’s a little money, you see. Generally speaking, it’s \$25 a performance, two performances a week around New York, in the streets and in the parks, except for extras that everyone wants to do but no one really gets paid for.

Those are glamorous things like going to Coney Island where everyone gets a free dinner, goes swimming and walks on the Boardwalk. The indoor theater isn’t funded that way and we just can’t pay that kind of money.

FB—But if you did have that kind of money, you would do repertoire?

CF—In order to cast a rep season decently, doing as many diversified plays as we do, you need a good fifty actors. We do forty shows a year, sometimes as many as twenty-five actors in a show. Now, even though this kind of money is lousy, if you did eight performances a week and got \$200 plus benefits that at least would be the beginning of something.

FB—I want to ask you about the ratio of professional to non-professional actors at your theater but I tend to reject those words since professional is usually defined as someone who does something for a living. I’m a poet, and based on that definition, there’s no such thing as a professional poet.

CF—Actors often don’t make a living in the theater, either. We say the professional is someone who has a certain amount of training and experience who has made a living in the theater or attempted to.

FB—So what would you say the ratio is between professional and non-professional in the street theater company?

CF—About half and half.

FB—Are there people who have been involved in the street theater company for 17 years that you would call non-professional?

CF—Yeah.

FB—Do they only do the street theater?

CF—Some of them only do the street theater. You know how they say Sunday painters and Sunday drivers? Well we have Sunday actors and some of them are marvelous. It’s true they don’t have a wide range but that’s because they haven’t worked to get a wide range. Within the range they can play, they’re wonderful and real and they aren’t stuck with all those horrible actorisms. The actors we take into the street think a lot. They read the newspapers and know what’s going on in the world. They care about the story they’re telling on stage and the character they’re playing and not just their own inner angst.

TALKING

FB—How do you see the relationship between Theater for the New City and the community?

CF—We’re as related to the community as we can be—again, not having a lot of money. We’d like to do street theater all year. It’s always a long, rough day playing in the street but it’s a lot of fun and I enjoy it more than anything. On December 20th of last year we performed on the playground across the street from the local precinct house on Fifth Street. They were giving away toys for Christmas to a thousand kids and we performed from 9:30 in the morning to 12:30 in the afternoon. We performed our Commedia pieces and a twenty-minute Christmas pageant and we needed more stuff, so I said, “Okay, this is your chance. Anything you create, if I see it and say it’s OK, we’ll put it in.”

FB—Is that how you do street theater?

CF—No!

FB—How is it done?

CF—The street theater is really written by me. I write this thing all year long. I’ve got a brown bag in my kitchen drawer and I put all my ideas in it as they come to me. Then at the end of the year I pull out the bag.

FB—Don’t people collaborate? On the program you always credit the entire cast.

CF—I come in with a scenario and maybe one or two songs and then I start to work. I work with the people and sometimes they give me ideas during an improv. I also have three ADs (assistant directors) taking notes like crazy whenever anyone comes up with an interesting idea or a fabulous line. I’ll give you an example. Last year Alex and Rome did an improv where they were sitting on a park bench eating lunch and talking about how hard it was to find an apartment and every two minutes they’re being interrupted by someone committing suicide by jumping out of a building. I said, “That’s a doozy of an idea.” There were a lot of corrupt politicians being fired last year, so in the show I had them sitting on the park bench talking about how hard it was to get an apartment and instead of people dying, we

threw dummies onto the stage to symbolize politicians getting the axe.

FB—Was it your political instincts that got you involved in wanting to do street theater?

CF—Yes, no doubt about it. I love the form. I love Cabaret and Commedia dell'arte. It's all politics and gossip and what's going on. Those Commedia troupes used to send somebody out in advance who would go to the local tavern or market square of whatever town they were going to perform in and they'd get all the gossip, what graft was going on, who was doing what to whom and they'd throw it all in the play. They had these stock characters Arlecchino, Pantaloon, Dr. Lombardi whose names they would change to the name of the famous person in town who was screwing up. They would refract Lombardi to something like, Dr. Leonardo Reganardi. The townspeople knew damn well who they were talking about.

Street theater doesn't only mean politics. It also means a way of bridging the question of poetry for the people. George (Bartenieff) and I fought for this maybe 19 years ago. We were in Philadelphia doing rep at Theater for the Living Arts when we were asked to do some poetry programs in the high schools. We brought poetry by someone—I no longer remember his name—but he had moved to Algiers because no one was interested in his poetry. But these kids went crazy over it. And that's the reason street theater's so wonderful, if you can get past the pre-informed public to people who don't go to the theater and don't read the critics. First of all, these people know very well who is right and who is wrong, they know where their bread is buttered and who's taking the butter off the bread and stealing the bread. They may not be able to do anything about it because they're not organized and they're depressed, politically. But they know the truth. Also, because a lot of the people in the neighborhoods we go into are immigrants, they are close to their old culture, which is full of myth, mask, religion, vision, poetry and art.

FB—Do you choose those kinds of neighborhoods?

CF—Yes we do. We like them. First of all, those people don't get to see a lot of art and they deserve to see something nice in the summertime. Also, they don't make you give explanations. They don't say,

“What is that?” and “What does that mean?” They just take it and believe and feel it. There's no problem getting to them if you're good and if you're no good, they throw bottles at you and they leave.

FB—How do auditions work?

CF—In 1987, for example, auditions for the summer theatre started May 16th for a workshop that started on June 20th. I count heads and see who's going to be here and then see what's available. We see who we want back. We don't want all of them back all of the time. That's how we weed out.

FB—What do actors have to do to be disinvented?

CF—They have to be real dumb. They have to fuck up all the time.

FB—They have to miss rehearsals?

CF—If they don't come to rehearsals, they're out. That's Rule Number One. I can't work if they're not here.

FB—So being reliable and basically together?

CF—That's right; unless you're psychotic, you'll probably be real good. What we do in workshops besides teaching circus and street theater techniques is develop characters and see what you can do well. If you can stand on your hands or roller skate, we'll put that in the show.

FB—But you're still the author, the director with the central vision.

CF—Oh yes, there's no way out of that. I've been involved in collaborative efforts that have been successful but then you have to have just a few people and you've got just a week or two or three to do it and you've got to be highly motivated to get the fucking thing done.

FB—What are you going to do this year?

CF—This year, it's going to be called, “Hit the Road, or Bumped Out.” It's the story of a young hobo who rises politically and socially, not because of his own desires but just in spite of himself, and finally makes it into the White House. Ronnie, on the other hand, becomes unemployed and when he asks if he can get on welfare they tell him, “Boy, you're not qualified.” So he goes to the hobo jungle and shares a pot of beans along with a bunch of other bums. We're not talking about beggars and bums here, but the 1930's image of the

hobo, who lives a nomadic life. But of course there are a lot of homeless people now because we're spending our money on nuclear bombs and Contras and all kinds of crap, instead of social services. There are usually nine songs in a show. This is only one little song—I usually don't come up with the big political songs first. Those will come in time. I wait for Mr. Reagan and the rest of his cohorts to tell me what to write. Anyway, this is one part of a song.

*I know you want to get to Las Vegas
become famous*

*gamble all your money and become
a millionaire*

*I know you want to go to Hollywood
and be a movie queen*

get on that movie screen

it's your dream.

*but if it isn't in the cards for you to
make that scene*

you can always be a hobo

let the free wind blow your hair

and you'll visit all the places that are there

and those that aren't there

*cause a hobo knows the path that he can follow
as it unwinds*

goes deep into his mind

Hit the Road

cause the morning light is calling me

Hit the Road

cause the morning light will set you free

If he's shaving in the bathroom

and he's been bad to you last night

just slip out that screen door

and close it tight

you can jump out the back window

take your flight

just remember to pack light.

Along with her husband, George Bartenieff, CRYSTAL FIELD founded and is artistic director of Theatre for the New City.

FRAN BASKIN is a writer of poetry, plays, fiction and sometimes interviews. Her poetry has appeared in various journals and magazines.



JEANNE KAMINS

Last year (February 14, 1986), completely out of my usually two-dimensional character, I was provoked into performing my first performance piece. The horrendous political situation in British Columbia was already eating at me. In the past ten years, British Columbia has gone from one of the wealthiest provinces in Canada to the second poorest. Our school system, once the envy of all North America, is now among the worst, second only to Alabama. In Vancouver we now have 150,000 people out of work (approximately 20% of the workforce) and the lowest minimum wages in Canada. Our welfare rates have remained fixed for years. It was this issue which prompted the End Legislated Poverty group (a coalition of social organizations) to challenge leaders of two provincial parties to try to live on welfare for one month.

Emery Barnes, a 6-foot, 6-inch ex-football player and the New Democratic



Party Member of the Legislative Assembly for Vancouver Centre, accepted the challenge. By the end of the month, he had lost 20 Kg. and had been eating at the Food Bank for 10 days.

When she heard the challenge, Grace McCarthy, Minister of Human Resources (the person responsible for welfare and social services in British Columbia), said, "If those do-gooders really want to help poor people, they will turn in the welfare cheaters and then we will have enough money to pay those who really need it."

I was so incensed by her cruel statement and bare-faced lying that I decided to accept the End Legislated Poverty's challenge in her name. My line was "of course you can live on welfare; all you need is a little gumption."

On February 14th, Valentine's Day, I moved into the front window of the Pitt International Gallery. Dressing in silk suits, pink heart-shaped glasses, and a red wig, I assumed the persona of Grace McCarthy. I lived there for two weeks on \$175.00—one half of the month's allotment for a single person on welfare in British Columbia. I paid the gallery \$100 for half the month's rent. I scrounged the Safeway dumpsters for all of my food, and I found my clothes in Salvation Army boxes. I had the window fixed up to look like a poverty room, using back alley furniture—a bed, a table and chairs, a sink, pots, pans, and dishes. I used a hot plate.

The rest of the gallery had large photo murals of "Amazing Grace" living her "bag lady" life. There was a clothesline of "dirty laundry" with Gracy McCarthy's outrageous quotations made while she was Minister of Human Resources. The presentation also included a video of "Amazing Grace" demonstrating how one makes ends meet.

In the gallery window there's a 20-minute video of my "Grace McCarthy" foraging for dinner in the Smithrites, complete with narration. As Gracie, I discovered that it's not \$3,500 a month but \$350 that I shall be living on. I climb into dumpsters at the back of supermarkets, lecture on the free food available in "this land of plenty," and at one point can't get back out. I bend a coathanger into shape to fish inside the Salvation Army box for clothes and household goods. I sing the praises of the soy bean grits discarded by bean curd manufacturers, then close the dumpster lid and get



DONNA HAGERMAN

my cute little suit covered with white spray. The video talks about the best places to go. And how to "Watch out and wash off the stuff carefully because they put rat poison in the bins to keep the rats out."

I bum my cigarettes, and I find the most delicious food in those garbage bins behind the supermarkets. I have no problem living on \$75.00 a week... although I do accept all dinner invitations and gifts of food.

Since I do feel that I am sophisticated at making ends meet, and once had a job teaching budget cooking, I give a class to the women of the Downtown Women's Drop-in Center. We make soy cakes with the chafe from the soy beans used in making tofu and a simple vegetable soup.

I participated in all other downtown political events occurring at the time, largely protests against the eviction of poor people to make way for the World's Fair, Expo '86. I also attended several social events sponsored by local churches and neighborhood support groups. As Gracie, I was a very popular clown, and as a character of the neighborhood, many of the street people joined me for tea. Every afternoon between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. I had an open invitation to anyone to come and have tea with Gracie: "just bring your own cup and tea bag."

Numerous people came in to relate their experiences in dealing with welfare. It's a horrific experience to go through welfare. You are treated as though you are cheating and have to prove that you

are in need. People can't live on welfare, really. Once their money runs out, they have to accept free meals at the emergency food services.

Although it seemed hardly possible that anyone could misunderstand the performance, I wanted to be sure that no one could misinterpret my actions as supporting the incumbent Social Credit party's position on welfare. For this reason, I posted a documentation which included small watercolors of the downtown area and the people whom I was meeting, as well as a written diary and large gestural drawings.

"Amazing Grace" was widely covered in both the Canadian French and English media; CBS-TV and CTV, AM and FM radio, newspapers, magazines, and journals. Consequently, I feel that this piece satisfied my need to reach people who do not usually go into galleries. I came into the area with the idea to influence the government and found a community down here that I hadn't known before. My feeling is that you don't just move out.

JEANNE KAMINS is a middle-aged artist and still cute.

on a piece of waste ground, under threat of eviction. They had no legal place to camp, though by law the County Council should have provided an official site for them. They have been campaigning for several years for proper provision to be made for them. Meanwhile they camp without security or proper facilities, in appalling conditions, anywhere they can.

The major obstacle to site provision is the negative stereotype of Gypsies held by housedwellers. Housedwellers are liable to get a distorted view of the Gypsy way of life, if they get one at all. The official camp sites which exist tend to be tucked away in isolated or industrial areas, away from other residents, screened from public view. The families strictly maintain their privacy, aware of and keeping away from the house dweller's gaze and hostility wherever possible. Beyond work arrangements there are few opportunities for ordinary social contact between housedwellers and Travelers. The teenage girls are kept under close family control.

The general public sees only the unofficial campsites perched on waste land or roadside verges, on any available space. These tend to be untidy as there are no sanitary or rubbish disposal facilities. Also, the space outside the trailer is used as a work area, for sorting scrap, cleaning metal, and so on. The startling contrast of the inside of the trailers (the only space the families can control), the shining chrome, mirrors and glass, the scrupulous cleanliness, is not seen by passersby. They form their opinions, reaffirming the stereotypes, from seeing only the outside conditions, which they themselves have forced onto the families by opposing official sites.

I had been working as a teacher with the Gypsy families in the city for several years, trying to ensure that the children have access to education despite the lack of an official campsite. I wanted to work on an educational project of some kind which would focus on the dreadful conditions in which the families were obliged to live. I hoped that, indirectly, this would be a further support to the campaign for a decent site.

At the same time I had been approached by an art student, Sara Hannant, who as part of her course work was expected to initiate an art project in a local community. She was keen to learn more about the Gypsies in order to base her work within



this group. She needed an introduction to the families. We discussed the idea of a photographic project and it seemed favourable from various points of view. The teenagers were very interested in photographs, but they had not previously had the chance to learn the process. Sara could come into the group primarily as a technician, an enabler for the project, not an intruder. Photography seemed the ideal vehicle to me for the site statement. So we put the suggestion to the group of teenagers; they were very keen to take some photographs and learn the process of developing and printing. But my idea for the subject matter was rejected straightaway. No one wanted to focus on the mud, the squalor, the broken water tap, the proximity of rubbish dumps, the reminders of what they had to live with day by day. What the girls wanted were pictures of themselves.

All Gypsy Travelers love family photographs and treasure and add to them whenever possible as living, growing family histories. Theirs is an oral culture, each generation passing on the family traditions and lore through conversation

and storytelling, accompanied by the photographs they keep. The girls already figured in their family archives of photographs, but now they were being given the opportunity to take control of the process themselves. They could choose where and how to photograph themselves and they could follow the stages right through to the final prints. They seized the chance to make their own images, to represent themselves.

Much thought was given to the composition and setting of each photograph. Each girl decided how she wanted to present herself, which aspects of her home, her environment and her lifestyle she wanted to be known to others; how she wanted others to see her. The girls were very conscious of their negative public image. Daily in the media and in personal contacts, they heard themselves scorned and reviled as dirty people, as parasites, as undesirables. They wanted to deny this image, to show themselves as they really were. More important, however, they wanted pictures of themselves for themselves, realizations of a self image.

Working one day a week, with the

encouragement and technical assistance of Sara and myself, the girls gradually produced their portraits. After a disastrous first session in the darkroom, when everything came out black because light was getting into the room and the safe light was faulty, the results were more impressive than any of us had imagined. The girls had captured a sense of themselves and they were delighted. Their achievement went beyond individual prints. Seen as a group of photographs, the pictures gave a positive identity to this small group of Gypsies.

At that stage of the project we discovered that Koudelka's photographs were to be shown in the city later in the year. The coincidence was too good to be ignored, so we approached the Arts Centre with the idea of holding a simultaneous exhibition of the local Gypsy photographs. Our suggestion was taken up and approved. We had just a few weeks to prepare and mount the prints and work on texts to accompany them. The girls decided to write briefly about their daily lives as reflected in their photographs. They described typical days for themselves, their occupations and preoccupations. They wrote of taking and printing the pictures. These texts, extensions and amplifications of the images, stood alongside the photographs.

By now I had realized that the statement the girls had insisted on making for and about themselves was far more powerful an assertion of their right to maintain their own culture and its richness than any I would have contrived. After initial embarrassment that they were on show to whom-ever might walk into the Arts Centre, publicly presenting their pictures gave the Traveler girls a greater confidence and pride in themselves. They began to take a professional interest in the images by Koudelka. They recognized the quality of his photographs and despaired of ever being able to achieve as much themselves. Yet they also understood that they had been regarded as worthy of displaying their work alongside his. Their community had asserted its right to be given space among other communities, to be seen on its own terms. It was that dignity, a pride in the community, that the parents carried with them when they found the confidence to walk into the Arts Centre to see the exhibitions.

A teacher and writer, KATHERINE KIDDLE has been working with Gypsy families for the last ten years.



STRANGE DREAD

(for reggae poet
Kinton Kwesi Johnson)

CARMEN WONG

Strange dread,
this urban reggae, Kwesi:
jungle drums and
electronic echoes.
Words without song

drop
each like a stone
onto glass:
ex-slaves
dance next to white punks.

Dark conga,
red sax:
like a molotov night
and sirens down on
Railton Road.

This is not Jah love,
no longer. This is
Island Boy uprooted
into London Town.
Burned

by coal and torch
a blacker black,
by icy winters
hardened but not cooled.
The secret lava roils within:

You are its fissure.

CARMEN WONG is a political
activist and writer
who works as a waitress
in order to eat.

Life-size woodcut rubbing, part of a series entitled "Groups," displayed at the Key Card and Gift Shop, Washington, DC.



JUDY BYRON

JUDY BYRON is an artist living
in Washington, D.C.

H E R E S I E S 61 T W E N T Y T W O

FIRST WE CREATE THE NIGHTMARE— THEN WE BUILD THE PRISON...

SHARON STRICKER

That afternoon as Susan began to read aloud she cried after almost every sentence she spoke. Her wavy, long red hair tumbled down her face as she bent her head to read, and several times she stopped and said, "I can't go on." The supportive silence of everyone in the room formed a safety net under her very young and yet very old small feet. She told her story, of how at twelve she was raped and beaten by the houseboy who raised her while her wealthy father and professional mother worked. She was sent to a school for unwed mothers for nine months and then gave the baby up for adoption. "Maybe I had my ten kids after that because I always wanted to make up for that loss. I wanted to keep the baby but my mother said, 'No, it would kill your father.' I mailed him letters from Canada where I was supposed to be, but he never knew I was here in the States all the time. He still doesn't know to this day." She laughed and cried at the same time. Tears streamed down her pale white skin. Someone handed her a toilet tissue roll and she looked up to smile thank you and broke into tears again.

Through the body of writing created by the women inmates in the Bright Fires Creative Writing Program at California Rehabilitation Center (CRC) over the past eight years, I have discovered a relation between child abuse and the women's incarceration.

In 1979 when I first began working at CRC, (based 60 miles east of Los Angeles), it was primarily a minimal-security state prison for women and men whose crimes were heroin abuse, addiction and other drug-related crimes. By 1983, CRC had become a medium-security prison where women felons who had been sentenced for forgery, burglary, and armed robbery were also housed.

When I first began at CRC, I had no idea that at least 90% of the women I would work with were victims of child abuse. Nor was I aware that at least 75% were victims of sexual child abuse.

Child abuse, because it so often leads to self abuse, has played

a major role in the lives of the women at CRC. As an adult, self abuse may take the form of drug addiction, suicide, mental illness, and/or crime. Thus, child abuse is an integral part of the road to prison for most women with whom I have worked.

Susan is an example. She'd been using drugs for twenty-five years, had been in and out of prisons for fourteen of these. She told me, "I've always been very scared, very closed, afraid to show or expose myself in any way. I only broke through this barrier after the time I broke down in the writing workshop, the time you made me write that autobiography piece that exposed my shields. Once I saw my shields and what it was that had imprisoned me all these years, I wanted to break free."

As she finished, Norma spoke up. "I know that took a lot of courage for you to write that piece, Susan. Believe me, I know." Norma sat in the soft grey chair directly across from Susan. Even though they had both been in the workshop for some time, they had not been friendly toward each other nor did they interact outside the workshop. But in that moment Norma raised her grey-green eyes and directly contacted Susan's blue ones and said, "I was molested by my stepfather at ten and I never told anyone till I was thirty-two years old. I just happened to see a show on TV while I was at California Institute for Women (a higher-security prison). I realized it was very common. Then I couldn't stop crying for weeks. I would cry if someone asked me my name. It's okay to cry about it."

In that moment I realized why Norma had previously been so stubborn when I asked her to continue the childhood stories she had started writing earlier. "You'll never get me to write about that painful childhood," she'd said, her eyes sparking. "It's too hard to tell about that."

Earlier, Marcia too had stated that her girlfriend's father had clutched at her ten-year-old breasts but "it didn't bother me." She had said it as dispassionately as though she had just declared, "my pencil is broken." I said nothing then but noted how totally emotionless she was, as though her years of being overweight had wrapped her in a shroud and no one would ever be able to touch her again.

A composite of many creative forces was working in the Bright Fires Writing Program at the beginning of 1983. For the first time in their lives the women involved felt free and safe enough in a group, albeit in prison, to say out loud the words that had been forbidden them in the past. Up till now, the taboo against speaking about this demon was too strong. They had been forbidden their voice until they didn't know they had one.

As a poet, my work has always been involved with image-making. Visualizations are a unique means of helping people find the images that are unique to each individual. I invited Stephanie Roth (a healer whose expertise lies in creative visualization and body symbology) to join me at CRC in doing creative visualization exercises. She and I planned a visualization and writing exercise to discover the image of fear personified by an animal. As a writer myself I was very aware of the many fears that blocked would-be writers. Unknown fears. Fears of taking the next step in writing, of crashing through barriers of depression. Marica was then a perfect example of someone who needed to break through her fears in order to explore her imagination and talent. She allowed her imagination to discover FEAR, to give it a voice, as well as to give herself a voice as DAUGHTER in order to answer back.

DAUGHTER SPEAKING

Marcia Moore

slumber party night, falling asleep
in a little girlfriend's bed

waking up

smelling unfamiliar breath
stinking with stale beer

waking up

feeling thick probing fingers
on downy-covered softness

waking up

with calloused hands on
places where breasts will be

waking up

not daring to breathe
not daring to open my eyes until
he staggers away

watching the moon float across
bedroom drapes into dawn
paralyzed with the thought that
he might return
screaming inside

screaming

mama...mama...

runaway

mothers crying

why why do you run?

Marcia came into my office the next day flabbergasted. She sat down and said, "Please, can I read you what I wrote after last night's visualization?" When she was through, she looked straight in my eyes and said, "I didn't realize it but all these years I have been pretending that none of this bothered me. I just kept sloughing it off as though it didn't make any difference. I had no idea that I was so profoundly affected by all that."

"Did you ever tell your mother about the neighbor fondling you?" I asked, curious to see the mother's role in her daughter's defense. "Yes," she said, "I did but she didn't do anything."

What I was beginning to see was a pattern in which the girl's parents, especially her mother, didn't protect her. Earlier Kandi, another inmate, had written:

Then I remember the stinking smell of alcohol, a body crawling in my bed next to me, kisses on my neck, hands groping my legs. My heart froze. My God, it's him! I told him I had to go into the bathroom and I got into it and locked the door. My stepfather kept beating on the door. This went on for about an hour and then I heard the back door open. It was Mom. I screamed for her. All she said was, 'What's the matter?'"

In my conversations with Kandi she acknowledged that her mother stayed with her stepfather simply out of financial insecurity. We held long discussions about how women in the '50s felt trapped. It was more than the "stand by your man" conflict. They had married young and had no training or experience in the affairs in the world. The mothers had learned no protection for themselves nor could they offer any to their daughters. Kandi's own mother had been raped by her husband. Kandi wrote:

It's been hard, Mom, I never had a childhood I could put on paper and be proud of. Shame overcomes me every time I remember back. My father the rapist, the pervert; my stepfather, the molester; me, the bad seed. I think you made me feel like that. Mom, I wasn't bad. I was confused.

It is precisely this confusion in the daughter's mind that makes her question whether her own feelings of rage at the abuse are correct or whether the incident was so terrible. As Alice Miller states in her excellent book on child abuse, *For Your Own Good*,

It may be that the plight of a little child who is abused is even worse and has more serious consequences for society than the plight of an adult in a concentration camp... with few exceptions, the inmate [of a concentration camp] will not doubt the tragic nature of his experiences. He will never attempt to convince himself that the cruelty he was subjected to was for his own good or was a pedagogical measure. He will

usually not attempt to empathize with the motives of his persecutors. He will find people with whom to share his feelings of outrage, hatred, and despair over the cruelty suffered. The abused child does not have any of these options. ... She is alone with her suffering, not only within the family but also within her self. And because she cannot share her pain with anyone, she is also unable to create a place in her own soul where she could "cry her heart out"; no arms of a "kind aunt" exist there; "Keep a stiff upper lip and be brave" is the watchword. (p. 116& 117)

Kandi's case, Marcia's, and others' revealed to me that there were great schisms in mother-daughter relationships when the mothers did nothing to protect their daughters, either by leaving the abusive husband or by reporting him to the police, etc. They communicated helplessness and victimization to their daughters, which sent the girls spiraling further into a world of isolation, loneliness, autism in some cases, and, in others, running away. Kandi ended up in reform school, Marcia joined a motorcycle gang, Terri stopped talking at ten.

I saw a repeated pattern modeled on the ancient Greek myth of Persephone and Demeter, which has been a central image in writing of my work at CRC. The myth tells of the incredible stress, sense of loss, sorrow, and pain that occur when a daughter is abducted from her mother at an innocent age and the mother is unable to do anything to protect her daughter from the rapist-kidnapper. Persephone is raped, taken from her mother into the Underworld by Death (Pluto) while Demeter, "her anxious frightened mother, looked for her daughter up and down the world." (Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, p. 152.)

Judith Herman wrote in her Colloquium on "Sexual Violence," 1984,

It is clear that girls who are alienated from their mothers or who are physically separated from their mothers for any length of time are at much higher risk for all forms of sexual assault. In my own survey of treatment programs for incest and child sexual abuse, one of the main points of consensus was that if the family could be rebuilt at all, the key to recovery for the victim and restoration of the family was the mother-daughter relationship. Where that could be strengthened and restored, the victims did well; where it could not, the victims had a much harder time.

Kandi wrote to her mother:

I love you very much. Through my writing I'm learning to accept my past and to deal with it. I'm using my past in a constructive way. I love you and I miss you.

Unfortunately it took till Kandi was in her late twenties and in prison for her to feel the impulse to write that healing letter.

Marcia, on the other hand, came to Bright Fires not yet ready to tap into her anger at her mother or at the man who attempted to molest her. Her fear of allowing herself to go back and acknowledge any of her feelings about her childhood sexual abuse was so great that she was in a prison of silence. Being silenced was yet another form of abuse. Her body had become an insulating cocoon and a prison out of which she could not grow. She had successfully suppressed her thoughts and feelings for so long that she suffered from deep depressions which she named, "the feeling," as well as feelings of inner emptiness and lack of self-worth. Heroin had been the only way she had found to relive the pain and simultaneously create another reality, albeit false and illusory.

However, once Marcia was able to break through the emotional hold of her past by putting it into words, she found a great release of energy and creative drive. She felt she needed to create a dramatic reading of her work in which Stephanie and I became the other character voices. This allowed Marcia to imaginatively enact her confrontation with FEAR through her dramatic dialogue. It revealed to her the power of the imagination to confront and conquer one's inner demons. After that, she dropped her little girl voice, an almost "Betty-Boop" quality of tone and mimicry. It was as though she gave birth to a more mature self, not yet a woman of twenty-four, but no longer a girl-child. She had begun to escape the emotional cocoon that had frozen her at the age of ten.

The process of creating a dramatic ritual out of Marcia's words was not only a creative opening for Marcia but also for the entire Bright Fires group. As in Aristotle's definition of drama, Marcia had allowed the audience to experience a catharsis through her words. While opening the door to confront her own demons, she gave courage and space to others to speak up.

This lifting of the voice was shown a month later when Debbie came in with a love poem thanking her present boyfriend for staying by her in spite of all her past difficulties. Her piece was vague and abstract. I could sense she was trying to articulate something important.

No one in the assembled circle of fifteen knew what to say since her meaning was so veiled. Without realizing what I was touching, I rushed in and asked, "Could you just tell us what you are trying to say and give us some concrete examples?" She began to read the piece again and this time broke into a fit of tears as she began to explain how she was molested at six by her mother's boyfriend. Everyone was stunned. Six years old! Yet everyone knew how unfortunately true this story was. Pat admitted she was molested at eleven by her older brother and had never dared admit that to anyone. Others told stories of being battered and abused as wives or being emotionally abused and ridiculed as children. The next few weeks of writing were filled with poems and stories inspired by Debbie's courage in admitting her story in a group setting. I wrote the following poem in response to that moment:

Will The Real Criminal Please Stand Up?

Sharon Stricker

She was 6

He was 30

She was a child with raven hair
and ivory skin

Fragile innocence
a young princess like you'd meet
in the Brothers Grimm

Except

he caught her
held back her flailing arms
tore at her party dress
inserted pain

for years she lived in paralysis
afraid for anyone to touch her
she imagined spiders
and other crawling things
living inside her

at 8

at 9

at 10

again and again
she cried Momma, Momma
he whispered, "I'll kill if you tell"

till one day she found him
with her sister
she told her grandma

who hit him on the head with a frying pan
till he grew into a monster
and threw the 90-year-old woman out the window

she died soon after

the little girl escaped
years later she found PCP
her drug of choice to kill the pain

married
frigid
in prison
insane

and Norman?

He is still free.

What wasn't apparent to me, however, was how many women shared a deep rage that lived so far down that it was almost forgotten. I got my first hint of its widespread existence when I read "Will The Real Criminal Please Stand Up?" and got a burst of applause. I then began to notice that whenever I read this particular piece to women in prison I always got resounding applause. I was tapping into their anger as well as their pain.

Norma Jean expanded our discussions by talking about the differing psychological responses to sexual molestation and rape.

My New Daddy

Norma Jean Ross

I was molested at eleven years old. Not raped, molested. You may not understand the difference. Molestation is intimidation of a child by threats, coercion, bribery, manipulation of many different forms. Created to accomplish a subliminal type of co-operation of the victim with the molester.

I heard him breathing deeply. My eyes opened just enough to see my stepfather sitting naked in a chair by my bed. I shut my eyes tightly and lay trembling in the darkness, praying to God for help. I was sure that my stepfather could hear my heart banging inside my chest. His breathing quickened, the noises he made scared me. I thought he was having a fit and was going to kill me.

He made sure that I was never alone with my mother when she was home. His eyes would narrow into an unspoken threat when she would come home from the bar she worked at. My mother worked nights so she was asleep most of the day. By the time I got home from school she would be getting ready to go to work and usually be in a hurry as she had to walk three miles into town.

My stepfather slapped me around after she went to work. I remember him making me pull my panties down so he could spank me for being bad. I got spanked for a lot of things, like sweeping the floor wrong. He was left-handed and I was right-handed. But if he caught me sweeping the floor right-handed, I got spanked.

After I cleaned the house he would make me bathe, while he watched ... making sure that I'd get myself clean. Sometimes he would wash me himself ... just to be positively sure. Then he would make me sit on his lap like a little girl. He would tell me not to let boys touch me in my private places, touching them himself so I'd know where he was talking about. Before sending me to bed he would kiss me goodnight and push his tongue into my mouth. If I jerked away he slapped me full across the face for being mean to him when all he was doing was trying to be a good father to me.

One morning after my mother came home from work she found me passed out drunk on my bed with blood all over the sheets. My stepfather told her that I had tried to entice him and had put something up inside myself. They got into a fight in the living room. He was beating her up really bad. I grabbed a frying pan and hit him until he let go of her. I must have been half-crazy because he ran out the door with blood pouring from his head. My mother lay thrashing and screaming on the floor hysterical. I ran out the back door. I ran and ran and ran.

Another moment of revelation came months later when Norma turned around to me in the Bright Fires office and said, "You know it wasn't just writing 'My New Daddy' that released me from shame and guilt. I realized, as a result of writing, that I am not to blame for this crime." She began to cry. "All these years I have carried around the belief that this was my fault, that I was the guilty one, that somehow I caused this to happen. But how could I be guilty of this? I was only eleven years old, just a child. Is there no responsibility placed on the adults?"

The room felt very white to me that morning—like an Easter Sunday when the church is filled with white calla lilies and the priest wears white and gold vestments. Norma had achieved a new level of awareness through her writing: she was no longer looking at her abuse through the eyes of a child. She was looking at her life through the eyes of an adult woman. She was clearly an example of Adrienne Rich's notion of writing as "re-vision." Rich says in her critical book *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*:

Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society." (p. 35)

In Norma's revelation I saw spread out before me my own belief that we need to know our past if ever we are to break its hold on us. Norma had travelled, like Marcia, from a place of total silence, through the intellectual recognition of her childhood abuse, to verbal acknowledgement and even mourning of her humiliation. But I believe it was writing out the entire event, coupled with speaking it out loud to a small group, that brought her to a total re-evaluation of the incident and to her insight that it had had power to cripple her life up till now.

Like Marcia, Norma experienced a tremendous new surge of creative energy which culminated in her finishing the book she had been trying to write for ten years: *Dead Flowers in a Dill Pickle Jar*. She no longer resorted to the "dumb prisoner" mask that she had cultivated as a coverup in prison. This work, along with other written explorations of her ethnic heritage, became a powerful stage of creative development for Norma. Since then her work has been published and she has won awards. Norma's willingness to explore her past inspired many of the other women to write poems about Norma, as well as to risk that same self-exploration.

Sandy, like Norma, had carried the disease of blame, guilt, and self-hatred around with her from the age of nine. She wrote of her abuse:

So repulsive was this I knew it had to be what I deserved since Momma said I was the cause of the craziness at home. Her drinking, and Dad and her fighting. ... Because of the craziness at home we finally moved to another area, leaving the old man and the "jackal" (her girlfriend's father who also had abused her sexually), to bury themselves somewhere inside me.

Sandy and I spent several afternoons discussing how this very early sexual abuse had left a mark that said she was a "bad girl," the "bad seed." After all, she believed, she was the cause of her parents' problems and had been told so. Was it any wonder then that she thought she deserved this abuse? Another inmate and former prostitute had once told me, "I associated abuse with love." Was it any wonder then that Sandy allowed her boyfriend-pimp to beat her? Or that her drug abuse was a direct outcome of the trauma of molestation and sexual abuse by two older men?

She later wrote:

I have been the object of abuse much of my life, so much that I cover it with my life as sometimes my will wilts like an uprooted flower. Has abuse become so familiar to me and my existence that I continue to abuse myself? Is it a cycle I will forever give life to, the addiction that takes so much life from me?

Sandy died of a heart-lung disease nine months later. I wrote this poem the day I learned of her death:

The Fire Inside

Sharon Stricker

rage ate out my friend's insides
blew them up all out of proportion
the heart a football
the lungs collapsed
emptiness
no breath
no freedom
constriction

a rare disease the doctors say
that afflicts only women
age 20–35
there is no cure
and I think, no, of course not,
because they don't know
about her rage

the rage of a woman
with too many years of anger stuffed
down her throat like a French goose
fattened
for the killing
rage that begins with her parents' drinking
and rejection
rage that flees from beating
rage that climbs down the ladder
of white sheets each knot another
tightening of her breathing
rage at being told she's a dummy
a junky with no good reason
to live or learn
rage at the jackal who haunts her memory
stripping innocence
as she sleeps

rage at all the men who used her
as a plaything/a wind-up doll
for their diversion
the empty field where one came running
the only way she knew to make a living
with less than an eighth grade education
a fragile beauty
hair long and silken
like Rapunzel in her prison
only Rumpelstiltskin to listen
her skin flawless and ivory
like a Geisha
admired for her beauty
caught in class distinctions
all this anger
before she went to prison.

It was not, I came to see, only the trauma of early childhood sexual abuse and lack of parental protection but also Sandy's fear of expressing her feelings and most especially her rage that had led to the use of heroin to deaden all her feelings.

Sandy, like Norma, had had "no loving arms" to cry into at ten. The fact that at 24 she couldn't cry was an example of how she exerted strict control over all her emotions. She was her own best warden, always fearful that the wrong emotion might get out. She was surprised that I could read her emotional life so well when I told her she looked like a Pacific Blowfish because her whole body seemed to puff up when she tried to hold in her anger (which she usually tried to do). She desperately wanted to be a "good girl." She wanted to be a "lady." She thought that the way to do this was to suppress all her emotions and feelings. Heroin helped her: it temporarily quieted the killing pain.

As I got to know the women better and heard more of their stories, I concluded that heroin addiction is most often the result of the repressed rage from early child abuse. Men express their rage and self-hatred outwardly against others. Women are trained to express it at themselves. Says Elaine Carmen in her study of men and women who have been victimized as adolescents:

Males became more violent and abusive to others whereas female victims became more self-destructive. Childhood trauma—whether physical or social—was associated with the most mutilating and self-destructive acts. Rather than believe they have crazy parents, abused children believe they deserve abuse, so they attempt to master the experience with self-punishment.

I saw this self-punishment clearly manifested when, as I was walking the women back to their dorms (after a workshop), Mary Ellen burst into tears and told me, "I feel like killing myself. I think I'm going crazy. I keep imagining myself in Patton State Hospital. Every time I think of my stepmother coming to see me, I'm afraid she's going to have a car accident. Even though I know there's no reason to think this, I'm afraid of everything."

I was shocked but also relieved to see Mary Ellen finally cry because all day long I had been trying to get her to open up. She

sat during the afternoon workshop uninvolved, fidgety and distracted. One of the other women said that Mary Ellen should use the word "anger" to write from in her exercise that evening.

Mary Ellen did indeed write from "anger," and the next day she followed my advice and wrote out a dialogue between the negative and positive voices she was hearing. But she couldn't believe the positive voices. She could only listen to all the negative voices—the negative voices from her past, from when she was a little girl. These were the voices that said she was "fat," a "slow learner," a "slut," "lazy," and that "she had killed her mother." She had such a powerfully negative self-image that she couldn't hear anything positive about herself and was winding herself down deeper and deeper into a depression. I knew Mary Ellen had been beaten as a child. Her father was an alcoholic and she spoke often of his abuse. At the same time he was her father and she dearly wanted his love. She found it very difficult to blame him for his abuse of her. Instead she turned her anger, guilt, blame inwards towards herself. She thought that because she had stolen her mother's silver dollars and given them all away in an attempt to gain friends at the age of seven, that she was inherently a "bad girl." Even though she knew consciously that she hadn't caused her mother's death, she believed that she contained some evil power inside herself that was the reason for her mother's death as well as the death of others.

Mary Ellen's self-hatred was so great that she had attempted suicide seven times before she entered prison. She was now 32. She used drugs, especially heroin, to deaden all these voices inside.

Because of my years of weekly contact and work with hundreds of women inmates who told or wrote about their lives, I am absolutely convinced that child abuse—physical, sexual, emotional, or through neglect—sets the stage for later self-destructive acts. The rage smouldering from this early abuse finds its outlet in drug addiction, alcoholism, excessive gambling, mental illness, suicide, prostitution, and crime.

The taboo against speaking about child abuse, especially sexual abuse, has been so great that the victims have lost their own voices. They have been told, "Don't tell or I'll kill." They have

been forced to swallow their own voices and thus to lose or negate an essential part of themselves.

I came to understand very clearly my role in this prison, to see the great need to discover this lost, forgotten or hidden voice. The gift of creative writing became the tool for this exploration and communication. We learned to talk to each other in writing/to break the silence/to tell secrets. As Micki stated, "I have to write it before I can speak it."

The expiation of the feelings of repressed guilt, blame, rage, and sorrow after so many years was critical for any growth or change. The women needed to mourn for themselves and to have a compassionate listener. They needed rituals for imaginative confrontations with their fear of speaking out or a workshop setting which allowed them to release their own voice, thereby releasing the voices of others. The whole atmosphere of repression was lifted.

The notion of the voice, the ability to express all the feelings and emotions that have been repressed due to childhood trauma, is the important key here. It has been with the lifting of the voice through the creation of a work of art in the form of prose, poetry, or dramatic dialogue and the subsequent presentation of this art form to the larger public that has served to free many of the women I have worked with. Writing and speaking were points of transformation for the women inmates. They resemble metaphorically

the alchemist's dream of changing base metals into gold. No one in the Bright Fires Program was ever the same after this work. Many who are going through this process are on their way to healing. My "graduates" have gotten out of prison and are still free in numbers far beyond the norm.

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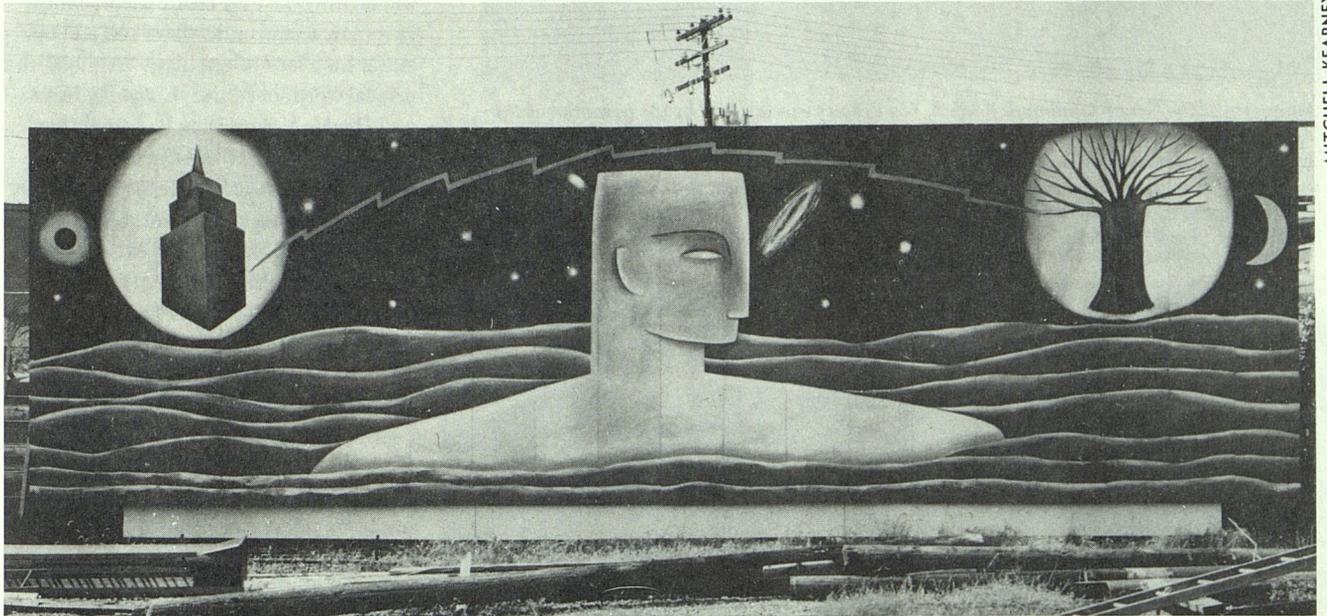
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RUTH AVA LYONS



Commercial billboard from the "Urban Vision" Project.

MITCHELL KEARNEY

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NANCY
PRINCENTHAL

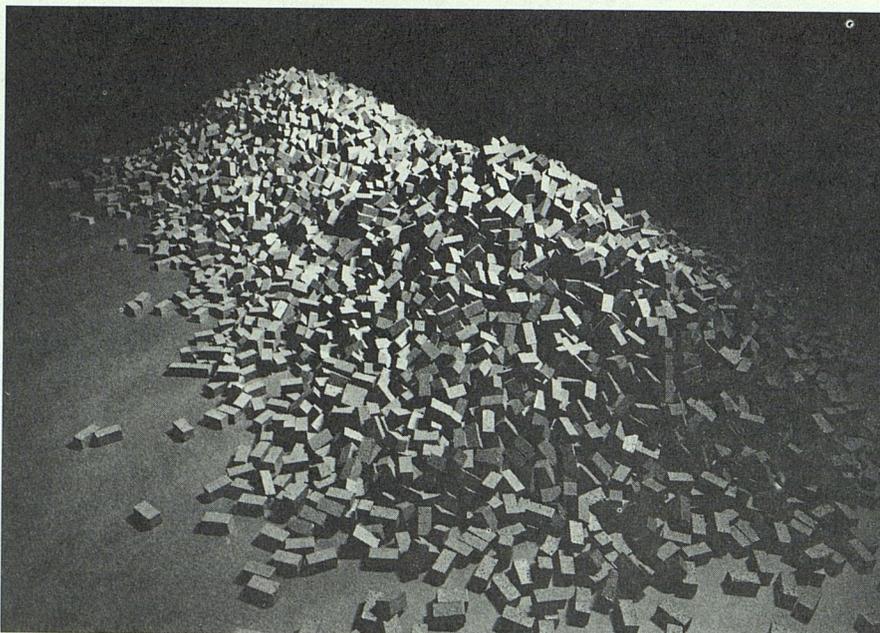
SYNTHESIZING ART, NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Three miles off the coast of Fire Island and forty miles from Manhattan, Betty Beaumont's *Ocean Landmark Project* lies submerged beneath seventy feet of water. Completed in 1980, the project consists of a 500-ton artificial reef fabricated entirely from industrial waste products. Now a flourishing marine community and a working fishing ground, the reef resulted from a collaborative effort that involved individuals at two major universities (Columbia and the State University of New York at Stonybrook) and an internationally acclaimed corporate research center (Bell Laboratories in New Jersey), as well as support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the America the Beautiful Fund and assistance from the Fire Island National Seashore, New York. It was a monumental undertaking, unequivocally successful. Yet hardly anyone knows it's there. When Michael Hiezer or Walter de Maria retreat to the country's arid interior, the earthworks they create there, almost as remote as the underwater reef, do not suffer for a lack of publicity. "Almost" is a critical word, of course; *Lightning Field* and *Double Negative* can be seen by any intrepid traveller, while the *Ocean Landmark Project* is inaccessible to anyone without scuba diving equipment. Still, ample photo-documentation does exist. The obscurity of a project with such enormous imaginative and practical scope requires a less conditional explanation.

Partly, it lies in the fact that Beaumont has gone beyond many original earth art concerns; defiance of the traditional gallery system is not of paramount interest to her, nor are the formal, perceptual, and to some extent anthropological issues that have motivated the earth artists. Neither does she approach collaboration—and this may be more germane—as a means of achieving a kind of synesthesia in which the collaborators' sensibilities are mutually articulated and enhanced. Beaumont seems in fact (and even in this she is not quite alone) not to be interested in sensibility at all; for her, collaboration simply grants access to expertise. But what sets her vision most distinctly apart from that of her nearest colleagues is its radical utopi-

Maquette of the Ocean Landmark Project. The Project was inspired by the potential of the Atlantic Continental Shelf and by a team of scientists experimenting to stabilize an industrial by-product in water. Beaumont proposed using their materials to create an underwater sculpture. In order to determine the size, shape and scale of the Project, she built a maquette using 17,000 blocks (3/4" x 3/4" x 1 1/2") in this 9' x 5' scale model (1" = 1'). 17,000 fly-ash bricks were then fabricated, shipped to the site on the Continental Shelf, and laid on the floor of the Atlantic.

PETER NAMUTH

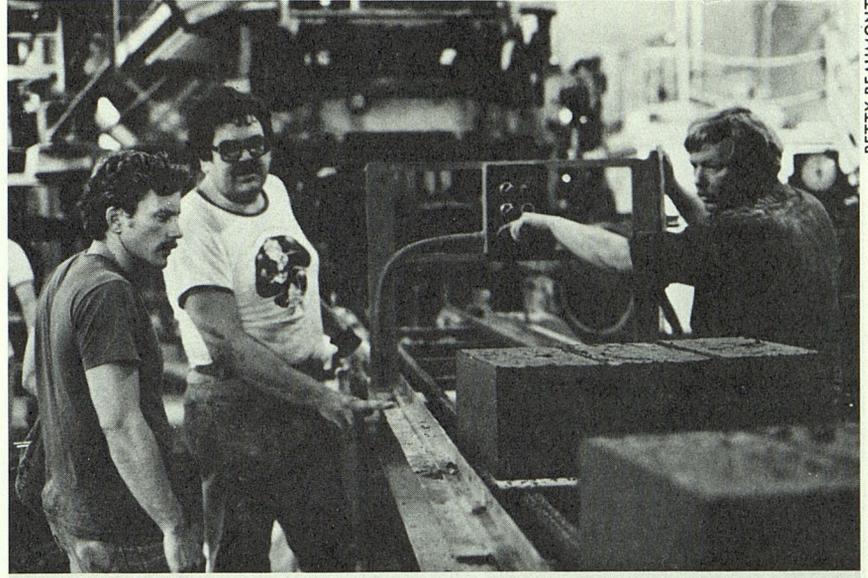


anism. Her belief in the cultural and social applications of new technology is fervent, and her ambitions for it might make some people uncomfortable.

Beaumont's most important work in progress is called *Algorithms of the Mind Project* (AMP for short). Aromas of high school math and Eastern wisdom mingle uneasily in this title, but there really is no simple descriptive term for the project. Its purpose is to create a system, using advanced artificial intelligence technology, that enables a viewer to visualize his or her creative processes. The basis of the project, as it is now conceived, will be a very broad-ranging representation of the earlier undersea piece, shown on computer-programmed video monitors or screens. Underwater photography of the reef will be just the core of an enormous body of information to be fed into the computer; "cultural anthropology," "mythology of the sea," "ecological concerns" and "continental shelf" are examples of several thousand subject headings under which further images and recorded text will be organized. A Landsat satellite map of an urbanized cultural region, a sonar reading of a continental shelf, and a photograph of two Indians praying by a river are examples of available images. Text sources range from Marshall McLuhan to the pages of *National Geographic*, and from Herman Melville to T.S. Eliot.

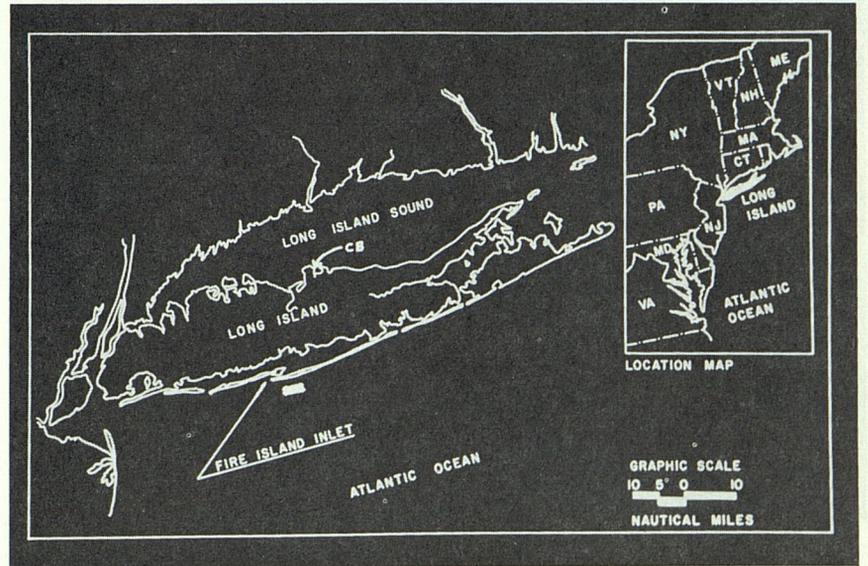
After introducing itself in a brief explanatory segment, AMP will ask its interlocutor for some basic biographic data. Then the viewer will take the reins, determining the sequence of information shown by choosing among options that the computer presents with each image. These choices, or movements through the data, will be made either by manipulating a joy stick or, in a more expensive version of the project, working directly on a large touch-sensitive screen. In either case, the images are to be shown on a large rear-projected screen. The viewer will be able to command AMP to alter, or "process," the imagery of the underwater project according to certain prescribed variables, creating various simulations of the reef. As the viewer proceeds from one image to the next, a schematic log of his or her progress, called a "cognitive map," will be formed and displayed along with the primary imagery. Beaumont has submitted a proposal for AMP to La Villette, which has expressed interest in presenting the

Block factory where 500 tons of industrial by-product from coal was fabricated into 17,000 blocks. From left to right in the photograph is the marine biologist, Jeff Parker, the material scientist, and a block factory worker. In the foreground of the photo are three OLP blocks.



BETTY BEAUMONT

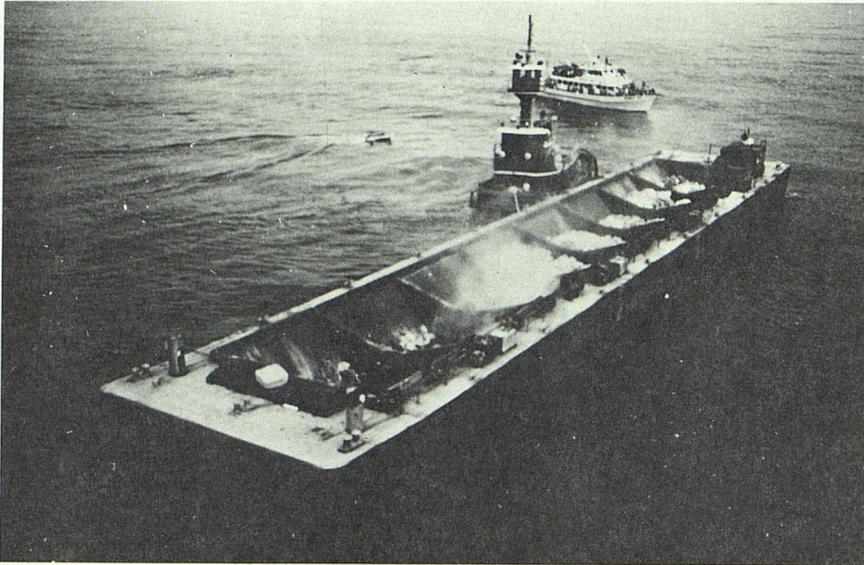
Computer-generated map of installation site. Three miles off the coast of the Fire Island National Seashore and 55 miles from Manhattan (see area of rectangle) the Ocean Landmark Project lies submerged in 70 feet of water. This part of the Continental Shelf was dredged for the installation.



IVER DUEDAL

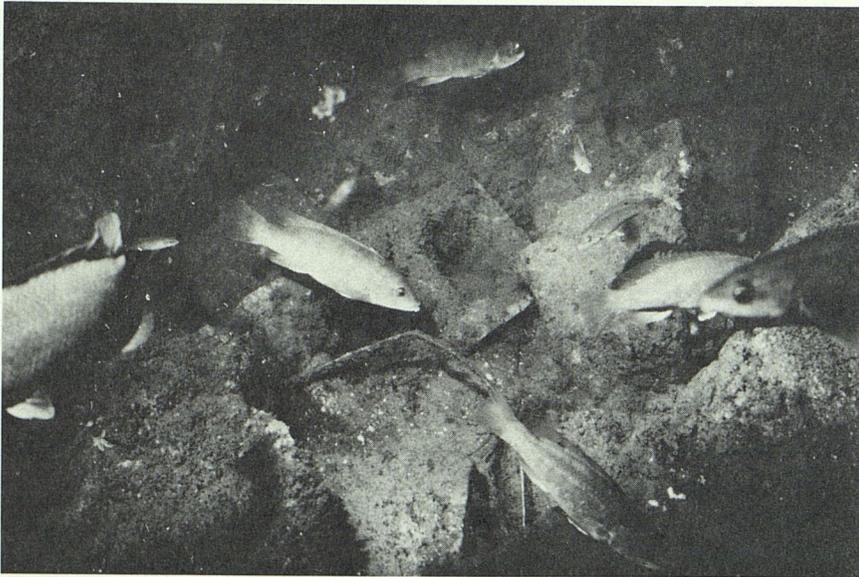
Installation photo of 500 tons of coal waste, an industrial by-product, fabricated into 17,000 blocks, being control-dropped 70 feet onto the ocean floor to form an artificial reef sculpture.

MICHAEL GOLD



Current underwater photo of the Ocean Landmark Project. At the site of the OLP a healthy and balanced environment has developed.

JEFF PARKER



work. For the French version, Beaumont would incorporate information about various coastal sites in France that might be appropriate for a new version of the underwater piece.

The technology to be involved in creating AMP is indeed sophisticated. Beaumont is now collaborating with cognitive psychologist/computer scientist John B. Black of Teacher's College at Columbia University in New York, and he describes the challenges that AMP presents in the field of artificial intelligence as unique. For one thing, the very idea of integrating moving video imagery with educational programs is very unusual, since most such programs—reflecting academic biases and also such practical difficulties as indexing a continuous filmed sequence of information—involve static images and, more often, text. And the kind of interaction that Beaumont proposes between user and computer is in many respects untried—the field is, after all, fairly new. But perhaps more basic would be AMP's pioneering use of what is known in the artificial intelligence community as a "study environment." In this type of program the computer's responses to the user's queries and decisions reflect the computer's inferences, based in this case on the user's choices to that point and on the profile it has formed from the biographical information solicited at the beginning of the program, of what the user wants to know next. Thus it is very unlikely that any two excursions through AMP would elicit the same sequence of information, or that they would produce the same cognitive maps.

Oddly, this inferential capacity gives the computer the privilege of ingenuity: what distinguishes the system that AMP would use from more primitive educational programs is that, in the case of a study environment, the computer is no more passive than the user. This puts a curious twist on Beaumont's paired intentions for this project: encouraging viewer sensitivity to the complexities of knowledge brought to bear on creative decisions, and allowing users to characterize their creative profiles by examining records of their distinctive approaches to AMP. The system to be used for AMP would indeed allow for a more flexible use of computer-stored data than is now ordinarily possible, but some of the most impressive displays of understanding and invention would be made by the machine. Beaumont is well aware of the

constraints surrounding the user's experience. Though their encounters with AMP qualify as "creative," she says, they do not result in artworks, since that function is reserved for practicing artists and hinges on the issues of intentionality. Finally, of course, AMP's entire artistic purview is determined by Beaumont's own imaginative life; the outer parameters of the user's encounter with AMP are fixed in place by Beaumont's vision. The project's ultimate model of creativity is, thus, the artist's own mind. It is not a timid conception, but neither is it less modest than that which motivates any traditional easel painting.

In a September, 1985, *Artforum* review of the "Les Immatériaux" show, which François Lyotard organized for the Pompidou Center in the summer of that same year, Kate Linker compared its aims to those of a 1968 show at London's Institute of Contemporary Art called "Cybernetic Serendipity." The London show, Linker said, "was launched in the name of Modernity, an ideal that, since the time of Descartes, has focused on the will and creative powers of the human subject." Linker found the London show's underlying premise to be that "technoscience" is "a prosthetic, or aid, to universal mastery; the cybernetic revolution appeared to accomplish man's aim of material transformation, of shaping the world in the image of himself." Lyotard's conception was, Linker said, antithetical; she described it as a postmodern revision of our understanding of technology, whereby the self is decentered, upstaged and even regulated by collusive social and technological forces. In this framework, Beaumont's vision is essentially a modern one. Her work seeks to redress what she sees as our society's "dispersed" belief in the individual. AMP is designed to celebrate a venerable model of artistic activity. "My medium is the mind," Beaumont has written. Industries, technologies and sciences are not, for her, formative or coercive elements but simply "raw materials." Beaumont does call the relationship of nature and technology "dialectical," and claims as her central concern the force of their combined "impact on creative and spiritual freedom." But her confidence in the viable and even cardinal value of these freedoms, her belief that they are not, as postmodernists say they are, chimaera, the self-comforting illusions of a superceded humanism, is

central to her approach to technology, just as much as is her utopian faith in its possibilities.

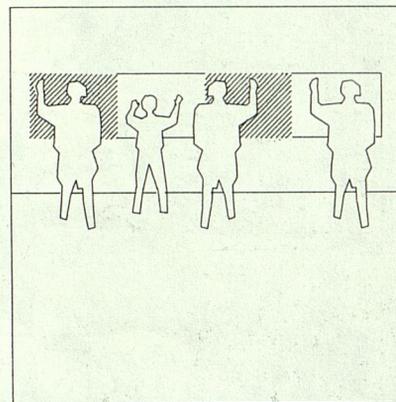
This is not to say that Beaumont is insensitive to the destructive power of misused technology. An active awareness of just this problem resulted in *Toxic Imaging* (1981; to be repeated in a revised form in 1987, available for touring), a multi-media installation that documented the ecological tragedy visited on the Love Canal community in northern New York State by the release into the ground of poisonous chemicals. It was, in part, concern for the effect of industrial waste on fragile environments that motivated her creation of the offshore reef. A project temporarily deferred would have fitted out a retired U.S. Armed Forces jet with an audio piece subversive of all military applications of advanced technology. And *Torment of Tantalus*, another mixed media project now in progress, will examine the phenomenon of world hunger as a function of industrialization.

Of course, to target the abuses of industry is not the same thing as renouncing high technology. Much of Beaumont's work deplores the ravages of big business while availing itself of corporate America's most glamorous products. She doesn't exploit this irony but simply accepts it as a hazard of working with the culture's most sensitive tools. Beaumont's sangfroid is remarkable in an age when many artists concerned with advanced technology express a deep anxiety—or a morbid fascination—with the dissolution of personal identity in the face of a blinding media-borne haze of digitized information. "I see nature as a circular system and technology as a linear system," Beaumont says. "My work is a curve between the two." Casting technology as an expression of progressive cultural development, Beaumont is able to preserve a humanist ideology on just the grounds where postmodernism finds it most seriously threatened.

All quotes of the artists are from her unpublished written descriptions of her work, from a public lecture, and from conversations with the author.

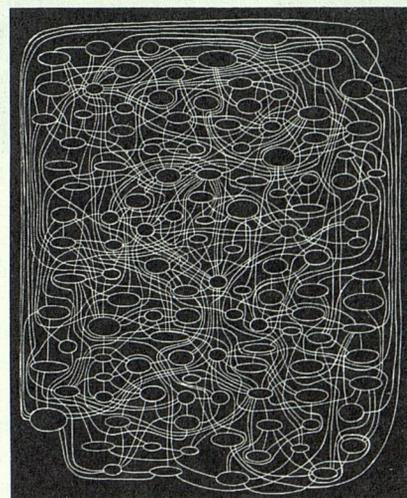
NANCY PRINCENTHAL, a freelance writer living in New York, is Associate Editor of *The Print Collector's Newsletter*.

Below is a design for Beaumont's Algorithms of the Mind Project (AMP)—participants manipulate images and texts on touch-sensitive computer screens. AMP is a performance artwork based on the interaction of artificial intelligence and the human mental processes of cognitive and creative thought.

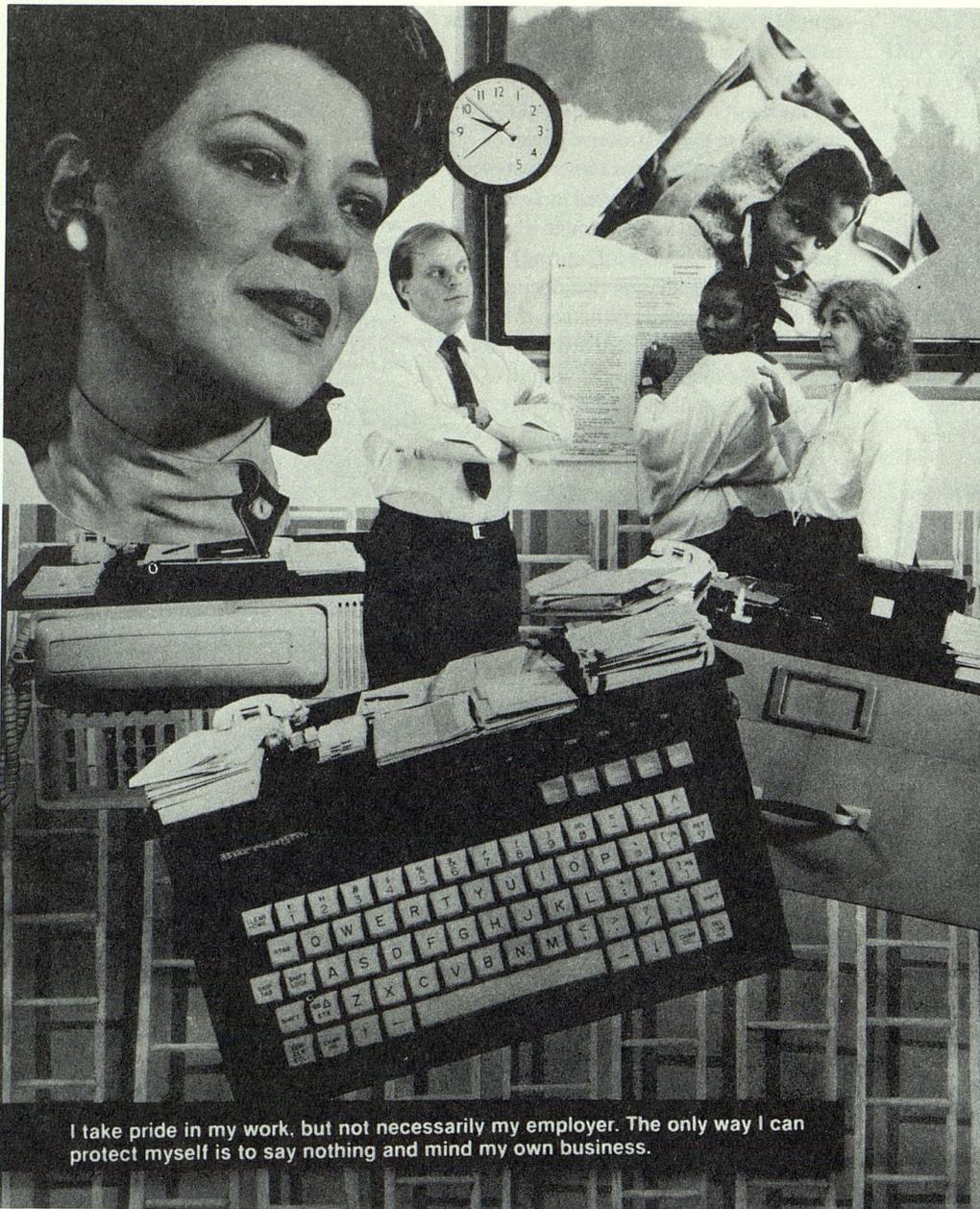


BETTY BEAUMONT

The cognitive map below is a knowledge network representation of concepts, arcs, and nodes similar to frame systems in Artificial Intelligence research. Participants in Beaumont's AMP will be able to examine their own "creative profiles" as recorded by maps like this.



BETTY BEAUMONT



I take pride in my work, but not necessarily my employer. The only way I can protect myself is to say nothing and mind my own business.

WORKING TIES

CAROL CONDE

CAROL CONDE works with Karl Beveridge and lives in Toronto. She has completed several projects with trade unions in Canada.

ON CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

DEBORAH LANGERMAN

When the Alliance for Cultural Democracy was formed in 1986 under the title of NAPNOC (the Neighborhood Arts Programs National Organizing Committee), it was made up of artists working in various communities and neighborhoods from across the U.S. We were engaged in art projects with people who, as a result of the economic and political structure of our cultural institutions, had little access to the means of production for artistic expression of their cultural and community values. Through the use of CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act) funds we were able not only to provide arts training for, and develop artistic projects with, disadvantaged youth, unemployed workers, the elderly, and others, but we were employed ourselves, which empowered many of us who use our skills to contribute to the process of social change.

So we came together as a kind of meta-cultural community, a community of artists dedicated to the use of community art. We were engaged in a struggle to make our own voices and the voices of the people with whom we worked audible within a dominant, imperialistic culture that by its very nature intends to silence us and that would rather not hear from us at all. As our community of artists grew, we began to articulate our beliefs and values and we entered into a long process of self-determination and definition. It is a process that all communities go through as they develop and begin to create their identity vis-à-vis other communities and the society as a whole. We organized ourselves around the guiding principal of cultural democracy, hence the name change to the Alliance for Cultural Democracy.

As the Alliance for Cultural Democracy enters its second decade, we continue to be engaged in the process of self-determination. In many ways, the questions "Who are we?" and "Who is a member of our community?" have greater significance and urgency now, as some long-worked-on projects begin to take shape, and new plans and projects for the future are developed. As ACD matures and expands, we need to remind ourselves that, while we are primarily an organization for artists building a movement for cultural democracy, we must at the same time welcome and accept cultural workers of all types and should actively seek out anyone interested in joining our community in order to integrate culture into the larger movement for social change.

The Alliance for Cultural Democracy will be able to survive as a community for cultural workers if we maintain a strong identity as artists. We will only be able to achieve our goals if, in addition to sharing our skills, ideas, and dreams for the future with one another, we open the doors of our community to a variety of people who share our values and desires for a world where cultural, political, and economic equality forms the basis for a free and open society in which all communities and cultures can flourish along side one another.

ACD has always had a broad definition of cultural worker and has included in its membership arts administrators, community

organizers, educators, and political activists, as well as artists working in diverse forms and media. As Kaye McDuffie (currently ACD's vice president and chair of the multi-cultural diversity committee) said of her first ACD conference in Atlanta in 1983, "It was the first time I saw artists, administrators, and community organizers who shared a common political vision coming together. That was very exciting to me. I felt as though I had come home." Our annual conferences have continued to be a home for many of us who have either felt that the doors were shut on us in other organizations in which we worked or that our politics were unwelcomed by arts councils, administrators, and the various art disciplines and circles in which we found ourselves.

Connected with ACD's broad definition of cultural workers is its recognition that culture and cultural democracy require definitions that expand the scope of these terms to include nearly all human activity. When progressives turn their attention to the movement for cultural rights and cultural democracy, they will speak out on a great many questions of broad social concern: Who controls the airwaves and to what uses are they put? What will our schools teach and who will control them? Whose stories will our cultural institutions preserve to make up the record we leave for future generations? Will profit take precedence over people in the development of our cities, the design of our homes and streets?

We must also remember that those members of our communities who don't consider themselves to be artists have been involved in an arts-related project at some point in their lives and certainly have engaged in a creative process. The separation of the arts and sciences and creativity from the work process itself is a recent phenomenon. We must recognize that we are all participants in the making of culture and that we all belong to a number of different communities at once: at work, at home, in our neighborhoods, ethnic, gender, religious, and political communities, to name a few.

To empower ourselves and combat our oppression, rather than retrench, we must engage in the active process of re-membering ourselves, a process that many community artists use with their fellow workers. It is a process of storytelling, sharing, oral history, a re-discovery of cultural heritage buried under the weight of dominant commercial culture, and a re-examination of one's role in larger social and historical movements. As community artists we must remember that many of us have skills that extend beyond our artistic ones, that we have been employed (whether out of necessity or choice) in a variety of occupations, and that we have played active roles in local, national, and international political struggles.

Once we as artists have identified our allies in other cultural and political organizations, it will become crucial to make links with them, so that we can make use of their skills as lawyers, administrators, community and political organizers, etc., and so that they can make use of our skills as artists. **The act of inviting "non-artists" into our alliance, and the offering of our skills and vision to them in turn, will bring us closer to another goal of our work as politically concerned artists: the integration of the arts and culture into the movement for social change. If we do not work as active participants in each other's organizations, we are left with a situation that a movement for cultural democracy seeks to correct: one where the work of artists is constantly seen as peripheral and superfluous and where, con-**

versely, the work of non-artists is automatically assumed to be non-creative or acultural.

For years members of the Alliance have been incorporating their work into national and international political movements. Arts Against Apartheid, Artists' Call Against Intervention in Central America, and Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament are but a few organized examples of what goes on in a much larger scale through the work of individual artists working together with local social-change groups.

Many members of ACD make use of the concept of "cultural animation" in their community art work. There are many definitions of cultural animation, but the concept rests on the foundation that members of the community become the artists and active participants in a creative project guided by the experienced artists, and that the process is one of mutual discovery, for both artists and participants, using an art form to help transform everyone's political and social consciousness. Inherent in the process of cultural animation is the underlying assumption that *any* member of a community can and should have an active part in cultural and artistic work, can share in the process of, as ACD members Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard put it, "envisioning alternatives and communicating them."

There has been much concern and discussion among artists that the process of cultural animation not become one of cultural imperialism. Much sensitivity and thought have been devoted to ways we as artists can guard against our work being a one-way process where we go in and impose our values, visions, and ideas on a group of people. We are vigilant in our desire to keep our work with others a two-way process, where we share our skills with others to help them bring to a work of art *their* values and visions, by listening to their concerns and by drawing upon their history and cultural heritage.

If we can understand the danger of not being open to the creative possibilities and cultural values of others in our individual work as artists, then surely in our larger community of artists and in our alliance with one another we must apply the same safeguards to our work as a group. We must continually "animate" ourselves so that we are open to the input and work of others in related (or unrelated) fields in order to create the vision of a world where our shared values can become a reality.

One of the ways to open our doors would be to create a space in our organization, perhaps at conferences, or in the make-up of our board, for the people in the community groups with whom we work—the senior participants in Elders Share the Arts, the young artists from Children Are the Future, the union members who publish their writings in the *Mill Hunk Herald*—to come together in order to see one another's work and to talk about culture and cultural policy with one another.

Support for our work must come, ultimately, from the communities in which we live and work. As community and political cultural workers come together in ever increasing numbers to organize ourselves, guide the debate on cultural policy, and work for cultural democracy, we must invite the participation of all those who are willing to help us achieve our goals and who will also benefit from them.

DEBORAH LANGERMAN was a founding member of United Mime Workers and is currently president of the board of directors of the Alliance for Cultural Democracy.

REHEARSALS

CAROL JACOBSEN

A Room Installation by Carol Jacobsen documenting 24 accidents (with chemical and biological weaponry) that have occurred worldwide. The communities represented have suffered thousands of human and animal deaths, ecological poisoning, immeasurable effects on health, and evacuations, including the permanent closure of one community, Times Beach, MO.

Fact Sheet on Rehearsals

An installation documenting accidents worldwide from chemical and biological weapons.

- 1 Cambridge, MA/today. The Arthur Little Co. currently conducts chemical and biological warfare experiments which kill hundreds of animals every month. In addition Arthur Little is working on research for Star Wars. In 1985 the company was found guilty of illegally shipping arms to South Africa with the help of the CIA.
- 2 Seveso, Italy/July 10, 1976. Leakage of Agent Orange chemicals on a large scale by the Hoffman LaRouche Co. Thousands of animals (birds, farm animals, wildlife) were killed, thousands of trees destroyed, at least 5,000 humans infected with diseases. Plant manager later slain. High incidence of miscarriages & malformed babies born since the accident.
- 3 Baltic Sea/1970. 62,000 tons of chemical warfare weapons contained in leaking and corroding canisters were dumped. Source unknown. Canisters were later pulled up in fishermen's nets, permanently injuring and blinding many.
- 4 Pagoda Beach, FL/1970. U.S. Army dumped 12,500 M/55 nerve gas warheads plus unknown number of nerve gas land mines. 30-40 whales died. Canisters were found leaking.

5 Dugway, UT/March 1968. Broken valves caused leakage of nerve gas killing 6,400 sheep. New facility now being built for more nerve gas and biological warfare research.

6 Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Denver, CO/1978. 10 bombs containing nerve gas leaked, killing rabbits, wildlife. High incidence of leukemia among humans in the area. Earthquakes have been linked directly to dumping of chemical weapons waste.

7 Okinawa, South Pacific/July 1969. Nerve gas leaks injured 24 men and 200 children.

8 Noel, MO/July 1969. Explosion of chemical weapons on freight train killed at least one person, injured over 100 persons, damaged all of city.

9 Fort Detrick, MD/1970. Bacteriological warfare research conducted still today. Experiments on 720,000 animals (including dogs) plus 200 humans each year. In 1970, 400 people were accidentally infected with diseases.

10 Sverdlovsk, USSR/April 1979. Accidental leakage of biological weapon VR 55. Several hundred persons killed.

11 San Francisco/1950. U.S. Navy & U.S. Army sprayed bacterial weapons for 6 days on the bay. 800,000 people were exposed. High rate of serratia pneumonia occurred, now recognized to result from exposure to that bacteria. Some deaths (unknown number) attributed.

12 Persian Gulf/1984. Poison gas used by Iraq against Iran. Deaths related are uncertified.

13 Bolsover, England/1968. Explosions in factory of 2,4,5-T and Dioxin nerve gas. Injuries undetermined.

14 Denver, CO/1980. Leakage from nerve bombs stored at Stapleton Airport caused animal deaths.

15 Fort Greely, Alaska/Today. Leaks of nerve gas between 1966 and 1974. Biological warfare research currently conducted here.

16 Irish Sea/Today. Dumping of 6,000 containers of chemical weapons including plutonium.

17 Puerto Rico/1968-69. Deliberate test spraying of Agent Orange by U.S. Army

in rural areas. High incidence of malformed births, miscarriages, cancer.

18 Times Beach, MO/1983. Evacuation due to leaking Agent Orange chemicals.

19 Aberdeen, MD; Richmond, KY; Pine Bluff, AR; Umatilla, OR; Toole, UT/Today. 500,000 leaking nerve gas rockets.

20 Newark, NJ/Today. Agent Orange chemicals have contaminated a neighborhood.

21 Jacksonville, AR/Today. Gardens contaminated by Agent Orange chemicals causing evacuations.

22 Grand Island, NE/Today. Wells contaminated from stored chemical explosives.

23 Jacksonville, FL/Today. Wells contaminated by military chemicals.

24 Eureka, NV/Today. Poisoned earth due to military chemicals.

Note—During the Reagan Administration the U.S. has carried out the largest expansion of the chemical warfare program since the 1950s. In October 1986, a 17-year moratorium on chemical weapons production ended with the start-up of a \$125.4 million program of new binary weapons (which means the chemical precursors are separated into two chambers that mix after firing to form lethal nerve gas), including the Bigeye aerial bomb which has blown up accidentally or otherwise failed in 90% of its tests.

The American Chemical Association estimates the present U.S. supply of nerve

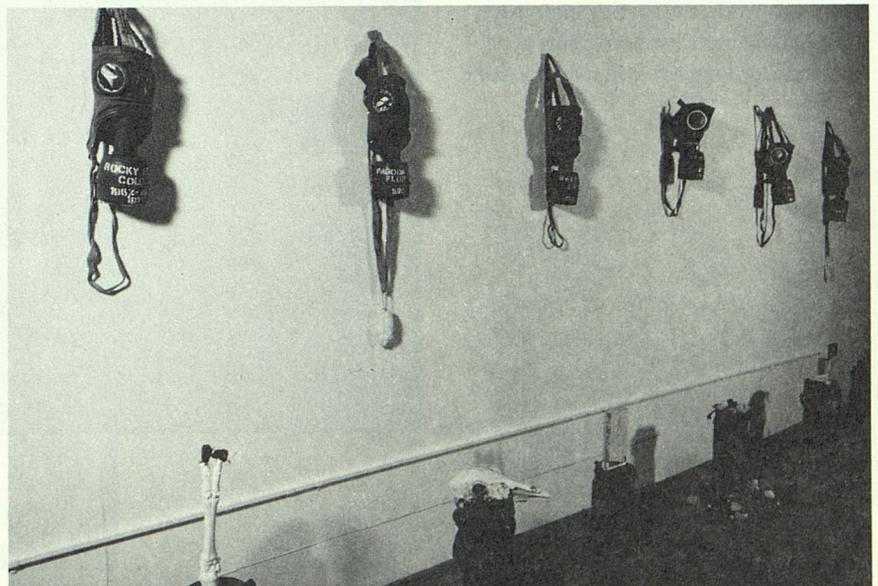
gas is sufficient to kill everyone on earth 5,000 times. Many of the current U.S. stockpiles of chemical weapons are decomposing and leaking. The U.S. Army is planning to incinerate huge numbers of these over the next decade at a cost of between \$2 billion and \$4 billion. Effects of the planned burn-off are unknown. The Pentagon is not subject to EPA regulations in its military toxic waste disposal even though over 500,000 tons of waste from chemical poisons continue to be generated each year.

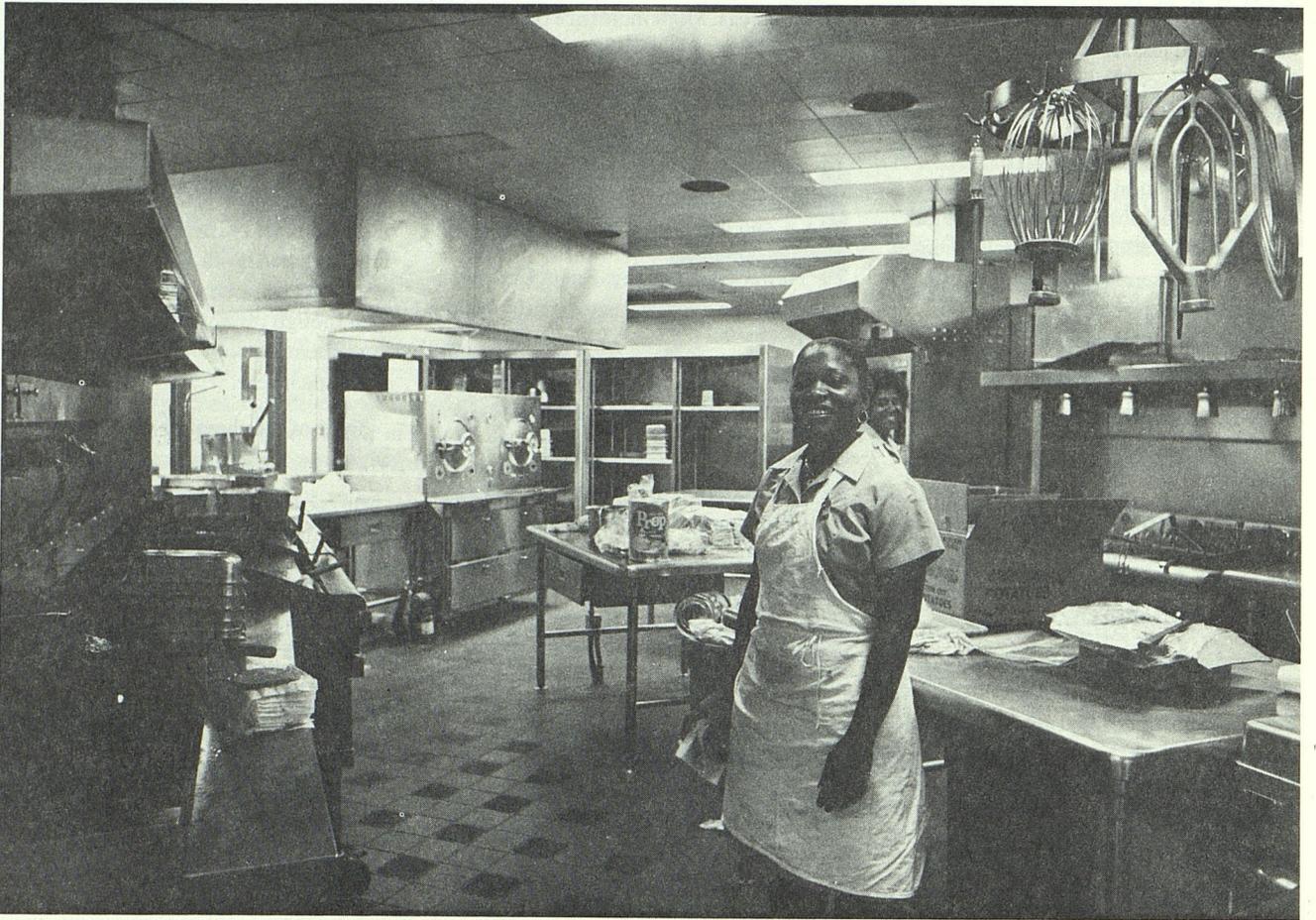
Some of the chemical and nerve gases which are currently stored include:

Sarin: nerve gas	CS: tear gas
Soman: nerve gas	CR: tear gas
VS: nerve gas	2,4-D: defoliant
Hydrogen cyanide: blood gas	2,4,5-T: defoliant, dioxin
BZ: Hallucinogen	SNIA Viscosa: poison
Weteye: nerve gas	
CN: tear gas	explosives

CAROL JACOBSEN is a pacifist artist who lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

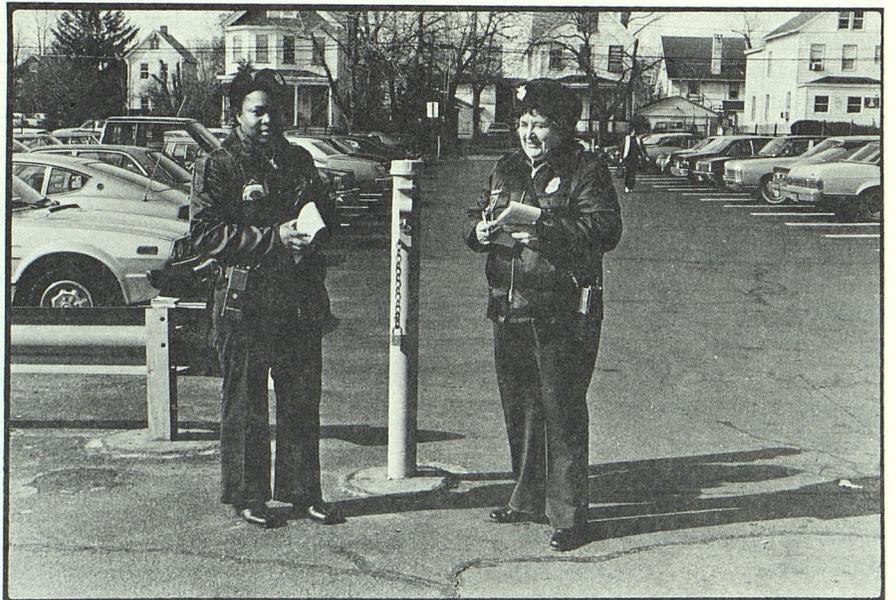
CAROL JACOBSEN



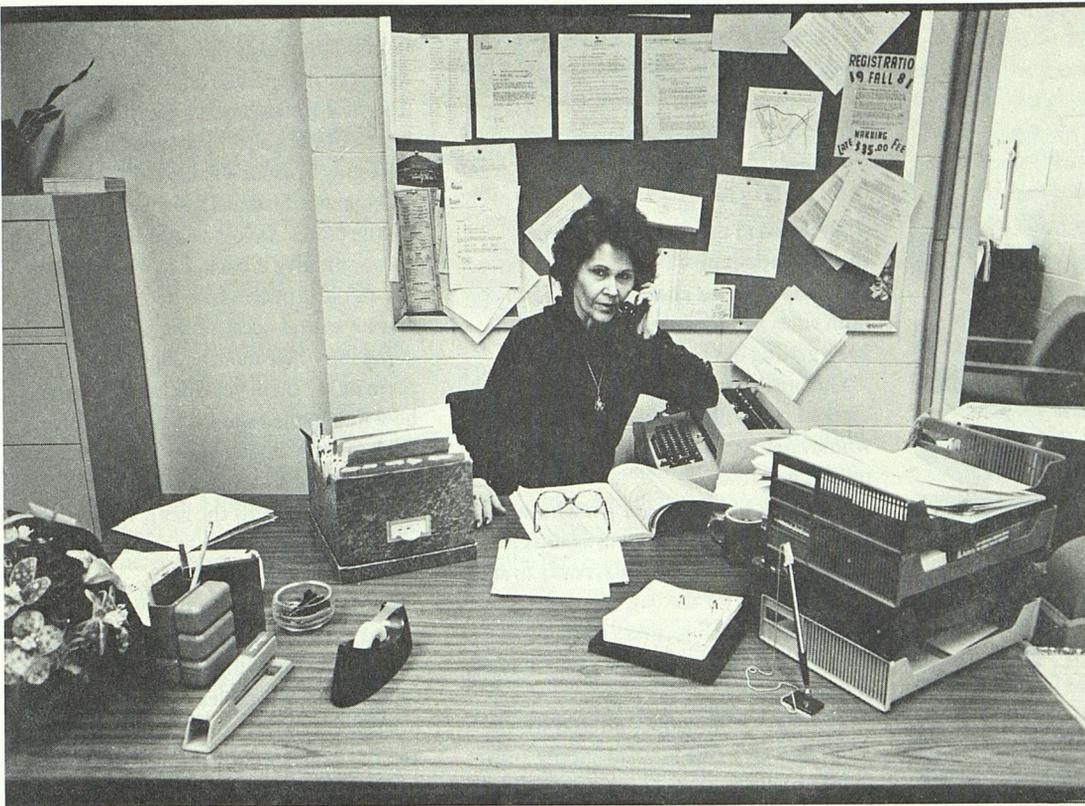


CARLA KATZ

Special thanks to Liza McCoy, a friend who worked closely with me on this particular work, conducting interviews, transcribing tapes, and providing good cheer during long hours in the darkroom.



CARLA KATZ is a union organizer and photographer living in New Jersey. For this year-long photodocumentary project, she photographed and interviewed the women doing clerical, food service, and custodial work at Livingston College.



"IN REALITY, IF IT WASN'T FOR THE CLERICAL STAFF THE WHOLE UNIVERSITY WOULD STOP MOVING."



"COMMUNICATION IS OUR WORST PROBLEM. SOMETIMES THE MANAGERS DON'T COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER, SOMETIMES THEY DON'T COMMUNICATE WITH US, AND WE GET A LITTLE MIXED UP."

AFTER DELORES

SARAH
SCHULMAN

That week on the way to work I was thinking about how funny it would be to show a lesbian car chase in a movie where both sides had terrible cars and had to keep getting out to push.

The breakfast shift started at 6:45 but I clocked in at 7:00 on a lucky day. The whole crew was waiting in their early morning attitudes.

"You look like you been screwing all night," said Rambo, leaning against the register in his military pants, ready to start all his bullshit for the day.

"Smile," said Dino, every morning, deep frying bacon for the fifty BLT's he'd make at lunch.

"Come taste the soup," offered Joe the cook. He was in the kitchen adding sugar to everything because Herbie, the boss, was so cheap, he didn't want Joe putting eggs in the meatloaf or using spices. Finally Joe just gave up on flavor and added sugar instead.

"No thanks."

Herbie's customers were living proof that you are where you eat. The breakfast club wasn't too fascinating except for the couple having an affair. They snuck in a few minutes together before work every day, the guy coming first, staring nervously at his coffee. Then the lady came. Her hair was done up like Loretta Lynn's and she always ordered American cheese on a toasted english and a glass of water with a straw. They'd hold hands across the table and say things like,

"Did you see Mel Torme on *Night Court* last night?" Then she'd get in on his side of the booth and I'd leave them alone until seven thirty when she went off to work at the phone company across the street.

Every day was the same day. It started with breakfast, which is always simple. Most people want *two over easy, whiskey down*, or else *scrambled two all the way*. You always have to ask them what kind of toast. Then they leave you a quarter because they think breakfast doesn't merit the same tipping scale as other meals. I'd like to remind them that a token still costs a dollar no matter what time you get on the train.

Herbie's mother came in at eleven carrying shopping bags full of discount paper towels or honey cake left over from her daughter-in-law's party. Herbie could sell it for a dollar a slice. Joe called her *Greased Lightning* because she moved slowly but still managed to steal waitresses' tips right off the tables. If you caught her in the act, she might give it back, but Momma was one of those bosses who hated to see the employees eat because she saw her money going into their mouths. She hated to pay them or see them get tips because somehow that money should have been hers. Her son was the same way, cheap. Herbie claimed spring started March 1st. That's when he turned off the heat, which drove a lot of customers over to the Texas-style chili parlor next door.

The lunch rush was a blur when I moved so fast I'd forget I was alive and would dream instead, swinging my hips back and forth around the tables. That was actually fun sometimes because of the challenge and the whole crew teaming up together, feeling closer. So it was always a letdown when it ended at two o'clock because that was it, money-wise, and the rest of the afternoon was going to be a sit-around bore.

By three o'clock the workers got to eat, which meant sneaking around whenever Momma or Herbie would turn the other way and popping something in your mouth. Technically we could have egg salad or french fries, but Joe would pretend he was slicing corned beef for a reuben and leave a whole bunch on the slicer for us to grab. Then Dino would forget to put away the fresh fruit salad so we could all have a nice dessert. Only Rambo wouldn't play along. He always threatened to turn us in, but was too much of a coward. Rambo spent the entire day leaning against the register showing off his tattoos or talking about the latest issue of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine and how he wished he could have gone over to Lebanon or Grenada instead of being stuck back there in the reserves.

Work was so much the same every day and business was so slow that I had nothing to do but read newspapers and, after that, stare out the window. That's when I would think about sad things. I couldn't help it. So, I started drinking with Joe behind the grill. I guess I just needed to sleep for a couple of weeks but I had to go to work instead, so drinking was some kind of compromise between the two. I

knew enough, though, to keep in control of things or else the customers looked at you funny, which makes you feel paranoid and pathetic.

In the old days, I would come home from the restaurant and Delores would be there.

"Hi baby, I missed you so much," she'd say.

I'd put my nose in her neck and say, "Mmm, you smell great."

"You don't." She'd laugh, that strange Delores way of mocking and loving at the same time. "You smell like eggs and grease." She'd kiss me on the face and slap my ass, being silly and cute.

Even after I took a shower, I never smelled as good as she did. I had to settle for being a nicer person and what the hell does that mean?

I don't like to admit it but women are the worst tippers. They put their heads together to divide up the bill and actually figure out exactly fifteen percent without taking into consideration how much they made you run around. Men don't talk about it. Each one peels a dollar from his billfold and quietly leaves it by the side of his plate.

It was a tough day at Herbie's because Momma was ragging on all of us. Joe and I were drinking rum, trying to stay out of her way. Some cooks make you feel tired, others are plain annoying, but somehow Joe charmed me into being more feline. With gold chains shining on his brown skin, and a toothpick hanging from his lips, every favor he asked was a service, and his smile, approval. The way he'd say *got it babe* when I called in my order, no matter how busy he was, always reminded me that he was my pal.

"Rum is good," he said in his Caribbean accent, "but it can betray you. When you get the shakes, you've gone too far. Don't go that far, you're still a lovely girl. You're a sweetheart."

Then he looked both ways and poured some more into my coffee cup.

"But," he sighed, "what can you do? The world is so full of pain."

Then he'd scratch his big stomach and laugh.

"I'm going home to Brooklyn and smoke some cocaine and turn on the television. Oh, I am getting fat from all the sugar in the soup."

When Joe left, I hung out with Dino

who was on the grill until closing. He was telling his war stories again because there was nothing at all happening on the floor.

"I was all over the Pacific during the war," he said. "They sent me to islands I didn't even know the names of till I was on 'em. Then we got two weeks of R and R in Hawaii. That was nice. Hotel, everything."

"Did they have segregated regiments then, Dino?"

"Yep. And drill sergeants of both colors. All of them ugly as homemade soap. Oh-oh, check out Rambo. Thinks he's so sly, that jerk."

Rambo was busy being the big man and giving away food for free to a cute Puerto Rican clerk from the hardware store. She was playing real coy and hard to get. But Rambo had picked the wrong moment to get off the register because the place was too empty and Momma was keeping her eye on everything. That's when I realized that for all his tough-assed talk, Rambo didn't even know how to steal and get away with it. He was putting on his whole show right out in the open, wildly flagrant without choosing to be.

"That turkey is so overt," Dino said.

Rambo ran rampant all over the kitchen. He whipped up a plate of the rarest roast beef while Dino sat there chuckling and covering his eyes. The slices were so red and bloody that Momma could spot them from a block away.

"Thief!" she shrieked, and her shrillness made the orange wallpaper tremble.

"What's the matter, bitch?" he said under his breath.

"Do you have a ticket for that? Where is the ticket? Thief, you steal the food out of my mouth."

"Fuck you, twat!" he was screaming all of a sudden. He was screaming louder than she was. "Fuck you and your dead meat!"

"Get out of here," she yelled. She yelled but she didn't move, like she had been firing people from that chair for forty years. Taking someone's job away involved such a natural sequence of events for Momma that it didn't require any energy anymore. Rambo picked up the roast beef and smashed it against the wall which broke the greasy mirror. Up until that point it had been pretty interesting, but I didn't like it at all when the mirror cracked. A curse by Rambo would be pretty hard to shake.

"I'm going to kill you, you bitch. Watch

your ass. I'm gonna kill you."

But he didn't kill her. He just walked right out the front door. The clerk from the hardware store kept sipping her Seven-Up as though she didn't care about it one bit. Me and Dino stood there without making a move. I did not want to touch that meat, lying in the crud of the restaurant floor, but I knew it would be me.

"Come on," Dino said. "I'll help you."

He started picking up the pieces of plate and beef and putting them in the garbage. Momma walked over, real slowly, watching us like we had been the ones who broke it.

"Dino," Momma said. "Those garbage bags cost thirty-five cents each. Don't use so many. Smash the garbage down with your feet. Don't be lazy. Be strong."

"I am not lazy," Dino said calmly.

"And you," she said pointing to me.

"Find a doctor with a nice practice and everything will be under control."

"That woman loves money," Dino said after she waddled away.

"She called you lazy."

"Don't pay her no mind. She loves money too much."

He picked out a penny from the garbage.

"I'll give this to Momma. Then she'll be happy."

And he smiled at me. "Don't let it get to you, there are beautiful things in life."

But for some reason, I just started crying and crying.

"You got to get a grip on that drinking," Dino said.

SARAH SCHULMAN is the author of three novels—*The Sophie Horowitz Story* (Naiad Press, 1984), *Girls, Visions and Everything* (Seal Press, 1986), and *After Delores* (E.P. Dutton, 1988). She lives in New York City.

A SLOWER STEP

NADYA DISEND

Walking into the studio of Creativity Explored of San Francisco is much like entering the working space of any visual artist. There is a clutter of paint and crayon and clay, works in progress and ceramic pieces line the shelves, finished pieces hang on the walls. This is a visual arts center and workspace for up to sixty developmentally disabled artists. This is not an art therapy environment or an arts and crafts program, but an open studio where the student/artists are encouraged by professional artists to freely explore their creative processes in any medium.

It is a widespread belief in our culture that disabled people are unable to participate in society in any but a dependent and rigidly prescribed way. Disabled people and their parents and social workers are faced with extremely limited options when seeking an environment in which they can explore their inner lives and develop their talents and in which they will not just be assigned "busy-work" to keep them occupied and quiet. In a society unwilling to support the free expression of self in any individual, even in their children, disabled people are seen as possessing no inner lives out of which to create, as having no vision worth sharing. In truth, the realities of those we call mildly to severely retarded are simply variegated forms of the mass consciousness. Here are people who experience life at a slackened tempo, to use the musical definition of retarded. Not as quick to respond and their responses not as programmable, they live in a world not unlike that of very young

children, whose senses of wonder and appreciation have not yet been jaded. Instead of recognizing that we can learn from every perception, we consider them as "child-like," a derogatory term in the modern world, and we treat them in a patronizing and often objectified manner.

The idea of affording mentally ill or developmentally disabled people free rein in an artistic setting and introducing them to multiple techniques and media is a wise and compassionate and healing one. Most of these people are forced to live in a sensually deprived world; their daily routines are inhibited and narrow. Denied exposure to music and art and to most forms of human interaction, they often have rich and uncommunicated inner lives, longing, like the rest of us, to be free.

The world of visual art is a very sensual one and the senses of disabled artists are awakened and stimulated by the techniques they learn and the media they choose to work with. Crayons on paper and a sculpture of wood and wire and tissue under the fingers of a blind man; wet clay being shaped in the hands of the societally powerless; a young wheelchair-confined retarded man feeling the smoothness and freedom of movement of the paintbrush on paper; the wonder of organization in a collage; the tiny and intricate designs from magic markers; the random design of splattered paintings; even the daily mask of paint and glue and clay donned as the work is made.

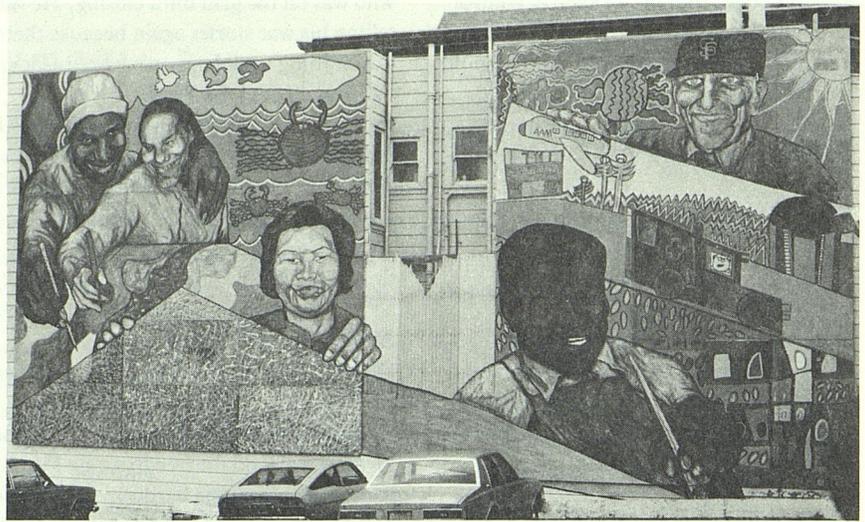
The artists at the studio, both disabled and professional, have contributed to the beautification of their neighborhoods and to the historic identity of their communi-

ties by creating public murals. Recently, the first public mural in the country created mostly by disabled artists was dedicated in the Mission District of San Francisco, where the art center is located. Their work serves to expose the community to the abilities and talents of the "Disabled," and people have warmly and openly welcomed this education.

Emerging artists of all levels of ability know how much energy and how many resources it takes to be recognized by establishment galleries and critics. Disabled artists are unable to do this work directly so the staff at Creativity Explored has helped them to exhibit their work at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Vorpall Gallery.

It would behoove us all to realize that we are all disabled, some in more subtle, culturally invisible, and therefore acceptable ways than others. All of us are disabled by living in a culture that is shut down to creative growth. The ones who are disabled in more overt and less disguisable manners need as much, and perhaps even more than most, to be given the experience of freedom of growth and expression. If we can open ourselves deeply enough to all facets of ability and talent, to widen the windows of our perceptions, then an artist will be seen and respected as an artist, a visionary; and a piece of art seen as valuable based solely on its "ability" to move us.

NADYA DISEND lives in San Francisco and works for the rights of the indigenous people of this continent. She also writes and walks her dog.



HORACE WASHINGTON

THALIA DOUKAS



IMAGINE YOU CAN DANCE

With thanks to Jenny Dixon, Susannah Hardaway and Janis Krasnow for their suggestions.

Sometimes the windows look very good. In January this year it was encouraging to see Shirin Neshat's big, powerfully stated triptych on themes of blood, death, and renewal safe in place at Herman Cohen Company (55 White). Shirin is Persian, and the installation is a statement about the war in Iran, which, she says, has made her very sad. Because the piece was very personal, including her own text in hand-lettered English and Farsi, she didn't at first think of it as political. In retrospect, she says it's the most political work she's ever done.

A large group show by the New York chapter of the Women's Caucus for Art was to follow Shirin in February, filling both sites on White Street (55 and 62, at Julius Blumberg, Inc.) and opening a new location at 480 Broome (in affiliation with Jacqueline Shatz). Unfortunately, the best place for several of the larger pieces the Caucus planned to include was 55, where Mrs. Cohen, spokesperson for the company, refused to approve certain work she considered controversial. Although she maintains a "no nudity, no religion, no politics" limit, she has been open to persuasion—which was the case when Shirin made her proposal. The group putting the Caucus show together was pressed for time and divided on the issue of censorship. In the end, they cancelled the show on short notice, leaving it up to us to fill their vacated slot.

Censorship is a big issue, but it should be good news to artists that, if they make a strong statement, they can expect a strong response. When exhibition space is borrowed, the lender will be inclined to keep an eye open for what might be provocative to neighbors or clients. Changes and disagreements can be productive, but they need time and breathing room—and these are sometimes unattainable luxuries.

It's impressive that the businesses we've collaborated with have been willing to discuss objections, and have not been tempted to terminate the arrangement without debate—which is the routine in some contexts. Once or twice we've been forced to re-route a show intended for the windows at 55 to those at 62. The windows in the Blumberg warehouse are usually the best for political pieces in any case because they are shallower and more or less at eye/shoulder level, so smaller detail is easily readable. This is where Dona McAdams and Jo Babcock collaborated on a first anniversary commemoration of the Three Mile Island nuclear spill (March '84), where Sabra Moore curated a group show of mail art by feminists on the theme "Protective Devices" (January '83), and most recently (September '86), where S.K. Duff installed his stong commentary on the politics of AIDS.

From the beginning, the Blumberg site has offered good shelter to this project, although there have been notable upheavals, as in spring '86 when strike action by typesetters lasted three months. The strike began in the first week of a show by Dianne Talan (March '86), who said at

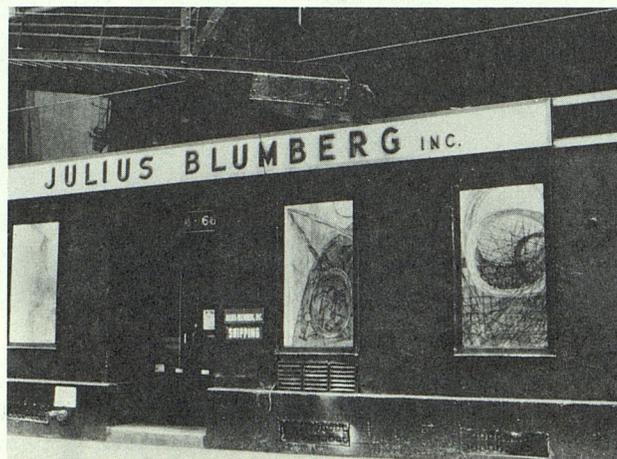
ABOUT WINDOWS ON WHITE

one point, if she had known the strike was imminent she would have preferred to cancel rather than cross the picket line. The first month of the strike was the ugliest. During a fight between strikers and non-striking employees, the building and windows were pelted with eggs. Nonetheless, after the show came down, strikers three times left friendly farewell messages on Dianne's answering machine. In the final month of the strike (May '86), an installation of book art by fifth graders from P.S. 130 in Chinatown was to appear on both sides of White Street. Robyn Stein, a creator of the workshop that produced the children's show, thought the strike might be "educational." Nonetheless, a spokesperson for Franklin Furnace, then sponsor to the workshops (now in their third year), objected and cancelled the windows at 62. Luckily, Robyn was able to fill the space with other work.

Pulling out of the site seemed inappropriate to me, but it was also clear that the decision was in the hands of the artists who had shows overlapping with the strike. As luck would have it, the artists and strikers established good relations: somehow it transpired that the artists submitted their proposals to both the company and the strikers, before installation—in one case, a subtext on the strike became part of the window installation. I know the issues involved are complex, but this experience left me with the simple thought that shielding children (or ourselves) from authentic confrontation, such as strike action, while we continue to be exposed to phoney, glorified conflict on TV (for instance) might merely say that we are *embarrassed*—or stumped. To not turn away is to express interest, and involvement, in an important disruption to normal life on the block.

Who are the windows for, who's seeing them? Are people from the neighborhood seeing art in a new light, after eight years of life with these monthly rotations of 24-hour window shows? These are logical questions without clear answers. Feedback is scattered and not always reliable—although as a participant it can be startling to discover your "community" watching you install and offering a response as direct as a rap on the glass and a thumbs-up

or skeptical grimace. There is definitely a large audience of like-minded artists following the shows and then feeling an influence when they get back to the studio—around the corner, in Indiana, in Italy, etc. A large piece of the usefulness of



SHE'S HER OWN WALKMAN

MICHAEL LENT

Windows on White is the big range of ideas it can accommodate, its accessibility, and a sense of community-beyond-geography it has created—in some of us anyway.

While galleries and museums are home to art carved in stone or cast in burnished bronze, in the windows it's great to see great, big-scale work executed in thrifty ways: a good example was Devora Kleinbeast's "Pink Limo" installation, made from three collaged and painted flats of corrugated cardboard (April '87). Or, Eileen Hoffman's intricate, abstract mixed-media piece, "She's Her Own Walkman" (March '87), combining cardboards and yarns from Woolworth with watercolor, wet-and-smudge crayon, and a small amount of plexiglas. Apart from any other message, are people reading into these shows that they could take more of a part in "art"? Can art-making be less of a spectator sport, in more democratic contexts? I hope so.

How does the project stay alive without much money? Is fundraising fun? Fact is, fundraising is expensive and involved (a bit like raising the dead, probably); it is another art form to study and improve. Throughout most of the life of the windows, it was more economical to funnel untapped funding energy into making the shows happen. Nevertheless, ten to twenty-five hours inevitably go into each grant application, and through the year we apply for seven or eight grants. In the last three

years, financial support has come (and gone) from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council—since the start, they've offered free publicity in their newspaper, *Downtown*, and the use of their nonprofit permit for bulk mailings; Beard's Fund (a once-only source of money to artists, now gone); Con Edison (little sums, but a beautifully simple application process); and the Manhattan Community Art Fund (MCAF). Community arts organizations are eligible for MCAF grants only three times, so this year's grant will be the last one for Windows on White. MCAF money is a re-granting of certain New York State Council funding; only community groups too small to qualify for NYSCA support are eligible.

Windows on White applies to NYSCA annually, although the application form is elaborate and

ever-changing and the selection process occurs in several stages over many months. NYSCA provides money and support for general operating costs only to larger organizations with a grant-bearing history. In the case of smaller groups (like some other grant sources) they are willing to supply honorariums to artists within a program, but not always to all, and not to "administrators"—usually artists, who are too often the initiators and/or life-support of the group effort. If a project has nonprofit status (Windows on White does not; it is simply a registered New York State charity) it can apply to a greater number of sources for funding including the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), although the NEA requires that recipients match their grants with money raised elsewhere.

About funding, here are some not unbiased opinions: Funding should be unconditional. Matching funds would not be a bad idea if the grant source offered a support team of writers and researchers and/or Events Experts to organize and publicize fundraisers. This suggestion might seem impractical but it's possible that more small grants and a system of free support services could prevent a lot of casualties and identity crises (i.e., art projects becoming fundraising projects). Funders could also: (1) Offer general operating money to small groups since supporting only certain more familiar faces within a group can be exceptionally destructive.

(2) Avoid pressing small groups to show signs of growth (flowers and tumors both grow) or to predict where they will be headed far into the future. This stuff, part of all grant lingo, is too theoretical not to be a waste of time. (3) Streamline application forms and avoid revising them.

(4) Let a project stand on its past successes and allow plenty of room for restless, unpredictable expansion: the point is funding always arrives late, and only partially offsets the real costs incurred. (If we need other models to follow, we could study more closely what happens abroad: government support to the arts is a well-established international tradition.)

As an alternative to grant support, *Windows on White* has slowly (over three years) assembled a book about itself, about 125 pages that layer page art by participating artists, documentation (press clips, etc.), and writing by ten notable friends of

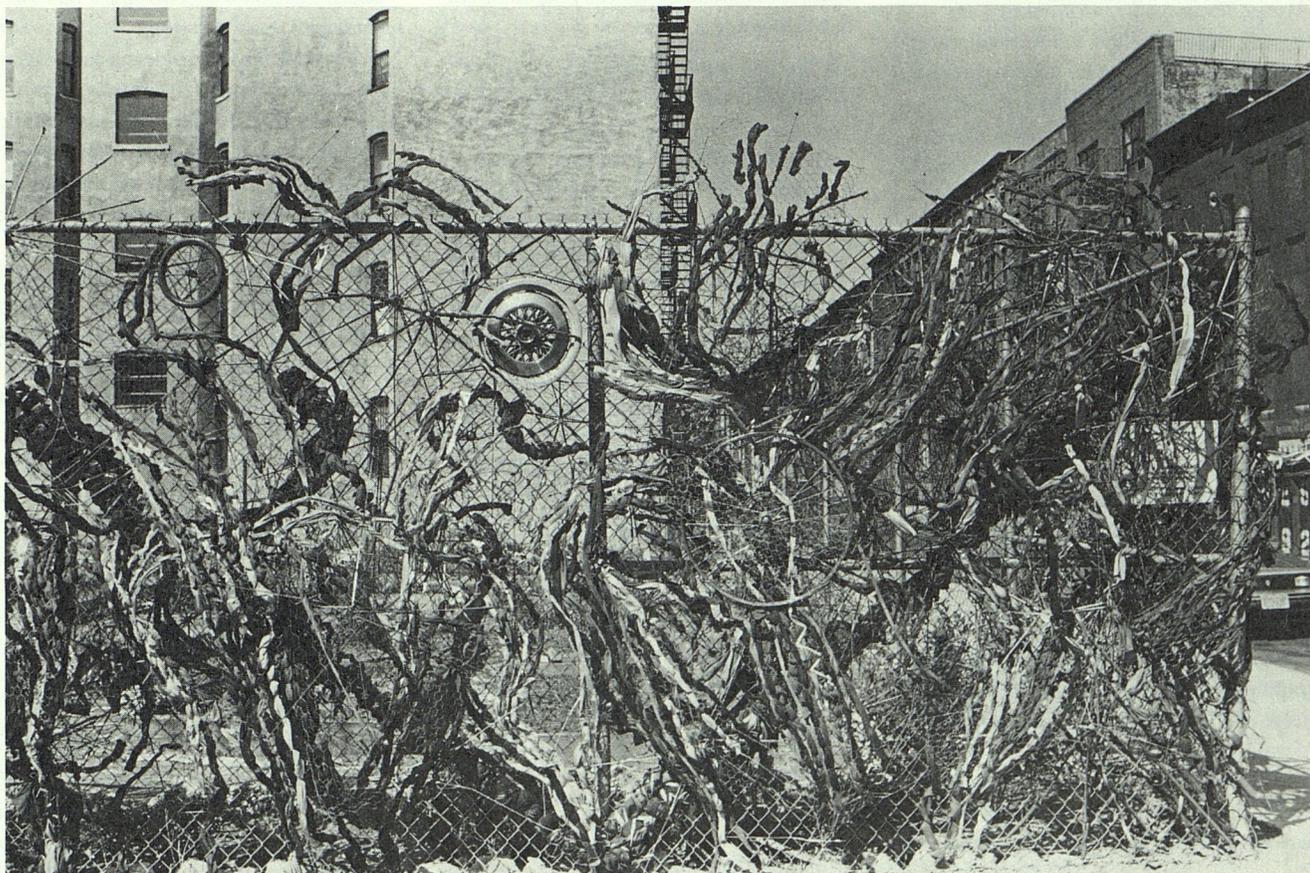
the project. We are selling the book by mail from our office at 160 Fifth Avenue, Suite 601, NYC 10010 (further details: 212-463-7150). On the one hand, if the book sells well, it will both bring money *in* and send information on the project *out*. On the other hand, the book was long and expensive to make and the edition is only 250, so other funding ploys will have to accompany this one. Although from the artists' point of view honorariums are the most direct form of support, they are usually small. A more valuable part of many installations has been the contact number in the window, which can lead to another show, publicity, and sales. (Unlike a gallery, *Windows on White* takes no commission when there are sales.)

The amount of money necessary to keep the windows alive is modest; less than \$12,000 probably covers it. My time with the windows has finally persuaded me

that "excellence" in art is not necessarily something that can be bought. It is also not a fixed thing. And, it's not only the cream that rises to the so-called top (according to the Peter Principle, cream rises until it's sour): Art is perpetually out there, re-inventing itself. Art-makers will always require more outlets than even this huge city can supply. As artists (and as a planet) we need to re-examine the in-built urge to grow bigger and better; big can be a bear. Small can be affordable in time and energy and sustainable over a longer time. Sustained effort is the answer, if the idea is to keep close to the meaning of the work, to get the work out, and to find new ways of saying what needs to be said.

THALIA DOUKAS has been Artistic/Development director of *Windows on White* since 1980.

FENCE by JANET NOLAN



SUSAN ROSENGARDEN

JANET NOLAN uses found objects as concept and material for her sculpture and drawing. Her major public works have been created for specific sites in New York City and Atlanta.

SARAH DRURY LISE PROWN

THE STORY

As you turn the corner onto the street its shimmering colors will catch your eye. Halfway down the block on the north side is a six-story building which dominates the small buildings on the street. Its sheer side now vibrates with the opulence of the mural.

THE FINAL REPORT

Initially this mural was a small community-based project inspired and nurtured by my neighbor Aida T. It was sponsored by the block association and funded by the local merchants. The mural project became a symbol for the neighborhood, a site of cooperation and contention. The mural took its voice and vision directly from the community. Had I known the final impact of my vociferous mural I would never have begun all this.

At once demur, polite, silent, benign and twisting, eager to please, but now murmuring softly, insistently telling the story of my creation, I trace my ancestors back to cave paintings, pictograms and hieroglyphs, frescoes and mosaics, and more recently, to public murals of a secular, civic nature. Now the questions is, whose voice speaks through me? Through her?

THE ARTIST'S RESUME

Four years of college and have shown work publicly once or twice.

Yes, I have had a thorough training in the vagaries of art school aesthetics; I came to question these artistic assumptions in light of the poor, ethnically diverse neighborhood in which I had settled after leaving school. Abstraction, figuration, the fetishization of materials I methodically embraced, then rejected each school of thought, finally settling on appropriating fragments of each genre as I began to delve into the conceptual underpinnings of modern art.

It's fine for her to turn a critical eye toward the insitutions of art history, but I am compelled to examine a more material evolution: the

changing function of walls. Of course, at first it was only interior walls that became murals, pictures not detachable from people, people not detachable from spaces. Now it's been turned inside out: no longer do walls shelter and enclose; walls break up, break down, break out and get broken into. Not a clean break, in half, dividing us from them, like the Great Wall of China, dividing inside from outside like the Berlin Wall, not just this one division. But walls within walls within walls. Walls with no more space inside them. Like these tenement buildings,—people locked out and locked in and, at the same time, in constant motion, escaping walls, abandoning themselves. But some people have figured out how to keep moving in place, travelling through walls, inside themselves.

Were my dreams a feasible source of imagery? The built environment, consumer society, figures from everyday life—all had potential as subject matter. Nature was easily appropriated as a source of form, texture and raw materials. Beyond this, was my imagination best fired by use of a camera, a brush, a press or a hammer? It was food for thought, it was a problem I could only resolve by withdrawal. Taken to task by several faculty members for my chameleonlike production, I was relieved to leave the academy for the pragmatics of day-to-day life.

My function in this community is to change the purpose of this wall. I am capable of functioning as a Transmitter/Transponder. Data in: Woman walking dog looks up ... picks up transmission ... rich green in lower lefthand corner, fleshy leaf form ... she emits weak signal, her sense of falling asleep under leaves in another time and place ... she relays my story, encoding it with an overprotective affection for a potted geranium on her fire escape ... repeat: tasteless iceberg lettuce ... repeat: intense pleasure in the observation of the saplings in the park ... repeat: fluorescent green plastic elf-toy she's pricing for her four-year old ... repeat: mint green sheets against golden brown skin ...

Life was in shadow under the dreary dominance of that grey wall in the center of the block rising out of the garbage-filled lot. My neighbor Mrs. T. had given me the idea to initiate the mural project by commenting on the poor effect the wall had on the neighborhood. Together we began to see how the wall might play a more vital role.

A stimulating conversation on green, I do enjoy this so as I ... but she's busy and moves

on. I appreciate these encounters with the local inhabitants as the artist sketches my lines, roughs in the forms; I notice the resulting wear and tear—certain areas of myself are vibrating intensely while others have already gotten dirty & chipped ...

THE MEETING

Theories of Community Art echoed through the meeting hall as the questions were asked. Was it truly a progressive project if a privileged outsider, professionally trained no less, initiated and guided the project? Aren't there any local artists? Was the artist a part of the community just because everyone knew and confided in her and was duly impressed with her abilities as an organizer and artist (and since she lived down the street)? Was the ethnic balance of the neighborhood adequately represented in the project and adequately expressed in the final product? There were class considerations here that affected the design of the mural ...

They ask, will my facade present a positive image or a negative? In dreams the two are mixed beyond recognition, the strange becomes utterly familiar, the familiar strange. Everyone wants to see an image of their own private utopia. That flamboyant color, that positive spirit, those oversimplified graphics—must we witness once again the stale vocabulary of murals gone by?

The community leaders asked who would actually paint the mural (most of the volunteers were quite young). Would the artist, as project director, get paid? The artist had friends who were community-conscious and would be glad to work on the mural for college credit.

... belaboring the point, I continue to address the thick night air ... I must tell you that in spite of the impenetrable surface of this brick wall, I feel as absorbent as a sponge ... I am absorbing the energies of each person who designs, paints, hangs out, helps, harasses, funds, or theorizes on my execution. I try to suck up each drop of desire to help me grow, and expel each possessive or dominating vibration. I could be fed by everyone, but little food is presented. Yet, each time I am nourished, I sprout a strange new limb ... like a tree or a six-armed goddess ...

THE EXECUTION

The local merchants who had contributed materials showed concern about having their occupations prominently displayed in the design. The mural design represented the reality of the street, both good

and bad, mercantile and domestic, local and universal, as perceived by the neighborhood kids who had collaborated with the artist on the working drawing.

Larger than life ... I simply contain, ingesting possessions, accumulated wealth, static images, consuming, entombing, monumentalizing, scouring away all signs of organic decay ...

Funders from the main office of the local bank expressed their reservations about the suitability of depicting the "down side" of street-life. The district assemblyman, who had donated office space and political support, generously funded a large sign for the project, the bankers agreed that press coverage was a priority.

Thin on fat, the surface cracks, obscene quantities of medium are required to bond together officially authorized units of representation ...

The church up the street issued concern over the fringe elements involved in the project and publicly worried that the graven image that would soon dominate the neighborhood was full of satanic scenes of tropical paradises (really, it's just images of the islands some in the neighborhood called home).

... I'd rather be a mirage in the desert, appearing, disappearing, having a real existence in someone's thirsty mind ... a vision of paradise seen in the feverish mind of one close to death ...

The local dealer couldn't care less about the project and refused all pleas for him to move his operations to another spot.

If I were a body ... if I could get up and walk away, if I could lie down and sleep ... I can't sleep. Can't eat a thing. I can't breathe; I'm suffocating ... nailed down ... corpse-like ... it seems they're calling for a crucifixion ... a nice symmetrical image

The landlord of the building whose wall was needed for the project could not be reached but his agent had authorized the work.

Despite my vertical orientation, I find myself prone, helpless, on my back beneath the everpresent pyramidal structure of which my community has been forced to serve as the base. This ubiquitous pyramid figures too prominently in this picture for my taste!

DEDICATION

Through a grueling and concerted effort, the mural is completed and varnished in time for the day of the block party that had been planned to celebrate it. There is

food and drink and the vacant lot has been festively decorated. We gather to survey the results. Many smile with satisfaction to see themselves, their concerns and objections, their community standing adequately represented, larger than life.

There's lots of picture-taking with the kids and teenagers and me and my friends, all those who have knocked themselves out to make the mural a reality. It's funny, our feelings are somewhat complicated. We express relief and elation that we've finished the project, but we're also uncomfortable because the result has somehow strayed from the original vision each of us had.

Speech after speech is delivered with high praise for compromise and the spirit of community effort.

My bottommost layers are a patch bag of connections ... dreams and ideas linking up across oceans and centuries ... interfaced with daily realities of despair and pride, ... opting out of this simulcast, normal programming is resumed ...

We are congratulated and awarded a token of appreciation from the community board.

... the layers of paint closest to the surface conceal great thicknesses of possibility ... like an outer shell which has grown too confining for the swelling, glistening crustacean within ... it threatens to crack, to burst, and something growing, pulsing and amorphous to ooze out ...

Who was this next speaker? We noticed a new face in the familiar crowd, one not represented in the overpopulated mural. However, the man from the mayor's office seemed to know him. Rumor has it that he is the landlord, Mr. P., the owner of the building. He speaks of the pride he feels to have made his contribution to this vital project. As he speaks, an uneasy hush falls over the assembled throng. He feels that this celebration presents an appropriate forum in which to unveil a further contribution to the community. He speaks of the mural project as being only one sign of the revitalization of this particular neighborhood. He announces his plan for renovation on a mass scale, perhaps eventually involving the demolition and rebuilding of some of the apartment buildings on the street, but for the time being involving an upgrading of the appearance of the main commercial avenues, the installation of Victorian style lampposts, a campaign to attract more specialty shops to the area,

aided, he hopes, by increased police activity to clean up the drug traffic in the neighborhood. He closes with renewed praise for the residents for their efforts to make this city a better place in which to live.

... an image put to many uses ... this useful outer layer can't contain so many painful stories ... covered with faces ... covered with words ... covered with mistakes ... erasures, large areas of void ... each layer must be revealed, one after the other ... all the stories must speak ... We moan! We scream! We are complicitous! We are violated.

Mr. P. ducked too slowly to avoid being smacked on the side of his head by the image of a palm tree, only the tree wasn't falling, but flying outward from the wall. Pandemonium broke out as a portrait of a prominent citizen exploded in the combustion of an erupting volcano, which sent a plume of a thousand ghosts circulating around the lot, from which people screamed in panic, or else threw themselves down, covering their heads in terror. Wild music and dancing replaced the ceremonious atmosphere of the event, but it was not the people of the neighborhood nor the assembled officials who whirled and sang, but their dreams, poured into this mural, imprisoned in it, and released again much stronger, real and present.

The official ceremony ended swiftly but the neighbors lingered to enjoy the music and food that was characteristic of local celebrations. This developer, whose elaborate plans ring like the empty promises of the past, does not penetrate our block party. The mural presides, for now.

Dear Sirs:

We would like to thank your agency for its generous grant and for its ongoing support of this project. Our mural has received a great deal of attention in the press and has been a source of inspiration for other muralists who are beginning to work in this neighborhood. Your foresight in funding this community mural has been noted by our city officials and in the future we hope that other arts projects in this neighborhood will be similarly encouraged. Thank you again for your grant which made this community arts project possible.

LISE PROWN and SARAH DRURY are artists who live in Brooklyn.

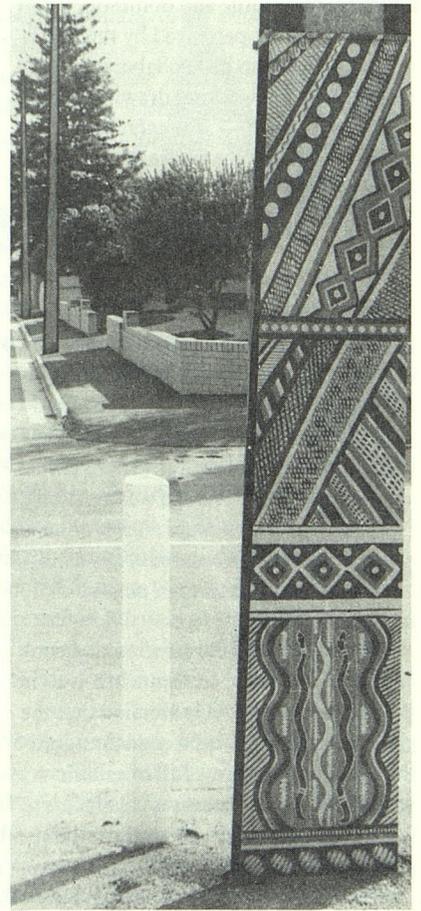
THE STOBIE POLE

ANN NEWMARCH

The colorful array of ideas and images which now decorate our Prospect poles are probably a far cry from those envisioned by James Cyril Stobie, the engineer who, in the early 1920s, invented this steel and concrete structure for the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (later the Electricity Trust). The “Stobie” was designed for economic reasons —South Australia, had, and still



PHOTOS COURTESY THE EXPERIMENTAL ART FOUNDATION.



has, very little suitable timber for wooden poles, and interstate imports were expensive. Its invention made the supply of electricity to rural areas possible. Despite high hopes and efforts to market a Stobie worldwide, it remains primarily a South Australian curiosity.

The Stobie symbolizes the 1920s’ love of tall structures towering skywards, although in recent years some of us have come to view them less affectionately, more as an obstruction on our footpaths and a danger to motorists. Folks have been trying for years to disguise Stobie poles in various ways, climbing geraniums being the most popular. In 1980 artist Lorrie Bruner painted geraniums on a new pole, replacing one damaged by a car, in the hope that such an accident wouldn’t recur. So far it hasn’t.

The notion of Stobie-pole painting as a project involving the whole community aimed to stimulate awareness of the visual environment in which we live. Since the Stobie is

uniquely South Australian, it is an ideal surface on which to establish our own community identity, to beautify the poles but also to reclaim small areas of public space for community expression.

A pilot program was begun in 1983 by Artist-in-Residence Ann Newmarch with the aim of assessing the viability of a larger community project. The concept was supported by Prospect Council and the Road Traffic Board.

It was decided that the eighteen pilot project poles would be dotted around the suburb to make them part of daily life, rather than be paraded in a showy display along the



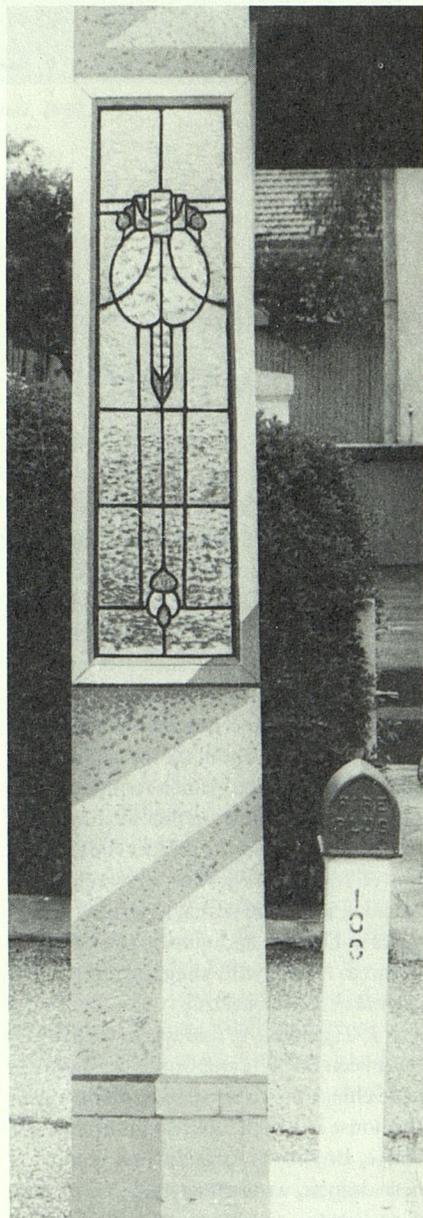
main road. The initial pole designs and locations related to the Prospect community. Designs included festive ribbons near the park where local fairs and community celebrations are held, and a stained-glass window pole which reflected the style and era of many original Prospect homes.

By the end of 1986, over 150 poles had been completed. While art-workers are no longer employed, poles are still being painted and designs still registered through the Community Arts Office. An Arts path, cur-

rently being planned, will take people past local parks, murals, historic buildings and many of the poles painted in 1986.

People now come from other places in Adelaide and bring visitors from other states and overseas to see Prospect's painted poles. For those who live here it could take months to discover them all. The once nondescript suburban stroll has now become an opportunity for creative discovery.

ANN NEWMARCH is a teacher at the South Australian School of Art. She is involved in screenprinting, painting and community art practice.



MAKING ACTIVIST ART

VIRGINIA MAKSYMOWICZ

I have been involved in community art-making since 1978, when my husband and I began working for the Cultural Council Foundation's CETA-funded Artist Project. We were sent to all five New York City boroughs and were stationed everywhere from reform schools to museums. While the art we made was not necessarily political in content, it was made for and with a specific community (which requested our presence) rather than in the isolation of our studios. When the project ended, we moved round the Midwest in search of teaching jobs (one year at Oberlin; two years in Detroit) and, during this time, began to find ways to integrate our political and artistic concerns.

In 1983, unable to find work (we had both been laid off) and broke, we had little choice but to move back home—in the house in which I grew up—in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. After the first year of near-despair, we were startled to find that a local pastor, a woman named Jo Tolley,

had begun a fledgling peace group, The Bay Ridge Coalition for Peace. Although small, it has been growing slowly; today there is an active core of about fifteen and about 200 members who receive the newsletter. We first encountered the group as it was picketing Guy Molinari's storefront Brooklyn office (Molinari is the Bay Ridge/Staten Island representative—a conservative, Republican Right-to-Lifer). Most of the BRCP's prime movers are women: Jo Tolley, Claire O'Brien Doyle, Joanne Lehu and Helen Hiltbrand have been its first four coordinators. Women represent the majority of the membership although we are by no means a "gender-exclusive" group. There is a wide range of ages among the members, but many are middle-aged or older.

Although the group is sensitive to a variety of issues—food irradiation, U.S. involvement in Central America, socially responsible investing—our primary effort has been directed toward stopping the proposed Stapleton, Staten Island Navyport (where the nuclear cruise missile-equipped USS Iowa would be stationed). The site is in direct view of Bay Ridge.

Trying to incorporate art into the activities of this group and for this type of

neighborhood is a challenge indeed. Our presentations are sometimes met with open hostility but, sometimes surprisingly, with much sympathy as well. The art contingent of the group has been growing: Deborah Griffin, one of the earliest members, has designed brochures, banners and T-shirts for the Coalition. Sharleen Leahy, a graphic artist and typesetter, is also our political songwriter-in-residence; she performs with Liana Bergo at both local and citywide peace events. Blaise Tobia, a photographer, has put together a slide show that has been presented to local civic groups and is made available for school showing. Richard Schomnsees wrote, directed and produced *USA and Other Places on Radio Landscape*, a play about the insidiousness of institutionalized violence, for which I created the stage sets and publicity posters. As a group, we've sponsored traveling antinuke performer Barbara George. We organized a month-long string of events during October '87 that included street theatre, participation in the Annual Fall Street Festival, and a rally attended by local press and politicians. Our aim was to create an image for a large neighborhood billboard which we coordinated with posters, buttons and balloons.



- 3-MILE ISLAND
- CHERNOBYL
- BAY RIDGE?

**ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN . . .
KEEP NUCLEAR WEAPONS OUT OF
NEW YORK HARBOR!**

THE BAY RIDGE COALITION FOR PEACE: 212/226-7161

This is the design for the billboards which were displayed in two Bay Ridge locations in October, 1987.

Ideas still in the works include the design and production of peace issue bookcovers to counteract the pro-military ones being distributed in area schools, and acquiring time on public access TV when area cabling is completed.

Some of our visual projects have involved guerrilla actions. We reproduced an informational flyer with graphics and color identical to one that had been previously distributed by a pro-homeport group, and we handed it out at a "Welcome the Homeport" celebration. I undertook a one-woman sticker campaign which altered the Intrepid war museum posters on the RR subway line.

The use of the arts as an attention-getting device has become indispensable to the effective functioning of the Coalition. Since we are usually trying to make our points to people on the run (on the main shopping street) or to folks often totally unaware of an issue (such as the Homeport), a visual image will make an immediate and/or lasting impression in situations where a spoken word may not. Art is a hook; something with which to grab their attention. As Sharleen Leahy emphasized, "You could stand and talk to somebody for an hour and you might not be able to

get through, but singing a song somehow has an effect on people. You get a guitar, you start to sing and all of a sudden you notice people are stopping, people are watching, people are listening, people are moved, people are interested." Our printed balloons at the local street festival are always a hit with kids and parents alike; we know that their message is brought home.

In a society that is used to well-produced electronic and printed media images, good visuals add an air of seriousness to our group's efforts. Handwritten flyers look amateurish; they are likely to go unread. Our crisply painted banner demands attention at local and city events often eliciting looks of surprise from the attending police, many of whom live in Bay Ridge.

The hardest thing about the serious consideration of issues through community-oriented artmaking (or organizing of any sort) in such a context is not the possibility of direct confrontation but the likelihood of no confrontation, no response and no feedback from the neighborhood, or from the larger political and arts communities. Even though we have been able to secure a regular column in one of our local newspapers, consistent

coverage cannot be counted upon. For example, during the well-publicized anti-homeport demonstration of June 8, 1985, which was organized by Manhattan-based peace organizations but which took place in Staten Island and Bay Ridge, the Bay Ridge Coalition was unable to secure a speaking slot at the rally—in our own neighborhood park!

Trying to communicate clearly, without banality and with a certain amount of artistic finesse to an audience unfamiliar with contemporary art and, in many cases, unfamiliar with the political issues at stake is an uphill battle. Performing on residential blocks or in church basements is a far cry from exhibiting in Manhattan galleries where at least a small sympathetic audience can be expected. Working collectively and publicly in one's own neighborhood with non-artists produces a different esthetic (no postmodernism here, folks!). But we believe, in a way, this type of art might be much more vital than the other art we make. We are trying to use art as a tool for entering into a dialogue. We keep hoping that someone will talk back.

VIRGINIA MAKSYMOWICZ is a sculptor who lives in Brooklyn.



Cast sculpture of natural fibers: willow, cedar bark, cornhusks, cattail and yucca, with additional touches of paint, charcoal and clay.

DEBRA BEERS

Most of my work (either directly or indirectly) has to do with the homeless, the haves and have-nots. I have been working at a soup kitchen in Portland, Oregon, where direct contact with people has influenced my work. What really interests me is the attitudes that “normal” people have about the homeless. Why is it that they are so frightened to walk on the same side of the street? Why is it that they can’t make eye contact, etc.? Is it because we identify ourselves through our jobs/positions, that those without work are less than human? We are all a part of this “homelessness”; something is very wrong, very sick about a society that cannot take care of those without.

DEBRA BEERS is an artist living in Portland, Oregon.

BIRD(S)

ADRIENE JENIK

GETTING A WOMAN'S TV NETWORK OFF THE GROUND

How To Use A Satellite

Satellites are used to distribute all kinds of information and data throughout the world. Telephone calls, financial data, tv and radio signals are bounced off satellites in space to speed their travel to points all over the globe. Presently satellite use is overwhelmingly controlled by commercial and military interests. These two interests often work together to devise lucrative and often diabolical ways to exploit satellite technology, such as killer satellites and the Star Wars plan. In recent years public interest groups have experimented in the non-commercial use of satellites. Women in Boston organized a satellite feed from the U.N. women's conference, Forum '85 in Nairobi, Kenya, to Boston. Space Bridge is an organization that has sponsored several teleconferences involving live television studio audiences in the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

DEEP DISH TV was the first successful attempt at using a satellite to link public access stations nationally. We want this network to expand and we also would like to encourage activists to start using satellites to distribute programming that the networks and most of the large cable programming services (e.g., HBO, Arts & Entertainment Network, Christian Broadcasting Network, CNN) are not interested in programming because it is not commercial, is too controversial in style and content, or is at odds with the message their current programming conveys.

How Much Does It Cost?

The cost of renting transponder (channel) time on a satellite ranges from \$500 to \$1,100 per hour and is usually available at a prorated rate for smaller increments of time. Sometimes it is even possible to get satellite time donated! But wait, before you jump to the conclusion that satellite communications are cheaper than offset printing, consider the following. You must spend AT LEAST three times as much money on publicity and promotion. Despite the hard work a group must put into promotion and the cost of publicity, satellite communication is a relatively cost-effective means of reaching a national audience using the most popular medium in our society, television.

The satellite transmission of one program makes particular sense when you are planning on covering an important event that will not get much coverage by mainstream media but will be the focus of an intensive grassroots publicity campaign. Why not piggyback on the grassroots publicity effort, including in it the news that the event (e.g., demonstration, ballot initiative, special hearing, conference) will be transmitted by satellite to any downlinks that will pick it up?



WATCHING

MARTHA WALLNER

DEEP DISH REPORT / THAT'S WOMAN'S WORK TV BY AND ABOUT WOMEN

"That's Women's Work: TV By and About Women" was transmitted via satellite in the spring of 1986 as part of DEEP DISH TV, the First Public Access Satellite Network. Over 300 cable systems picked up the free transmission which was made up of excerpts and short works by women or about women's issues, collected from independent, community and public-access producers from around the country.

How different is this image of women—women's needs, hopes, and interests—from what is normally offered by commercial TV? Since public-access television is wholly uncensored, free from commercial sponsorship interests, and provided to members of a community on a first-come, first-served basis, the potential for that difference is as great as one's imagination.

DEEP DISH TV was the first time grassroots TV was given a larger voice outside of its modest community base, the first attempt to link many diverse community groups and media makers together. The series utilized satellite technology as the basis for sharing information and strengthening already existing constituencies. In addition to "That's Woman's Work!!!" the ten-part series programmed shows on racism, U.S. intervention in Central America, housing, children's TV, the farming crisis in America and other national issues of immediate import.

Beyond networking women's groups and other activists using media with and among each other, DEEP DISH TV attempted to expand people's knowledge about public-access TV as a potential tool for disseminating radical and alternative media. The public-access channels that picked up DEEP DISH's programs are provided through franchise agreements between city governments and local cable systems. Access activists have long argued that without access to electronic media, all citizens' first amendment rights are severely limited.

Access cable facilities vary from community to community as the first show in the DEEP DISH series, "Getting a Grip on Access," illustrates. While some communities, like Manhattan, are only provided with a channel on which to cablecast already produced programs, many community-access centers provide hands-on studio equipment and training, as well as vans, outside equipment and even in-house production staff to facilitate the communities' use of the facilities, as in Somerville, Massachusetts, and Austin, Texas.

What this means is that voices not normally heard in mainstream media (e.g., women, people of color, children) now have access to training and equipment usually denied to them. Women

Booking Time

There are many ways of booking time on a satellite transponder. You may contact the corporation that owns the satellite directly. For example, contact Western Union to book time on the Westar satellites.

You can also book time from a programming service such as HBO that sublets time that it doesn't use itself. Most large government agencies that use satellites also have unused time that they have reserved and might be willing to sublet. There are also brokers such as Bonneville Satellite Corporation in Washington, DC and World Communications in New York City which will book time for you. Or you can turn to an individual satellite communications consultant like Arlene Krebbs (718) 857-3717 or to an organization like Public Service Satellite Consortium (202) 863-0890, 600 Maryland Ave SW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20024. Shop around! The less middlepeople involved in the transaction, the cheaper the time, so try when possible to get the time directly from the satellite owner. Consultants can, however, offer very useful time- and money-saving information to those who have never used a satellite before.

If you want cable stations to pick up your feed, you should use a satellite that most cable stations are already tuned into. To find out what satellites are most often used by cable companies and what programming services are already being offered, contact the National Cable Television Association for a free copy of the "National Cable Network Directory" (202) 775-3550, 1724 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

If you are interested in reaching the over 300 public television stations in the Public Broadcasting System, you will want to book time on the satellite service that they use exclusively. The rates currently run \$307 per half hour. This price includes a system-wide publicity release over their electronic mail system, but it does not include any assurance whatsoever that any of the stations will actually program your show. Unlike the cable satellite systems which accept 3/4" masters, PBS requires 1" masters for transmission. To book time or get more information, call Mary Anne Schuessler at PBS Broadcast Operations, (703) 739-5454.

Making Sure People Know Your Show Is Coming Down

There are two basic levels of publicity and promotion. One is aimed at the folks who are going to downlink the program, station employees, home dish owners, and in some cases public-access volunteers. The second level is aimed at the potential viewing audience. To reach cable station programmers and public access staff, you will need to get a mailing list that includes them. Start your search with a call to the NFLCP (National Federation of Local Cable Programmers), (202) 544-7272 and inquire about their book, the *Resource Directory*, and their mailing lists. Mailing lists are also available from Thomson International Communications, (303) 860-0111, and Television Digest, (202) 872-9200. There are over 5,000 cable stations in the United States, but you can get much smaller lists if you want to save money on postage. For example, you can get a list that includes only stations that have over 5,000 subscribers or that includes only a few states. If you are trying to reach PBS programmers, you will need to buy the mailing list from PBS. It costs only \$29. Home-dish owners can be reached through program listings in the magazines that cater to them like *Satellite Orbit* and *Satellite TV Week*, both available on the newsstands.



have a strong history of using access to produce programming that speaks to our needs. While much of this programming has relied on talk show or other conventional TV formats, we were able to find and program many tapes that explored new creative possibilities with limited budgets. "That's Woman's Work!!!" sought out this type of programming in order to show access users and independents a variety of ways of communicating their information, of getting the message out.

"That's Woman's Work!!!" incorporated a great diversity of style, content, and regional representation. The hour-long show opens with the sober image of a woman "newscaster" tracing the origins of male and female genitalia. Her matter-of-fact manner of presentation coupled with the anatomical graphics which flash periodically over her right shoulder, lend an air of authority to her thesis that male genitalia have essentially been "paved over."

While some works in the DEEP DISH program utilize structures from mainstream media in their critiques, many of the tapes depart from conventional formats altogether. "That's Woman's Work!!!" continued with an erotic Flamenco dance performed by two women from Tucson, Arizona, an under-the-car interview with an owner of an all-woman repair shop in Boston, and striking department store clerks in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who were seeking their community's support for their struggle.

Unlike the images we normally receive from the airwaves, which invite us to sink a little further into our couches, these images inspired, informed, and united viewers in towns across the country. People in Albuquerque, New Mexico, got to see how a Chinese-American woman grew up in the back of her family's Chinatown laundromat in "Eight Pound Livelihood," while those in Great Falls, Montana, and Anchorage, Alaska, watched a candid discussion among men and women on the subject of men's role in rape prevention, and people in Louisville, Kentucky, watched a California woman spill her metaphorical guts in "Womb with a View." Through programs like "Post-hysterectomy Syndrome," "Women of Steel" and "It's Not a Fine Line: Sexual Abuse in Hawaii," it becomes possible to gain real information from our TV set on issues that concern us.

DEEP DISH TV did happen and it will happen again. We are now organizing the upcoming season in which women and women's media will most certainly play an important role. We believe that public access television can play a crucial part in returning the television medium to its original visionary potential as a mass-based communications tool. We've seen, along with those who watched DEEP DISH TV, that it is possible to produce and distribute powerful, informative images which provide a basis for action, rather than an escape from it.

People who will bring down the feed need to know when the satellite transmission will take place, which satellite and transponder to tune into, and what the terms of usage are for the program. Can they record it free of charge? How many times can they cablecast it or broadcast it? This information should be included in a press release that also describes the programming that you are offering.

You will need to develop a press packet that can be used by the stations that are going to run the program as well as by general press people. A sharp, interesting photo will help a lot! You need to mail this packet to all the relevant press contacts that you can. Whenever possible, let local press contacts know the program's programming date in their area. This provides them with a local hook. Try to arrange as many press screenings as you can, or at least provide preview copies of the program to journalists who are interested in the issue that your program concerns or who regularly write about television.

DEEP DISH programs appealed to particular constituencies so we did as much outreach to the grassroots and national organizations dealing with issues related to our programming as we possibly could. We asked activists to make sure that their public-access stations programmed the series. Reviews and ads and announcements in relevant publications and newsletters helped.

The key to success is to do as much phone outreach as you can. After mailing the press release to cable programmers, for example, call a targeted list of programmers and find out if they need any more information and if they are going to pick up the program. Your call will serve to remind them of the feed and perhaps stimulate curiosity in your program. The same goes with follow-up phone calls to journalists and activists. Many of these folks are sympathetic to alternative media but they are not accustomed to actively promoting it.

The idea of asking our local cable station to play a show that WE want to see does not usually cross most people's minds. Most people don't realize that many public-access cable programmers are eager to find programs to fill up their channel time and welcome suggestions from viewers in the community.

All of this promotion will not guarantee a big audience. Network television depends on millions of dollars worth of hype to get (i.e., deliver) an audience. Our grassroots publicity campaigns can be easily overshadowed. But if our efforts are sustained and imaginative they can draw an audience that is certainly worthwhile.

While the purpose of this article is to encourage independent groups to use satellite technology, we think that an even more effective strategy is for community television producers, activists and public-access programmers to work together to create an ongoing alternative television network. This is the goal of Deep Dish TV. By pooling resources and sharing publicity, administrative and satellite transmission costs, we can afford to send out more programming. More important, only a consistent presence on access channels will give us the time we need to build an audience and, in time, to actually change people's relationship to television. Corporate-supported network television cannot possibly provide us with the information and inspiration we need to change this society. By taking advantage of the availability of public access cable channels, satellite technology and portable video equipment, those of us who are marginalized by mainstream media (the vast majority!) can make the kind of television that truly responds to our needs and desires.

Photo, page 91

"Repeal the ladies' vote! Remember it's suffering, not suffrage, that keeps us up on our pedestals," from LADIES AGAINST WOMEN by Lauren Lazin.

Photo, page 92

"They've accepted so totally the oppression involved in not letting the people get at communications that it doesn't even occur to them that they have the right to be in television."—Flo Kennedy, access producer, New York City.

MARTHA WALLNER is a co-coordinator for Deep Dish TV and a member of the Paper Tiger Television Collective in New York City.

ADRIENE JENIK is the distribution coordinator for Paper Tiger TV and is presently working as an associate producer for WHAT DOES SHE WANT, a project to distribute women's video and film to the home video market.

SATELLITE TERMINOLOGY

BIRD—slang term for satellite

UPLINK—the facility that transmits the signal up to the satellite

DOWNLINK—any antenna designed to receive signals transmitted by satellite. Most cable companies have downlinks.

TRANSPONDER—each satellite has 24 channels or transponders which can transmit programming simultaneously.

FOOTPRINT—the geographic area in which a particular satellite's signal can be received is called that satellite's "footprint."

DISH—parabolic-shaped satellite antennas are often called "dishes." A person who has a dish in his/her backyard or field is often referred to as a "home-dish owner." There are approximately 2 million home-dishes in the United States.

Changing the Channel

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF BEAUTY Tonight: the nose.

9:30pm **DIAL-A-TACTIC** A weekly live call-in program concentrating on organizational problems and conflicts and their solutions. Tonight's guest: a representative from the Sisterhood of Black Single Mothers. Call 1-800-A-TACTIC. Next Week: Union for the Homeless.

10:30pm **APRÈS TV: AN ANTI-DOTE TO TV O.D.** French communications theorist Michele Mattelart looks at TV's latest line-up of police-women in Cagney & Lacy: Liberated Lady Cops or Cop Outs?

11:00pm **LISTEN UP!** Angela Davis hosts her nightly international round-up via satellite. Tonight features Comandante Dora Maria Tellez, Nicaragua's Minister of Health; Egyptian author Naval el-Saadawi; Irish activist Bernadette Devlin; and Albertina Sisulu, co-president of the United Democratic Front in South Africa.

12:30am **HITS & RERUNS** Tonight's rerun: "The Flying Nun"

1:00am **INDEPENDENT FEATURE** "Leila and the Wolves" directed by Hiery Srour. Banned at Forum '85 in Nairobi, this film depicts the historical role of women in Palestine and Lebanon. U.S. premiere.

3:30pm **NINE LIVES TO LIVE** Trella's supporters fill the Biloxi courthouse as she stands trial for the murder of her abusive husband, Arlen. Robin tells his father about his plans to escort Bud to the prom. Betti-Sue adjusts to the cramped conditions of her new home in her boyfriend's Toyota Corolla.

4:00pm **ROLLER DERBY** The San Antonio She-Devils roll with (and over!) the Montreal Moving Violations.

4:30pm **TIME MACHINE** Today we pay a visit to anarchist/feminist Emma Goldman's facial and scalp massage parlor for professional women in Lower Manhattan, 1905.

5:00pm **REALNEWS/NEWS-REEL** News, information, analysis, and reports from women's news bureaus across the nation.

7:00pm **GYN PHYS** Produced by the Boston Women's Health Collective, tonight's topics: New reproductive technologies—What's in them for us? And Women and AIDS: a critical look at public education campaigns—Who are they for? Are they really reaching those women most at risk?

8:00pm **WOMEN IN THE SHADOWS** Part 5 in an 8-part series based on the novels of Ann Bannon.

9:00 pm **ABOUT FACE: CROSS**

CIVIC MINDED LANDSCAPING

PATRICIA JOHANSON



Stem-segments and "animal islands" in the middle of the lagoon, where birds, ducks, and turtles find refuge, are arranged as lines of defense and extended slightly under water to break up wave action.

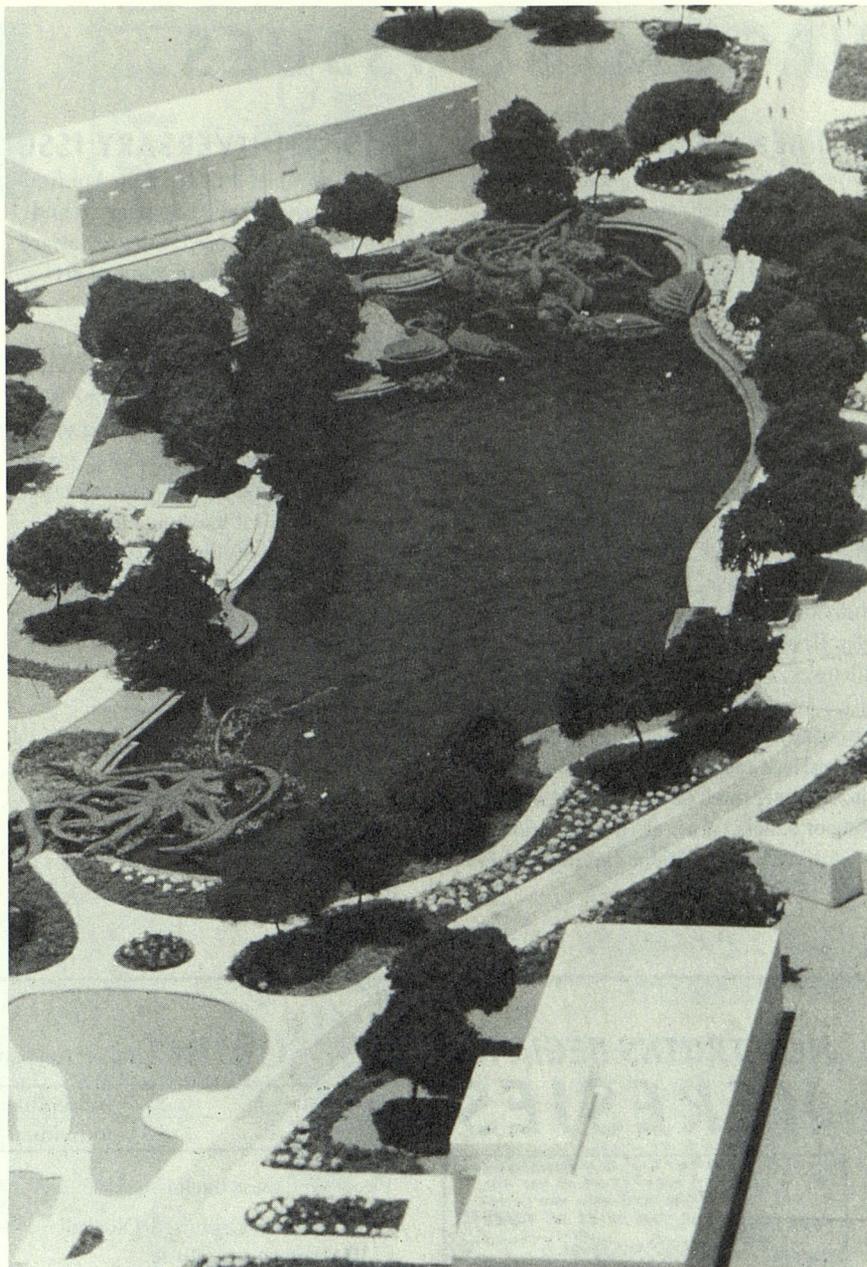
H E R E S I E S 94 T W E N T Y T W O

PATRICIA JOHANSON

Community art offers the hope of moving beyond the monolithic goals of a single designer toward structures that embody the aspirations of both the individual and the group. In the recent past, works of art have tended to become the grave markers of civilization, leading to an ever-narrowing dialogue that categorizes, pigeonholes, and separates. An alternative would be to acknowledge that *everything* is important ... that the world is made up of checks and balances ... and that as designers we can choose to work with positive, life-supporting influences. By dealing with the *real* world, *real* people, and *real* issues (as opposed to the treadmill of aesthetics) art can become a vehicle for transforming commonplace structures into poetic ones, as well as a means of exploring the world, and ourselves.

Vita brevis, ars longa does not account for the fact that without *life*, "art" would be meaningless. The goal for artists in the 21st century should be to develop an art of social and civic concern, with the *individual person* at the center. The contemporary acceptance of cultural objects as surrogates for superiority, money, and power must be replaced by an art of *personal* meaning, that has the capacity to affect all life for the better. By developing open-ended structures that allow for the possibility of all kinds of other structures within, "imposed objectivity" can dissolve into a multitude of subjective situations. Designs that allow for exploration and discovery ... plans that are "felt" rather than "seen" ... art that "gathers in," and allows us to create our *own* order and meaning ... becomes a means toward developing dialogue, empathy, and understanding with all the communities of the earth.

PATRICIA JOHANSON designs large-scale works in parks, fountains and public spaces that combine sculpture, architecture, and landscaping. She lives in Buskirk, New York.



Model for the Leonhardt Lagoon, Fair Park, Dallas, 1982. Upper left—Dallas Museum of Natural History and SAGGITARIA PLATYPHYLLA, 235' × 175' × 12', gunite, 1981–86. Lower left—PTERIS MULTIFIDA (Fern Bridges), 225' × 112' × 12', gunite, 1981–86.

Designated the second National Historic Landmark in Texas, 1986.

UPCOMING ISSUES

WOMEN ON MEN

Women have always had plenty to say on the subject of men, and this issue gives women a chance to voice new (and old) concerns as they relate to the '80s. Possible subjects include: sports, bosses, incest, AIDS, lovers, single motherhood, and the new conservatism.

COMING OF AGE

Aging exemplifies change—the deepest form of radical process. We leave behind, but we also arrive. We come of age in unexpected ways, repeatedly, not only individually, but communally and culturally. Between the generations there are alliances, conflicts, and all forms of objectification. As individuals, we come of age physically, psychologically, politically, with the birth of a child, the death of a parent, the enlightenment of experience, the shedding of beliefs. What are the joys and anxieties of each phase of our coming of age?

10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

What is feminist art? The 10th Anniversary collective is soliciting page art and cartoons on this subject. Surprise award for the best definition of feminist art.

MYTH-EDUCATED WOMAN

How has school changed your life? Why do so many women study art (and so many men end up showing, publishing, performing)? Do you have to go to school to make it? What's it like being the only woman teacher, student, married woman, mother in your class? Did you ever have an influential woman professor? What about education in general?

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Each issue of HERESIES has a specific theme and all material submitted to a particular issue must relate to its theme. Manuscripts should be typed double-spaced and submitted in duplicate. Visual material should be submitted in the form of a slide, xerox, or photograph with title, medium, and date noted; however, HERESIES must have a black-and-white photograph or equivalent to publish the work. We will not be responsible for original art. Those submitting either written or visual material must accompany their contribution with a two or three line biography. All material *must* be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope in order for it to be returned. We do not publish reviews or monographs on contemporary women. We do not commission articles and cannot guarantee acceptance of submitted material. HERESIES pays a small fee for published material. Send all submissions to: HERESIES, PO Box 1306, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

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