ISSUE 15 FALL 1989 $2.00

PERFORMANCE ART MAGAZINE

# P-FORM

CENSORSHIP

The EXPERIMENTAL SOUND STUDIO (ESS) is a Chicago-based, not-for-profit organization founded in 1986 for the production and promotion of innovative audio art. We serve a diverse community of artists, including audio artists, composers, musicians, installation artists, performance artists, video artists, filmmakers, theatre companies and choreographers.

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(*with engineer or instructor)

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October 13 - November 4

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13 at 7PM
*FRIDAY THE 13TH - NIGHT OF THE "KOOKS"*
*An evening of true weirdness and full-blown lunacy, featuring: THE "KOOKS" ART EXHIBIITON, MALLMASTER from NEIL TRAIS & DAVID HAUPTSCHEIN, DONNA KOSSY in Person Reading From DONNA KOSSY'S ORIGINAL KOOKS MAGAZINE, FILMS, VIDEOS AND MORE!*

Saturday, Oct. 14, 7 pm
*SEX, POLITICS, GOOD CITIZENS & THE ART OF FITTING IN*

Saturday, Oct. 14, 9 pm
*"EYES OF HELL (THE MASK)"*

Sunday Oct. 15, 7 pm
*UFO REPORTS, ABDUCTION STORIES & GOVERNMENT CONSPIRACIES*

Friday, Oct. 20, 7 pm
*END OF AUGUST AT THE HOTEL OZONE*

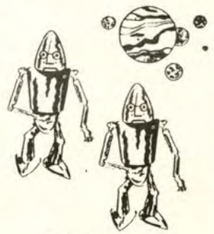
Friday, Oct. 20, 9 pm
*GENE WOLFE & DAVID SEDARIS*

Saturday, Oct. 21, 7 pm
*"THESE ARE THE DAMNED"*

Saturday, Oct. 21, 9 pm
*ROBERT SHEA plus "STRANGE HARVEST"*

Friday, Oct. 27, 7 pm
*"CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED"*

FOR A DETAILED SCHEDULE CALL CHICAGO FILMMAKERS, 281-8788
1229 W. BELMONT AVE.



Friday, Oct. 27, 9 pm
*PHYLLIS EISENSTEIN plus "SIREN OF ATLANTIS"*

Saturday, Oct. 28, 7 pm
*"FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH"*

Saturday, Oct. 28, 9 pm
*FREDERICK POHL plus Experimental Films*

Friday, Nov. 3, 7 pm
*"PERFUMED NIGHTMARE"*

Friday, Nov. 3, 9 pm
*GROUP PLASTIC SURGERY by DAVID HAUPTSCHEIN Plus a reading by DAVID GREENBERGER From DUPLEX PLANET*

Saturday, Nov. 4, 7 pm
*"THE CARS THAT ATE PARIS"*

Saturday, Nov. 4, 9 pm
*DUPLEX PLANET NITE*



THE SCHOOL OF
THE ART INSTITUTE
OF CHICAGO

SELECTED LECTURES

Wednesday, October 18, 7 pm
**May Stevens**
painter

Monday, October 23, 7 pm
**Suzanne Lacy**
performance artist

Wednesday, October 25, 7 pm
**Charles Ray**
sculptor

Monday, October 30, 7 pm
**Trinh T. Minh-ha**
filmmaker
screening *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*

Wednesday, November 8, 7 pm
**Judy Pfaff**
installation artist

Monday, November 13, 7 pm
**Luis Cruz Azaceta**
painter

Monday, November 20, 7 pm
**Malangatana**
painter from Mozambique
admission is free

Wednesday, November 29, 7 pm
**Dennis Adams**
public art/installation artist

All programs are held in the School Auditorium and admission is $3 for the general public and free for students and staff of area colleges unless otherwise noted. These programs are partially funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

THE VISITING ARTISTS PROGRAM
COLUMBUS DRIVE AND JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60603

Friday, October 20, 7 pm
**Erotogenesis**
Video Data Bank screening

Friday, November 3, 7 pm
**Branda Miller**
visiting artist in video

Friday, December 1, 7 pm
**Julie Zando**
visiting artist in video

Saturday, December 16, 8 pm
**Michael K. Meyers**
performance

All programs are free.

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(OF THE DEAD)

A BENEFIT DANCE PARTY
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 9:00 PM

1532 N. MILWAUKEE

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GREEK DANCE LED BY FREEDOM LIALIOS

A SALTERELLO LED BY BOTTARI/PARISI AND THE ETRUSCAN HARUSPICES

SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY GURLENE AND GURLETTE

*$5.00*

WHITEWALLS MAGAZINE
A MAGAZINE OF LANGUAGE AND ART


## THIS BOOK MUST NOT BE MAILED

TO KNOW the right from the wrong, to be sure of yourself, go through this little book and read it carefully, and then when you visit Storyville you will know the best places to spend your money and time, as all the BEST houses are advertised. Read all the "ads."

This book contains nothing but Facts, and is of the greatest value to strangers when in this part of the city. The names of the residents will be found in this Directory, alphabetically arranged, under the headings "White" and "Colored," from alpha to omega. The names in capitals are landladies only.

You will find the boundary of the Tenderloin District, or Storyville: North side Iberville Street to south side St. Louis, and east side North Basin to west side North Robertson Street.

This is the boundary in which the women are compelled to live, according to law.

P-FORM
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P-FORM is a bi-monthly publication dedicated to the development and understanding of performance art, as well as building critical dialogue in Chicago. Reviews, commentary, criticism, interviews, and features are welcome. Manuscripts should include author's name and a method of contact. Reviews should be limited to approximately 400 words; typed copy is encouraged.

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*Cover Photo by The Pikture Man*





Please, dear reader, read these words in the spirit of a hatred for the late zeitgeistification which favors chaperoning of thought and creation over a free run of the mind. If they should offend, or provoke derision, amen.

Performance art has always been intrinsically confrontational and antagonistic. The history of live visual art is one of affront and outrage, by provocation (e.g. Futurism) and apathy (late Jarry).

Although the three works central to the censors' platform ("What is the best way to display the American flag?", "Piss Christ" and Mapplethorpe's homo-erotic oeuvre) are largely presented photographically (the Tyler was an interactive installation, but it incorporated a photo-collage and was disseminated by the media photographically), they are in fact representing real-time acts which, if viewed first hand, would be "shocking" in a much more immediate way.

(At least two of these works have precedent in the history of live art. The Tyler is related to many anti-nationalistic works by the Surrealists during their flirtation with the Communist Party. The preoccupation of Serrano with his bodily fluids in a religious context reiterates many of the ideas of the Viennese Action group of the 1960's, especially Gina Pane and Hermann Nitsch.)

The "violence of the photo" contributes to the shock effect as the medium of photography always has, though in performance this is called documentation.

Yet the outrage is in the act itself, in the knowledge that such an action could have occurred to be viewed photographically.

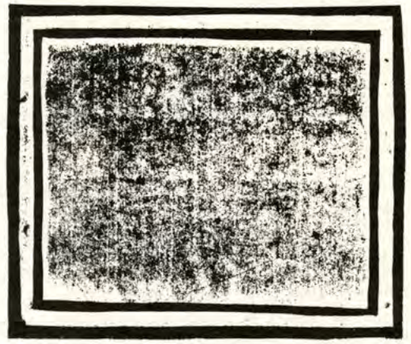
It is the action which is viewed as reprehensible: stepping on a flag, peeing on a crucifix, being a homosexual.

This is the life of art which cannot be lied to, which cannot be hidden or coerced.

There is a truth which cannot be denied in certain moments of living artfully - these moments are what scare and repel those of us with hypocrisy in our hearts - all of us.

These moments are sacred, indeed.

*-Robert Daulton*



# CENSORSHIP

To be considered legally obscene, material must meet these tests: taken as a whole, it appeals to a prurient interest in sex; it describes or depicts, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by state law (which may include actual or simulated contact or nudity); and it lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

# The Magical Act of Doing

## by Frank Moore

*...the poet is the last person who is still speaking the truth when no one dares to...the first person to begin shaping the new consciousness when no one else has begun to sense it...these are two of the most essential human functions. Pound once said, "artists are the antennae of the race." whether or not we have an audience, this strong visioning and shaping of a master poem informs the conscience of generations to come.*
*—Diane di Prima*

***Frank Moore began doing private, erotic performances in the early 70's, which have developed into long ritualistic pieces, public events, experimental theatre, and tacky and outrageous cabaret, as recently seen in the film* Mondo New York. *Moore creates books, videos, and musical recordings as well. He has taught at U.C. Berkley and is an N.E.A. Fellowship recipient.***

Most people think the power or the effect of art comes from the seeing of the art. Thus the focus at least in western art has been doing work to be shown, to be seen by as many people as possible...or at least someone else. This has caused the development of art as a product to be packaged and sold, to be created with at least one eye on what is sellable, the latest art trends, what is presently politically correct, what issues and styles are currently acceptable to the audience, to the galleries, to the art critics and experts. This blocks artists from doing their visioning and dreaming function, turning them into agents of the present order of things.

The dynamic of seeing art is not the fundamental dynamic of art. The doing of art is art's basic dynamic. The doing of art and having other people see the art work are two separate dynamics, events, rituals. The seeing of art is what the viewer or the listener does in her head. The doing of art is the ritual of creation, is what the artists does. In reality, this ritual has more to do with the act of doing than the act of creation. When a child first draws crazy lines on the wall, he is not trying to create something or express himself or show you something...but to do something for some effective purpose that our linear logic cannot grasp. The crazy person does his insane rituals, not to express himself but to keep the sky from falling or to make pain go away. And it works. The sky does not fall down. Maybe it is because of the rituals of the insane.

The very act of doing changes the whole universe. This is a key principle of magic. By doing a ritual or by speaking a spell, you can effect change. Painting a picture, doing a dance, writing a poem, any act of art can be a magical ritual, the doing of which has nonlinear effects. Seen in this way, most acts of creation are private rituals done in personal caves. What we usually think of as works of art are aftermaths of art.



The cave artists operated in this magical way. Their art was not for looking at. This is why they did their rituals and paintings in very dangerously inaccessible, pitch-black bowels of caves. The purpose of these paintings and rituals was to magically effect change in the world (the past, the present, and the future as well as the life after death...) or to communicate with the universal powers. This magical effect and these communications were caused by doing the art. The act of doing this magical art released an energy, some of which remained within these caves, making them "holy" or magical" sites. The walls of a lot of these caves have layers upon layers of magical drawings done by different tribes over time spans of hundreds or thousands of years. These tribes may have been drawn to these dangerously inaccessible caves by this special energy, released through the doing of art, stored in the caves, radiating out of the caves, and recharged by every new act of magic art done within the cave.

This magical action art is not the only kind of art. In the time of the cave art, there was body art which was meant to attract and turn on the opposite sex, and other kinds which were meant to strike fear in the enemy, etc.—all through the medium of seeing, hearing, experiencing the art product. There were also arts of decorating, educating, and entertaining which used the medium of seeing/hearing/experiencing by a spectator. Moreover, the action art and the seeing art at times were combined.

*"...ways of being politically correct are laid on the art and the artist by the powers either of the establishment or the 'alternative' power systems of the present society or both..."*

The problem with our modern frame of art reality is not that we do art to be seen, but that we have forgotten (or have been made to forget by those who control what is to be seen and what is not) that the power of doing art is the main power of art. The private perfotmance is a way to regain the magical power of the doing of art. Defining what is a private performance is an interesting way to enter the magic. I define it as a ritual that is not for an audience. It is something that has to be done, something you may not even want to do. One of the easiest to frame as a private performance is a shaman going to his secret spot to do rites nobody will see to open himself up for channeling visions that he cannot personally use or tell anyone about. We have seen other obvious private performances—the child, the madman, the artist alone doing art. We can add things like doodling, singing in the shower, playing invisible drums to the radio when you are safe alone in your room. It is something that has to come out. It is something too silly, too taboo, too sacred, too intense, too raw, too vulnerable to be done in public, to be expressed. This may be where real art begins. This kind of doing by one person is clearly private performance. It has an element of secrecy and undercover. I can remember singing on my bed along with the radio, quickly stopping when anyone opened the door, not wanting to be exposed, not wanting to lessen the magic.

This hidden ritual not only kept me from insanity (some people will say that makes it therapy, not art), but opened nonlinear routes of possibilites not only for me, but for everybody. The private performance gives the artist freedom from limits and shoulds and morals, so she can go beyond where the society or culture or the consciousness has reached, to connect to the universal power. By doing this she brings a new universal area into this reality.

In my work, I have been trying to discover how private performances affect the outer world. The most obvious and least controversial way in which they affect the outer world is that the doing of a piece that no one other than the doer will know about or experience psychologically changes the doing artist. By his relating to the outer world after the private event, the change is transferred to the outer world. In our culture which focuses on masses, on bigness, and linear cause-effect process, this small, intimate, changing effect is usually dismissed as not meaning very much, not doing very much. In my work, I have been applying what I understand of the principles of quantum physics. Physicists have found that there are events that cannot be explained by normal linear ways of looking at things. Linear seeing turns out to be a small frame on top of a much bigger frame they call the chaos theory. In this what first appears to be a small event with little or not effect sets off a pattern of effect. This pattern sometimes even fades or disappears for a time. Then it reappears, causing a wide reaching chain reaction, whereas an event that at first appears big and important usually, after a burst of energy, fades in effect. When seen in this light, the changing effect that is transferred by the artist from the private performance to the outer reality by his living in that outer reality becomes a very powerful source of change.

But this is not the only source of power for change. Artists are surrogates of society who go into the reality of dreams and myths and universal truths. Private, secret performances give the artists a bubble

private pieces. In my work, there comes a point, which is different for each person, where there is a change from passive audience to active participant. Even watching becomes an act of involvement and vulnerability. At this point, a large number chose to leave the performance, which is in itself a vulnerable act of involvement. This would turn the performance from a piece that my cast and I are projecting for the public to an act, a magic ritual which all of the people there are performing together.

***"It is something too silly, too taboo, too sacred, too intense, too raw, too vulnerable to be done in public, to be expressed. This may be where real art begins."***

In reality, a large percentage of my public ritual work is made up of private and secret sections. Some of these private, secret sub-rituals take place before the performance, or within a hidden cave, locked box or vault, away from the experience and knowing of the audience. What happens within these secret sub-rituals greatly influences what happens in the public performances, even though there are no physical or linear links between the public and the secret sub-rituals. When the secret sub-ritual fails to reach the taboo-breaking intensity, the public ritual falls flat. Kristine Ambrosia has taken this aspect of the nonlinear principle further by performing secret rituals alone on a mountain top or in a hidden room while her public performance goes on many miles away.

Other sections of my public performance are private because they are only experienced within the mind and/or body of the person, or between the bodies of two people. I have several techniques I use to achieve this. For a large portion of the performance, the people are blindfolded and are directed not to speak. In this way, what she experiences comes without the influences of others. She is taken alone into caves without knowing what others have done or how they have reacted. She is told she can do whatever she wants, but not to reveal what happens within the room. This creates a freedom from taboos and from outside pressures.

As we have seen, the secret, hidden quality has always been an aspect of the kind of art we have been talking about today, one of the reasons to use secrecy is to draw a circle around the magic work that protects it from the prevailing taboos, morals, and judgements. This is especially important for a student just starting out, who cannot distance her artistic self from social pressures. But this circle or secrecy is not just for protection. The shaman did her art within secrecy because this focused the energy released by the act back upon the act. This feedback cycle intensified the power of the act. A good example of this is when Barbara Smith sat nude on a comfortable mat for a night in a room. Men could come in one by one, and do whatever they wanted with her, but what was done in the room could not be revealed. For years after, rumors of what happened in that room grew up wildly, continuing to release imaginative energy. Smith has done public performances in which she had tantric sex. But on deep levels, this may be much less powerful than the performance in which she may have just sat on a comfortable mat. The magical trigger was the public secrecy.

All the qualities and hidden channels of effecting, healing, changing, dreaming, myth-giving powers that we have seen in private performances are also present in public performances; but in public performances layers of seductions, limitations, considerations, taboos, morals, ways of being politically correct are laid on the art and the artist by the powers either of the establishment of the "alternative" power systems of the present society or both. When I do a public piece, I am not swayed by how many people come or how many walk out, because I am still functioning, and rooted, in the channels of magical change that I became aware of by doing private performances. This rooting in private rituals gives the artist freedom from, and weapons against, the corrupting concerns of money, fame, competition, good taste, acceptance, and the search for on audience. This freedom is important in shamanisitc art, which is art that acts for nonlinear change, because, by bringing new dreams, new myths, new visions into society from the universal underworld, it will radically change society. By being linked to a power system, be it establishment or alternative, the artist is trapped in a basic conflict of interest, because she has aligned herself either with protecting the social system or with a certain manner of change, when her true job is to carry the new visionary myths from the gods into this world through her body.

***"...tubes up asshole and down throat and up the nose..."***

When the artist is rooted in private rituals, it becomes clear that she is not an agent for society, or some political movement, or the art galleries and art "experts", or even for her own individualistic imagination. Instead, she is an agent of gods, of dreams, of visions and myths. This causes reactions in society, especially when the piece is public. Karen Finley is criticized for limiting her audience because she offends them by her words, anger, nudity. An artist who is rooted in the private channels is not affected by this attempt to curb the power of the art by strapping it to audience acceptance and agreement. The





power of a Karen Finley is the taboo-breaking energy she releases into society. This societal pressure to tame art down, which usually sounds very reasonable and comes even from liberal sources, is very hard for the artist to resist who is not familiar with the hidden channels of change.

Another example of society's attempt to rechannel the change coming from shamanistic art is what an "art expert" told me" "your work is...not art...(because) it doesn't address the concerns...(which are a) part of the current art dialog, whether it be mainstream or 'alternative'...curators and presenters are (not) obliged to show it." She went on to say that I should stay "in (my) own sphere", and that I don't need the public channels that galleries represent. Which is true. But galleries and the people who think what is in galleries is the full range of art need the artists, not the reverse. The magic of private performance is needed to expand the narrow, shallow river of "the current art dialogue," controlled both in content and depth by the art experts. Fortunately, there are galleries which are willing to go into the magical unknown represented by private performances.

Another way society tries to deball the magical power or private performance is to co-opt it by absorbing it back into the normal reality. What happened to Paul McCarthy is a classic example. Paul is, or was, the best of the modern shamanistic performers.

In the '70's, he did performances in run down motels. He transformed into a rubber-masked trickster who called forth realities of vomit, of messy meals of dog food, mayo and catsup..., of wearing women's clothes...of hard-ons dangling out of girls' underwear fucking dolls, tubes up asshole and down throat and up the nose..., of fucking alone in a motel bed in mayo..., of walking bloodied barefoot on glass. Friends watched via video in another motel room, But most ran out in shock. This shock is a special kind of shock. It is not the shock of when a youngster uses obscenity or when a guy exposes himself. It is not a reaction or an aggressive act. It is more like culture shock. It is a reality shock. It is when two different realities come together, collide, and combine. This happened around Paul's pieces. Most people could not handle it. But the shock released incredible amounts of uplifting energy.

By the early '80's, Paul had been discovered by the art scene. He was invited to the S.F. Art Institute to do a performance. The big hall was packed with students. Paul did his rituals, which in the past would have cleared the room, shocked and physically disturbed most people; but this time, the audience laughed and clapped at everything this clown did. They even drank catsup with him to show how hip they were. There was no shock, no magic, no colliding of realities.

Paul stopped, defeated. He was cut off from his private, magical roots by being transformed from an outlaw magician into a hot artist. He told me the day after he felt the loss of the magic but did not know how to get it back. After a few more performances, he stopped performing...which is a great loss to us all. He was defeated because he underrated not only the importance of his private magic, but how much it threatened normal reality.

# CENSORSHIP

## *And Female Identity*

menses
it all started there
dirty things between our legs
the body messy
dripping its bloody rhythms
CLEANING UP
proper sex in the licensed
(by god and state)
wedded family
reproduction
of the family property
CUTTING OUT
other acts
masturbation cunnilingus intercourse
Mapplethorpe
anything with the word anal in it
blasphemy debauchery obscenity indecency

A REVERED MAN IN WOMEN'S UNDERWEAR, A FLAG ON THE FLOOR, A GOD SUBMERGED IN URINE... These are REVERED things contaminated by DIRTY things. Borders between clean and blasphemous, sacred and bodily, honored and sacrilegious, become blurred and indistinct. There is a mix-up between categories, between phallus and mint green lingerie; between the stars, stripes, and feet; between the bread, the wine, and the bladder. THESE THINGS SHOULD NEVER MIX because if you mix up men and women, you mess up the FAMILY, and if you turn the flag upside down, you mess with the COUNTRY, and if you can't tell the difference between the spiritual and the bodily head, you're messing with GOD.

Why is dirt dirty? It is aligned with the earth, not heaven. Why is the floor not appropriate? It is aligned with the bottom of our feet, our lowest bodily parts, opposite our heads. And women's underwear? The frilly stuff that no puritan would wear, that no male man would be caught dead in. The point here is that conventional (patriarchal) ideas of family, country, and god would continue to define themselves in opposition to the body, earth, and the female; the "other side," the dark side where the body bleeds rhythmically and where babies are born out of vaginas. Keeping categories clean, images non-problematic, is a point in artistic censorship. Feelings run deep here. Family, god, and country are sacred institutions to many people. These people feel no irony about them. During the height of the Washington painting incident, I thought about pornographic images of women and my own feelings of anger and violation when I saw them. For the image of the female is definitely one I identify with and would like to protect.

2

BUT
my breast is my wetness
is my tongue to go on and on
BUT ALSO
her thigh, showing, caused him to go mad
with physical craving, he asserted
in the court
that she had asked
(without words)
(implied: with her body)
for i t
PLEASURE AND DANGER
A SEESAW
AND A WOMAN SITS ON BOTH ENDS

Vickie Hoch

Carole Vance, anthropologist and Professor of Public Health, theorizes (1) that the recent split within feminism on the issue of pornography has its roots in two distinctly different feelings women have toward sexuality. In female socialization, women experience their sexuality as dangerous, in that they may accidentally or otherwise, arouse the male. Our social agenda is that if women stay controlled, men will be able to too. But is a woman is sexual, or sexy, whatever happens is her fault: in the classical scenario, if she is wearing a short skirt and is raped, "she asked for it." Consequently, her sex is perceived as dangerous to herself and others. On the other hand, it is her pleasure. Loss of control, loss of boundary, her body as ecstasy, intimacy — the very opposite of danger.

Vance places the history of feminist attitudes toward pornography on this continuum, with "pleasure" at one end and "danger" at the other, and a range of shades and mixes in the middle. Most women she asserts, have experienced both, since in our lives we experience rape, abuse, and harassment as well as love, touching, the erotic. For anti-pornography feminists, the danger from outside is so strong that pleasure is to be withheld until after danger is regulated. However, with regulation comes new dangers; those who would regulate the sexual and pornographic industry (the present legislature), would be fulfilling their societal agenda, which would "clean up" not just violent pornography, but, as demonstrated in recent events, everything else as well.

The feelings of danger, fear of our sexuality, residing in us may cause some fo the censorship that women do to themselves. As women begin to explore sex, they take risks. Karen Finley's work may be misinterpreted as some form of kinky sexual entertainment, as Robert Daulton suggested in a recent article in *P-Form*. Joanna Frueh's work was subjected to a puritanical form of feminism by her critics, who seemed to have completely misunderstood how a woman could speak with such a filthy mouth and not betray her sisters, as if being a feminist means adhering to a rigorous, prescribed sexual code.

The definition of feminism and female identity is an ongoing experiment. Thanks to writings of black and "minority" feminists such as Bell Hooks (2), we realize that the feminist ideology of the '70's was exclusive, based on middle-class Caucasian experience, narrow in its outlook and self-righteous. A feminism based in an understanding of the racist, capitalistic, sexist nature of society will be one which does not hate or imitate males, but seeks to practice non-domineering relationships between people — in the family, in society, and globally. It is one that will explore and liberate the male and female within each person, in which pleasure will reign over danger. It will be one that embraces and celebrates our connections in the body, with the earth.

*Acknowledgements: Thanks to Carole Tormollan for guiding me to important articles and authors.*

*In November, N.A.M.E.'s schedule includes a series of programs loosely plotted around themes of gender, censorship, redefinitions, and sometimes subsequent reclamations. Call N.A.M.E. — 226-0671 — for information.*

**October 27 - November 24**
*At Liberty to Say, an installation by Kermit Berg and Treasure Smith.*

**November 9**
*A Vagina Surrounded by a Woman: The Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, a lecture by Carole Vance which gives an overview of the debate in feminism on pornography and explains the appropriation of feminist rhetoric by the conservative right, touching on recent acts of censorship in Chicago.*

**November 10 &11**
*Opening the Circle of Identities, a juried performance series of artists who question or present (or both) new possibilities to conventional notions of female identity.*

**November 17 & 18**
*Motivated Plots, videotapes by women video artists and filmmakers who have developed alternative narrative formats to tell women's stories. Artists include Eleanor Russel, Johanna Sophia, Abigail Child, and others.*

**Notes**

[1] Carole Vance, "Pleasure and Danger: Toward a Politics of Sexuality," from Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality. Edited by Carole Vance.

[2] Bell Hooks, Feminist Theory from Margin to Center.

# RALLY TO SUPPORT THE ARTS

Report by: LISA PINES

## The signs read:

**Fight Art Censorship**
**Not the church, not the state,**
**we decide when art is great**
**Free Art=Free Country**
**Stop Jesse Helms**
**Ban the Senate Art Police**
**Keep your hands off my art**

Over 250 artists, musicians, writers and arts supporters assembled Saturday, August 26, 1989 in front of the State of Illinois Center to voice their support of the arts. The press release read:

*"This rally is being organized by Chicago Artists who are joining artists from cities across the country in a nationwide day of protest. The purpose of this event is to voice public support for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and to alert people to amendments being proposed in Congress in response to NEA funding of art that has become controversial. These amendments are punitive in nature, threaten the integrity of the NEA and challenge the rights of all citizens to free expression."*

The idea for the rally originated in a meeting of the Time Arts Committee of Randolph Street Gallery on Tuesday August 8. It came up during a discussion of the *Inalienable Rights* exhibit and event organized by the Committee for Artists Rights (CFAR). The Time Arts Committee, which curates film and performance events at Randolph Street, received word about a national day of protest against recent threats to the NEA budget and charter in Congress. Protests were planned for the same day in Los Angeles, New York, and Minneapolis. The specific amendments included in the Senate bill are:

***1.*** The "Helms Amendment" offered by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), which prohibits funds from being used to *"Promote, disseminate, or produce obscene or indecent materials including but not limited to sadomasochism, homoeroticism, exploitation of children, individuals engaged in sex acts, materials which denigrate the objects of belief of adherents of a certain religion or non religion. . . or denigrates, debases or reviles a person, group or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin."*

***2.*** A five year ban on NEA funding to Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) for funding the works of Andre Serrano, and the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Philadelphia for organizing the Robert Mapplethorpe retrospective exhibition.

***3.*** A $400,000 reallocation in appropriations from the Visual Arts Program of the NEA to the Folk Arts and the Local Arts Programs..

Committee members felt that it was important that Chicago participate in some way in this national day of protest. From the start the response was conceived in a positive sense. One early suggestion of a parade was shelved because of the short amount of time available. By August 14 several committee members had committed to organizing a "Demonstration Against Censorship." The issue of sponsorship came up and the organizers decided to participate as individual artists, rather than as representatives of an organization. The primary reason may be concern that their actions might have ramifications on their organization's funding (as it did when the Illinois Arts Alliance held a press conference in support of the SAIC during the "Flag Flap;" subsequently the Alliance had $20,000 state funding removed from their budget). The second reason, suggested by Peter Taub, is that individual artists need to speak up and take a more active role in the eyes of the public. Artists are beginning to take more responsibility, and are standing up and actively offer constructive suggestions about how to support the future of the arts in America.

Mindy Faber began contacting speakers, arranging media coverage and planning logistics. The organizers saw this as an opportunity to generate letters, have petitions signed and phone calls made to Congress in support of the NEA. The organizers also wanted politicians to realize that many of their constituents are artists and arts supporters, perhaps encouraging them to defend threats to arts funding. *"There's hardly a person who doesn't participate in the arts in some way,"* commented Faber. Media coverage would help the public learn about the threats to the NEA and hopefully involve the entire art-going public in voicing their support of the arts.

As the Rally was organized it evolved from a "Demonstration Against Censorship" to a "Rally to Support the Arts." As Faber says, *"The event evolved from a reactive response to a pro-active shoe of support for the NEA."* A diverse group of speakers had been assembled representing a wide range of opinions, all of which expressed positive support for the future of arts in this country. As speakers agreed to participate the rally became more and more about information. The speakers would make many different kinds of points about how censorship relates to different constituencies

Organizers, including Mindy Faber, Peter Taub, Mary Jo Schnell, and Larry Steger, with some last minute help from this author, called contacts in arts organizations and in the press and postered all over the city. CFAR called members and included the rally in a mailing. Friday night before the rally, Randolph Street Gallery was the site of a poster making session. The art supply store Koenig's/Sheldon's donated sign making materials including paint and poster board. Thirty energetic artists worked on making over 100 posters representing many aspects of the issue. Signs ranged from one word comments such as *"FREE DUMB"* to complex cartoon drawings of Senator Jesse Helms. Chant leaders volunteered from the sign making group and were lead by Larry Steger. The group lead the chants that began the rally, and were intended to set a high energy level for the rally before the speakers began. Mary Jo Schnell organized the sound system with cooperation from the State of Illinois Center building manager's office.

The rally was an accurate representation of the arts community in all its diversity. There was a broad spectrum of opinions expressed from radical to moderate . However, all these individuals were united by the principle of free speech and in their opposition to the politicization of the NEA. In these times it is imperative for artists to speak out, to join together, to attend rallies, to write letters. In short, to become involved in active support of the arts. Only is this way can we protect our rights.

*Continued nest page*

*Critical analysis of rally by Werner Herterich on page 23*

# Freedom and Art

In recognizing those who create and those who make creation possible, we celebrate freedom. No one realizes the importance of freedom more than the artist, for only in the atmosphere of freedom can the arts flourish.

Artists have to be brave; they live in the realm of idea and expression, and their ideas will often be provocative and unusual. Artists stretch the limits of understanding. They express ideas that are sometimes unpopular.

In an atmosphere of liberty, artists and patrons are free to think the unthinkable and create the audacious; they are free to make both horrendous mistakes and glorious celebrations. Where there's liberty, art succeeds.

In societies that are not free, art dies.

In the totalitarian societies of the world, all art is "officially approved." It's the expression not of the soul, but of the state. And this state-sanctioned art is usually, as a rule, 99 percent of the time, utterly banal, utterly common. It is lowest-common-denominator art.

In fact, it is not art at all, for art is an expression of creativity, and creativity, as I've said, is born in freedom.

Which is not to suggest that great artists who love the truth of art cannot be found in the totalitarian states. They're there. Visit a prison; you'll find a number of them.

Their garrets are jail cells; their crime is that they refused to put their minds in chains and their souls in solitary. Some artists are forced to the fringes of society. Their work is repressed. These artists may be unpersons, but all of them are heroes. I know you feel solidarity with them. I know you often think of your brother and sister artists throughout the world. And I hope you continue to pay tribute to them by celebrating freedom in your work and in your lives.

Andy Soma Photo by Jenny Knowlton

*Excerpts from a speech by President Reagan when he presented the National Medal of Arts in the East Room of the White House, April 23, 1985*

New York Times April 29, 1985





## *"Offensive" Art Show Flops As House Rejects Fund Ban*

Basil Talbott
*Chicago Sun-Times*
*September14, 1989*

WASHINGTON - An exhibit of homoerotic photos put up . . . in the Capitol by conservative Republicans was a big flop when a decisive House majority turned thumbs-down on a proposed ban on government funding of "offensive" art.

Curious congressmen wandered off the floor to peer at the photos, pasted on pieces of cardboard in the manner of a class project, but they weren't inspired to vote for the ban. After a parliamentary minuet, they voted 262-153 against a procedural motion that would have put the House on record in support of a funding prohibition authored by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). The Helms amendment is attached to an appropriation bill passed by the Senate. . .

Brendan de Vallance Photo by Jenny Knowlton

## EXCERPTS FROM ARTS DEBATE IN SENATE

A vote against this amendment is a vote for pornography."
*Jesse Helms, R., North Carolina*

*New York Times*
*September 30, 1989*

"These are gross. These are indefensible. I don't think these are art. . . .I'm not for Mapplethorpe. I'm sick that a dollar of taxpayer money went to pay for this kind of junk. I'm sick about it. . . .It is truly outlandish."

• • • • •

"That's not the issue. The issue is how good are we at defining whether something is suitable art or not suitable art, and how we should draw those definitions, and should we really write definitions on the floor of the Senate which cover *Godspell* and *Tom Sawyer* and *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Color Purple* and *The Godfather?*
Now, Mr. President, I think that the answer is no."
*John C. Danforth, R., Missouri*

• • • • •

"Now censorship is not involved. We have condoned too much. . . We've had an organization that we've been funding for a long time called the National Endowment for the Arts. Sure, I want them to put the blocks to them, I want them to exercise their responsibility instead of exercising irresponsibility. . . .

## Conferees Reject A Plan To Curb Federal Funds For Obscene Art

WASHINGTON - A House and Senate conference committee today rejected a proposal to prohibit Federal financing of art that violates broadly defined moral standards.

.In place of that plan, the seven Senators and five members of the House unanimously agreed on relatively mild restrictions for the National Endowment for the Arts...

The strongest of these restrictions was a temporary standard that would prevent the endowment from supporting art defined as obscene by a 1973 Supreme Court decision [Miller v. California] ...The committee also authorized $250,000 to set up a commission to review the endowment's grant-making procedures...

... The conference [also] accepted the House and Senate provisions to cut the agency's overall budget by $45,000 - a sum equal to the amount of the relevant Federal grants to the two arts organizations...

William H. Honan
*New York Times*
*September 30, 1989*

Recent actions by our government to punish the art community for condoning "obscene" or "controversial" art works makes vividly evident the tenuous nature of the artist/government relationship. That our government balks at endorsing a broad interpretation of First Amendment freedoms should not be a great surprise—a government dependent on exploitation cannot function in an evironment where full disclosure and open dialogue are genuinely supported. "Free Enterprise" depends on class division for its existence—the creation and perpetration of the myth of a superior (white, male, straight) minority ruling class seeks to ensure the continuation of an underclass laboring to acheive the dubious and unattainable qualities of the rulers. Age-old trickery. Exploitation of needs and desires.

In its ideal conception our government represents equal opportunity and freedom—to its own citizens, at least. The reality has always been subtly shifting patterns of inequality and exploitation. As artists we really have two choices: to accept the values and conditions as they exist, or to work against those values and conditions. Simple: commercial galleries with their inflated prices and insistence on the banal are useless to all but the bored rich, and are dangerous to the artist who places inordinate value in their sanction. Grants are corrupting where curatorial policy is jeopardized for cash, and generally tend to promote work more useful to the grant giver than to the public.

Corporate commissions are trophies to capitalistic exploits. As long as artists rely solely on these means for support and as measures of our success we will remain little more than colonised playthings of the rich—no matter how successfully we may delude ourselves. It's past time to cast off bourgeoise aspirations. As citizens we are right to expect governmental support, but it is foolish and reactionary at this point in time to not actively pursue alternatives.

As the latest "controversies" in art exlemplify, the ideological gap

# JOE MATUNIS

between artist and public is huge. As members of the working class it is our responsibility as citizens with training to make that training useful and available to our fellow citizens. To continue as cliqueish, elitists cloistered in galleries and about museums is to cut our own throats. Our continued existence as viable, conscientious voices of change depends upon developing solidarity with those of our class. We must take responsibility not only for explaining complex artistic concepts, but also for making art work available outside of the tombs of culture as they exist—ostensibly "open to the public," but, in reality, psychologically closed spaces to all but a minority.

Some artists feel trapped in the gallery/museum/publisher/theater system thinking the only venue for their works are these extant institutions. There exists an artificial cultural imperialism that places greater value on exclusive, expensively produced art works, More valuable to whom? Certainly not the artist. Ifdissemination of your aesthetic is of greater value to you than endorsing the values of the excessively wealthy collector/connoisseur then a street performance at 43rd and Pulaski is of greater value than a performance at BAM, a series of xerox posters displayed across the walls of the financial district is of greater value than a solo show at Phyllis Kind.

Now that our funding is drying up it's not time to get bitter or to waste valuable time flogging a dying horse, it's timeto get creative. Forget everything you learned in art school (especially if you're a SAIC grad.) and learn to use every free, available technology & material at your disposal. Use the company's laser printer, stat camera, xerox machine, your art work. Think of it as some of the company's profits "trickling down" to your benefit. Never ask permission. Get keys. Be honest on the job.

The city is full of oppuortunities for art display and activity. Construction boardings are gallery walls (letra-press a legend declaring your work "supported in part by the City of _____ Commission of Public Works. Thank you for your support"—it fools'em every time.) Vacant lots, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, billboards (unrented billboard space can sometimes be had free of charge with the proper rap). Spray stencils, chalk drawings, xerox posters (multiple sheet images, even) mono-chromatic painting, found object sculpture, small scale epoxy-cast sculpture epoxied to buildings, sidewalks—all cheap, cheap, cheap. Easy. Fun. Good. We need to overcome our respect for private property and value our ability to transform,what are in the urban environment numbingly bland, oppressive spaces into areas with some reminder of the individual, human voice. Private property exists at our expense in more ways than one. Fight back.

While censorship from the Federal level is coming into vogue it is still relatively risk free to carry out situationist style guerilla art activities in the city. Cops understand that spray paint graffiti is deemed criminal, but seem baffled or indifferent to other urban art activity. If they don't know for sure, they'd rather not ask.

Meridel Le Suer, an 89 year old artist/activist said in her address to an Alliance for Cultural Democracy conference last year: "It's a wonderful thing to be here now, stripped of some of the illusions of bourgeoise culture—the illusion of getting into those galleries, the illusion of becoming prostitute to bourgeoise culture. It's not possible anymore, except for a few. The grants are being cut off. They're not going to give out those grants anymore. They didn't work. You didn't go in and perfume the sewers. And thank god, we're not going to have those kinds of grants anymore."

Often it takes a crisis to reveal the true nature of a situation. Its encouraging to see artists working together to fight censorship; the logical concurrent step is to seize all possible means of actively, positively opposing and countering these policies (and the larger policies of the capitalist system that engender censorship and other worse crimes). Direct placement of art work into non-sanctioned space is one way of broadening the dialogue between artist and public and freeing ourselves from the crippling, disheartening system of official culture now in place. We'll have accomplished little if our goal in protest is a return to the status quo.

**GO.**

**X.**

**JOE.**

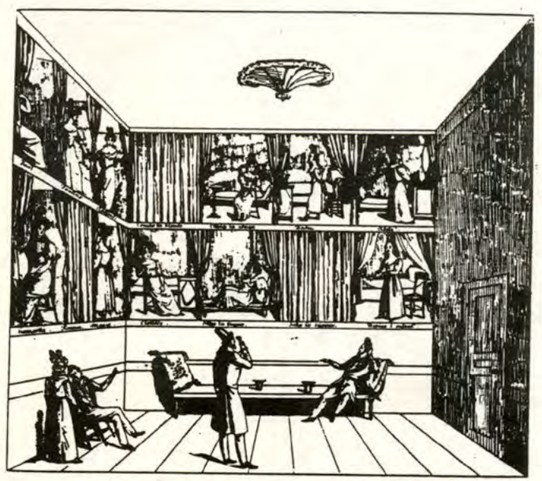
# All Kinds of News

**Featuring useful information for performance artists, such as scoops on spaces, performance opportunities, and competitions.**

Please send interesting tidbits, hot news items, and idle gossip to Douglas T. Hoppe at *All Kinds of News* c/o
P-Form
Randolph Street Gallery
756 North Milwaukee
Chicago, IL 60622

## *Space Survey*

***Interview with Chris Murray, founding member and Director of Arts at The Edge of the Lookingglass Theatre***



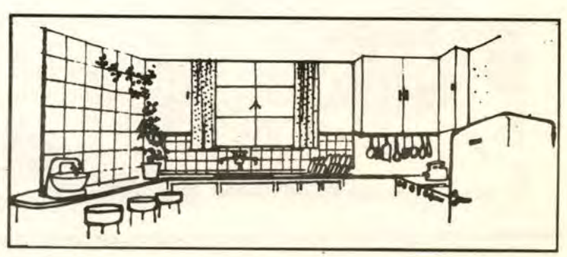
The Edge of the Lookingglass Theatre, located at 62 E. 13th St., is a multi-disciplinary arts and performance complex. The Edge is for-profit; liquor sales pay for much of their operating expenses. The Edge is open to many kinds of performance art; Murray believes that "when artists are free from government and corporate purse-strings, they will be free of censorship, too."

Chris Murray and the other members of the Edge keep long hours: weekdays are 4 pm - 2 am and weekends are 4 pm - 4 am.

Murray cautions artists that, "as we usually have two events each night (8 pm and 10:30 pm), performers need to tell us their needs *in advance*."

Call Chris Murray at 939-4017. He'll be happy to talk to you about performing at The Edge. If you would rather, send a proposal, slides, videotape, and SASE to:

Chris Murray
The Edge of the Lookingglass Theatre
62 E. 13th St.
Chicago, IL 60605



# Space Statistics

### Art Gallery

*Where:* 1st floor
*Space:* a bar, tables, and chairs are in the center of the gallery
*Shows:* 2-D, 3-D, and installation work
*Size:* 2,000 square feet
*Floor:* wood
*Ceilings:* 15 feet
*Seating:* 80
*Shipping:* The Edge is willing to ship out of state artwork
*Sales:* artists receive 100% of selling price

### Upstairs Gallery/Rehearsal Space

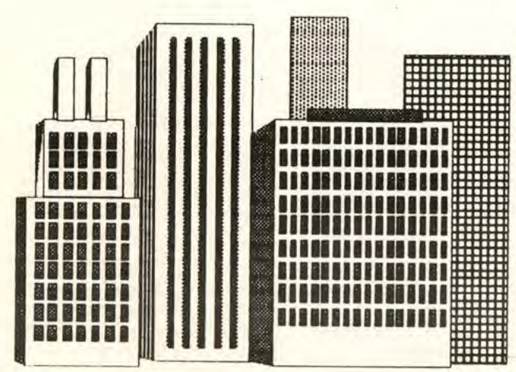
*Where:* 5th floor
*Space:* more low-key, controlled than first floor
*Shows:* art & rehearsal
*Size:* 3,500 square feet
*Seating:* 80
*Accessibility:* stairwell, freight elevator
*Exits:* Backstage and hallway
*Status:* under construction at the present time

### Performance Space

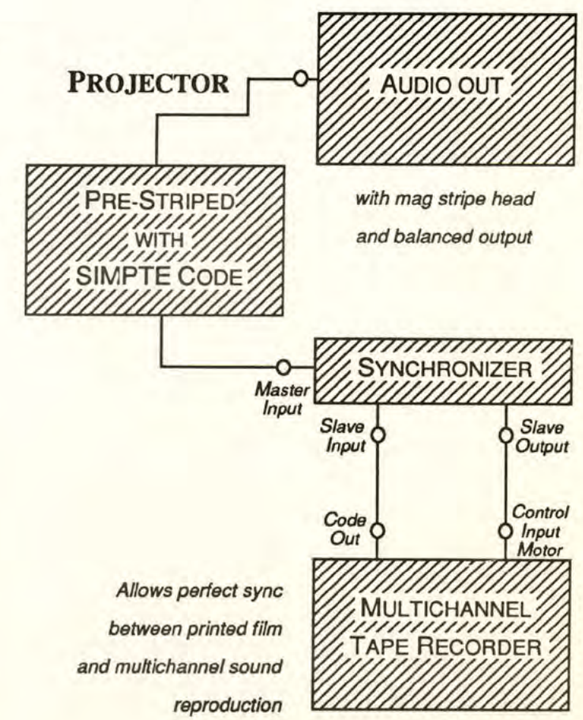
*Where:* 1st floor, rear
*Accessibility:* stairwell and small freight elevator
*Shows:* all forms of 4-D work: performance art, films, video, music, theatre, etc.
*Size:* 4,500 square feet
*Seating:* 200
*Exits:* audience exits into bar; backstage area for performers only
*Equipment:* a large variety of lighting, sound, video, and film projection equipment; also a VHS camera for the artist's personal documentation
*Advertising:* 10,000 monthly calendars, various print and radio ads
*Artists Compensation:* all performers are paid; amount varies

# Film

Seth Greene, a founding member of The Edge and a playwright, has what may be the best multi-channel sound-to-film system in Chicago (see *diagram*, right). For more information, write or call Seth Greene at The Edge.



DIAGRAM



### R.I.P.

### DO THE HUMAN RIGHTS THING!

A Performance Art Benefit for
The Peace Museum
Iris Moore
Brigid Murphy

Michael Meyers
Getz Theater
August 11, 1989

Love has no rights—like taste it's a matter of opinion and to argue opinion as to its rightness or wrongness is not right... so where does that leave us — in the cesspool of Dear Abby columns, do's and don't's of dating, singles bars, a tome of "How To. . . " books, alimony, palimony and "safe sex," which sounds as oxymoronic as "Peace Museum" — we put under glass or rubber latex the things we most want to be protected from or protect. . . ?

Iris Moore's *A Faction of the Matter*, a dark piece that skirted the notions of loss, as registered by the body, and assumption, as counterbalanced by realization, moved with a funereal pace only very occasionally lightened by black humor. The choppy blocking and "Brechtian" disruption were both a help and a hindrance, creating a sense of severance and inexplicable loss but never allowing the piece to gel into a singular motion. The sentiment seemed to derive from the depths of an emotion that invokes both wrath and confusion in equal doses, yet the timing was neither succinct enough nor relentless enough to either purge or resolve. The pieces are all there; it seems to be just a matter of time and possibly distance.

Brigid Murphy's *Peace at Our Feet — Tales from A Broad* was the antithesis of Moore's work; a send-up of mythical unrequited love replete with a miniature reenactment of campy Hollywood grand choreography, lip-synched "bitch banter" a la *The Women*, and a fairy talish sisters story performed with the "ironic" awkwardness of "new dance" steps (Dance-noise, the Shrimps, etc.). This is the sharpest work I've seen by Brigid outside of the languorous lazy-boy ease she exhibits as host of her own variety show — *Miss Milly's Orchid Show*. The slapdashness was thoroughly convincing and worked beautifully at undercutting all the polish Hollywood works so laboriously at to pull both heart and purse strings simultaneously. Still the work remained on the level of pastiche subverting conventions for the sake of a laugh rather than the anger it could invoke.

*Iris Moore in "A Faction of the Matter"*

Photos by Jenny Knowlton

Michael Meyers closed the night with a performance entitled *Talking*. The piece was a loosely arranged series of stories held together by a few reoccurring motifs, idiosyncratic gestures, and the bluesy acoustic sound of Jeff Ragsdale playing and replaying "Deep River Blues," and "Remember My Name." All in all the piece felt like a strange cross between Garrison Keillor and Robert Ashley: a smart, highly stylized Midwesterner's take on love experienced and processed by the mind and not the body. The writing, most of which I was familiar with, seemed stripped bare in this context and occasionally burdened by a literalness perhaps better read off a page than spoken aloud. Still the voice, in that tone of confessional familiarity and nakedness, became the focus as much as the words. The stories were full of mental pictures etched into the brain and stored for slow reexamination, and Meyers' pacing and ease of retrieval worked to create a sense of storyteller as placater and language as palliative. The language occasionally fell to rehearsed sensibility partly owing to the rhetoric itself — composed as a writer composes and therefore trapped within the confines and logic which language imposes. The delivery, regardless, was flawless and accentuated with gestures of both hands and face that added a layer of distance between the mind that considers and the tongue that delivers. My main regret was that the music did not somehow rise to the same surface as the rhythm of the voice and thereby deepen the whole sonic effect; instead the music seemed to fill any uncomfortable breaks rather than allowing silence to play its own part in the whole.ease of retrieval worked to create a sense of storyteller as placater and language as palliative. The language occasionally fell to rehearsed sensibility partly owing to the rhetoric itself —

**More Iris Moore**

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*-Kevin Henry*

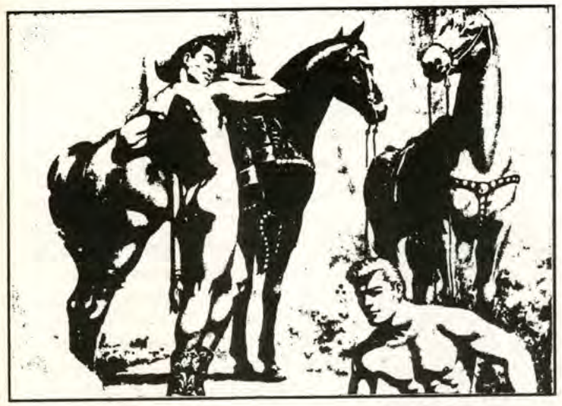
### New Gay Fiction

Gary Indiana and Dennis Cooper
Randolph Street Gallery
May 27, 1989

Attending performance of excerpted textual reading, we expect some full experience. We want to be engaged, (a story), pulled along by the reader, breathing, his timing some beat to us (listeners). Want to engage and may be changed, like wiping shit from your shoe. Like getting wet. We shouldn't need more than this—should not feel excerpted, as if we didn't get enough to get it. A whole into which we may be seduced, lured: heard the words (a reader's) may be an invite to some dangerous dance with him. Rhythm. It's what we turn out for, crave, the rhythm of a voice. After all, we could be home reading, the words on our own terms.

Buzzz of a man who spoke as he read, read like he smoked. Gary Indiana, reading from *Horse Crazy*, a voice staged no different than we imagine his telling this story round some kitchen table. (we feel at home here) He streams into the meat, in, and back out again, one steady sputter expressed nervously. Delivers a poetry: song in the first person, of his own flow, punctuated—the cigarette smoking, aside sips of water. Edgy. Sweaty. He (the reader) satisfies a thirst for drinking in the blood and gut of a friend's good story. The fact that we're in this together. We might not be gay. Don't have to BE a good friend to get to the story. We don't really have to read (a book).

A'ravelling; revealing, a man's exposed. The buck nakedness in us all. The text, of jittered uncertainty—recalling plans made over the phone. Nervous verbs, compulsive and immediate. Where the moment of recall is a flash of contra/diction he weaves of fact and fancy. (Fiction?) Gary Indiana gives us this: clarity of image:



the struggle revealing some creeping creepy truth filled with the desperate desire to not want to look (at it). Can I really have been stood up? Can I have AIDS? Can I really be sure? Through the storytelling, a pulse that feels as if it were our own throbbing, we are en/tranced to a place from which we can see (ourselves). A look in the mirror where it can be a slap in the face. REAL OR IMAGINED?

Contrast...smoothe story told cool. A reading entered into, the distance of to and from. Not with and for. Dennis Cooper's voice staged in the character/narrator of *Closer*—set somewhere "like LA" more far away. Tale told in the first person, but the telling a deliberated act—method—which starts and finishes, separate from the reader's own remark, more removed from the h(ear)t of this audience. Listening to Gary Indiana, we can hear ourselves and engage. Dennis Cooper does not let himself that close. Still, we may engage: the devicre, a construct of lookin' good youth in dark love seedy sensatinal car crash violence. Proffers, a bannister from which to watch what in not dared known. A soft armchair, the vicarious rhythms of pay T.V...Gay T.V.

(An audience) In each very face, an every new facade. All distinct, all alone. But a humanhood hid beneath, where ewe all are. In the striptease of one person, we can each know our own flesh. Gary Indiana reaches us there, in a moment we share. He gave this, audience full and left something we take home. A feeling like the wear of a day in the body. Dennis Cooper brings us to the limits of billboard sized sensibilities--a peek, pokes at the chafe behind the gaff. Gaff behind the glitter of Hollywood yellow brick roads. We're so sure of these limits that they don't touch us. Like voyeurs, we're left to wonder about the bigger picture, unfulfilled. Cliffhangertrailer—a hook to sell books? The empty promise of a TV commercial we might not have to sit through.

*Bob Whittinghill and*
*Dan Trattler*

### Do The Human Rights Thing, Part II

Getz Theater
August 12, 1989

LEG(S)EEE!!
Lynn Book

A stage is set with a classic landscape painting within a gold decorative frame on a thin easel. The painting is upside down and off to the side yet moves during the course of the event proper.

"The Four Seasons" by Antonio Vivaldi adds musical demure. Lynn Book has on a dancing leotard top, a short loose skirt, with frill and pumps. I believe the flat rectangle with oval, which she held in front of her face, was paisley, but maybe it was a miniature landscape.

Her movement was deliberate, well practised in a stylized theatrical technique.

During the piece there were sounds, dialogue, and works spoken and lip-synched by Lynn. A film was shown stage right of Lynn doing her movement in an outdoor environ. It appeared that it was all well choreographed yet much of the detail gets lost by the time of writing.

Smash came the flying white plates being hurled form both ends of backstage dropping quite close to the starlette's feet. She proclaimed that she was wounded to the hands behind stage.

Werner Herterich and Lou Mallozzi entered wearing white jumpsuits sweeping up the broken plates to be the circle of cut china, center stage and Lynn to the lip synch. The two marching gentlemen stood in front of her as she changed into a green satin gown. The song had an early nightclub air to it from another decade past, since the lines were not finished as memory lapse all through the tune until the lyrical end, it created a melancholy of frustration. She is back to her poised bow. The two men are in the aisles of the audience. They throw numerous white flowers (I presume white carnations). They move closer and closer. They present her with a lovely bouquet of the same flowers. Her face is expressive, grateful, crying with cynicism being sensed. They picked her up while marching to a melodic drum beat type chant.

A table was set, stage right, with candle and silver accessories. She joked about having come a long way a la Virginia Slims. Wine was served with a discourse on pleasure. There was a table bell. A waitress introduced as Suzette began serving her. Absurdly Lynn ate a crunched piece of paper. Suzette (played by Jill Daly) served, pouring water all over the table. Generally things became a slight chaotic dining mess and the performers returned to the circle of plates.

I'm sure there was reference to *The Legs of the Countess* by Abigail Solomon-Godeau *October* #39, essays of feminist criticism essay excerpts from Marlene Dietrich, and all sorts of illusion, yet if not versed in all the specific literary details the casual observer might read the performance as a classical influenced absurdist surreal type of dream with training in body movement. I remember the words abstract and figurative from earlier dialogue not hearing all of the dialogue could easily have fantasized the reiteration of history in painting breaking into the modern but would have liked to know in a paragender sort of way the symbolism and meaning of the feminist criticism.

• • • • •

My Vile Reasons
Brendan deVallance

The objectd' pop or quintessence of techno disgard is set for the force of the brain-dead word.

A woman is sitting on a chair in a kiddie pool, not with child but cardboard pizza container in her lap.

There is the dusty coat which is hit intermediately between the spoken Brendan with all the clever props and commentary.

The ice clock on techno grid is melting as the intensity of anger and truth reveal the fast pace of a nihilistic and humorous reprise.

"Chew the flag... Grenade, no time... Stop to think... Change for a dollar... Shudder... Smile for me... I don't have change... a luxury I can't afford... Horror and Action...!" The words are loud, clear, fast. Too fast for notes: the pizza is cut.

Brendan speaks of Communism with a capitalist "C." That we are all born and existed. Topics change to dinosaurs with brains the size of walnuts and on and on, entertaining by the second. I can identify with the pizza slice of indecision.

There is the attache case with a silhouette of a gun, the world on a stick, an accidental stuffed Garfield cat, and old-fashioned typewriter.

The woman in the kiddie pool is asked to hold up signs as the audience reads them aloud. The Truth! "Take my words and fuck me with them — they don't mean a thing." And they read; a victim, militarism of my dilemma, the error God to enjoy and pizza. He dons a cardboard car; there are car noises, ambulance sirens — a vehicle under the influence, hit sports car again.

The illusion of a man with the whole world dangling at the end of a stick, the future on a stick, a space shuttle on a stick. Does the shuttle need a galaxy sticker?

His shirt has a flap; a square in his shirt is ripped open revealing a tattoo of the brain on his chest changing his heart with plastic surgery.

The tune of "Imagine" by John Lennon is heard as Brendan sing/speaks straight from the voice "I can't get no satisfaction" by the Stones as he walks with his gun image attache case.

Seeming to reveal the complexities of a million things to deal with or not, to enjoy and to experience in a short period of time in an understanding of the overwhelming abundance, enjoying the man, his imagination and his serious Art.

*-Lester Brodzik*

### *FASHION FABLES*

Joel Klaff
Chicago Historical Society
September 23, 1989

Joel Klaff, in his fashion designer persona, Guy Taylor, has mastered site-specific performance, or what he calls "environmental theatre." His latest critique of Fashion occurred within a tradition-laden cultural institution which has always relied heavily on upon Chicago's fashionable elite for its patronage. Expanding with affable humor upon the perennial relevant belief that dressing up deserves a dressing down, Klaff and associates premiered "Fashion Fables" at the Chicago Historical Society on Saturday evening, September 23, 1989. He was aided by Larry Lundy, Pegee Garrity, members of the Latino Chicago Theatre Co., and members of the Malukosamba band.

*Joel Klaff as Guy Taylor, "Sony Kimono: Fashioned Media"*
*Photo by Gavin Morrison*

"Prisoners of Fashion," wearing this year's ubiquitous black and white stripes, rolled giant dice down the same spiral staircase descended by couture-clad socialites during lavish fund-raising galas. In a flurry of transformations, fashion's prisoners became runway models and, from within a ball-and-chain, Guy Taylor emerged as his globe-headed Man of the World. We can always appreciate another enlightened commentary on mas-produced fashion's world-wide sphere of influence, with its media-perpetuated, very lucrative illusions of change. As consumers, we are all potentially prisoners on top of the skin.

"Fashion Fables" very ambitiously encompassed a retrospective of Guy Taylor's collections, such as his "Fall Guy Collection" (including origami-like garments made of foliage -patterned environmental-graphic wallpaper); his take on corporate-logo fashions (garments made of dog food sacks, featuring ALPO labels); his "Comfort Master" pillow-suit facade; and his "Man On The Move" collection (including jumpsuits made of quilted U-HAUL moving blankets). Klaff the costume designer is endlessly inventive, creating garments rich with visual and verbal puns. He is as formally adept as the best couturiers. His followers are familiar with most of these pieces from past performances held at River North art galleries, the Oakbrook polo grounds, and the Chicago Apparel Mart. And once again, at each of those locations, the performance was, yes, tailored to its context, and new garments added to the designers' ouvre. This time, Guy Taylor unveiled his "Fort Dearborn Suit," calling it "history in the making."





At the Chicago Historical Society, schoolchildren, socialites, and tourists can view documents of Fort Dearborn, The Great Chicago Fire, The 1933 World's Fair, and now, Joel Klaff's "Fashion Fables," which was held in conjunction with the current exhibition, "Just Another Guy," curated by Susan Samek. She says that the institution is very interested in new artists. This is certainly cultural progress. Yet, Susan Tillet, the Society's Director of Cultural Affairs, said, "It's not a radical departure, but a continuum. Whether focusing on the 19th or 20th century, the Chicago Historical Society is interested in material culture, and Joel Klaff is particularly insightful in that area." Indeed, Klaff's performance, and his garments, like those in the Society's renowned costume collection, reflect Chicago's social and economic diversity (ethnic cultures, sports, high society, and even Chicago's menswear industry).

In offering itself as a venue for Klaff, the Chicago Historical Society shows its commitment to the celebration and documentation of the full range of our culture, including the corporate, the artistic, the traditional and the avant garde among its exhibitions, programs and patrons. The 200 or so families, fashionables, artists and socialites attending "Fashion Fables" reflected a new and relaxed comingling. Newcomers were introduced to both the Chicago Historical Society and to performance art. We can expect new expressions in historical education and expanded opportunities for performance artists in Chicago's future.

Thus, it seems true, as Guy himself so expansively shouted at the evening's close, that, "Everyone's a winner on The Guy Taylor Show!"

*Sandra M. Adams*

### *SAIC Time Arts Fellowship Winners 1989*

William Easton
Zara Frederickson
Henion Han
D. Maria Benfield
Jon Schnepp
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
September 10, 1989

William Easton's performance lecture 3x3 was an articulate self-portrait as characterized by the lives of three of his artist friends. Through a process of analytic formalism, Easton divided the self into sets and subsets, neatly categorizing and labelling possessions, gestures, and personal relationships in an attempt to better understand the complexity of being. Easton's three friends, who personify three unique aspects of himself, were delved into as well. We were shown fragments of their own artistic visions, i.e. conceptual art, art criticism, and structuralist filmmaking. In so doing, Easton strengthened his own work by effectively incorporating the work of others.

*William Easton*

Zara Frederickson's performance *Bringing the Table Down* centered on the issue of the homeless and took a strong confrontational approach. By exploiting the situation of the captive audience as a means to illicit support for the upcoming homeless march to Washington, audience participation in this case became passing the hat. The artist and members from the Chicago Union of the Homeless sat at a round table breaking bread with their homeless guest, setting the proper atmosphere for an intelligent forum to take place, but it failed to happen. Instead, the interchange that did occur was aggressive and didactic but eventually dwindled in energy. However, Frederickson is to be commended for her attempt at social change. If one person left the performance influenced, the performance was a success.

Henion Han's film *Utter*, made up of found footage from the 50's and 60's, juxtaposed banal home movies with the gruesome slaughtering of whales. The disjunct editing and dramatic contrasts of imagery seemed to short circuit any attempt to shape the material into a clear statement; rather, a reinterpretation of the image was made with the addition of the soundtrack. Misaligned, exaggerated sounds created contradictory, humorous, and haunting effects.

D. Maria Benfield's film *Warring Absence: The Widow of a Great Poet* was a narrative collage based on the life of Caitlin Thomas. Utilizing surreal cinematography, music, and texts, the film explored the intimate life of Caitlin Thomas through the provacative inference of pederasty and incest. The intrigue of the film revolves around the son who served not only as liaison for his mother's personal encounters, but also as the standard by which these lovers are pursued. The self-consciousness of the acting sometimes detracted from Benfield's ambitious effort.

Jon Schnepp's performance, *A Musical Comedy in Three Parts*, was set against a background of dual video monitors showing himself engaged in sound improvisations including chanting, squeaking, honking, and mumbling. Schnepp's light musical incorporated technology and personality to hint at the enigmatic meaning of life. Schnepp interacted with the video monitor in an untraditional manner by dancing and conversing with himself, using humor and timing to create a warm interaction with an otherwise cold, sterile object. Schnepp attempted to analyze the world by slicing a metaphorical apple into smaller significant sections, then abandoned the procedure and threw it aside. Evidently, rational analysis (and performance) is a fruitless effort.

Contributions to this review were provided by Kristen Braid, Floyd Braid, Doug Hoppe, Megan Murphy.

*StevenBaun*
*Paige Bruhn*

### *THE CHICAGO VOGUERS' BALL*

Medusa's
Thursday, September 7, 1989

I was so self-conscious, I dressed for the Voguers Ball. I should have known better. Not that this dressing was inappropriate, by any standard. I dressed in a black suit and walked up the stairs to Medusa's main ballroom at about 8:00, in time to sample the comps: nasty sausage paper thin, and an all beer bar. The voguing proper would begin at eleven, so I

left and came back at that hour, having wearied of observing well-dressed persons. Upon my re-arrival, the buzz of attendees had become a swarm. The M.C. was announcing the first house so I threaded my way to the front of the expectancy.

It was hot. The air in the ballroom hung in contrast to the cool September evening outside. Creatures of strange visage of all sexual persuasion, of seemingly every strata, disenfranchised or not, the village smithy stood ready to lick up the anticipated spectacle, sweating.

Enter House of Extravaganza gesticulating wildly, yet composing as they strut and pose down the runway, elegantly stating the characteristic techniques and motifs we would see in virtually every show: runway walks by individual vogues (and pairs) showcasing individual talents and costumes, matched and backed up by ensemble tableau vivant, each pose shaped to the beat of thundering disco bottom, the cumulative effect engendering a remarkable crescendo of gaudy synesthesia.

The sexuality embodied in the throbbing music threatened at every turn to turn the crowd into a mob, the models writing orgasmically, pouting, glaring, avuncular. The best houses-flashy trash, Whistles and a few others managed to convey great robotic pathos, when the image of dying AIDS victims happened to spring to mind, dying for love and dancing.

The beat brought me back. The crowd screamed and whistled, they looked joyous, some in transvestite gear. The costumes largely assembled from trash in the best collections, sometimes naively paraded haute from the couture houses of Oak Street, et al, roamed all phases of kitsch, glitz, camp and chic. House music roared, pullulating. A six-foot black girl glanced at me disdainfully. A high-pitched rebel yell arose from behind me as the crowd whistled. The music ended and the last house had walked. Observing the well dressed personages around me, squeezed very tightly through a doorway, I swept down the staircase and onto Sheffield Avenue with the rest.

*Robert Daulton*

### A NOVENA FOR THE LEATHERMAN: THE TRAIN'S CONTENTS

Eric Schmidt
N.A.M.E
September 22 & 23, 1989

In a symmetrical setting of pink moire rectangles and a green wrap skirt hung from the ceiling, a rope ladder, a stretch of black and white checkerboard contact paper on the floor, two powder blue Sons of Hope banners ("A man may be out but he still has hope"), a red strip of a Chinese restaurant awning, two strips of colored triangles of the used-car lot variety; on a blue and white print runner that continues up the wall behind him and under a banner that reads "REAL GOOD FRIEND," stood Eric Schmidt. Wearing a gold dickey with black chiffon pants and a jacket sheer enough to reveal the muscular strength of his arms, high-cut black Speedos, and elastic-banded knee-high nylons, Schmidt spoke in a voice as fluid as the back chiffon cape draped over his shoulder. "Powderfluff and fake/ attraction to the ornate/ I like some nice place."

Eric Schmidt

Schmidt's stance was immediately theatrical and, when he declared himself the "Czar of minor blood of the Netherlands and Germany," it is clear we, the audience, were subjects, present only to watch from a distance. And it is that distance that Schmidt challenged. The set itself teased us. The house lights on, we could not enjoy the luxury of darkness, of unspoken detachedness, our license for apathy. The banners framed him, but two streamers of colored triangles reached out over our lit heads, threatening to include us in the program. He poked at the fourth wall, crawling to it on his hands and knees, edging near the feet of the spectators. For a moment his eyes invited us to consider "how the slipper of a man/ with a blue thumbnail/ proceeds onto cissal." He continued his soliloquy, and we, as if peering through the window of someone's attic, watched as he performed the recitation for himself, gesturing at a hung portrait of a man, then at no one ( who could have been a leatherman or a weatherman). Was it to us that he spoke when he asked, "Who are you, some friendliness? Are you/ some friendliness? Who are you but some friendliness?" Was it to us that he said, "You sing to me, according to your song, well? I don't hear you anymore, I shrink, I strike/ knitting needles through my eardrums and pull the bloody tips/ out for you to see, because you are/ my murderer." Easier to say it was at some other lover that his eyes, grown cold, now stared..

His voice, with seemingly effortless clarity, was familiar and sometimes friendly to us, even despite the theatricality and memorization. With this he created a subtle deception, for I seemed to understand the sound of his voice, yet I could not place the meaning. It was like knowing the vocabulary of a language but no understanding of the syntax. And all

Eric Schmidt

along he smiled and joked or became serious and meaningful and he took us with him and we followed, pretending to know the joke, too. I didn't know the joke. I didn't "get" the oriental fetish, or "what it means to be Geiseking." But I saw an elegant, compelling man perform a strange and familiar piece.





*It's no alibi and I confess it's true*
*as though I could leave anyone with that*
*and I laugh real hearty and spill*
*from my pockets all the bucks and pocket*
*innards which only*
*mean one thing to one person,*
*blindly, satisfactorily*
*countenancing that the form of*
*lyric is no death*

*Emily Lozano*

### UNTITLED

Dani K.
Randolph Street Gallery
September 9, 1989

In her performance *Untitled*, Dani K. undermined the authority of absolute gender categories. Using spoken and recorded text, for instance, K. occupied different subject positions. On the one hand, K. spoke with conviction, but on the other, she listened to a text on how to make your child a genius. During these sequences, K. flexed her muscles, tossed lingerie onto the stage, and removed apples and oranges from a grocery bag. Using a power tool, K. then drill holes into the fruit, implying, perhaps, that gender differences are imposed rather than instinctive. K. reinforced this notion by putting bumper stickers on her shirt that read: "Proud to be Chinese," "Proud to be Chilean," and "Proud to be Czech." Ironically, each title changed K.'s identity. Moreover, it was interesting to note that a long, blond braid was caught in a door leading offstage. It called attention to a form of female entrapment, and, by extension, offered a commentary.

*Carole Tormollan*

Dani K.- Untitled  Photo by Peter Taub

Hester Reeve: Whirl's Museum Piece
(See review in next issue)

Photo by Peter Taub

### RALLY TO SUPPORT THE ARTS

State of Illinois building
August 26

A rally of some 150 artists, art administrators and sympathisers assembled in front of the fading facade of the State of Illinois building on Saturday, August 26, as part of a nationwide day of protest against proposed ammendments to limit funding to the NEA as a result of the controversy surrounding recent exhibits of works by Mapplethorpe and Serrano.

Organizers had things well in hand. Two tables on the sidewalk presented people with opportunities to sign several petitions against government censorship and interference in art affairs. A sound system and small stage enabled several speakers to address the protestors, encouraging them to take an active stand against the "Helms Ammendment" which threatened to impose ambiguous funding restrictions on the NEA. Everything seemed perfectly coordinated during the two-hour event, from an on-time start, through a seemingly choreographed emotional crescendo of speakers, to the rally's dissolution just as a predicted afternoon rain shower began.

Carrying some very creative placards, protestors representing a broad cross section of Chicago's art community marched in a circle around the Dubuffet sculpture near the entrance of the building. They chanted slogans and bore signs that read, "Jessie Helms is a tobacco pusher," "Down with the Art Police," "NEA Fumding - $170 million, Military Band funding - $193 million," "First Amendment, NO Exceptions Allowed," and "Today's Difficult Message May Be Tomorrow's Truth." Several placards depicted pig-pink skinned legislators with arms raised in Nazi salutes expressed protestors' disgust with bandwagoning politicians rallying around the flag against government funding of "degenerate" art.

Too bad the rally was held on a Saturday morning when the usually busy building was closed, so only a few passers-by and tourists on Randolph Street and motorists waiting for the traffic light on Clark Street saw what was going on. Too bad there were not more creative efforts like performance artist Brendan de Vallance's, which included his perennial loud suit and a sign that read, "Freedumb, Live Free or Die," or Eric Koziol's elegant and simple empty picture frame on a stick. Too bad there was so much standard rally rhetoric and not more creative outrage as supplied at the demonstration's opening by Detroit's rap poet, General B. Come to think of it, too bad the rain didn't start earlier to give the whole event an edge.

*Werner Herterich*

Brendan de Vallance

Photo by Jenny Knowlton

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2 *Introduction to The Blue Book.* Courtesy of Lawrence E. Gichner. From *Great Bordellos of the World,* p. 204.

6-9 *Postures of love which enhance its delight,* a manuscript from Orissa, 19th century. From *Tantra The Indian cult of ecstasy,* Philip Rawson, p.57. Bounty Books, New York, 1973.

10-11 From *Caught Looking: Feminism, Pornography, and Censorship,* Carol Vance The Real Comet Press, Seattle, 1988.

18 Reception Room of a Bordello, 1830. Lithograph of Bazard du beau sexe by Carnavalot. Photo by Bullox, Paris. From *Great Bordellos of the World,* Emmett Murphy, p. 157. Quartet Books, New York, 1983.

20 Drawing by George Quaintance, 1952. From *The Sexual Perspective,* Emmanuel Cooper, p.235. RKP, New York, 1986.

"'A Vagina Surrounded by a Woman': The Attorney General's Commission on Pornography"
*Lecture*
Carole Vance
Anthropologist & Professor in the School of Public Health at Columbia University, NY
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