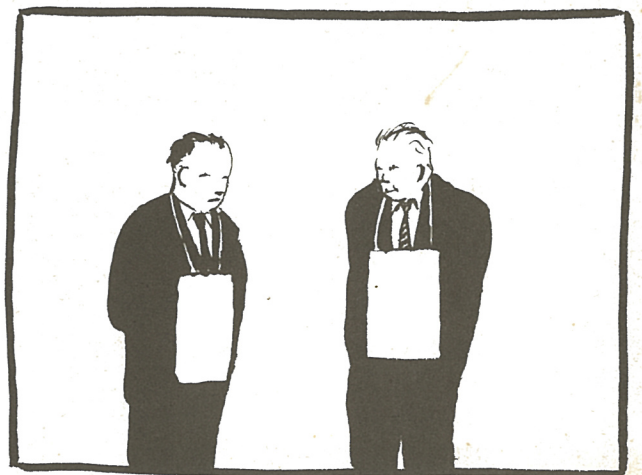
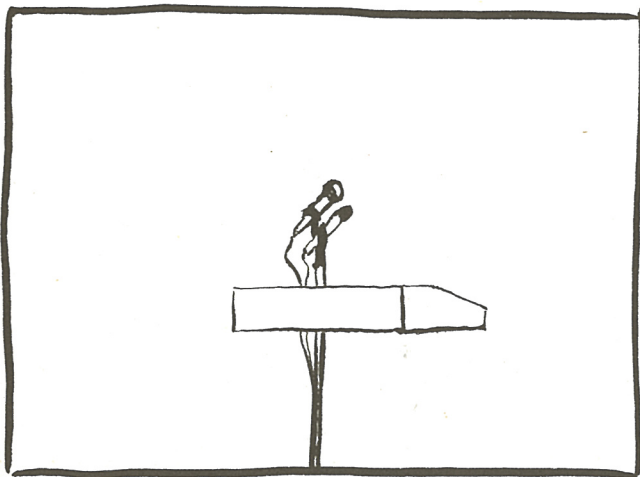
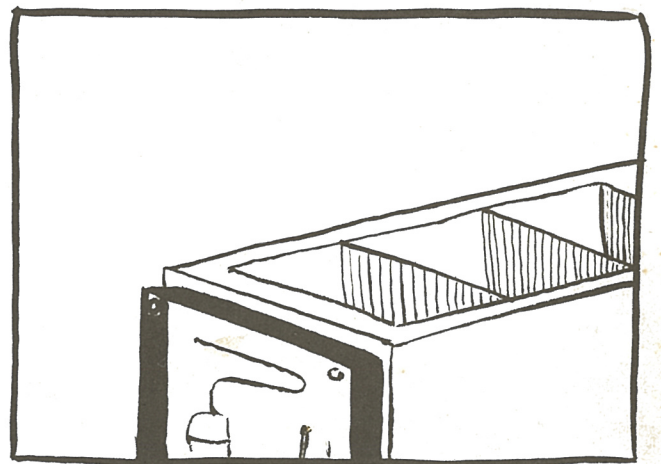
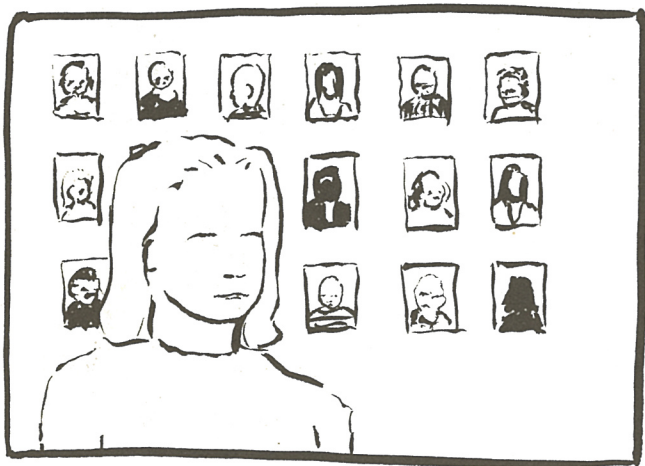


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THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

The Visiting Artists Program Selected Lectures and Screenings September & October, 1991

Monday, September 9, 6 pm

Frank Moore
performance artist

Monday, September 16, 6 pm

Richard Myers
filmmaker

Thursday, September 19, 7 pm

Tony Oursler
video artist

Gallery 2, Free

Monday, October 14, 6 pm

May Sun
performance/installation artist

All programs are in the School Auditorium unless otherwise noted. Admission is \$3 for the general public and free for students and staff of area colleges and senior citizens unless otherwise noted.

VISITING ARTISTS PROGRAM

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Gallery 2 Selected Time Art Events September & October, 1991

September 6 - October 4, 1991

Revelations: Artists Look at Religions

A juried exhibition of works in all media by students, faculty, staff and 1991 alumni of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The exhibition seeks to explore and critique the multifaceted relationship between art and religion.

Opening reception:

Friday, September 6, 6-8 pm

Time Art Evenings:

Saturday, September 7th & 14th

7 pm, free admission

Friday/Saturday, September 27th & 28th 7 pm, free

Kate Anderson, Carol Redmond, and Ken Thompson

Works by performance and video graduate students.

Ostinatofarrago - performance by Kate Anderson

The Artificial Kidney - video tape by Carol Redmond

Performance/Video by Ken Thompson

Thursday, October 17, 7 pm, free

Video Data Bank Screening

Video for Women's Lives:

Artists and Activists' Works on Women's Lives

Curated by Dolly Meieran, Dana Nasrallah, and Karen Ramspacher, this screening is part of the Video Data Bank's touring program, including tapes by Chris Hill, Scarlot Harlot, Ann Meredith and Sadie Benning.

GALLERY 2

1040 WEST HURON STREET

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60622 • 312.226.1449

P-FORM
Published by
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P-FORM, published quarterly, is dedicated to the development and understanding of performance art, as well as building critical dialogue in Chicago.

Contributions are welcome. Contact Randolph Street Gallery or send manuscripts including author's name, bio and means of contact. Features should be limited to 2400 words, reviews 500. Typed copy or Microsoft Word diskette is encouraged.

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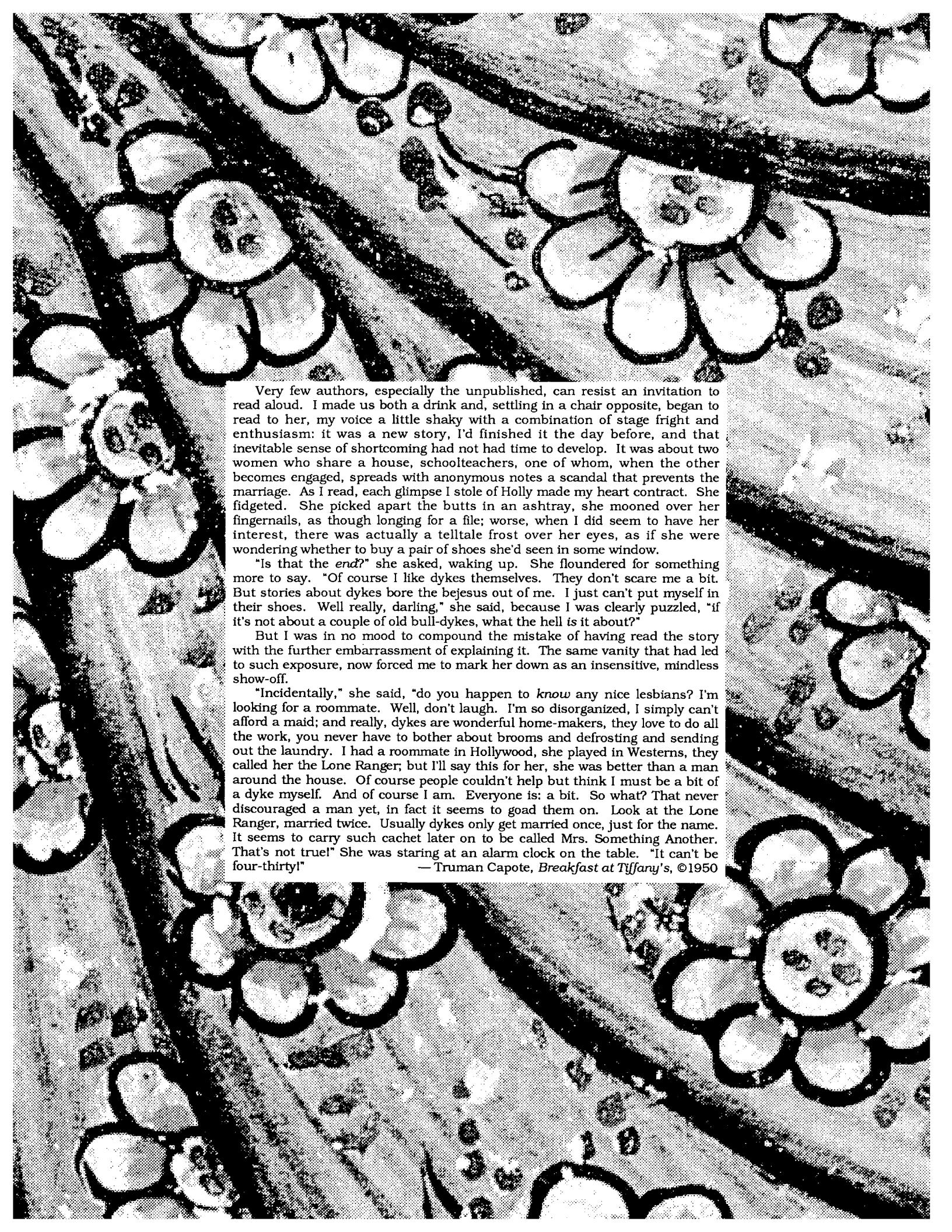
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Very few authors, especially the unpublished, can resist an invitation to read aloud. I made us both a drink and, settling in a chair opposite, began to read to her, my voice a little shaky with a combination of stage fright and enthusiasm: it was a new story, I'd finished it the day before, and that inevitable sense of shortcoming had not had time to develop. It was about two women who share a house, schoolteachers, one of whom, when the other becomes engaged, spreads with anonymous notes a scandal that prevents the marriage. As I read, each glimpse I stole of Holly made my heart contract. She fidgeted. She picked apart the butts in an ashtray, she mooned over her fingernails, as though longing for a file; worse, when I did seem to have her interest, there was actually a telltale frost over her eyes, as if she were wondering whether to buy a pair of shoes she'd seen in some window.

"Is that the *end*?" she asked, waking up. She floundered for something more to say. "Of course I like dykes themselves. They don't scare me a bit. But stories about dykes bore the bejesus out of me. I just can't put myself in their shoes. Well really, darling," she said, because I was clearly puzzled, "if it's not about a couple of old bull-dykes, what the hell is it about?"

But I was in no mood to compound the mistake of having read the story with the further embarrassment of explaining it. The same vanity that had led to such exposure, now forced me to mark her down as an insensitive, mindless show-off.

"Incidentally," she said, "do you happen to *know* any nice lesbians? I'm looking for a roommate. Well, don't laugh. I'm so disorganized, I simply can't afford a maid; and really, dykes are wonderful home-makers, they love to do all the work, you never have to bother about brooms and defrosting and sending out the laundry. I had a roommate in Hollywood, she played in Westerns, they called her the Lone Ranger; but I'll say this for her, she was better than a man around the house. Of course people couldn't help but think I must be a bit of a dyke myself. And of course I am. Everyone is: a bit. So what? That never discouraged a man yet, in fact it seems to goad them on. Look at the Lone Ranger, married twice. Usually dykes only get married once, just for the name. It seems to carry such cachet later on to be called Mrs. Something Another. That's not true!" She was staring at an alarm clock on the table. "It can't be four-thirty!"

— Truman Capote, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, ©1950

ALL KINDS OF NEWS

FISH DRUM magazine-on-the-air is a radio program of poetry, prose, interviews, reviews, music, "the domestic and the strange," seeking recent live performances of "verbals" on tape. The show is heard on the third Saturday of each month at 8pm beginning August 17th on KSFR 90.7 FM, Santa Fe. Contact Robert Winson, 626 Kathryn Ave, Santa Fe, NM. 87501.

The American Council for the Arts offers a Hotline for Artists. This toll-free referral service gives artists suggestions for help with funding, housing, insurance, health and law questions. The Hotline is open 1-3pm (Central Standard Time) at 1-800-232-2789.

Performers of all kinds are invited to appear on Albuquerque's hottest public access TV show, "Your Program of Programs." Contact Kestutis Nakas, 505-265-3506 or 505-277-3421.

Artswatch is seeking proposals in all media for exhibits, installations, films/videos and performances. Open Deadline. Submit slides, resume, reviews and SASE to Artswatch, 2337 Frankfort Ave, Louisville KY. 40206 or call 502-893-9661.

Nexus Contemporary Art Center seeks new and experimental work for solo exhibitions and special installation projects. For more information, contact: Gallery Director, Nexus CAC, P.O. Box 54661, Atlanta, GA. 30308.

Walker's Point Center for the Arts is interested in presenting new installations, video, sound art, and performance. Send 10 slides or VHS videotape, resume and SASE to WPCA, 911 W. National Ave., Milwaukee, WI. 53204, or call 414-672-2787.

Klang! artspace is accepting proposals for the fall and winter seasons. Any individuals or groups of painters, writers, performance artists, etc. are eligible. Contact Klang!, c/o Mr. Seaton, 1140 Euclid Ave, Atlanta, GA. 30307, or call 404-577-5084.

The Acme Art Company seeks proposals for future shows in painting, sculpture, dance, performance and video. Send materials to The Acme Art Co., 737 High St., Columbus, OH. 43215.

Ongoing deadline for proposals in performance, all other media. Individuals and groups welcome. Send resume and 10 slides per artist or videotape with SASE to Buckingham Gallery, 13441/2 W. Second St., Flint, MI. 48502.

PERFORMANCE VENUES

The following performance spaces in the Chicago area are continually accepting proposals for performance work. Contact each space for application procedures.

Edge of the Lookingglass
62 E. 13th St.
Chicago, IL. 60605
312-939-4017
Contact: KB Daughtry or Beth Tanner

Randolph Street Gallery
756 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL. 60622
312-666-7737
Contact: Mary Jo Schnell

Chicago Filmmakers
1229 W. Belmont
Chicago, IL. 60657
312-281-8788
Contact: Ines Somner

N.A.M.E.
700 N. Carpenter
Chicago, IL. 60622
312-226-0671
Contact: Irene Tstasos

Art-O-Rama
3039 W. Irving Park Rd.
Chicago, IL.
312-588-1876
Contact: Joe Crosetto

Cafe Voltaire 2
3231 N. Clark
Chicago, IL. 60657
312-528-3136

Club Dreamerz
1516 N. Milwaukee
Chicago, IL. 60622
312-227-9638

Columbia College Dance Center
4730 N. Sheridan
Chicago, IL. 60610
312-271-7804
Contact Peggy Imig

Link's Hall
3435 N. Sheffield
Chicago, IL. 60657
312-907-2182
Contact Jim Dejong

Club Lower Links
954 W. Newport
Chicago, IL. 60657
312-248-5238
Contact Leigh Jones

CAFE VOLTAIRE

Cafe Voltaire is a natural foods restaurant, coffee house, art gallery and performance space. Originating in a Chicago warehouse district in 1987, Cafe Voltaire moved to its current location in December of 1989. In the heart of Lakeview's theater, club and restaurant district, it offers an artistic place to gather for good food, sights, sounds, and eclectic happenings. The cafe is housed in a Victorian limestone three-flat built in 1894, occupying the ground floor, basement and backyard. The ground floor space contains the cafe, with brick walls serving as gallery for monthly displays featuring various artists. Cafe Voltaire attracts and is accessible to a wide group of individuals including urban artists and students, downtown business people, and professionals, suburban families, grandparents, grandkids and just common folk. The cafe is open late every night, often completely jammed past 3:00 am on Friday and Saturday nights. Opening times are 5:30 pm each weekday and 11:30 am on weekends.

As the cafe serves up creative, natural food in an artistic environment, the basement performance space is dedicated to creative, expressive, intelligent performance. Friday nights feature plays followed by New Music performers such as Ensemble Noamnesia, Gene Coleman, Bob Marsh, Hal Rammal and Spencer Sundell. Saturdays start out with dramatic readings followed by improvisational work and music. Sunday afternoons are for fiction readings; nights feature performance by Those Dadaist Fucks and new plays later in the evening. Tuesdays, performance art and experimental film and video, with such artists as Thax Douglas, Jon Keith and Patrick Siemers. Wednesdays are featured poets and open mike, and Thursdays are for the acoustic folk music of Todd Kelley and Friends, also featuring open mike. The performance space has showcased established performers as well as providing a forum for creative expression of new talent, new ideas. It currently is an approximately 1000 square feet rectangle of usable space with seating capacity for 70 people in a comfortable array of mixed chairs, cabaret tables and vintage lamps. The blue drywall ceilings are seven feet-three inches with beautiful limestone brick walls. Technical equipment is limited to minimal lighting with no directionals. Artists, at present, must supply effects lighting and sound systems.

Cafe Voltaire was named after Cabaret Voltaire, the Expressionist performance space, restaurant, and hangout in Zurich, Switzerland, popular with artists and dissident intellectuals during World War I. With Tristan Tzara and Hugo Ball at the front, Dadaism grew out of Cabaret Voltaire sometime in 1914, and their cafe theater was dedicated to

the wild freedom of artistic expression. They staged a disparate programme: performances by French, Russian, German and Swiss writers; songs by Bruant; a balalaika orchestra; Rubenstein playing Saint-Saens; poems by Max Jacob, Erich Muhsam, van Hoddiss; the auctioning of a doll. Any variety of combinations was possible. The walls were covered with works by Picasso, Marcel Janco and others. James Joyce, Lenin, Arp, Kandinsky, Modigliani all visited and eventually a journal was published to document the time and creative expression of the varied artists there.

It is from this colorful history that Cafe Voltaire finds itself committed to the integrity of the past, the development of their current space, and the excitement of the future. Work is beginning on the installation of a new kitchen, the acquisition of a liquor license, construction of a new bar area, the development of outdoor cafe seating and a major renovation of the performance space. This will include removing the cement slab floor, excavating down nearly two feet, removing the drywall ceiling to expose the wooden rafters, installing better lights and a PA system, creating a more formal stage

construction and building a new cabaret theatre to open in September '91.

Cafe Voltaire encourages new artists to approach them as a venue. Artists interested in performing at Cafe Voltaire are encouraged to visit the space and contact Maya Sahafi, Artistic Director, either in person or by phone. Although slides are required for visual artists, video documentation is not required for performers but is strongly encouraged. Most important is a clear idea of the proposed project and a professional spirit. There is no space rental fee and artists can negotiate percentages of door ticket sales with the management. Artists are responsible for their own production and publicity. Extended runs are mounted occasionally with a negotiable advance deposit.

Cafe Voltaire
3231 North Clark, Chicago 60657
312-528-3136



FALLING

I am performing on a stage, the stage suddenly becomes a steep incline, I feel myself losing my balance, and falling into the audience. I reach up and grab what I think is a wall, the wall collapses on top of me, and I realize it is a prop I created for this performance — a performance which is presently going awry. Props are falling, lights are crashing, and the stage is no longer a stage but an incline. Amid the chaos on stage, I look into the audience, many have already walked out, and the auditorium is almost empty. I struggle to remember my lines, the introduction to my performance Living in the Midwest in which, as Carla Bulgari, I am having a dream that I am Elizabeth Taylor. As I grope for the right line, I realize I am not a performance artist, but an actress, and as an actress I cannot remember my name, nor can I remember who I used to be, want to be, or am. I try to remember something funny, a joke, a hook, something to make the audience stay. I blurt out "Eddie Fisher!" The audience stares back at me impassively. I say, "Wait!" I awaken.

schedule, it adds up to a considerable amount of time. I keep telling myself if I can keep this up for another few years I will be self supporting as an artist. Somehow I believe it will happen to me: I will hit some level of livelihood in

This is the same dream that I have been having since January. I am working sixty hours a week at the insurance association (not including travel schedules or business trips). If I were to include all of my writing, booking and rehearsal time outside of the office schedule, it adds up to a

GRACE



which scripts are sold, performances are booked and rent is paid. I will not have to work in the straight world of insurance ever again. I have written a list of goals for the year, and this goal of artistic self-sufficiency is on that list. I read my goals every morning before I meditate.

I am in a luxury hotel on a beautiful island in Hawaii on a business trip as director of communications for an insurance association. It is July of 1984, things have been going relatively well, I have performances and lectures booked throughout the country. When I return from my trip, I will be going to Cincinnati to do a performance with James Grigsby as part of our ongoing series in other cities called, *A Couple From Chicago*. When I return from Cincinnati, I will be back at my job in Chicago the following Monday. Then I will have articles and press releases to write, a newsletter to edit, directories and proceedings to proof and edit. I often work at this job on weekends to stay on top of the dearth of writing and editing. I cannot turn my head because my back is stiff; my back is stiff because I am working full time, and performing as much as I can. Emotionally I feel completely driven, and devoid of a personal life. Time with friends is valued, but I feel guilty if I am not working on my art all weekend. I also feel guilty if I am not a corporate success. Somehow success in the corporate world is a goal in tandem with artistic success.

FROM

I feel I can single-handedly withstand and overcome rampant sexism. I have read the statistics, in ten years I will be making 60% less than

my male counterparts in corporate public relations. At conferences, in board meetings, high-level insurance executives from *Fortune 500* companies regularly insult me outright, or tell seventh-grade dirty jokes. I am appalled and shocked by the prejudice. I keep thinking if I do a more than competent job, they will be less insulting in general. I will receive offers, promotions, or salary increases which will subsidize my art work. Combined with my overwork, the prejudice I encounter here only serves to depress me, break my spirit, and diminish my dreams.

A woman came to my office to interview me for an article. She marveled that I was able to accomplish so much. "How do you do it?" she asked. "Yoga and meditation," I answered. What I might have said is "I have no personal life, that's how I can do so much." Regarded as a success by my peers, I am beginning to attain my long-standing goal of establishing a national reputation. Inside I am imploding, but I don't yet realize the extent of implosion, nor do I know how long it will take to get back on track once it is complete.

I have trouble sleeping. I have lost my appetite, I am crying at inappropriate times. Curiously, I turn all of this off at work, or while performing or lecturing. I am trying to keep it a secret from James, from everyone I know except for a few friends. I am keeping a tight lid on, and having nightmares when I do sleep. I have gone to tarot readers, psychics, and astrologers to find what ails me. All have seen: great success in work, that I have suffered some personal losses, that I will suffer more such losses.

August 25, 1984 Dream: *I have bought a mirror, and realize it has a crack in it. I decide to keep it anyway.*

August 31, 1984: *Elizabeth Taylor arrives in a limousine. As she steps out, I realize that she is very obese. She does a little song called I am what I am, and that's all that I am, accompanied with choreographed movements.*

I am lying by a swimming pool irritated by little gnats which swoop in and out of my field of vision. I get up and walk to the edge of a precipice. I see a fleet of UFO's in a V formation. They lower themselves with a single downward motion, and signal to me with flashing lights — I feel great relief and exhilaration. I signal to them by waving my hand. "At last, they've come!"

July, 1984: Barbara Latham, professor, gifted video artist and kind friend has died of cancer. It is wrenching to be at her memorial service. My voice is in a video tape they are showing. Though I knew she was ill this past year, I didn't expect her to die. I expected her to survive this. We had studied and performed together. I try to talk to her in my mind's eye, to reach her - but I can't feel her clearly.

February, 1984 Dream: An atomic explosion. The City of Beirut has bombed The City of Chicago. No one knows where to go, how to act. A group of us stands inside the Museum of Science and Industry. It is empty. No exhibits. I feel apprehensive. I decide it doesn't matter if I am inside or out. I'm still going to be exposed to fallout. A woman has put the exhaust pipe from a car over her mouth, she breathes through this pipe. She says it doesn't really matter what we do, none of us can breathe anyway. This dream imagery becomes the theme of Living in the Midwest. The idea of an explosion that creates an immediate death for some, an extended death for others. A death from which no one ultimately escapes. CR

February, 1985: Am part of a promotional group photo with Hudson, Evans and other Chicago performance artists for something called Performarama, which James Grigsby has organized. The photographer has dropped the negatives in the snow, and cannot find them. James uses a photo of me as Carla Bulgari. It is published in the Reader with a calendar piece. One of the artists is furious. I hear from sources that this artist thinks I am somehow responsible for the loss of the negatives in order to gratuitously promote myself in this benefit series. (Sheesh.)

June, 1985: My stepfather, Robert McNamara has died suddenly of a massive heart attack. He was my friend and my protector. He treated me and my siblings as his own children. He paid for our education. He tried his best to be a good father. He fought with us when he thought we were wrong, and was never too proud to apologize if he made a mistake. A good man, with a great and wise heart. I cry every time I talk about him. My mother is devastated.

June, 1985: In Washington, at a meditation conference, I am meditating and doing yoga four times per day for a week, in an effort to unwind and recoup. An old friend and performance colleague, Christine Jung, suggested this as a good way of coping with Bob's death.

July, 1985: I am named Acting President of Randolph Street Gallery on the premise that the person least interested in being president would make the best president. I am not so sure, but keep on plugging away, making the best of things. I feel terribly depressed about Bob's death. (I was to resign four months later.)

January, 1986: I am in a performance at P.S. 122, New York. James Grigsby and I are both doing solos as part of our A Couple from Chicago series. The performance is well attended, and goes smoothly. I am told by a friend of mine that James referred to me as "unprofessional" because I was nervous before showtime.

I have another performance scheduled at Film-In-The Cities in February. My boss tells me he does not want me to go. I tell him I must go because I am scheduled. His previously spontaneous support seems to wither with my noncompliance.

The performance in Minneapolis is also an exhibit. It is poorly attended. Is this because I do not have a New York reputation? I remember the Poetry Days which my father used to sponsor through Poetry Magazine. I remember Robert Frost reading to a half-empty Auditorium Theater. I felt bad for my father, Henry Rago, for Frost, for all poets that night. This consoles me.

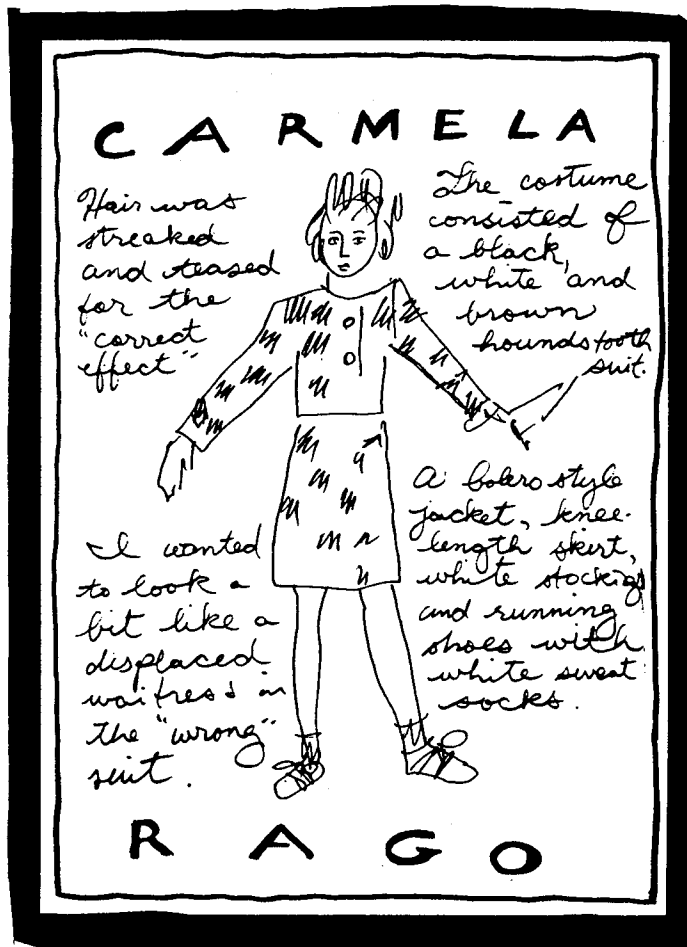
EARLY YEARS

Written in Journal, March 20, 1977

"You have control over action alone
never over its fruits

Live not for the fruits of action
nor attach yourself to inaction."

Verse 47, Bhagavad Gita



December, 1977: My Grandmother has died. She suffered a stroke a few months ago, and never quite recovered. She was a person of quiet strength and enormous kindness. She said she couldn't write because of her arthritis, but I think it was because she didn't know how. She was able to read, and after she died we found a box of clippings cataloguing the lives of various icons of popular culture. The divorce of Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball, the break-up of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. She told me stories of coming to this country in steerage on a boat, of her first husband - how he died of tuberculosis in Italy and never made it back here.

My mother said that when my father died in 1969, my grandmother had matter-of-factly said that she would just have to make the best of it. My grandmother adored my father; at the mention of his name, she would dab at her eyes. "Oh poor Hendry," She would say. She always called him "Hendry", not Henry. She called my cousin David, "Davis." My mother took her advice, went back to the Art Institute, got her Master's Degree in Painting, and taught at Barat and Loyola. Those were difficult years, three of us were still in high school. With my older sister away at college, and my mother either working or at school a good deal of the time, I was the surrogate head of the household. I cooked meals, and tended to my younger siblings. I was acutely aware that we were on a tight budget. I believe that concern about poverty and lack have been major themes throughout my life.

Back to my mother's taking my grandmother's advice. At Loyola, she eventually met the priest who was Dean of the Sociology Department, Robert McNamara. He later gave up the priesthood to marry her.

I followed almost any advice my grandmother gave me. When I took time off to live in California and pursue experimental theater at age nineteen, she suggested I go back to school to get my degree. "Because an education is worth a million dollars." I did return to school the following year, first to Bennington where I studied ceramics, literature and contact improvisation with performance artist Steve Paxton. Later I went to the Art Institute.

In *Living in the Midwest*, I utilized the device of a benevolent grandmother who offers sage and simple advice, whose advice is remembered and savored over and over again like a mantra. *A little happiness is a precious thing* sounded so familiar to me. CR

FEBRUARY, 1977 Found in a Greyhound bus station

Sue was here
old man kick me out
but what do ya do
when ya love him and Chi town both
Life on a Harley was fantastic
don't ever fall in love with a biker
well, back to Omaha, Nebraska

I was never able to use this in a performance, but wanted to find a place for it CR

February 9, 1978: Watching I am, I'm Jealous tape with Tom Jaremba and Christine Tamblyn. They're watching with head phones. I'm



not, silently listening for changes in breathing patterns, posture, gesture. I am wondering at their reactions. The snow has been falling for days now everything is covered. Later that same day, Tom critiqued me. He was ruthless, calling the work pubescent, adolescent, unfocused, a hodgepodge. I was grateful for the criticism, however, I felt demoralized. So much so that I buy new ballet slippers and tights. Been doing more yoga and pranayama in the morning. A happy and healthy mood has set in. Happiness in work and confidence in accomplishments.

February 17, 1978: Discussion in Video class. Just saw Nam June Paik's Requiem for Gaudal Canal. A graduate video student is going on and on about the tape. He makes me sick.



February 27, 1978
Dream: Playing an unfinished tape for Christine Tamblyn, Barbara Latham, and E.W. Ross, I am trying to explain to them that this is the story of Peter Pan. They keep interrupting me. Finally I yell. "Look you guys, I haven't even seen this tape yet. I'm not even sure what it's about. Will you have the decency to listen?" They tell me they are interested in purchasing aspects of this tape and utilizing the bits and pieces they buy in their own performances.

February 28, 1978:
Today Tom Jaremba said he saw a very basic, healthy, holistic approach to my work. He said that after thinking about I am, I'm Jealous, he could really understand what I was dealing with. Perhaps.

Strange quote: "Men are the most important thing in my life to me. They are my whole reason for living..." Ursula Andress

April 4, 1978: This day has sucked. Actually it's been good in terms of accomplishing things - but I feel on the verge of a major artistic breakthrough or a nervous breakdown. No time to call my own. Struggling to sync times for performance with Harvey Weiss, Kate Cormack and Phillip Yenawine. Trying to assuage bruised egos. Trying to edit and tape, edit and tape. No time to visit with friends, barely enough time for my studies. Smoking cigarettes (again). Working out each day, which is good. I don't know how I'll pull it together. I must. I will.

April 10, 1978 Dream: Kate Cormack is on television. She acts out her affectations. Someone in back of her mimes them. I am impressed that she was able to hit television without sacrificing her natural abilities. I feel no envy, simply a kind of love.

May 1, 1978: Heavy bullshit hitting the fan. Kathy Rossos speaks to me after class. She sees a clique of which I am a part...wants "in" in terms of performance work and friendship. The strength of her paranoia was so strong that I believed it, and wondered if I was being exclusive. Called Tom Jaremba, he somehow has a calming affect on me. The day before, Philip Yenawine called me, and said that he had overheard Ellen Fisher telling Kate Cormack and Harvey Weiss that she didn't like our piece. Harvey Weiss and Kate told her that they didn't like it either (!) and that they were pretty much forced into the roles, choreography, and situations they played out in the performance. Philip felt completely betrayed. They spoke disparagingly about our piece, but Philip didn't tell me what they said. I don't really care what they said. The piece was good. We had conflicts. I want to go forward, not to get caught in petty party intrigues, jealousies or competitions—or even one performance 'group'. I am simply doing my work and nothing will stop me.

May 5, 1978: *Learned that I have been nominated for the Chicago Art Award for Best First One-Person-Show of 1977, for I am, I'm Jealous. The award is sponsored by the New Art Examiner and WTTW. A Tribune critic will later denigrate the whole concept of the Chicago Art Awards, and call my acceptance speech a Hollywood starlet acceptance speech. I thanked my parents and my family and friends for their support. As I am flat broke, I am very happy to win \$300.00. As will be my custom in later years, instead of saving the award money, I use it to learn another, more advanced meditation technique. CR*

Got a long night ahead. Just cleaned up two weeks of mess in my room. Trying to garner a last modicum of strength to pull through the end of the term. A curious depression has occurred, I think, wrought from my own exhaustion. I need some respite from my schedule, performances, an awards ceremony,

performances in which real time and taped time impinged upon one another. Nicholas Sistler, Ron Kantor, Heather McAdams, Charlie Vernon, Ellen Fisher, Bob Peters, Gunderson and Clark, video artist James Byrne and James Grigsby were all making new performances every season; performing at N.A.M.E. Gallery, and later at Randolph Street, West Hubbard, Artemesia and Cloud Hands. Nancy Lurie was a great champion of the form. The press releases I sent to newspapers at this time were often late, hastily written, full of misspellings and strange adjectives and allusions describing my performance, and my place in the cosmos. Knowing what I know now of the media, I am surprised anyone wrote about my work at all. I was very naive.

I have been told that the cardinal rule of the press is not to completely knock the block off a young, inexperienced performer. I think critics followed that rule with me, and gave me a long rope with which I could easily hang myself. In 1981, a certain critic gave me a particularly rough review after a "reading" I gave at Nancy Lurie's one afternoon. I cried when I read the paper the following week. Then my mood developed into a full boil. I marched over to the newspaper and asked to speak to the reviewer. He ventured out to meet me. He shook my hand and led me to a conference room. "That was a scathing review you wrote!" I said. We spent the next hour discussing my work (ten minutes, tops), and art, literature, and Aristotle. I found him charming and funny, and decided that he was entitled to his opinion. I would have liked a retraction of course, it was a great shock for me to get negative press. Another example of my considerable naivete. I had gotten my block knocked off, and I was still standing. It made me more cautious about what I performed, and how I performed. The following year I ran into other people who had seen the review, and was deeply aware of the impact of negative press: it was certainly remembered more than anything positive I had accomplished. However, the sting of the insult was gone.

school, a job I've yet to find. I don't see any peace for some time. I must create it within me. If I had funds, I would learn the second Transcendental Meditation technique, learn the Siddhis. In my head, I have a house, a beautiful place, with a lot of space, a loving lover, books, plants, and much light. I'm here now, doing my dharma. Nature is presenting me with fulfillment of my path. If I do all that I must, the rest will follow - best not to hurt my heart so with worry.

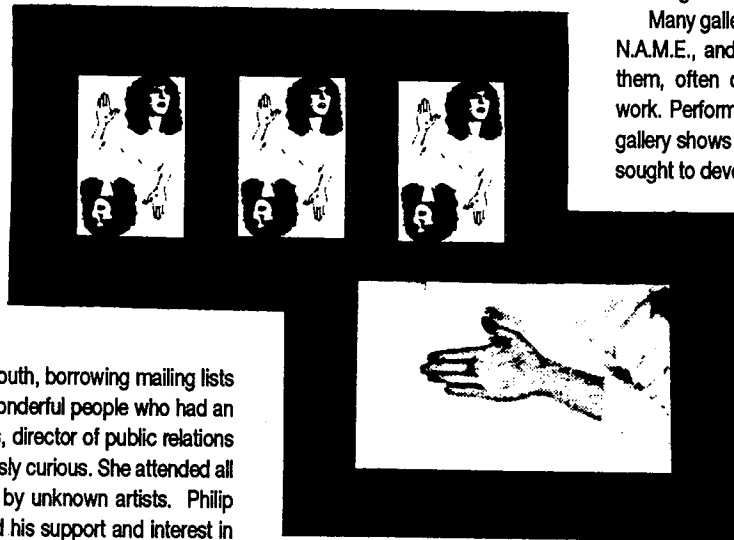
September, 1983: *My father, Henry, is alive. He tells me he wanted to check up on me. I offer him a sandwich. He starts to type. I ask him if he is writing poetry. "No," he tells me, "jokes."*

Boom Years 1977-1981

It's hard to describe the scene but what characterized its energy was an innocence, a sense of fun and mischief. Many critics did not take performance seriously, so it was next to impossible to be reviewed. If you do not receive press for your work, it is almost as though it never happened, but being so ignored, we developed a great deal of courage to do whatever we wanted.

We developed our audiences through word of mouth, borrowing mailing lists from galleries and fellow artists. There were some wonderful people who had an appreciation of the form; among them Alene Valcanis, director of public relations at the MCA. She was patient, interested and relentlessly curious. She attended all sorts of performances, even seeing work presented by unknown artists. Philip Yenawine had incredible energy and enthusiasm, and his support and interest in performance work helped greatly in subtle and profound ways. He took many young artists seriously, when we were "unproven commodities." This buoyed our confidence. He also educated us about the contemporary art scene. Magazines like *High Performance* would print scripts and performance descriptions. *The Reader* was very supportive of performance in general, but seemed to lack a staff that was interested in covering it. Richard Pollack, who died in 1987, covered performance through articles and in the calendar of *Chicago Magazine*. His genuine love of the form created interest in the public at large. It was by reading one of his pieces that my boss at the time, vice president of CCIA, eventually realized that I was a performance artist. This situation, I think, prevented him from truly taking me seriously as a corporate type.

Both Tom Jarembo and Ellen Fisher's classes at the School of the Art Institute were literally overflowing with students. Suddenly it seemed everyone wanted to perform. In 1978 and later, a slew of performance artists were winning SAIC fellowships. Jean Sousa was creating multi-media pieces which included film and body movement. Christine Tambllyn and Barbara Latham were creating video



Many galleries in which I performed, N.A.M.E., and Randolph Street among them, often did little to promote the work. Performance was incidental to the gallery shows of static art. Jean Sousa sought to develop a collective of performance artists who would properly mount performances in galleries.

My memories of early *Fluid Measure* meetings are of ridiculous fights over such issues as, "Can we mount our shows exclusively, or will we be more politically correct if we

serve the community the first few years, and perform our work later, after we have established a reputation of altruism?" The group consisted of Ron Kantor, E.W. Ross, Patty Pelletier, Woody Haid, Sharon Evans, Jean Sousa, and Harvey Weiss (before he moved to New York). I'm not sure why we fought so passionately with each other, except that we all felt very passionately about performance. We also felt that we were not being taken seriously. Once, during a meeting an artist screamed at me, "I bet all you care about is doing your own work, and performing wherever you want!" I was momentarily speechless, as the attack seemed to be a truism. I simply said, "Right! I don't want to perform back to back or in a piece with a new performance artist!" "So you see!" was the reply. I never did quite figure that one out.

Later, I dropped out. Patty and Ross were extremely supportive of my work, and helped me mount several performances through 1983 under *Fluid Measure*. Patricia Pelletier and I sometimes fought irrationally over such things as who was getting more rehearsal time in the gallery. During one such incident I called her a

Eleanor Antin

by Danielle Probst

Eleanor Antin is a pioneer in contemporary performance art, one of the first artists to work in the area of self-transformation, specifically through persona. Her several selves—the King, the Ballerina, and the Nurse—are realized through a wide variety of media, including painting, drawing, video, film, photography, writing, and performance. Represented by Ronald Feldman in New York, Antin has performed and exhibited in major museums, galleries, and performance spaces around the country as well as in Canada and Europe. She is a professor of visual arts at the University of California at San Diego. In the past five years Antin has devoted herself to making films; currently on the festival circuit is Yevgeny Antinov's "The Man without a World," a Yiddish silent film using the acting and cinematic techniques of the late 1920s.

Eleanor Antin: I need the making-up time. At the Whitney, since it's a museum and closes except on Tuesday nights, I did a day show and a night show. They're open until five or something and so I did a one o'clock show. Now, that is not the normal time that one does a standard performance.

Danielle Probst: Right, in any tradition — performance, theater ...

Exactly, so it was everyday, weekends, but I think it was closed Mondays. I needed that time, it was great. In fact, it began to be a formal ritual. You kind of ritualize your habits. Next to the theater on the second floor there's a little john, a women's john, so I'd close it off. The guards had a sign that said, "Closed, go upstairs." I'd put the sign there and then I'd be all by myself and I would prepare. I've been doing live audiences for so long now that the endless time it took in the book is not the case anymore. And now, yes, I probably need about 40 minutes.

I find that, if I'm not 100% ready but still need to go on, I can "act" until it starts happening, where I'm "being" that person.

You mean, as you're preparing to go on?

Right. Is it something that's

INTERVIEW

occurred with you?

Well, I don't know. I've been Antinova for so long, in a sense, her gestures and my gestures at this point ...

I have some of her gestures, you know? She's very dramatic. Some of them she got from me and then changed. And I got some of her gestures and then changed them to mine. I need the time, the quiet, OK? Sometimes some people would ignore the "closed" sign. I know one woman was very indignant that they would close the door and ignored the sign. She opened the door, saw me, was in a rage. She went to the john, washed herself, and left. I remember looking at her rather bemused. That's all right, you know, I could.

The performance artist's dressing room is the bathroom of any place you're working.

Yes, of course. (Laughs). Sometimes in a theater, you get a dressing room, but they're usually so decrepit anyway. So, after changing, I do need a little time to just sit, go over the lines because I panic that I won't remember them. These are performances; it's different when you're going out and living as the role. I need about 15 minutes to start going over the script. Sometimes I don't get that, I'll have five minutes, trying to relax, just cooling out by myself. When I cool out, she comes.

Yes.

You're right, the acting will bring her on, too. If I feel a little bit ... you know, some days you feel like you have a lot of stuff coming in, overload.

Extra stuff?

Yes, overload, and you can't cool it. After I'm introduced I listen to about three minutes of speech I wrote that they read and then I begin. Under ideal conditions I run happily towards them to be there in front of all the people. I take the mic and I say I'm so happy to be here this evening in this theater, it's so modern. It's a little overdone, but of course just gets you into it. Then I have an action to do with the mic which gives me something to do.

Do you primarily work from scripts? Have you ever done performance with Antinova or any other persona where you just let it happen?

Oh, yes, I used to improvise for a number of years. I'm not very talented at improvisation. I'm not so bad at it either, but it's not a special gift I have. But I do have a gift with

writing. I always tell that to my students, people who do this kind of work, that you don't just go out and figure something will happen and you do it, unless you're living the persona over a sustained period of time. That's a different thing. But you have to give it time so things can develop. Sometimes it's something interesting. But normally an improvisation means you have certain ground you want to cover, you want to get somewhere.

You have an agenda.

Yes, exactly, and then you move within it. Of course, if you've been improvising the same piece for some time you start to copy how you were the day before. Other things get into it, but in a sense that's a kind of script. When I went to do a King performance at the Venice Biennale in 1976, or maybe 1978, I was really worried that they wouldn't understand me, so I had an interpreter, this young artist. They got me some sort of prince to do it because all the artists there are princes or rich. They're communists and princes at the same time. All the avant-garde artists are that kind of ... noble person. They brought this guy to me and he was so suave and I thought, "Oh my god, with my schleppy King! It's totally unlikely." I wanted to make this guy cavalier so I could place him in the space with me in some rational way. I thought I was obviously going to be his Sancho Panza if he was there so I said no, I didn't want him. So instead I found myself an artist selling trashy art of Venice bridges to the tourists. He was wonderful, like a street guy, very charming, and he knew English and would translate. I had to prepare something for him. Once the piece gets off its feet I have this big battle and I rage around the stage. So in a sense he needs only intermittent translation. But for much of the set-up he needs more information than that, so I scripted it. He could make a loose translation in advance and know what I would do. If you know another foreign language and you're not so great at it but you know it, and then somebody runs around fast, you might forget it. I didn't want that to happen to him. It was very exciting. On opening night, people were drunk, running around; it's a good thing I had the script. I liked my script, because when I came back, everything was there. But then I changed it because it was not rich enough for me. I changed parts of it, and as soon as I came back from Venice, the next day or two, I had to perform it at the American Theater Convention in L.A. I used it because I had it, even though I didn't need an interpreter. From then on I started working on that script; parts of it I left open for total improvisation. But really, most of it was scripted. It was fun to write because I had started as a



writer. I was an actress but I majored in writing earlier than that in college. When I lived as Antinova for three weeks there was obviously no script. You have, in a sense, the scenario of everyday life. I put up the exhibition of her photos and text and drawings and what-not at the Feldman Gallery. I had the performances at night at the gallery and they were scripted, but all day I'd go in and set up the performances, I would go see my friends. Those are the scenarios of everyday life. Nothing is rehearsed

But you still had a certain agenda.

Yes, exactly, but I'm in the habit of living in the city and doing such and such, coming in to do a show or whatever.

How did people react to you?

They don't expect it. They don't know what you are and they're very disoriented. The ground is really shaky. They see you and then they *know*. They know it's me, for one thing. I don't know what they would do if they met me somewhere where they wouldn't expect me. But I come in the gallery and it's my show, in fact, it's announced as Antinova's show. They never mention my name — I don't want them to. Which is why a number of people came in that you see in the book: "Oh, I used to be with the Ballet Russe." I mean, all sorts of people came in to see this old ballerina., Antinova. But then I would have an appointment to meet someone, and they would see me there as Antinova. It's different. They know that you're there, but at the same time you're not, until they get used to it. Once they get used to it, then in a sense they say, "Oh yeah, now she's being the ballerina." See, I didn't tell anyone I was going to do it.

You didn't tell anyone you were going to live as Antinova?

No, just Ron Feldman, my dealer. He knew I was doing it, but he didn't tell anyone.

It seems to me, from your lecture, that you were doing a ballerina before but it didn't really manifest itself as a persona/character.

Yes, she was sort of generic.

Until you did this in New York?

Until she became black.

Do you see any difference between "persona" and "character"? It's a real problematic thing for me and I'm trying to tackle it for this article.

Do you know the work of Jo Harvey Allen?

No. Is she an actress or a performance person?

It all comes down to where you get to a character or a persona. Allen does southern women and

continued on page 28

THE

Text and artwork by Lester Brodzik

UNSPOKEN

LESTER DOUBLEPLUS GOOD COMMUNICATION TRANSMISSION/X-7 SYSTEM-WIDE NETWORK BROADCAST A.T. ALL MODES....



LESTER SAYS:

Last year one of the nicest things happened to me. I was out with a new friend I met. We were waking to some club. She said (in a creative way of perception) that I look like Marlon Brando in that Tennessee Williams play which was made into a movie. I told her truthfully that I had only seen one play by him at Oxbow many years ago and that I don't remember the name of it or what it was about. The evening went on with song and dance. At the end of the evening for some unknown reason I said, "A Streetcar Named Kandinsky." She said, "See, you knew it all along."

I wondered why Kandinsky. She wondered why not Kowalski. I think I know now. Probably because his early abstract-like neo-expressionist paintings are somehow involved in the beginnings or attributed towards Abstract Expressionism and I did have interest in the work the Chicago Neo-Expressionists had done. I hope that should clear it all up, especially for all you imaginative painters out there.

I'm very excited about this and hope the saga of "A Streetcar Named Kandinsky" will continue, knowing only time can tell since imaginative spontaneity is quite important as is a little mystery in order to keep things interesting.

This is the first feature article written by me for P-Form. Since the beginning of this column had been written, I have realized Kandinsky can also be spelled with SKI. I have decorated a vest for a benefit including the theme which was bought by someone from France. I'm beginning to realize this isn't all part of Lesterism and all a mystery until the time reveals imaginatively or in reality. As you may know, Stellatowicz also stars with Lester Brando in "A Streetcar Named Kandinsky." Is this story about painting and or real life. It all has me feeling like Lester Dean and "Pollock Without a Cause."

Unrelated to the beginning of this article is an issue which is more Academic. Maybe there is a definition in "Scenes from Bohemia" by Henri Mourgen. I think I'll just redefine the terms. Why not? I really should reveal another way of looking at the world!

A few months ago there was a term being kicked around town. I decided to give this term true definition according to my ideas drawn from that Lesterism preception.

A true "Art Fuck" is a certain type Artist. This person is an elitist, yet you'd think that this person is quite the opposite of an elitist (Sometimes this is not the case). This person is generally exalted mostly in the minds of their peers and often enough only in their own minds.

It is thought by other people that live around the Art Community who really do not create art that these artists are boring or confusing people, hence the term "Art Fuck."

Anyone whom is referred to as an "Art Fuck" should take this as the highest compliments. This means you are cool.

Another misunderstood term which should be regarded as a respected and non-sexist term is "Art Slut." Sometimes this term is used to denote a woman that is going out with or hanging out with an artist. Actually the term does not have to apply to just one sex. In addition, the term means all that "Art Fuck" entails. An "Art Slut" is usually an Artist also; An Art Slut is very cool. Is "Art-Wreck" a polite way of saying "Art Fuck?"

THE UNSPOKEN INTERLES GOOD ++X DATCOM SYSNETCAST....

Does anyone else ever read those Carlos Castaneda Books? Bringing about such questions as...Are there any impeccable warriors out there, without self-importance, familiar with stalking, seeing, dreaming and intent, etc...? Please send me a benefactor soon and if not a whole lot of power plants. What the heck is Jimsom weed?

Actually a fellow artist told me he ate some and that it made him go crazy. He also added it didn't matter because he was in rural Indiana.

Off the record...if anyone has any disc by Françoise Hardy that "Yeh Yeh" girl from Paris or Hasi Adkins "That Wild Man" please give them to me especially if you are getting rid of them anyway. Thanx.

Now that that is out of the way and the 2nd part of "A Streetcar Named Kandinsky" is in mind, let's turn our attention to an actual horoscope of the Zodiac Signs, namely, Lesterology!



Leo

July 24th to August 23rd:

You are magnetic, industrious, intellectual and generous. Symbol: the Lion. Ruled by the Sun, yours is the sign of kings. Leos shine with the Sun's own light; you are expansive and generous to all. You are strong-willed, confident, proud, ambitious. Single-purposed, dynamic, you are headed for success. Lucky day is Sunday; numbers are 5 and 1. Lucky colors are orange and gold; gems are sardonyx and ruby.

Male-You will plan a trip to the zoo with someone you have a desperate love feeling for. At the zoo she inhales the helium from a souvenir balloon she bought. She starts speaking in that funny tone of voice. You begin to think she is the queen of the entire faerie horde. At this point you realize you are a goner and just might be her love-slave forever. Oh well, tuff-shit!

Female-You're blinded by love and use all your money supporting your jobless, homeless boyfriend but things go well because he starts making money in some other irreputable way and pays you back. And you seem to always feel quite high.

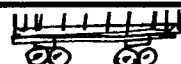
Virgo

August 24th to September 23rd:

You are practical, systematic, conscientious and sensible. Symbol: the Virgin. Yours is the sign of service; you are dedicated, eager to help others. You are discriminating, industrious. Mercury, your ruling planet, relates to intelligence; you are analytical, often a perfectionist. Lucky day is Wednesday; numbers are 8 and 5. Color is sapphire blue, gem is the sapphire.

Male- You have a really big idea to make money using your inspirational skills to create new icons for cultural diversity and worship. You see your girlfriend making lewd gestures and sensual sexual movements with and over her manikin. You now realize she may make love with you when you cross-dress. You get overly excited and become incontinent. She refuses to ever see you again.

Female- You start to organize a successful theme show on post-mortem industrial feminism and the American androgynous way of life. You meet a person you like and your love life begins to soar. Be careful not to get addicted to chocolate covered pizza.



**he said, “...the
women who worked on
this piece really like it.”**

jeff koons

*on his sculpture
“woman in tub” (1988),
from a lecture
at the art institute
of chicago,
april 2, 1991*



a visual commentary by
THE X-GIRLFRIENDS

JD How would you define an action? **PMG** My actions are presented solely as a reality. They are unrehearsed, never presented on a formal stage, and exist without plots or heroes. I don't use the spoken word because words tend to be very protective, and people will follow the path of protection if it's provided. Everyone has their own definitions of words, and they follow that path and don't allow their minds to wander. As reality unfolds, we all have our own interpretations. Words would limit and define those interpretations for people. I think an action should allow anybody to see any reality. My actions present my reality, but everyone there has a different experience. **JD** It seems to me that there are certain cues. If it were a text, I could read it in many different ways but one of those ways would be as a kind of mass; are there certain paradigms from Christianity?

PMG Yes, I would agree with you that many of the actions center around a mass in terms of a ritual, the cycle of life being that ritual. What I'm saying is that any cycle of life is as much a ritual as a mass or religious ceremony. For example, in the installation at Club Lower Links, Blue Dis-Ease, there was an analogy made between a surgical room and a church. (There was a white table in the center of a white room with a single beam of light directly above.) In this action as with all the others, there is a healing process enacted that allows recognition and acceptance of pain, beauty, fear, death, birth, the life cycles. My understanding of the purpose of Christianity is simply this recognition and acceptance of the life cycles. **JD** Were you concerned about the piece seeming Satanic? **PMG** No, because I worked a

long time at getting those references to stop. That meant I placed a lot of emphasis on the actual installation, adding exterior elements so that people would see something besides the blood and the animal heads. These elements are often used in Satanic rituals, but people forget they are also used in day-to-day life. As I started my work, it was seen as having a Satanic message; the work was young, I was just exploring these elements of life-blood, meat, etc. I never attended Church as a child, so I knew little about formal religion; I knew less about Satanism. But I think

it's important to note that if someone sees this element of Satan in my work; that is alright. The work comes with no definitions, that interpretation comes from the individual. **JD** Are you concerned with the perception that your work is homoerotic? **PMG** To some extent, if that is all that people are willing to see. The work is about much more than homosexuality. I hate the use of labels. The work surface can be read with many of these labels religious homo-erotic, sexist, etc.. But the work in its entirety tries to transcend these labels. It's about sensuality as opposed to sexuality. It's about eroticism on the whole as opposed to a

select homoeroticism. When I used a woman in my action at Tower Coyote, someone questioned whether I was gay. It's obvious that many people can only live the labels and definitions and to me that is sad and even dangerous. The importance of the actions is on the audiences' interactions, given their own reference points but also to realize that other meanings exist. **JD** Are there metaphors or symbols for the use of these organic substances? **PMG** Sure. They all have meanings. The actions have a consistency in elements blood, red wine, milk, eggs, meat, and some form of fat. They first and foremost represent those elements that they are. The eggs are a symbol of purity, of birth and the process of birth. And yet if you have ever been to a hatchery it's horrifying. The chickens are raised to lay eggs as machines without consideration for the fact that they are living creatures. It's certainly not barbaric to obtain our food this way, but it is when I represent it in the actions. It's not so much that I'm trying



rite of spring

Interview with Paul M. Graves by Jacqueline Disler

This interview took place after Clean Red Blood and Blue Dis-Ease, two action installations at the Tower Coyote Gallery and Club Lower Links, respectively. Actionism stems from the work of the Wiener Actionist's, most notable Hermann Nitsch.

to express the ideas of vegetarianism. But to some extent, yes, I agree with this idea of poor animals in relationship to the fact that we're all so poor we don't realize the conditions we live in and accept. When I break eggs at the actions, I feel I bring them to life and at the same time destroy them. The life comes in the releasing of the energy, and the audience is for the first time thinking of that egg, I believe that thought is a representation of life. The destruction allows room for something new to come; it releases the energy. It's important for the evolution to have that

destruction, without destruction there is no room for new creation. **JD** This is contained within the action; the release of energy and substance you are destroying is within the action, that context contains the energy, it never goes outside. **PMG** No, I think it does go outside of the realm of the action. The energy is released, the audience becomes part of that installation taking away their thoughts and interpretations of that action. When you come to an action, you are confronted with all these fresh fluids- eggs, milk, red wine, and blood. It becomes very pungent. Not a rotten smell, but more aromatic of the life cycles that surround these elements. Some

people get nervous, blaming instinctively the use of blood, claiming it smells so strong, and yet it's the red wine that smells so much. For me it's important that people touch afterwards, to see that it's real. It depends on the individual as to how much he or she is willing to explore. **JD** How do you feel when you

come in contact with the blood? **PMG** It all depends. There are really wonderful moments. The first contact with the blood is really sensational because usually the blood is so cold. I quickly become frozen from being naked and wet. The blood has such a thick texture and yet it's like pouring silk down your body. In the last action, a candle was heating a bag of milk; with the warmth of the milk I began to come back to life. Resurrection is a major part of all my work. Putting the emphasis on the materials is strange; the emphasis should be placed on the metaphors of the materials. People seem to have stopped making new definitions. The work is about new definitions, about making a transformation. The blood is very important to resurrection because of its role in all of the life cycles. **JD** Could the use of blood in the actions be a subtext for AIDS?

PMG Yes, definitely. This is a disease that has touched me, as it has touched so many, becoming for many a part of the life cycle. All throughout history there appears to have been a major disease killing people. This disease started with such labels and definitions of being the problem of homosexuals and drug users. Now we find it touching all aspects of society with the labels and definitions of the past being

meaningless. In fact these labels have helped the silence and the spread of the disease. We need to see more than labels, a broader acceptance is necessary. A resurrection if you will. **JD** You have worked both in Europe and America, what is the biggest difference for you? **PMG** Let's compare Chicago and Berlin. The difference lies in the art crowd itself. Chicago seems to me not to support itself. In Berlin it's not uncommon to have a major world curator, like Christos Joachimides or world gallerist Bruno Bischofberger to appear at an unknown artist's opening, action, etc...regardless of the press, location or time. Here in Chicago I have

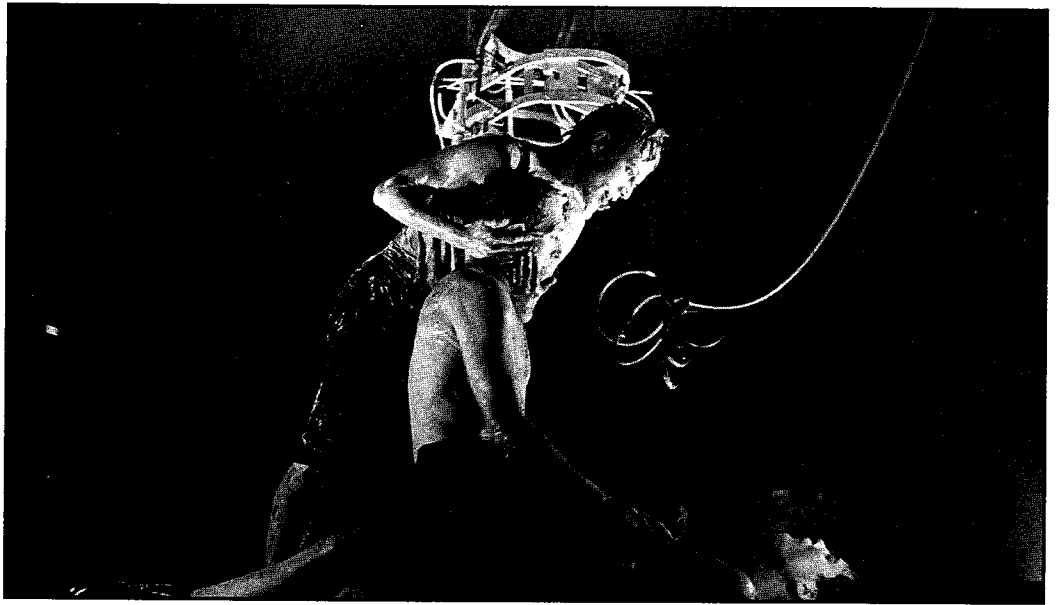
never seen a cross over of the blue chip with the up-and-coming or alternative art scene. This is by no means the fault of the blue chip alone. Even the alternative scene only supports itself. If you go to an opening at the National Gallery in Berlin, its full of artists, collectors, gallerists, and the chic. Here at the MCA or Art Institute it appears for the most part to be



Paul Graves in Performance

members only. This policy of members only exists in Berlin but with the masses of uninvited artists that come it would cause a riot to turn them away. That I think is great. In Berlin, they fight for the right to participate; in Chicago censorship seems to be the only thing to cause a riot. Sad. Chicago needs to support itself more, take risks and enjoy all of the art world not just the small corners of interest.. When N.Y. gallerist Holly Solomon came for Art Expo, she went to the Randolph Street party. Did Donald Young, Rhona Hoffman, or any of Chicago's blue chip? **JD** There's this dichotomy between high art and the comic in your work, is this intentional? **PMG** It's important to me to show the horror being as natural as laughing. People think that laughing is natural, I think it is a tough thing that we learn to do. It's on the same level as horror and for sure the same intensity. I know there are humorous aspects in the work, I put them there. I would like to eliminate elitism. I hate labels and definitions; art should try to transcend them. The language of the action is inherent in all of us. The work has a very Baroque quality, much emphasis is placed on the image. Yes, it's all very high yet with humor and kitsch thrown in.

Reviews



La Fura Dels Baus, **SUZ/O/SUZ** photo by Dona Ann McAdams.

SUZ/O/SUZ

La Fura Dels Baus

Kaufman-Astoria Studios
Astoria, Queens
June 12, 1991

Through a collaboration between Creative Time, The Kitchen, and P.S. 122, La Fura Dels Baus from Barcelona has finally made it to the States as part of the New York International Performance Festival of the Arts. This company began its evolution into a performance group in 1979, creating musical performances which were half circus, half street-theater. Since then they have become known for performing controversial works in abandoned factories, shopping centers, funeral parlors and disused prisons around the world. Now, their notorious reputation precedes them. The posters advertised "Passion and Danger, Rock Music and Theater, Spectacle and Ritual," and my ticket said "Wear Old Clothes."

The audience queued up on the sidewalk beside the Kaufman-Astoria Studios in Queens, a 3-4 story high white concrete building with no windows which housed the performance. Although there was a fire truck

and an ambulance on the street in front of the door, no one seemed particularly nervous, just curious, as we watched the EMS personnel wheeling a prepped stretcher into the performance space. The doors opened at 8:15 and we were ushered into a very large, dimly lit cavernous space. As one's eyes adjusted, several sculptural structures made of metal and wood materialized. There was a stage at one end of the space, but no place to sit down.

Suddenly, one of the "Sculptures" along the wall was lit with a brilliant light and transformed by electricity into a robotic noise maker. One at a time, five more joined in. Each added its own rhythmic pattern and variety of tone, creating an aural collage which evoked an industrial atmosphere. Lights slowly illuminated the area above a grid of beams which had not been visible in the dark. Ropes were tossed from the grid, and the actors, each wearing sneakers, white shirt, black tie, and a jockstrap, began climbing down them to the floor. They leered and grunted apelike at the audience below. The first one reached the floor, crouched and strode off sudden-

ly and purposefully through the crowd, knocking aside anyone who was in his way. A tall man with dreadlocks lowered himself onto the shoulders of another and, as they headed off into the crowd, he simply stretched out his arms and whacked in the head anyone who happened to be within arm's length.

Soon all ten members of the troupe were on the ground, and the mechanical instruments had been replaced by drummers on the stage. Suddenly, one of the actors was beside me carrying a huge metal object with a chain on it. He dashed it onto the ground with a deafening clank and began to swing it around by its chain. People moved, quickly, out of the way. The other actors appeared among us swinging, pushing and pulling other strange contraptions, mostly metal. One began a chainsaw motor and ran it around next to the ground by people's feet. The sound was ominous, and soon the smell of gas hung in the air. I was constantly jostled, disoriented and glancing all around for the actors with their menacing props. One could see where they were because people were moving like waves in front of them.

It was an unknown environment for everyone present, and the collective unfamiliarity with this new experience was palpable.

There was one scene in which two medieval combatants, atop six-foot-high rolling carts pushed wildly by others on the ground, were rushing at each other. They began to throw some sort of white powder at each other which was wrapped in a paper projectile. If thrown properly and accurately, these small baby powder missiles seemed quite deadly and often, ended up smacking into the chest of someone in the audience. There were looks of surprise on the faces of the stricken audience members.

Music, varying from driving, pulsing rock to a single saxophone, (which plaintively accompanied a remarkable scene in which two men were submerged in giant, womblike tanks of water) was always present, and served as an emotional driving element. Without it, some of the activities lost their potency. In one scene, two actors roared at each other like prehistoric punk rockers as they ripped raw sheep or goat innards apart with their teeth. The music ended and left them in the silence roaring and pounding their chests at each other. Without the underlying drive of the music, their exuberance appeared less primal.

Throughout, the audience was creating something in the space with which to interact. We were not there to participate or be confronted, but to be included. One did not feel invited to actually engage in the activities of the players. I was tempted once, after being completely soaked, to run and belly dive as they were doing along the floor, slick with warm water, sweat, fake and real blood. But I didn't. The rules of theater, us/them and the line between, prevailed.

There was an abundance of provocative imagery which was violent and astonishing in its

scale and degree of physicality. What are the politics of a piece like this? In an interview with Mark Freeman of the Village Voice, the founder of the group, Marcel li Antunez Roca, seemed disinterested in discussing the unconscious meaning behind some of the violent and homoerotic imagery, merely asserting that the group members are, in fact, heterosexual.¹

This work was most stimulating in the way it incorporated the audience into the performance. In the interview mentioned above, Roca said, "The whole purpose of theater is to move us internally. So it helps to move physically: on the physical level there is an increase in sensation, and on a mental level more sensibility." Certainly, my experience was heightened by the necessity and the opportunity to move.

Scott deLahunta

1. Village Voice. 6/11/91

MUSINGS BY MADWOMEN

Beth Tanner, Donna Rose

Blue Rider Theater
Chicago, IL.
April 12-14, 1991

Sex and sex and sex . . . these are the notions that have shaped the collective consciousness of a generation. Like it or not, you're expected to be trim, fit, buxom; ready and willing to take it up the ass, up the nose, in the mouth . . . wherever a dominant male tells you.

Beth Tanner, Chicago lesbian artist and curator, takes on these notions in her performance piece, *The Adored and the Adorned*. Tanner's subject matter is the mystification and objectification of the sex act to the point of ridiculousness. Sex is no longer sex . . . it is a tool to their own benefit, like anything in corporate America.

Performing alongside dominatrix/hostess Tanner (who,

with musical accompaniment, exhorts us to "submit" and to "relax" to our terrible erotic fate) are drag artists Gurlene Hussy and Joan Jett Blakk (whose most recent ticket to ride was her candidacy for Mayor of Chicago), who recreate nightmares of female weakness and submission to male idolatry. Included is a version of *Good Love* that would make the Residents blush, to which soothing notes Hussy vomits and Blakk contorts like Mohammed Ali's son . . . in drag, of course.

The tone of *Adored* is not one of helplessness or hopelessness, but rather a biting satire offering a direct challenge to antiquated missionary ideals. Tanner and Co. (Hussy, Blakk, and musicians K.B. Daughtry and Jan Collins) are all skilled performers whose natural sassiness perfectly augments the subliminal message of the show.

Slightly less successful was the opening performance of the night, Donna Rose's *An Emotionally Patterned Poem*. Rose bills herself as an African-American Lesbian Poet . . . and that she is. Her imagery is clear and vital, her words all politically correct and certain to send "the gals" into fits of euphoria. Rose, too, performed with musical accompaniment. Unfortunately, Rose's decision to bray unintelligibly so as to drown out the music killed the effect.

It's not that Donna Rose is not a gifted writer—she is—and it's not that she has nothing to say—she does. Rose does tend to fall into the all-too-typical lesbo-police pose, depriving (in this reviewer's opinion) the writing of real immediacy in favor of predictable, safer rhetoric.

There were definite moments of real genius during Rose's 20-minute performance. The final segment, a literal sermon on the value of tears, was delivered with passion and gut-clenching honesty. Rose's voice is strong and sure, full of energy and con-

viction. If Rose's choice is to specify her work to the lesbian-feminists of the Mountain Moving Coffeehouse clique, she is well on her way. This is, indeed, a personal choice that should be respected by those who don't agree with the artist's perspective. For this reviewer, the experience of Donna Rose would be far more pleasurable were she more adventurous in her content.

Lori Ann Weiner

WORLD WITHOUT END

Holly Hughes

N.A.M.E. at Blue Rider Theater
Chicago, IL.
April 3-6, 1991

World Without End combined fantasies, memories, jokes, provocations, and questionable truths in a one-woman monologue delivered in and around a lone armchair on an otherwise bare stage. Wearing a tight dress and high heels, Holly Hughes presented an image of a woman occupying with ambivalence an identity which was, and was not, hers—a self partly inherited from, and primarily in relation to, the sprawling and not entirely benign influence of her non-conformist mother. But countering (or complementing) this sense of compulsion, of being doomed to repeat (like generations of baby birds she watched as a child return year after year to the "mess [nest] their mother had made"), was Hughes' own determined energy to claw through the stuff that had made her and to find in it—to celebrate and use—what is precious, alive, and meaningful, exemplified by the image of an apple, which at the end, she describes holding, momentarily, in her hand.

In Hughes' expertly woven, circumnavigating narrative, images that appeared in the beginning cropped up later, reminiscent but transformed: the tomatoes in the arms of a prep

cook which prevented the kiss Hughes attempted to give him (as if in spite of herself), appeared later in her mother's garden, fertilized by the smell that exuded from between her mother's legs. The revelations Hughes whispered into the microphone in the dark in the voice of a child—we are both the same, we are both babies, we are both full of roses—appeared in other places, in other voices, in the story of Eve (Holly) getting it from or with Adam (an anonymous male co-worker) in a sleazy motel.

But an appreciation of the script in structuralist terms is a pretty dry response to a work that raised such wrath with the NEA and which had raised expectations here for more of a political punch. Why did it leave me feeling untouched? *World Without End* must have begun, at some primordial time of anonymity (before her celebrity rise via the NEA's mistake), as an impassioned and provocative self-exploration. But after more than a year of repetition, with some variation, scripted spontaneity became routine—over-stylized, overpracticed, over-perfected. Hughes was as distant from the moment, and her audience, as if she was still an image in a magazine or rehashing a comedy routine on TV. At some points Hughes addressed individual audience members (I'm sorry I got into bed with you. Are you hungry? Do you want to go home?) but her targets barely began to sweat before her gaze glided off them, and the next pre-conceived joke, quip, question followed, leaving no room for response. Then why ask? Such stabs at "audience interaction" suggested a false spontaneity that simply did not function in such a carefully structured piece—sanded, polished, and shellacked. No matter what politically sensitive content was woven into the text, its potential for provocation was de-fused—because the distance

felt between audience and performer was so great; and over-practiced delivery made risk routine.

Hughes' playful use of metaphor throughout the text emphasized that sex is sex is sex and that sexual identity of any stripe is a thickly planted plot of criss-crossed, hybrid, and multiple desires. Although labeled by one talk show host as a "pro-lesbian performance artist" (which Hughes gleefully appropriated as "professional lesbian"), sex itself was described in relations with men, who she pushed around in words like the fly-weights of fantasy, stand-ins for an Other that was fluid, interchangeable, impossible to grasp. The only memorable mention of another woman beside her mother was her childhood friend, Jodine Windy Thompson, who was "doomed to wear her body like somebody else's clothes."

There was a potentially vulnerable persona in this piece: Hughes' raunchiness—if you could even call it that—was not entirely rip-roaring and brave, but tinged with a real life insecurity, and a sense of not choosing, but being doomed, to what her mother left her. She seemed both proud and lost. But even this persona, potentially raw at one point—that mythical, primordial point of origin before we all knew her name—had reified by the time the piece came to Chicago, into something that she too wore "like somebody else's clothes."

Laurie Palmer

CAFE ARMAGEDDON'S SHOOTING FROM THE HIP AREA

Various Artists, Organized by Wayne Alan Brenner

Vortex Performance Cafe
Austin, Texas
May 3, 4, 10, 11, 1991

I was there mostly to see *Hard Women*, I admit it.



Wayne Alan Brenner, *Cafe Armageddon's Shooting from The Hip Area*.
Photo by Bonnie Cullum.

They're a costly habit, since they perform at least weekly, often more frequently, in more venues than any other performance group in town. But here they were in *Shooting From The Hip Area*, the second of *Cafe Armageddon's* annual performance showcases, doing a piece commissioned for the show, a piece called *Caffeine*. So I had little choice but to attend.

Oh, wordmeister David Jewell was there, too, and brilliant as usual; and Bill Jeffers who can do no wrong & so much good on stage; and The *Cafe Armageddon Players* (Syd Cook, Kelly DeConnick, Matt Patterson, and Jeff Wilson) rendering Brenner's "Waitress Heaven" into a joy beyond its printed worth. And Fritz Blau filled in for Jeffers the 2nd weekend, weaving humor-punctuated tales of drugs & adolescence & Pepe the Pirate Channeler. And there was the connecting schtick, with Brenner playing *The MC From Hell*, causing the overhead disco ball to explode, wreaking politically incorrect havoc until DeConnick blew him away with a .38 special (thus eliciting much cheer-

ing from the antagonized audience, night after night). Yes, there was that, the whole deal, and much of it was better than most performance art I've seen.

But *Hard Women* were there, and that's what's important. They performed *Caffeine* aided by the unnerving lighting of Brad Butler and James McCartney's eerie sound-track. Rachel Martin-Hinshaw began the piece alone, sitting at a desk, smoking her cigarettes, drinking her java, typing furtively at a manuscript, the floor around her littered with at least fifty coffee-stained styro cups, at least as many wads of rejected pages. And on into the night until it was time to grab some sleep before the dayjob view drew too close. Once in bed, though, the woman couldn't sleep—at least not undisturbed. Phantoms tormented her dreams, phantoms made flesh by DeAnn Acton, Suze Kemper, Lisa Qualls, and Ellen Bergen. One phantom emerged from the vanity's mirror, a doppelganger mocking Rachel's earlier movements. The others crept out from under the bed, skulking and grasping. They besieged the sleeping woman—tickling, poking, twist-

ing, biting, spewing red jello from their mouths. In one assault, they led Rachel through a dream sequence where she stabbed her own mother to death. In another, they forced her to jump rope in hotpepper time while a strobe light stuttered the motion into freeze-frame portraits of terror. Eventually, after much torture, Rachel managed to return to bed and fall asleep, only to be awakened, minutes later, by her alarm clock. And again the Hard Women came a-calling. But this time they were surreal fairies of the morning, entering from a giant coffee cup, dressed as a coffeepot, a spoon, a cup of cream, and so on. They flocked around Rachel's bed, chirruping greetings, tossing her to the floor, dragging her exhausted carcass into a suit, some make-up, the proper business ornaments, the semblance of human life this side of the dream state. And with a final shove, they sent her cheerily out the door and off to work. She didn't make it, though. Instead, she collapsed upon the front porch in a bundle of blissful, indisturbable sleep, safe at last in the Land of Nod.

The whole evening was an enjoyable bundle—both dream-like and nightmarish—and I await next year's version, although Brenner threatens that this might be the last.

Jack Tensleep

CAFE VOLTAIRE

Various Artists
Organized by Jeff Wilson
Vortex Performance Cafe
Austin, Texas
May 22, 1991

Jeff Wilson's *Cafe Voltaire* has just completed its third monthly occurrence. Wilson plans to keep it going through '92, skipping October and December. "I want to enrich performance art in Austin by

supporting ground-breaking work for new and emerging performance artists," he says. He does it out of his own pocket. *Cafe Voltaire* is one of the few paying venues in Austin, with each act getting \$25.

With minimum pomp, Wilson introduces the show to the thirty-odd people there that Wednesday night.

Bill Ivey was first up. He read short stories. His deadpan delivery suited the inner life mystery tone of his works, all full of dead floating cows, glimpses into the homes of strangers, and the lost-in-the-supermarket absurdity of everyday consumption. There in the shadow of the highway out among the big shining signs, this guy was right at home.

Things got changed around a bit on the stage section, the lights were turned down and Richard Proffitt was waving his long hair over a Holy Grail art-class-crafted chalice burning blue full of alcohol and epsom salts. The flames were jumping and organizer Wilson was just about quivering, seemingly trying to get a scope on the nearest fire extinguisher should something go wrong. Proffitt bobbed and weaved forgiveness, Desert Storm, Jesus, His wife and son, and a lot of energy into his piece. The flame of the Holy Grail burned beautifully and trouble free. Not a hair was singed.

With the lights back up, the audience was witness to a boombox on a pedestal. It told a story of friendship between two young "Well I guess you wouldn't really call us" piano prodigies. Jim Fritzler wandered around behind the pedestal, occasionally squeezing a few notes out of an accordion. Presumably the voice from the box was his, but as he never spoke, we never knew for sure. The feeling of the narrator from "The Wonder Years," grown up to live in a room above a drugstore and not knowing what

happened, came through in this piece. The narrator of Fritzler's story was grown up now, of course, and seemed at a loss. The accordion helped to get that feeling across.

All Larry Thoren needed when his time came was a mike and his folder of poems. He's the guy that put the tex in Vortex that night. His poems are like the finest of country and western delivered in an honest Texas rhythm and a totally believable tone and style. If what this man is saying isn't the literal truth it sure is the truth spiritually. Thoren pulled no punches sharing his spirit in poems about rolling on the highway, escaping, "empty beer can whispers from the back seat," the irony of returning troops and the yellow ribboners seen through his ex-Marine Vietnam veteran eyes, making friends with a man who spent thirty-five years in the Huntsville state prison, and losing his virginity in a Mexican border boys town. Most powerful was his anthemic "Weeds," a poem which starts out on one of Austin's mean streets, rolls through the railroad yards and backside of Oakland, California, and eventually becomes a call to "poetry of the down and out, poetry of the left behind. . ."

The audience was asked to shift to the other side of the lobby to view Sheelah Murthy's section of the program. With lights down low, Murthy sat next to a two-foot high pile of flour on a coffee table, shaping it with her hands and a battery-operated pocket fan as an 8mm film was projected on her and the flour mound. Dancer Anu Radha stood behind the pile, wearing Indian ankle bells and punctuating Murthy's free-flowing monologue with movements and jingling stampings of her feet. Murthy gracefully went from describing a camel expedition in Northern India, and her feelings of foreignness there, to growing up in Seattle and the

confusion and anger felt at a British neighbor's prejudice towards "the poor Indian girl!" to the strength of her father's non-violence towards this same neighbor, to the sweet but not overly sentimental feelings of Christmas spent in a garage with Cambodian refugees. After a climax of ringing bells and stamped flour, the two danced off into the darkness.

Cafe Voltaire is looking for performers. If you're passing through Austin and would like to perform, and be paid \$25, contact Jeff Wilson at (512) 448-2299.

W. Joe Hoppe

EPISODE SIX: EYE OF THE STORM

Ground Zero Theatre
Directed by J. W. Whiddon

Vortex Performance Cafe
Austin, Texas
May 3 - 25, 1991

Before my very eyes: Yahweh versus Allah in one brawling shitkick of a pro-wrestling grudge match, refereed by in-your-face atheist Madalyne Murray O'Hare and emcee'd by author & professional paranoid Salman Rushdie. Wham! Bam! Crunch!

Oh the power! The glory! The vast silliness that rocked me laughing, rocked me like a forearm smash to the immediate facial area. And this spectacle, these two blithering bludgeoning deities, were a mere increment of Ground Zero Theatre's assault on Operation Desert Storm and the misguided notions that fueled it.

Ground Zero's been working the more political side of performance art in Austin for years, with varying degrees of success, and their *Episode Six: Eye Of The Storm* is the pinnacle thus far. In scene after scene, their line-up of writers and performers laid waste to the false gods of recent war, here spoofing a

closed-door meeting of superpowers, there showing what MIGHT have happened during Bob Hope's USO schtick. Some pieces, like the divine wrestling, were pure farce; others were more serious, though no less pointed. A crew of light & sound techs wrought effective surrounds to the action, employing audio and video samples from the wartime media circus. These and other devices added depth to the show's connecting structure: an intricate & ingenious send-up of the format used in Ken Burns' **CIVIL WAR** series on PBS.

Perhaps the brightest highlight of the show occurred near the beginning: a hilarious musical number featuring Mick D'arcy as that Ultimate Threat To American Oil Supplies, Saddam Hussein. It began with Secretary of State Jim Baker (Tim Hawe) and his aide-de-camp (Andrea Beeson) awaiting conference with The Mustached One. Into the room stalked Saddam with two of his fanatical Republican Guards (Whitney Milam and Brian Simpson). After a brief exchange of greetings, insults flew like Irish confetti until Saddam spat on Baker's companion. And instantly—the bespittled femme urging, "GET him, Jimmy!"—Saddam and Baker were bound at the wrists and handed knives. And around they went, slashing and cursing, two thugs displaced from some '50's juvie exploitation film, eventually breaking apart, much ruffled but mostly unscathed. Then more violence as the Guards gunned down the aide-de-camp, paused for a deathscene of such mock-poignance as to urge one's gorge toward escape velocity, then bound Baker to a chair and stepped back to allow Saddam to explain His Fiendish Plans.

And he did, marvelously, to the tune of "New York, New York." Accompanying music swelled from hidden speakers and the Republican Guards

formed a two-man chorus line, mugging & mincing in such ridiculous synch as to make the ghost of Busby Berkeley weep with joy and vexation.

This piece and most of the others took no prisoners into boredom's dull cell. The audience was captive to its own loud appreciation for the troupe's anti-war stance, for comedy on par with vintage Saturday Night Live. Apropos their name, Ground Zero Theatre simply blew us away.

Wayne Alan Brenner

TO US AT TWILIGHT

Alyson Pou

New Langton Arts
San Francisco, Ca.
June 8, 1991

In the middle of her performance, Alyson Pou dances under the weight of twenty-two black dresses tied to her waist, a child's plastic phonograph broadcasting unintelligible hymns to her swaying hula-hoops. She impatiently rips the needle off the LP, and in the proceeding silence frames a story of her mother's youthful adventures—shooting guns, flying planes, travelling to unknown cities—a life folded and put away, like the dresses, when she returns to Louisiana for marriage, domestic chores, and familial obligations. Later, of course, this arrangement leads her to worry about Alyson's future; to plead with the girl to hang the wash on the line, not to dry mudpies on the bottom steps, to take on the woman's role. People are talking. But Alyson knows the mixed messages of family loyalty. She was born when her grandmother died; in passing, her mother refused to name the child after the dead.

Alyson leads a different life, yet the loss she articulates is a kind of homelessness. As she muses in the opening moments



Alyson Pou, *To Us At Twilight*. Photo by Dona Ann McAdams.

of her monologue, she visits, to find, "... one never returned. . . deeply of this place. . . uncomfortable with the possession of it . . . to escape, to return, never fully able to express it." The displacement she feels corresponds to the generations of mothers, grandmothers, aunts and cousins who abandoned themselves to the duty of family. She is warned, "Don't forget where you came from." The family women "had their secrets . . . they didn't want them, they didn't tell them either—whatever it was was gonna stop with them." And just as the buried bodies in the town's graveyard remain a puzzle to the living, Alyson watches as her women relations, who "don't know what to do" with themselves, destroy themselves. Three generations—daughter, mother and grandmother—descend upon the graveyard where Alyson kneels by her grandmother's side, "a party to her tenderness," clearing debris from the family plots. Lineages are recounted by

names etched on marble slabs; small town stories made into histories. As they plunge further into the past, Alyson's mother frantically keeps to the present, closing the car door to wait for their return.

Like grave markers, each dress Alyson lifts from the floor of the performance space brings to life a story of a woman in her family. Jean, who is "not of this world," keeps gardenias hidden within the confines of her black dress. Cousin Becky, draws back her dress sleeve to pick at wrists and forearms with straight pins—varying the strokes and stabs of the needle with gruesome repetition. Grandmother Emma, who passed from life as Alyson entered, never learned to cook or clean house and, singlehandedly, would paint her house a different color each year. She anchored her land with painted rocks, spoke to the air, and measured the wind with homemade devices. She is the woman closest to Alyson's life as an

artist, the one everyone—family and townspeople alike—claimed as crazy. Yet the madness coursing under the repressive guise of kinship expectations, like the “Wet, warm southern air that winds around like an invisible vine,” is the heritage Alyson flees.

Deborah Hede.

SPEW: THE HOMOGRAPHIC CONVERGENCE

Various Artists; Organized by Lawrence Steger, Steve Lafreniere, Susan Seizier, Suzie Silver, Steve Marton, Mary Jo Schnell, and La Mar.

Randolph Street Gallery
Chicago, IL
May 25, 1991

The Spew press and performance festival was an intense day of shopping, cruising and entertainment. Randolph Street Gallery opened its doors from noon to eight p.m. for this day of celebration, networking and quick reads at all the stands, comparing purchases with friends and finding new surprises in the gay graffiti literature scene. Editors from *Fuzz Box*, *Straight to Hell*, *Thing*, *Farm*, *Bimbox*, *Negativa*, *Holy Tits*—clamps and too many more to mention, held state at small tables displaying a wide range of materials including zines, tee shirts. Performances ran all day, including those by Thax Douglas reading poetry, Andy Soma getting his hair cut, Mary Brogger lip-synching Nick Cave, Bunny and Pussy rumor mongering, Hudson reading a short story published in *Farm*, and Vaginal Creme Davis belting out a tune for the audience.

As the advertising promised, there were no boring panels, no pointless workshops, and no brainless keynote speeches. If you were here to find pornography, forget it. The celebration brought together many people from different cities across the

nation and Canada. The true success of the event was in the realization that we're all here while things are happening politically in this country. We can unite and bring about change. The vibes were so positive and the energy so high that the sense of being at a queer happening or love-in prevailed. The many people involved in organizing the event deserve the respect not only of the gay community but the arts community at large for presenting a genuinely alternative party for the press.

Jacqueline L. Disler

IS THE FAT LADY SINGING?

Various Artists

Art-O-Rama
Chicago, IL
May 3, 1991

Carol Jackson with
Chris Tarkowski - *Ceremony*

As Carol Jackson performs the games and rituals of childhood, she's every inch the petulant little girl, overdressed in mom's jewelry. Wordlessly she offers each audience member a piece of gum. And with their acceptance of that forbidden fruit, they are “in on” the game, breaking the rules. You don't chew gum in certain settings, do you?

With childlike, impatient precision, she takes the audience through a litany of memories. But the rope jumping, book balancing, and rhyming/name calling take on a darker hue. With every seemingly innocent action and word, Ms. Jackson reminds us of our own past pains and embarrassments. You break the rules, you suffer the consequences of derision and disapproval. “You're gonna get it.”

And the violence of our education system and the condition-



Vaginal Creme Davis, *SPEW: The Homographic Convergence*. A part of *In Through the Out Door*. Photo by Sam Mangen.

ing process do not fade, she reminds us. Growing up is not growing out of it. As an adult she now dictates the rules—“You can serve the hors d'oeuvres,”—but she is still herself the servant of her own upbringing. She cannot challenge or change the absolute rights and wrongs. She can only pass them on—perpetuate the violence and numbing of her own conditioning. “Don't step on cracks,” she warns her daughter. “Mom, don't be so superstitious,” is the predictable reply.

Lorel Janiszewski - *The Red Handshoes*

“Red handshoes can never come clean.” With this disappointing discovery, the lights dim on Lorel Janiszewski's dramatic and poetic piece of frustration and unfulfilled desire.

It's a performance within a performance, rife with the dramatic intensity and bitter irony that characterize Ms. Janiszewski's work. In *The Red Handshoes* she is initially confident as hostess of a telethon to raise funds for cleaning the red handshoes.

She is almost breezy as she informs the audience that about “10% of our funding comes from money found under Ferris Wheels” and invites them to give their share. It is, after all, a most worthy cause, she reasons. The handshoes (German for gloves) have given the audience so much pleasure. To illustrate, she plays the finger game “Where is thumbkin?” and points out that it simply doesn't work without the handshoes.

As the telethon progresses

and the phones remain silent, the hostess becomes more anxious. Her smile becomes forced; her controlled delivery begins to crack. Her hopes fade further when she grabs the ringing phone to discover it is only her mother, calling to question her daughter's actions. The tension and desperation build until the final blow is struck. The phone rings. It's the cleaner calling to confirm the futility of her quest . . . the handshoes CANNOT be cleaned.

Andy Marko with Barbie Nicholls - *The Independent Agent*

Andy Marko likes to examine and dissect the unspoken underpinnings of our society. Like a scientist probing and poking at our motives, he makes us think about the forces that shape our actions. In *The Independent Agent*, aggression is the target of his multi-dimensional exploration.

Aggression is pervasive in American society, according to Andy Marko. It's seen in the way we turn a first date into a contest of salesmanship, Mr. Marko and Barbie Nicholls remind us. Sitting at a restaurant, the couple begins looking at menus and ends up interviewing each other and vying for the upper hand—the sales advantage.

With a tv monitor blaring the news and tv commercials, Mr. Marko recites crime statistics and instances of violence. Throughout, his nervousness of style creates a tension that suggests a just-below-the-surface storm of potential violence. Even when he dances with Ms. Nicholls, his movements are frenzied and forceful.

Let's look at the aggressiveness that's made our society such a violent one, he is urging the audience. Let's not just accept as natural a violent way of life.

Dina Morelli with June Bralich - *Shinestand III*

Performance artist Dina Morelli has worked as a shoe



Carol Jackson, *Ceremony*. Photo by Bogdan Bilyk.

shine person at a large Chicago hotel. In *Shinestand III*, she translates the monotonous, repetitive rhythms of shoe shining into a compelling examination of the symbiotic relationship between servant and master.

She performs the ritual over and over, slapping on polish and buffing with a steady, musical beat. The shoes she shines are empty, intensifying the focus on the ritual. Taped comments of the supposed wearers occasionally punctuate the silence—"Hey, Baby . . ."

"Hey Joe, don't forget a babe for me." When the last act of polishing is performed, the servant signifies that the transaction is complete with the simple comment, "You're all set, sir."

What takes place in the pro-

cess is an osmotic transfer of information through the shoes and into the hands. The servant builds a memory bank; the wearer of the shoes is cleansed—relieved of information.

It becomes the servant's burden, as Ms. Morelli notes. "The sequenced repetitive action and the resulting rhythms become a vehicle for centering. It is through this physical and aural meditation that the servant creates a solitude offering the strength to take on the weight of a collective suffering."

Casey Spooner - *Untitled* (tentatively called Italy)

A North Carolina drawl and a chatty conversational style are his main "props," yet Casey Spooner very effectively takes us into the world of a Tennessee Williams-esque character, domi-

nated, confused yet matter of fact: "I am a woman, a girl, a female. Mama made me get perms. I burned my hair off with a hairdryer."

He's a captivating monologist, weaving almost mundane childhood incidents into an enticing fabric: "Mama had the same hairstyle all my life. I dreamed she cut her hair off . . . She had metamorphized. She was not the same woman. I resented the fact she had changed. I kept saying, You look ten years younger."

Later, at a grandmother's funeral, Mr. Spooner recalls mama looked at the body and remarked, "She looks ten years younger, doesn't she?"

As Mr. Spooner's character grows up, the chance comes to examine life beyond mama's grasp. "I was asked to escort friends and family members to Italy . . . Once I got there I felt empowered, independent. I would seek employment in a land where the language was but seductive sounds to me." What better place," he muses, "than a peninsula shaped liked a boot. I have to demystify what is foreign. Desire is desire, no matter how misinformed my emotions might be."

Kent Albin - *David's Girl and Beyond*. Thanks to the 28 hundred years of western literature that came before us.

Wordplay and strong symbolic visuals punctuated Kent Albin's parody-like "tribute" to sense and nonsense in thought and literature. Like a mocking beatnik of the 90's, he turns words and phrases inside out, examines and displays them.

"I want to be an impressionist," he insists, peering out through a black drape and over a washtub set on a pedestal beside a large white plastic swan. "The meta-irony of nihilism has just begun. Bring on the contradictions," he invites. One of those would seem to be the mini-skirted girl who makes a brief appearance to mug and gesture

in flapper style.

"History is absolutely necessary. It provides a lovely backdrop," Mr. Albin asserts. "I believe in endless possibilities meaning any of you are David's girl."

Valerie Addams

PLAGUE MASS (MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH): A REQUIEM FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED OF AIDS

Diamanda Galas

The Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield, Chicago

3 April 1991

(Ego loss)

Plague Mass was written in 1984 in San Francisco, developed and recorded in 1985 in London and Berlin, and toured in 1988 in Australia, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Holland, Italy, Spain, Bavaria, and the United Kingdom, to name a few.

[Galas doesn't come to Chicago very frequently, and given the controversial nature of her performances, expectations were high, perhaps too high. The audience had settled in for a pleasant evening of shrieking, wailing, keening, and gnashing of teeth, and Galas delivered all this and more. But she was cool to the touch, removed, distant in spite of the ultimately superficial wrought-ness of her performance.]

(Diminished capacity for pleasure)

Galas was arrested with fellow members of ACT-UP in December of 1989 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York for disorderly conduct, disrupting a religious service, resisting arrest, and criminal trespass. She returned in October of 1990 to perform Plague Mass at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

[Maybe in 1984, or 1985, or even in 1988 Galas' show would have struck terror in the hearts of her witnesses, or would have filled them with awe and wonder, or would have shocked

them out of complacency. In 1991, though, the typical performance audience has heard and seen a lot of "controversy." They are a much tougher sell. They see Diamanda dip her hands into a bowl of blood and smear it over her bare-breasted body and instead of being seized with the moment, they're wondering how long the drink line might be, or if she uses real blood, or how long it takes her to clean up afterwards, or what it would be like to have sex with her. Cynical responses for an ironic, dead age.]

(Sleep disturbance)

Three-and-a-half octave voice. Two hand-held microphone "speaking in tongues" technique. Enhanced digital processing. Five languages. Biblical verse, 19th Century French poetry, modern American gospel verse. Screams, whispers.

[Galas has pledged to repeat performances of Masque until the "end of the epidemic." This is perhaps not the best idea. The problem is that the emotions of bereavement and loss and anger seem to lose their urgency and stridency with repetition. Having performed this piece literally throughout the world, it is inevitable that some of its source power is lost. A similar problem occurred last fall when Karen Finley came to Chicago, except that in her case, both repetition and notoriety turned her show into a weak tea of cliché, political posturing, and self-aggrandizement.]

(Decathexis/recathexis)

A DeJavant production by Chamber Music Chicago. Other events include Marianne Faithfull in Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* and Einstürzende Neubauten.

[Galas looked great, though. Really wonderful arms. I realize that those two observations are not the most ... sensitive? But true nonetheless.]

(The autonomy of self-esteem regulation)

Plague Mass is dedicated to those who are HIV-positive, PWARcs, and PWAs. It was written as a response to the death from AIDS of Galas' brother, Philip-Dmitri.

[Most disappointed were those always-been-hip types who had seen Galas several years ago during her last visit to Chicago, and were able to comparison shop. Now, if we postulate that these individuals were only recently-hip several years ago, does that mean that the members of the audience who are now recently-hip liked the current show? Or is current-recent-hip always subservient to always-been-hip? Hip replacements?]

(The ability to tolerate painful affects)

Other compositions include *Wild Women with Steakknives* and *Tragouthia apo to Alma Exoun Fonos* (Song from the Blood of those Murdered). Galas has also collaborated with filmmaker Derek Jarman in *Last of England* and with Wes Craven in *The Serpent and the Rainbow*.

[It's a little frightening to think of what this show might be 10 years from now, or whenever the "end of the epidemic" is reached.]

How will Galas compensate for the erosion of stamina? Will she invite members of the audience to try their hands at bathing in blood, or wielding the dual microphones?]

(Decreased interest in the external world)

Sections of the *Masque of Red Death* trilogy include: *The Divine Punishment* (1986), *Saint of the Pit* (1987) and *You Must Be Certain of the Devil* and the *Litanies of Satan* (1982).

[Her voice is incredible, the modulations remarkable, her strength enormous. These are Galas' trademarks and remain so. And, hey, Europe loves her, right, which means we had all better get on the culture bandwagon and start appreciating, start loving, now.]

(Preoccupation with unbidden, poignant reminiscences sometimes of a near hallucinatory intensity)

Lonnette M. Stonitsch



Diamanda Galas, *Plague Mass (Masque Of The Red Death): A Requiem For Those Who Have Died Of Aids*



**So Many Dreams,
Larry Duckette.**

*Randolph Street Gallery,
Chicago, March 29, 30, 1991.*

Photo by Peter Taub



"Do you
know what I am?"
"What?" "I am
a chandelier."
"Oh."

Lawrence Steger. A part of Circa '91, Cabaret Metro, Chicago, May 31, 1991



**More Garage Dances,
High Risk Group.**

*A part of In Through the Out Door,
Randolph Street Gallery,
Chicago, June 7, 8, 1991*



Cindy Salach
of The Loofah Method.
Photo by
Jeannie Deubel



SPEW: The Homographic Convergence.

A part of In Through the Out Door,
Randolph Street Gallery,
May 25, 1991.

Photo by Sam
Mangen



I Remember, LeVon McAllister. A part of Chicago Performs,

Randolph Street Gallery,
Chicago,
December 7, 8,
1990

Hudson, SPEW, Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago, May 25, 1991. Photo by
Sam Mangen.



they are characters, but sometimes when you speak to her as a person, there's so much of that southern gal quality that's Jo Harvey. She also sings. Her husband is Terry Allen, an installation sculptor. They do it together. She's the singer and he's got the band, the country western band. He also sings and has made records, art records. But basically she does her own shows, her own performance art. It's kind of like a nutty cross between a Tennessee Williams character and her own. Is Goldie Hawn a persona? Or is Goldie Hawn the nutty person that we know always acts the same role? Is that a persona, or what? It sounds like a persona she inhabits comfortably. What do you think?

Well, I had to come up with some kind of definition for myself because otherwise I would go crazy. And the conclusion that I came to was that, for example, Lady Macbeth, anybody can put on the outfit, memorize the lines, and do it. They might do it badly, they might do it really well, they might be convincing or not. But that's a character. And someone that you manifest for yourself, that's a persona.

Yes, like Divine was a persona.

Yes, but people could dress up like Divine and be that character. Then they were playing Divine, the character.

That's what I came up with.

I think so. It's funny, when you think of John Barrymore, who's a terrible ham. He played in a very hammy way these Shakespearean roles for a hundred years. He's sort of always talking with noble gestures, showing his profile, carrying on. He played his roles the same way. His voice always modulated in sort of a bizarre fashion. Unnatural. Now, is that a persona? He fits it very well. It is for some people. In a sense he moved into it, his persona. I'm sure he didn't start that way. He moved into that persona, which developed out of a need, an internal need, and in a sense I think it is.

Him playing himself?

Him playing himself, right. People have play-acted for ages, especially artists, because artists are supposed to be flamboyant or interesting no matter what. Now we, as artists, do something else with it. We frame it in some way. We make art and life; for example, you have Sylver at the door, she gives out the programs. Everyone's disoriented; your friends, they don't know what's happening. People are asking you to sing. You're not coming on with fanfare, ta, da, da, "Sylver is going to perform." Instead, you're at the bar, they say, "Come on Sylver, sing." Right? So Sylver says, "All right."

Right.

And she just sings, right? So in a sense the persona is always making you see that art/life confusion, that confusion between ... well, confusion and *fusion* at the same time. But I think we relate to John Barrymore and Goldie Hawn and the sort of artwork they made out of themselves. But there is a difference. Maybe because things can happen to us as personas. But Goldie and John are closed. It's so plain what can happen to them. It's already established because we've seen it. You know what I mean?

Yes.

Antinova could go through all sorts of stressful situations; I mean, it could be playful, it could be funny, it could be all sorts of rich possibilities, depending on the situation I think you have to think about that. That's a real complex issue, that question. I can't answer it, I can only play with it.

Well, it's interesting to have someone else's take on it, because I've questioned several people who I feel either do this type of work or come close to it. And we all basically have the same feelings about it. But another thing I was thinking of was this play you had written where Antinova is a character in the play but she's also plays herself in her own play.

Yes.

And then there's Antinova sitting in one of your performances watching herself in a film done by this other Antinev, this other manifestation. I mean, it's getting so complex!

That fascinates me, I don't know where it's going to go, I love it. It just intrigues me more. Which is one of the pleasures we have because we can be inventive in this way. Now the plays were an interesting problem. In fact, Sun and Moon Press publishes them in their New Theater series as the Eleanor Antinova plays. They include some performance text and these two real plays that I wrote. It's interesting how theater critics react. It was curious, because having written the play, Antinova having the name of Antin, the advance publicity stated "performance artist." All of this I think prejudiced the critics into dealing with it as something other than what they're normally used to. Also, my acting style fits so close to the skin that it didn't look to them like an actor. Maybe if the critics didn't know in advance that I was a performance artist, then they wouldn't think that. I have no idea. But that's what a number of them said, so I don't know how much it was because of the advance decision on those things. I don't know.

Maybe, too, people's perceptions of performance art/artists is that you're a bad actor.

Well, in my case, I'd been an actress once, and when I was doing the acting, I tried to act as well as I could. For some reason, I still can't understand why, I think my responses were not similar to the way the other actress in the Antinova play responded. The critics insisted I was a performance artist acting. For the theater presentation, the live performance section, I wanted my sister to help me because I wanted to be suave. She's an actress and she thinks I did a very good job but thinks I'm still a performance artist. "I don't know what it is," she said, "an actor wouldn't do that." And I still don't know what they mean. I haven't found it out yet. I know I did a good job acting. In fact, the critic from the L.A. Times thought it was a wonderful job. All sorts of people thought I did very well as an actress.

I think maybe they just had a problem with the fact that it wasn't you acting but that it was Antinova.

Oh, yes, that may have been a problem for them, that I didn't act the same way everyday.

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Carmela Rago began performing in 1977 in Chicago at space such as Museum of Contemporary Art, Nancy Lurie Gallery, N.A.M.E., Randolph Street Gallery, West Hubbard, MoMing, Exit, and Artemesia and later throughout the country at such places

as Sushi Gallery, Film in the Cities, The Washington Project for the Arts, P.S. 122, The Cincinatti Institute of Contemporary Art, and The Cleveland Art Institute. She has appeared in Tom Palazollo's films *Caligari's Cure* and *Added Lessons*, and exhibited performance documentation at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, and N.A.M.E. Until 1987, she wrote criticism for The New Art Examiner, was active at N.A.M.E. and Randolph Street Gallery's Board of Directors. In the fall of 1987, she established Carmela Rago Fine Art to sell her writing, and act as an artists' agent and consultant. She is presently represented by Geddes Agency, Chicago, and Norman Epstein, Los Angeles. and pursuing freelance writing for various projects.

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THE X-GIRLFRIENDS is an art collective aiming to refocus public perception of art and to make art more accessible and less institutionalized. For more information: PO Box 3891, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL. 60654.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

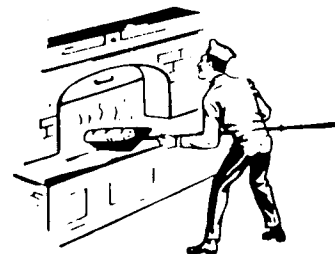
ERRATA: Graphic design credit in P-Form #21 was partially incorrect. **Benjamin Seaman** was actually responsible for pages 12-13 & 18-19; **Steve Marton** deserves applause for his design of pages 16-17.

P-Form wishes to extend a **huge thank you** to the writers and designers who rushed more than we usually demand to meet the surprise deadlines on this issue.

P-Form belatedly welcomes **Jacqueline Disler** and **Lonnette M. Stonitsch** onto its editorial board as of issue #21. Jacqui is active in Chicago poetry circles and the author of *Leopard Radio*; Lonnie is a contributing editor to *EXETER* magazine, co-editor of *ANIMUS ANONYMOUS*, and frequent arts writer. Best wishes to **Iris Moore** on her sabbatical and a big welcome to **Cheryl Bailey** as our Art Director, back from her leave of absence. And a big, appreciative welcome to designer/all-around enthusiastic and swell guy **Michael Thibodeau**.

P-FORM #22 WAS DESIGNED BY:

Cheryl Bailey (pp. 8-11, 26, 27, 30),
Matthew Buckingham (front and back cover),
S. R. Lines (pp. 12 & 13, editor's note),
Nancy Martell (reviews), **Jim Ochsenreiter**
(pp. 16 & 17), **Lonnette M. Stonitsch** (editor's note),
and **Michael Thibodeau** (pp. 8-11, 14, 15 26, 27, 30).



*Home Made Bread
Baked Daily on our Premises*



F___ B___. Sharon Evans made me lie down with a shirt over my head, to calm down. Sharon never lost her head in these infractions. However, Patty and I had also shared the ability (no doubt from growing up with many siblings) to each apologize to the other and let bygones be bygones. I was always impressed by her generosity of spirit, her fiery nature, and raw talent.

Our biggest single act of altruism was a performance extravaganza we mounted in the spring of 1981 to raise money for risers for N.A.M.E. Gallery. We had over 100 performance artists perform for 5 minutes each during a 2 night period. The diversity of artists and their art was wonderful. We raised money for N.A.M.E. and gave a lot of artists exposure.

During my first performance at Randolph Street Gallery in 1980, I found out the night I opened that the gallery directors (there were three of them) neglected to send out any promotional materials at all. In retrospect, what's pathetic is that I took all of this as matter of course. It never really got me down at the time.

Performing anywhere could run into a great deal of money, as one had to rent sound, video or film equipment, chairs, and pay for postage and printing. One could easily spend \$1,000 on a performance, and only receive a \$300 honorarium.

My performances from 1981 through 1987

Why I do it: When I first began doing performance I used to tell people I wanted to expand a concept, to take something no one wanted to think about and force them to think about it.

In the writing of this piece, I suppose I am taking unpopular subjects like burn-out and depression, and conceptually expanding these concepts. One can't just create ceaselessly, and survive easily as an artist. Life is a balance, and the key is finding a personal life that will enrich you and enliven your artistic life, as well as finding a means of livelihood that is enriching and life supporting. I think most creative people (scientists, writers, or artists) have a tendency to burn the candle at both ends, working all night if they must, forgetting food, relationships and sleep in order to complete their work. It took for me a conscious application of my will to put the brakes on my work, and to stop performing in order to find and recreate a personal life.

My best work comes every three or so years, and the time in between is spent letting ideas germinate and mature. Life needs to overlap upon the work, so that the efficacy of artistic concepts can stand the test of reality. For example, over time I am convinced of the reality of Carla Bulgari's insanity and the reality of people like Carla. When I first created her, James Grigsby was disgusted with the character, and told me that no one was like that. After my first (rough!) performance at MoMing, I received calls and letters from men and women who told me they identified with Carla. I was shocked that any man would admit identifying with such

a weak, child-woman. When that happened, I felt I had created something very real. Later, I met a professor at Columbia College who did not recognize me sans wig, makeup, and the Carla wistfulness. She did not expect me to be energetic and happy because she believed the character I had created.

After working so hard, for so long, and after being so unhappy in my livelihood, I was interested in developing more comedic ideas. My work had always had comic threads, so much so that some people laughed at parts of performances which were not intended as funny - they came to my pieces expecting humor. Mere irony often produced guffaws. You figure.

My experiment in outright humor and parody began in 1986, when I performed *People's Revenge*, a performance in which I destroyed Roger Machins's sculpture, *Diminished Seventh* at the Rainbow Club with a Sawzall and a Saber Saw, while telling art stories and auctioning off pieces of the sculpture. Jeff Abell, critic and teacher, told me I had bitten the hand that fed me by spoofing, and knocking the art world. The Rainbow Club was packed. It was a wonder I didn't end up losing an arm or a leg, and there was a definite rawness to the piece. Most of the sculptors who attended the show felt I had insulted sculpture as an art form in particular (by destroying Machin's piece), and that I had dragged down the art world in general. Though it wasn't a beautiful piece, it was great fun to take the risk and to do something bizarre. I enjoyed parodying the high-mindedness of the art world.

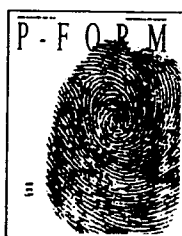
The following year, in a performance triple bill at Daley College, I tried my first series of jokes. There were no props, just me doing stand up comedy. Throughout 1988 and 1989 I performed at the Funny Firm and the Improv (during New Talent Nights), and at The Limelight. It was absolutely terrifying standing in front of a comedy crowd, trying to be funny in thirty seconds or less. It was an amazing exercise, which made me realize why performance art worked so well as a form, for me. Through performance, I could stretch out a funny concept. I didn't need to tell "jokes." I rarely dealt with hecklers as a performance artist. It was humbling to experience the process of bad timing. At that time, I also auditioned for Geddes Talent, and was accepted into their stable of "talent." I began auditioning for commercials. Because I wore braces, I was told to wait until they came off. As long as I wore them, I wouldn't even be *atmosphere* in a McDonald's commercial - yet I could book and do performances anywhere.

I left my job in March of 1987, and moved to Fairfield Iowa where I lived for six months in a little white farm house, raised rabbits, grew flowers, learned and practiced daily the advanced meditation techniques, the Siddhis. It was a lovely community. No one knew me, I knew no one, I thought I might reinvent my life there. Half of the townspeople were meditators and Siddhas, the other half just regular Iowans. The town had the reputation of having the highest income per capita in the nation. Stock brokers, Hollywood producers, inventors, actors, writers, carpenters - all kinds of people lived and worked there. Though I got some freelance jobs, I quickly ran through my savings by that September, and returned home to help my mother sell her house in Evanston. I still needed to find a way to make a living. Iowa was in a great depression/recession, 50,000 people left the state every year. I had no idea that jobs, (even freelance jobs) would be so far and so few between in that state.

Back to Square One

In the time between 1987 and the present, I have been embarked upon an adventure the Hindus call "right livelihood." I sought advice from a Thai monk who said that whatever I do, I wouldn't be happy unless I am teaching and helping others. Art will fall into place. I was desperate to find the right work, having tried everything from working as an extra in films, promotions and in-store modelling, freelance public relations, sales and counselling. I began teaching and counselling, and eventually landed at an outplacement firm as a counselor. One day, a client passed me in the hallway and asked her counselor if that was Carmela Rago. The counselor said yes, and the woman said that I was a performance artist, and she thought I might even be a hand and leg model. Word spread throughout the company quickly, and I was asked to leave the following Monday. I lay on the couch

at home for three days and read *Bonfire of the Vanities*. I decided that my only future was performance art, and teaching. I will be going back to school this fall to pursue a Masters of Fine Arts in performance. I am teaching children art, and have recently married. I am writing again, and feel I have found a peace of mind and deep happiness that comes from knowing what truly pleases me. I really hated performance after awhile because it felt like such a thankless, ridiculous art form. Unfortunately, or fortunately, the die was cast when I first wandered into Tom Jaramba's performance class at SAIC and he said to us that we would be able to *expose ourselves and not get arrested* — (how ironic that sounds now). The die was probably cast long before that, when I told my playmates stories, and was able to move them with a description. Or perhaps the die was cast in fourth grade show and tell, when I told my classmates my dreams instead of bringing toys or curiosities. Perhaps the die was cast when I did a performance/happening my junior year and our french teacher walked out of the auditorium. I was always left of center, yet I always wanted to be "normal." Even as an artist, I wanted to be a normal artist like a painter or a sculptor, I really didn't want to be a performance artist. But that is what I am, and that is what I do best.



These and other riveting back issues of P-FORM are available for \$2.50, checks payable to Randolph Street Gallery, 756 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. Write for a complete list.

Issue 6 Sept/Oct. 1987

Fashion issue: Writings by Barbara Kruger, Sandra Adams, Jeff Abell, Tom Kalin. Art by Buzz Spector. Reviews of Joel Klaff, Theatre X, Lydia Lunch....

Issue 12 Feb./March 1989

Accidents issue: Guest Editor: Steve Lafreniere. Fiction by David Sedaris, Gary Indiana, K. Golland, Dennis Cooper. Considerations of Ping Chong, Guillermo Gomez-Peña. Reviews of HAH, Linda Montano, Iris Moore/Beth Tanner, Blair Thomas, Laurie Macklin. Art by Kay Rosen, The City Moon....



Did you miss out? Selected Back Issues

Issue 14 Summer 1989

Guest editor: Linda Novak. Essays by Nancy Forest-Brown, Robert Daulton, John Malpede interview. Reviews of Karen Finley, Frank Navin, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Pat Oleszko, Circus of a Queer Nature....

Issue 15 Fall 1989

Censorship issue: Writing by Frank Moore. Censorship and Female Identity. Artists' rights rally. Art by Joe Matunis. Reviews of Brigid Murphy, Lynn Book, Chicago Voguers' Ball, Eric Schmidt....

Issue 16 Jan./Feb. 1990

Suzanne Lacy interview. ACT-UP Benefit. Cabaret history by Andy Soma. Poetry by J. McManus. Art by Goat Island. Reviews of Odeon Haunted House, Suzie Silver, Christine Tamblyn/Joanna Frueh, Kathy Hemingway Jones....

Issue 18 Summer 1990

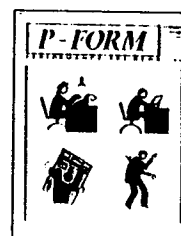
Art and Law issue. AIDS activism. Unauthorized reproductions. Prohibited performance. Dancer Violet Banks' arrest account. Art by The Talent Family. Reviews of Laurie Anderson, Terry Galloway, Elizabeth LeCompte, Cleveland Performance Festival, Miss Ketty's Latin Drag Revue, Beau O'Reilly/Jenny Magnus....

Issue 19 Fall 1990

Namedropping issue. Ellen Fisher interview. Writings by Deborah Hede, James McManus and Frank Moore. Art by P.E.&O. Subvertising, Danielle Probst. Reviews of Sharon Evans, Drieske Performance Co., Sandra Bernhard, letter from Gurlene and Gurette Hussy....

Issue 20 Winter 1991

Performance Text issue. Texts by Doug Grew, Susan Bradford, Joanna Frueh, Beth Tanner, Michael H. Brownstein, Sean, Brendan deVallance, Dominique Dibbell, Jeff Abell. Club Lower Links survey. Reviews of Metamorphosis, Zygmunt Pío Trowski, Alice Rubio, Matthew Owens, Donna Rose, Syeed Milky, Lynn Book, Ishmael Houston-Jones workshop, Dean Ireland, Cazazza/Handelman, Robert Wilson's Alceste.



P-FORM



