A Publication of Political Art Documentation/Distribution

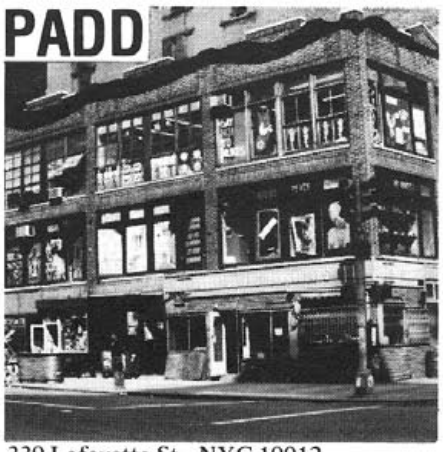
# UPFRONT

Number 6-7 Summer 1983 $2

## LOWER EAST SIDE: PORTAL TO AMERICA


INSIDE

**PADD**



339 Lafayette St., NYC 10012

**Cover: Anton van Dalen, *Real Estate*, wall painting at El Bohio, 1981.**


# UPFRONT

**A Publication of Political Art Documentation/Distribution**

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We welcome letters in response to the issues raised in UPFRONT, and documentation of your actions and exhibitions. Please type double-spaced (with stamped self-addressed envelope if return is necessary) and send to PADD, 339 Lafayette St., NYC 10012; 212-420-8196. Indicate if you want submissions to be kept for the PADD Archive.

**EDITORIAL**

# Five Second Sundays: The Hookups and the Hangups

This double issue of UPFRONT covers 6 months of Second Sunday forums, which are the raw material of most of PADD's public activities this year. Held monthly at Franklin Furnace, they are organized by different groups from within PADD's working membership in an extended workshop format. Each evening focuses on a specific political issue and the culture being made around it. The public event represents the final product, but the process itself is of equal value to the participants.

Part of that process is experimentation with different forms of public presentation. We're trying to get off the panel treadmill and develop lively ways of mixing political dialogue with various art forms, to the point where it's hard to tell where one stops and the other starts. This involves bringing in live music, performance, various kinds of slide shows and discussions. Each evening covered here had a different form, though the conventions still hang us up.

The process continues with the forum's summarization—or re-presentation in print and picture—for UPFRONT. For the record, the February Second Sunday isn't here because it was "For Love and Money"—a celebration of PADD's third birthday with our annual fundraising Valentine's party. And the year should really be seen as a whole, including the two evenings covered in UPFRONT No. 5 ("Hispanic Art from Outrage" and "Who's Teaching What to Whom and Why? Art, Ideology, and Education.") This year's final Sunday, on June 12, will try to formulate an overview of the whole movement for cultural democracy, with guests Arlene Goldbard and Don Adams from San Francisco. It will be covered in UPFRONT No. 8, in the fall.

Networking, of course, is a continuing goal of both the Second Sundays and UPFRONT. We get full houses for our programs but the audience, aside from faithful regulars, differ depending on the subject. Keeping an eye on the audience helps broaden our understanding of the character of the Left cultural community as a whole.

The six subjects covered here reflect the breadth of PADD's program and the extent of the tasks facing us. The forums were on street art and control of public space; the problems of Cuban postrevolutionary photography; the lives of art activists; Native American and Black art resisting oppression; and anti-gentrification. What, then, are the hookups between these subjects?

There are obvious ones, such as the way "Street" leads into anti-gentrification, the way Cuban photography related to our two previous international Hispanic culture nights, the relationship between performance and activism as direct communication. More generally, it's possible to consider all these subjects under the umbrella term of "dialectical engagement." In other words, our goal is to set up an active discourse between audience, artists and community. While we hope to inspire and entertain along the way, we'd like to move beyond the estheticization of social processes, beyond reflection of social contradictions and anger at injustice, towards actually creating the cultural climate for social change. The goal itself constitutes a definition of activist art. It's going to take a while. . . . Hang in there with us.

*UPFRONT* IS THE GREAT COMMUNICATOR OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ART IN NEW YORK AND HOPEFULLY PROVIDES SOME MODELS FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE ARTICLES EVOLVE OUT OF THE PUBLIC FORUMS HELD AT 7:30, THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, AT 112 FRANKLIN ST. (925-4671). EVERYONE IS WELCOME . . . AND TO THE MONTHLY WORK MEETINGS ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 5:00, PADD OFFICE, 339 LAFAYETTE STREET AT BLEECKER (420-8196).

# NOT FOR SALE:
# A Project Against Displacement

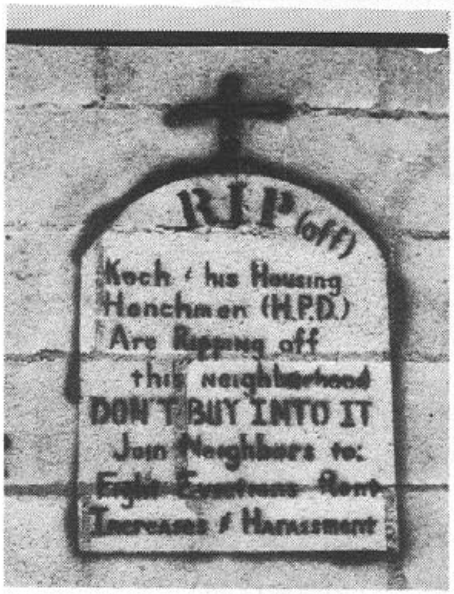

EL BOHIO 605 E 9th ST.

"Artists and other creative people locate in a poor area of town where rents are low. Soon their needs are met by coffee houses, art galleries, organic food instead of processed chemicals, and handcrafted products instead of plastic ones. As a market is developed, corporate capitalism and the consumer society move in. . . ." (William K. Tabb and Larry Sawers, eds., *Marxism and the Metropolis*, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 14.)

"The State Capitalist City is an integral unit of corporate state capitalism. It combines state, metropolitan, municipal, and special district forms of organization into an urban political system governed according to principles of corporate planning. In the process the central city is integrated into a geographically, politically, and economically efficient space economy. . . .

"The State Capitalist City is a top priority on the agenda of the class-conscious wing of monopoly capital." (Richard Child Hill, in *Marxism and the Metropolis*, pp. 230, 232.)

PADD's "Not For Sale" project occurs a time when the art world is more receptive to political art and, simultaneously, when real estate speculators are capitalizing on the expanding Manhattan art community as never before. Assuming that a highly centralized, efficient corporate city is the long-range plan for Manhattan, gentrification can be seen as one of the steps in achieving this goal. In many Manhattan communities, the leading edge of gentrification has been artists (see Michael Anderson's article below). The dynamics of gentrification (the transformation of a neighborhood housing lower income and often non-white residents into one housing residents of middle and upper incomes) casts different social groups in different roles. What relationship, then, do politically conscious artists have to this situation?




**Michael Anderson, *RIPOFF*, street stencil on and around *AHOP* buildings, May 1981.**

For artists, mere awareness of their roles in gentrification is not sufficient. On the one hand, this project attempts to raise consciousness about the issue; on the other hand, it can be seen as another "Off Off West Broadway" encroachment on the Lower East Side community. Aware of these contradictions, we have organized events and exhibits at different locations in the Lower East Side community. Art exhibitions at El Bohio (a former high school become community center on 9th Street between Avenues B & C) and at ABC No Rio (an artist-run space on Rivington Street) will include works by over 50 artists focusing on the experience of gentrification in the area. There will also be documentary slide, film, and video presentations, window installations, street art, and stencils—all at various locations in "Loisaida."

"Not for Sale" will present information to artists and others about how to get involved with community activists, with block and tenant assocations and with community cultural events and demonstrations. This project underscores the difficulty progressive artists face in trying to reach an audience outside the artworld, and to break out of cultural isolation.

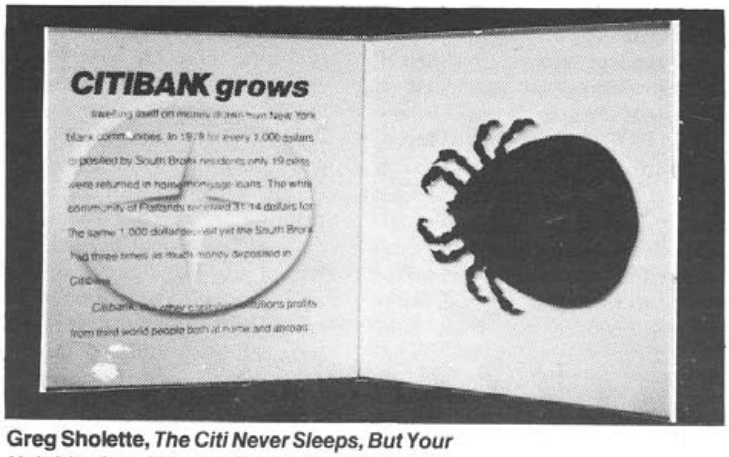
Our concerns in the exhibitions are to make visible the following issues: how gentrification affects all tenants; how displacement of the poor changes the social and cultural life of a community; the issue of artists' housing; and how to organize for a viable community in which people of all incomes and backgrounds can live together. We hope to make June a month of public awareness on housing and social displacement, and, at the very least, to open up a dialogue within PADD and the Lower East Side Community. —J.K. ■

**APARTMENT in lively neighborhood, clean secure building, with friendly landlord, very affordable.**

Rare or impossible in New York City? You bet. And it's getting worse. Real estate speculation is wiping out low-income housing. Hardest hit are the city's poor and elderly, who are being displaced by those willing and able to pay higher rent. The gentrification of many neighborhoods is destroying community and culture. Central to this process are racism, harassment and homelessness.

**NOT FOR SALE Project Committee:** Michael Anderson, Ed Eisenberg, Janet Koenig, Karen Kowles, Greg Sholette, Glenn Stevens, Eileen Whalen, Jody Wright.

*With special thanks to:* Chris Bratten, Dona Ann McAdams, Dan Ochiva, and Vincent Salas.




**Greg Sholette, *The Citi Never Sleeps, But Your Neighborhood May be Put to Rest*, artist's book (made in vacuum-formed plastic and Xerox versions), 1980.**

# NOT FOR SALE

# AHOP: The First Battle

## By Michael Anderson

The defeat of the Artist Homeownership Project (AHOP) was a major event for artists and the art world in New York City this year. This project was presented to the city by Mayor Koch's administration via the Housing Preservation and Development Department (HPD). It specifically proposed to create 117 live-in work units for artists in existing tenements on the Lower East Side. In the political course necessary for its approval, pro-AHOP artists were pitted against other artists and the community. The opposition charged that the project would cause irreparable damage to the multi-ethnic Lower East Side by speeding the process of rising property values, increased real estate speculation, and the subsequent displacement of poor and minority residents—the process commonly known as gentrification.

An important dialogue began about artists' needs and the relationship of these needs to those of the community. What came to pass was an unexpectedly progressive scenario in which artists had to present themselves, their needs, and their work to the community for legitimation. Pro-AHOP groups were convincing but one-sided in their articulation of the special needs of artists. The anti-AHOP forces were trying to make the opposition and the Board see artists' needs in the context of the Lower East Side community, a community already battling speculation and displacement.

Some pro-AHOP artists suggested that they themselves were victims of real estate speculation and displacement from Soho and Tribeca and that they would work sympathetically with the LES community to fight gentrification. Despite their sincerity, there is no question that artists moving into the neighborhood would be a factor in the displacement of countless residents. Plans were even being made to destroy much-needed apartments to provide loft-like open spaces in areas where empty commercial spaces would have served the same purpose.

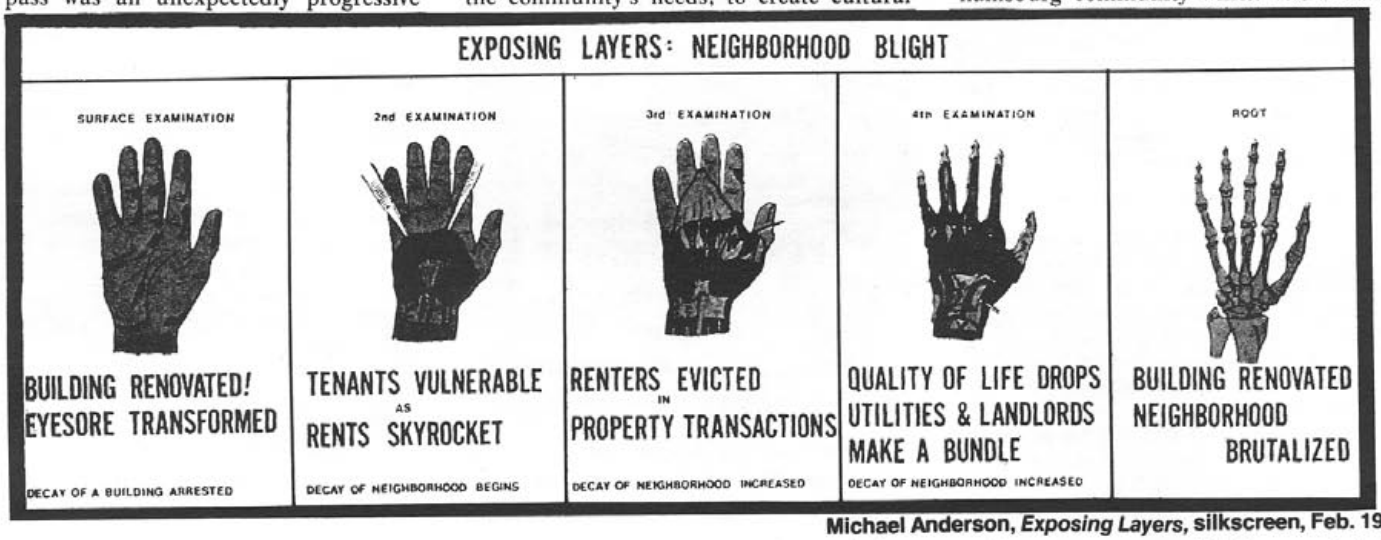
One issue repeatedly raised was that artists have a special need for a studio/work area in addition to a living area. Taken alone, this is a perfectly reasonable and legitimate argument, but in the context of a city where space is at a premium, where there is an acute housing shortage and there are 36,000 homeless walking the streets, it hardly offers a clear perception of the whole issue. Space is a commodity and the ability or non-ability to secure it divides artists into socio-economic classes. At this time, in this city, the ability to make monumental artwork begins to imply conspicuous consumption.

The fallacy of the AHOP is that artists have special *housing* needs where in fact they have a special need for *work space*. An alternative has been proposed by the opponents of AHOP which addresses the separate work space and housing needs. The idea is to reorganize art resources to meet the community's needs, to create cultural centers in vacant school buildings or industrial buildings not slated for future use. At this time there are four such buildings on the Lower East Side. Under this proposal, studios would be made available to artists living in the community for a reasonable or subsidized rental. Ideally the centers would be fully outfitted with carpentry workshops, printing presses, darkrooms and other specialized equipment needed for the production of art. The city would benefit from the skill-generating education made available to community residents through workshops provided by members of the cultural center. Consolidation of artists' work spaces into one building (possibly including community organizations) and assurance through by-laws of an adequate racial and cultural cross-section of the community offer a community-based answer to artists' needs which is non-gentrifying and beneficial to the neighborhood as a whole.

In the interim, it is important for artists to become aware of their role in the process of gentrification. There is still a split between artists and the community. In the AHOP proposal, the city picked up on what community housing activists and real estate speculators already knew—that on the coattails of the artist come the developers of luxury co-ops, inflated property values and displacement of poor and minority residents. Everyone seems to be aware that after the planned deterioration, the first sign that the neighborhood is swinging toward development is the influx of artists. Artists also tend to be more visible members of a community. The nature of art is to be public in some form. Even the most hermetic artists have a marked impact on their environment, so, when artists isolate themselves from a neighborhood, there is a tendency for the isolation to be more visible. The All Fools Day art show in Brooklyn was picketed by the Williamsburg community which felt that the artists were unaware of their own role in the community's struggle against gentrification.

The issue is larger than just artists. Artists are being manipulated by the forces of capital in the city. The problem ultimately rests on the free rein given to owners of private property and their knack for joining forces with each other, with politicians and with banks to dictate the terms of housing in this city. Yet artists should not feel helpless. Our role at this time is not only to support the cultural center alternative but to forge alliances between our communities and artists in the struggle to maintain our lives and cultures. The arts must be seen as a valuable resource and tool in the fight against gentrification and displacement.

**BULLETIN: The AHOP has been resurrected in Red Hook, Brooklyn.**




**Michael Anderson, *Exposing Layers*, silkscreen, Feb. 1982.**

# What Are The Answers?

Photo: George Watkins

1. People gather outside the building at 643 East 9th Street to:
   (a) watch a street performance
   (b) buy the latest issue of UPFRONT
   (c) prevent the HPD from entering the building

Photo: George Watkins

2. These police officers are:
   (a) demonstrating for higher pay
   (b) helping the HPD enter a building
   (c) confiscating the latest issue of UPFRONT

Photo: George Watkins

3. The man on the right is smiling because:
   (a) he has just become the new owner of an abandoned building
   (b) he just won at Wingo
   (c) he can proceed to evict homesteaders

Photo: George Watkins

4. This man is arrested for:
   (a) loitering
   (b) trespassing
   (c) homesteading

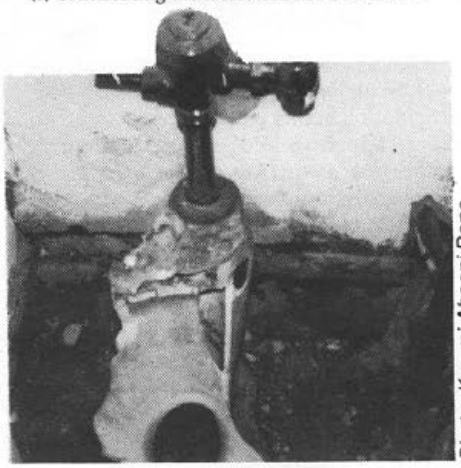


Photo: Kwami Absani Bona

5. Who smashed these toilets:
   (a) the HPD
   (b) careless plumbers
   (c) vandals

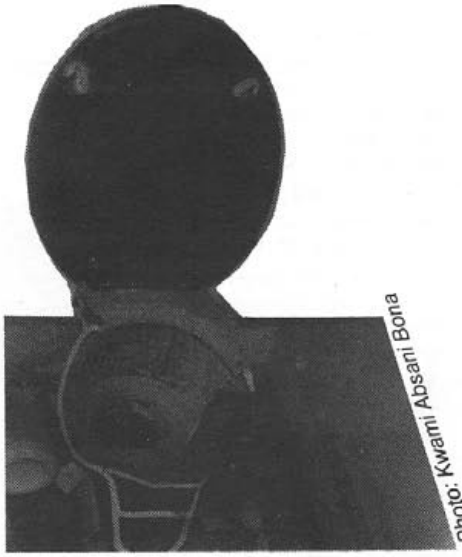


Photo: Kwami Absani Bona

"The pressure of gentrification, especially west of Avenue A, combined with the loss of housing units through disinvestment and abandonment east of Avenue A in the past, has caused a rapid dispersal of this Hispanic community. The trend is likely to continue because the price of new market-rate housing coming on line precludes their reentry into the East Village's housing market. This shrinkage will also be reinforced by the slowdown of further commitments of subsidized housing by the Federal government. . . .

Because of the large number of abandoned buildings and vacant lots, developers will enjoy greater operating freedom to produce new and rehabilitated market-rate housing. As a result, there is likely to be greater long term return on investment for the Loisaida section of the East Village." (From "An Analysis of Investment Opportunities in the East Village," prepared for American Oreo Inc. by Oreo Construction Service Inc., September 1981.)

Since 1979, the homesteaders of 643 East 9th Street (including a PADD member, Jody Wright) worked to maintain and upgrade their building which the landlord had abandoned. They forced out the junkies, prevented arson, plastered and painted, put in new windows and a cold water riser as well as many other repairs. Currently they are involved in litigation with the city to stop their eviction and to preserve their building as viable housing for racially integrated and low-to-moderate income tenants. As these photos show, they are struggling against ongoing harassment by the HPD (Housing, Preservation and Development Department of New York City).

## ANSWERS

1(c) On February 24, 1983, tenants and community people tried to prevent the HPD from entering 643 East 9th Street for the purpose of sealing up 6 out of 8 apartments.

2(b) A special police force arrived in order to aid the HPD to enter the building and carry out its evictions and apartment closures.

3(c) The man on the right is Deputy Commissioner of Consolidation Kulkin who entered the building without a legal warrant after promising not to damage the apartments he was sealing up.

4(b & c) This man is arrested for criminal trespass because the HPD no longer recognized him as a legal tenant even though he had been a homesteader in the building for more than 6 months.

5(a) Broken toilets, broken promises. The HPD also removed and destroyed stoves, refrigerators, bathtubs, sinks and doors from the 6 apartments in order to render them uninhabitable.

# STREET:

Diane Neumaier, Julie Spriggs, Miriam Brofsky, Eva Cockcroft, Jerry Kearns, and Lucy Lippard met almost weekly during September, October, and November to investigate the visual imagery of the streets. The ideas came from several directions, as suits an image brawl—from the increasingly weird ideological mix of downtown street art; from analysis of the corporate culture imposed on every neighborhood; from the street stencil projects executed around the June 12 march; from models around the world for "correcting" corporate messages (especially those in Seattle, which is becoming corporate correcting capital of the U.S.), and those of BUGA UP in Australia, which has achieved some amazing revisions of cigarette and alcohol ads; BUGA UP stands for Billboards Utilizing Graffitists Against Unhealthy Promotions. We read and discussed, among others, the theories of Raymond Williams about residual, dominant, and emergent culture, and of Amilcar Cabral about the pre-revolutionary role of resistant culture.

These discussions led to more defined interests and approaches. Julie and Diane began to research with their cameras the corporate visual domination of public space, Julie exposing the legal/ideological techniques employed for private control of the public domain and Diane revealing consumer advertising methods and the guerrilla graffiti responses. Miriam and Eva surveyed street painting and featured interviews with several individual artists. Lucy and Jerry readdressed many of these issues in more experimental form in a slide/performance about social interactions on the street.

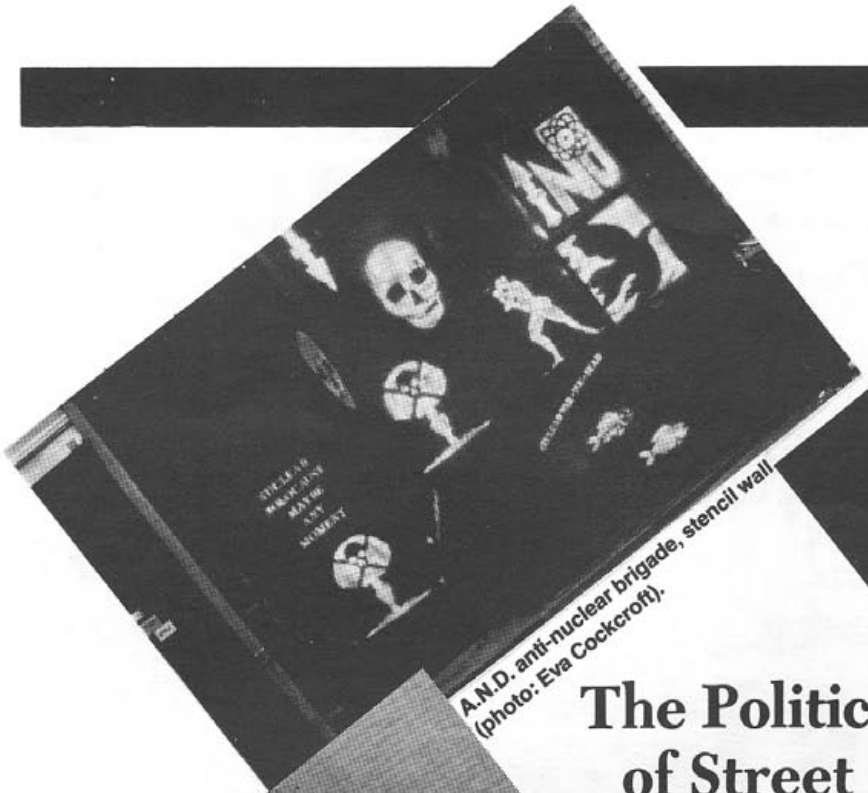
During those four months we all observed the streets more acutely than we had before and we all took pictures. We questioned, clarified, disagreed with and re-organized each others' findings in an effort to understand, participate and encourage resistance/participation in this public arena. We found that a supportive and critical community can provide a working situation in which radical analysis and practical activist strategies develop more efficiently and in different directions than they would evolve in isolation.

Anti-WW3 (San Francisco Poster Brigade), New York City, 1981 (photo: Jerry Kearns).

The relationship between dominant and oppositional images occupying the New York streets was always at the center of our investigations. We tried to analyze the cultural warfare taking place there in terms of history and class context (the corporate billboard invasion of poor neighborhoods and its use as social control; the zoning of the city itself as a symptom of class conflict). We scrutinized the ways different groups of people fought back, from the addition of words to the mutilation of faces. We looked at the images in the street as orders, as persuasion, as communication, as individual rage or self-identification. We talked about how as artists we found ourselves "between cultures" and discussed the relationships of urban "non-art" images to their uses in the art world.

The theme song of the December evening was Grand Master Flash's heavy rapsong—"The Message".

Lower East Side, New York City, (photo: Jerry Kearns).

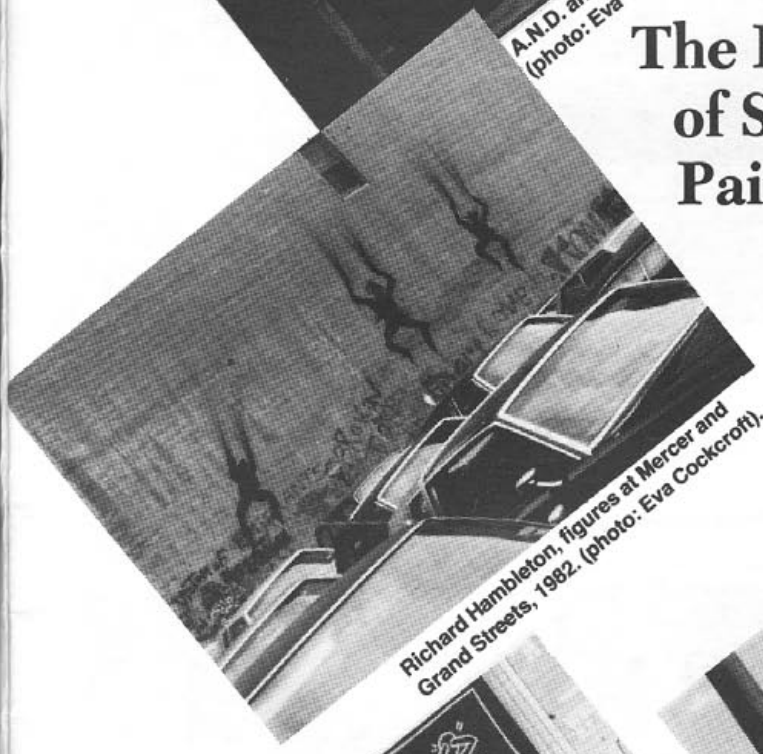


A.N.D. anti-nuclear brigade, stencil wall (photo: Eva Cockcroft).

David Wojnarowicz, street stencil on abandoned car (photo: the artist).

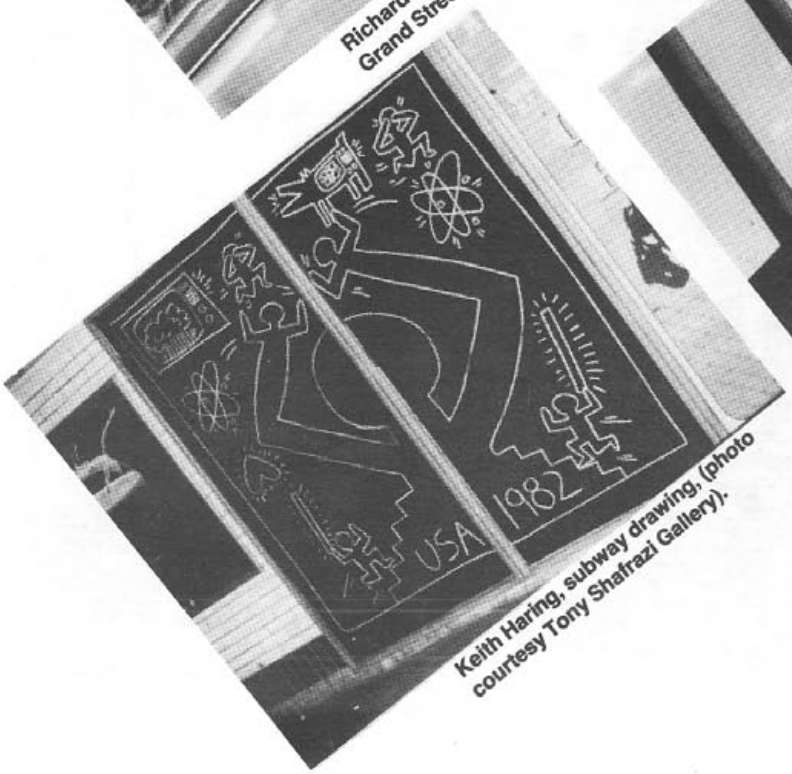
# The Politics of Street Painting

**By Miriam Brofsky and Eva Cockcroft**



Richard Hambleton, figures at Mercer and Grand Streets, 1982. (photo: Eva Cockcroft).


John Fekner, Decay, from Queensites stencil series, 1980-81.(photo: the artist).




Keith Haring, subway drawing, (photo courtesy Tony Shafrazi Gallery).

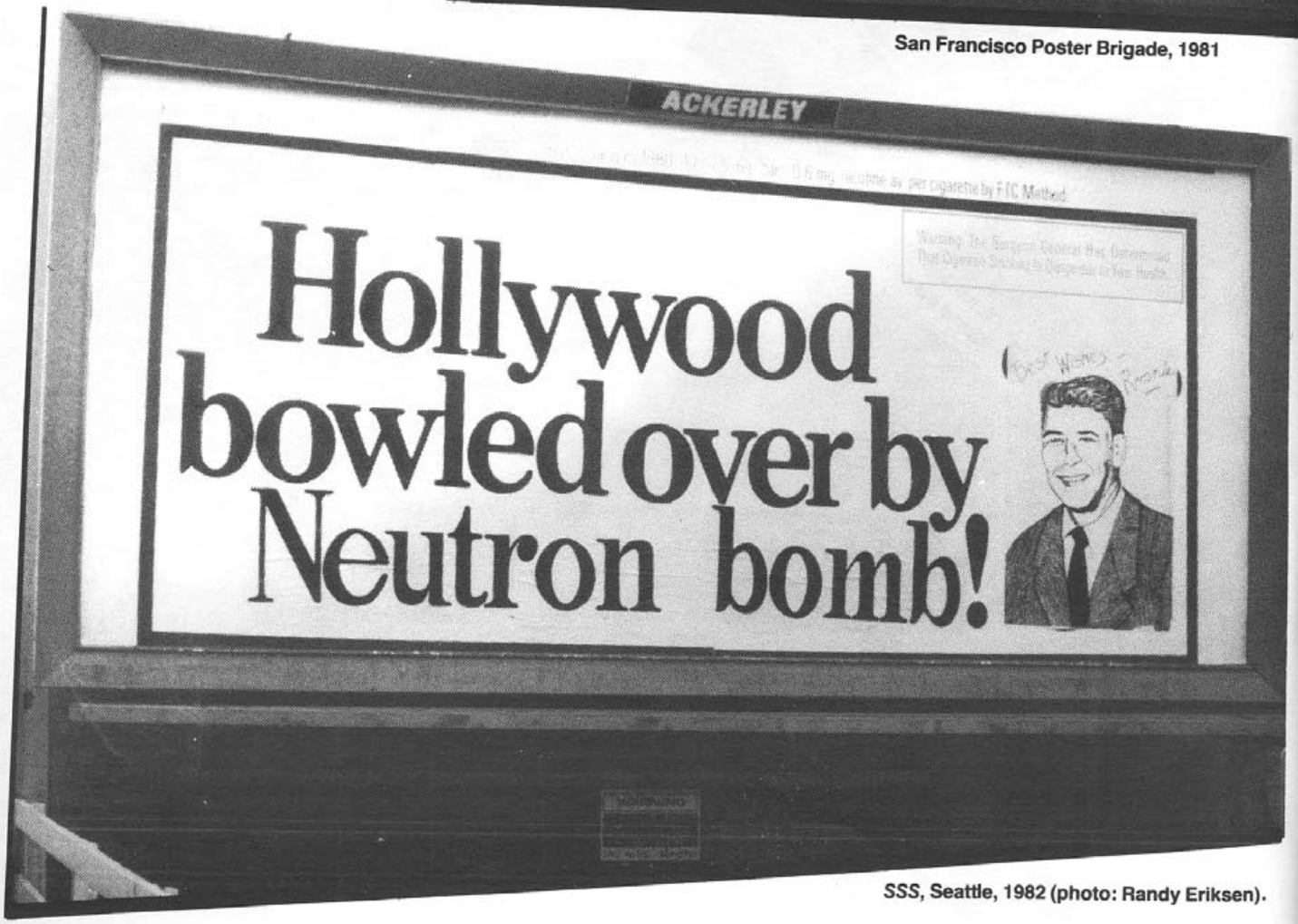
On the street, no matter what the artist's intentions, the image is what people perceive it as. There are no mediators, no critics, no guards, and criticism can be direct and brutal. Intentional or not, everything put in the public space out on the city streets makes a political statement whether it is decorating the status quo or attempting to change society. (*excerpt from "The Politics of Street Painting,"* Art & Artists, *Feb. 1983*)

# STREET
# "COWBOYS AND GUERRILLAS"

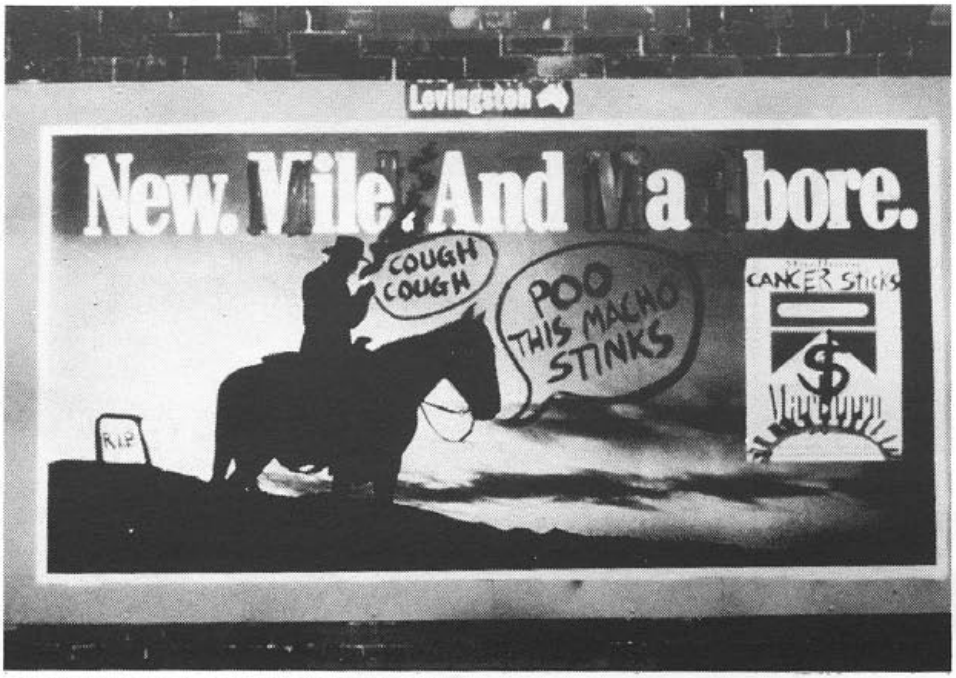
**By Jerry Kearns, Lucy Lippard and Diane Neumaier**

Since cigarette advertising was banned on television and radio, tobacco companies have been making extensive use of magazines, newspapers, and the much less expensive billboards. These billboard cigarette ads have become the arena for organized graffiti retaliation. The San Francisco Poster Brigade appropriated and revised Carleton's version of this U.S. Gov't Report. SSS in Seattle appropriated Kent III taste, and BUGA UP in Sydney, Australia, appropriately appropriated the American cowboy image of advertising's self-proclaimed "most successful campaign". —D.N.


San Francisco Poster Brigade, 1981




*SSS*, Seattle, 1982 (photo: Randy Eriksen).




**BUGA UP, Sydney, Australia (photo: BUGA UP).**

Have you noticed how in midtown Manhattan there's not much graffiti? Maybe that's because the people there are reinforced by and agree with the image of themselves created by the culture machine. The reassuring stability of the *New York Times* layout is reflected in nice clean skyscrapers and red carpets and doormen and fur coats. Money places a velvet rope between you and violence. In the ghetto, the people who read the tabloids live lives embedded in the violence and fear of violence exploited in the chaos of the *NY Post*'s layouts. The two shot down were Allen Boys. Some of us talk a lot about operating in that overrated gap between art and life. The Allen Street Boys found themselves going for death.

The headlines say it's happenin' out there, *way* out there—in Loisaida. in Harlem and in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Happenin' far away, but comin' at you. It's called distancing. You've heard of Brecht? If you're not afraid you're stoned, if you're not stoned, you're afraid...It's called destabilization. It's called deliberalization. It's painless. It's called destabilization. It just takes time. It's painful. Who's ripping who off? If you let me write on your walls, will I let you write on mine?

—J.K./L.L.


**Lee Quinones, Allen Boys, mural on Allen Street, New York City, commissioned by the Allen Street Boys (photo: Jerry Kearns).**


The street: *A public thoroughfare together with the adjacent buildings, the street wall—which are privately owned.*

BUT

People assert the private as public. The state legislates: Penal Law of New York State: Posting of Bills: *A person is guilty of unlawfully posting advertisements when, having no right to do so nor any reasonable ground to believe that he has such a right, he posts, paints or otherwise affixes to the property of another person any advertisements, poster, notice or other matter, designed to benefit a person other than the owner of property.*

# THE STREET = PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

*excerpts from the slide presentation*

## By Julie Spriggs

This is a gate on Wall Street: More private property secured. Below, an outline of a couple dancing, painted on the street for Hiroshima Day 1982—echoing the shadows of people left when the bomb exploded in 1945. That was "national security"? Private property ultimately secured?

**Does the history of private property end with the nuclear bomb?**

## I. PRIVATE PROPERTY: A SHORT HISTORY

John Locke: *As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates and can use the product of, so much is his property. He, by his labour, does enclose it from the common.*

Private property: *Such property which belongs absolutely to an individual and of which he has the exclusive right of disposition and is protected from being taken for public uses.*

As land becomes valuable, boundaries become aggressive and enforced by implied violence. The statue of a knight guards the apartments which surround Gramercy Park, the locked private park in the center of Manhattan. You could say he's a quaint vestige but he also denotes both coercion and class: he stands outside protecting the property of his superiors indoors.

Private property extends itself. Look at Proposition 13—the accumulation of property with less responsibility to the community. And James Watt turns public lands into private profit.

Private property's duties lessen and its sphere grows large. The knight may be vestigial but the state in legislation backs his stance. The image brawl signals something deeper: a land control fight.

## II. THE PUBLIC DOMAIN: GROUND ZERO

**Look at the sidewalk:** the public part of the street. Or the property of the state?


**1** Public land is lent to Con Ed. It had a large net profit last year.

**2** The Lotto poster on the lamppost is one of the few public notices distributed by the state. The state's message: You can be a multi-millionaire too—America's extreme extension of private property. The state divides the community.

**3** But people reclaim the state's land. Ground zero is a public notice that creates community.

**III.** That's the set-up. Here's an example: Park Avenue Plaza. Its developers advertise it:

## GREAT STRUCTURES MAKE GREAT STATEMENTS


In exchange for providing public space, a 'street' through the lobby, the developers got a zoning variance. They were allowed to build over the regulated height which allows for air and light to reach the street. They got an extra 78,000 square feet, rentable at $55 per square foot. That's $4,290,000 extra in rent per year.

**Examine the public space:** a new type of street created by the state in 'negotiation' with private fiscal desire.

**1** The space designated as public which got the developer his bonus (read booty) he now rents out for more profit—to a restaurant where the average tab is over $10 a lunch. Which 'public' is this for?

**2** Security guards.

**3** The gold sign reads: THIS BUILDING IS UNDER CONSTANT VIDEO SURVEILLANCE. The cameras are perched in the trees.

**4** A public space used to be dedicated to familiar public figures. Now the anonymous Fisher Brothers claim their public space, but unlike the graffitist who asserts the personal against the monolithic placing their tag on top of property, the Fisher Brothers have workmen carve theirs comfortably into the stone.
GREAT STRUCTURES MAKE GREAT STATEMENTS ABOUT STRUCTURE.

John Zucotti said of the city planning process: "It wasn't neat. But in fact the process worked. The project eventually was approved." John Zucotti is the former chairman of the City Planning Commission—now he's a partner in a law firm that negotiates with that commission for developers. He was also the finance chairman of Mayor Koch's gubernatorial campaign. He's a FUNNEL.

The state and private sector wealth intertwine in the destruction of public terrain.

## IV.

So—it's about corporate invasion.
Invasion: *to enter as if to take possession, to encroach or infringe upon; to penetrate; spread into or over.*

There are choices about how to connect what is private with the public thus creating a public terrain or negating it. Messages like RENT STRIKE sent from stranger to stranger, unmediated by a corporate body, create community. The street becomes a channel of public cohesion opposing private property's vision of the public as a suspect appendage onto which the private steadily encroaches, subsuming it, until there is no space left for those...without private property.



*New York Times, Oct. 31, 1982*

**Here are two windows. One's a fantasy offered up by the developers. The other one, we control.**

"It has become a fight to autonomously assemble, to spontaneously discuss...in short, to be a public person, to create a public sphere, and to form a body politic against entrenched power and bureaucratic surveillance.

"Without our 'freedom for' a public terrain, the phrase 'body politic' becomes a mere metaphor; it has...no voices, no faces, and no passions.

"We must recover the terrain necessary for the personification and the formation of a body politic."

—Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, 1982, pp. 335-336.


*All People's Garden, East 3rd Street*

*Photographs by Julie Spriggs*

# OUT OF THE DARKROOM:

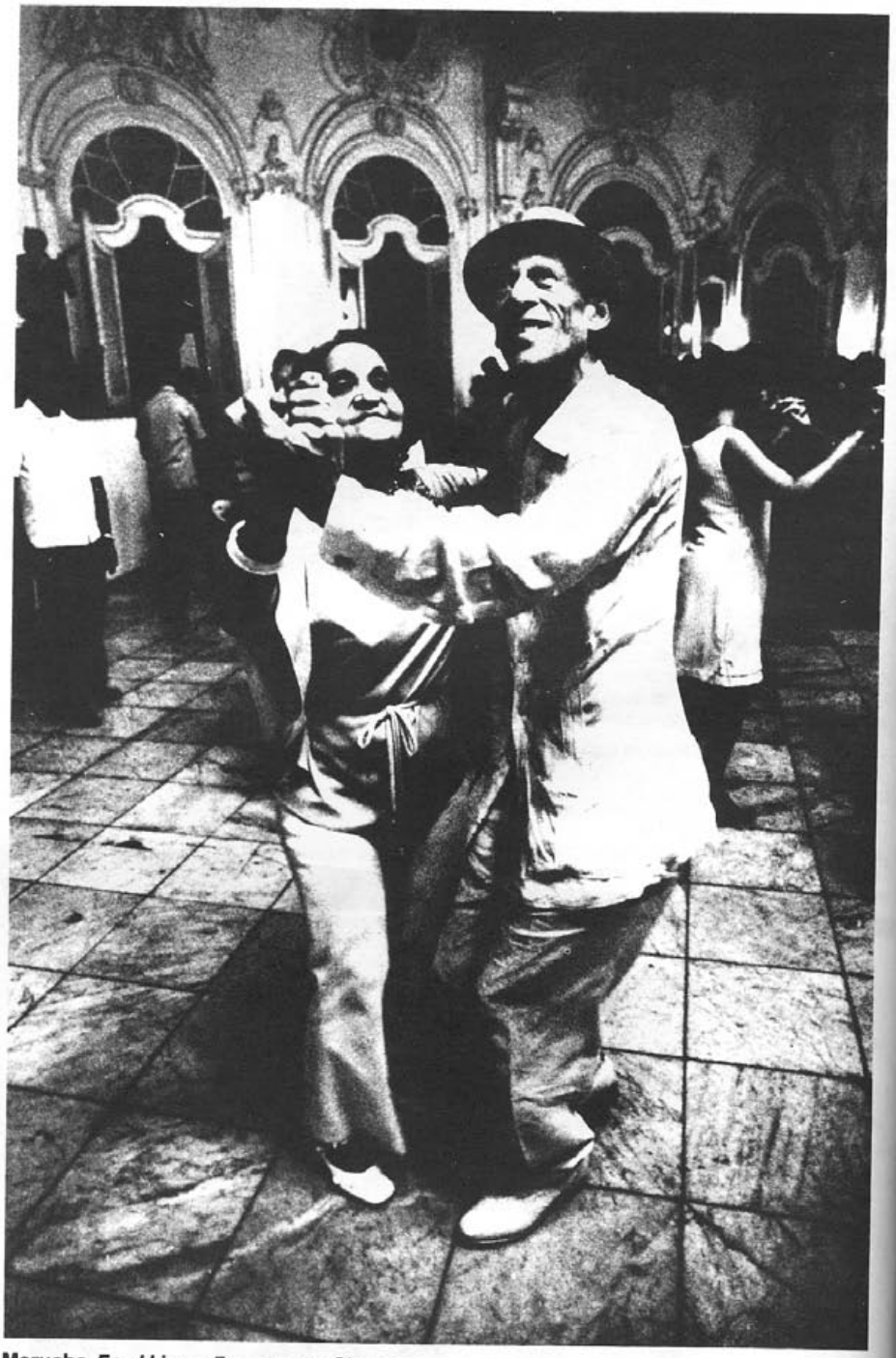
Three Cuban photographers visiting the U.S. (Raul Martinez, Marucha, and Mayito) had planned to speak about problems of post-revolutionary photography in Cuba at the January Second Sunday. Two days before, we were told that their arrival had been delayed. It was too late to cancel or change the event, so we had to improvise. They say that necessity is the mother of invention and sometimes leads to new or better things.

PADD member Eva Cockcroft, the prime organizer of this Second Sunday, was fortunately also the organizer of the retrospective exhibition of Cuban photography and posters being held at the Westbeth Gallery in conjunction with the Center for Cuban Studies.* She was able to speak about the slides PADD had taken, and in a hectic two days, other New York photographers with knowledge of Latin American photography who had visited Cuba were pressed into service as discussion leaders.

Mel Rosenthal, a documentary photographer who has done photographic studies in Puerto Rico and the South Bronx and visited both Cuba and Nicaragua, was the moderator. Other panelists were Susan Meiselas, a photojournalist best known for her photos of the Nicaraguan revolution; Tony Velez, a Puerto Rican photographer and teacher at Queens College; and Eva Cockcroft, muralist, writer and activist.

But it was the quality of the audience that was most impressive since it included numerous photographers and authorities on photography—among them, Max Kozloff, photographer and critic; Fred Ritchen, editor of *Camera Arts* magazine; and Walter Rosenblum, documentary photographer and teacher. In addition, many others in the audience had visited Cuba and could make informed contributions. Several PADD members had read the comprehensive article by Esther Parada in *Afterimage* (Dec. 1982) reviewing the history of Cuban photography and the conference and related exhibitions held in Havana in July 1982.

The usual questions about censorship and propaganda were discussed, but the dialogue became really interesting when it focused on

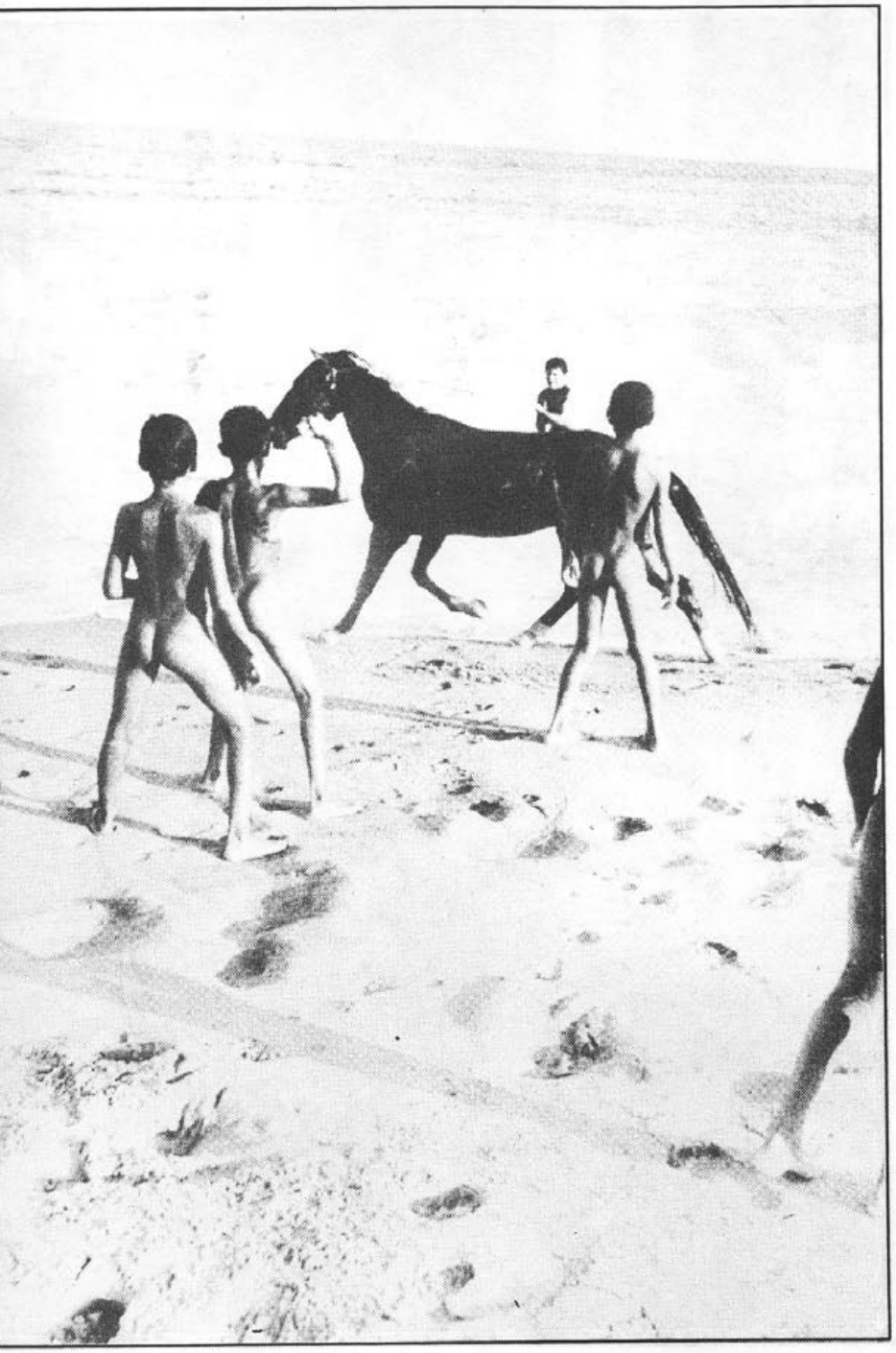


**Marucha, *En el Liceo: Esperanza y Chenaro.***

NOTE

The exhibitions, Cuban Photography: 1959-1982 and Cuban Poster Art: 1959-1982, were held at Westbeth Gallery from January 16-February 9, 1983, and were sponsored by the Center for Cuban Studies, 220 East 23rd Street, New York, New York 10010, (212) 685-9038. The exhibitions, which contain 100 photos and more than 150 posters, will be available to travel separately or together to other locations in the U.S. throughout 1983-84. For information, contact the Center for Cuban Studies.

# Cuban Photography Now



. Alberto Figueroa, El Juego.

the relationship between reality and representation (as in the images of heroes) that was prevalent in much of the work. This led to a discussion of whether these photos provided a portrait of Cuba—and whether that was the aim of the exhibition. Sparks really began to fly over the question of quality, of the preponderance of frontal images and people smiling at the camera, and the question of whether Cuban still photography was adequate to its mandate from the Revolution.

Eventually, the Cuban artists arrived in New York and PADD members and other interested artists had several opportunities to talk with them. But oddly enough, the Second Sunday discussion of Cuban photography seemed to benefit from the absence of the Cubans, from the lack of any "authority" to question or attack. Some excerpts from the discussion follow. —E.C.

**Mel Rosenthal**: Mayito and Marucha, in writing about their photography, both say that the question of censorship as it is put in the U.S. is strange to them. They identify so strongly with the Revolution and they consider the government to be a representative of that Revolution. That is, the difference between their attitude and ours is partly the result of very different conditions for artists in Cuba and here, since U.S. artists find themselves in an oppositional position.

**Rudolf Baranik**: I would like to refer to the question of freedom of expression *vis à vis* revolutionary fervor. When I was in Cuba recently, I wound up almost by accident at the photographers' conference at the Havana Libre. From the discussions, I found out that freedom of expression there is almost total. This photojournalist stood up and he said very openly that photojournalism is more alive, more pertinent, even when it is not ideologically for the revolution—and there was applause.

**Max Kozloff**: Now, I was struck by the rhetorical level in the selection of images we were shown tonight, and I was wondering how to talk about that. It seemed, oddly enough, that there was a landscape of the past and an environment of the future which was being alluded to quite often, even though all the figures that we saw were in the present of that particular photographic moment. So that Ivan Cañas' old veterans or Marucha's women and men in the Liceo were inhabiting the urban ruins, as it were, of the faded and corrupt grandeur of the past. Whereas the repeated upscale images of the flag, and icons of the heroes, though drawn from the historical past, alluded to the possibility of Cuba emerging into a more progressive future. I frankly liked the more nostalgic, seedy downbeat environment of the

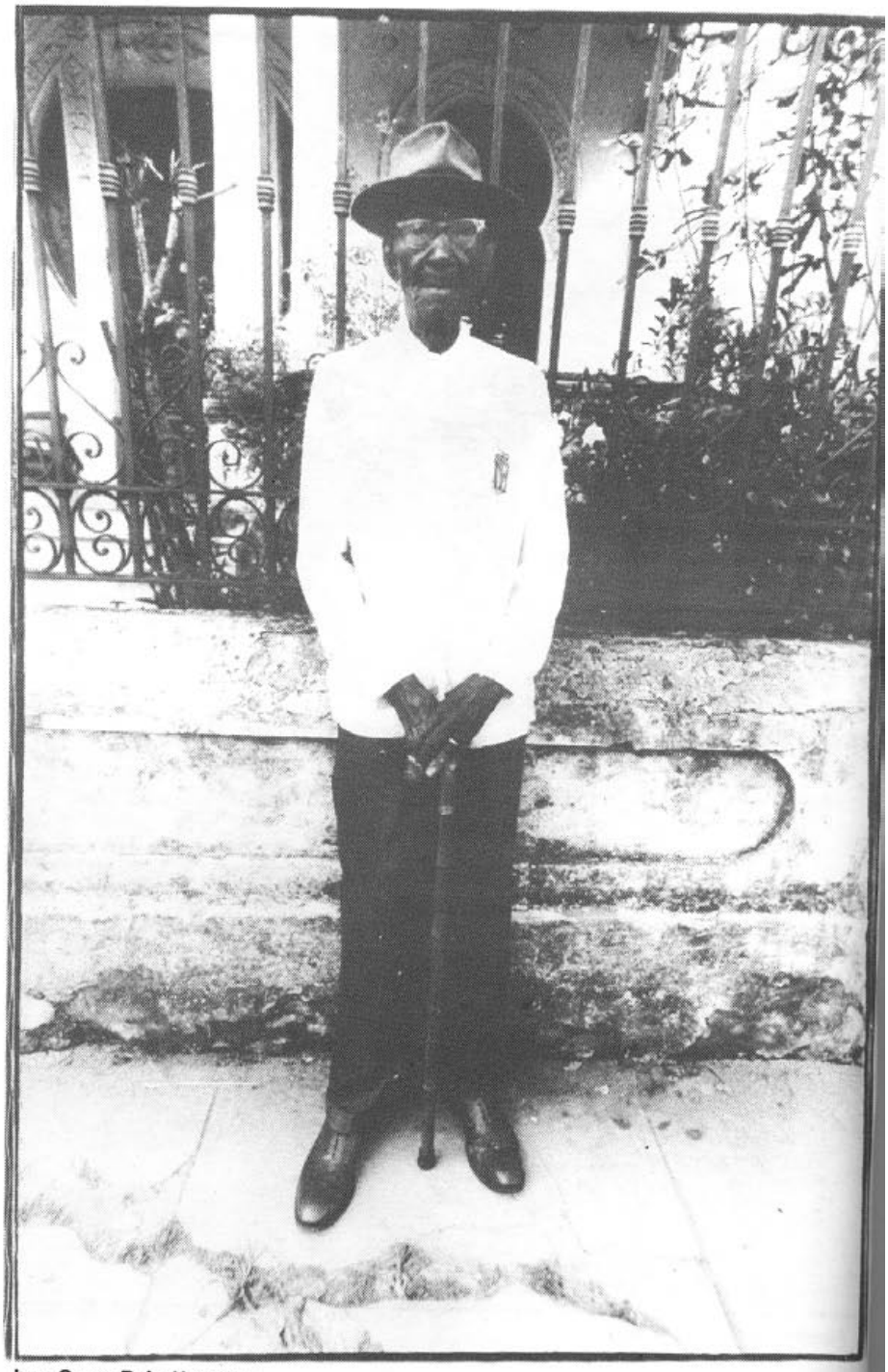
past where people are finding their way, sometimes with a kind of sensual abandon as in Marucha's work, and conversely Cañas' old men demoralized, faded, weary, about to sink into the earth, as if that were a comment on a past not to be repeated.

**Fred Ritchen**: These pictures are not stated to be about Cuba. It is not a portrait of a country, it's 15 or 20 photographers' individual visions. If you were taking a portrait of New York City and everyone was smiling, you'd say, "Where is the bad side?" If you saw Cuba and everything was perfect—no society now is perfect—you'd ask, "Where is the other side of it?" Then you're left dealing with these photographers' individual visions, which is both of the subject and of the photographer. Photography is always about what you're photographing and about yourself.

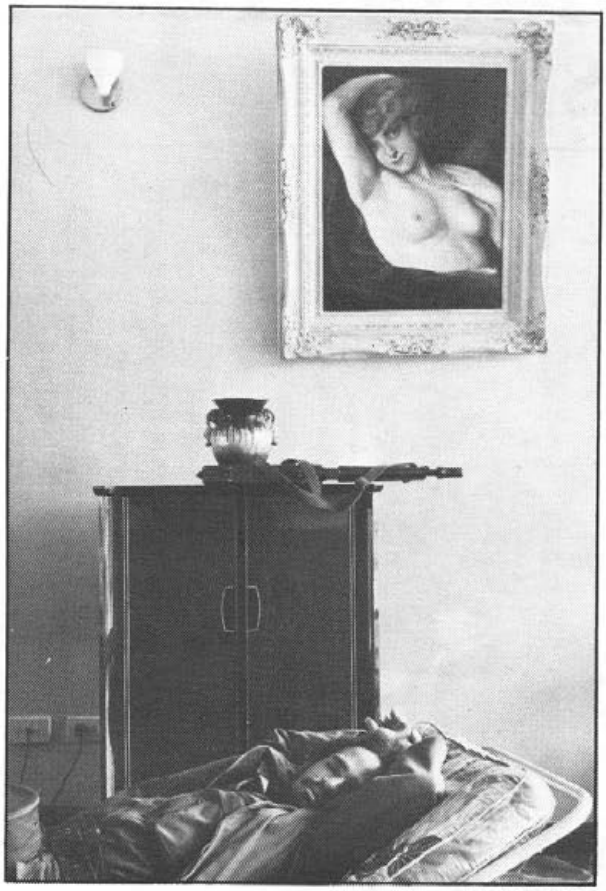
It becomes a question of what vision do these people have. Are these world-class artists who stand up to Mexican artists, Indian artists, North American artists in this country? If you did a show and wanted to present a picture of the '30s, you wouldn't show 20 Walker Evans, and 20 of someone else. You would pick individual images by whatever photographers. So, I have to question what was the intent of the show—to show a vision of socialism, of censorship, or life under Castro, or of the individual visions of the Cuban photographers?

**Eva Cockcroft**: The intent of the show was to show photography since the Revolution, not to present a portrait of Cuba.

**Walter Rosenblum**: I'm sure that most of us would agree that the Cuban Revolution is one of the most meaningful and exciting events of our time. What disturbs me is that the photography we've seen does not really meet the needs of the Revolution and does not really come up to the standards of what has been accomplished socially. This is particularly true of still photography because if you look at motion pictures, certainly the Cuban motion picture is on a par with the Cuban Revolution. . . The question is, why is Cuban still photography so lacking in a sense, because as the gentleman pointed out, a lot of it consists of people looking into the camera smiling—things which have been forgotten in photography for a long time. The question is, why does that happen now? Is it because there is a lack of historical overview in Cuban photography now? Is it because they have missed the fact that photography has been in existence for 160 or 170 years, and have very little knowledge or background?



Ivan Canas Boix, *Veterano*.



Raul Corrales

**Susan Meiselas**: I'd like to get to one of the questions that has been raised about whether a photographer is a realist or a critical realist. I think we're both. We make documents and yet we're selective about reality. Just to begin with, I was trying to think about the work of one photographer and see what he was trying to say as image-maker or as speaker for the Revolution. Figueroa has an image of some young boys nude on the beach with a black horse. I don't know what it says about the revolution, or what's in his mind, but to me, it is very original. You speak about a lack of originality in Cuban photography—it is just as original as anything I've seen in New York for the last few years.

Juxtaposed to that—the next one by Figueroa is a motorcycle or bicycle with a man standing by it in a classical, very traditional style, what we've seen for whatever number of years. I don't think the Museum of Modern Art would have had three major exhibits of Atget if they thought frontal photography was, by its very nature, boring. So, I think that we need to look into the image. It's not just about the structural relationship of the photographer to the subject, it's also the subject. That photograph of the man and the bicycle is looking at Cuba and what Cuba is today. It says something about being in Cuba in the same way that a similar photo taken on the Lower East Side says something about that situation. □

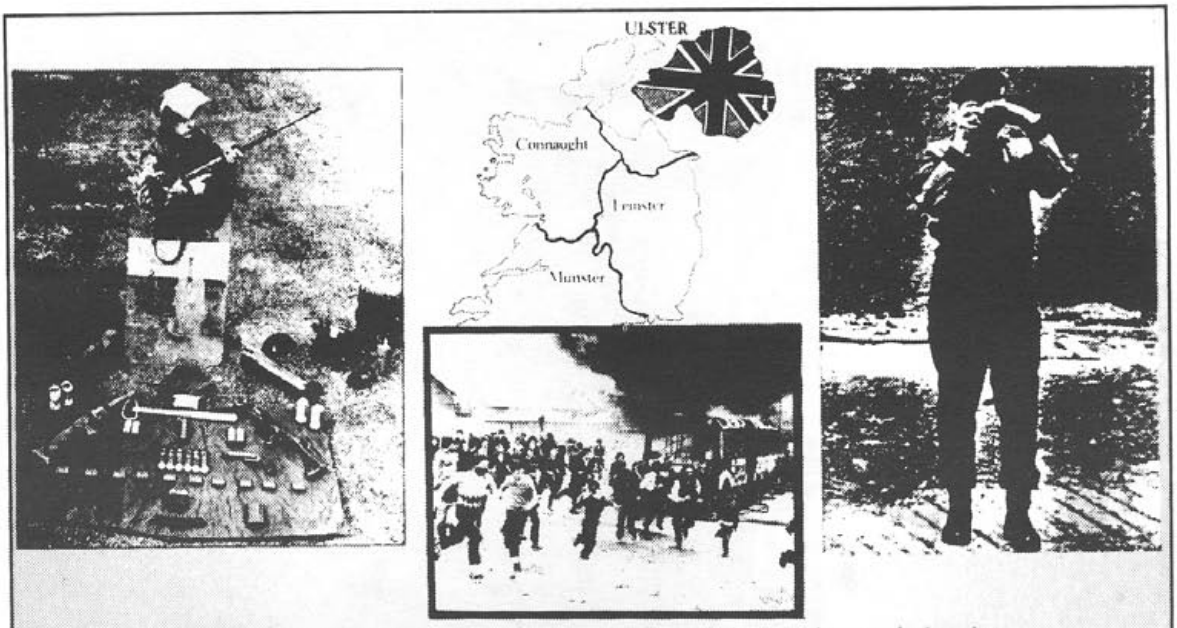

Mayito - *El Mejor Homenaje*

# PADD
# INTERNATIONAL POSTER MODERNISM


**Barbara Hall and Jan McKay (based on painting by Emily Osborne), silkscreen poster for Women's Art Registry, Sydney, Australia, 1976, 33 x 21".**

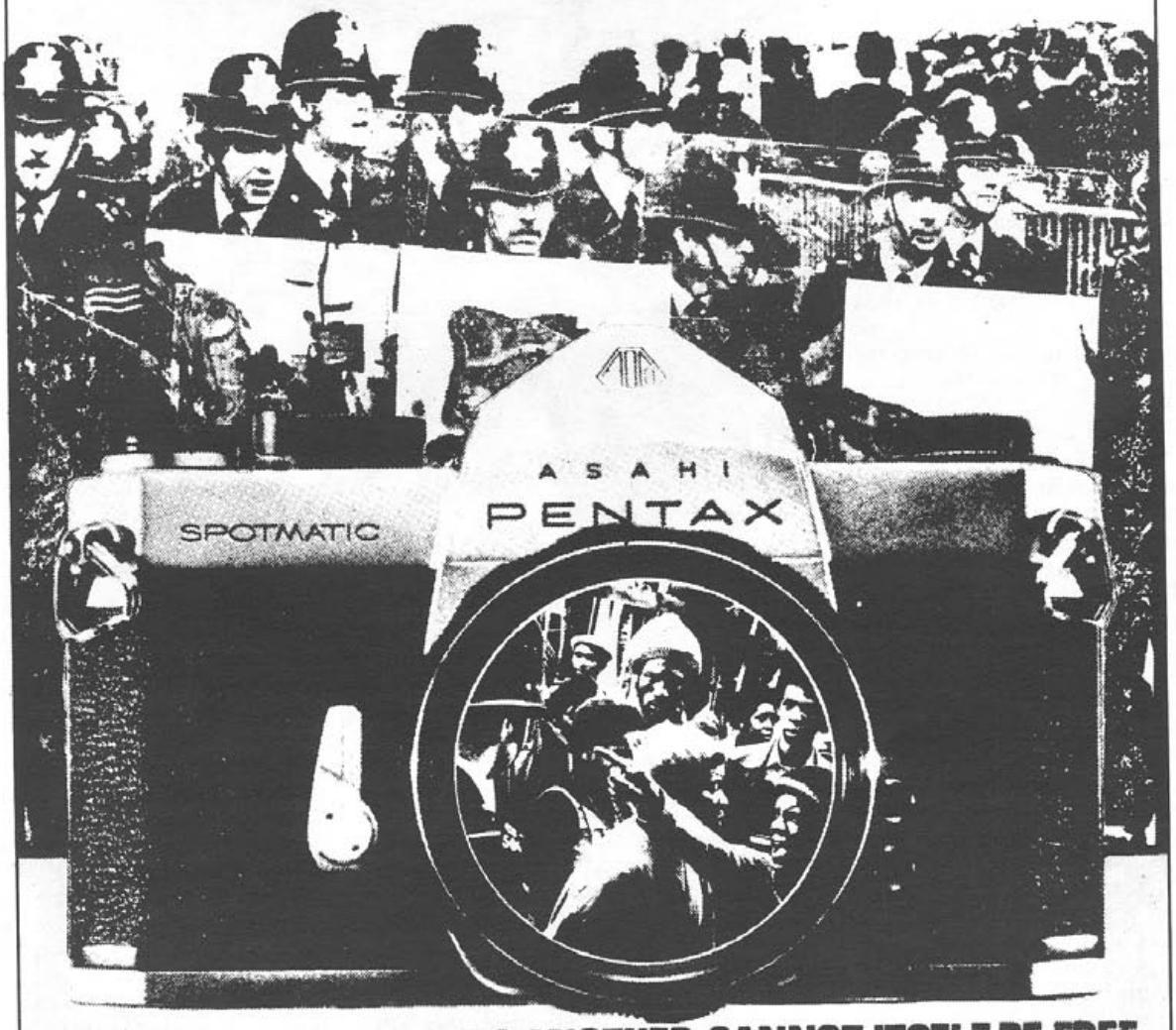
**HOW TO SEND TO THE ARCHIVE:** Filing goes slowly and it saves us a lot of time if you send your material in an 8 x 10" file folder with your name on it; specify 'Archive' on envelope. We welcome all kinds of multiples—buttons, posters, leaflets, photos, slides, etc., but we cannot be responsible for original art works. If you send two copies, one will go to the A.J. Muste Foundation collection. For information on meetings of the Archive Committee, contact Barbara Moore, 564-5989 or 989-3356; or Mimi Smith, 228-3017. Send material to PADD, 339 Lafayette St., NYC 10012.


**Artist unknown, Kraker poster from the Dutch squatter movement, 1981. (photo by Sol Lewitt/Carol Androcchio).**




*'What happens in Londonderry is very relevant to what can happen in London, and if we lose in Belfast, we may have to fight in Brixton or Birmingham.*

John Biggs Davidson, Conservative MP




**A NATION THAT ENSLAVES ANOTHER CANNOT ITSELF BE FREE**

**Poster-Film Collective, London, England, 1982, silkscreen, 31½ x 21".**

# OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND (I): Native American, Black

This was the first in a planned series of four PADD Second Sunday forums exploring cultural diversity/democracy in "minority" communities. Others will cover Asian/Hispanic, Gay/Lesbian and feminist arts—the ways they relate to political action and effect social change. We chose the title "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" for this series to emphasize the ways corporate culture tries to keep most images and voices unseen and unheard. We're hoping these forums will suggest ways to work together and lift the cultural blanket corporations try to smother us with.

The celebration of our complex cultural heritage is a breath of fresh air. As we see it, everyone has the right to political, economic and cultural democracy, which are inextricably intertwined. Gentrification, for instance, violates all three rights: By denying people homes and community, it denies cultural as well as economic/political rights. The term "cultural democracy" as defined by Arlene Goldbard and Don Adams (who will elaborate on the subject at PADD's June 12th Second Sunday) acknowledges "that the U.S. is a multicultural society; that each person has the right to participate in any cultural forms and traditions; that the government has no more right to favor one of these cultures above the other than it does to institute a state religion."

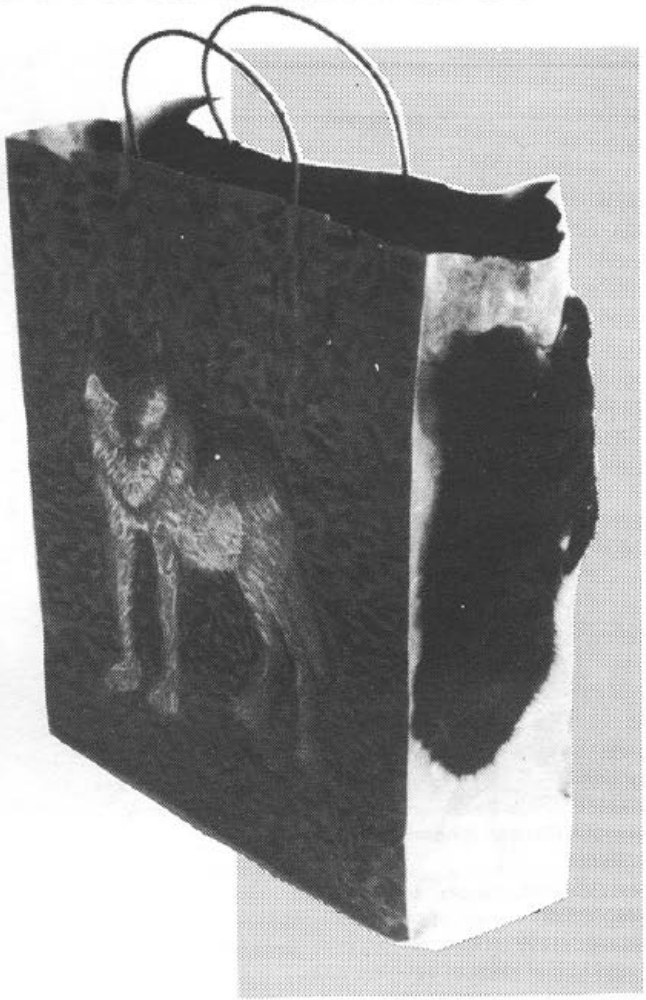
So how *does* culture express, resist and transcend oppression? For the most part what is characterized as mainstream culture in the U.S. reflects and protects the interests of the corporations and their allies and is either passively useless or actively detrimental to the rest of us. The blanket extends from the mis-named "mass" media to the highest of high art institutions. (Witness the recent merger of the Whitney Museum at the Philip Morris corporation's headquarters at Park Avenue and 42nd Street—an appropriate location for both of them.) The dominating culture's safety net captures fine art, literature, the church, the educational system, and spreads out into the playground, down the street, and so on and so forth. Sociologist Todd Gitlin has described corporate culture in the U.S. as a centerpiece in the strategy to cool out and control the domestic scene. Today as we watch Reagan dismantle the EPA to feed his war machine, as we breathe, drink and die of poisonous corporate wastes, it's hard to argue with Karl Marx's basic analysis—that there is an irreconcilable conflict of interest between capital and labor.

We are in so many ways a divided people and an angry, alienated people isolated by class, race and gender prejudices. Our ignorance is daily used against us as we respond in kind from our own pain. PADD's active membership is Euro-American. That's not the way we want it, but that's the way it is. However, as white leftists, while we know that people of color, gays and lesbians and women have suffered most under capitalism, we also know that the corporate culture doesn't reflect *our* reality either. All of our histories are being suppressed in favor of fake homogenization. While we understand the continuing need for organizations to work according to racial and sexual identities, we also see the need to work together whenever possible to build a cultural, political and economic democracy. Nuclear explosion, radiation poisoning, chemical death are not prejudiced. If unleashed, they will get all of us—equally. A cross-cultural class unity and support of the true diversity of North American culture is a matter of survival for all of us.

**Jesse Couday, *Untitled*, 1982, color photograph, 5 x 7".**

The spread of class consciousness is anathema to the corporate mind. The last thing it wants is for all of us to realize it's us against them. The control of information and the manipulation of ideology creates the cultural climate within which prejudice and oppression can be justified. The invisible can't be seen. The silenced can't be understood. The unseen and unheard can be feared. The feared can be hated and the hated can be killed. To oppose the killing of ideas and esthetic expression is to oppose killing, a crucial task for cultural activists.

# and White Artists in Search of Cultural Democracy



**Peter Jemison, *Fur-Trade*, mixed media, 14x18x7" 1983.**

OUR PEOPLE

Our people
slit open the badger
to see the tomorrows
in its blood.

Now
look at me
and see what our
tomorrows hold.

We lie together
Souls slip open raw
and bleeding
We embrace
And rub
the wounds
together.

—Diane Burns, from *Riding the One-Eyed Ford,*
Contact II Publications, New York, 1981.

Racism and gender oppression are major fibers in the fabric of the corporate security blanket. They are woven together in intricate patterns to keep us apart and unconscious of our commonality. They emphasize differences as divisive, instead of celebrating diversity as enriching. What the melting pot really means is if you're white enough and rich enough you're in the stew. . . but if you're a person of color or working/white, your ass is in the fire. Well, as long as we're in the fire anyway, let's get together and turn up the flame. Maybe we can melt the pot. —J.K.

Following this introduction, artists Mel Edwards and Peter Jemison (who is also director of the American Indian Community House Gallery) gave slide presentations, respectively, on recent Afro-American and Native American visual arts. Jolene Rickard, a Tuscorora photographer, spoke briefly about her own work in this context. Then Serious Bizness (Ngoma and Jaribu Hill) sang several rousing freedom songs from their new Folkways record—"For Your Immediate Attention." (Poet Diane Burns was going to read, but was unavoidably detained at the last minute.) Some PADD announcements were made, participants in the workshop that had met for several months to organize this evening were introduced: Jerry Kearns, Elizabeth Kulas, Lucy Lippard, Herb Perr, Eileen Whalen, and Holly Zox. Then came the discussion (excerpts from which follow) and the evening ended with more music and an enthusiastic response. □

**Jerry Kearns:** One of the things that occurred to me is a difficult, ongoing question which places all of us, not in the same way but certainly we parallel each other in the sense of having to deal with the seemingly omnipotent power of the dominant culture here in this country.

**Mel Edwards:** If there is a particular innovation and/or practice developed and then the practice becomes available at Macy's, probably the people really involved in the struggle by the time that's at Macy's already have moved to something else anyway, because it's a continuous kind of thing; it's a living, organic situation. My attitude, for instance, in relation to works which are explicitly political is they're of real value during the moment or time of use; then afterwards, if there is some other use found for them, that's fine and good, but the real reason for their creation was their use at that moment, so that often things aren't even documented.

**Jaribu Hill:** Yeah, I agree with that because for one thing, in the '60s when the slogan Black Power was first raised and when the Afro hair style became really a dominant part of looking Black and understanding and appreciating your culture and trying to shed the self-hatred that you'd been taught since you were very small in order to keep you powerless you had to hate yourself, and once you begin to love yourself and understand yourself then you begin to understand that the things that are missing from your life, somebody or something is responsible for that. And so you begin to link up with other people who understand that and you begin to struggle around that, so that to try to belittle or humiliate that aspect of struggle, the power structure will try to co-opt different hair styles. And in certain tourist circles, they sell Indian headbands, and they try to co-opt any people's culture to make it something that is to be laughed at or scoffed at. Those of us who are still trying to identify and trying to find ourselves, we may become very, very infuriated, but at the same time that kind of infuriation needs to be turned to something positive like continuing to have programs like this and educating people around other people's cultures. I think it's important for us to understand what's happening, not only to Black peoples' culture, but to just about everybody's culture. Nobody's culture is original anymore. Nobody's culture is sacred anymore, because everything has been bastardized and co-opted because there is a general disrespect for humanity.

# OUT OF SIGHT,

**Jolene Rickard:** I am from a reservation in Western New York, and it's part of the Iroquois Nation. There is no one Native American. We all come from separate nations, so there is no one headband or one style of dress or one hairdo that would signify the same thing for all of us. So not only are we as Native people working towards making other people aware of us as a separate cultural group, but they have to see that we are also separate within our own group.

For us every small thing is a struggle. Specifically with my own photography my priority is first to speak to Native people, helping them understand more about themselves, and then I usually follow that up with carefully thought-out reasons why Native people today do things the way they do—how some of it is Red Nation tradition, and how some of it is by picking up the most disgusting and facile elements of contemporary society and how we mix it up and how it becomes part of our society. With the camera you can focus and you can draw attention to specific things.

I am doing a series on bead work right now, which has been very popularized by trading posts and by the fashion world, and I'm pointing out all of the different patterns in bead work, treating it from a historical point of view. Some of our bead work is in museums; some of our bead work is from Hong Kong. Basically, the designs are ripped off. And some of our bead work is actually on people at pow-wows or in someone's home, and some of our bead work is hung on Christmas trees and some of our bead work is wrapped around candles and cigarette holders and things like that.

An Indian person on the Navajo reservation out in Shiprock has very little connection with the Iroquois person from Western New York, and so we have to deal with not having a single voice politically. Dennis Banks does not speak for all of us. He speaks for parts of Nation and parts of oppression, but we all have our separate struggles and we all try to help each other. Most of it tends to come down to land rights and health. But then there is also the area of cultural freedom or cultural expression and so I work with Peter at the American Indian Community House Gallery. It's in Soho and it's on the second floor, so it takes a while to get people up there. But usually when people come up there, they are really interested in what's going on.

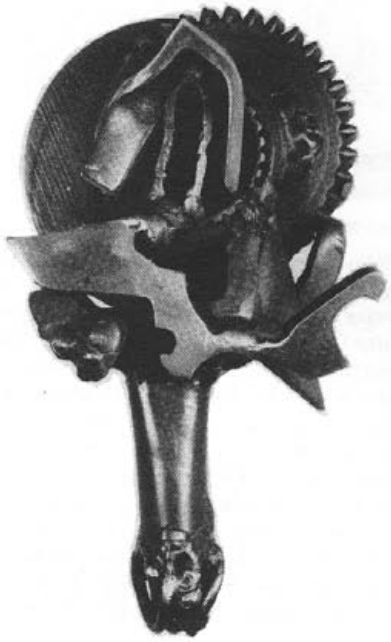
**Irving Wexler:** At what point does Black or Native American art hold fast to its integrity and at what point does it absorb so much of white American or dominant or middle class culture that it begins to weaken, attenuate and wash out some of its cultural strengths?

**Peter Jemison:** You have now a lot of situations co-existing at the same time. You have the person like Joe David, whose slides I showed of masks on the Northwest Coast. He is university educated, or college educated at least, but his father is quite traditional i thinking and I think that even after experience as a designer in the design w there was a recognition on his part tha thing that was probably closest to the was to go back and do those masks- repeat the imagery that had been cre by the previous generations, but in effe create his own sense of aesthetic within particular tradition of mask carving o Northwest Coast. Then on the other you have a person such as Jaune Quic See Smith, whose roots are on the Flat reservation in Montana, where the cu consisted of the bead work trad decorating personal clothing for ceremo purposes and language and land. Sh Shoshone but where does she go with th make an artistic statement which pertai Jaune Quick-to-See Smith in 1982 or in when she began to really take off on own. She went the route into the Unive of Albuquerque in New Mexico to disc really what the world of art was about, world of painting, the world of persona pression, and so then I think it becan matter of trying to find a synthesis of t elements.

What is usually missing in a discus like this is all of the white people who h taken things from Indians and reflected us as though they were their own ideas, Jackson Pollock, Max Ernst, Andy War Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Ro Indiana . . . I could sit here and tick off to all these people who have taken some as of our culture and found a way to use it make art of it and nobody's ever saic

**Serious Bizness (photo: Jerry Kearns).**

**Mel Edwards, *His and Hers*, from the "Lynch Fragments" series, 1964, 9x5x4", mild steel. Edwards' Lynch Fragments series deals with the physical ideas of hanging, pain, resistance; it began in 1963 when the civil rights movement was in full force. "A lynching is a murder, a group murder. You take all the energy of a lynching, all the hate and all the fear, and pile it on one human being. What I'm doing is taking fragments of the intensity of a lynching, turning it around, changing it into an object, and making that object something creative and positive." (From essay in *Free Spirits I*, 1982).**



**Affrekka Jefferson, *The Violation of Africa*, 1982, color lino-cut, 18 x 18".(photo: Herb Perr).**

them, hey, man, aren't you...No, it's just like it's ok, you know, it's ok for Picasso to take African masks, it's ok for Picasso to take anything, actually, to make art. So it's ok for us too, you know. You know you get up every day, and whatever's barking at you, you kind of deal with that, and then go about making your art, I think it should be open to you to make art.

**Herb Perr:** Going to "Artists Talk on Art" the other night and listening to the seven or eight American Indian artists talk about their work added a dimension, gave me a context, by which I can see the work anew. Yes, it's true one could look at it and say, well that looks like abstract expressionism and that looks like a cubist influence or Picasso influence. But the fact that we're here in this room and beginning to try to change the context...versus being home, let's say reading a book on art or watching a movie on television. This is an attempt at changing that context, being here and talking is a kind of political situation, when political artists raise questions about the so-called contradictions between what an image looks like and what its intentions are and how the context changes the way we see things.

**Jaribu Hill:** Our children, especially children of color, have a very sad situation in terms of deculturalization, in terms of not knowing and not learning about the rich history and tradition. It's our responsibility to teach that to them but we can't do it all day long, because we have to work. So in school they are bombarded with "you're inferior" and still manifest destiny is being taught, still inferiority is being taught in the public school system. Today in 1983 Black people are not being taught about their history. Slavery is still left out of the textbooks, the issue of Native American people is still left out of the American history, so we still have a long way to go.

**Randy Wade:** In American Indian culture, one of the most wonderful things about it is that it is a part of people's lives. The way we look at things now because of media and because of galleries is to go *outside* our lives to receive culture. It's so out of context that it seems to be real susceptible to things like fashion. That's why it's like we don't have a culture, we've got these periods of fashions constantly trying to spark our interest.

**Mel Edwards:** I really don't like to use the English language and it's the one that I speak because I grew up here. But you say things like dominant culture, and all my life, I thought this was the weakest thing I've ever seen. The western world is growing larger in its influence and weaker in its quality.

**From Audience:** We are now one world and our increased communication and our closeness to all the peoples in the world, all of these things becoming more valuable, I don't ever think in terms of dominant culture because I really see the value of input of each culture as it is evolved....When Van Gogh sees the Japanese prints and appropriates these into his own, he sees quality, the beauty that has grown out of a process that is beyond anything our commercial culture could know anything about. So I think as artists we have a responsibility to know and understand this with each other, and a responsibility to make people aware of its sources and its development. I see some very positive things about the sharing and integration of these things.

**Ngoma Hill:** I concur with a lot that's been said. I think we have to start looking at various people's works and the reason it was done and the actual purpose that it was done rather than just to make something to seem more attractive. It's "propaganda," it's intended to raise people's consciousness. Also we have to look at the real history of things to be sure that our present is linked up to the past so that there's no gaps. There's a lot of information that hasn't been passed on from time to time. Say, if you go into a high school and ask Black students who Malcolm X was, they might say who you talking about, is that a new dance? When we start talking about the culture, we talk about people's life style and their ways of looking at and doing things, and that particular hookup.

Work that we do—"Serious Bizness," as musicians, a lot of people want to say it's folk music because it's acoustic. But the actual form isn't what Europeans or even Americans would think of as folk music. It's a lot funkier, it's got a lot of different riffs in it. But primarily, the question is the reason that you do the particular work and who your audience is, who you intend it for and the purposes. Do you intend to reach the mass market? For example, the music that we do, we wish it could reach the mass market, because we realize that if it does, that then the majority of people that hear it would be able to hear what we're doing and that would raise people's consciousness. The fact that it hasn't reached a mass market—we realize that what we're doing is correct, because it's being kept away from each other.

**From Audience:** I'd like to commend PADD because of its concept of documenting political art, because a lot of little things aren't documented and it's very important that the people's history be documented so that we can look ten years ago and say "oh, this is why these people are doing this or why this is happening, or this is why this person's the hero and this one isn't, this is why this group of people are called terrorists and these people are the heroes."

**Jolene Rickard:** I think very consciously about where creativity fits into all of this. If we're going to talk about creativity we're going to talk about foundations, and if we look at this society, there are some terms that historians will use, like contact and pre-contact. There was a period when the Native

people existed here. And then after contact there was a period we called mutual exchange, in which Native people helped those people who came here—Europeans—to survive. They taught them the appropriate skills. And then when that relationship had run its course, the people who survived became oppressors and that is the state we have existed in for the past 400 years. But now again it's becoming a type of mutual exchange, because the society which oppressed has lived a very scattered and unconstructive life. They have only picked and chosen things from other cultures which they thought were important, without ever following one thought through. Our parents fight a constant struggle when we're young to sift out that which is not part of how you see yourself as a Native person. I cannot speak for the Blacks or for the Haitians or anybody else, but as a Native person my parents constantly were up against things like Indians are now going to be on TV and you are not part of that, and being an Indian from the east—we didn't wear bright colored clothing with pink feathers and act stoic. And so all of these things have to be articulated to the young mind. If we are one world, whose one world are we? And all of these things have to be clarified. Now I feel that we're at a point of mutual exchange and it can happen in many ways, and art is one of them.

Art is very difficult for a lot of people to deal with. Photography and maybe film, videotapes, that sort of thing is more palatable for more people. I attended a film festival where the programming director from PBS told us what we should put in our films to allow us to have access to Channel 13. And I pointed out that I thought Channel 13 was a racist station because all they do is show Masterpiece Theatre. This is not culture, this is *European* culture. And when I placed that idea, all of a sudden you're a radical, you're a dissident. In Native American imagery, I think it's critical now that the people creating these things become more specific and learn more about why these images exist and put them there because they create dialogue with other Native Americans.

This visual dialogue is important but it also can transcend and can be looked upon by other people as a source for understanding one way of interpreting creation, or one way of interpreting daily life. If you start diluting it and putting something Chinese or Buddhist in with a Hopi thought and you're not a practitioner of either, what is your accomplishment? You know, I don't feel as though I could ever be a Buddhist Zen. A Tuscorora—that's what I am. I don't feel as though any of you can be a Tuscarora, but you can understand something about me and I can understand something about you. And I think that's the direction to take rather than try to recreate the melting pot theory. □

**Jolene Rickard, *The Wolf Clan Mother*, 1981.**

Installation of Exhibition (photo: Rae Langsten).

# DETOURS, SHARP TURNS AND LITTLE NAGGY FEELINGS: Turning Points in the Lives of Art Activists

Putting the personal into a political context and illuminating our social visions by way of our personal histories was the subject of this PADD project. It consisted of one major work by each of eight artists at Gallery 345, Art for Social Change, Inc., and three two-person collaborative performances at Franklin Furnace on March 13, as the month's Second Sunday forum.

The Turning Points exhibition was unique in that each artist's work evolved within a collective workshop that met over a four-month period (as well as in the studio); the exhibition was also collectively installed. Freed from the isolation of wholly individual artmaking, we were provided with a process of exchange. It's rare to be able to find out how your ideas and images are communicating to others before the work is publicly shown. The discussions raised both formal and political questions.

Of the eight exhibited works, Eva Cockcroft merged the relationship between herself, her husband, her sons, against a historical background on a two-sided round painting that actually turned, to symbolize change. Irving Wexler's red, white, and black graphic expressed a gradual change, over forty years, from hard line to libertarian socialism; the key image is Lenin on his deathbed. Herb Perr's patterned pages from a photo album explored the family traumas and dislocations that contributed to his political-psychic development. Rae Langsten's black, white and silver window frame utilized the image of Sputnik to reveal its critical impact on American education of the 1950s and on her own thinking. Randy Wade created a pink and blue garden of glass and lights in which to reflect on two very different approaches to career and family taken by her immediate female predecessors. Diane Neumaier's photo and text composition dealt with the death in the holocaust of her grandmother, an opera singer, and her own subsequent development as a social activist. Elizabeth Kulas presented a large visual and textual diary encompassing a lifetime progression of significant changes that led to her resolve to "save and recreate the world." Holly Zox's work was an over-life-sized painted shadow image of empowerment, accompanied by a taped prose poem of the constructive as well as the destructive influence of her "blood memories."

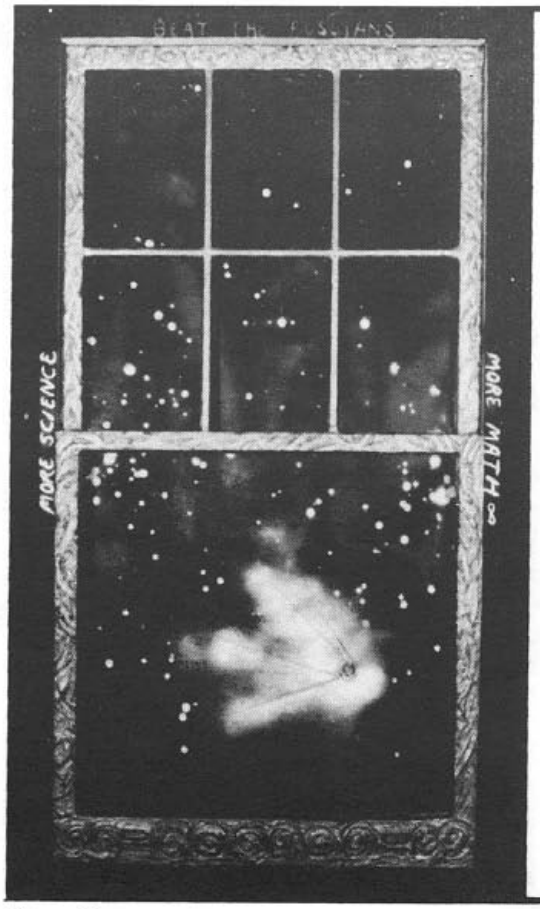
At the performance night, Jerry Kearns' and Lucy Lippard's "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" was a text, slide and shadow play that traced their gradual radicalization from very different backgrounds to their current collaborative politics. The Dentures Art Club (Joan Giannecchini and Stan Kaplan) presented an excerpt from "Charms," a dramatic narrative analysis of the inherited violence of sexual politics and popular culture. Jerri Allyn and Bill Gordh moved the audience upstairs for their "3,743 Days"—the amount of time they have been friends; moving from numbered poster to poster, they improvised dialogues about their personal and political interactions, ending with an audio tape.

*Later, two members of the collective continued the dialogue about the exhibition's goals.*

**Why did PADD do these autobiographical projects?**

Some of the objectives for this show were: to provide both ourselves and our audience with insights into the ways personal and social transformations interact; to open up ways for artists to perceive our lives and works in a larger frame than that provided by the artworld; to encourage participating artists to scrutinize the relationships between our values, attitudes, politics and esthetics; to suggest more collective manners of expressing ideas through images. On one

(*continued on page 29*)




Sputnik went up. The news reports said the Russians had gotten into space first. They had beaten us. Space. . . who were the Russians? Where did they live? What were they going to do to us? I thought this country was the best, the strongest, the richest, number one. How come the Russians beat us? My teachers began talking about the need for more mathematicians, scientists, and engineers. How could someone who liked art, music, and good stories find a place?

**Rae Langsten**

# TURNING

**Jerry Kearns and Lucy Lippard**

**JK:** IN RURAL NORTH CAROLINA, MY FAMILY WAS WHAT PEOPLE CALLED POOR WHITE TRASH. . .
**LL:** I'M A 100% WASP AND NO LONGER ASHAMED OF IT. . . .


## "MY PLACE, YOUR PLACE, OUR PLACE"

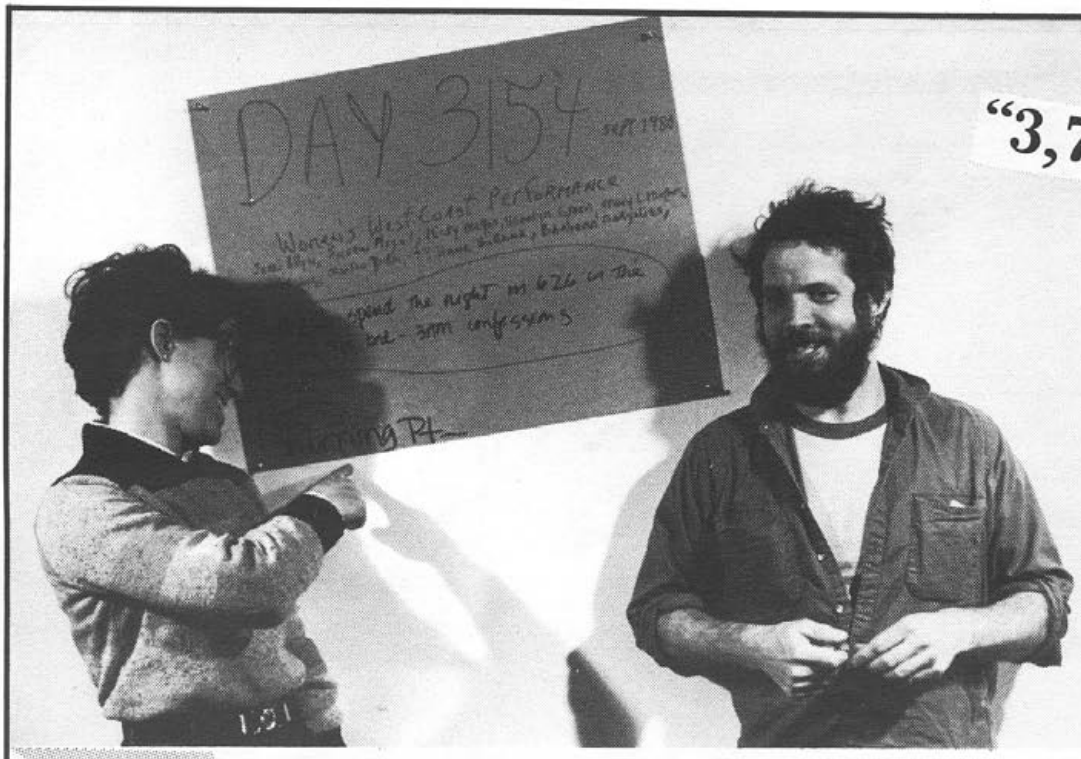
**JK:** . . .A PERIOD OF DEEP IMMERSION IN ORGANIZED POLITICAL STRUGGLE WIPED AWAY A LOT OF IDEALISM AND GAVE ME A PRACTICAL UNDERSTANDING OF DREAMING LARGE WHILE DOING WHAT IS POSSIBLE AT THE MOMENT . . .
**LL:** BETWEEN ACTIVISM AND FEMINISM I FELT LIKE I'D FINALLY FOUND *MY* PLACE. KNEW WHERE I STOOD AND WITH WHOM. . . BUT NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY TO GLUE IT ALL TOGETHER, THE COLLAGE KEEPS SPLITTING UP AGAIN. . . .

***I don't want to tell people what to think, I'd just like to give them a place in which to do it well.***

**Randy Wade**

## POINTS

**Jerri Allyn and Bill Gordh**




**"3,743 DAYS"**

(photo: Cheri Gaulke)

A performance exploring our intense (often transcontinental) friendship through dialogues about the development of our radicalized views of social, artistic, and sexual politics . . . and about the eye-opening discovery that we met only 20-odd times over the 3,743 days we've known each other.

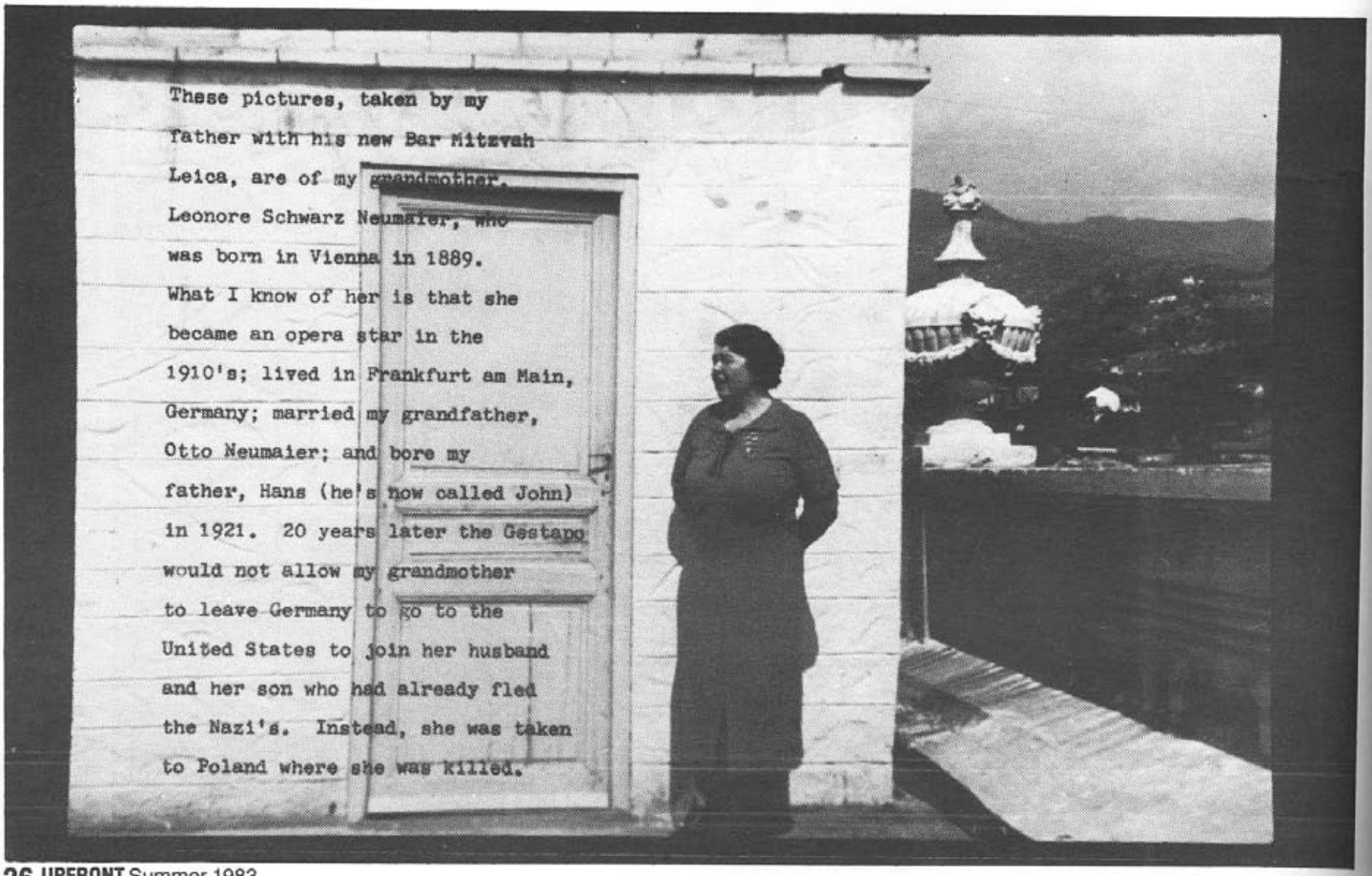
## "GRAY EXPECTATIONS"

At the age of 15, a slumchild of the Depression, I leaped onto the train of necessity, powered by dialectics, and headed hellbent for the kingdom of freedom. Oh, what bliss it was to be young and a Marxist-Leninist, on the lookout for human liberation through Stalin-tinted glasses, as we zoomed over the tracks of history past the purges and murders, the Nazi-Soviet pact, the gulags and repressions, the betrayals of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, and all the other little moral abominations and ambiguities on the way to Utopia. Then, with the Khrushchev revelations, came the first little naggy feelings, followed by New Left detours through the sixties, around the sharp turns of black power, feminism and possible nuclear annihilation. And so, here I am today, grayer if not wiser, this time on foot with the rest of the Movement, limping along two steps forward and one step back, more than ever convinced that we can transform ourselves and help create a world free of oppression, and still pondering: What is to be done? Ah, but when the answer comes, will I be around to celebrate that transcendent turning point?


**Irving Wexler**

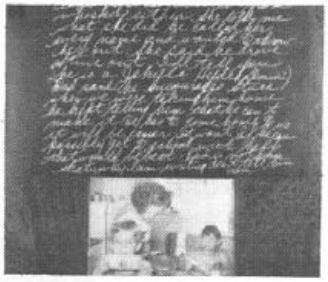
# TURNING

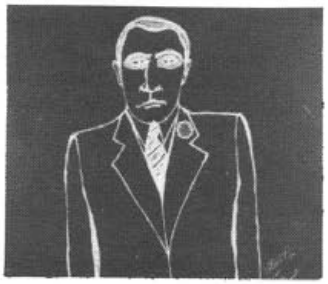
**Diane Neumaier**

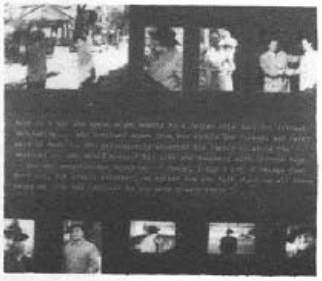


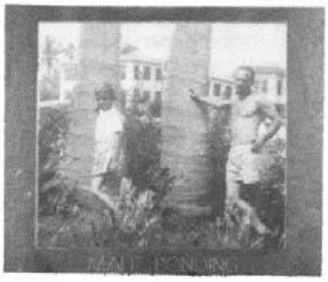
A FAMILY TRADITION

None of us trusted authority. Mom bowed out with passivity, dreams and evasions. To beat the system, Dad became a bookmaker and a gambler. My younger brother escaped through drugs, my sister through prostitution. I chose to search for transformation through resistence.









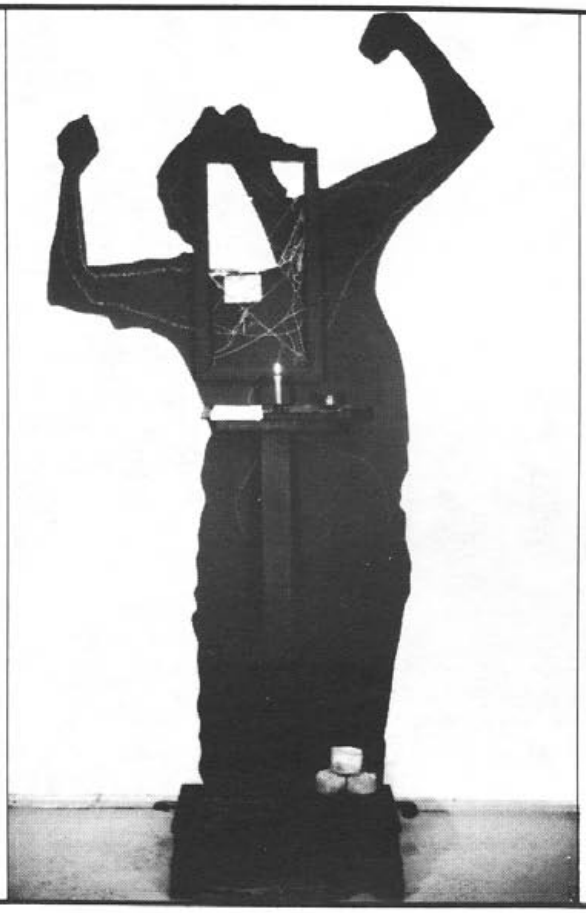
**Herb Perr**

# POINTS

**Eva Cockcroft**

**at the still point of the turning world**
**. . . where past and future are gathered.**
*—from T. S. Eliot's "Four Quartets"*

first memories are blood memories
blood red stripes
in the flag
on Kennedy's coffin
Vietnam death counts
war clips
blood of corpses
the arms without bodies
blood rushing to my head
as Mom tried to put me
in pigtails when I was two
and I screamed
NO!
blood in the first words
I read and read
about Native Americans
slavery the Great Depression
the Holocaust
blood of the pogroms
that all my great-grandparents
came to this country to escape
stained in the creases of
Grandma Fanny's hands
and in the sugar
of the candy her hands
gave us every Shabbos
blood
in my nightmares
in my underwear
for the first time
and I never told anybody
blood
blood in all my pores
when the flashes flash



blood in Sheila's eyes
when I found
her as he tried to
rape her in her room
blood that could have
been on the knife
he carried
I carried her blood
as her trembling
became my trembling
as I watched her
become a chain-smoker
our blood pounding
in my throat my ears
my nose my eyes
as someone in the court
asked me
"Was she upset?"
"Was she really screaming?"
blood screaming
screaming NO!

blood bathing
cleansing washing
birthing rebirthing
reclaiming blood
all our blood
blood lost in the thumbscrews
in the screwing
the shooting
shooting flames
my blood
reclaiming my first bleeding
and the flashes
are not always of
destruction but of
wholeness

**Holly Zox**

# TURNING

**Joan Giannecchini and Stan Kaplan**

## HEADLINE IN JEWISH PRESS: GOYS AND DOLLS

(photo:Dona Ann McAdams)

## HEADLINE IN CATHOLIC WORKER: GROWING UP ABSOLVED

HUMANS TRAUMATIZED IN '50s get revenge in "Charms," Dentures Art Club's investigation of sex, role and romance at the Franklin Furnace and Soho Rep.

One day when we were going out to play, my mother told us we could no longer eat the snow. "We can't eat the snow? Why?"
"There's radiation in it. You can't see it but it's there."
"How does it get there?"
"It falls from the sky."
"You mean we can't eat the snow ever again? Ever?"
"Never."
"Why?"
"It's bad."
"Why?"

The snow was our friend...it covered the earth. As I walked out the door my world had changed. We searched the sky. We tasted the snow for the last time...Mom wasn't looking. It was hard to believe something we couldn't see, taste or smell. But it was there. Mom said it was there.

This winter when I was high in the mountains of Vermont, I became thirsty. I thought, now citified, I can't have a drink way out there, can I? But as I looked at the snow I realized...it would melt in my mouth and I could drink like the early settlers did.

As I broke the surface I heard my mother's warning. Should I? Is there radiation way up here? But I already knew, didn't I? If there's radiation in the snow, it's already in me. Why, I have walked in it...fallen in it.

As I looked at the snow in my hand I faced what I had faced many times. I was already contaminated. Had I forgotten that for one beautiful moment?

I used to run in the fields after Dad sprayed DDT, didn't I? And remember? I played with the asbestos that he brought home from the General Electric Company, in the backyard. The company he had worked thirty years for, making nuclear transformers. And what about the PCB's they found out about years later down in the wash by the river...

I ate the snow. I ate a lot of it. For the last time. In ceremony...to something we should have been allowed to be able to do.

And as I looked out over the frozen lake, I wondered...how much longer.

**Elizabeth Kulas**

# POINTS

(*continued from page 23*)

level we were internalizing and integrating our pasts and presents, and on another level we are still struggling to develop vital, innovative forms to better express our social convictions. For some of us the project was a kind of consciousness-raising process around history; for some it was another reminder that only by looking outside ourselves can we understand how we interact with others and what external factors cause and control those interactions. The project was also seen as a means of getting to know each other better—our own lives, our politics and our art being the three things most of us are most engrossed with. Finally, it was seen as a kind of model for expanding autobiographical art through adding social content.

**There was a conscious socio/political overtone while conceptualizing this show. Was that necessary and effective or is autobiography inherently political as a micro-reflection of society's interchanges and maybe also a controlling element in its make-up?**

Autobiography, like art and anything else, may be an inherently political microcosm, but the point of this project was to make it consciously or actively so. Autobiography has been a staple in much avant-garde art—conceptual, figurative, and especially performance—since the late 60s. The addition of a social framework and awareness of the ideological battlefield is intended to contextualize such autobiographical fragments and to clarify some of the external reasons why we live as we do, why we've turned out as we have, why we feel we have to be activists *and* artists. We hope the effects go beyond the theme show itself by suggesting more open ways to think about art and life.

**But I, for one, felt that the way most of us related our lives to the social framework was the same way it's usually related: the selection of personal fragments from the past imposes an importance on that which is remembered. Can this be misinterpreted when a narrative art form (autobiography) is squeezed into a visual "piece"?**

It seems positive to me that people are curious about each others' lives. All art is a fragment of something larger, as art itself is a fragment of something larger—which is one of the major points of "Turning Points." Things either connect to something in the viewers' experiences or they don't; nothing connects to everyone who sees it; an image that's trivial to one person may be significant to the next. An artist chooses what s/he is willing to put out into the world. The whole truth can hardly be told, but the show and performances in general demonstrated the need to reach out, to search, to make oneself understood in the world as well as to understand the world with a political consciousness.

**Does it matter at what point along the process of art creation the desire for autobiography presents itself? What if it comes *before* the process of creating has even begun —as with this show? Would it be more interesting if it were used as a result of a specific artistic impulse that can only be satisfied by the autobiographical stuff?**

This is a kind of chicken and egg question. The process of creation begins in our lives, not in some separate compartment where we first sit down with a brush in our hands. The need to communicate ideas and feelings about the contradictions of even trying to make a socially involved art here and now is an integral part of the creative process for most activist artists. Autobiography has seemed a useful vehicle for some and not for others, and obviously only those who felt it was useful bothered to use it here. Probably the main virtue of an autobiographical approach is the communicative possibilities that lie in the very familiarity of all our daily lives. Acknowledging that communication is a goal for art is, in itself, an activist position, aiming for change in the way art and artists are used and perceived. □

# EVERYTHING HAPPENS ALL OVER,

## Postcard Politics


**Peter Gourfain, postcard, 1982, from One-World Artists Cooperative.**


**Peg Averill, postcard, 1982, from WIN magazine, 326 Livingston St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.**

**Peter Kennard, *Britain reduced to a skeleton*, photomontage, postcard for Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 11 Goodwin St., London N4,3HQ.**


**Mariona Barkus, postcard from *Illustrated History*-1982.**

The Australian Artworkers Union, which meets at the Sydney Trade Union Club and publishes *Artworkers News*, has produced a unique poster/booklet with text, bibliography and other info about artists' health and safety (PO Box A 509, South Sydney,Australia 2000). Some of its members run Union Media Services—an artists' graphics and design business affiliated with many major unions. Progressive mural and poster groups are very active in both urban and rural Australia and the success of collectives in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and Woolongong has led to an important artist-generated community arts and employment plan—"The Artists Job Creation Scheme."

Two particularly witty and clear new artists' books analyze our national obsession with consumer goods and goodies: From California,Micki McGee's *Something for Nothing: A Department Store of a Different Order*, and from Florida, Paul Rutkovsky's *Commodity Character* (plus a funny little mail-order shopping mall catalogue). They're available from Printed Matter, 7 Lispenard St., NYC 10013. So is Janice Rogovin's moving bilingual photography and text book, *A Sense of Place/Tu Barrio*, about gentrification in Massachusetts, and two incongruously beautiful books on nuclear disaster—*Nuclear Atlas* by Sharon Gilbert and *This Is a Test* by Mimi Smith.

The Anti-Nuke art movement is going strong all over the place, from mainstream NYC galleries (Robert Morris and Sandy Skoglund at Castelli, Ron Feldman's "Atomic Salon" and "1984" shows) to Boston's Artists for Survival (144 Moody St., Waltham, Mass. 02154, 617-891-4235) to LA's "Fallout Fashion Show" in Feb., featuring "military Hard Wear" and the "Civil Defense Line"; a paper cocktail dress was presented to Nancy Reagan. Joyce Cutler Shaw's "message monument"—a giant SURVIVAL spelled out in ice at the UN in October—is part of an ongoing "Waters of the Nations: Messages from the World" project that sees artists as messengers. Painter Irving Kriesberg's 40-foot banner *Peace Dove* is temporarily installed in the World Trade Center, and will travel; Michael Lebron's striking dove poster was in several NY subway stations this winter, after a legal battle with the transit authority which said its politics would alienate their corporate clients. Mark Rogovin's Peace Museum in Chicago (364 W. Erie, 312-440-1860) is in touch with artists all over the world. Swedish actor Jan Bergquist travels with his anti-nuke "The Last Talk Show" and performer Paul Zaloom continues hilariously to expose government civil defense insanities.

The greatest peace piece of them all is the British women's action at Greenham Common, now in its second continuous year and the model for this summer's "Women's Peace Encampment" at the Seneca, NY, Army Depot, July 4-Labor Day; for information call Women's Pentagon Action, 212-254-4691.

Another innovative "performance" took place at lunchtime in Washington DC last summer and is now recorded in "Everyone Understands Freedom"—a 17-minute videotape by Nancy Garruba (available with documentary package from Rapid Deployment, 2853 Ontario Rd. NW, Washington DC 20009; 202-667-5049 nights). The piece doubles as a vivid guerrilla art event—"Salvadoran" soldiers jumping from a truck and abducting people at rifle-point—and as a continuing organizing tool.

Workers are making performance art too. Members of District 1199 hospital workers union in West Virginia publicly placed a stick of baloney on a carved and painted chair to convey to Gov. John D. Rockefeller IV that "we've had enough baloney." From Rand, West Virginia, David "Blue" Lamm writes about a coalminers' art group. They have shown in Washington DC and elsewhere and are looking for wider exposure of their art on miners' lives and struggles. His address is 5225 Ravin Drive, Rand, W.VA., 304-925-6286.

From Aberdeen, South Dakota, Mark McGinnis writes about his elaborate research, silkscreen and "table-painting" project, *Scenes from an American Tragedy*, a topographical map illustrating in detail the history of the cultural and physical extermination of the Native Americans by government policy, drawing parallels with current exploitation and profit through subjugation.

The activist postcard phenomenon continues to expand. Along with those shown here, there are a number of other great ones with too much text to reproduce well: Donna Grund Slepak's "A Gift that Lasts" (peace) is available from PO Box 1182, Portland, Oregon, 97210; Dan Higgins' anti-gentrification image/survey from Winooski, Vt., connects with the artist's work with Burlington's "socialist mayor" on various enlightened cultural projects. In New Haven, Conn., the One-World Artist Cooperative has published a marvelous col-

# ALL THE TIME, [redacted] AT ONCE.*

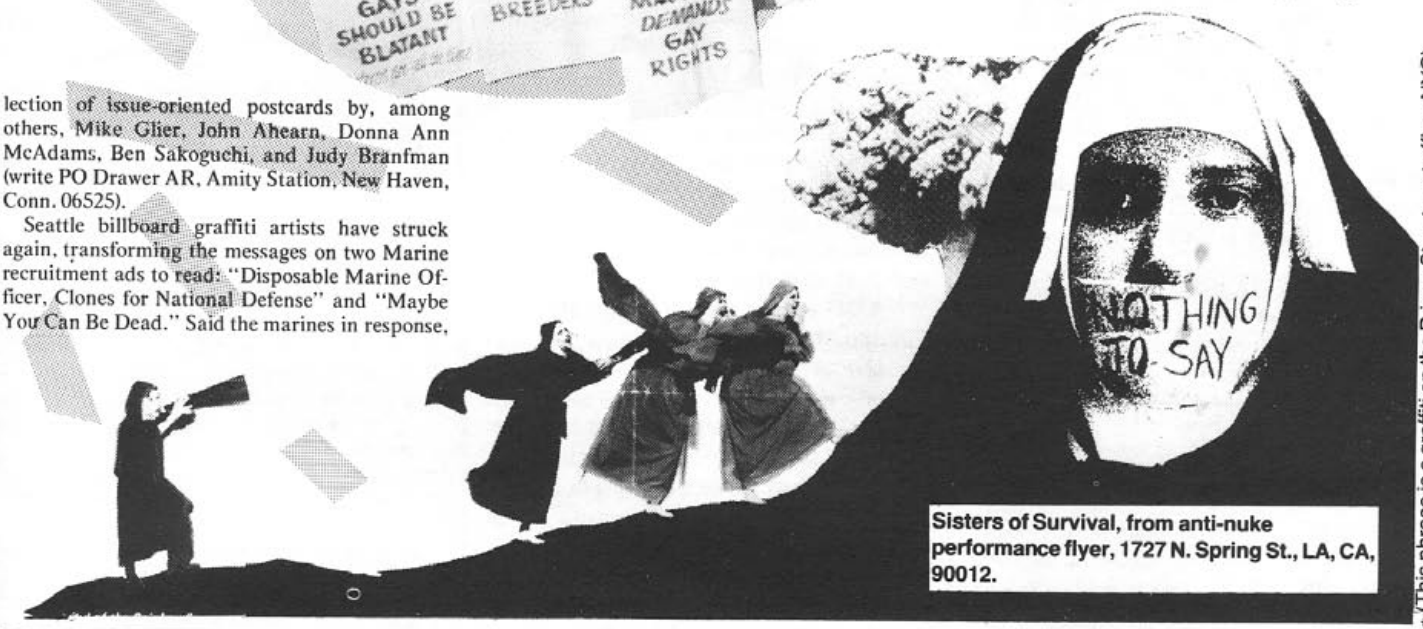

**Demo vests by Moral Majority of Sydney, a gay-rights group that copyrighted the term "Moral Majority" when Jerry Falwell visited Australia.**

"We know that some people, primarily the youth element, think they have the right to express themselves. . . ."

Michael Rossman of the AOUON Archive (1741 Virginia St., Berkeley, CA 94703) has collected thousands of political posters, wants more, is preparing a book, and will put postermakers in contact with poster collectors. . . . Finally, notice of Kenneth Shor's show in Chicago titled "Your Politics Are Just a Pretext for Complaining." Huh?

lection of issue-oriented postcards by, among others, Mike Glier, John Ahearn, Donna Ann McAdams, Ben Sakoguchi, and Judy Branfman (write PO Drawer AR, Amity Station, New Haven, Conn. 06525).

Seattle billboard graffiti artists have struck again, transforming the messages on two Marine recruitment ads to read: "Disposable Marine Officer, Clones for National Defense" and "Maybe You Can Be Dead." Said the marines in response,




**Sisters of Survival, from anti-nuke performance flyer, 1727 N. Spring St., LA, CA, 90012.**

*(This phrase is a graffiti on the Prince Street post office, NYC).

# PADD ACTIVITIES

**PADD SECOND SUNDAY FORUMS** at Franklin Furnace (112 Franklin St.) the second Sunday of every month (after June 12, starting up again with an informal get-together on Sept. 11).

**PADD WORK MEETINGS** ending with slide discussions on progressive art are the third Sunday of every month at 339 Lafayette St. There are various levels where you can get involved—as a full voting member, working on UPFRONT, on RED LETTER DAYS, with the Study Group, on special projects, or by becoming a supporting affiliate member. Come and see what good clean fun all the dirty work can be.

**UPFRONT:** BACK ISSUES available: **No. 1** (50¢) PADD's beginnings and statement of purpose; **No. 3** ($1.50) "Against Inner Exile"; "Art Politik" in Seattle; "Anti-WW3" in NY; NAM in Milwaukee; **No. 4** ($1.50) "February 26th Movement" illustrated directory to progressive art groups in the US; includes Art Squad, SPARC, LAPAD, NAPNOC, X Change, ABC No Rio, Cityarts Workshop, National Black United Front, Co-Lab, Fashion Moda, Group Material, and Basement Workshop; **No. 5** ($2) "Hispanic Art from Outrage" and "Who's Teaching What to Whom and Why?"—accounts and transcripts of 3 Second Sunday forums, plus national news. Add 50¢ for postage.

*COMING SOON*—**PADD GRAPHICS WORKSHOP**. . . . *Develop skills, art and politics all at once*. . . . .

## Statement

**PADD is a progressive artists' resource and networking organization coming out of and into New York City. Our goal is to provide artists with an organized relationship to society, to demonstrate the political effectiveness of image making. One way we are trying to do this is by building a collection of documentation of international socially concerned art. The PADD Archive defines social concern in the broadest sense: any work that deals with issues ranging from sexism and racism to ecological damage and other forms of human oppression. The PADD Archive documents artwork from movement posters to the most individual of statements.**

**PADD is also involved with the production, distribution and impact of progressive art in the culture at large. We sponsor public events, actions and exhibitions. These are all means of facilitating relationships between (1) artists in or peripherally in, or not at all in the art world, (2) the local communities in which we live and work, (3) Left culture, and (4) the broader political struggles.**

**We hope eventually to build an international grass-roots network of artist activists who will support with their talents and their political energies the liberation and self-determination of all disenfranchised peoples.**

*WE WANT TO LIVE! A 15-minute slide/tape show produced by PADD and Cultural Correspondence, on the visual imagery of the June 12th march for disarmament. Accompanied by a stirring text and music by Serious Bizness, others. Rent for $35 or buy for $100. "When we say FREEZE! we do not mean to keep things the way they are." RECOMMENDED FOR CLASSROOMS, RALLIES, CONFERENCES, AND FOR SHEER PLEASURE AND REVOLUTIONARY UPLIFT.*


**RED LETTER DAYS:** A Monthly Listing of Left and Socially Concerned Cultural Events in New York City—an attempt to build a cohesive audience for all of us (especially those who can't afford to advertise). It includes films, performances, plays, conferences, musical events, rallies, art exhibitions, workshops, and notices of upcoming national exhibitions and projects. $5 for a 10-month subscription. Send $$ and info to PADD.

*PADD is a proud member of the* **Alliance for Cultural Democracy** *(formerly NAPNOC) and recommends that everyone else become one too.* ACD's *annual conference will be held in Atlanta, Sept 30-Oct. 2. Send $25 to Katherine Pearson, c/o Appalshop, P.O. Box 743 Whitesburg, KY 41858, [606] 633-0108 to become a member and receive the publication* Cultural Democracy.

## JOIN THE PADDED CELL

## SUBSCRIBE

- ☐ $8 Non-member Subscription to UPFRONT (4 issues)
- ☐ $10 Friend, includes UPFRONT (for low incomes)
- ☐ $25 Pal, includes UPFRONT (for average incomes)
- ☐ $50 Ally, includes UPFRONT and free admission to Second Sundays and other PADD events and our thanks
- ☐ $100 and over, Hero, includes all of the above plus undying affection, eternal gratitude, and a red star.

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

*Checks payable to PADD*