UPFRONT

A Publication of PADD (Political Art Documentation/Distribution)

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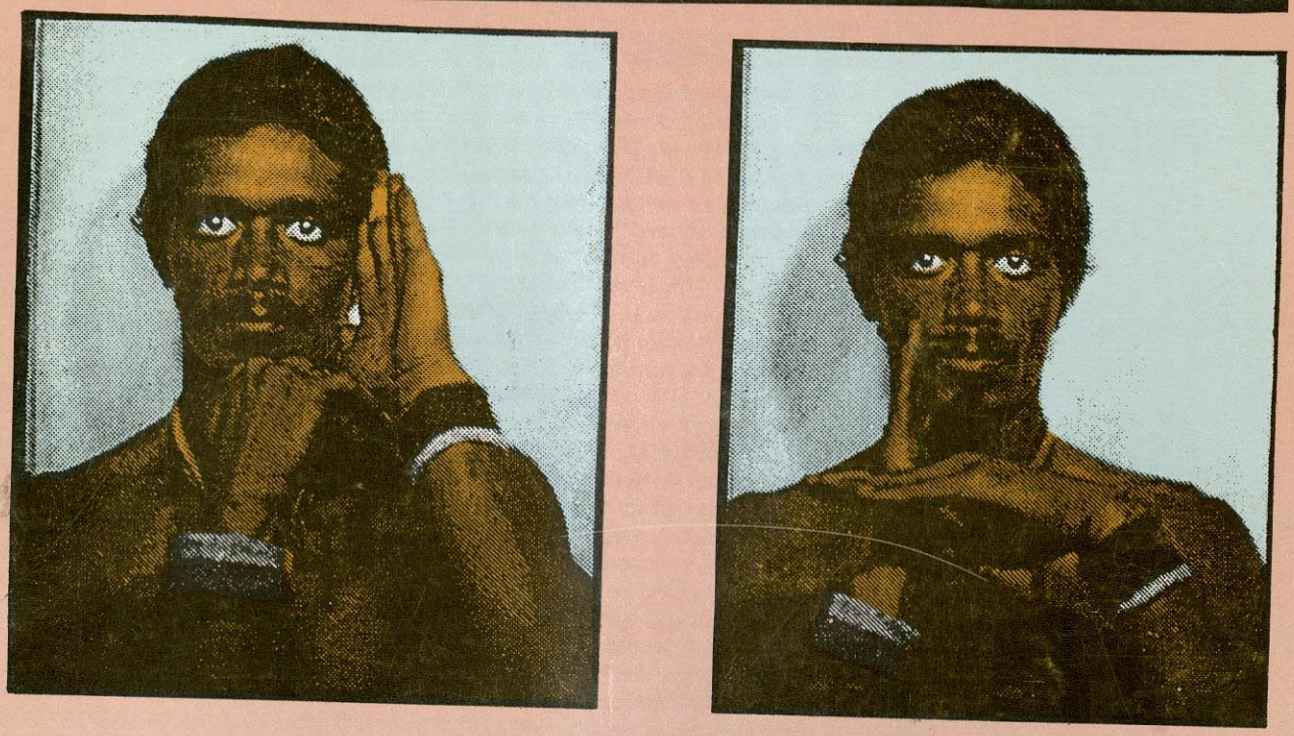

BALANCE YOUR BRAIN

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A Publication of PADD

(Political Art Documentation/Distribution)

N.Y. Editorial Committee:
Charles Frederick
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Lucy R. Lippard
Anne Meiman
Herb Perr

Managing Editor
Irving Wexler

Art Direction
Keith Christensen

Poster Photographs
Rae Langsten

Performance Videos
Alan Steinfeld

Printing by Expedi Printing, Inc.
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Computer input by Martine Christensen
Photostats by Lannes Kenfield

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EDITORIAL

A RITE OF PASSAGE

This double issue of UPFRONT marks a rite of passage, containing the last of the Second Sundays, the first of the national participation. It is being edited, appropriately, on the cusp of 1986-87, as we peer through the cracks in the state apparatus opened by Contragate and await the crumbling of walls. Since its inception in February 1981, UPFRONT (then called *First Issue*) has concentrated on the activities of PADD, while also incorporating other national models for activist art. In our first editorial, we declared that our main goal was "to provide artists with an organized relationship to society." The first four issues focused on our own public projects and local/national organizing, culminating in the "February 26th Movement"—a national conference at District 1199, in February 1982.

With UPFRONT No. 5, we began to take our main themes from the content of the Second Sundays (monthly forums combining art and politics). In this issue, we cover the end of that program, which PADD has sadly but sensibly discontinued—for reasons not altogether tragic. The constant increase of more-or-less progressive art in the mainstream and peripheries has rendered us triumphantly redundant.

In the editorial for No. 5 (February 1983), we said: "We'd like to help create a new audience for the new forms developing between social groups and artists." The editorial in No. 6-7 (1983) reiterated our commitment to "dialectical engagement," to creating "the cultural climate for social change." In No. 8 (1984) we retrenched a bit. Having burnt out temporarily on huge projects, we were becoming increasingly aware of the necessity "to align collective needs and goals." (At this point we began a short-lived series on individual works.) And we noted an emerging national dialogue about "the strategies and theories of cultural organizing" that crossed disciplinary boundaries.

In the next issue (1984), PADD began to look at visual art as a part of the national movement for a broader "cultural democracy." Although there had been a concerted effort from the beginning to include and work more closely with other so-called "minorities" (through the "Out of Sight/Out of Mind" series and in our public projects), these efforts intensified in 1985-86, foundering to some extent in despair. (See "We Want It, We Need It, We Ain't Got It Yet" in No. 11.)

With the addition of UPFRONT's national "editorial community" (see pp. 6-16), we intend to be more responsible to the needs and desires of communities both like and unlike ourselves on a national level. Our frustrating but provocative local coalition work has prepared us for the pain, difficulty, and occasional joys of an expanded enterprise. UPFRONT will continue to feature the PADD Archive and the international news column, but substantial articles will be solicited from and through the Editorial Community, whose role will be concretized through the active participation of those we have invited (and others who will join us as we go along).

Finally, our activist art community will continue to try to strike a balance between the Left and populism *and* the experimental and/or scholarly center. We want to address more often the sometimes absurd but also fascinating debates around the meanings and strategies implied by "postmodernism." Absolutely crucial to this whole endeavour will be merciless (but not mean) mutual criticism of our art, our organizing, and our analysis. That's where you, the readership, become an integral part of the editorial process.

EDITORIAL COMMUNITY (organizations listed for identification purposes only): Don Adams/Arlene Goldbard (Ukiah, CA) ● Pat Aufderheide (*In These Times*, Washington, DC) ● Eva Cockcroft (Artmakers, N.Y., NY) ● Tim Drescher (*Community Murals*, Berkeley, CA) ● Jimmie Durham, artist, (N.Y., NY) ● John Greyson (V-Tape Distribution, Toronto, Canada) ● Nye Heron, (Irish Art Center, N.Y., NY) ● Gale Jackson (Art Against Apartheid, N.Y. , NY) ● Peter Jemison (NY State Office of Parks, Victor, NY) ● Joan Jubela (X Change, N.Y., NY) ● Charlie King (People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle, Norwich, CT) ● Avis Lang (*Heresies* Collective N.Y., NY) ● Robert Lee (Asian Arts Institute, N.Y., NY) ● Liz Lerman (Dancers of the Third Age, Washington, D.C.) ● David Lindahl (*James White Review*, Minneapolis, MN) ● Robbie McCauley/Ed Montgomery (Sedition Ensemble, N.Y., NY) ● Jay Murphy (*Red Bass*, Tallahassee, FL) ● Jim Murray (*Cultural Correspondence*, N.Y., NY) ● Juan Sanchez artist, (N.Y., NY) ● Susan Sherman (*IKON*, N.Y., NY) ● Dona Grund Slepack (Inter. Shadow Project, Oregon City, OR) ● John Pitman Weber (Chicago Public Art Group, Chicago, IL)

Why I Prefer Rhinestones to Diamonds

(and other questions of power in art and culture)

By Charles Frederick

Because when I wear rhinestones (which I can afford), I control what they mean. Their most important brilliance is metaphoric. Their semiotic gleam reflects my fire. While if I were to wear diamonds (which I cannot afford), what they mean all by themselves, on or off my neck, would have greater significance than I do.

I will admit that once in a while diamonds still wear some shmatas of metaphor. They are said to represent durability (hardness, coldness) and absolute brilliance. (Additionally, because they are mined by Black people in South Africa, they represent oppression, and because of who wears them, they represent avarice. But I only say this because I have a call-me- a-radical, no-sense-of-humor, tediously-one-dimensional, always- bringing-that-up-again way of looking at the world.)

Diamonds, although they are only things, need never sell their wares on the street as metaphors, need never go up and down in value, in and out of fashion (need never grow old and socially useless). Diamonds do not suffer the indignity of merely *representing* wealth: they are *actual* wealth. (Whereas the person wearing them represents the potential of wealth, generating actual wealth only when put to work.) Diamonds' most perfectly crafted setting is not a necklace, but a bank vault.

I prefer rhinestones to diamonds because I want people to have more power in and of themselves than things do in and of themselves; I want the name of a thing to be mortal and attached to its place of birth, not to be eternal and universal. I want its meaning to come from the democratically expressed freedom of people to decide what is humanly valuable.

I am, of course, talking here about the difference between high art and democratic culture.

THERE IS A GLEAM OF ANGER IN THE SPARKLING EYE OF A RHINESTONE

I am a gay man. Wearing rhinestones in the presence of my (carefully put together) personality is one way I make art. I am (self-composedly) confusing the "right meanings" of signifiers. I am (biologically and culturally) a man, playing with the cultural attributes of a woman.I am liberating sexuality.

From outside my community, however, wearing my gaudy bracelets and brooches (brilliant at night, dull under fluorescent office light) appears "queer." My self-composed meaning is refused. My expression is devalued and seems incomprehensible within a "universal" acceptance of the distinction between male and female. And although by no means do I get constant applause in the gay community for all my choices, at least I am confident that when I am making my entrance at the top of the ballroom stairs, I am speaking a language of complex expressiveness (gender fucking) which everyone there speaks.

"Remedies for Damaged Maidenheads," from Pure Virtue (an Elizabethan Video), produced by Tanya Marc. *Fuse* magazine.

WEARING RHINESTONES PROPERLY IS AN ART FORM, WHEREAS WEARING DIAMONDS CAN NEVER BE MORE THAN A COMMODITY FORM

The assumed principle here is that all style is a cultural statement in the form of personal artistic expression. The problem is not mine; it will be in the surrounding culture, which sees my expression either as smooth within its weave, or rejects it as a cut of another cloth. The problem becomes mine, however, because when the surrounding society rejects or disparages my artistic expression, they don't simply say they don't like it; they negate its existence, they declare it isn't art. They can declare me a non-person.

So I have come to understand that the principle of personal style as a form of art is not sufficient in and of itself. I have a pedagogic responsibility to myself, my communities, and my potential

allies—other communities whose cultural expression has likewise been nullified. I must teach people how to interpret me. This becomes an activity of dialectic consciousness when to do this I must learn to evaluate—and criticize—myself.

Oppressed communities (cultures) are isolated. They remain ghettoized because the surrounding society is not strong enough (democratic enough) to embrace them within a collective history. The paradox is that domination is ultimately a form of weakness.

Ghettoes demonstrate that the oppressed are not yet strong enough either to act alone, or to create the necessary alliances with others to free themselves from domination. But ghettoes are dialectical enclosures: they are places of *history*. People are yoked in an enforced alienation by material, political and cultural means, and, at the same time, they are gathered in what become wombs of retreat, where different rules of culture and power might apply, where the community is developing, even while it is being policed. This proves that domination is not eternal. However, under the restrictive conditions of oppression, codes of meaning in the ghetto are languages of recognition and expression private to the oppressed community, a hidden subversion, yet another way in which a community's potential is imprisoned.

There is another ring to this circle: no community is totally integral unto itself, so no community can be in absolute isolation from the surrounding society. After all, even oppression is an expression of relationship. The codes of meaning in the hegemonic society, expressed back and forth in the relationship of domination, become universal referents.

They become systems of communication, signification and self-recognition, organizing knowledge and meaning for all communities, even when they are antagonistic and disparaging to the identity of the community. Even if they create for a community images of powerlessness and self-worthlessness: gay is queer and an abomination, Black is carnal, criminal and lazy, Indians no longer exist except as ghosts of a noble, savage past. "Universal" is just another word for "domination".

CRITICISM IS THE POLITICAL EDGE OF IMAGINATION

Our struggles in our communities for identity and liberation, our projects of cultural creation, are simultaneously struggles for and against systems of sign (and processes of representation) of human identity and meaning. Criticism, our reflection and judgement on how we signify our presence, is a militant political activity.

How is our cultural work (art and more) naming us and giving us images? How is it a new resource of power? We need to overthrow the "universal" canons of cultural criticism by replacing them with evaluations of cultural work that arise from and are accountable to the same community locations where the art itself is made. "Universal" standards of art and culture (beauty) are no more than the parochial standards of the oppressor.

How difficult it is to remember this! How difficult to keep from falling prey to disparagements and devaluations of our work and the self-recognition that work represents in our communities. How easy to lose hold of our tenuous confidence, to feel primitive, weak, shabby and formless—like powerless people all over the world, having yet so much to learn in order to unlearn our deference to power.

While scorning ours, universalist culture has its own political mission: to contain the possible liberatory human meaning arising within a society by consistently devaluing its cultural expression. Those who wield this power of critical judgement always deny they have any political mission.

But we should not be surprised that hegemonic power in any form refuses to name itself as power. It would then be stripped of its mystique as a truth which transcends history. It would have to show itself. If revealed, this system of power would be forced

Lizzie Olesker (rear); Diane Torr (r), Chris Koenig (l) in "Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Queens," performed at BACA

to wear the iron shirt of state censorship or to compete with other systems of meaning.

We will not be successful, however, in our work of organizing flexible critical languages, essential to the continuous development of community culture, if all we do is reactively refuse the oppressor's evaluations, if we cannot create honest evaluations of our own, including, when necessary, admission of the weakness of some of our efforts. Our cultural expression is at the same state of uneven development as are our communities. We are still oppressed, after all.

We need to bring our work under the control of our communities, subject to informed public discussion—a project of education and mutual development, both for the community and its culture. Is our cultural work best expressing the real and potential truth and beauty of our communities? Is our work forthright about both strength and weakness, hope and fear, division and unity? Are we confident enough to let go of our defensiveness, to enjoy the power of criticizing ourselves, on our own terms?

Also, we need to be comprehensive. Our criticism must be a complex interpretation of many systems of meaning at the same time, mirroring the ways our communities are creating themselves within conflicting cultural possibilities. In addition to our communities' indigenous cultures, all of the surrounding, impinging, even dominating cultures have combined to name us, to make us who we are. If only our task were so simple that all we had to do were to distinguish good from bad culture. But development out of our current historical conditions is the answer to oppression, not cutting limbs off of our experiences, not new repression and misrepresentation, even when disguised as idealism.

Our work takes place in history, so our criticism cannot be a stubborn refusenik opposition to it. It must be dialectical, dancing on its toes, moving with history, gathering in all of the many forces shaping us. Our responsibility is to organize our own systems of knowledge, based on new principles of human rights, but taking into account the entire swarm of history—not just who we wish to be, but how we create identities which are concretely constituted and rooted in history as potential subjects of history, systems of knowledge arising from our actual struggle to be free.

THE UPFRONT PROJECT: ANSWERING A QUESTION WITH A QUESTION

Responsible criticism—criticism that is part of the effort to change the world—begins not with assumptions, but with questions. It begins with a kind of radical curiosity, a wish to understand what is there; not, as in universalist criticism, with an anxious defense of what has been mistakenly assumed to have been there always. Radical critics understand that they are not "objective" onlookers; they are participants in the event.

Why, we ask, has what I am looking at, or reading, or hearing been made? What does it accomplish? How was it done? Who was involved? Why do I like it or not like it? What do I understand? How can I describe the experience? Then, what does this experience connect me with, and what associations arise out of my own history? What else do I need to know, about the community where it is made, about the cultural and aesthetic traditions of that community? What else do I think is needed?

It must be recognized that none of these questions can be pursued by an interrogator free of his or her place in the world, free of history (class, sex, age, race, geography, etc.), free of cultural community or milieu. Anyway, isn't it our ambition to be free *in* all of these places, rather than to be free *of* them? If we are to compose a critical discourse that might defend the cultural and liberatory development of ourselves and our communities, a discourse that might break down the walls of our ghettoes (while

Sue Williamson

A detail from "Case No. 6831/21" (A Few South Africans),

describing them), the first task for each of us, for each of our communities, is the task of self-investigation.

This is best accomplished in a mutually trusting and risk-taking environment, in dialogue with others, who speak (and know) from different personal and cultural origins. We need to ask each other questions that will not occur to us if our reflection is pursued only within our own communities. Our communities have been oppressed for so long that some of the cultural/artistic responses to that oppression run the risk of being limited by defensiveness.

(One example is the usefulness of the feminist critique of men in drag performance. This critique brings out a set of questions about the representation of women within the culture of gay men. This does not deny the cultural validity of drag performance—which is unendingly complex, a Moebius strip of gender subversion—but new questions are raised about the acceptance of the feminine within the masculine, which is one of the primary questions of cultural identity and liberation in the gay male community.)

UPFRONT is offering itself as an expanded forum for such a discussion. To begin this effort, the New York editorial collective has invited about sixty artists and cultural workers (in all mediums and occupations) to be part of an "editorial community" to help develop a critical discussion of culture in the U.S. We have invited people from around the country, who come from many different communities—racially, culturally, and politically. They work in different ways and with many different issues of art, community, politics and culture. We have listed on our masthead those who have responded thus far.

The Enquiry that follows this introduction is the first installment of an ongoing brainstorm among the developing editorial community. We are attempting to map out a terrain for this discussion of culture and cultural work and we expect that our effort will be somewhat unwieldy at first. Our process will remain open to scrutiny and discussion as we go along. We are trying to become an instrument for a new, continuous discourse of cultural criticism resting on the principle that each community has its own culture, equal in value to all others. Only when the different foundations of each community are consciously acknowledged, understood, internally criticized and externally communicated can we find among ourselves common categories with which to organize a shared criticism of culture—always keeping in mind that the shared discussion does not trespass on the autonomy of the diverse cultures.

We are proposing that a new image is flickering over the wall in the cave of history (herstory/ourstory): a *democratic* culture of cultures, ultimately global in sweep (ultimately sweeping imperialism from the globe). On the way toward that future, we are enmeshed in the struggles of the present—both in the U.S. and internationally.

It is exactly these places of activist cultural production—a vast universe of art and culture—which we want to address as the subject of our criticism. By choosing this subject (the cultures of opposition, liberation, and community/human development), by finding the terms of aesthetics and accountability to carry out this discussion, by learning how to organize and present our forms of knowledge and expression, we will have gone another step towards taking our place in history. *We* will be naming culture, rather than abdicating our powers of judgement. We, the cultural workers whose work is identified with and committed to this developing history, have the authority to formulate the cultural criticism of this new history.

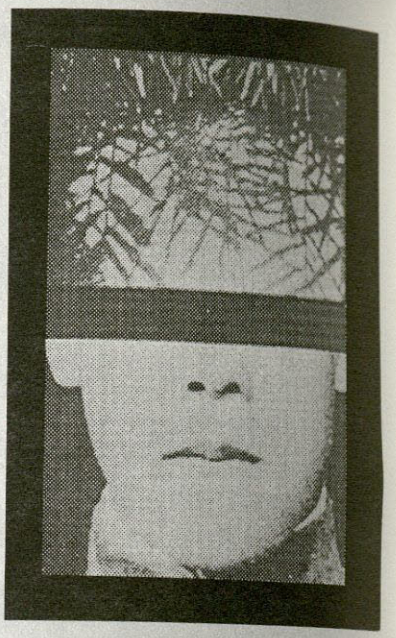
WHAT WE'RE STARTING WITH

Our questions of ourselves and cultural workers around the country fall into three general areas. First, we want a general sense of people and their work, how they see their work in an historical context. Second, we want to know what cultural diversity really means, what are the different insights we need to communicate to one another? And third, what are the concerns that broaden the scope of our aesthetic inquiry beyond the simple art object, making our evaluation different from the dominant forms of criticism?

Already, from the response to the questionnaire, the editorial committee in New York is recognizing that our organization and cooperation with people around the country will have to be carefully critiqued. People have come up with different questions and we need to share the authority of this venture more fully. In future issues of UPFRONT we will be able to address these different needs in a mutually informed collaboration.

CODA: A LAST THOUGHT ON WHY I LIKE RHINESTONES

It's totally personal. I like glittery things. It was one of my earliest ideas of what makes something beautiful, something that can keep my eye and attention with color and sparkle over well-cut facets. Pondering what all that means is part of the enchantment.



CULTURAL ACTIVISM:

Movement or Murmur?

A Cross-country Enquiry Into Where We're At

We're living at a moment of emerging ferment—politically, socially, culturally. Even as we go to press, fissures are appearing in the seamless wall of Reagan reaction and corporate dominance. In this situation, the fragmented cultural movement—Blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, gays, lesbians, feminists, community activists and others—-is presented with new opportunities for reaching people and inspiring positive social change.

Few have the illusion that a single artwork can transform society. We do know, however, that culture is a cutting edge—that its emotional/aesthetic/political magic lies precisely in its ability to create an authentic critique of our oppressive social system and to project a countervision of a more humane future. To fulfill this potential, it seemed to us after six years of working and networking in PADD, what is needed most now is for cultural activists to develop a shared consciousness of one another's activities/goals, and to define what constitutes the movement we are all part of. Are we, indeed, a strong cultural current, or merely a ripple in the stream of American ideology?

Fortunately, as the previous article indicates, such a dialogue has already begun to surface nationally. "What connects us?" we are asking, "What divides us, and how are our differences themselves fruitful?" What the following answers to our questionnaire reveal is that our differences—from racial, sexual, political and aesthetic approaches to perceptions about where the movement should be going—are often as deep as our connections. Airing these divisions frankly, as our respondents do, can help build bridges between the various sectors of the cultural movement.

Our questionnaire also asked for advice on how UPFRONT can be developed into a national journal of activist culture and how it could help the movement itself. The replies we received in time to print are not nearly broad enough to constitute a consensus—in terms of race, community and group representation, media, etc. As this project develops we hope it will continue to expand its representation. Meanwhile, the following (edited and abridged) comments provide some insights into the enormously complex story of a cultural movement that has been erupting all around us in the past ten years or so.

THE QUESTIONS

What was the most important cultural event you worked on in the past ten years?

Describe a cultural work you saw or heard that was created in a milieu/community different from your own, but that you thought was important for your own milieu/community.

How did this work help you develop your own?

Do you think there is a progressive cultural movement in the U.S.? If so, what is your part in it? If not, what are the obtacles?

Can we describe ourselves as an era in U.S. political/cultural history? If so, describe our historical importance. What do you think the historical importance of your work is?

How is political consciousness part of your artistic/cultural imagination?

What is the importance of organized political activity to your own work? What about the Labor movement?

When has your work been most effective? Why? When didn't your work succeed? What did you learn?

What is/are your own communities?

How have you involved different sectors (youth, elders, etc.) in your work?

How has U.S. involvement in Central and Latin America affected your work?

Does the aesthetic debate about postmodernism mean much to you in your work?

What is the artwork you'd most like to make that you haven't been able to? Why?

What do we need most in our work immediately?

What do you think of this new UPFRONT project?

THE RESPONSES

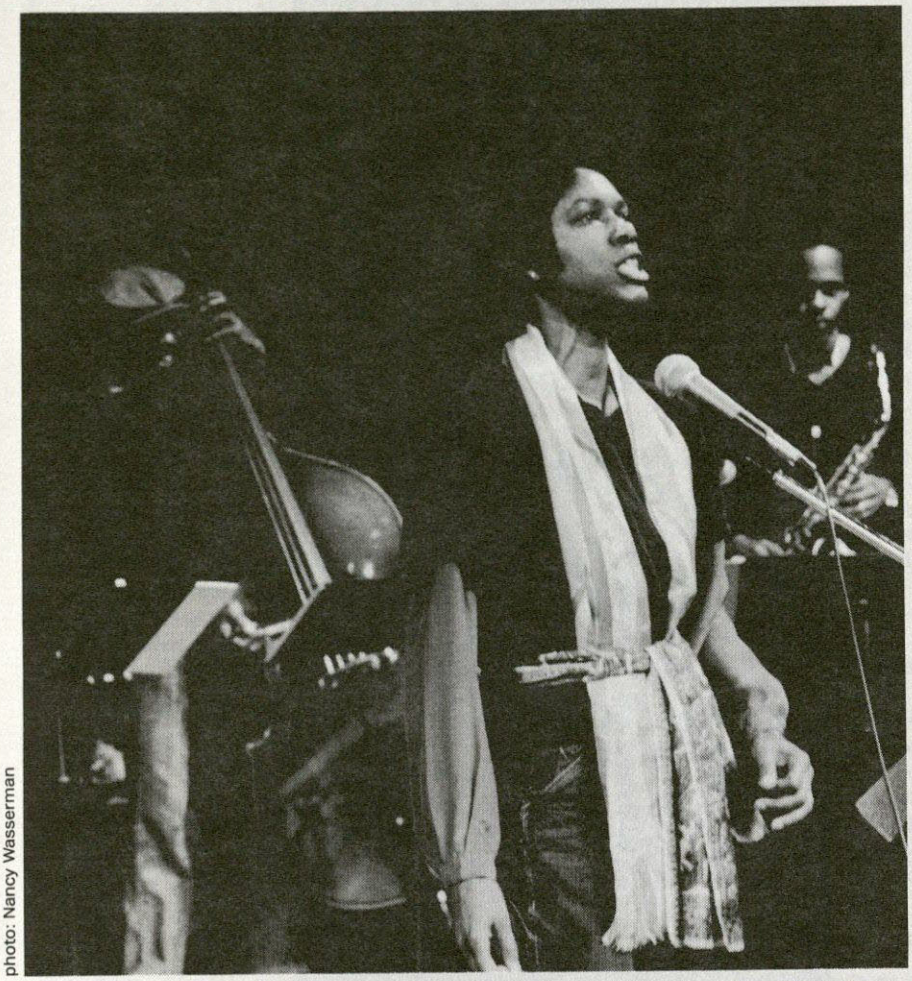


photo: Nancy Wasserman

"The History of the Universe According to Those Who've Had to Live It." Sedition Ensemble at Dartmouth College. Photo by Nancy Wasserman

"What's Real & What's Illusion," photograph by Tetsu Okuhara exhibited at Asian Arts Institute group show "Fathers," in May-June 1986

ROBBIE MCCAULEY, with Ed Montgomery and the Sedition Ensemble, New York, NY

There are numerous individuals and groups dealing with progressive images in art, but we are loosely and tenuously connected. I wouldn't call it a movement, because of the bourgeois individualism that U.S. artists are subject to—the subtle privileges, who you know and how to know who you know. Just to get work seen is quite an obstacle to developing the trust and dialogues needed for developing a movement.

My own work? Ed and I keep trying to reflect the political/personal contradictions as beautifully as possible. We study, read, go to rallies, feel for images about issues we want to talk/make music about. We are anti-imperialists, and do not mind being thought of as political artists. We'd like to think our art is political work, but we understand art is not enough by itself.

Our communities are Black people who know about and come to our shows, middle-aged hippies, leftist activists, people of the Lower East Side who support the artists down there, and other artists. We see older and younger people as part of our audience, and often they are.

I come out of experimental theatre and Ed out of jazz, so whatever avant-garde is, I'd guess it's influenced us. We use traditional music—Black classical (blues, jazz), Puerto Rican and other Afro-Hispanic musical forms, and Native American music. I'm exploring Black story-telling. I don't know what postmodernism is.

An important cultural event for us, created in a community not our own, was the story-telling done at the annual meeting of Alternate Roots—a coalition of community-based performing arts organizations located throughout the Southeast—that I attended August 1986. It was not only a story-telling but a potent confrontation and dialogue around the issue of racism that was prompted by a performance. There was sensitivity and no-nonsense discussion that seemed to come out of the fact that we were isolated outside Atlanta, Georgia, in a camp setting and, more importantly, that the Southern thing like beginning and ending meetings with a story or song made what was some heavy talking able to happen. These made the confrontations less rushed and more positive than similar-type attempts up here. What happened there gave me some insights into story-telling, which I've been exploring lately, and I felt more centered in my obsession about finding ways to speak out on racism—to explore more deeply the personal and political images.

Concern with U.S. involvement in Central America is essential in our search for images to expose the imperialist nature of the U.S. government. I'm concerned, however, that white artists may be using this issue to avoid their own and the society's systematic and now more subtle racism here against Blacks, Native Americans, and Puerto Ricans especially. I hardly ever see white artists confess their whiteness in all this, in their work. I see the denial of guilt and a trendy awareness of apartheid and oppression in Central America. My performance piece, "My Father and the Wars," and our duet performance, "Nicaragua in Perspective," try to deal with this.

We need leftist distribution—a conscious reaching out to a more populous audience—first-generation college students, government workers, progressive people in labor. The future is now and it's too late to attract the same audiences that tv and theatre producers try to diminish in social awareness with their low common-denominator talk. The future is a network of home videos, tape recordings and live performances in small places—home parties, meetings, classrooms.

Most of us are struggling hard to work with political ideas and art. We need the support of PADD/*UPFRONT*, not to be made to feel that this is the wrong place for us. UPFRONT needs strong Black and Hispanic input. It is a mistake not to have indicated this in some way that would turn on Third World artists and recognize that some language has to be found among progressive artists to deal with racism.

I'd have artists review and describe their own work before it is shown and have others comment on how it fulfilled, clarified, transformed, etc. I'd also have real interviews with audiences, a critical dialogue among writers (where they all see the same work and give their views within a social context), and a wide variety of ethnic and political views. Who'd read the magazine? Humanities students—college and otherwise, Black artists and community workers, parents, leftists, bourgeois intellectuals.

PETER JEMISON

I've curated over 30 exhibitions in the last 8 years, and co-curated or presented a number of others. Three were important for their impact upon the public, in my view: the first national survey of "Native American Photographers" (1984); "Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage" (1985), curated by Jaune Quick to See Smith and Harmony Hammond, with catalogue, and mounted by myself, Jesse Cooday, and Will Guy at the American Indian Community House Gallery, before it began its national tour; and "Common Heritage—Contemporary Iroquois Artists" at the Queens Museum (1984) curated with Irving Kligfield, catalogue design by Jolene Rickard.

The "Times Square Show" was the first time I showed my work on brown paper bags and it became a catalyst for further development of the bag series. Janet Henry included my work in an exhibition at Just Above Midtown. It was reviewed by Kay Larson in *The Village Voice*, and I kept producing these bags. They are direct, temporal, and vehicles for multiple images.

"The Maori" at the Metropolitan Museum in 1985 exposed me to the beauty of the Maori people, their art, songs, dances, and beliefs. This past summer, I was invited to address the Nga Puna Waihanga, the Maori Society of Artists and Writers. I attended their annual conference at Turangawae, New Zealand, where I spoke and showed slides of Native American artists. The experience was unforgettable—a reaffirmation for the direction my life's work has taken.

I believe there is a progressive cultural movement in the U.S., but its vitality is not so great once you leave the major cities. The movement is not truly color blind, either; it tends to be primarily white with non-white artists included in various exhibitions. The oddity of the movement is its nearly singular focus on politics, which often leaves exhibitions with a biased non-review by critics. The nature of the idea seems to preclude direct culturally pluralistic statements. The shows are often thematic; however, the theme is political, in other words, progressive.

I can't decide what the political cultural impact of the work is. Sometimes I feel it's viewed mostly by the faithful and reaches few "others." My own current interest is to express the reality of politics for Native Americans as it's been played out for the last 300 years. The disturbing events in Guatemala, Bolivia, El Salvador, and Nicaragua are reminiscent of our past in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, and appear to repeat the mistakes of Vietnam. The bottom line is that those are *Indians* dying in those countries on both sides of each conflict.

"They Both Have Horns" (original on grocery bag), by Peter Jemison

JUAN SANCHEZ, Artist, New York, NY

I think we should get more seriously involved with the working class and poor communities. We should stop entertaining intellectuals and the mainstream art-world and start integrating ourselves into communities where we are badly needed and can certainly contribute to consciousness-raising, especially where our art truly reflects the reality, history and struggles of the people.

We socially/politically committed artists should be in issue-oriented movements and not merely with other political artists or other "art" activity. We should have been in the South Bronx a few weeks ago with the organizing committee when white people were beating up Puerto Ricans and Blacks. I went to the South Bronx, designed a flyer to help mobilize people to march against racism. Along with other artists I have always been doing this kind of work. I wish PADD would become more involved with their art activism on the community level.

My community consists of Puerto Ricans, Hispanics, Blacks and others who

are concerned and interested in community struggles. My own painting deals with questions of imperialism and colonialism in Puerto Rico. My work is dedicated to the liberation of Puerto Rico. I have also created art against apartheid, U.S. intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean and nuclear warfare.

One statement I wish to make: you must continue the effort to bring more non-white participants into the coordinating committee. They must be more visible in the art and decision-making. We must continue to deal more with internal problems of our country such as racism, unemployment, the homeless, poor education, sexism, etc.

I am very much impressed with the tremendous work accomplished by the priest Ernesto Cardenal in the isolated islands of Solentiname in Nicaragua. To move there and work with the peasants, to be part of and touch all levels of each other's lives, and to develop a community of painters is incredible. Especially this is so when art truly reflects the reality, struggle and history through poetry, painting and sculpture. In our own work here what we need most is for it to be installed in union halls, hospitals and public schools, so that we can have direct contact with working and poor people as our prime audience.

[redacted]

NYE HERON, Irish Arts Center, New York, NY

No, there is no progressive cultural movement in the United States. The main obstacle is—an absence of a progressive political movement here. What about the labor movement? Some individuals have been enormously helpful to us, but as a movement it seems irrelevant to art.

All Irish art is consciously political. Our cultural activity occurs in inverse proportion to the political temperature in Ireland. Our communities consist of Irish immigrants and middle-class Irish Americans. We serve both the young and older sectors of this community, but depend on involving people in their twenties—they do the work.

The avant-garde tradition has no importance in our work. I don't know what the word postmodern means. (Your letter uses too many big words in long sentences.) The older traditions in art-making are very much part of our work.

One of your stories carries without a comment a report on British artists' work on "the absurdity of strife...the terrible intransigence of Ulster's civil war." A left magazine should be able to see through this crap. The Ulster struggle is a colonial struggle, not a civil war!

All of the above sounds very negative, but I did find UPFRONT interesting, well written and well edited. I would be happy to collectively edit anything to do with Ireland, white ethnicity in the United States, and the relationship between white ethnicity and minority struggles.

[redacted]

PAT AUFDERHEIDE, *In These Times*, Washington, D.C.

As the cultural editor for *In These Times* from 1978 to 1982, and senior editor ever since, I think the project of having a cultural section in a newspaper oriented to leftists (who largely work in institutions such as labor unions, universities, and local and regional governments) has been the most important project I've attempted. The challenge has been to find both subjects and voices, to discover a link between people who mostly don't work in the arts and people who write on and work in cultural affairs. The fundamental task has been to redefine culture so that it doesn't just mean "the arts," but the milieu—ideological, esthetic, and structural—within which we work.

As a historian of Latin America, I was always interested in Latin American art, particularly film and video. This has led me to a curiosity about the art forms of the emerging culture of the Third World—"emerging," in that today there is a culture between the traditional or autonomous cultures of countries outside the superpowers and the international culture brought into those countries by imperial forces. The ways in which the relationship between the two arenas is expressed, and the ways in which new cultural territory is being established, have been fascinating to watch.

That territory has parallels, not always close, with the struggles for expression in the U.S. by racial and ethnic groups; by artists searching for new ground now that the modernist distinction between artist and commercial society is eroded; by emerging social groups such as those defined by sex role, sexual preference, and age; by working people reviving a labor sensibility; and perhaps least of all by groups sharing a political perspective.

A clear characteristic of the left readership of *In These Times* is cultural balkanization, in part a reflection of political balkanization. I regard my job as finding a balance that both responds to reality in our readership and also educates that readership. In practice this means, among other things: finding perspectives on the most popular trends in commercial culture that avoid the easy trap of censuring it just for being commercial; probing why the appeal is there; searching out expressions within commercial culture that demonstrate cracks in the ideological facade or indicate changes; and sorting out from the welter of demands for coverage of what is unhelpfully called "alternative culture" the themes, events, personalities, and issues that are significant.

I regard my work as part of the dispersed work of Americans across the country who are not in accordance with the "control stupidity" (Daniel Ellsberg's phrase) that seems to be a key part of the cultural baggage of middle-class Americans. My job is to provide a voice, attitude, language and data that lets this dispersed group of people know that they are not alone, crazy, or Quixotic. I see the majority of my writing and editing as speaking primarily to people working on the left because the market conditions for thoughtful, socially-critical writing are grim. I think a host of forces have diminished the group of people who want, or can afford, to be critical about the way American society is organized.

Repeatedly in *In These Times* I've tried to publish articles that are self-critical about cultural expression on the left or in 'alternative culture.' In general, coverage of emerging, left, "alternative culture" suffers from a style that's basically either public-relations hype or groupieism. If I had figured out how to lick this one, I would have slammed the results into print long since. As it is, I myself hesitate even to write about independent films or left cultural projects about which I cannot be enthusiastic, because it's just too easy to be misunderstood.

It sounds to me like the projects of UPFRONT and the cultural coverage of *In These Times* would be neatly complementary. I assume you would primarily be addressing people who work in cultural affairs, which would permit you to raise—among friends and at some length—the difficult questions of what's working and what's not, to try some of the criticism that seems so hard to raise once you take a step beyond the cultural producers themselves.

The question of the tradition of the avant garde is much more for artists than for critics and journalists. (I myself consider the passing of the avant garde as one of the most interesting phenomena of postmodern culture.) The esthetic debate on postmodernism is still grossly immature. We should all be participating in and reading about it without treating the state of the discussion as developed. Of course we need to have it, and have at it, because the terms of modernism no longer apply to the work we are all doing or to the relationship to audience and market. I would like to write for a broad audience about the social implications of cultural expression, and, to put it crudely, the market isn't there for it.

At the most general level, I think what we all need is not to lose faith that having principles, integrity, critical voices, projects that resist the impetus toward greed, self-satisfaction, ignorance and cruelty are important, right where we are, within our communities.

JIMMY DURHAM, Artist, member of American Indian Movement, New York, NY

It is a bad situation for many minority artists. My community is the American-Indian, but not in New York City. Here it is political artists and organizers. Our political work is usually separate from our art and time-consuming. Still, I don't think I could possibly have artistic imagination without political consciousness. They are not separate items. I try to be a contemporary Indian artist by following the traditions of my people—sculpture, etc. used by the people. I try to think of performance pieces and installations that are inclusive instead of declaratory. I am most interested in the theater work of Augusto Boal and cannot imagine why he is so ignored in this country. The obstacle to all this is that the only art system we have is really a marketing system. Art work is often done in the context of a basically white art community, with little intercourse relating to other groups. The tradition of the avant-garde has been of no importance to me. The aesthetic debate about postmodernism means nothing at all to my work. What we most need in our work is mutal responsibility and solidarity.

JOAN JUBELA, Xchange TV, New York, NY

U.S. involvement in Central America and my education around this issue have been pivotal in how I have come to perceive my work. As an independent video-maker, I have been interested in innovative methods of distribution, alternative kinds of television programming, fresh forms and poignant content, but until I began to investigate the political situation in Central America, it hadn't completely dawned on me how the monolith of corporate media in this country manages to keep so many of its citizens stupid and passive. Picking cotton with the Brigadista effort in Nicaragua initiated a change in my critical thinking. Subsequently I became involved with a group calling itself Xchange TV. As a loose-knit collection of young artists and activists we began to bring to the U.S. television programming produced by Nicaraguans. Our intention is simple. While an excellent body of independent film and video produced by North Americans exists about Nicaragua, not much media in this country attempts to look at the Nicaraguan situation from the Nicaraguan point of view. We have distributed Nicaraguan tapes to solidarity groups, educators, cable systems, and museums. Xchange TV cablecasts a half hour program on cable TV Channel D in New York City every Monday night at 9 p.m. Through my involvement with Xchange TV the political considerations in the other kinds of work I do have become more sharply defined.

I'm trying to balance the work I do as an independent video-maker with both individual and collective endeavors. Video, both production and distribution, is a very expensive and time-consuming medium to work in. Money is a big obstacle. By working collectively, people can pool resources, equipment and ideas. This is what we do in Paper Tiger TV, a public access show that critiques mainstream media. It's very beneficial to work in a supportive environment with other artists, but our society is very individually oriented. The purveyors of culture, like critics and programmers, look to individuals the same way Hollywood promotes stars. I think individual creation is important, but I wonder how collective projects can grow in a society that stresses individualism so strongly.

Thinking about ourselves in an era of U.S. history, the historical significance of my, or anybody's work is problematic and overly deterministic. First of all it raises class divisions and secondly it de-emphasizes social awareness of the here and now. Understanding history and what it can tell us is one thing, but trying to second guess your place in history because of the artificial importance our culture places on it is analogous to religious beliefs that promise rewards in the hereafter. Poor people need access to art that can allow them to express their oppression now. We should not worry about how history will judge us.

ARLENE GOLDBARD & DON ADAMS, Ukiah, CA

It seems important to recognize that some of the people who might contribute to your dialogue on cultural politics are those whose perspectives are national or international, or who are involved in writing and thinking about culture from a different point of view than as creators of works of art and art events. If you want the new UPFRONT to focus primarily on the creation of art works, criticism of works, and so forth (which would certainly fill a real need), then perhaps you need to cull some of the oddballs—such as ourselves—from your editorial list.

If the magazine will pay primary attention to aesthetic themes and criticism, then we would caution you to avoid becoming trapped in the art world's hall of mirrors. The debate about "postmodernism," for instance. These teapot tempests are ways to absorb energy that might go into changing the culture. "Postmodernism," so far as we can see, is a feeble reaching toward cultural democracy, a sham pluralism stimulated by the bankruptcy of the wholesale gimmicks of "schools" and "trends." But this yearning toward pluralism can never be fulfilled, because it must take place within the frame of the artworld, which is by nature undemocratic. The position of a progressive cultural journal toward this sort of stylized "debate" should be to call it what it is, and invite those who have been seduced by it to consider what real cultural democracy might mean. You also need to be careful to avoid the big-city trap of exaggerating the importance of such matters because there are enough people in the New York artworld who care about them to keep up the appearance of a genuine debate.

With a group so dominated by East Coast people, involved in cultural politics as they've been conducted there, one of your problems will be to enable real diversity of voices and points of view, as opposed to producing another version of "how New York sees the rest of the world." What about coming up with a plan for the first year involving rotating guest editorship? The editorial collective could remain in charge to oversee production and coordinate editorial work. But a person or small group of persons could plan and focus each issue's material on a specific issue, a specific type of work, a specific community, or some combination of these. You could use the responses to your editorial community questionnaire to decide which foci are important for the coming year.

People say that "no one reads anymore." We would prefer to see that as a gross exaggeration, but it is true that a spot survey of potential readers of publications like UPFRONT will often reveal that very few people have gotten around to doing more than looking at the pictures and captions. There is a terrific anti-intellectualism among the potential readership. There is no quick and easy answer to this problem. But we would suggest plain language as much as possible, every effort to link complex or even arcane questions (when they really justify attention) to real practice, and great care in explaining things that may seem obvious to members of the editorial collective.

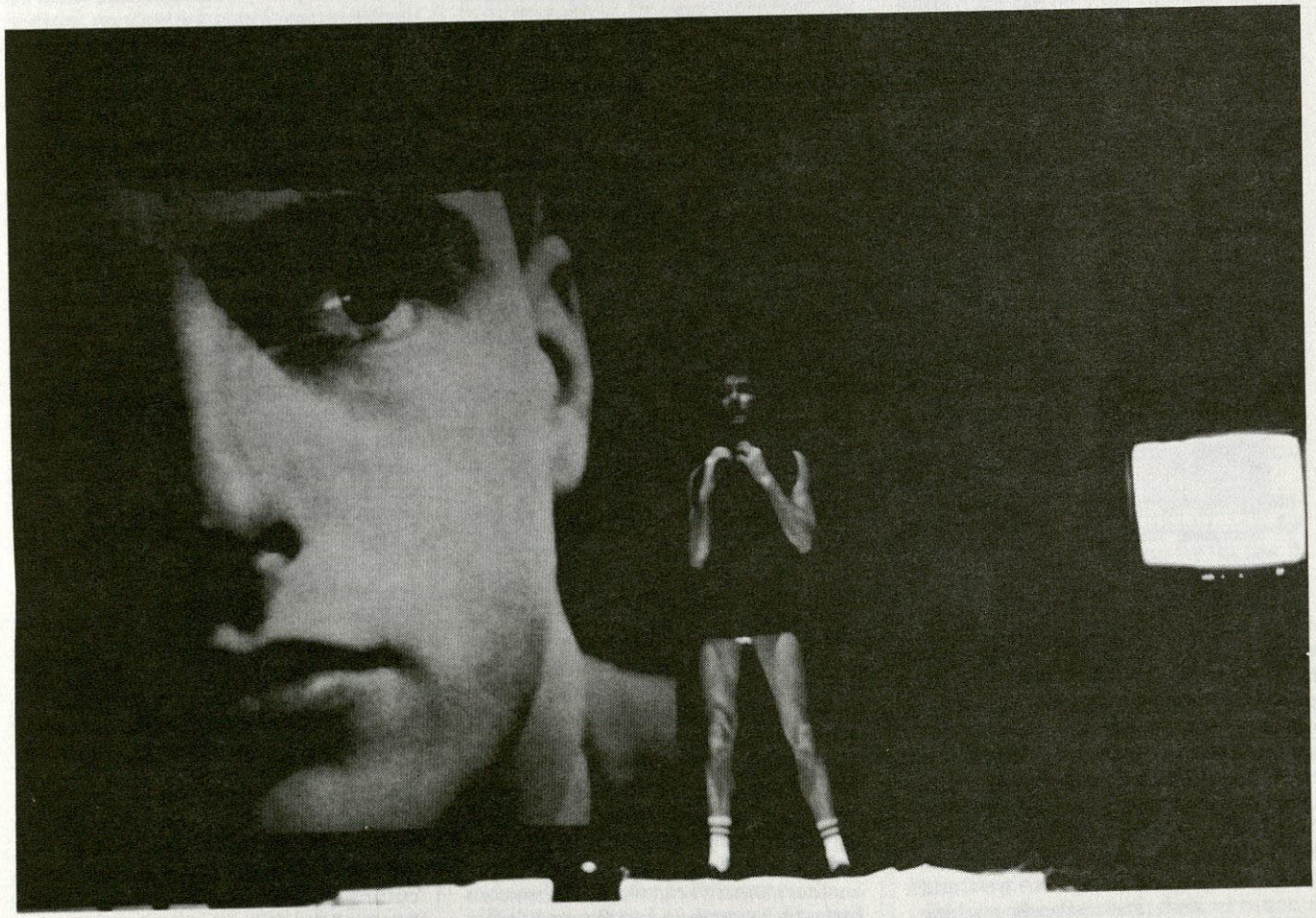
If these links are made, the magazine can be tremendously helpful in teaching people new ways to think about their work, to put it into perspective, and ultimately to see it as part of something larger.

JOHN GREYSON, John Greyson Productions, Toronto, Canada

It feels a bit like reinventing the wheel, especially since so many of the questions are rhetorical. *Of course* there's a progressive cultural movement in the States (as well as in most other countries, suppressed or flourishing, underground or state-sanctioned, co-opted and contradictory). Here in Toronto, The Independent Artists Union is rolling ahead full steam and will begin negotiating with government this spring. Central American and Anti-Apartheid Solidarity has involved the arts communities actively—during the Arts Against Apartheid festival last May, Queen Street (our version of Soho) was strung up with artists' banners denouncing apartheid and festooning the streets. Feminist and lesbian/gay artists in the city have been incredibly active fighting censorship and exploring issues of sexuality, sexism and heterosexism in their work. There was a first annual Labour Arts Festival last May, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Haymarket. Compared to five years ago, the city is hopping with activism in every media. I just came from a meeting for an artists' housing co-op we're building, which is a concrete result of artists organizing around the housing crisis.

Finally, perhaps most pertinently, artists have been in the forefront fighting the current free trade negotiations with the U.S. which consumes our headlines daily (though few Americans have even heard about them). In trying to keep culture off the bargaining table, we're fighting for what little culture we have left. One of the challenges is to resist a simplistic nationalist analysis.

And . . . in regard to UPFRONT, having worked with a number of magazines, some of which were devoted to cultural criticism, a million questions come to mind—it's hard to begin. Audience: I'd aim for cultural workers—internal discussion—and obviously a larger audience will be interested. If you aim for a larger audience (that mythical general public), it'll have a lot less bite. Content: I'm sure it'll prove very difficult to get anyone to be critical. We all tend to be overprotective, over-supportive, and quite shy of expressing our critiques publicly. Two reasons seem to be: on the one hand, a real (and often necessary) reluctance to criticize the work of other cultures/communities, and on the other, a reluctance to be tough or strongly critical in a "mixed" context (e.g., I always write differently about gay stuff in gay publications than in straight ones). It would be great if some of these difficulties and limitations were explored and addressed. UPFRONT will probably work best as a very imperfect magazine going in several directions at once. Just as long as it's sassy and irreverent and fun and bad.



"You Taste American," performance by John Greyson for V-Tape distribution. Photo by Cheryl O'Brien

LIZ LERMAN, Dance Exchange, Washington, D.C.

Of course we are in a U.S. political/cultural period. We always are, and it is up to us to define and explain it. We have many tasks —one is to recognize that there are connections between all that we are attempting to do and realize that each of us does not have to embody the entire sweep of our efforts. When taken as a whole, every activity on the continuum is part of our movement toward a more liveable and just world.

I would say that among our other tasks are: to see as clearly as possible the way things are working out on our planet and then find a way to communicate this sight so that others can reflect on that viewpoint. I'm not sure we must also be the active change-makers; we should at least be connected to those that are, so that we can keep from feeling useless and impotent.

about questions of life and death becomes something very unique.

The most difficult issue for me around political consciousness and my art work is how much to say. . . how much to tell the audience. . . how to leave room for discussion. Currently, what I am trying to do politically is to show the events, lace it with my feelings, but leave room for opinions and feelings from others. Perhaps this puts me at the conservative end of our movement's spectrum. . . or perhaps it has me compromising with the aesthetics of ambiguity.

What are my communities? They include: women (some parts Jewish), parts of the aging, D.C. arts community, Black artists/white artists, ACD, ACD old-timers, family, people next door and across the street, my dance company, my husband and I, National Performance Network artists and presenters, Children's Hospital, DC Village.

The question of community is at the heart of some of my deepest questions about my work. I have always felt there

"Swan Lake." Dancers of the Third Age. Photo by DeLoria

We need to fight the overwhelming sense of cynicism facing people everywhere—that's why it's important to transform our research of how things work politically into visions that convey information and feeling. To some extent, it is our act of creation that can serve as a metaphor for power, or is in itself a form of power. I know that when people see my little dance on the (M1) tank, part of the effect is that a sole woman organized the facts, makes them heard in a new and funny way and thus makes the whole defense business less mysterious. Sort of, "If she can, than I can."

As for my own work, I have been concentrating on two old issues: who gets to dance, and what are we dancing about. For me, to have older people join us on stage becomes very new. . . for us to dance

were reasons for all of us to be together. . . to share what we have in common. I have also felt there were times for separation—to be with a very small community (say, just young professional dancers, or just of Jewish women, or just the community of me.) This would allow me and my group to challenge ourselves completely on whatever the issue was facing us. Thus, with older dancers I can concentrate entirely on their issues, while at another moment I can work with my own issues on becoming a middle-aged dancer in a world that suggests we should quit by the age of thirty.

A second problem for me with this notion of different communities is the feeling of fragmentation. I am all these at once, not one moment Jewish, another moment female, and yet another moment artist. I know I don't feel as fragmented as I used to, but I also know I must explain myself (Dance Exchange is always explaining itself so people get the whole picture). This is very hard, since most of the world is satisfied to be just a fragment.

ROBERT LEE, Asian Arts Institute, New York, NY

My role in the progressive cultural movement—if there is one—is to emphasize an Asian American presence both aesthetic and political, and to support the creation of a new art/vision/ mentality that meets our collective needs: simply to respond to good art.

I believe the art created by Asian Americans is worthy of attention and should be recognized as a field—to document the cultural change of Asians in America. American culture rides through a series of deceptions almost by necessity. . . taboos and conventions incessantly retrenching. My work resists one of these—resists closing the door on another culture. . . keeping it open, making continuity possible through preservation or innovation. Cultural diversity *is* a cultural/political movement.

What we need most in our work is advocacy and a broad-based audience, to shift the flow of resources from objects to cultural efforts, or to change the nature of cultural work to become more a part of the process of production.

It is through the tradition of the avant-garde that influences from Asia have entered Western society. Certain styles and ideas have been reworked and transplanted. The meaning of this is however paradoxical, since it reaffirms for us aspects of an established tradition in the guise of the newest elite. Committed to a community and the development of a culture from within, elitist culture does not serve us well.

Asia is presently fragmented and distorted for consumption in a new context—a new audience who, in accepting reports of themselves and Asians cannot see "the thing itself" themselves, nor the presence of Asians in their midst. Stereotypes, the reports of a phenomenon, are more real than the thing in itself. Elites, by definition, cannot be close to the people. Cultural traditions that make no fuss about their innovation are an art—perhaps an ethnic art—that we as a movement have not fully explored. Avant-gardism—the "cutting edge" of history/art—may not be the people's edge.

Your plan for UPFRONT can help create crossover movements. Culturally diverse groups (i.e., Asian Americans) can be heard by others with different viewpoints. Community art is specific and limited if not in its viewpoint then in its intended impact. A broader network and a vital au-

dience will strengthen the groups and the art.

I would like—as part of this project—to broaden my audience, share some thoughts, take an estimate of your audience and their receptivity to Asian American issues. Can you introduce this editorial committee to each other? You rekindle my affection and my reservations for the 60's-70's.

TIM DRESCHER, *Community Murals Magazine*, Berkeley, CA

Having been producing a political art magazine for nearly ten years now, I believe that the single most important characteristic of such a publication is its regular production—it must come out regularly, on schedule, on time, like clockwork, or it does not make any impact at all; frustration overwhelms any stimulation it offers. To make this happen, there must be one person who takes the task on as the primary priority in his/her life. Others must do their part but without someone making phone calls to line up editorial meetings, layout, design, printing, mailing, the magazine won't happen regularly, and thus may as well not happen at all.

We all need a magazine that discusses questions that we may be reluctant to bring up locally because local egos/ friends might be bruised. There are real political differences within and between groups and these need discussions too.

Certain theoretical questions need discussion too. Are there particular images suitable for now? Not suitable ones? Must aesthetic impact be diluted in direct proportion to the inclusion of non-artist community members? Is there a working class to which artists can relate meaningfully without resorting to clichés? Must progressive art be tendentious or is Marcuse right? Is he right enough to warrant our doing "our" art no matter what? What else can matter?

My personal role is as a participant—murals, photography, lectures, teaching—and as a member of the CMM Editorial Group, helping to produce a magazine about community-based visual arts that tells us all what everybody else is doing, how they are solving problems and what their images/struggles look like.

Obstacles include a lack of a political movement to relate to; lack of personal nourishment; lack of new blood in what is left of the movement. Besides these, the massive oppression by conservatives at every turn.

Our community consists of working people—specifics vary according to project—muralists; members of particular groups such as church groups, unions, women's groups, schools, sometimes neighborhoods. "Community" must have a social definition, not be allowed to refer only to a place where budget items are spent. Muralists (and the Magazine) simply go where there are people who want to work together on a collective project.

The important thing is to get a publication out regularly and print whatever is not regularly covered by other publications—video, theater, film, poetry, murals, photography. All are available in a variety of places, but some from each around selected topics would be wonderful, sort of cross-fertilization for us all.

DAVID LINDAHL. *James White Review* (a Gay Man's Literary Quarterly), Minneapolis, MN

In general gay magazines here have been around for a while, being quite prominent in Germany in the 20's. In that respect what the *James White Review* is doing is not new. I think what we are is a voice, an image. The magazine attempts to define homosexuality or "the gay experience". By our own selections we hope to actually deepen the understanding of what it means to be (or act) homosexually for a man.

We distinguish ourselves from women for the simple reason that we have our own issues/values/problems that are apart from women. I am particularly interested in relationships between heterosexual and homosexual men. Homoeroticism in literature is as old as literature itself. It's been traced far back in time. We try to publish translations of such material.

I am turning over the list of questions you sent me to a gay friend, a performer who is organizing artists locally against apartheid in South Africa (to be continued in the next issue of UPFRONT).

AVIS LANG, writing for *Heresies*, New York, NY

As a newer member of the collective, I welcome the chance to say something about *Heresies* and about its importance in my own history and that of many other people like me, who have read it as a voice from the center—by which I do not mean this floundering city, but rather center as core, crucible, lap, a place where who we are is collected, welcomed, transmuted and made ready for re-emergence.

Ten years ago in Los Angeles, I picked up the first-ever issues of *Heresies* and *Chrysalis* at a College Art Association conference. The Women's Caucus had scheduled a crucial series of panels with high-profile artworld feminists I'd never heard speak; Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin's "Women Artists 1550-1950 exhibition" had recently opened at the L.A. County Museum; and there was also the Woman's Building and a big Judy Chicago show. That trip turned out to be not only key to my professional coming of age, but occasioned the discovery that I had objections to analyzing and discussing material in certain ways I later came to identify as self-promotional, narrow, smugly academic, unpolitical, unenlightening or in some way deeply shaped by capitalist, patriarchal, Seven Sisters assumptions about the nature of art and boundaries of appropriateness in a petit-bourgeois world. What *Heresies* represented and still represents—a gutsy exploration of intersections of feminism, art and politics (our subhead)—was not yet fully integrated into my conscious frames of reference. But the magazine soon became one more powerful factor in my consolidating realization that more was wrong than I had ever imagined.

The fact is, the problem is that one can only come to consciousness by coming to consciousness, in bits and pieces, fits and starts. One can only get there by getting here, and probably there's no such thing as arriving. Nothing is automatic, nothing is inevitable, nothing is neat. I would venture to say that each of us involved with anything involved with feminism—indeed, any groundswell or ripple for social change—has gone through an uneven, ragged, unpredictable and continuing series of moments of recognition, precocious or tardy.

This is where the voice of a publication comes in. Those who are committed to any degree to communication, social change and a slightly better world, and who seek to be open rather than definitive and authoritative, must be able to address a relatively miscellaneous constellation of interests/foci/emphases all swirling around the main sun.

Heresies exists both as forum and as catalyst. It constitutes a continuing call for more voices, not a platform for the few. It is read in New York, to be sure, but it is also read and followed all over North America. When I taught courses on women in western art, there was no other periodical to which I could confidently direct my students who wanted to know what was produced primarily by the artist wing of the feminist art community, no other which would speak to them both imaginatively, incisively and aesthetically, no other which in a short space would exemplify so much of how effective and how different from the mainstream we could be.

By now, the complete stack of twenty issues of *Heresies* stand six inches high, issue 21 is nearly finished, issues 22 and 23 are underway, our latest performance event was a smash hit, a ten-year anniversary issue and major exhibition are in the offing. I live in New York, don't even try to teach because the wages are too insulting,

and am part of the river of women who give and have given our energies to the magazine because we are confirmed, expanded and made whole—as well as disturbed and angered—in the process.

It seems, somehow and by consensus, that *Heresies* is in the midst of a renascence of energy, participation and success. New women are joining, associate members are reconnecting, plans are being made. It has been remarked that issue 20, the activism issue with its marvelous cover of all-caps synonyms and epithets for 'activists' burning white-hot on a black ground, feels like the daughter of *Heresies'* first issue devoted to feminism, art, and politics.

Once in a while, however, the going is rough—thus this Postscript: Notes from a meeting. . . Attack is not a desirable modus operandi. If we don't cultivate the practice of valuing what others do and encouraging people who are new at a process; if we don't understand that our very behavior towards one another is a form of political activity; if we refuse to understand that teaching enters into every kind of relationship and that it means helping other people to acquire the tools for independent thought and action in arenas they select themselves; if we don't or won't or can't discuss these issues; if we don't treat people as though we believe they have something to offer—then we're not going to get much further up the hill of change. And isn't that what we want?

JIM MURRAY, *Cultural Correspondence*, New York, NY

This questionnaire asks the right questions—the big questions—and its spirit is inclusive. I like the emphasis on criticism defined in radical, that is, historical, ways. There is something honest about this questionnaire—it is saying to me that UPFRONT does not want to be a house organ for one organization but a journal of a wider movement.

Some of the ways I would like to participate: Send you poems to publish; advertise CC publications and activities; share mailing lists, share visuals. (I will be joining IMPACT VISUALS for the quarterly tabloid I'm planning). Also, possibly co-sponsor a festive event to reach out to a constituency of cultural activists who are not artists, such as radical historians, librarians, ecologists or writers, to name a few I'm targeting in our new tabloid.

The tabloid will function like the old Liberation News Service in that the editors of the 700 alternative pubs now networked through *New Pages* can take material straight out of it.

Distribution: As the only self-professed literature table artist in the U.S., I hope to find ways of having a cultural table at many more conferences, concerts and rallies. Would UPFRONT like to support such an effort? Consider: There are probably 500 (if not 5,000) events a year where at least some people would be glad to find out about organized cultural activism. Consider: Every one of the professional academic disciplines and of the media specialties has a radical caucus where people devote their work to overthrowing the hierarchies in culture and society.

Consider: Within ten years there will be ten or twenty publications like *Rock n' Roll Confidential* serving workers and audiences in specific branches of popular media. Have we anything to offer to table-browsers at a Springsteen or Sweet Honey in the Rock concert? What I mean is that UPFRONT and *CC* and *Cultural Democracy* have not published much or anything on popular culture.

GALE JACKSON, Art Against Apartheid, New York, NY

Over the past ten years I have worked as a librarian/educator/ organizer in the book arts, in addition to being the writer I've been all my life. I have been in certain storytelling events—in classrooms and in the library—that have been extraordinarily satisfying cultural/political experiences for me both as an organizer (who created and coordinated the happening) and as an artist/performer/cultural worker. I am also now recalling a film series done by the library I worked with in 1980-82, done in collaboration with a community senior citizens center. Showing films like "Stormy Weather" and "Hallelujah" to a group of older Black folks in East Elmhurst, Queens, elicited discussion about those people's pasts that was extraordinarily affirming and important and definitely grounds for an oral history project in that community—the need for one and the historical importance of getting some of those stories down. Among them were performers who knew much of the social configurations facing the Black artist in the 1920s and '30s; people who had been nurses and admirals in Garvey's Army. . . people with a wealth of knowledge which they longed to, needed to share.

I also think of my work with Art Against Apartheid, most specifically our genesis—a month-long national cultural campaign to educate folk through the artists of their communities about Apartheid, South Africa, and U.S. Government involvement. The overall success of, for instance, 40 simultaneous events in different cultural centers in NYC communities is still coming through to me two years later. I think we helped get a wave of cultural thinking going, added to many people's vocabularies, and served to connect some of the often disparate elements of our larger cultural community.

I think that there *is* a "progressive cultural movement," that I live in the middle of it, that it is both resonant with humanist cultural "tradition" (which is by and large progressive) and also a neo-phenomenon organically responsive to the oppressive "culture" of this inhuman capitalist environment we find ourselves in. Still, there are, I think, real obstacles to that movement as it exists and those obstacles mirror our problems in connecting across race and class and agenda which divide the whole "movement." The things that divide us are the things we do not articulate between our different coalition-selves, though they are problems recognized within smaller communities. Racism. Sexism. Homophobia. The fears of ourselves and of each other that the ruling society has taught even progressives. Why aren't we talking about the Palestinians?

Maybe this is the first time we can clearly imagine an end to all human and animal life on this planet, and hence we are challenged to imagine life in a way no others before us in written history have experienced. The lethal "intelligence" of oppression has almost forced us to a grand intelligence of humanism requiring both creative responses (love) and strategy (analysis).

Political consciousness (consciousness of others' needs and desires, of the complex interplays between human beings and what we carry of our history) like lust, is the heart of my work. I talk about, write about, tell stories about, remember, the life/people of this world because basically I care. You hear it to pass it on because you care, because you care.

Organized things are good. They give you a structure to work within, a vehicle to reach people where they live. Progressive organizations and institutions are like street addresses so you can reach folks where they're at. My work has been most effective where I've been supported in operating in my full range—as a poet, a writer, a storyteller, a librarian with children and older people—one thing feeding off another, constantly.

I am a Black woman, a Black woman writer, I feel part of a community of African and African-descended people, a part of a community of women of color tracing many histories, a part of a shared feminism, a part of various communities of writers, of artists, of a community of communities where these overlap, and I am part of a community of people who are "gay" and of some of the smaller subdivisions of these communities. I live in Brooklyn and on a block with neighbors male and female, of color and not, gay and straight, and from almost every place in the world, and that feels like community too.

My work is informed and immersed in the oldest of cultural forms and traditions,

applied, adapted through tradition to the needs of the moment. The future, if there is to be one, is a question of the cultural re-dissemination of "humanism"—the respect for others, respect for the earth, self-respect, joy—as opposed to this other shit "they" puttin' out here. There are progressive traditions, I must believe, in all cultures, to reach people where they are at and to go with them from there with the confidence of the cultural diversity of freedom and by the liberated heart. Because beyond the revolutions of blood and body and bone that are taking place and those still to come there are still the battles to be fought to revive the thinking heart of our society. And that, I think, is the cultural worker's job.

JAY MURPHY, Editor, *Red Bass*, Tallahassee, FL

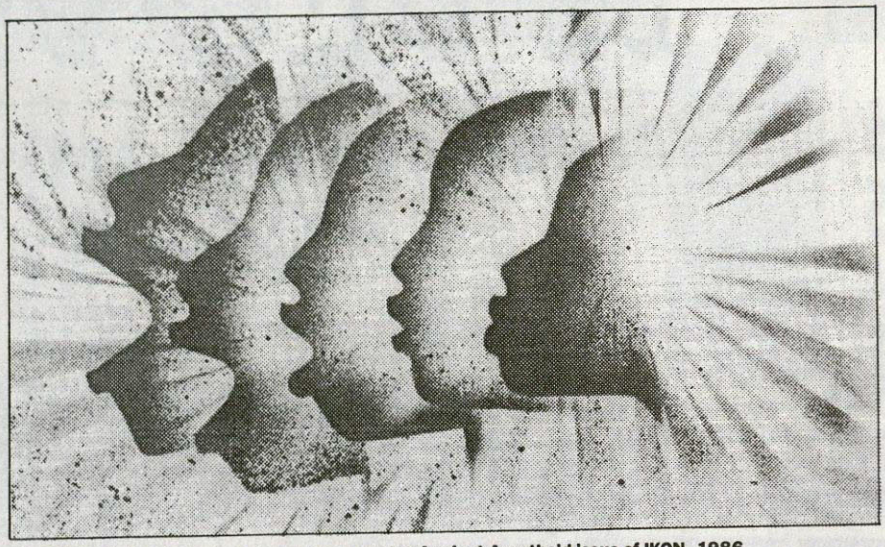
We, *Red Bass*, are a present-day example bravely holding forth in North Florida the tenuous link between the traditions of the aesthetic or anti-aesthetic, modernist, avant-garde and libertarian socialism, post-representational art and post-representation politics. We are struggling to bring about the "golden age of data" that Richard Huelsenbeck foresaw.

This is an urgent, pre-war period preceding what may be our last imperial engagement. The fragmentation of the Left is truly disturbing. What *Red Bass* may show is the potential that even one or two individuals possess. We reach a readership and have an influence way out of proportion to our numbers of copies or amount of community support. If there is any kind of inspiration there, it may be that what more unity and coordination on the part of the cultural left could achieve is more than sufficient for the pollsters and slick power machines of both the major political parties.

Ironically, we still get the best response from artists, not political activists. So many political activists want art to present a clear and "correct" line. So many still have no understanding of abstract art and even seem incapable of it. They seem to want art and literary arts magazines to take the place of a political party and present the proper class line. I think a lot of the confusion stems from the disorganization of the Left, its historical repression, the destruction of the labor movement.

Our obstacles are the lack of any developed national network of communication and political organization, which leaves local and regional efforts open for petty ego squabbles, individualism, and sectarianism. I don't even need to mention lack of money during this current economic depression.

The UPFRONT project can involve more people nationally, provide more links between the activist cultural community. People like myself might not feel as isolated. It seems somewhat limited to New York, but I'm sure you will discover all the various groups out there as you continue. Certainly, it's a very good start. What I can do is to provide contacts of other groups you might have missed, contribute articles about cultural work themes, and contribute artwork we have come across for publication.



"Apartheid No" by Valerie Maynard, from the Art Against Apartheid issue of IKON, 1986

SUSAN SHERMAN, *IKON*, New York, NY

The events we run concurrently with the publication of issues have been enormously helpful in getting interest, and really have been like issues of the magazine themselves.

We worked on a number of events the last three years. All of the programs had the core, as the magazine does, of making connections: "Art Against Apartheid" connected the struggles in South Africa and the U.S.; "Women in Struggle: Seneca, Nicaragua, Medgar Evers," a benefit for Margaret Randall, and a series of readings brought together women and most of the women's press.

I do think there is a progressive cultural movement in the U.S., but it's hard for groups to be in contact with each other, which I hope this new effort by PADD will help to solve. If the separation is difficult in the city, it is even more pronounced nation-wide. The obstacles I feel are largely self-imposed—by the place to which radical politics in this country has repeatedly relegated culture. The Women's Movement and movements for national liberation—unlike the New Left—are much more supportive now of cultural projects.

My artistic/cultural imagination is me—and I am political. I remember in the '60s finally suffering a complete burn-out, both in my art and in my personal life, and spending the first couple of years of the '70s in a state of almost complete depression, unable to do much of anything. It is a big mistake to let that happen and when I see it happening again, at least I know it's a mistake and can think about doing something about it . . . but it is really hard to find people to work in certain isolated, less social areas, like doing the "dirty work" which is most of what putting out a publication is about.

The community for the magazine is, I hope, expanding more and more. Usually it is a feminist magazine which is run by and prints the visual and written work of women. In the "Art Against Apartheid" issue, we expanded the contents to include all anti-apartheid artists, both women and men. I hope our audience encompasses a wide range of people interested in progressive work by women—Third World, Lesbian, Jewish, working class, middle class, etc.

I am really turned off by discussions of avant-garde, postmodernism, etc. Any art which is moving and means something to me artistically or politically is what is important to me. The theoretical debates—Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, and the new French philosophy—get me crazy. To me it's all a very integral part of the worst kind of formalism—looking at the line and literally the shape of the word and the context of the sentence for meaning rather than looking at the artist, and the context of the artist—the world. It's like examining the cells of a person's skin to see why they are upset, instead of finding out that that morning they lost their job!

The artwork I would most like to make that I haven't is mine . . .

Continued on page 71

WHICH BRAND IS FOR YOU?

Magazines and Activist Arts

By William Olander

When I lived outside New York, I looked forward to the first of the month and the arrival of the slew of art magazines to which I subscribed. Living in a tiny college town in the Midwest, they were my principal connection to the artworld or, at least, to the world of artists and critics who lived in New York, who I presumed knew more than I did. This was what shaped many of my own perceptions not merely of what was new but, equally, of what was important. Obviously, it wasn't necessarily issues, politics, or theory I was after, but Proper Names, and the magazines provided them in abundance—*Artforum, Art in America, Arts, Afterimage, October, Reallife, Wedge, Upfront,* and *The Village Voice.* These were supplemented by frequent purchases of a well-stocked college bookstore, and in many ways, I waited no less enthusiastically for the most recent wave of scholarly journals in order to get my fix of academic discourse — *Semiotexte, Enclitic, Critical Inquiry Signs, m/f, Radical History, Representations.* Consuming discourse was as much a passion as consuming artworld trivia, and more often than I would like to think, it was difficult to distinguish between the two. It wouldn't have surprised me if Jacques Lacan's obituary had appeared on the back page of *Art in America;* indeed, I almost expected it.

When I moved to New York two years ago, the first thing I did was to cancel *all* my subscriptions. Not that I wouldn't like to have a complete set of Thomas Lawson's *Reallife* (though I wonder, sometimes) and not that just because I lived in New York, I knew as much or more than the editors of our so-called leading periodicals. The primary concern was saving time and saving money (a subscription to *Art in America* currently goes for $24.95 and that's the holiday offer). I no longer had to fixate on news and reviews but could pick and choose more effectively not merely what I wanted to read but what I needed to own. And once I became acquainted with many of the real life participants, I was even more convinced that the decision to cancel had been the correct one. "Disinterested" is not what I would call some of of our leading intellectuals (and activists), who turned out to be the same kind of careerists as the artists whom they so handily condemned for the same reason.

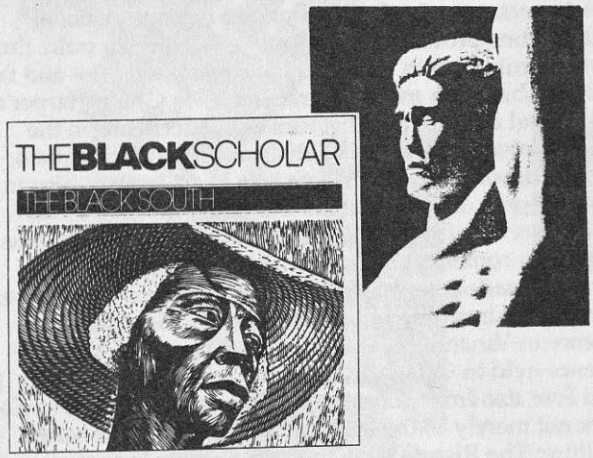
This is not sour grapes. Look, for example, at a recent issue of *October (No. 37),* which carries on the cover its motto "Art/Theory/Criticism/Politics." Rosalind Krauss, one of the founding editors, introduces a sixty- page section of the magazine by describing an "innovation" instituted by the College Art Association in 1985: "the symposium—intended to organize inquiry around an issue of far-reaching theoretical importance, one that could be presumed to be of concern to the field of art history as a whole." What follows is Krauss' introduction to the five papers of this so-called symposium (comprised of five participants selected by Krauss, it met once, privately, in Malibu, California, thanks to the Getty Foundation and once, publicly, in New York at the annual CAA meeting). In a parody of the topic ("Multiples Without Originals") for those who attended this celebrity-studded session, we are treated to some significant and not-so-significant essays by: Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, another frequent contributor to *October;* Molly Nesbit, a younger art historian from prestigious Barnard College; Linda Nochlin, a Krauss colleague from the Graduate School of CUNY; Michael Fried, another Krauss colleague from the 1960s'; and Steven Z. Levine, a professor at yet another prestigious institution, Bryn Mawr.

No longer to be addicted to this academic name-dropping, in the name of theory and politics, is a genuine relief; to be free to formulate my own ideas and opinions and to be cognizant not merely of the inside dope, so to speak, but of the ideological and institutional frame of so much of what passes for scholarly discourse (why it's being done, who it's being done for and to) is a discovery which literally helps me sleep at night.

What I have been talking about, with a few exceptions, are relatively mainstream publications which, to varying degrees, address audiences ranging from the most homogeneous (*Art in America* and *Art News* are reputed to have the largest circulations of art magazines and are probably found on more suburban coffee tables than the others) to the culturally specific (*AHA!*) or medium-based (*The Indepen-*

dent). They are, again with a few exceptions, politically ambiguous in editorial policy, which tends to neutralize their content and, probably, diffuse their effect. This is certainly true of the glossies. No publication mentioned, except for the newsletters, covers with any regularity cultural events specific to Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, the elderly, or handicapped, or covers events of a specifically political or activist nature. Nowhere, for instance, can one read about the protest that was registered by Black artists over the paucity of non-white representation in exhibitions organized to benefit even the best of causes. The news, for the most part, when there is news, is, like the articles, devoted to artworld personalities and institutions, or to the identifiable public controversy—Standard Oil's rejection of Claes Oldenburg's and Coosje van Bruggen's rubber stamp sculpture at its headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. Why can't we read, instead, about the resistance movement mounted by the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common NATO Air Force Base in southern England?

The best periodicals are still those that accomplish two things: focus on a particular issue (and I don't mean *Arts Magazine's* devoting a portion of the book to a group of essays by graduate students) and attempt to convey a point of view, hopefully engaging if not engaged, other than the neutralizing pluralism of both the glossies and so many of the more academic journals. *Heresies* is the model art periodical in this respect, effectively combining critical theory, political practice and the aesthetic achievements of both mainstream *and* culturally diverse artists, writers, critics and historians. According to its statement of purpose, "...*Heresies* will stimulate dialogue around radical political and aesthetic theory, as well as generate new



creative energies among women." Issue No. 20 does that and more. Dedicated to women's activism, it includes an extraordinary group of articles, ranging from a profile of the late June Beer (a Nicaraguan painter whose work, in the words of Betty LaDuke, "reflects five decades of Nicaragua's history from a unique Black and feminist perspective") to Cara Gendel Ryan's "Intellectuals and Political Action" (a penetrating analysis of the role of radical intellectuals in relation to their own class positions." In addition to the features are inquiries with responses from dozens of women to questions like "Has your attitude toward non-activists changed?" as well as works of art by Margaret Hicks, Nina Kuo, Nancy Chunn, and the ubiquitous Guerrilla Girls, among others.

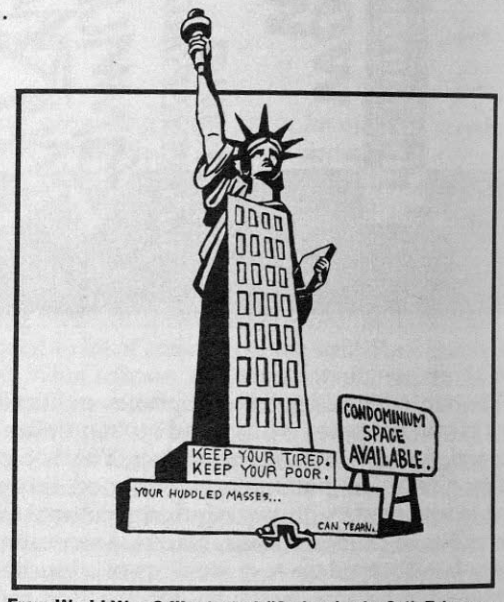
No periodical manages to combine art and politics so effectively as *Heresies*, but there are others that come close. The 1985 issue of *Upfront* included an important section on

the events organized around Reagan's inauguration in January 1985, "State of Mind/State of the Union." *Wedge*, which began as a sort of punked-up version of *October*, has evolved into a serious journal devoted to issues both of critical theory and political practice. *October* itself occasionally focuses on a specific topic, and when that occurs, its stated aim to be a journal of some political clout seems to be more realistic (see, for example, Issue 21, devoted to Rainer Werner Fassbinder). The most recent issue of *High Performance* includes a lengthy section called "Nuevo Latino!"—a look at Latino culture in Southern California—as well as an important commentary by Linda Burnham called "What Price Social Art?"

To flesh out these areas, it's essential, of course, to read some of the other newsprint tabloids produced in New York and elsewhere. *Art and Artists* (formerly *Artworkers News*), did cover the Women's Caucus event and the gift to Cuba, as well as, in the same November-December issue running a long piece on Sue Williamson, a white South African artist- activist (though one still has to put up with things like Kenneth Friedman's "A Letter to Critics," which begins: "Good criticism is first good writing"). *In These Times*, the weekly socialist newspaper published out of Chicago, besides providing a forum for Lucy Lippard, whose piece last summer on the collaborative team Group Material should be required reading, also publishes some of the best analysis of media and culture in general; in particular, Pat Aufderheide's media column and film reviews.

Artpapers, out of Atlanta, is among the best regional publications providing a site for local writers to make their own contribution to the critical debates which rise and fall in New York with monthly precision (see Glenn Harper's wonderful downbeat "Rhetorics of Modernism" in the tenth anniversary issue). *CEPA Quarterly*, out of Buffalo, though devoted mainly to activities at art centers, also includes works of more general interest. *Parallelogramme*, from Toronto, often publishes entire papers from various Canadian conferences, as well as full listings of events across Canada (the Fall '86 issue contains both a report on and papers from the June "Strategies for Survival" conference in Vancouver, and the papers from another conference held in Ottawa in 1985, on "Images of Sexuality"), and *Fuse*,also from Toronto, combines news of issues relevant not merely to the art community (e.g., "Privatized Culture: The Rise of the Canadian Awards Industry" in the Summer 1986 issue) with critical reviews of exhibitions and reports on a wide range of events and interventions including "Art Against Apartheid" and "Women's Music" in Toronto (both in the same issue).

Add to these such institutionalized publications like *AHA! Hispanic Art News*, published by the Association of Hispanic Arts, *Cine Vue*, the newsletter of Asian CineVision, and *Native Vision* , produced in conjunction with American Indian Contemporary Arts, and one at least can be informed, albeit in a still relatively official fashion, of activities not exclusive to the white majority represented by the bohemian artworld of lower Manhattan. Then add on periodicals like *The Independent*, *Afterimage*, *Exposure*, *Camera Obscura*, *Ikon* (especially its "Art Against Apartheid" issue) and my favorite, *Jump Cut*, and one begins to move beyond the generic categories art and artists and beyond reviews, to some penetrating analyses of the culture industry at large. *Jump Cut*, for example, always runs a section devoted to a topic of specialized interest (women and violence, gay men and film, alternative cinema in the '80s, new America Black cinema, sexual representation) as well as its primary focus on the politics of popular entertainment and the Hollywood film industry. *Exposure*, although more "scholarly" and narrow (almost exclusively concentrated on still photography) seems recently to have opened its pages to a more critical, discursive, and engaged practice with articles on lesbian representation and "The Rhetoric of AIDS." And *The Independent* is essential not only for its news coverage but also for its features (a marvelous piece, for example, by Xiang-ru Chang on the attitudes of Chinese audiences to the movies), and its technical information. *Camera Obscura* is notable for its attention to feminism, film criticism and Third World issues (see the extraordinary group of articles in No. 13/14 under the heading "Documentary/Documentation," which includes an interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha, an article on Connie Hatch, and a conversation with Mary Kelly).



From World War 3 Illustrated #6, drawing by Seth Tobacman

There are, of course, other periodicals (often published irregularly, but published, nonetheless) whose politics are consistently leftist and whose contents are consistently radical. This is a very diverse group. It includes magazines emphasizing art, especially public art, such as *Community Murals*, which features news and articles of particular relevance to the Third World, or *Left Curve*— both out of California. Others emphasize culture in general, for example, *Cultural Correspondence*, edited by Jim Murray, which published as issues the essential *Directory of Arts Activism*, the comic handbook *The Art of Demonstration*,and single essay pamphlets such as No. 6—Charles Frederick's important "Culture and Community Development."

This category also includes more off-the-beaten-track periodicals like *Red Bass* , out of Tallahassee, Florida; the decidedly new wave "comic" book *World War 3 Illustrated*, published (where else?) in New York's East Village—apparently not yet entirely the province of 25-year-old capitalists; *Radical America*, out of Somerville, Massachusetts, which, though a bit more scholarly, ranges from issues like "Women and War" to a tribute to Jean Genet.

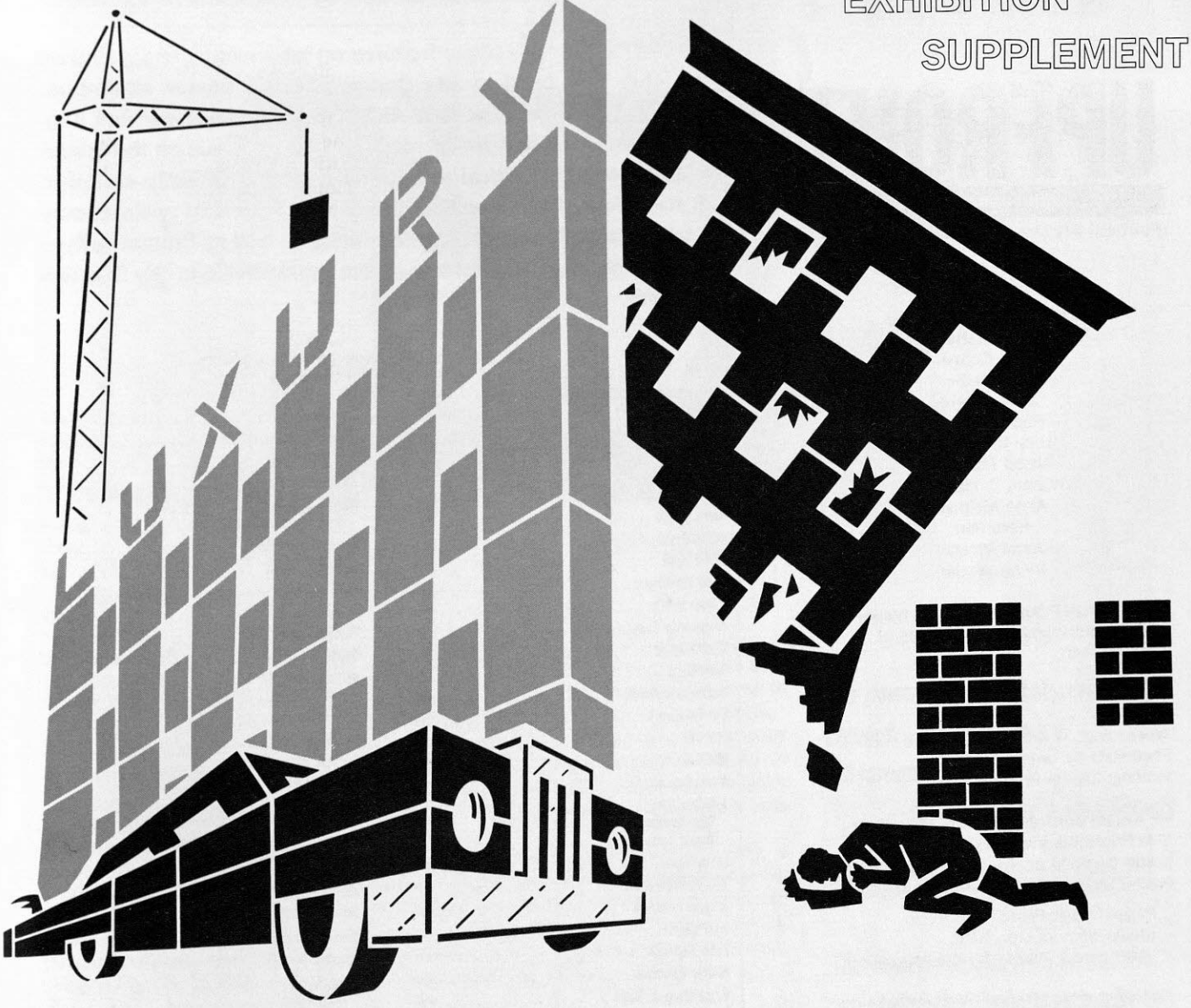
Continued on page 71

Winter 1986-7

UPFRONT

A Publication of PADD (Political Art Documentation/Distribution)

SPECIAL
EXHIBITION
SUPPLEMENT



CONCRETE CRISIS

URBAN IMAGES OF THE '80s

CONCRETE CRISIS
URBAN IMAGES OF THE '80s
AN EXHIBITION OF STREET/GALLERY POSTERS SPONSORED BY PADD IN ASSOCIATION WITH EXIT ART

This UPFRONT Supplement features an introductory essay and an annotated catalogue of the Concrete Crisis poster exhibition, February 19-March 21 at EXIT ART, 578 Broadway, New York City.

Concrete Crisis is a poster exhibition that focuses on the gamut of urgent social, political and psychic issues currently confronting New York. Encompassing the work of seventy socially concerned artists, it reflects—aesthetically as well as thematically—their feelings and attitudes toward the problem-ridden city in which they live.

UPFRONT

A Publication of PADD

(Political Art Documentation/Distribution)

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Irving Wexler

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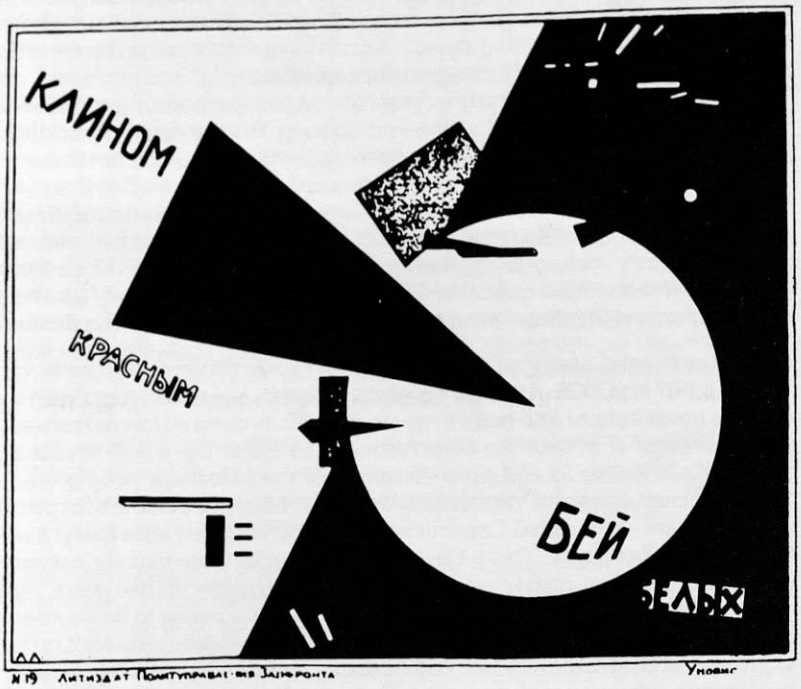
Cover by Anton van Dalen
Luxury City

"Luxury City" evolved out of my observations and experiences of living on the Lower East Side for twenty years. The area embodies on a small scale the increasing disparities of our time. "Luxury City" is part of an ongoing documentation of the Lower East Side begun in 1975, consisting of drawings, paintings and stencils.

LIST OF ARTISTS

CRACKING THE CONCRETE:

Interventionist Posters



"Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge," El Lissitsky, 1919

By Margia Kramer

Posters are cheap, mass-produced public communications. Whether commercial or political, their arresting images and texts mask the drabness of cities and disturb landscapes to provoke desired emotions in viewers. Posters are sign systems that compete in a war for attention with other distracting stimuli of modern life.

Commercial advertising posters were developed in the late nineteenth century when industrialists in search of expanded consumer markets began to manipulate advanced lithography print technologies. They discovered that the new urban labor force of women and men, whose strength and non-compliance they feared, was highly suggestible.

Turn-of-the-century advertising posters conveyed a lighthearted society, a theatrical spectacle in which women were less submissive to the old religious order but more anxious about conforming to the new. Beauty became a type of standardized property to be manufactured like merchandise, with costumes and cosmetics. The great department stores were modelled after ancient temples and opera houses. Everything was neutralized by incorporation into "themes."

■ Commercial posters still exist on one level to sell marginal or luxury products, services and entertainments. In the dystopia of commercial advertising, all relations are commodified. The message is: Buy cars, buy beauty, buy status, buy sexual gratification, buy financial security, buy mastery of things over people, buy war, buy peace of mind. The unacknowledged subject of each appeal is the power of money.

The media of mass communication, where ephemera, journalism, art and mass culture intersect, are symbolic vehicles for propaganda. They mirror prevailing social relations, reflect modes of production and create values. Their networks of signs insure the maintenance and cohesion of our society as a static class, gender, age and race-stratified system. Billions of dollars are spent annually by business and government on advertising messages because they are in essence methods of control.

Whether serving up propaganda for established or embattled governments, promoting the homogenized fantasy worlds of consumerdom, or providing subversive

The power of grass that cracks the cement...[is] the power of grassroots movements.

—Movement for a New Society

The important man [sic] is not the artist, but the businessman who, in the marketplace and on the battlefield, holds the reins in his hands.

—John Heartfield

visions for progressive social change, posters are effectively used to mobilize competing ideologies.

■ Interventionist posters are made to interrupt the status quo. They attempt to "speak truth to power," in order to break the encoded links between images, texts, products and internalized oppression. For the most part, there are two kinds of interventionist posters: descriptive or protest posters, and prescriptive or revolutionary posters. Some posters have elements of both.

Descriptive posters provide the emotional impact of powerful topical protest images for or against a variety of causes, including war, and contain little text. They are aimed at individual sympathetic viewers to whom they offer relief from immediate social or political pressure. Often they are attempts to "sell" a cause. They do not rupture the prevailing styles of advertisements because they work within a system of appeal that is characteristic of capitalism.

Prescriptive or revolutionary posters are made from a communal world-view which provides an analysis, vision and strategy for the future in addition to the description of a single issue. Revolutionary posters are made in connection with political upheavals and social movements toward classless societies; they are directed from a specific point of view toward the shared interests of groups of viewers. Long texts which present information withheld, plus critical, transformational, alternative and admonitory scenarios are often combined in these works. Their forms of address and styles can be radical breaks with the present and past, for the purpose of ideological mobilization away from the given reality toward the desired reality.

"No More Wars," Kathe Kollwitz, 1924

NUR KEINE ANGST – ER IST VEGETARIER

"Don't Be Scared—He's a Vegetarian," John Heartfield, 1936

■ It has been estimated that over 3,000 posters were produced in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1923. After the Revolution, artists wanted to transform the White Russian environment and build a new nation. They covered towns from end to end with a barrage of poster-like constructions "to make the whole world a gigantic poster," functioning as agit-prop educators of the masses of people who spoke a variety of languages and were largely illiterate. Many of these artists produced an essentialist art—later called Constructivism—which derived from Eastern mysticism, Cubism and Futurism. These Constructivist works were usually assymetrical in design and relied on abstracted images of machine fragments like gears, pulleys and cogs, with slogans by revolutionary poets. They were meant to be grasped quickly, but read slowly. Factual, material culture, new and dynamic sans-serif typographies expressive of contemporary life, and distinctly Russian representation derived from indigenous religious and peasant folk art traditions were incorporated in such posters as Lissitsky's *Beat the Whites With the Red Wedge* (1919).

During World War I, Montgomery Flagg's *Wake Up America* (1917)—a typical protest poster—showed a personification of the State, the patriarch Uncle Sam, pointing an accusing finger toward the viewer to provoke nationalism and guilt. The republican address to an assembled body of citizens which characterized earlier government proclamations was replaced by the new liberal exhortation to the individual.

Inherent in the growth of capitalism, the democratic rhetoric of universal literacy, and the enjoyment of visual literacy, is the erosion of complex messages. Compare *Wake Up America* with Käthe Kollwitz's *No More Wars* (1924), where a woman with upraised arm suggested that poor and hungry people are the victims and responsibility of the State. The brief message and the sympathetic appeal to the individual are identical to the technique of Flagg's pro-war poster. *No More Wars* leaves you wondering, how? Within what social context?

In Germany, in the 1930's, Bauhaus artists carried on the work of revolutionary typographical design. But more important, the Russians' new-found artistic resources in pre-capitalist culture were mirrored, after World War I, by the Berlin Dadaists' identification with the irrational. Political posters were illegal in Germany until 1918, when artists, like playful children, employed scissors and pastepot to cut and suture images derived from the dominant media which claimed to represent the "adult world." Later, photomontages such as John Heartfield's *Don't Be Scared—He's a Vegetarian* (1936), ironically reflected Hitler's satanic childishness and the "civilization" of Fascism. The Dadaists and photomontagists constructed a world where propaganda was recycled with a twist, demonstrating that critique, dismantling, laughter, and reconstruction are possible; that myths and symbols can be manipulated by people for people to forge antagonisms that break the system.

The activity of the cut—the edit—was central to the work of revolutionary and avant-garde artists from the 1920s. In Germany, Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht developed works which extended the intervention of the cut. Benjamin, pointing to the Fascist estheticization of political reality and the politicization of art, hailed the infinite repeatability—the "democracy"—of machine-made arts like photography and film, detached from their fine arts "aura" and available to less restricted audiences. Brecht developed the "alienation effect" which, like montage, showed how

fragments of reality are engineered to construct ideology. His works exposed the sutured nature of everyday bourgeois life, rupturing its hegemonic seamlessness. Commodities were defetishized and repositioned within a new reality of revolutionary possibility. Brecht and the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who developed the theory of hegemony, demonstrated how relationships of oppression are fluidly disarticulated and rearticulated through the medium of culture in civil society; how this could lead to non-violent revolution, because social change occurs when peoples' perceptions of themselves change.

■ During the Spanish Civil War, from 1936 to 1939, barbaric raids on helpless towns by Franco's forces rehearsed the destructive potential of Fascism. The struggle was memorialized in thousands of Republican posters made by trade and artists' unions in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. Many of these posters combined photomontage, Socialist Realism, Cubo-Futurism, commercial advertising art and straight photography in a mélange of styles that reflected international support for the Republican defense. The scale of transgression was evoked by helpless children and women in heartrending images of senseless attacks, as in *Madrid, l'Action "Militaire" des Rebelles* (1937), made by the Ministry of Propaganda. These moving images of the civil war resemble protest more than revolutionary posters, due to their symptomatic articulation of events and their emotional appeal.

During World War II, pacifism was barely tolerated. All posters were pro-war. Film and radio became more effective transmitters of government propaganda, and official posters were relegated to certain tasks. The U.S. government hired the advertising firm of Young and Rubicam to write a pamphlet, "How to Make Posters That Will Help Win the War," which said that posters:

> . . .can help speed up production, prevent waste. . .sell bonds, dramatize the things we are fighting, increase. . .enlistments, stop rumors and gossip, create a better understanding between this country and our allies, and help do any other job necessary. . .

Posters were slick works of graphic art. After the Allied victory, they were used with the Marshall Plan and the spread of the U.S. military to stimulate new foreign markets. From about 1950, commercial art was no longer an instrument of nationalism, but an "international style" generated from a U.S. melting pot of European immigrants.

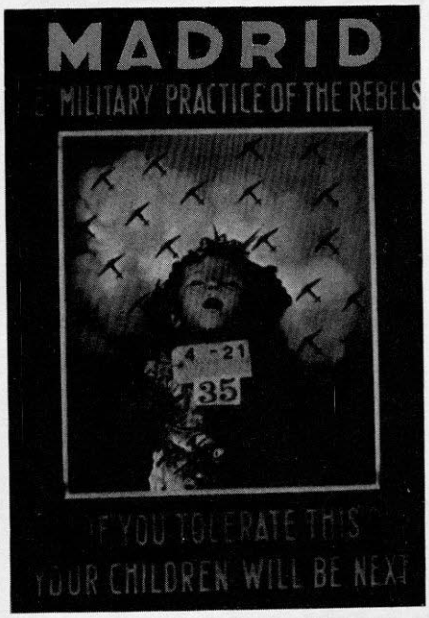
Class and community are rarely articulated in protest posters. Until the 1960s, the nuclear family substituted for the State as the self-interested object of protection and defense. Nationalism or virility were foregrounded; women and children were portrayed as dependents; the Other is entirely absent from representation.

In May, 1968, in France, the Atelier d'Affiches Populaire was formed by Parisian art students to create posters in support of the workers' and students' strikes against the Gaullist regime, class-based universities, and art-for-art's sake educational practices. Their actions coincided with similar movements, exhibitions and publications in other French cities, in Great Britain, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Mexico and the U.S. This French student collective—similar to the ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) Collective which produced window posters in the Soviet Union around 1920—created more than 300 posters in silk-screened editions of 200 to 300, about which they wrote:

> All the militants—workers, students, artists, etc.—from the Atelier Populaire meet twice daily in a General Assembly. The work of this assembly is not merely to choose between the designs and slogans suggested for posters, but also to discuss all current political problems. It is mainly during the course of these debates that the political policy of the Atelier Populaire is developed and defined. It is essential that as many workers as possible should take part.

■ Revolutionary posters are structural critiques, with agendas for changing the system. Their forms and contents herald new communities. On the other hand, many protest posters are symptomatic, negative critiques relating to disaster and subordination. Historically, they have presented emotional images—disturbing scenes of horror or appeal—and short texts. Their projections of helplessness, conformism, anxiety, and moral obligation echo the strategies and styles of the dominant media, and collapse the differences between them.

Since television, 1968, and the Vietnam era, counterculture and anti-war protests have mushroomed. Many of these works link militarism to patriarchy and capitalism as a triple threat to modern life. Serious anti-war posters, such as the Art Workers' Coalition's *Q: And Babies? A: And Babies.* (1969), where a photograph was combined with a brief message to commemorate the My Lai massacre, were joined by posters protesting the draft, race relations, the new radicalism, civil liberties, relations with



"Madrid, L'Action 'Militaire' des Rebelles," anon, 1937

the Third World, ecology, anti-nuke scenarios of annihilation, the rights of Native Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Afro-Americans, women, gays, children, animals and the elderly, and, most recently, anti-Reaganism.

Protest posters can be all too easily coopted. Susan Sontag has described the art-cum-protest collectibles phenomenon of the 70's and 80's—posters that memorialize events never attended. They contribute to a miniaturization of the world—a domestication or tourism of protest—which reflects the moral vertigo of our society.

■ In the U.S. today, grassroots organizers engaged in long-term campaigns for peace and justice have developed a four-step process—description, analysis, vision, strategy—for social change. But the isolation of many artists from social events and from each other during this period of political stasis and economic decline, and the lack of coherent progressive political programs, contribute to the diffusion of current interventionist posters and the grassroots paradigm (largely unacknowledged by artists in this exhibition). The situation is aggravated further by the Right's successful cooptation of traditional, radical methods of outreach.

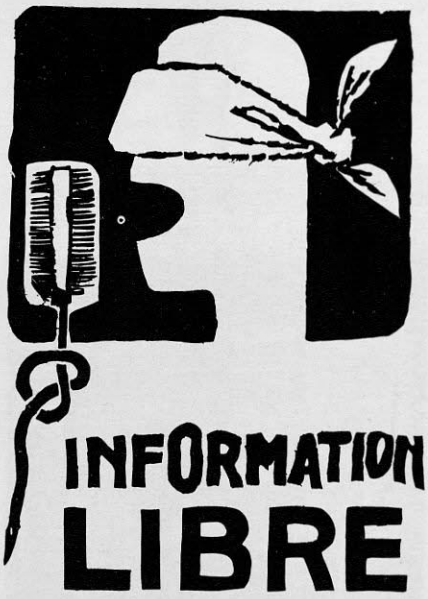
■ *Concrete Crisis* is an exhibition that brings together the works of over 70 of New York City's socially concerned art community. These men and women, whites and people of color, are socially passionate artists, angry and indignant at the injustices that surround them. Their works comprise an arresting statement about the human essence of this urban center.

The written agenda for this exhibition was to create work about this declining city in which we all live. The unwritten agenda which most of the artists have chosen is the portrayal of a capitalist city in irretrievable decay—an array of social pathology including crime, drugs, violence and homelessness, with no structural breaks, and few countervisions or specific suggestions for transformation. The aggregate impact of the exhibition is a sad and angry negativism of content within a positivism of forms that recalls episodes in the history of poster design and modern art. It suggests that society requires a total transformation if peace and justice are to flourish.

The sponsoring organization—PADD—chose the medium of the poster because of its powerful tradition, its cheapness, and its ability to function in different environments. It was decided that the exhibition would have three components: the show within a gallery; selected posters to be silk-screened and posted in the streets, also sold separately as a portfolio of prints; and the catalogue in this special issue of UPFRONT magazine. PADD applied for and received a grant from the NYSCA for the exhibition, revealing a set of contradictions that reflect the economics of the New York art scene. It was necessary to use the gallery system in order to draw attention to street art; use of the gallery system required securing a grant; money from the state was used to attack the problems of the city; "competition" for selection of posters into an exclusive portfolio works against a sense of community; entrance into the gallery system itself is the goal of many socially conscious artists who use posters.

Posters can be more effective if artists are conscious that protest posters are less potent mobilizers for social change than revolutionary posters whose prescriptive form is synchronous with its transformational content, and if we join forces with one another and with political groups. Using Gramsci's theory, we can predict that the fluid nature of hegemony will be affected by the ripples from the social critiques found in these posters, leading to the articulation of relations of subordination, oppression and repression that will break the system.

As Guy Brett has commented in discussing the influential writings of Walter Benjamin, the mass media is now a social institution full of contradictions, with its own repressive "aura" that neutralizes reality. It seems that this is a good time to articulate and reformulate the relations of socially active media to art and the dominant culture. This exhibition provides opportunities to raise these questions. □



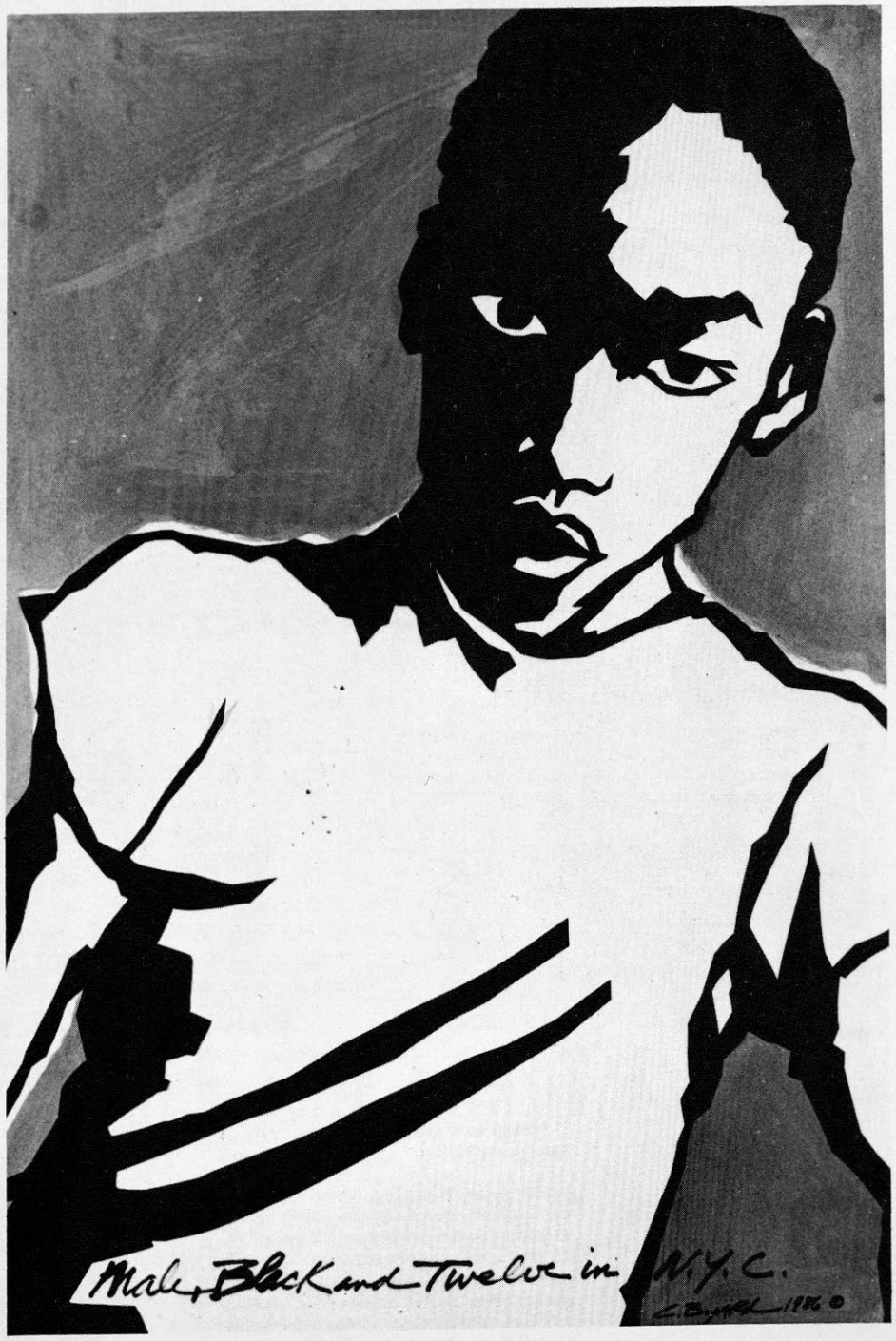
Two posters by French students of the Atelier d'Affiches Populaire, 1968

SOURCES:

Dawn Ades (and others), *The 20th-Century Poster, Design of the Avant Garde* (New York, 1984); Atelier Populaire, *Posters from the Revolution, Paris, May 1968,* (London, 1969); Max Gallo, *The Poster in History,* (Middlesex, 1974); David Kunzle, *Art as a Political Weapon: American Posters of Protest 1966-70* (New School catalogue, New York, 1971); Irvine Metzl, *The Poster, Its History and Its Art* (New York, 1963); Hellmut Rademacher, *Masters of German Poster Art* (Leipzig, 1966); Maurice Rickards, *Banned Posters* (London, 1969); *Posters of Protest and Revolution*(New York, 1970); Susan Sontag, *Posters: Advertisement, Art, Political Artifact, Commodity,* in Dugald Stermer, *The Art of Revolution* (New York 1977).

Margia Kramer is an artist who lives in New York City and is on the editorial board of Upfront *magazine; she has had no involvement in the selection process of any of the works for the Concrete Crisis Project.*

CONCRETE CRISIS POSTERS



Carole Byard
Male, Black and Twelve in N.Y.C.

Eva Cockcroft
At Lafayette and Houston

Some are veterans, others lost themselves. They live here on my corner. The police usually let them stay. The only times they take them away is when there's an important event at the Puck Building.

Question Authority

E. Salem Krieger
Question Authority

Globally we are in a strange dilemma; repression is reaching extremes. But simultaneously there is a heightened awareness and consciousness. We need to examine the nature of repression; it boils down to control: the few who control the most. What is the problem? What can we do about it?. . .educate ourselves, take action in constructive ways, question any rule that's given. We've got to remember that authority is a man-made structure, subject to error.

Janet Koenig
After A Successful Colonization The Mother Ship Lands

I want to show what is happening to the Lower East Side. A vacant lot is depicted and the art scene is replacing the neighborhood stores and the habitat of the low-income residents. After the art galleries, come the museums. The mother ship is landing . . . but unlike Spielberg's film, it's not likely that the homeless will be rescued by space aliens.

Betsy McLindon
Adam in the Garden

I was a neighbor of Adam. He was a squatter, who was the creator and caretaker of the 'Garden of Eden,' in a vacant lot. The garden was destroyed by the city, and this piece is in response to that. The garden was part of the environment, and had been there for years. This was my gut reaction to my experience of Adam and his garden.

Quimetta Perle
Dreams/Ashes

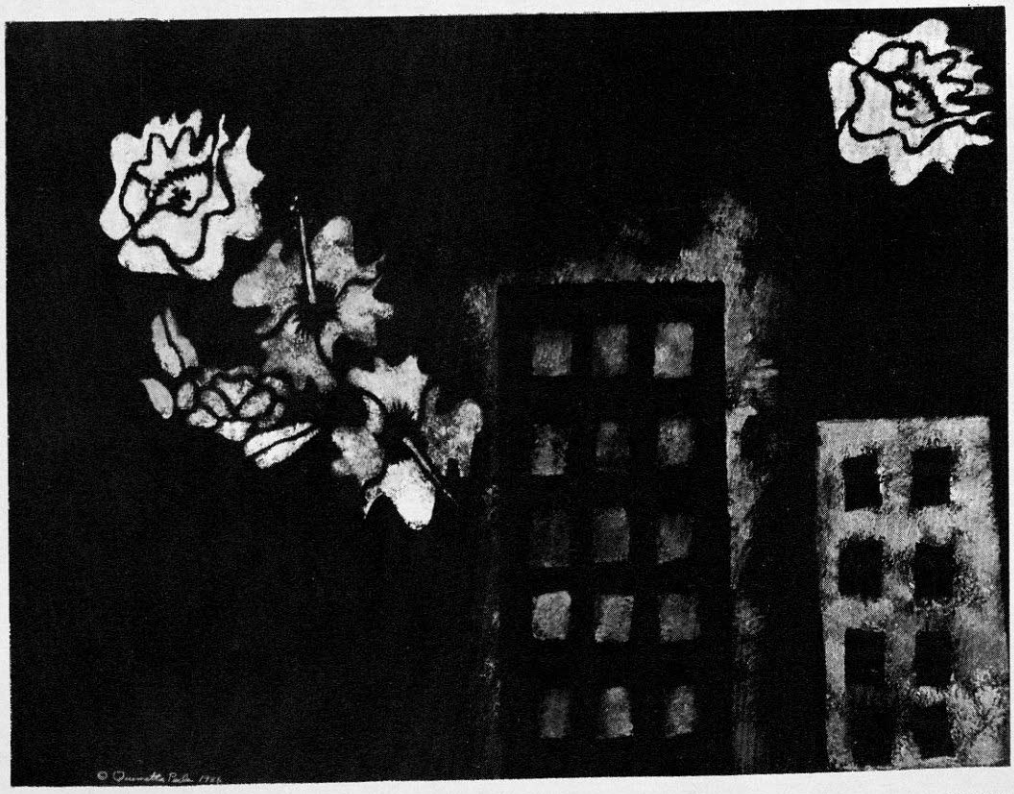
New York is a city where contradictions exist side by side, and where visual beauty and spiritual beauty exist next to ugliness and despair. My experience of New York has been one of contradictions. I consider graffiti as urban flowers, and I continue to marvel at the will exhibited to make dreams happen out of such despair.

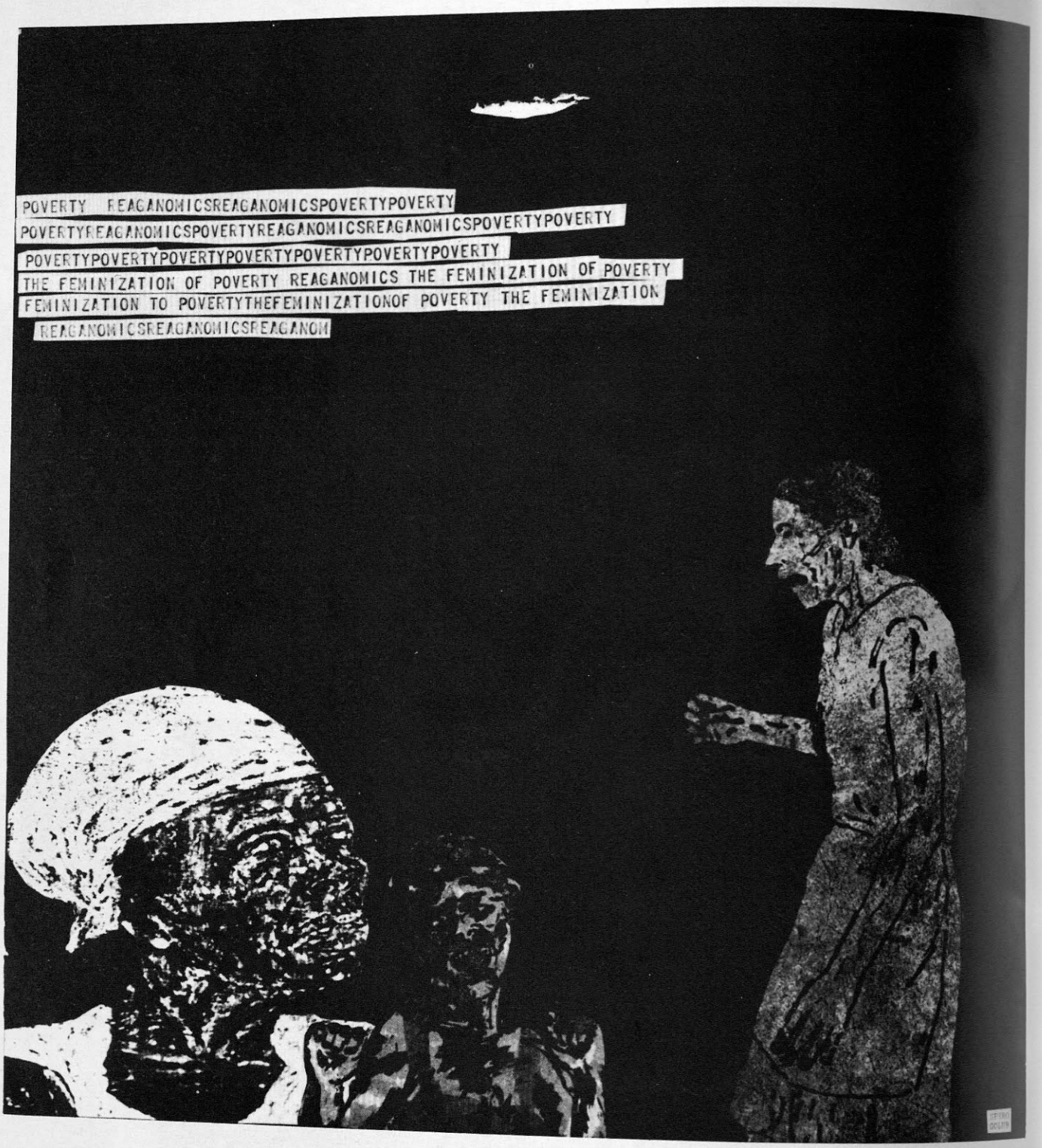
Stephen Soreff
Heal The Homeless

I wanted to comment on the increasing homeless population. A large number of thse people are a result of the psychiatric facilities trying to empty their beds, and thus these people end up on the streets, not being able to cope. They may receive minimal treatment through limited programs but they need regular, comprehensive treatment, and they need to be off the streets. I believe the solution includes our taking responsibility to write our city reps and strongly encourage more funding, etc. for complete treatment for these people. We are going to end up paying a severe price for "cutting costs" in our psychiatric institutions, if we do not act now.

Aki Fujiyoshi
Mobility

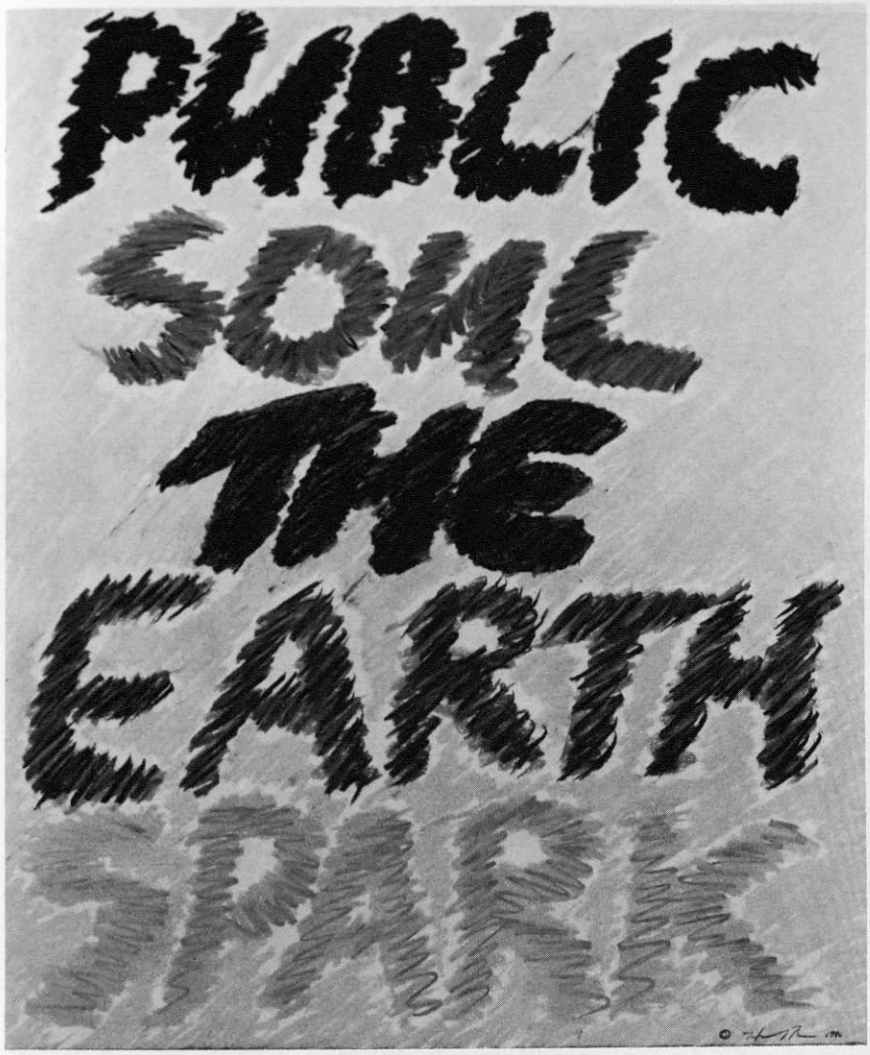
I was inspired by the exposé in World War 3 magazine, about Yolanda Ward's discoveries. There is a much more unified effort to depopulate the cities of minorities than we had ever imagined. It is an organized effort; from landlords all the way up to the federal government. The U.S. government has learned from South Africa, not to put people together, but disperse them, to keep them powerless.





Leon Golub/Nancy Spero
The Feminization of Poverty

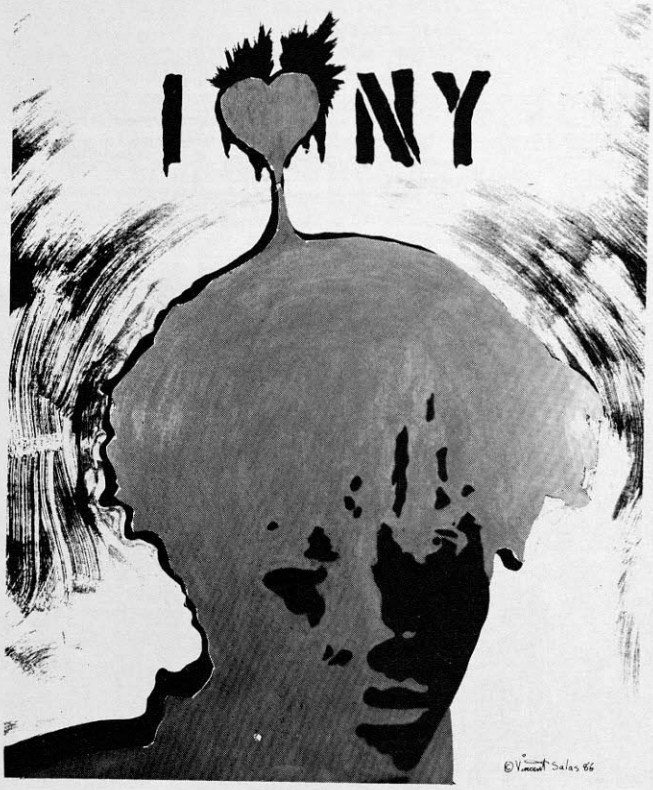
Public policy, nationally and locally, increasingly reinforces the victimization of the poor, with particularly brutal effect on women, children and minorities. The poster image underlines the repeated staccato language of Reaganomics as it relates to the feminization of poverty.



Edgar Heap of Birds
Public Soul

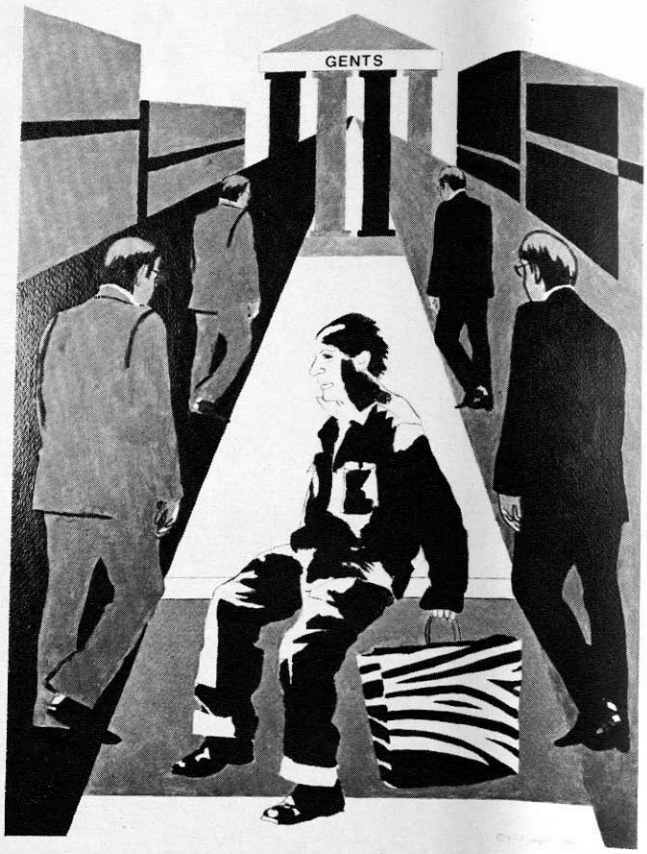
I see my role as an artist is to bare my soul, and raise issues publicly; thus I act as public soul, an Earth Spark. The Earth Spark is the connection with people, with history, with things that are important. This piece is a reference to the Sundance, a ceremony to renew the earth, to see our connection with people, with the earth, and where we came from. The public soul calls attention to people's needs.

Joseph Nechvatal
Untitled



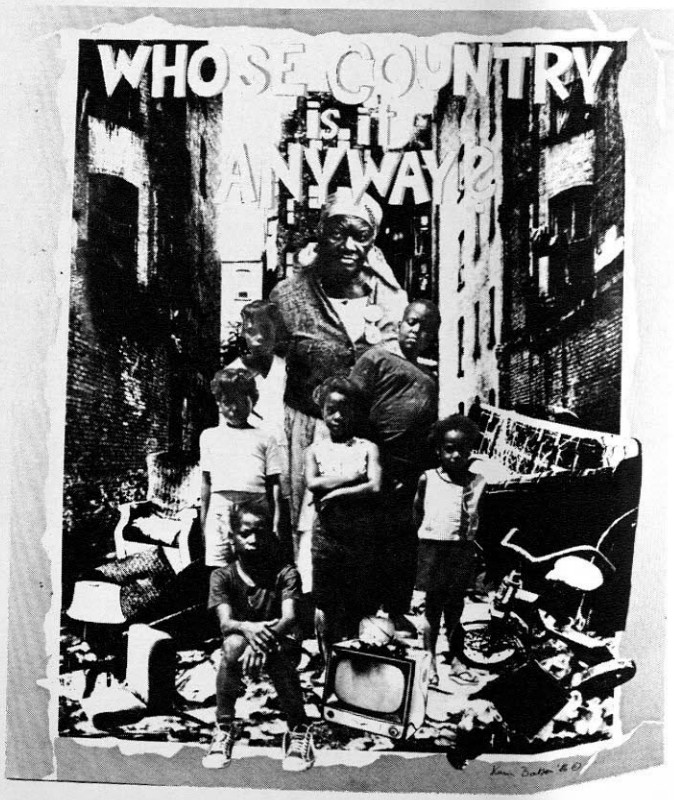
Vincent Salas
I?NY

I feel hopeful toward New York, except for a sense of sorrow at the narrowmindedness of Mayor Koch toward Hispanics and Blacks and our increasing poverty because of his real estate deals—like selling the poorest parts of the city to the rich. At a time when death is justified because of one's skin color and coverups are part of running a city, I hope to shatter the image through my artwork, at the same time remembering the senseless death of Michael J. Stewart at the hands of New York's finest. Remember M.J. Stewart loved New York too.



Tom Finkelpearl
Gentrification and Its Discontents

I've lived on South Street since 1979, and it used to be a fantastic historic neighborhood. It was transformed, literally in a weekend, by South Street Seaport. I think it exemplifies the tunnel vision perspective and the homogeneity of the downtown business world. The neighborhood is awash with yuppies, and it's depressing that the revitalization of the area is at the expense of its true historic nature in the name of commerce.



Karin Batten
Whose Country Is It Anyway?

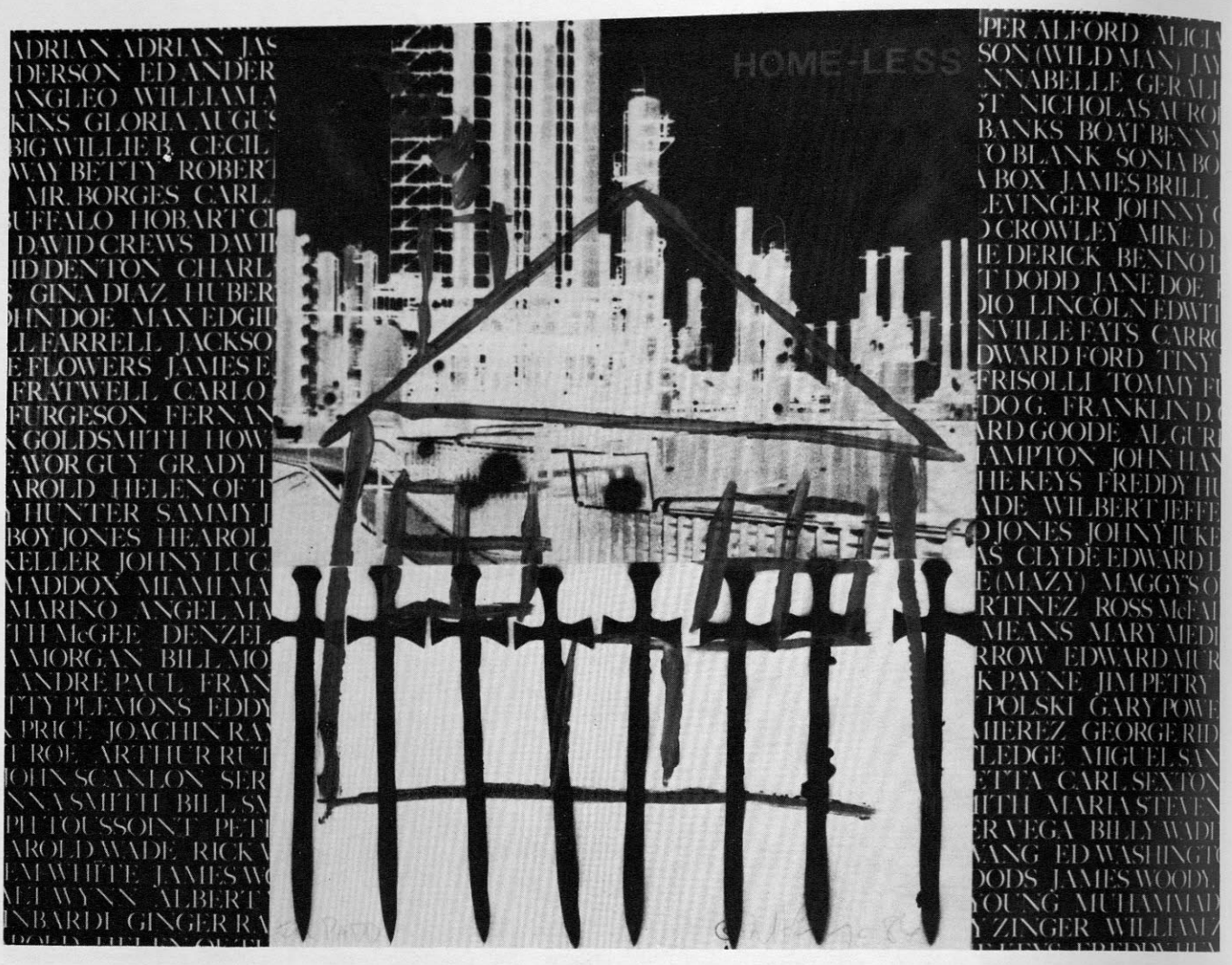
This poster covers different issues in cities: eviction, racism, gentrification, and especially hunger. This city, and ultimately this country, belongs to the people that live and work in it, not to the large corporations that may control much of what goes on. I think that corporate control is at the root of such problems.

Tomie Arai
Rising Waters

The title of my poster comes from a poem of the same name by Langston Hughes which seemed to mirror my feelings about N.Y. At its worst, life in the city is an existence of extremes—terrible poverty in the midst of affluence and enormous waste. The crisis I'm confronted with is one brought about by inaction—treading water, barely keeping afloat, hoping things will somehow get better. The waters are rising, there's tremendous tension in the air. Anger lies below the surface of every detail of our lives—from going to work, to buying food, to paying rent. Living here is like living in constant anticipation of change. "Rising Waters" is about that anticipation.

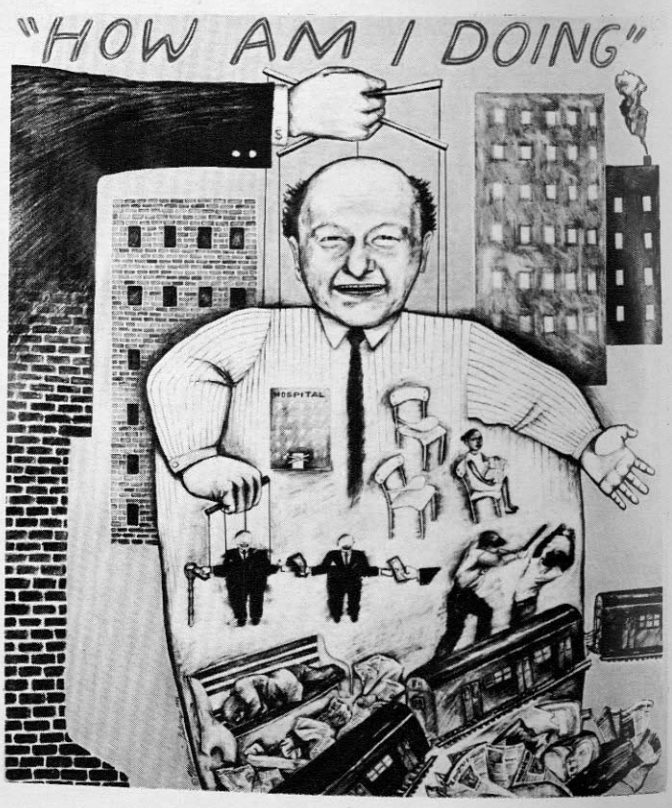
Laura Elkins
Save the Children

Two to three years ago, I was riding on the subway, and I saw this child with big sunglasses, like a Fresh Air child. But she was labelled with a big number across the chest. She had obviously participated in some philanthropic function, and became a walking billboard for it. It was like Old MacDonald Meets Big Brother.



Robert Longo
Monument for the Homeless

Marina Gutierrez
How Am I Doing?



Koch is a pet peeve of mine. But he is not the root of the problem. He is symbolic of a larger threat: the real estate industry, moneyed interests. He is 'working for the big boys.' The minority communities suffer as a result, homelessness is a result and decline in education is a result. The puppets themselves are pulling strings, thus playing dual roles as puppets and puppeteers. But the show is not funny.

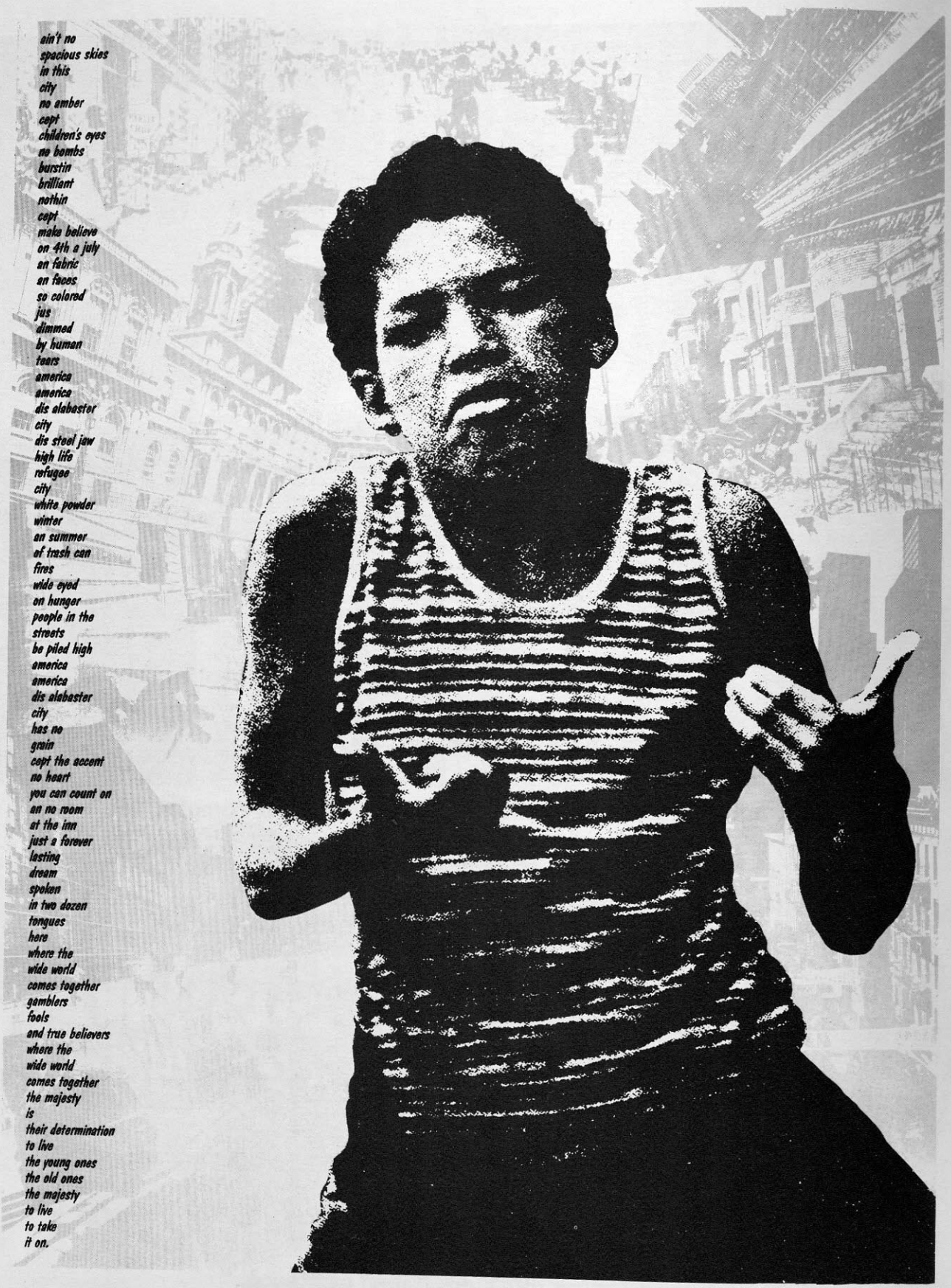
Peter Gourfain
In Koch's New New York

William C. Maxwell/Gina Marie Terranova
A Coin for New York City

I chose to compare Rome as an historical beginning of the Mother City, the modern metropolis, to New York, the examplar of the contemporary city. The flip side of this Roman gold solidus shows the New York cityscape almost entombed by the Roman aquaduct of Nero. The face side is Janus, God of the Roman state, whose insignia appeared on most doorways and public gates and was thus the key to the door. His two faces are Roman Emperor Nero and Mayor Koch. Both leaders began their reigns as enlightened saviors, and served to cause changes that first appeared to be for the better. . . I leave it to the spectator/participant to complete the comparisons. This artist realizes he cannot change the world, but he can join the ranks of the culturally resistant, describe the world this way and attempt to affect the action.

"The final mission of the city is to further man's conscious participation in the cosmic and the historic process. Through its own complex and enduring structure, the city vastly augments man's ability to interpret these processes and take an active, formative part in them, so that every phase of the drama it stages shall have, to the highest degree possible, the illumination of consciousness, the stamp of purpose, the color of love. The magnification of all the dimensions of life, through emotional communion, rational communication, technological mastery, and above all, dramatic representation, has been the supreme office of the city in history. And it remains the chief reason for the city's continued existence."

Lewis Mumford, The City in History


ain't no
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dis steel jaw
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an summer
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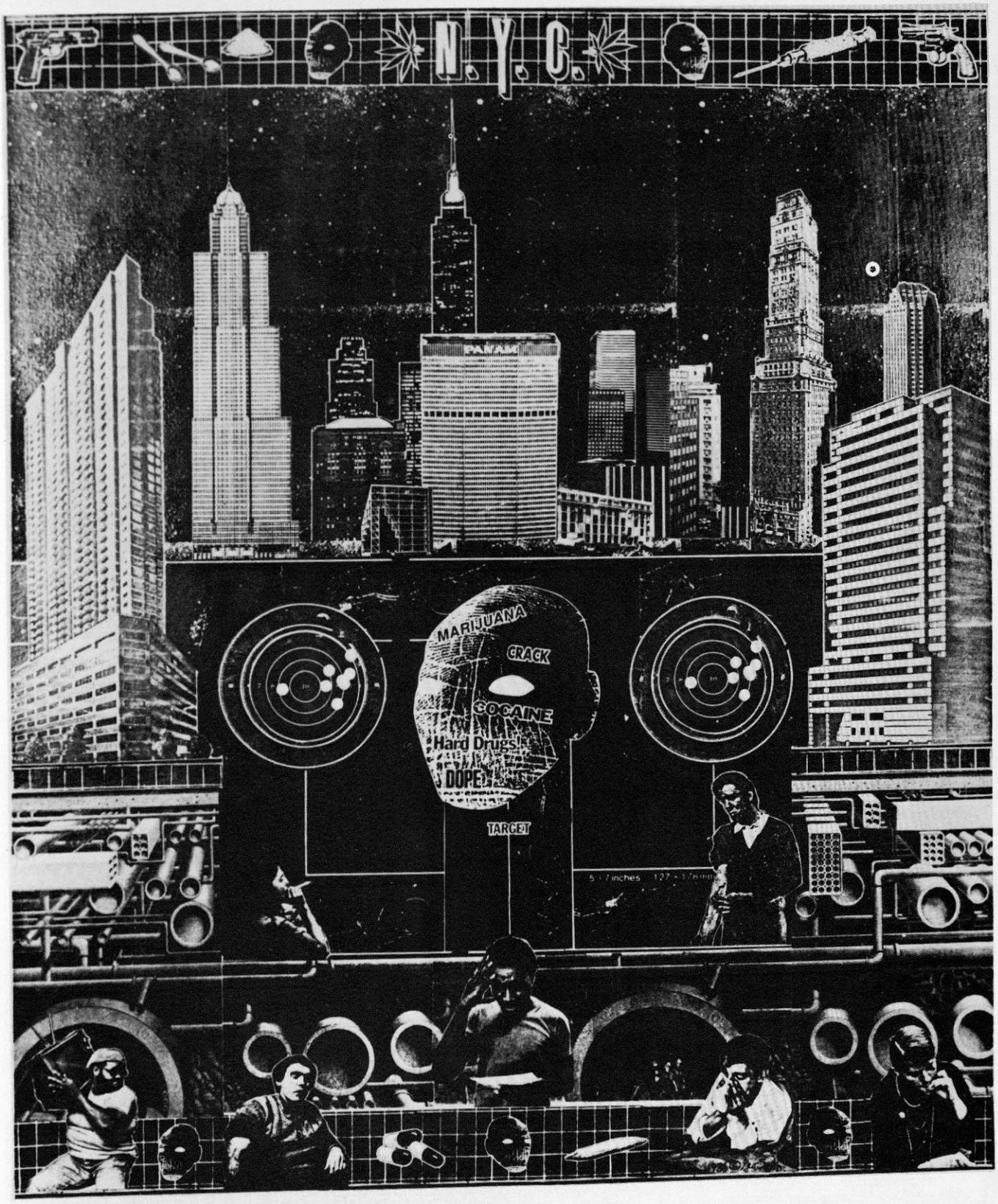
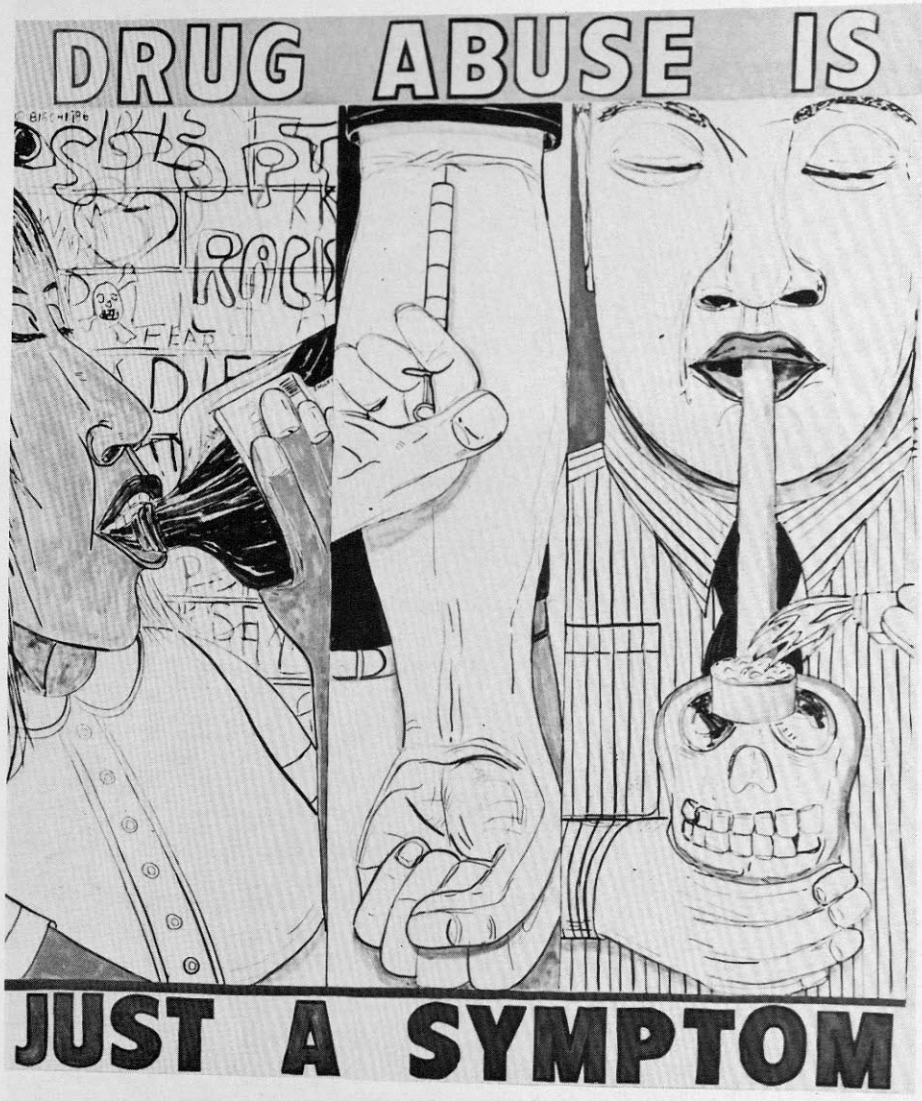


Tim Hillis/Gale Jackson
Ain't No Spacious Skies in This City

We tried to approach the broader issue of coping with city life among the working class. This was a true collaboration, in which we focused on a kid confronting growing up in NYC, alternating between things that represent the exclusive of New York versus those that represent the toughness and harshness of the city.

George "Geo" Smith
Target NYC

New York is a target for drugs to be filtered into this country for consumption. Our children, young people become targets. My piece is demonstrating some of the effects on children, and how drugs are the underlying root of many of our urban problems.



Willie Birch
Drug Abuse Is Just a Symptom

The New York Times stated that 60% of marijuana that is smoked in the U.S. is grown in the U.S. This country is not ready to face why there is such a need for this pleasure. The media points its finger at drugs, crack etc., yet people don't think of tobacco, pills, alcohol as the same thing. All the attention on drugs as the problem is a joke. Until we deal with why people take such substances, we are not really addressing the issue.

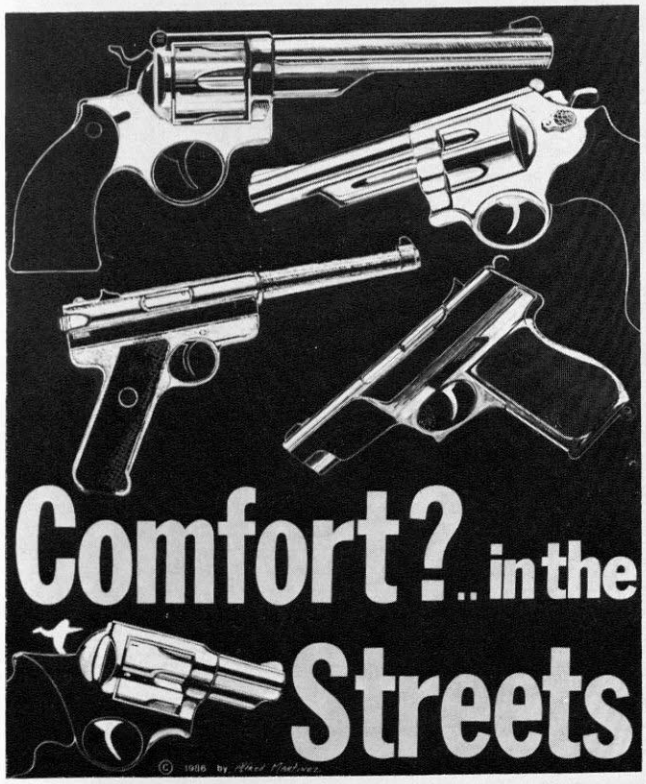
Fay Chiang
East Fourth Street

Nancy Sullivan
Dead End

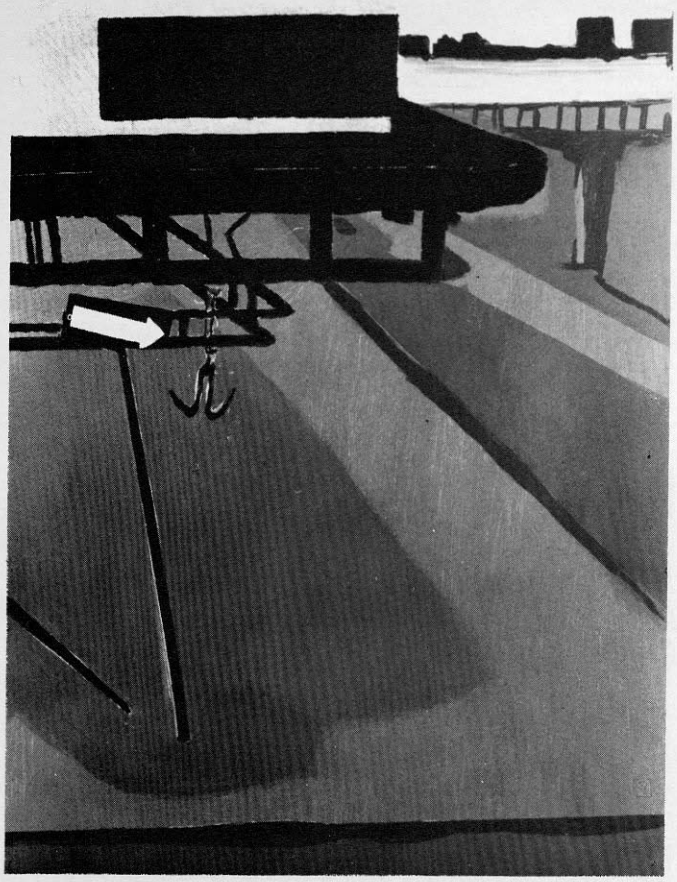
This piece refers directly to the Lower East Side, and the effects of the Housing Project Development on its people.

Maria Dominguez
Apple Syndrome

I was trying to design a poster for anywhere, and not to offend. The piece really took its own life, it became what I really feel about living in NYC. If you are not a member of the upper class, New York can be a sorrowful place to live. I have been a resident of the city since age four (I am now thirty-six) and I have seen the city change to the worse for the poor. This piece is a reflection of my own personal experience.



Alfred Martinez
Comfort? in the Streets



Ross Lewis
14th Street Meat Market

I wanted to make an image suggesting the desolateness of living in the city, the Meat Market I see literally, during the day. At night, this street is surrounded by the sex meat market. There is quite a contrast between day and night. Those open spaces are very ominous at night. There is both a sense of tranquillity and danger. The space is left open for the viewer to imagine what goes on . . .The hook is both a beautiful and dangerous object.

Jeff Schlesinger
N.O.T.I.N.N.Y

I travelled in London, and this piece is a statement on the comparison of New York and London—the same city dwellers, but London exemplifies a more civilized, caring spirit. New York could be like that. There is no reason why it couldn't. Simple graces like "thank you" and "please" are carried over to other aspects of life.

Marguerite Bunyan
Untitled

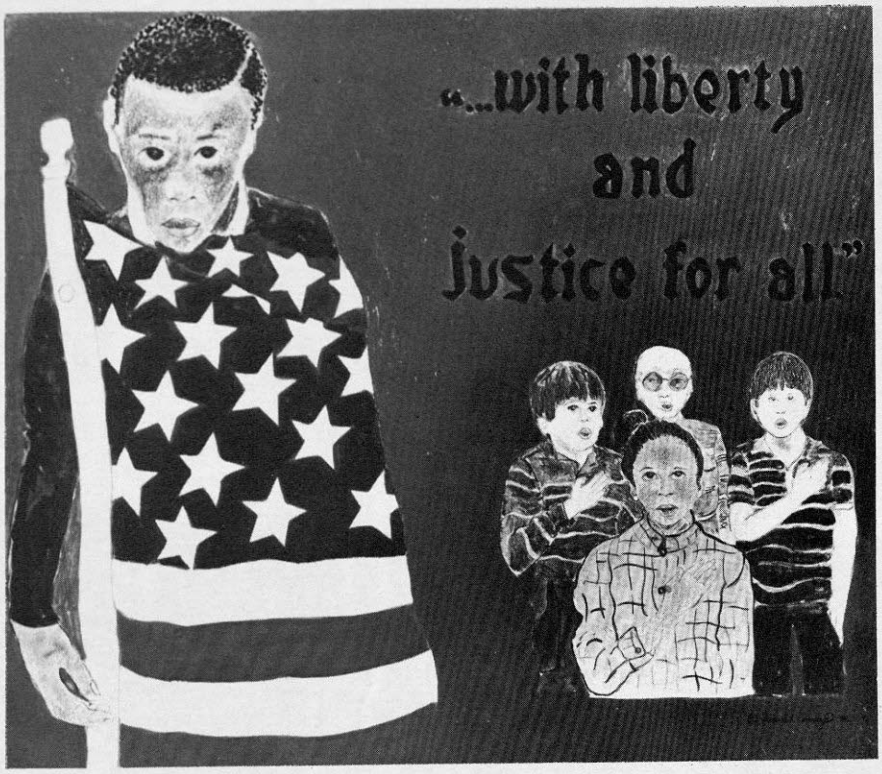
The voice that used to call you home
has gone off on the wind
beaten into thinnest air
whirling down other streets

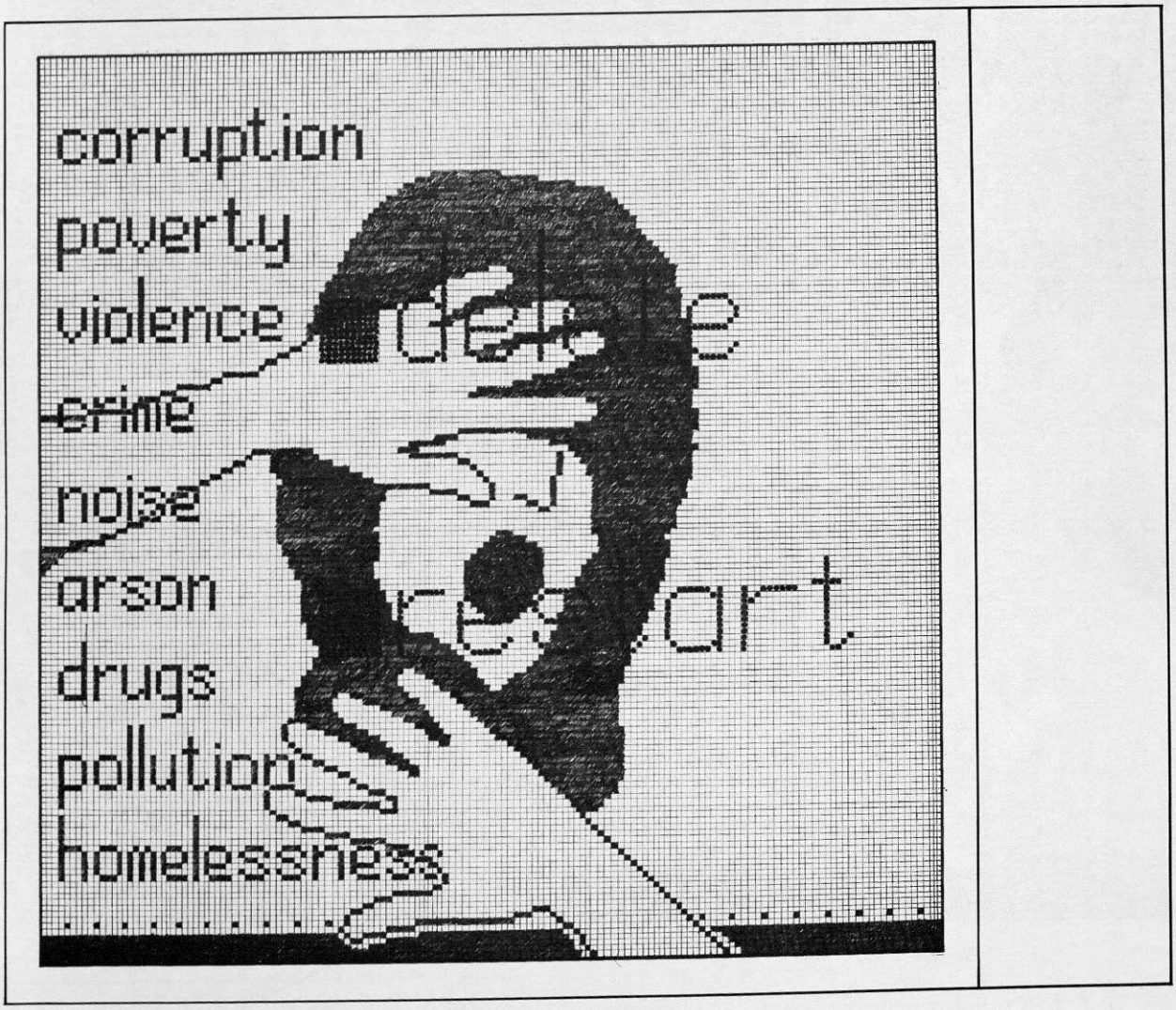
Mimi Smith
Restart

. . . in thinking about the city, and all its negative factors, it seems beyond repair. So I think we need a restart, a fresh beginning. DELETE and RESTART. As computer language and images are invading our society, and changing the visual way in which we look at things, I have been incorporating them in my work.

Jamillah Jennings
Education in New York

I teach art in special education in a junior high school in Brooklyn. My piece is an attempt to draw attention to a serious deficit in public education. Most of my students, who are learning-disabled, are Black and Hispanic. The schools are not geared toward these children's special needs.

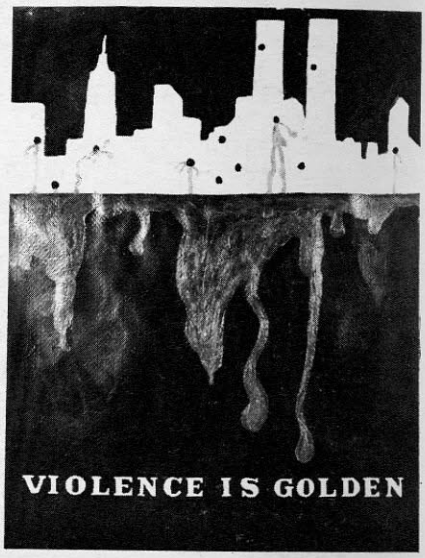




Noah Jemison
The System

My idea for this piece combined the art system and the system itself. They both are a dog-eat-dog situation. I identify it with a notion of the star system, how one person represents several people playing 'King of the Mountain', fighting to get to the top, no matter how or what it takes. But if you look at the meat of the structure, you find it is made up of a great variety of people, supporting this one person at the pinnacle. This is also a commentary on the fact that less than five percent of artists are able to make a living out of their art.

Tom Wachunas
Violence is Golden?



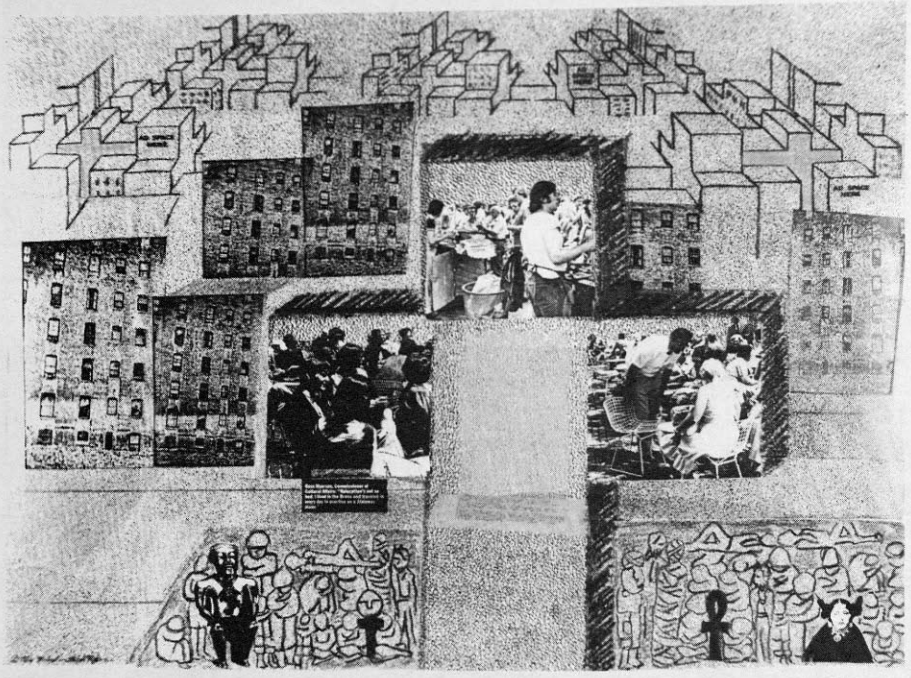
Cliff Joseph
We Must Pick a Better One

I am dissatisfied with the way things are going here. It could be a beautiful city; it's our responsibility to make it such. We've entrusted officials who have been involved in corruption, now it's up to us. We need 'to pick a better one.'

Sue Coe
Let Them Eat Cake

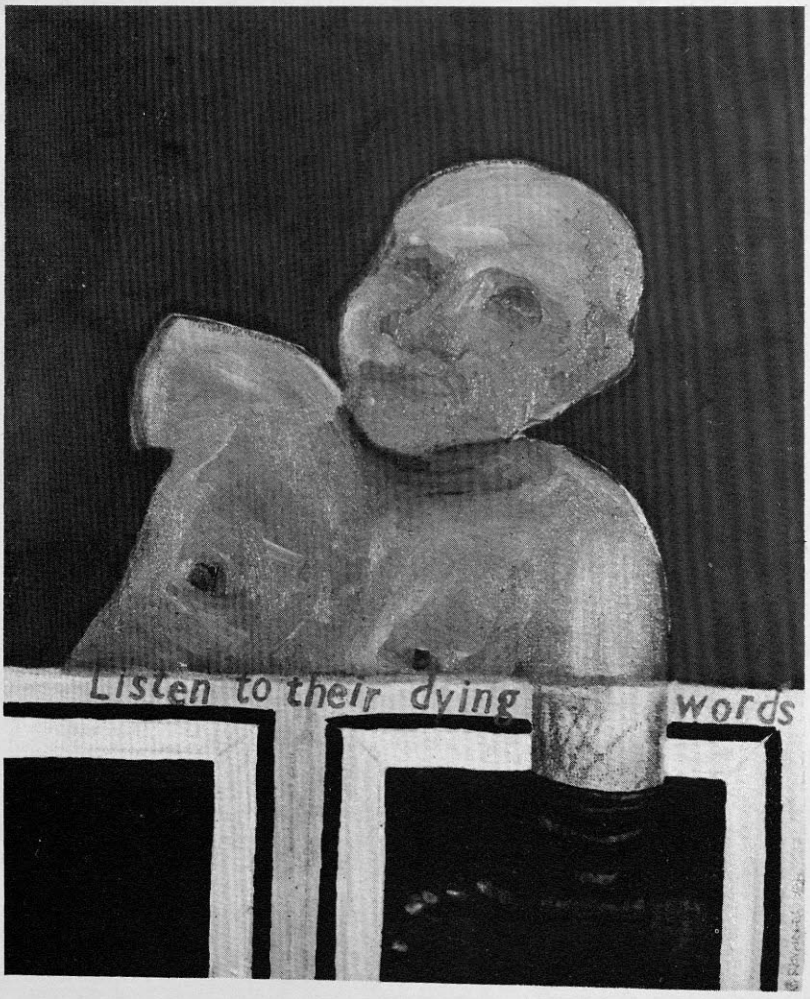
Aleta Bass/Malcolm Eliot Ryder
Add Space Here

We wanted to deal with the homeless situation, which is enormous. The city spends an overwhelming amount of money to shelter people temporarily, instead of providing long-term solutions, like decent housing. Our piece is a representation of how NYC and other cities have become graveyards not only for the increasing number of homeless, but also graveyards for the consciousness of the cities' citizens. New Yorkers have become adept at ignoring the homeless, both on the streets and in City Hall.



Julius Valiunas
Will Yo Be Next?

'Yo' is a play on words. It means 'I' in Spanish. This piece is a reference to water pollution, to nuclear waste, and environment destruction. I want to bring it closer to home, to one's family, to oneself. Will I be next to be affected by our collective disregard?

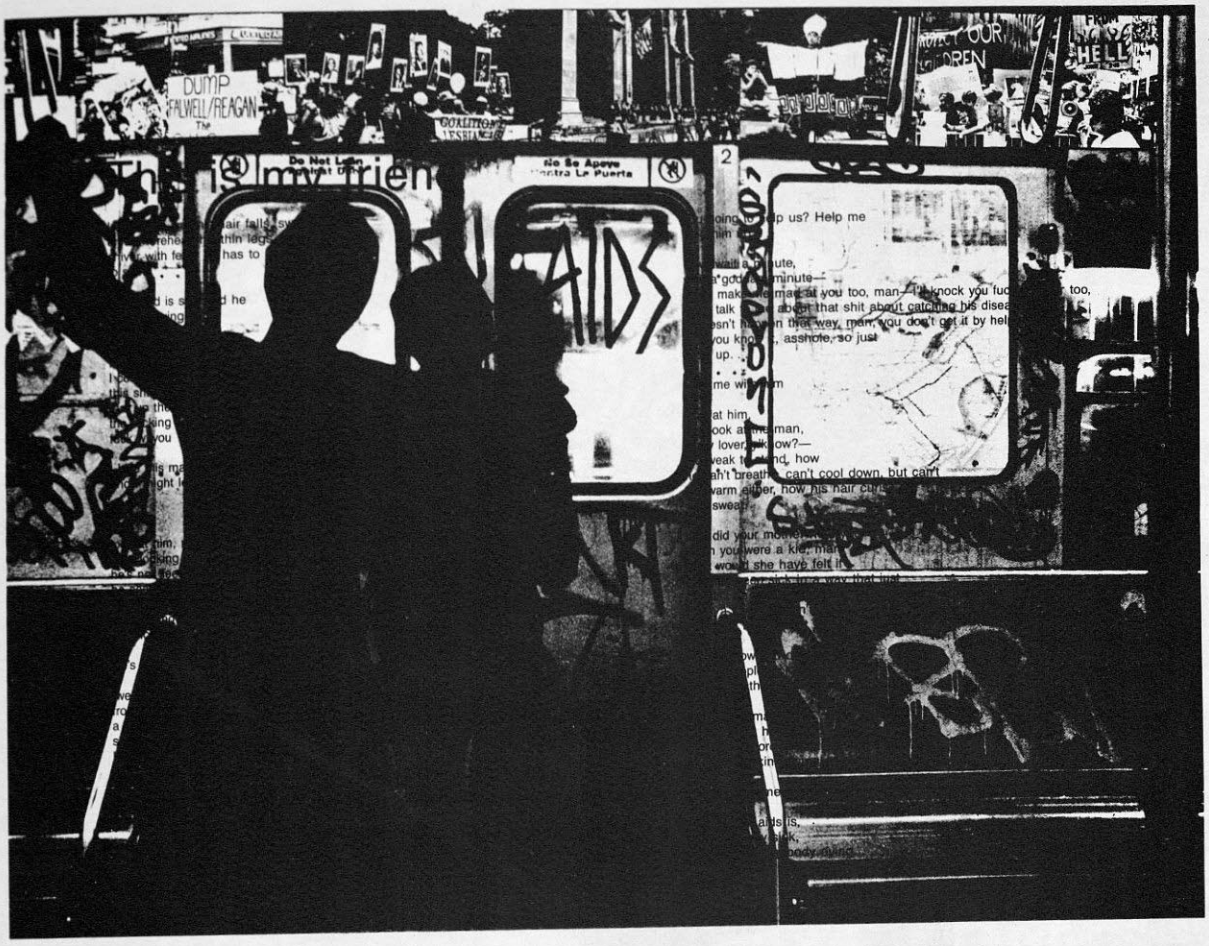


David Reynolds
This Child Is Dead

This piece is a comment on post-modernism: everybody is being set up for death and determination. It is a warning about being cute about post-modernist concern. The underlying principles include fear of cynicism and the death implication in order to ensure the survival of the next issue.

Jeff Dreiblatt/Charles Frederick/
Wayne Rottman
AIDS

It must be understood by people generally in this society that AIDS, although at the moment primarily affecting the gay community and people oppressed by use of intravenously consumed drugs, is a cataclysm of historical proportions ravaging human society in its entirety. When any community is so attacked with pain and death and sorrow, the entire society has been injured. The poem and image compose a meditation on death and sorrow, taking these themes out of the safe enclave of "universalism" into the everyday reality of people, which is where these profound emotional experiences must be recognized if we are to develop our humanity fully. To put it succinctly, the oppression of gay people is not simply morally wrong, it is literally the withering repression of human sexuality itself.



This is my friend
by Charles Frederick

This is my friend

look at the way his hair falls, sweaty
on his forehead his thin legs and arms
shiver with fever he has to lean against me
to stand

my friend is sick and he
may be dying

do you hear me?
Man,
I could rip down all
this shit, all the fucking streetlights in
New York City, I could
tear up the fucking pavement from the
streets, man, roll over
the fucking buses, fuck wi'y'all, man,
fuck wi'you, hear me,
fuck wi'you

I love this man
and I might lose him

Aids

look at him, man, his eyes lose focus,
did you ever see
that, looking inward at himself,
he's not seeing any hope inside,
he sees fear
he may be dying,
and he knows it, man,
he knows he might be dying

He's an artist,

twenty eight years old, comes
from California, worked as a typist,
a waiter,
a hotel clerk, he's paid rent and votes,
shops in the A&P and watches
Miami Vice,
he reads The Times each morning,
and the Voice each week, he's listed in
the telephone book,
worries—just like you—about where his
next dollar
is going to come from
just like everybody

yeah
just like everybody else, he liked to
go out
—dancing, he liked sex—hot and cool,
all kinds,
he liked sex, just like you, man,
just like everybody.

You going to help us? Help me
hold him up . . .

Now, wait a minute,
wait a goddam minute—
Don't make me mad at you too, man—
I'll knock you fucking over too,
don't talk to me about that shit about
catching his disease,
it doesn't happen that way, man, you
don't get it by helping,
and you know it, asshole, so just
grow up . . .

help me help him

look at him,
just look at the man,
—my lover, y'know?—
too weak to stand, how
he can't breathe, can't cool down,
but can't
get warm either, how his hair curls
with sweat.

how did your mother hold you
when you were a kid, man?
what would she have felt if
you had been sick in a way that just
couldn't be comforted?
when a fever wouldn't go down,
when the fever might never go down?

think of how you don't like
to see people sick, how you don't
like to see them that way

he's dying, man
that's what's happening, he's dying
I love him more than anybody else,
and he's fucking dying . . .

Know what I mean, friend?

That's what aids is,
it's somebody sick,
it might be somebody dying.

Keith Christensen
Let's You and Him Fight (Remain Humane)

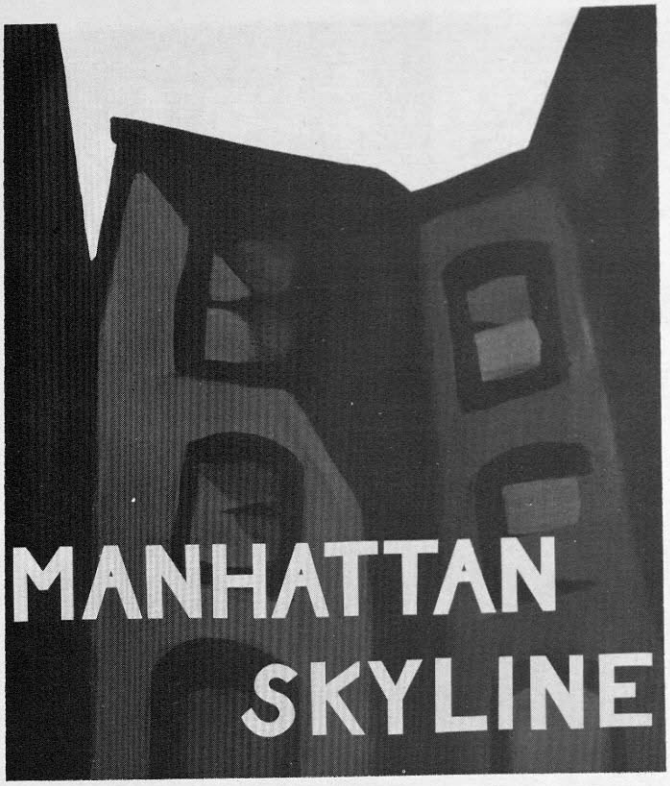
The piece focuses on racism in the city. People of color and poverty are pitted against each other. The 'fight' is being served on a platter by those who gain by a divided community. My view is to recognize this situation and call for humane relationships and unity among the oppressed.

Anita Steckel
Who Are the Homeless? They Are You. They Are Me.

I used a mirror to reflect myself. There is a tendency to think of groups like the homeless as separate from ourselves, as we think of the aged poor, Black, etc. This is a way of visually relating, seeing oneself without verbal reasons. Hopefully this kind of recognition leads to action that is needed today. The President, as well as many citizens, does not identify with these people. He ignores these needs. He has the face of a pleasant man, but he is a monster.

Seth Tobocman/Chuck Sperry/
Yolanda Ward
Spatial Deconcen ration t

Yolanda Ward contributed posthumously to this piece. The work is based on her writings. She was a housing activist assassinated in D.C. in 1982. She had unearthed documents from the Housing Urban Development files in the early '80s which prove what is described in these illustrations . . . the idea of "spatial deconcentration". Further details are outlined in the Kerner Commission Report and in *World War 3* issue no. 6. as well as the upcoming issue of the UTNE Reader. The illustrations have been used by the Union of the Homeless and the Harlem Reclamation Project.

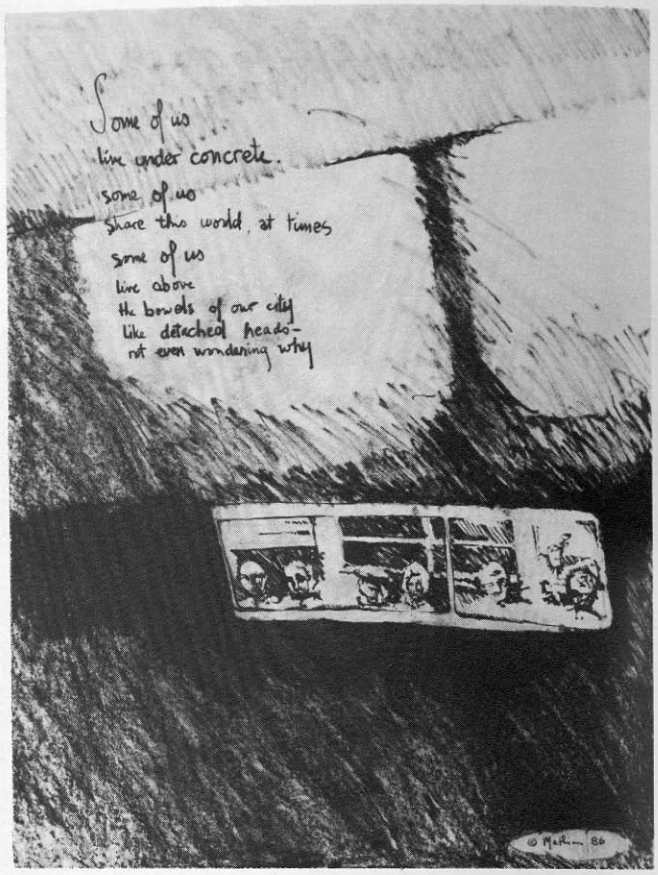


Thelma Zoe Mathias
Above and Below

I feel the subway really characterizes the city, in terms of the people. The homeless use it as a home; people use it as transportation in their daily lives as a way to work. Some people refuse to use the subway, and ignore the problems it exposes. 'Above And Below' is a metaphor for the concrete of the sidewalk as the surface skin to the inner workings of the body. The real mechanisms of the city are below the concrete. To see the 'concrete crisis,' we must look beyond the superficiality of what's in front of us, and look below. I love the subway, it keeps me in touch with the pulse of the city.

Sabrina Jones
Manhattan Skyline

I wanted to describe the irony of what we think we live in versus what we really live in (or under). We have this universally appealing image of living under the Manhattan skyline. It's become this glamorous crown that New Yorkers don, but our city's reality is more claustrophobic and less dramatic than the skyline's image. We need to come to terms with the reality of where and what we live.

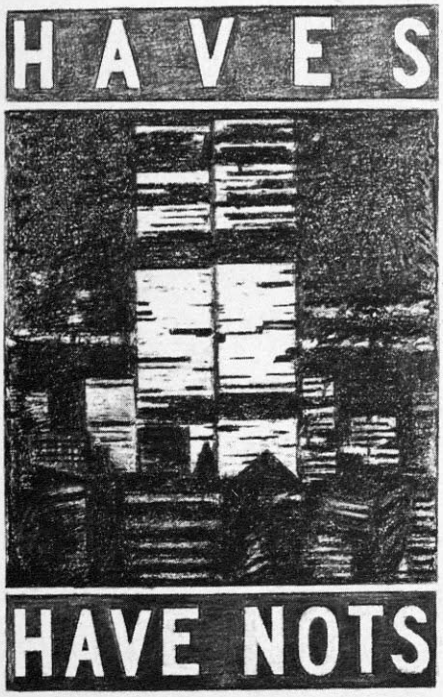


Phyllis Bulkin
Night and Day

. . . a satirical allegory on the individual fighting the various forces of city life during the day and at night. This piece is an outgrowth of a technique of animation: drawing on film.

Vernita Nemec
I Realize I Must Keep My Wits About Me at All Times

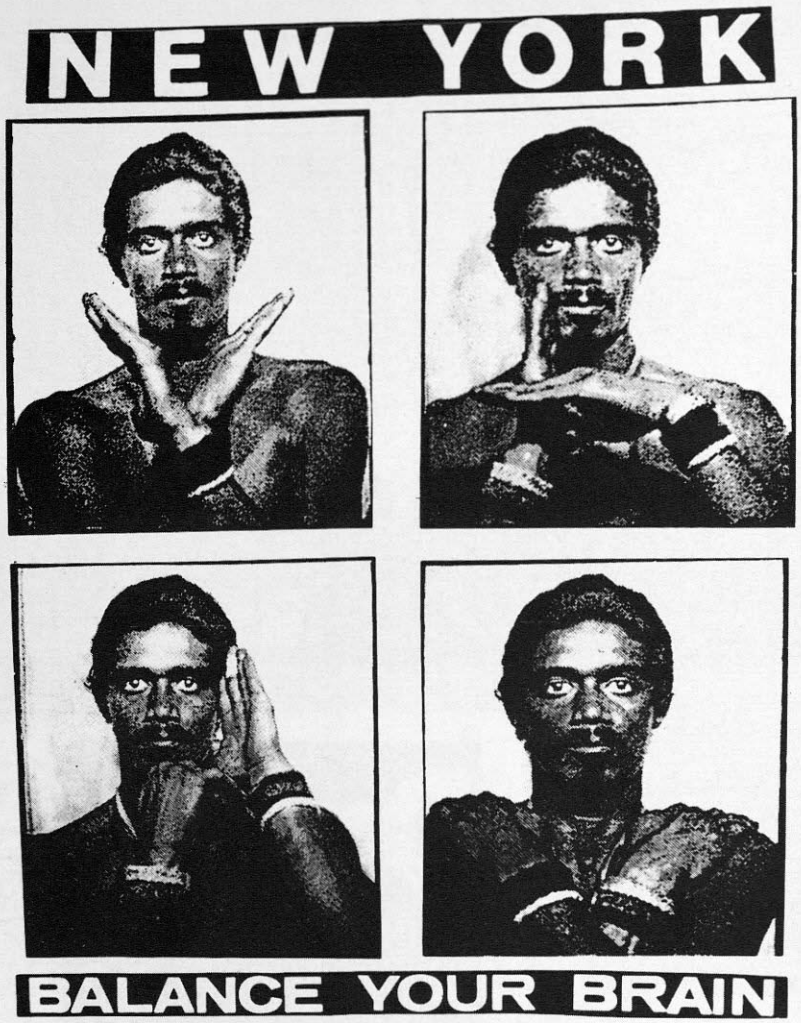
City life is dangerous. Physical and psychological dangers are lurking in every shadow, around every corner, especailly if one is female. This is one of 10 narrative drawings/monoprints that was shown at 10 on 8, each containing a warning to the viewer passing on the street that one must live with care. This warning applies to surviving on the streets as well as surviving in a culture of discrimination.



Dan Rock
Make Your Eyes Bleed

Brad Melamed
World Trade Center at Night

Awhile back, I did a lot of street art involving stencilled posters which posed dilemmas such as, "Would you rather have fame or age gracefully?" My aim was to provoke people to question their value systems. In the same vein, "World Trade Center" uses an image which romanticizes the city, thereby symbolizing corporate capitalism at its "best." Against this image of the "haves" my text ironically contrasts the condition of the poverty-stricken— the "have-nots." What I also wanted to show is that images—a form of ideology—can mean whatever the power structure wants them to mean. This is my way of visually demystifying the exploitation of signs/symbols that serve the dominant class.



Rachael Romero with photographs by Greg Velez
New York—Balance Your Brain

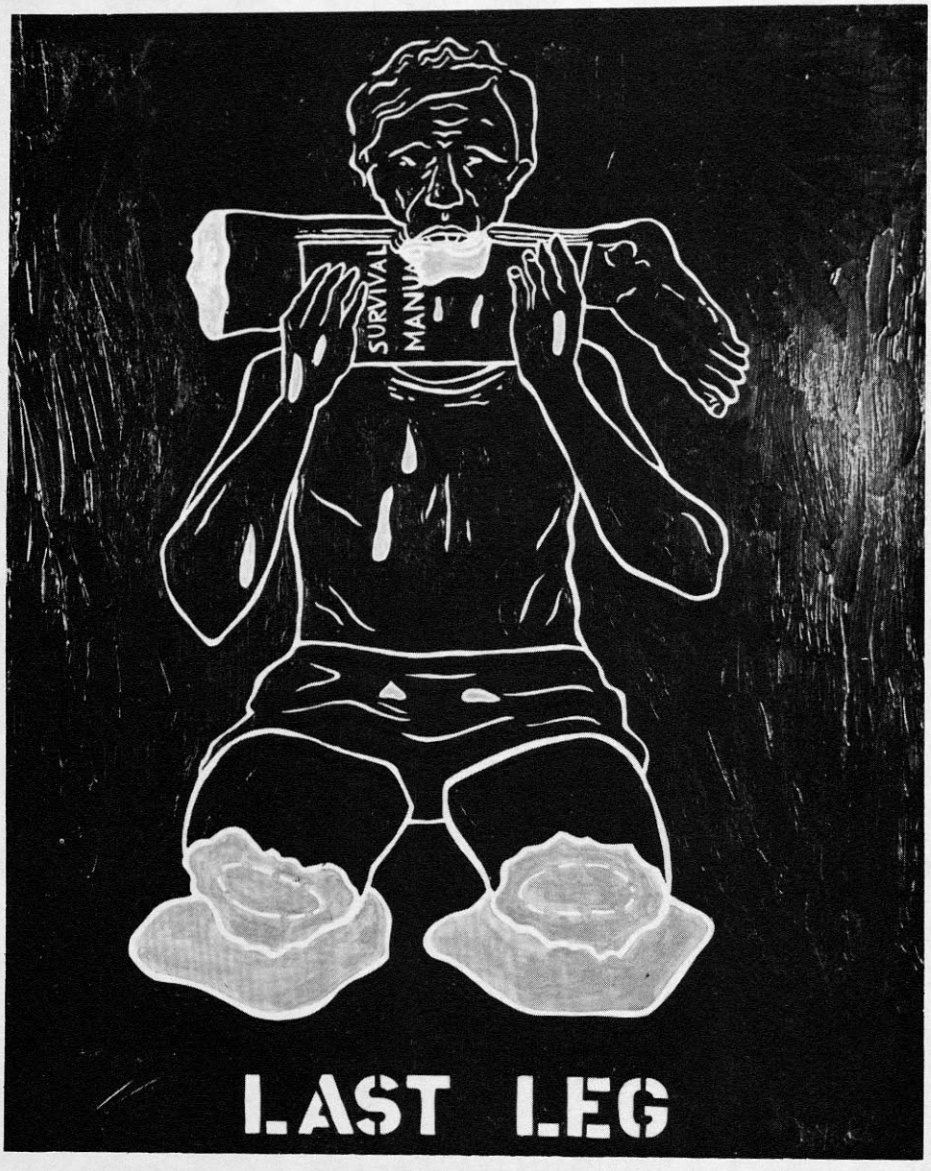
I designed this piece incorporating the auto-portraits of Gregory Jose Velez who claims to be my twin brother. We met on the street during my street portrait project (NYC 1982-1985) and we have been working together ever since. The portraits come from "The Indications" series and are intended as feedback for the population. I hope the poster's effect will be calming, amusing, intriguing and yes, New York-balancing. Indeed Gregory has kept his balance through 8 years of homelessness. I enjoyed returning to the street poster—an art form that was a main vehicle of my work from 1975 to 1981.

Vito Acconci
I Love New York/New York Loves Me

The mode of the poster is to be on the wall—to send the viewer away from the wall into the world. If a mirror is inserted into a poster, the poster is used as furniture. The viewer slips into the poster, is not just given a message, but becomes part of that message. All the while thinking he/she has been using furniture of the world, the viewer is taken from the world and brought into the picture—trapped in signs. The mirror shows you not so much who you are but where you are. The viewer finds the self framed, a figure in front of the ground, an inhabitant entwined in the city. Knowing his/her place, the viewer can now plan how to re-place.

Ilse Schreiber
Homeless

My aim is simply to make people aware of the increasing number of homeless people in New York, and the need not just to help financially, but to provide an active input into what's causing the situation. We need to examine the psychological needs of the homeless as well as the obvious physical needs.



Jeff
Last Leg

I am commenting on the futility of life in the city for creative people. It is a graphic struggle for survival. I have friends who are simply trying to live. The 'last leg' is the meat of a survival manual sandwich.

ARTICLE 7-C of THE MULTIPLE DWELLING LAW

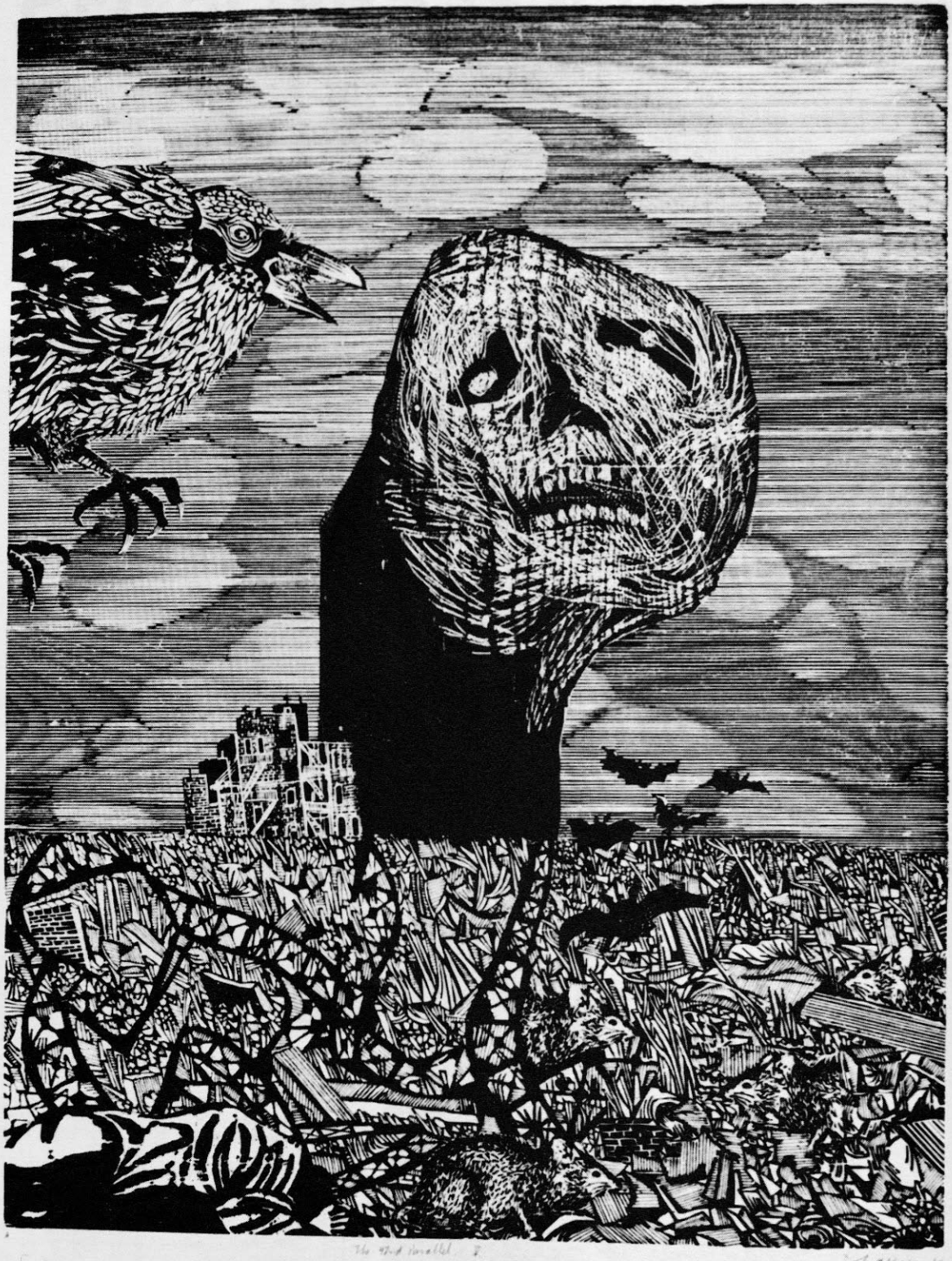
LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

The legislature hereby finds and declares that a serious public emergency EXISTS in the HOUSING of a considerable number of persons in cities having A POPULATION of over one million, which emergency has been created by the increasing number of conversions of commercial and manufacturing loft buildings to residential use WITHOUT compliance with applicable building codes and laws and without compliance with local laws regarding minimum housing maintenance standards; that many such buildings do not conform to minimum standards for health, safety and fire PROTECTION; that HOUSING maintenance services essential to maintain health, safety and fire protection are NOT BEING PROVIDED in many such buildings; that as a consequence of the acute SHORTAGE OF housing as found and declared in the emergency TENANT PROTECTION act of nineteen seventy-four the TENANTS in such buildings would suffer great hardship if FORCED TO RELOCATE; that as a result of the uncertain status of the TENANCY IN QUESTION the COURTS have been INCREASINGLY burdened WITH disputes between LANDLORDS and TENANTS regarding their respective rights and obligations under the EXISTing circumstances; that some courts have declared such buildings *de facto* multiple DWELLINGS; that ILLEGAL and unregulated RESIDENTial conversions undermine the integrity of the local ZONING resolution and THREATEN loSs of jobs and industry; that the INTERVENTION of the state and local GOVERNMENENTs Is Necessary to EFFECTUAte Legalization, consistent with the local zoning resolution, of the present illegal LIVING arrangements IN such *de facto* multiple dwellings, and to establish A SYSTEM WHEREby residential rentals can be reasonably adjusted so that the RESIDENTIAL TENANTS can assist in PAYing THE COST of such legalization *without* BEING FORCED TO RELOCATE; that in order to *prevent* UNCERTAINTY, HARDSHIP, AND DISLOCATION, the provisions of thIS article are necessary and designed to *protect* THE public health, safety and general welfare. SIGNED INTO LAW ON JUNE 21, 1982.

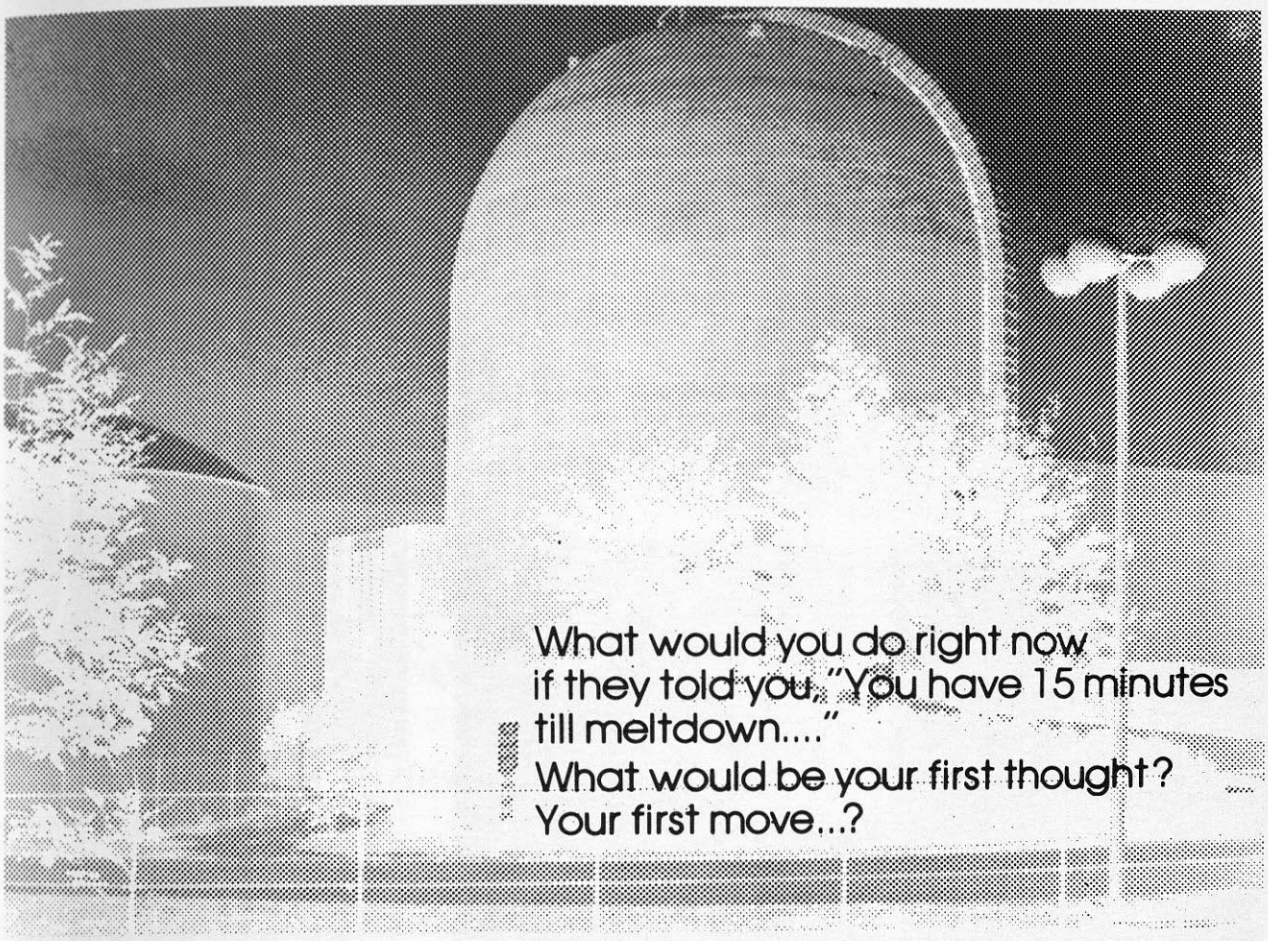
Michael Corris
Exit Housing

Rae Langsten
Subterrestrial Blues

A footnote on the underground in post-industrial America.

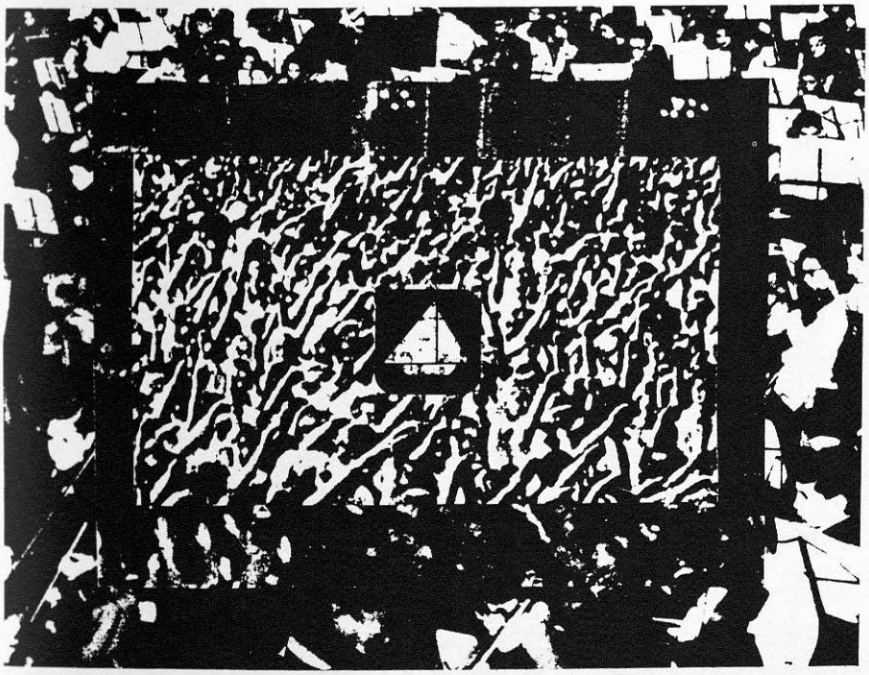


Antonio Frasconi
The 42nd Parallel



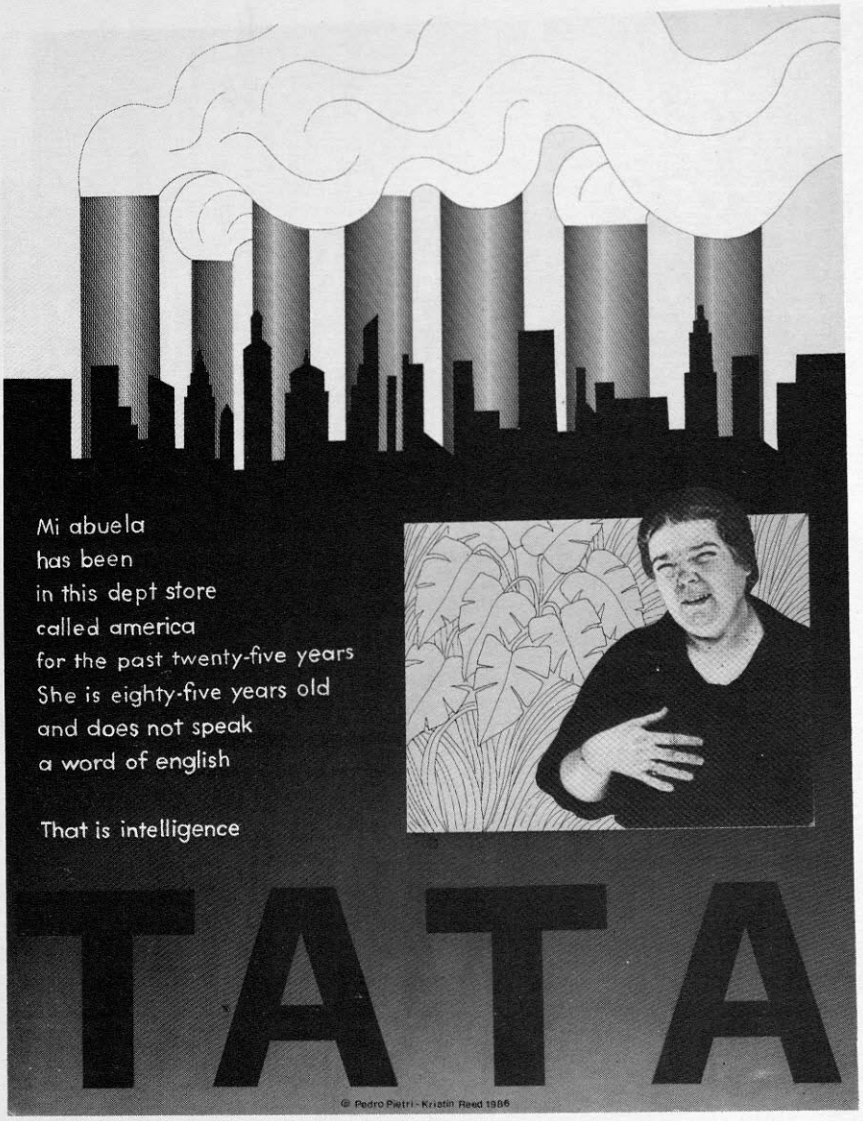
Elizabeth Kulas
Indian Point Is an Accident Waiting To Happen

I woke up in terror the night of the broadcast on Chernobyl, knowing that at any moment, we could face the same thing. With this piece, I want us to imagine those first few moments until we imagine it as real enough to act on.



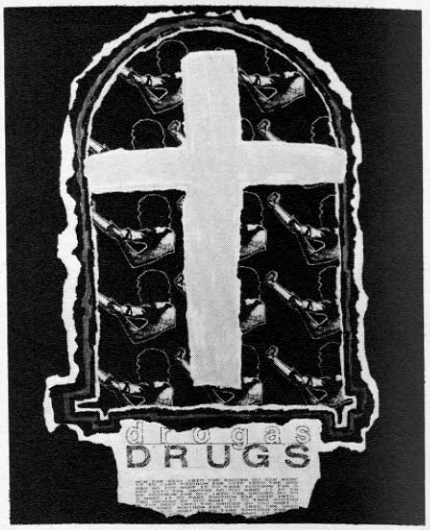
Lauri Bretthauer
Crowds at Sea

Elizabeth Taylor's triumphant cleavage gleamed like a tanned salute from her white sweetheart neckline. The encapsulated seduction of the 19-inch screen offered the dazzle and intimacy the scene below could not. It was a programmed yet extravagant seduction that led the crowd in the vast flow of synchronous time in its desire for Spectacle. At a thankfully high remove from the mass catharsis, I was a privileged voyeur, in my room high inside the World Trade Center. The hordes surged below, en masse along the West Side Highway. There were no individuals. I observed only the configurational texture of a mottled organism en route.



Kristin Reed/Pedro Pietri
TATA

The poem, by Pedro, is about his grandmother, an immigrant living in New York. It reflects his cynical sense of humor, which illustrates how those who isolate themselves in their own little culture within the city can avoid the rat race. The imagery of the leaves is a symbol of another life that this woman surrounds herself with. She did not try to assimilate into the rest of the culture. That is intelligence.



Juan Sanchez
How Far Deep Into the Ground Do You Want Drugs to Take You?

In the midst of a possible nuclear holocaust, U.S. intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Apartheid in South Africa, our communities in New York are infested with similar problems. We have unemployment, homeless, racist attacks, crack houses and street predators. My poster is an attempt to point out to our youth that drugs mean death. They can take control of you and destroy your soul. We must destroy those things designed to keep us from progressing and developing in our daily struggle for a just and better society.

Greg Sholette
The New Angst: For George Grosz

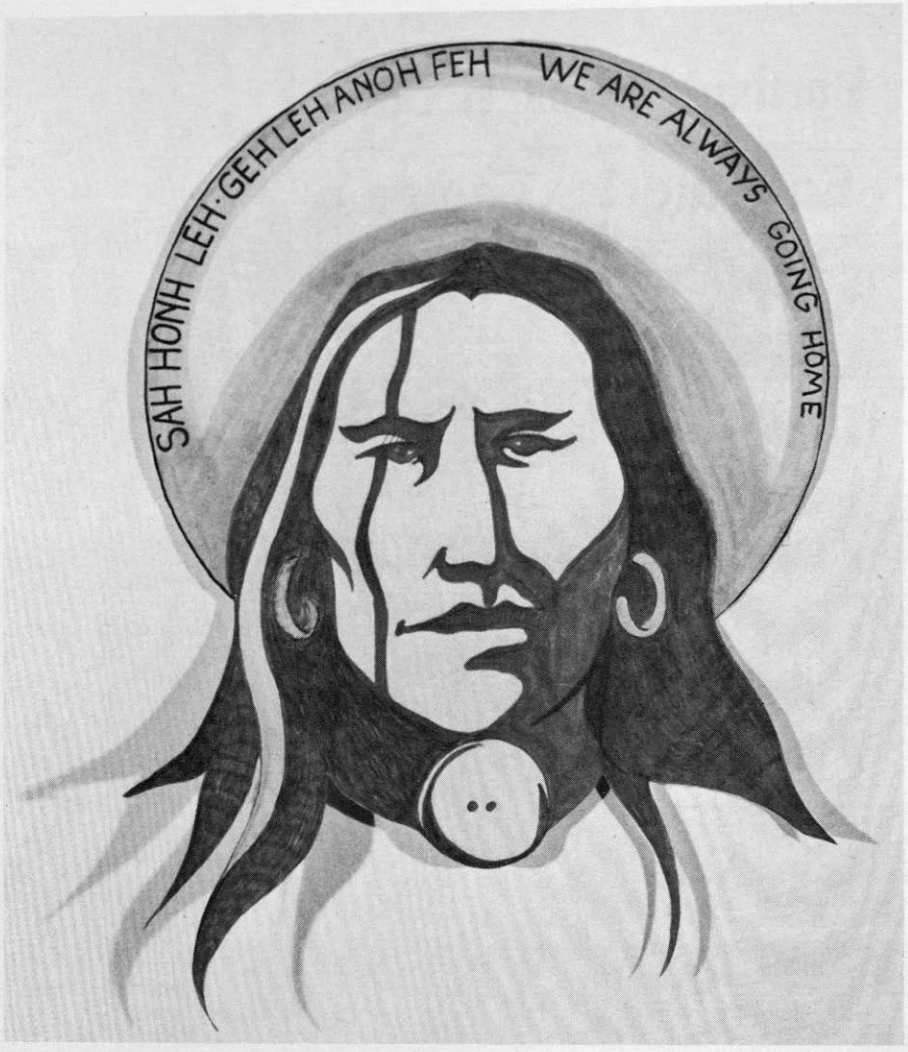
This cartoon is meant to express the contradiction in which artists find themselves: between social and moral criticism on the one hand, and on the other hand, the economic reality that the institutions of the art world in which we participate are sometimes responsible for those social problems. In this case. it is the housing and displacement crisis in NYC. The artist pictured is morally outraged, but the painterly products of his/her outrage become the currency of those (vicious) economic forces.

THE NEW ANGST

Margia Kramer
Diversity in America

This poster satirizes several aspects of urban life in America. Its cinematic structure echoes film frames. The Gothic typefaces recall the piety of the Middle Ages, the culture and language of Germany, the stability and the conservatism of the haute bourgeoisie and satirize their own functions. When assembled this way, these logos of the media of mass communications demonstrate their religious and exclusive connections. It is incorrect to assume that the mere number of newspapers within a society necessarily affords a plurality of viewpoints in news reportage and interpretations. . . .under capitalism, newspapers—entrenched bureaucratic businesses—can be prime instruments of oppression, leading to homogenization.

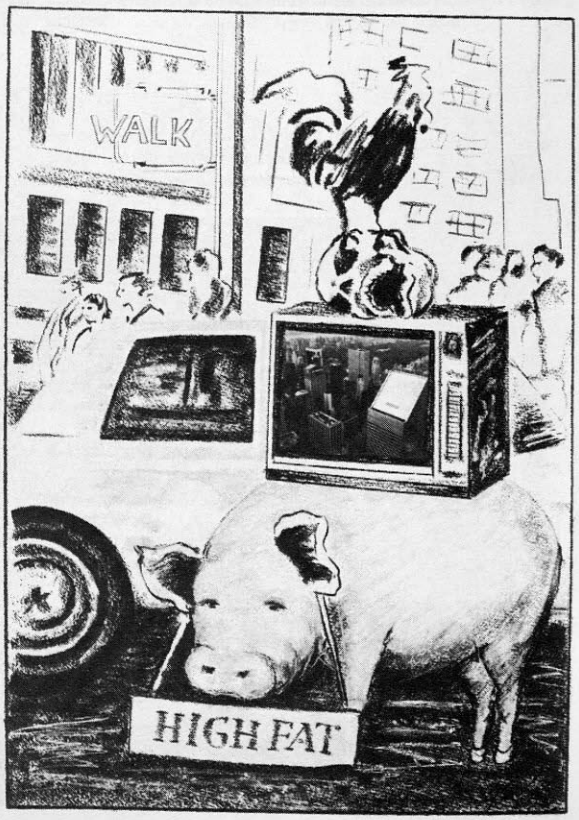
Dona Ann McAdams
Fort Washington Men's Shelter

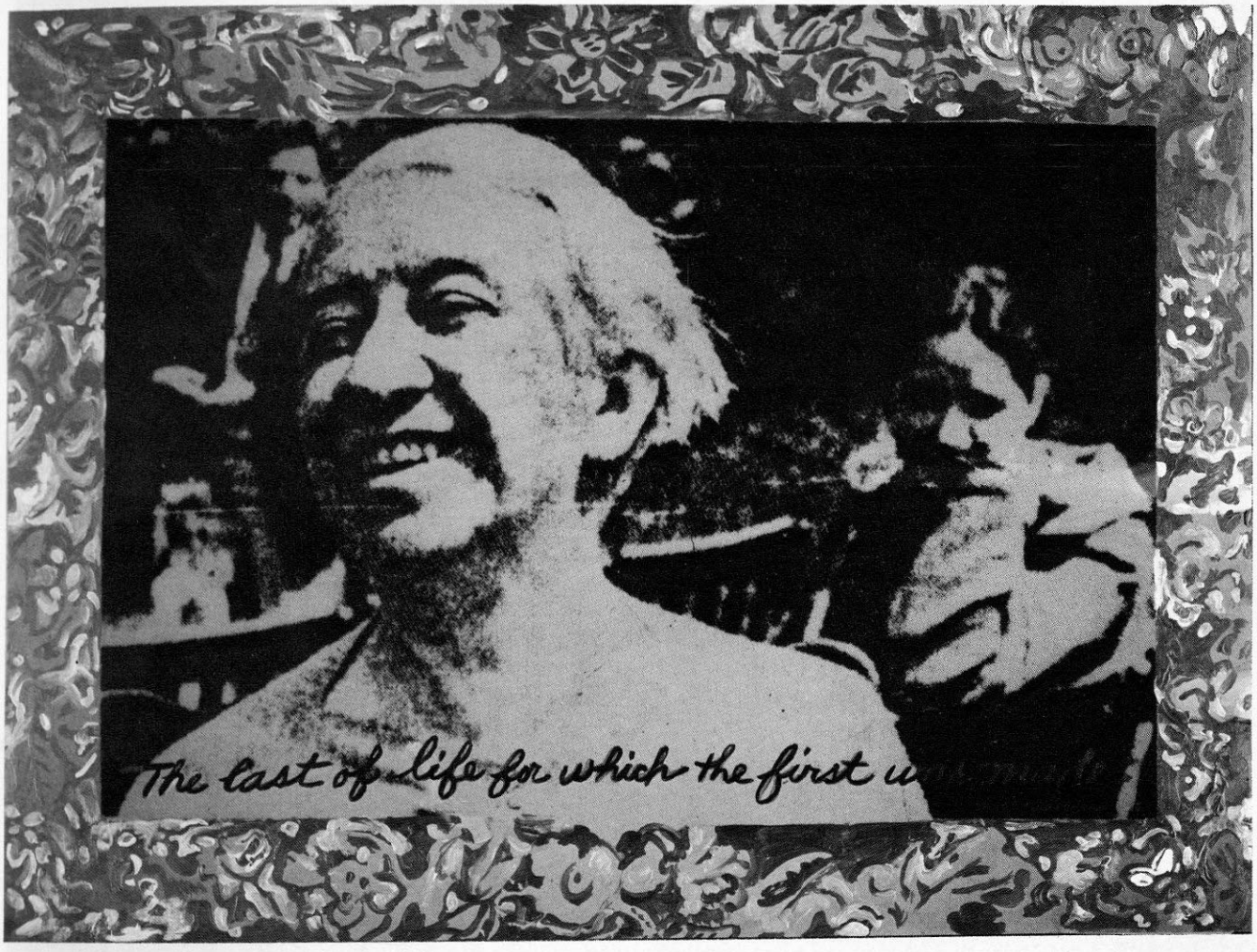


Richard Ray Whitman
We Are Always Going Home

Olivia Beens
Shaking

This piece was derived from a performance I did on the subjects of the NYC subway and the homeless. The experience described is real, and its purpose is to function as a mirror for the viewer, to identify with the homeless and the poor. It could be you . . . you too may be shaking, for whatever reasons.





May Stevens
The Last of Life for Which the First Was Made?

We live in a city with a possibility for a continuously human life reaching into rich, old age as almost inconceivable. Even the upper classes must breathe this air.

Janet Vicario
High Fat

I'm making a humorous comment about that element of overabundance of wealth in the city. This piece refers facetiously to the totem pole of greed, evident in the streets.

NEW YORK CITY The most populous center of the former North America Empire and the largest concentration of humans in the Western Hemisphere during the congested living era. It is believed that during the last decades of the Capitalist (obs.) Era, 2010 to 2030, it was an area of extreme contrast between poverty and luxury. During the period of ecological dispersal of the population which took place near the end of the 21st Century, New York City had a population of five millions, half of what it had a century earlier. The decline was triggered by an event which took place in April of 1992 and became known as the Disaster of New York City.

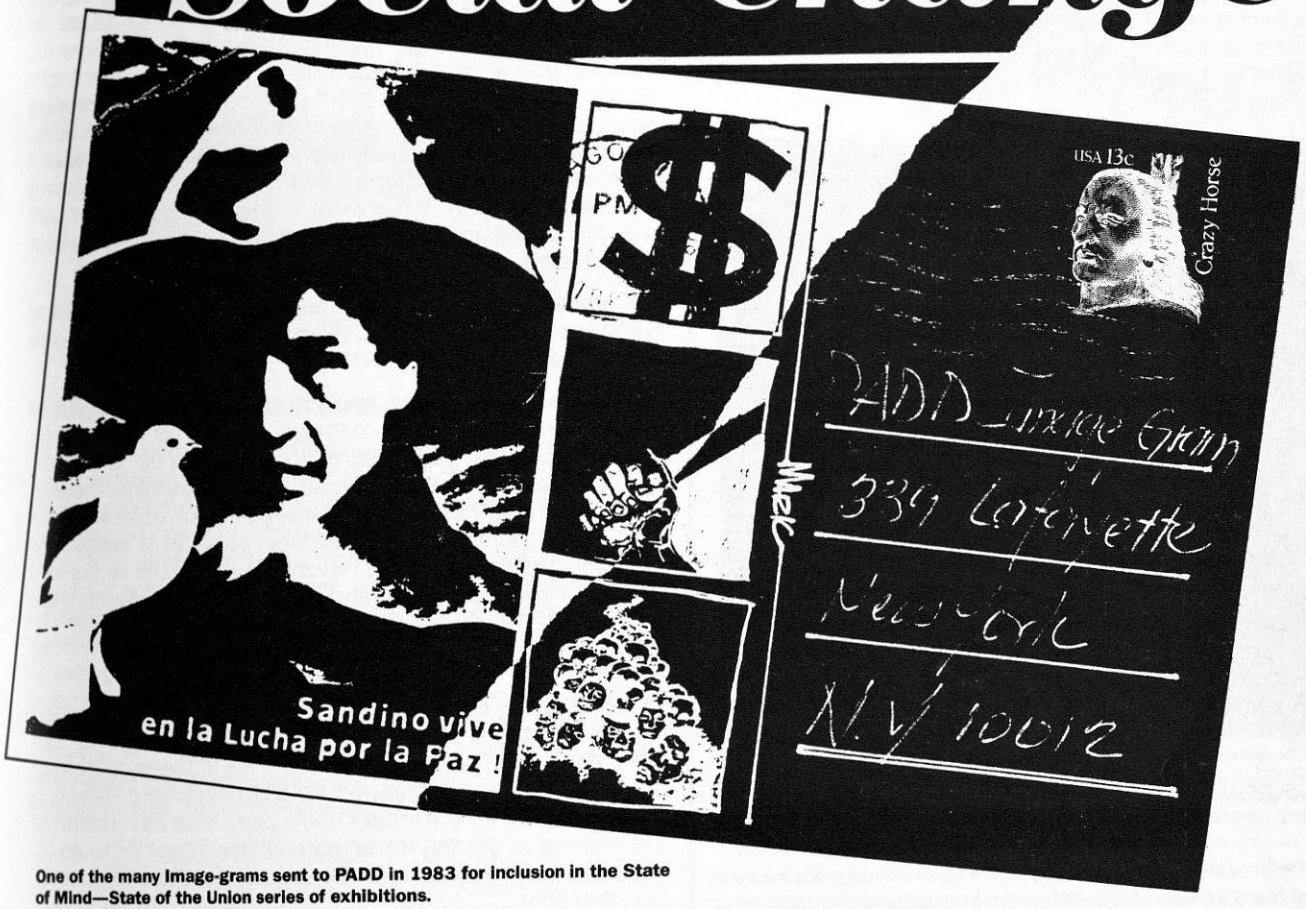
NEW YORK CITY, THE DISASTER OF A term which was used for two centuries, marking the mass death of nearly two million inhabitants of New York, the most populous city of the former North American Empire. An explosion at a nuclear (archaic) station on Long Island, 90 kilometers from NYC, 22 of April 1992, brought immediate death to 75,000 inhabitants but many more died in the ensuing panic and gradual contamination of the environment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY An excerpt from the "Christian Science Monitor", published in Boston, Mass. is typical of the press reports a day after the disaster (The New York press ceased publishing on the day after the event, though an edition of the "New York Times" came out in Rochester, N.Y. but did not reach New York City.) The headline of the "Christian Science Monitor" was "The Tragedy of Our Neighbors". Excerpted are the portions printed (archaic) in bold type.

OBSERVERS IN HELICOPTERS WHO FLEW OVER NEW YORK REPORT THAT THE TRIBORO BRIDGE, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE AND THE WILLIS AVENUE BRIDGE ARE COMPLETELY PARALYZED. TENS OF THOUSANDS OF CARS ARE STALLED ON THE BRIDGES AND THE APPROACHES. THERE IS SOME MOVEMENT IN ONE LANE ON THE VERRAZANO BRIDGE BUT SHOOTING IS HEARD IN THE VICINITY. PRIVATE RADIO OPERATORS REPORT THAT SHOOTING CAN BE HEARD IN MANY AREAS OF THE CITY, ESPECIALLY NEAR THE BRIDGES AND TUNNELS. A TELEPHONE REPORT TO THE "MONITOR" FROM SUFFOLK COUNTY ON LONG ISLAND SAYS THAT IN MANY PARTS OF NEW YORK VIOLENCE RAGES, MOSTLY BETWEEN INHABITANTS WHO HAVE NO VEHICLES AND ARE TRYING TO TAKE AWAY CARS AND TRUCKS FROM THEIR OWNERS. THERE IS COMPLETE PANIC AT THE APPROACHES TO THE LINCOLN AND HOLLAND TUNNELS, WHERE SICK AND DYING DRIVERS ARE TRAPPED IN STALLED AUTOMOBILES. THOUSANDS ARE TRYING TO REACH NEW JERSEY ON FOOT THROUGHT THE TUNNELS BY CLIMBING OVER THE STATIONARY VEHICLES, BUT MOST ARE OVERCOME BY THE FUMES IN THE TUNNELS. LOUDSPEAKERS AT THE HOLLAND TUNNEL ARE CONTINUING TO URGE DRIVERS TO SHUT OFF THEIR MOTORS, BUT MANY REMAIN RUNNING, APPARENTLY WITH DEAD OF DYING DRIVERS AT THE WHEELS. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ATTEMPTING TO SWIM ACROSS THE HUDSON TO NEW JERSEY AND MANY DROWN. A BAND OF WHITE RACISTS ATTACKED INHABITANTS FROM HARLEM WHO WERE COMING TO THE COLUMBIA PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS. W.N.Y.C., THE LAST NEW YORK CITY RADIO STATION TO BROADCAST, FELL SILENT AT 7.30 PM AS IT WAS CALLING FOR BLOOD DONATIONS BUT GIVING NO INSTRUCTIONS AS TO HOW AND WHERE.

Dictionary of the English Language, 24th Century Excerpted by Rudolf Baranik.

THE PADD ARCHIVE: Filing for Social Change



One of the many Image-grams sent to PADD in 1983 for inclusion in the State of Mind—State of the Union series of exhibitions.

At first glance it's not very prepossessing—a few old painted file cases in the corner of PADD's office, a flatbox for posters, a lightbox, a shared desk, a few slots for received mail. No hi-tech index system, no microfilms, certainly no computers for data storage and retrieval. Notwithstanding, PADD's Archive has gained a reputation as one of the most comprenhensive collections of art dealing with social themes to be found in the United States. The oldest continuous activity in PADD, the Archive is now in its seventh year of existence. And the fact that without funding, paid archivists, sufficient space or equipment, it contains an invaluable collection of art and art-related materials from all over the world is a tribute to Barbara Moore and Mimi Smith, who, along with Kate Linker and Carol Waag, have headed, hoarded, and organized the Archive from the beginning.

Because PADD is currently in the process of changing directions programatically, we thought it an appropriate time to ask Barbara Moore and Mimi Smith the following questions on the philosophy, aims, organizing principles, and future plans for the Archive.

—The Editors

What prompted PADD, when it was formed, to place so much emphasis on documenting—as well as creating—socially concerned art?

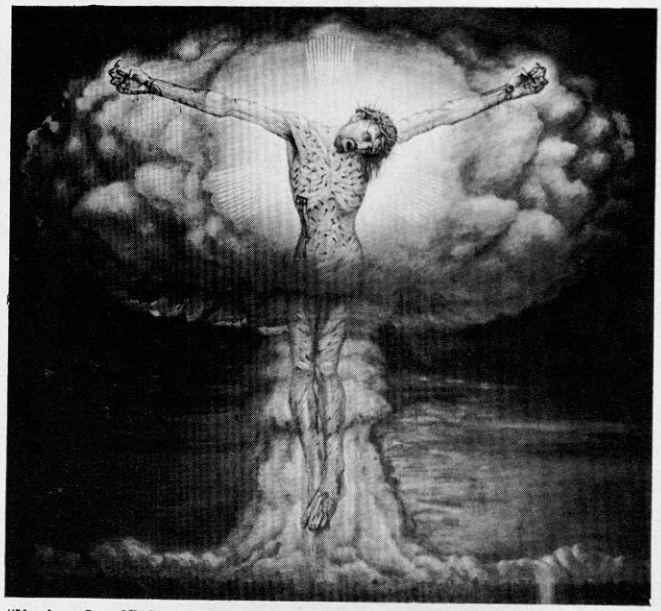
Well, that was what the group was orginally about—documentation of art relating to social and political issues. There was a long history of such art, an enormous amount of such work had been done, and many PADD members had been involved in activist art from the sixties, before that, and on to now. Actually, it was Lucy Lippard who came up with the idea and insisted from the first that there was a need to archive socially relevant art, to make it available to the largest possible public and to educate ourselves as well on our own history.

Also, one of the expressed aims of PADD was that of networking—bringing artists into an organized relationship with society—and if that were to be done, a repository of social art was a seriously needed resource. Some people did at first raise objections. They didn't want PADD to become a "file-cabinet" group. They were interested in activist work. And so, the Archive eventually became one side of the coin—the other being activism.

THE PADD ARCHIVE

How did you begin the process of building an archive from scratch?

A flyer went out in June, 1979, and news somehow got around—by word of mouth, and group to group—that we were creating an archive. By spring, 1980, material started coming into our new office at El Bohio, almost by itself. Clive Philpott from the Museum of Modern Art Library was an early member and helped set up the subject headings. Also, we got a big boost when the Archive was mentioned in UPFRONT No.1 (it was called First Issue at the time). After that, individual artists and groups began sending things in, mostly in labeled file folders as requested. This included people outside New York who had no access to the art community here and were doing public and social artwork in their own communities throughout the country.



"Nuclear Crucifixion," Alex Grey, from Disarming Images, a traveling exhibition organized by Bread and Roses—the cultural project of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees—and Physicians for Social Responsibility, NYC (1984-86).

PADD defines social art as "any work that deals with issues ranging from sexism and racism to ecological damage and other forms of human oppression." Does that mean the art materials you've collected are for the most part overtly political? How about art that deals with the personal—the psyche, emotions, inward relationships, everyday life?

(Loud laughter): Of course we have a lot of that stuff. Yes, PADD did set forth its own definition of social art, though as a matter of fact all of us believe that the personal is political, and conversely, the political is personal too. From the beginning, though, the Archive Committee chose not to make a narrow distinction at all and to define social art in the broadest sense possible. We even have some reactionary art that's fallen into the files. It's up to people who send the material in to decide whether it's socially relevant or not. For the most part, unless the items are blatantly non-political, we put them into the files.

Can you describe the kinds of material in your collection?

There are several hundred categories. In UPFRONT No. 9 (1984) we ran a double-page spread listing these categories alphabetically. Just to touch on them, they include abortion, Africa, anarchism, Argentina, Attica, the draft, El Salvador, fascism, genocide, gentrification, lesbian and gay art, ideology, machismo, non-violence, penal system, reproductive rights, surveillance, Vietnam, weapons, World War II, Yugoslavia, and several artists whose names begin with Z. In effect, what the Archive contains theme-wise is a cross-section of activist art and art-related materials on nearly every pressing social/personal issue that has engaged committed artists in these last decades. We would like to stress, however, that the Archive does not encourage the sending of original and unreplaceable art. These belong to museums that can care for them properly. There are of course certain media where in effect the reproduction is the original—for example, xeroxes and photos. We certainly encourage people to send such material to us.

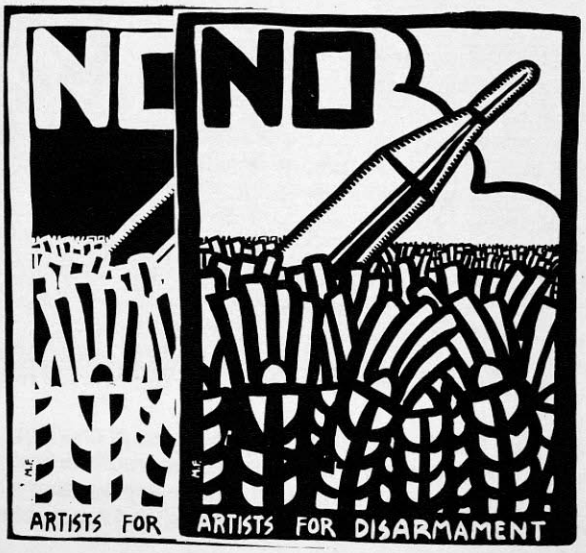
A good deal of what we do receive is not artwork per se, but documentation of past or ongoing work of individuals or groups. It takes the form of press releases, announcements, articles, publications, leaflets, brochures. The work itself might be anything from a street event or an exhibition to a protest demonstration to a community action. We want to emphasize, too, that ours is essentially an archive of visual art with a social dimension. To a lesser degree, we do include material relating to music, poetry, etc. We are not interested for the most part in documenting any kind of general political activity unless it is art-related.

You obviously place a good deal of emphasis on the visual component of the Archive. What kinds of images can one find in the files?

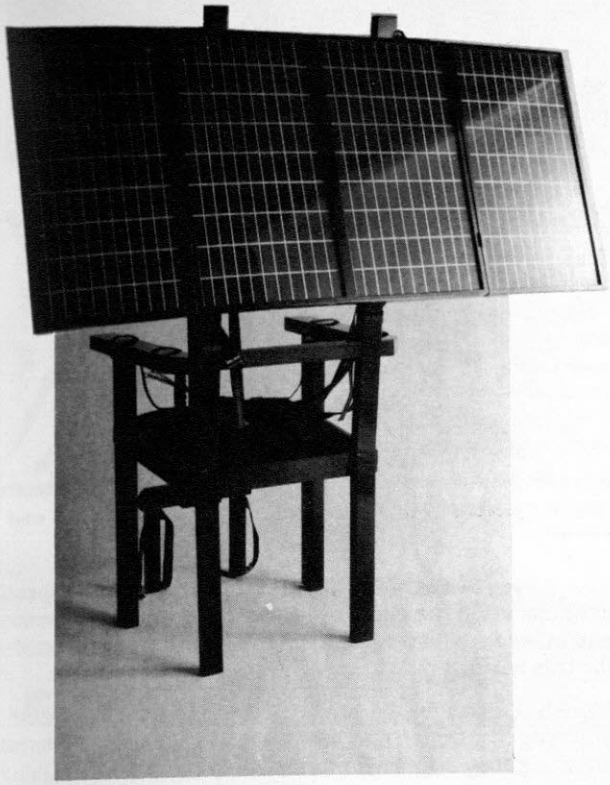
As you can see, we have a good mix of images from different media—everything from posters, photos, and placards, through erotic art, paintings, mail art and murals, to window and storefront art, cartoons, drawings, sculpture, films, installations, video art. There is also a large collection of slides—the work of individual artists or groups, some of it usable for research. Unfortunately, we haven't organized the slides well enough for general use and we need a volunteer slide specialist so they will be more broadly available.

How is the Archive organized?

When materials come in, we categorize them initially—when we can—by the artist's name. We make a file folder for that artist and then cross-reference the items into one or more of the various subject categories. We also have a card file which lists alphabetically the artist's name and a brief description of the material in the file. If the material doesn't relate to an individual artist, we file it under the group, institution, or publication that sent it.



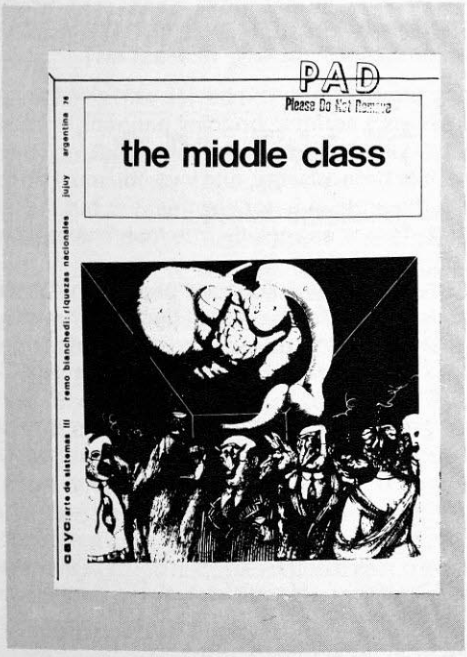
Cover for Artists for Disarmament publication, Mark Fisher, 1982



"Solar Electric Chair," James Hong, New York.

Who uses the Archive and how is it most effectively used?

To give you some actual examples, someone who is doing a book on street art recently consulted the Archive. He first looked under the category "street art" and followed this up with anything else related to his subject—like graffiti, demonstrations, you name it. He then xeroxed some of the visual material and later contacted artists and art groups doing street work whom he had discovered in the files. Other people use the Archive for dissertations, special articles for publications, activist projects they are planning, etc. Someone who wanted to produce an exhibition on a special topic would look through the files for groups or individuals doing that kind of art. We consider this Archive as the starting point for research on any subject. People follow up their research by seeking out the different artists, groups, networks or other sources they find here.



"The Middle Class," Remo Bianchedi, sent to the Archive by the Center of Art and Communication, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

FILING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

How does one get to use the Archive?

By appointment only. We have a committee of three—or at least two—working at one time and on call. We prefer that people who want to use the Archive come at our regular meeting period, which is usually one morning a week. We will, however, try to accommodate people at other times if their needs are very specific. We cannot accommodate those who are on fishing expeditions and want to spend huge amounts of time here, since we have no staff at the PADD office.

Guerrilla Girls: From a poster for the Untitled Conference (1986) of the National Association of Artists' Organizations, Buffalo, New York.

In some six years—without special funding and with only a few people working together—you've somehow managed to amass an astonishingly large and diverse collection of social art materials. How have you done this?

For one, we have the help of PADD members, associates and friends here and elsewhere. An example: as soon as the Archive became established, Lucy Lippard, on her slide shows and talks around the country and abroad, would mention our archive and its need for material. Very soon, people and groups began to send us items from different states and different countries like Australia, Northern Ireland, England, Mexico. By now we have items from dozens of foreign countries, among them Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Cambodia, Canada, Central America, Chile, China, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Mozambique, the Philippines, Poland, Thailand, USSR, Uruguay, Vietnam, and more.

Then too, PADD's own art activities—its exhibitions, performances, street events, graphics—became an important source for material. UPFRONT helps, too, particularly after an issue featuring work from the Archive.

Still another example: Kate Linker, who worked with us for many years, asked Dore Ashton and Rudolf Baranik for some art material and they gave us a small but important collection of sixties' art—from the 1967 "Angry Arts" in particular. It included historical items, correspondence, discussions and activities relating to different events such as the Vietnam War—in effect, a small history of sixties social art.

When there are gaps in our collection—groups, people, or events that should be included—we often approach people with requests to send the materials in. Recently, for example,

one of us noted we had no work by Leon Golub and Nancy Spero. When we called them about this, they each gave us an impressive stack of fascinating items. From time to time we make this kind of outreach to artists on a special list.

Incidentally, though we have no official funding, we do sometimes receive modest contributions from PADD or others. We were also very fortunate in getting legal-sized file cabinets, flat-files, and lightbox equipment from Material for the Arts.

The Archive is known to have an excellent collection of political posters. Can you say a few words about this?

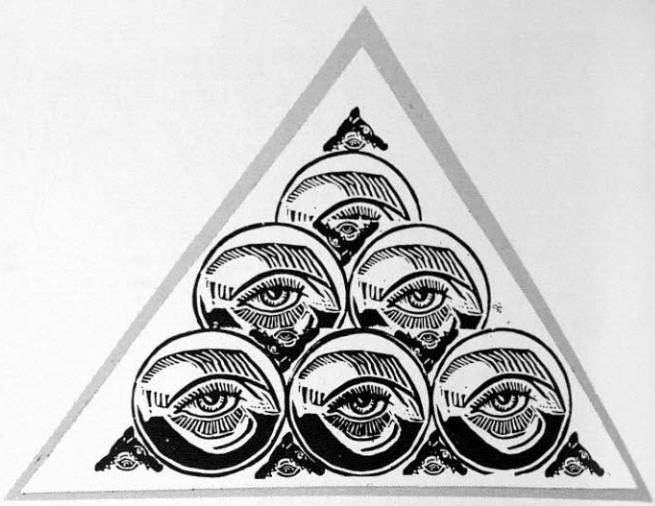
Posters are of course one of the most obvious ways that artists can use their work for political purposes, and there are no end to the ways in which the collection seemed to assemble itself. People just spontaneously sent us posters from as near as New York and as far as Australia. Then, sometimes we get a providential break, as when Karin diGia closed her Gallery 345 and we were able to purchase very reasonably a collection of the most significant posters of the sixties—many of which we had never seen before. There are seventy or so of these posters, and they parallel the history of political art of that era.

Of course there are other unofficial ways of collecting posters. When, for example, we see an interesting poster on a wall, we ask for a copy or, on occasion—particularly in the street—we just rip it off the wall. Both of us, we're real scavengers for a good cause.

Are there any other major archives for social art here or elsewhere?

None in New York, for sure. As for outside New York, we really don't know. People who use our resources say they too aren't aware of other collections like ours. We should mention, of course, Jim Murray's good collection of cultural materials he assembled in the course of producing the *Cultural Correspondence Directory of Activist Art*. It may not qualify as an official archive, but it certainly is a valuable resource for culturally democratic arts throughout the United States and abroad.

Drawing by Paul Rutkovsky for GET ("that is out to win, gain and obtain everything").



"Big Brother Is Watching," an Image-gram sent to the Archive, 1985, artist unknown

How do you account for the fact that in view of the upsurge of social art in the eighties, libraries, museums, art schools and other such institutions have not created special archives for this material?

Frankly, institutions of that kind are not responsive at all to anything that doesn't further their own specialized interests, anything they consider of an ephemeral or populist nature. Their mandates are simply different from ours. We concentrate on social art and they don't. Museums consider socially relevant art as part of the artworld—but generally not the kind of art they would exhibit. Museums and libraries, as well as colleges, do in fact include social artworks in their documentation, but not as a separate archive. It's not a high priority for them.

How do you prefer people to send their work to the Archive?

First of all, we have graduated from letter-sized folders to legal-sized folders—a giant step forward! If you want your work to get into the files promptly, send it prepared in a folder with a name on the tag—last name first—or the name of your group. This saves us work and gets you right into the files. And, remember, no original artwork or other items, unless it can fit into the folder, and the artist wants us to have it permanently. We don't want valuable material that we are expected to return to the sender.

What advice would you offer any group that might want to develop an archive of socially relevant art?

(After a long pause): Well, the advice we'd give to anybody is that an archive is a serious, ongoing program, not a one-shot project, but a comprehensive collection that requires a major commitment of time, energy, and love. You must be prepared to stick with the archive—not just this year, but the next year, and the next. This is especially true for archives which have no paid help.

For a starter, you need qualified people—not necessarily professionals, but individuals qualified by virtue of having a strong social sense, a segment of spare time each week, and a willingness to work on a regular long-term basis.

It's also a good idea to be associated with an activist art/cultural group, like PADD, where there is a continuous source of energy and an activist program that feeds into the archive. It should preferably be part of a group that's geared for the long pull—artists who themselves create social art. Finally, an archive needs people of a certain temperament. It's not like going out to a demonstration or street event with your work; rather, it's like nurturing a project patiently, watering a seed, as it were. To use another image, an archive like ours is a calm center in an activist storm. ■

PADD PERFORMANCES: 1983-1986

With this issue of UPFRONT, we bring to an end our reports on PADD's long-running Second Sunday performance/forum series (see Editorial). From 1981-1986, we presented scores of individual artists and groups to diverse audiences within and beyond the Soho axis, at schools, churches, community centers, and in the streets. The events ranged in format from agit realism to boldly experimental, and from the overtly political to the intensely intimate—all with the aim of making the connections between art, social forces and personal concerns. Our heartfelt thanks to Franklin Furnace for generously providing space and equipment, and to the many performance artists, and others who participated in the project.

PERFORMANCE SERIES — PROFESSOR LOUIE

Professor Louie's Survival Rap

photo: Joel S. Cohen

In February, 1986, PADD celebrated its sixth anniversary at Franklin Furnace with a Second Sunday party and performances by Professor Louie. Coordinator for the event was Joel Cohen. A PADD slide show was assembled by Herb Perr, and D.J. for the occasion was Captain Kirk, Dominique Philbert.

The performance space at Franklin Furnace was festooned with garlands of balloons and silver tapes, the stage lights were phosphorescent yellow and green, the sound of flutes and bongo drums soared audienceward as Professor Louie began the first of his raps with a wicked skewering of New York coming apart at its seams under the regime of Mayor Koch. This kind of performance, delivered with a style at once passionate and cool, has become the hallmark of Brooklyn-born-and-bred Professor Louie—rap artist/poet/comedian. Tall, loose-limbed, with close-cropped haircut like some hip medievalist, Louie has been sharpening his street-smart performances before large and small audiences throughout New York for several years. With a group of musicians, he has developed a series of pieces that zero in on the gamut of social malaises confronting us. Political art it surely is, but as Louie insists, its inspiration is his gut reaction to "whatever is happening out there as soon as you open the door—the shit of everyday living."

Watching the Professor bop out his hard-hitting and very funny assault on drugs, poverty, discrimination, nuclear war, Reaganite reaction and just about every other species of social/psychic decay is one thing. Trying to capture for the reader the high of Louie's performances—with the strange and wonderful instrumental sounds weaving in and out of his torrent of words—is quite another. The best bet is to catch Louie his next time around, or to get hold of his new tape. Meanwhile, to suggest a little of the literary flavor of his gigs, here are some excerpts from his near-classic "The Cockroach" (a paeon of praise to the most indominable of all survivors) which the Professor performed at PADD's sixth birthday party:

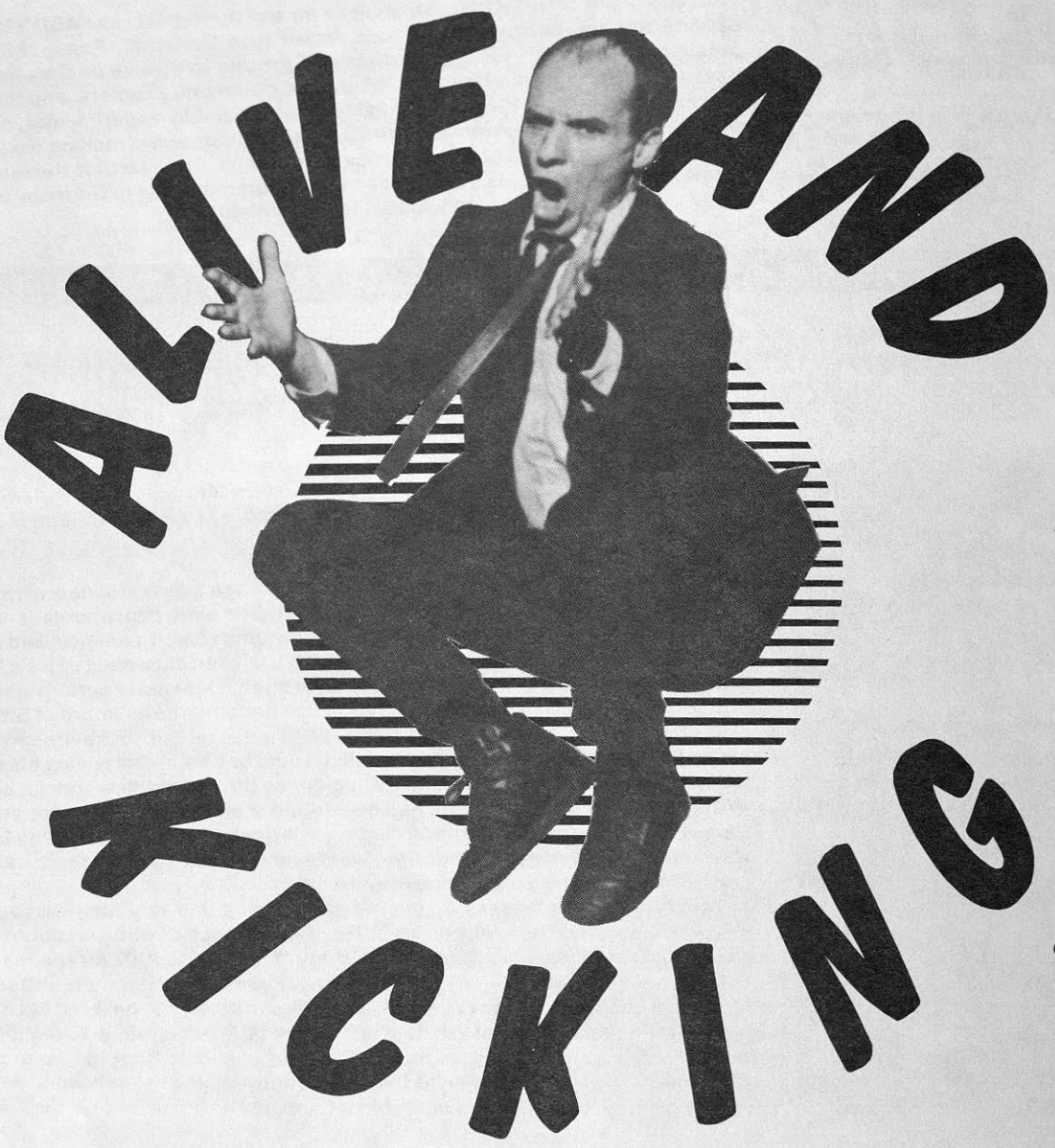
THE COCKROACH

The Cockroach is a miracle of nature./ Every step he takes reveals the vast connections between all aspects of nature./His intelligence is incredible./His will to live indominable./His ability to survive stupendous./His sexual capacity is terrifying./Watch the cockroach as he strolls straight up the side of the kitchen wall./He does not give a fuck about the laws of gravity./He is not intimidated by the peeling paint./He is not worried by the two spots of greasy mazola oil.

There are 5,307 species of cockroaches living in the world today./There are 117 species living just on my block./Right now some places have the highest unemployment in twenty years,/but the cockroach is making out okay./ Some people have nothing to eat,/but the cockroach gets three square meals a day—or more./The economic system of the United States is crumbling/but the cockroach is doing better than ever./People are using birth control cause they can't afford children, /but the cockroach goes in for large families./His families run into the thousands./His community runs into the millions./His nation runs into the billions./

The cockroach never makes war on other cockroaches./He does not make money off other cockroaches./ He does not send other cockroaches to welfare./ It is unheard of for a cockroach to beat his wife./ Cockroaches do not sell dope to young roaches./They do not send old roaches off to die in crooked nursing homes./Cockroaches have no cops./They do not put other roaches in jail./There is no discrimination among cockroaches based on the color of the shell./Cockroaches are not divided into rich or poor./ Some cockroaches do not do all the work, while others run multinational corporations and do not lift a pinky./The cockroach is very advanced politically./ Not one cockroach in America voted for Ronald Reagan./

Observe this miracle of nature as he steps out on the kitchen sink./Even the cockroach is subject to giant forces out of his control./Just like all of us he sits under the shadow of the atomic bomb, controlled by a millionaire cheap hollywood cowboy who couldn't care less about you.



Charles Dennis
photo: Ursina Lys

PERFORMANCE

CALE / DENNIS / GOESE / HOUSTON-JONES

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES DENNIS

Charles, as coordinator of the event, what did you have in mind when you chose the title "Alive and Kicking?"

I wanted to suggest that a representative part of the dance performance community here was alive and kicking, and that it also shared a certain political social awareness.

In your publicity, you featured a photo of Ronald Reagan, Jr. dancing on mock point and cradling a broom in his arms, much like a soldier on parade. Why did you select the president's son as your image?

Well, for several reasons. For one, he's a dancer-performer. Two, it's a lively shot. And three, there's an irony in seeing our president's offspring dancing in his underwear—a spirit of irreverance and anarchy—a playful rebelliousness that I liked. And all this from a source that you would least expect.

As an established performer, and through your work with P.S. 122, you had a large circle of artists to call on for the March event. Why did you choose who you did?

Because of a certain originality, a vitality and social sense they have in common.

Despite their differences in approach—your own animal energy, Houston-Jones' explosive fusion of personal and politics, David Cale's offbeat black comedy, and Mimi Goese's surrealist satire—the program did in fact hang together. Can we briefly discuss each of the performing artists' work in terms of what you think they tried to and did accomplish?

Well, we began with David Cale—a British monologist who told a very witty story about homosexual encounters with

strangers in England. It was a humorous and intimate performance, with a great deal of sly understatement. I really appreciate his sure craft, his avant-garde sensibility.

David is a very stylish performer, but I also felt that he was deeply concerned with the question of sexual politics—how our society through its homophobia and sexual repressiveness affects the lives of gay people in particular.

Yes, he definitely touches on elements of sexual politics, as when he humorously describes the character in his performance getting involved in male prostitution. Prostitution is of course illegal even though many people think it's a necessary part of society as it's now constituted. There was a strongly comic and at the same time pathetic side to his experiences. But, you know, the question of Cale's politics versus his character's flirtation with male prostitution seems to come down to me, at least, to a personal politics. For this occasion, I think David took the experience more as an experiment in lifestyle and behavior—almost like doing research.

Don't you think it may also represent for David Cale a means of subverting—showing his contempt—for what is considered "normal" sexuality?

Possibly that too, but there's also a kind of forbidden thrill that enters the world of the male prostitute—it's illegal, taboo and therefore very erotic.

Let's talk about the second performer, Mimi Goese.

I think Mimi has a unique voice, not only as a performer, but as a dancer, singer and band musician. She brings a very quirky personal sensibility to the performing area.

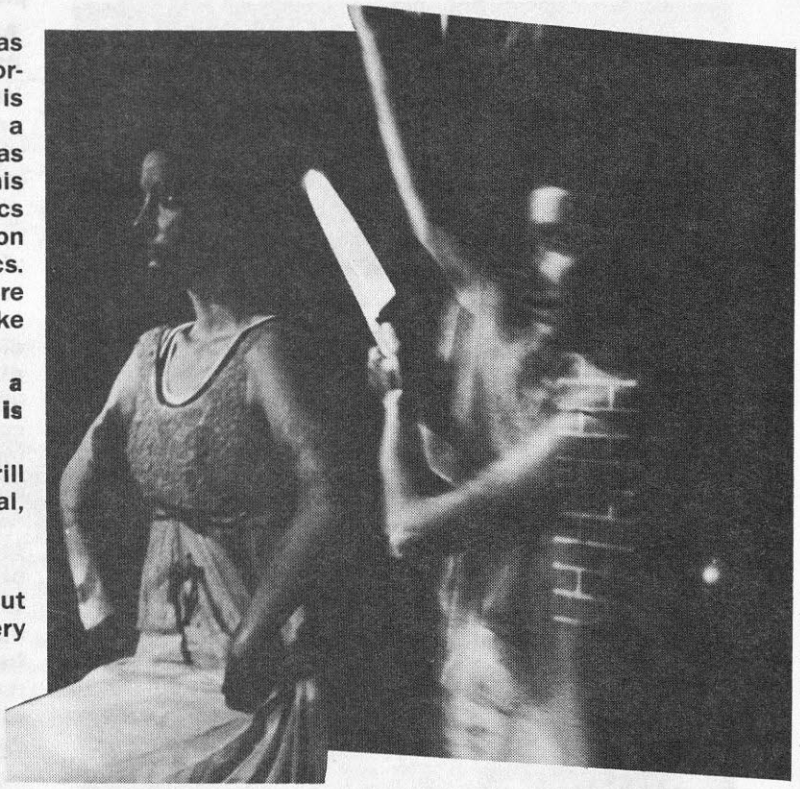


photo: Robert Flynt

Mimi Goese

photo: Rae Langsten

David Cale

I particularly enjoyed her strong physical presence, which she establishes with weird props and tape sounds—like her flight jumpsuit, bits of mirror smeared with blood, a madly waving capricorn flag, an immigrant woman sweeping the streets of New York.

It seems to me that she wants to transform her identity from moment to moment—setting up one situation, breaking the mood abruptly, and then flipping into another reality. It's like a surrealist collage.

My guess is that Mimi wants to upset people, to scramble their beliefs by shocking them—as in the final scene where she played an actual tape recording of a violently anti-semitic British broadcaster. I think she was a famous Nazi collaborator.

Yes, Mimi told me that the tape really upset quite a few people in the audience. They complained to her about it.

I asked Mimi about her piece afterwards and here's what she said: "My performances are bits of isolated ideas that I find interesting. There's no overriding single theme or big narrative device, because I don't want to spell out any morals—or soapbox the audience. Maybe because I'm only twenty-six and am not ready to reveal my private thoughts about where the world should be going. I suppose there is some kind of critique of society implicit in my work—such as the lunacy of anti-semitism, the way people can't communicate, their refusal to face the horror and farce of reality. It's there as an underlying text, but I want the audience to work hard to dig out their particular readings."

Of course with our third performer, Ishmael Houston-Jones, we are discussing one of the most powerful and socially articulate artists in New York.

On top of that, as a Black artist concerned as much about the situation of oppressed people as he is with the formal aspects of his work, he is one of the most alive and kicking peformers on the New York scene.

No doubt, but there was another compelling reason why I wanted Ishmael to be part of this event. I knew that he had recently traveled through Nicaragua and had met a lot of Sandanista leaders, and was teaching and doing artwork with and among the Nicaraguan people. In his peformance here, he called on his experiences recorded in his travel journals and he danced them out gesturally—symbolically.

A while back I caught his incredible performance for PADD before an audience of elderly people. Blindfolded, and talking to the audience about his experiences in Nicaragua, he danced so wildly, so dangerously, and he nearly leapt off the stage. It's as if Ishmael was risking his whole body to express his sense of oneness with the Nicaraguan people as they face the risks—the impending danger—of invasion.

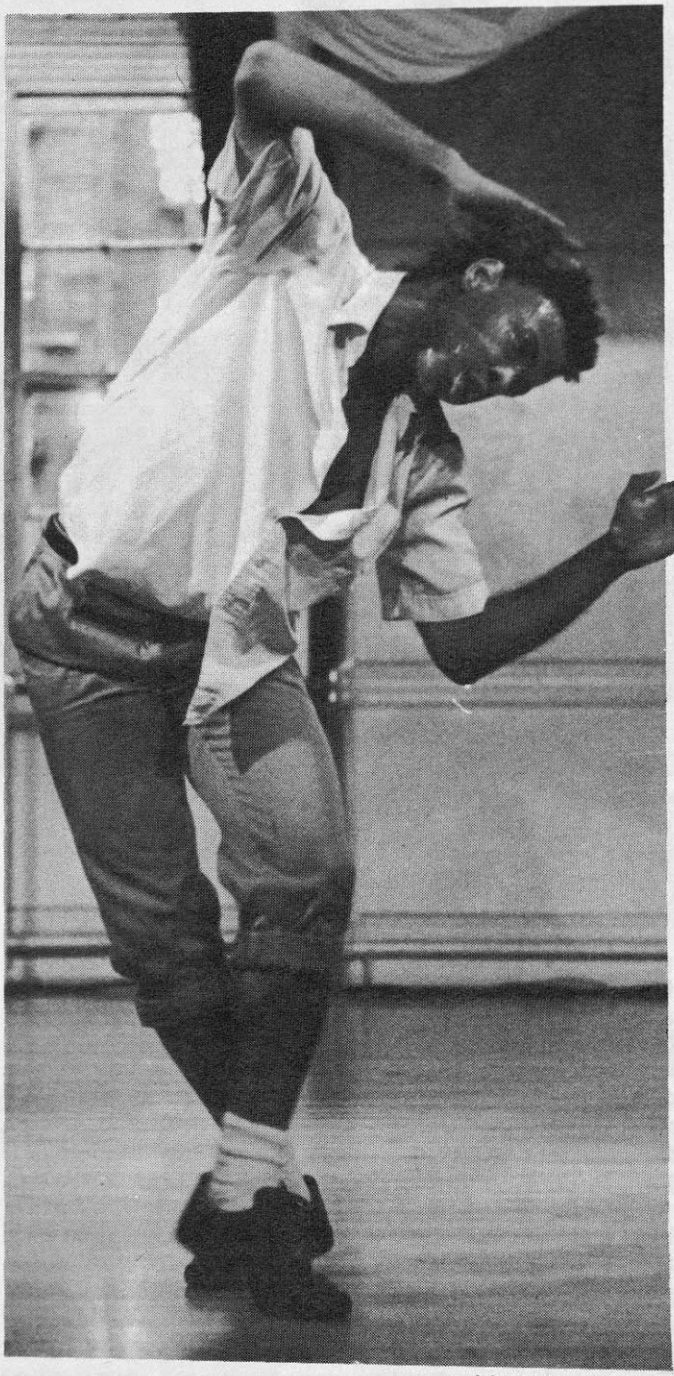


photo: Dona Ann McAdams

Ishmael Houston-Jones

What's amazing too, is the ease with which he moved from the overtly political to the intensely personal in the "Alive and Kicking" performance. I'm thinking particularly about the dance sequence with David Zambrano, which I saw as a physically combatative and a cooperative duet for two men.

And now, Mr. City Animal, can we turn to your performance?

Well, I'm very much concerned with the issues of survival—personal, psychic and environmental. You remember the piece I did for PADD last year called "Clearinghouse"? It's my portrait of the world after an overwhelming disaster, like nuclear war which reduced people to living in protective suits with masks to breathe. In spite of this, the man in my piece continued to live as a ruthless capitalist, still trying to sell survival equipment to people who needed it. By the end of the piece, he had removed his equipment out of a disgust with having to live this way and was reduced to an elemental mudman whose flesh was mutated into some kind of primitive ooze. I see "City Animal" as a portrait of the contemporary urban man, who is both sophisticated and intelligent and yet is a complete savage on certain levels as well.

When you say contemporary man, what are you referring to—some generalized character, a universal everyman—or someone who represents a member of a specific group—rich, poor, oppressor, oppressed, Black, white, man, woman, whatever? Is this person's character structure (in this case the way savagery is expressed) therefore mediated or strongly influenced by economic-social-class origins?

The person I chose to portray was definitely upper-middle class, because I myself come from an upper-middle class family, white, educated, privileged. In my performance I move in a yuppie-like environment and express my savagery within this environment. My character is partly autobiographical and partly fantasy. Because he is middle class, it's easy to see the face of sophistication ripped off, and below his gentleness to reveal some of the basic animalistic aspect within human beings of all kinds. I think such characteristics are dually caused—there are certain innate animal traits—hunger for food, sex, power. These are very basic drives. I want to show the fine line between being civilized and barbarian. We need to know the truth about these drives and to recognize them as such.

Of course, as you point out, some of these drives are intensified and given more expression by the way most people are forced to live in our inhuman and socially decaying New York. Still, I think some of these drives are a priori in us. Yes, we are in a jungle society, and most of the time in New York, it's all masked, unconscious—our lust for power, status—hidden from ourselves.

That's a pretty dark, social-Darwinist point of view, don't you think? Do you, on the other hand, see any possibility for change?

Yes, in my piece I do try to show the cost of savagery to my main character—the fear, alienation, loneliness. But I think Western people are currently in dangerous times, and there are not many overt signs that we are transcending our animalism. Hopefully, some kind of awareness for the need to change themselves and their society is spreading. And hopefully, in a modest way, as in the arts—music, poetry, performances such as these—we can look forward to something positive happening.

—Performance Committee

CULTURAL ACTIVISM MOVEMENT OR MURMUR?

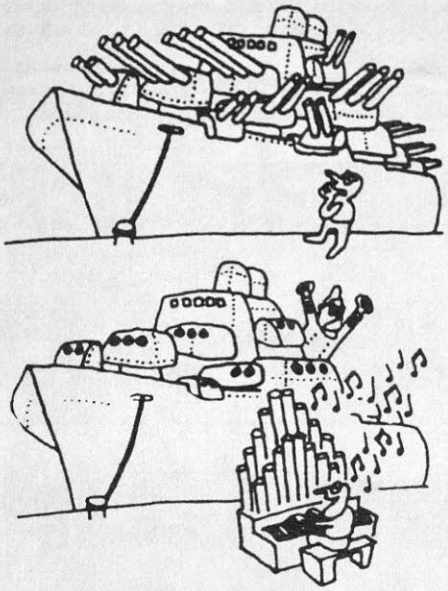
Continued from page 15

CHARLES KING, People's Music Network/Songs of Freedom and Struggle, Norwich, CT

As far as artistic/cultural imagination is concerned, my political values determine what and whom I write about, what approach I use—from celebration to satire. Organized political activity is my bread and butter. Ninety-nine percent of my concerts are sponsored by political/community activist groups. Political networks have been the vehicle for traveling a national circuit with my singing and songs. They are my inspiration and my focus of hope.

The labor movement? It's a mixed bag. There is no one I'd rather work with than a rank and file organizing group involved in issues that are local and immediate, where people fight for control of their work/lives. The more removed from the grassroots level the labor bureaucracy gets, the less a dynamic spirit there is. But at any level, union gatherings provide me with the most diverse (racial/ethnic/age) audiences and some of the most enthusiastic. It's worth adding that there are inspired/inspiring leaders at the national level—i.e., Wimpisinger, Chavez, etc.—and also demoralized, bureaucratic rank and file locals.

My role in the cultural movement is: songwriter/chronicler/story-teller/ satirist/singer/heart-toucher/laugh-bringer/ doomsayer/hope-mongerer/organizer/



Letterhead image of People's Music Network or Songs of Freedom and Struggle

clerical worker for music makers. As an unschooled music-maker, I rely heavily on forms I've absorbed over the years—acoustic folk styles, ballads and other folk structures, especially broadside/topical/political songs, 60's AM rock-pop, troubador and story-telling traditions. My goal is simply to reach larger and more diverse audiences with songs of increasingly better quality.

I use my songs and concerts as a way of building bridges between labor groups and peace/justice/safe energy individuals and groups. Progressive culture should be accessible to working people, should deal with and celebrate their lives and should breed hope, empowerment and activism for control of their own destinies.

My work has been most effective when it respects everyday people, whose lives and labors are trivialized by mainstream culture (being equals consuming)...when it tells their stories and connects with their real issues/fears/passions. It has been least effective when I am trying to perform in an unfavorable work situation. This teaches me to be more informed and demanding in advance with producers. Perhaps I should talk of trying to move PMN/SFS toward a more interracial, multicultural network. Although this hasn't been a complete failure, it has been slow in coming. I've learned that racism runs deep and quiet, that cultural forms (i.e., acoustic folk music) can be excluding forces, and that for evil to flourish it is enough for good people to do nothing.

Yes, we are in a historical era in U.S. political/cultural history. This era reaches new heights of culture as a business...politics as show business. Eric Gill said the concert hall and museum are tombstones of culture. What can we say of TV and *People* magazine? With art and politics in the grip of highly centralized image-makers, we become increasingly powerless as creators and can exercise power only as consumers choosing among pre-set choices. Hopefully, the ability to self-destruct will be matched by a greater determination to resist and survive.

Continued on page 78

MAGAZINES AND ACTIVIST ARTS

Continued from page 18

Finally, there are the more "serious" academic journals such as *Cultural Critique, Minnesota Review, New German Critique, New Left Review, Practice,* and *Social Text*, which, though not focused on art, consistently treat subjects of interest to cultural workers and activists. A recent issue of *Socialist Review* (No. 87/88, 1985), for example, includes an important essay by Fred Pfeil called "Postmodernism and Our Discontent," in which he asks the question, suppose we did inhabit a left public sphere? The response is worth quoting at length.

> For then, in the space created by an ongoing, collective project, it might be possible for the category and practice of postmodernism to be widened to include other quite markedly similar cultural practices beyond the galleries and museums of an elite white world say, for example, Hip-Hop, the indigenous amalgam of rapping, scratching, breaking and tagging which, arising from the urban ghettoes of the late seventies and early eighties, nonetheless does not bow to artworld postmodernism in its employment of techniques of "seriality and repetition, appropriation, intertextuality, simulation or pastiche" toward ends and effects which are quite commonly political with a vengeance...Is it not possible, instead, to imagine a public sphere in which a far more fruitful dialectic, both theoretical-critical and practical, between white postmodernism and Hip-Hop might take place?

Not surprisingly, I have moved from the individualist to the political, from the glossy $6.50 pages of *Artforum* to the unillustrated and almost pocket-size $6.00 version of *Socialist Review,* from the editorial vision of a "girl of the zeitgeist" to an editorial collective comprised of over fifty men and women; from the heady histrionics of the monthly to the plodding thoughtfulness of the quarterly; from eighty-eight to seven pages of advertising. The point is not that activists should ignore the glossies (well, maybe *Flash Art*), but that they should be able to deconstruct them. Why did the Guerrilla Girls insert two new posters into the pages of the most recent *Arts Magazine*? Because it was cheaper? Because they felt its readership would be more or less sympathetic? And it's not enough to get one's weekly dose of leftism from the pages of *In These Times* without at least attempting to come to grips with some of the critical and political theory being churned out in such large quantities in the academies. Reading can and should be an activist practice. There is no need to swallow whole what's dished out every month. Rather, what's required is to bring to our reading the same kind of critical thinking that we bring to our working.

I am grateful to Russell Ferguson for his assistance in obtaining many of the periodicals in this essay.

PERFORMANCE

NORTHERN IRELAND

Behind the Green Curtain

photo: Giani Siri

Barbara Juppe

A mixed-media extravaganza, with a cast of dozens, the April Second Sunday ran close to three hours and incorporated just about every device and format in the performance repertoire. Its intention was to penetrate the propaganda pollution factor—and the indifference factor—that have kept the tragic events in Northern Ireland shrouded in secrecy for almost two decades.

To begin with, there was an unusual "intergalactic" radio concept in which an earthling, Barbara Juppe, purported to be in communication with creatures from outer space about the history of Northern Ireland since the British Army's invasion. Playing all the roles in the two-way exchange (much in the surrealist spirit of the sixties' Fireside Theatre), Barbara explained that Northern Ireland "has a long history of political tyranny, economic oppression and yes, cultural oppression too." When the outer-space person remarked: "Maybe you ought to forget about Ireland. It sounds like a real loser," her answer was, "No, the Irish are fighting back. It's a form of resistance called cultural subversion and here's how it works. It has all the characteristics of an infection, and once you get it, it never stops spreading."

From this point on, the performance itself—sometimes to its own detriment—never stopped spreading. It kept adding separate yet intertwining pieces that were meant to illuminate "the revolution that real people play out in their everyday lives against the backdrop of tyranny in their time." A steady stream of video images was interspersed with the performance sketches. Among the highlights of the powerful visual footage were: British soldiers assaulting people in the streets with armored trucks, dogs, rubber bullets, truncheons and bayonets; Irish prisoners incarcerated behind barbed wire fences; demonstrations against police and military brutality; hunger strikes and funeral processions protesting the martyrdom of Irish patriots; interviews with freedom fighters. In a very real sense, the video footage constituted a mini-history of the Northern Irish battle against the rule of the British.

Meanwhile, the performance itself continued with a candlelight procession and a "counting" dance dedicated to Bobby Sands and other Irish Republicans who died in the struggle; letters from prisoners; readings on Irish history by members of a group celebrating its fifth year of continuous picketing of the Irish Consulate in New York; an oratorio in honor of Irish heroes, live and taped Irish folksongs and songs of resistance, and more. The performance ended with a protest parade by the entire cast and on a positive note: "The British have tried genocide, apartheid, military rule, land referendum, colonization, indirect rule and puppet parliaments. The only solution not yet tried is absolute and unconditional withdrawal!"

It should be evident, from this summary, that "Behind the Green Curtain" was large in scope, original in concept, and commendable in its efforts to throw light on the long-suffering people of Northern Ireland and their unceasing fight for independence. It was equally clear, at least to this member of the audience, that the performance was unwieldy, wordy, lengthy and largely unfocused. The piece needs to be shortened drastically

—honed down to the bone—and the individual sketches need sharpening in order to create a more dramatic line that sustains the piece emotionally from beginning to end.

No doubt this is a lot to ask of the few dedicated people who labored for months to make the performance a reality. Still, there is a very strong work waiting to be reconstructed, one that can more effectively tear off the veil of silence and lies that shields Northern Ireland, and alert many more people—outside as well as within the Irish American community—to a greater understanding and support of the ongoing struggle. The WBAI Irish Media Image Group has demonstrated vision, a deep concern for the Irish people and a plenitude of talent. Let's hope these intrepid earthlings can find the energy and resources to fulfill their project's potential.

—Irving Wexler

Our primary aim in doing this piece was to recreate in some measure a perceivable environment through which people—alas far too many of them —who were unfamiliar with the tragic history of Ireland could catch a glimpse of a complex, living reality.

The performance—a visualized extension of a former weekly WBAI radio program of the same name—was never intended as a finished, independently existing piece of art. It was not meant to be more than an experiment—a work in progress. It was hastily assembled, with few resources and within severe limitations of time, schedule and finance. It utilized whatever performers, nonperformers and whoever else was available for the technical work. Our hope was that the piece would continue to exist on its own—a documentary that would throw a brief, fleeting light on the dark shadows of everyday life in Northern Ireland. We saw form following function as crossover dreams between art and one kind of real world out there.

To be fair, we had hoped to get a little further along, in terms of form and finish. This, more than anything, accounts for the element of spontaneity in the event, the risk we took on an unfinished work—a risk that was in our view necessary and worth the effort. Beyond that, we would like to see a continuing discussion, not only about this piece—its intentions, ambitions, and where it might go from here—but about what we are all going to do about the issues raised in this forbidden foray into the unhappy circumstances of present day Ireland.

—WBAI Irish Media Image Group

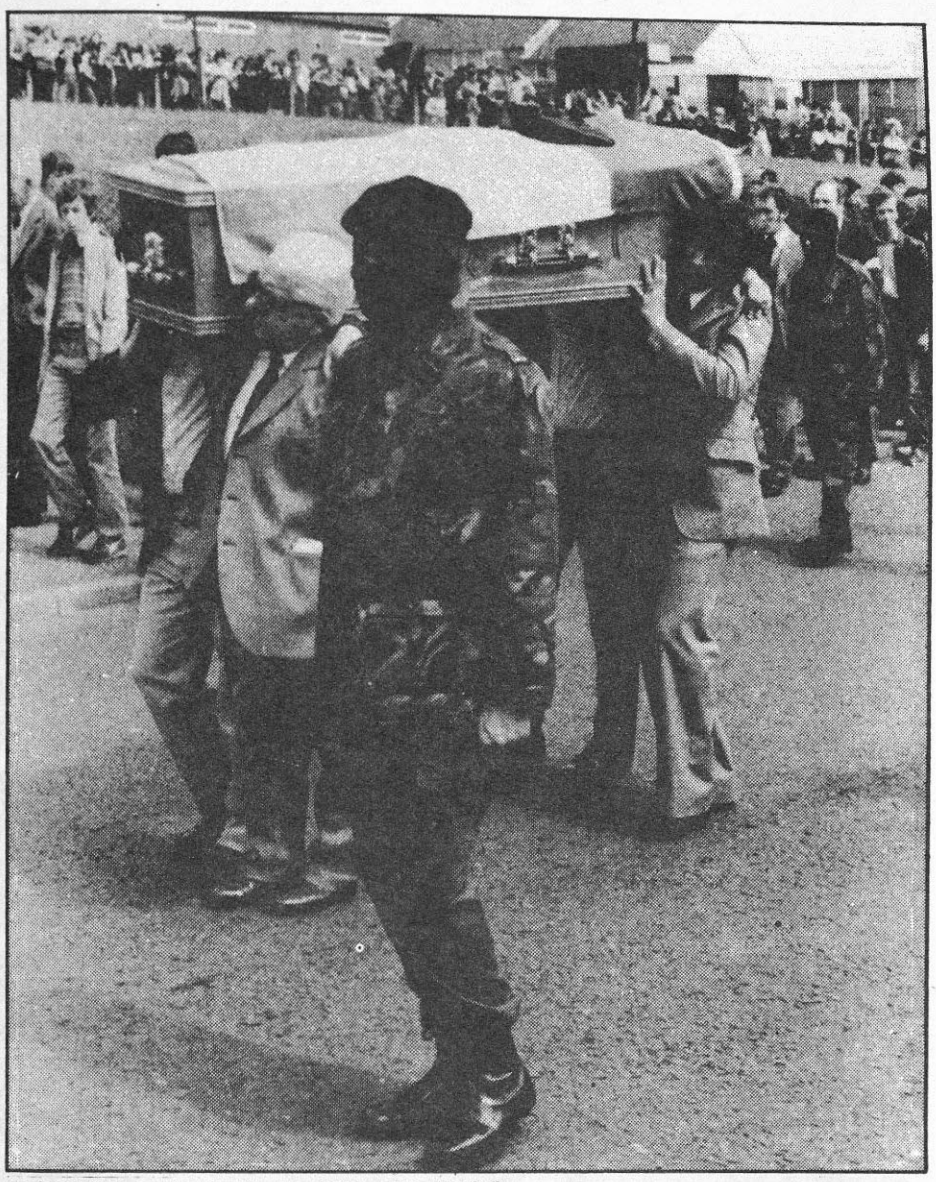


photo: James Kusnir

Belfast IRA Funeral Procession from "Alternative Media"

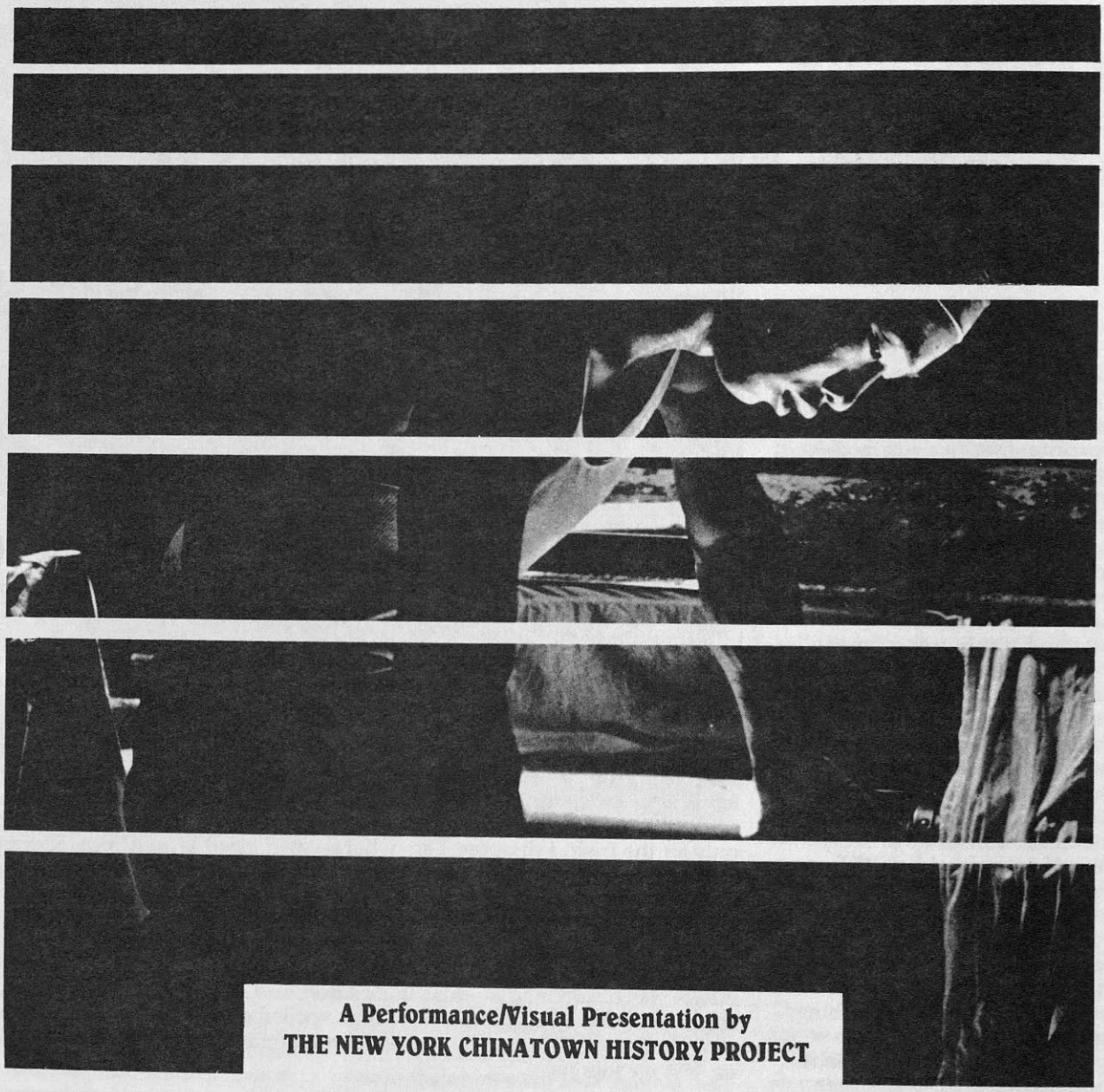
A second brief, audience-eye view is offered by Leroy Lissane, actor, teacher, folksinger:

I suppose it was, in some measure, her experience at WBAI which led Barbara Juppe to organize the piece given at P.S. 41. Now the popular opinion—the view fostered by the powers that be—is that no one is really interested in the problems of the six counties unless they are ethnically Celtic or British, or perhaps are connected to Ireland by social kinship ties. In short, this is news fit to print only for the Irish. I disagree. I am what is categorized as an Afro-American. So is Matt Jones—one of the evening's performers. During the 60s Jones was active in the civil rights struggle in the south. More recently he has worked, marched and been beaten in the north of Ireland for freedom there. The evening Matt was on stage at P.S. 41, I was in the audience, as were many others who clearly had no ethnic ties to the Belfast troubles; to the woes of Armagh. The performance was mixed media—done in darkness and light. As with every baroque suggestion, there was more unsaid than spelled out, like the sounds of the pipes in the wind. Like the heartbeat throb of the tomtom, the show said Join us, Join us, Join us.

"Northern Ireland: Behind the Green Curtain" was produced by Barbara Juppe, Bill Mayr and the Irish Media Image Group (IMIG). A partial list of acknowledgements includes performers: Mary Bringle, Ronnie di Joseph, Merry White, Douglas White, Ian McGowan, Carol Bertol, Robin Howard, Matt Jones (also for "The Black and The Green" film), Joanie Fritz (dance for Bobby Sands); British Consulate pickets: M. Kennedy, C. Rogers, Alice, Ellen, Ed, Leona, Althea, E. Neil, Mary Cruz and more.

Among the other groups and individuals who lent their support: Ethel Breheny (video-editor), Rafik (video-editing), Pete Farley and Irish Circle, Larry McEvoy (videos), Joanne Kelley (audiotape editor), Ed Briody (video), Marjorie Waxman (from WBAI), Henry and colleagues at Asian Cine-Vision (equipment), Gina Tlamsa's WKCR "Shamrock Shore", American Irish Cultural Project, Lori Quigley (Armagh tape), Irish Arts Center, Anarchist Switchboard, and others.

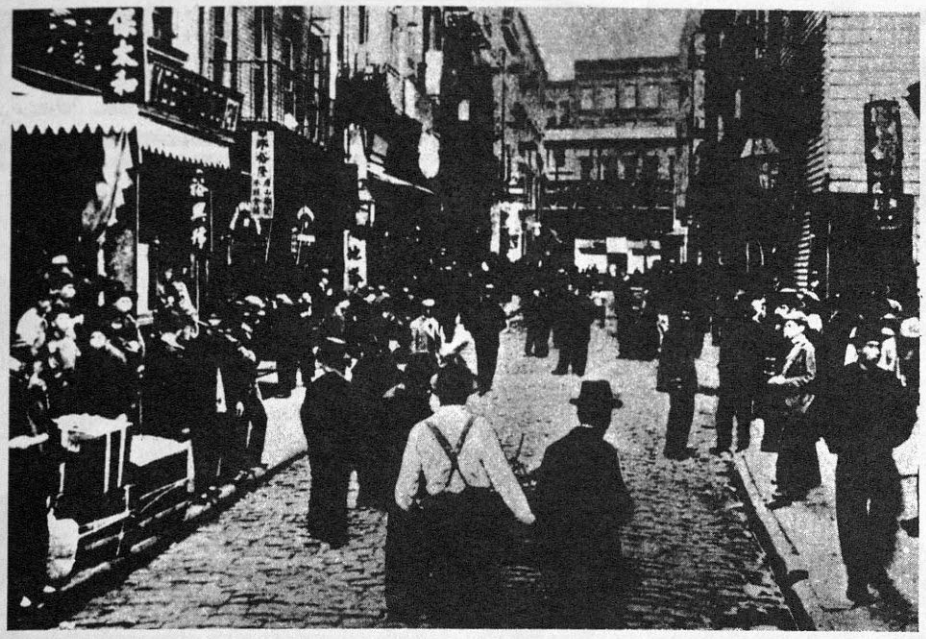
Eight Pound Livelihood



Chin Che Yung, Wo Sing Shirt Press, Queens, N.Y. 1982 photo: Paul Calhoun

A Performance/Visual Presentation by
THE NEW YORK CHINATOWN HISTORY PROJECT

Eight-pound iron, ten-pound day/seven days a week to make it pay/sort and wash, press and fold/bitter rice on a mountain of gold." These verses, from a song by William "Charlie" Chin, epitomize the harsh aspect of the lives of laundry workers in Chinatown and elsewhere as movingly evoked in Chin's performance at the New York Chinatown History Project. Preceded by a visual compilation of rare photos entitled "The Evolution of New York Chinatown", the Second Sunday event took place in May at 70 Mulberry Street, the Project's headquarters.



Pell Street on a typical Sunday afternoon. This was the way the "Chinese Quarter" in New York looked in 1898.

In making visible the almost invisible history of laundry workers, William Chin's performance—"The Guest of Flowery Flag"—does more than catalogue the hardships of the countless Chinese immigrants who labored anywhere between twelve and twenty hours a day in hand laundries, struggling to survive and send a little money back to their families in China. Standing at a table and deftly ironing a pile of wash, he becomes— by the use of voice, gesture, intonation, humor and irony—a representative of the community whose legacy the performance seeks to uncover. These members of "the bachelor society"—as laundry workers were called—were not permitted to bring their wives and children to this land due to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Chin strikingly illuminates this community, clinging to its cultural heritage largely as a consequence of forced isolation. Through the anecdotes and asides of one character, we see the humiliations laundry workers faced from prevailing racist hostility, the pain of being separated from their loved ones, the loneliness of their existence, the language and customs that alienated them from the dominant culture. All of these "blood and tears" experiences—so little known or understood by most Americans—Mr. Chin portrays with sensitivity and wit.

As the performance unfolds, we are shown the daily life of the laundry worker—living, breathing, feeling laundries—later relaxing with friends, exchanging news from the home villages, playing card games, and finally returning alone to his tiny room. We hear his impressions of the alien world around him, of young people in a changing Chinatown, of his own past and future. Particularly cogent is Chin's depiction of the racially stereotyped way in which laundry workers were regarded by most non-Chinese. His hero's acute awareness of these slurs and clichés, is one more reminder of how well oppressed people come to understand the nature of their oppressors.

More than a performance, "The Guest of Flowery Flag" is a page from a worker's life, a glimpse of a community of men whose strong wills and feisty humor enabled them to survive with pride, dignity and a sustaining culture all of their own.

The New York Chinatown History Project was formally incorporated in 1980. In common with other community-based organizations, its aim was to improve Chinatown in a meaningful way. After some time it became clear to the group that the best way to do this was by making available the rich material on the history of Chinatown that up till then had largely been hidden from the public view. The following description of the Project is culled from articles by Steven Chin, Charles Lai, and John Juo Wei Tchen in *Bugaoban*, the Project's newsletter. (Bugaoban, or community bulletin boards, were the principal means of disseminating news in Chinatown prior to the proliferation of the community's many newspapers):

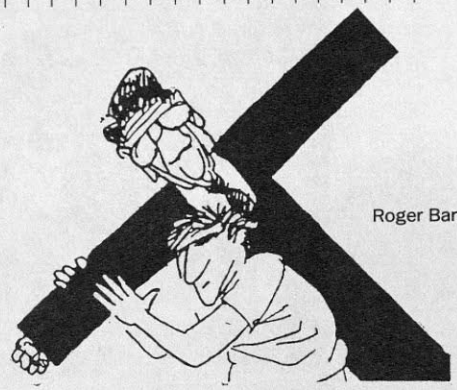
Three years have allowed us time to better understand the community and for the community to know us. It has been a time for gathering information in many different forms—oral histories, family photographs, store signs, irons, letters and account books. Each has added something to our understanding of the past.

The role of a history project has become clearer to us. Not only do all of us naturally look back to our personal past when we get older—something beautifully expressed in the traditional Chinese saying—"falling leaves return to their roots"—but from a practical standpoint we cannot improve the present unless we understand the past. Understanding community history is not a luxury, it is a necessity for all who wish to move positively into building a decent future. We wanted the Project to create a physical and intellectual space for this learning process.

It is our philosophy that all the history and folklore we learn from the community, once analyzed and organized, must be brought back to help educate and improve the community. Bilingual radio programs, slide shows, pamphlets, plays and traveling exhibits are just some of the public programs that are being produced. The long-term goal of the Project is to create a permanent historical center that Chinese and non-Chinese Americans can be proud to participate in. This process of gathering, developing, and giving back what we learn from the community serves to pass on the rich heritage of New York Chinese from those who shared in the making to those who will be shaping the future.

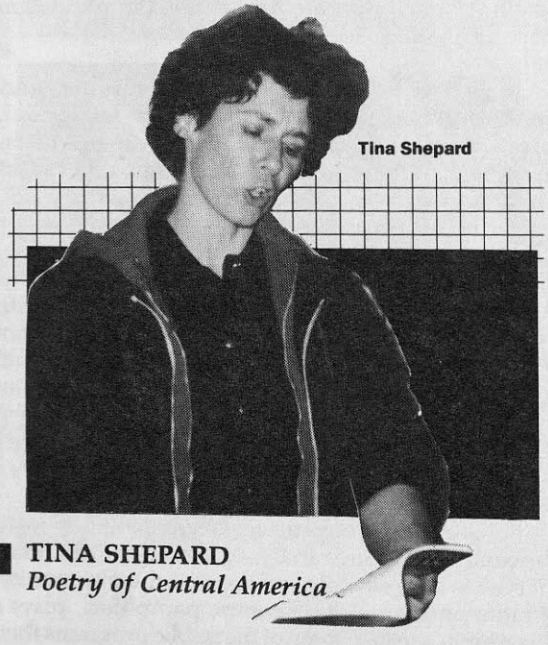
SANCTUARY

A Performance Event on Behalf of the Sanctuary Defense Fund



Roger Barricada

In November, Charas, Inc. and PADD co-sponsored an evening of three performances in conjunction with *The Cross Is Not For Sale*, an exhibition of paintings and drawings by artists of Central America to the United States. The event took place before an overflow audience at La Galeria en El Bohio, 605 E. 9th St. Below, performing artists Tina Shepard, The Sleazebuckets (Emily Rubin and Nancy Tucker) and Diane Torr discuss the personal, aesthetic and political aims of their performance pieces:



Tina Shepard

TINA SHEPARD
Poetry of Central America

Before this performance, I had been deeply concerned with the plight of the refugee victims of the war in Central America, but had never been actively involved in their behalf. The challenge I felt was to create a piece that was appropriate to the occasion and would serve—even in the smallest way—to express my solidarity with the Central American people who are threatened with invasion.

"The challenge—to create a piece that would express my solidarity with those Central Americans who are threatened with invasion"

With that in mind, I selected a group of poems by Central American writers including Otto Rene Castillo, of Guatemala; Lil Milagro Ramirez and Ricardo Castorrivas, of El Salvador; Roberto Sosa and Clementine Suarez, of Honduras; Daisy Zamora, Ernesto Cardenal, Giaconda Belli and Rosario Murillo, of Nicaragua. I quote Rosario Murillo as an example of that extraordinary fusion of tenderness and strength—the remarkable lack of bitterness toward the enemy—that is common to all of the above poets:

I am going to fly a heart like a comet,
one of blood and cosmic dust,
a mixing of earth with stars,
a heart that has no country,
that knows no borders,
that has never signed a single check,
that has never had a strongbox;
a heart unswerving, unmovable,
something simple and sweet,
a heart that has loved.

Beautiful poets like these are barely known in this country. I felt, therefore, that the value of my performance would lie in introducing a few of them to an appreciative audience. In a way, it seemed to me, the words would be a verbal parallel to the powerful visual images in *The Cross Is Not For Sale* art exhibit that were being introduced to New Yorkers.

What I wanted to achieve at Charas was an effect of aesthetic bareness by reciting the poems on an empty stage—without special lighting, props, costumes or other theatrical aids. My purpose was to serve as a conduit for the poets' passion and compassion, without calling attention to myself or any other distracting mediations.

DIANE TORR
Flora MacCleod...
Previously Hamish MacCleod

As a child growing up in the north of Scotland, I became aware of the Scots' intense hatred of the English. They were disdainful of English culture, English ways, even the English language. It was never explained to me why this hatred exists and is propagated from generation to generation. Perhaps it stems from the dispossession of their lands by the English in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Maybe the hatred is rooted in the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, when the supporters of James VI of Scotland, who became James I of England, realized that his heirs would not inherit the throne.

It could be too that the loathing for the English is based on the bloody Battle of Culloden, when the Scottish foot soldiers, weary and undernourished, were massacred by the Duke of Cumberland's cavalry. This was the final defeat. Scottish heroes such as Rob Roy, Robert the Bruce and William Wallace could be compared with Sandino. It's a different history, but the same story of colonial imperialism.

Sanctuary for the Scots who had had to live with the English domination was to retreat to their own culture, and to try to sustain the language, poetry, song and dance. In the Charas piece I bear witness to that heritage and with a Scottish sense of wit bring Caspar Weinberger to the Tunnel Bar to meet his Maker. Along the way I deal with subjects as varied as homelessness, American policy in El Salvador, the exploitation of Central American workers, sexual transformation (via transvestism), food pollution through radiation, and the genetic damage of children and future generations. All this with Scottish songs, dances and a thick Highland brogue to boot.

Diane Torr

THE SLEAZEBUCKETS
(Emily Rubin and Nancy Thacker)
Lynnwan Chew's *Warm Pigs* and
Let's Talk About Your Host, Dick Donahue...

The Sleazebuckets are always concerned with the political aspects of the subject we are dealing with. We feel, however, that hitting people over the head with our beliefs serves more to alienate people than challenge them. We therefore always set our observations within the more accessible context of humor.

Many performances we do have a basic concept that is quite flexible. Because of this, we were able to shape our piece to fit the theme for the Sanctuary show. Our first piece was a Poetry Parade which parodically presented one of Japan's leading avant garde poets. The poem she recites deals directly with the sometimes fashionable acceptance of repression, with camaraderie serving as a means of survival, and personal religion as political force. Stylistically, the format was intended to relieve some of the serious tension around performance art, dance recitals and the too often staid poetry readings we have all suffered through.

The second piece dealt with the problems of being politically incorrect within any form of society. It involves a woman who has, in fact, won an award for being the most politically incorrect American in 1986. The concept of this piece is in response to the interview show of the "boy, do we confront the issues" genre (i.e., Phil Donahue). Our aim here is to demonstrate satirically how all too often personal/political beliefs are mashed, expanded or diluted to become the news.

What we are seeking here is to educate as well as entertain. People need to laugh and, we have found, they learn more (and reject ideas less) when they are having fun in the process.

photos: Rae Langsten

The Sleazebuckets (Emily Rubin and Nancy Thacker)

Continued from page 71

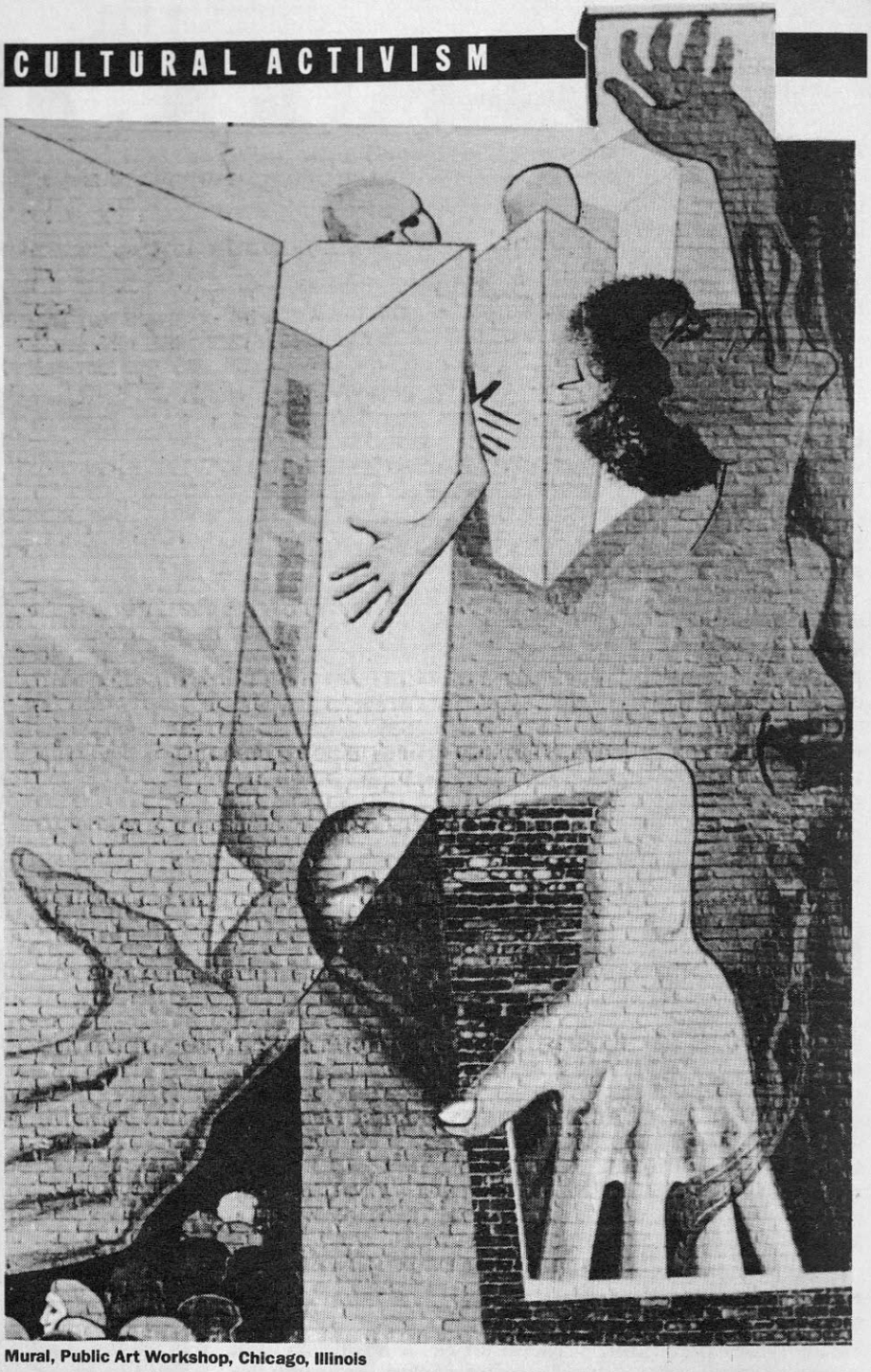
JOHN PITMAN WEBER, Chicago Public Art Group, Chicago, IL.

In 1968 I first saw the Wall of Respect and the Wall of Truth, collective patch-work type murals in the middle of the Black south side of Chicago. It led me to do my first outdoor piece with teenagers on a retaining wall in the backyard of a church in the notorious Cabrini-Green projects. This wasn't my milieu, but I did have friends there, worked on programs there, and was invited. I believed I should be relating to the Black Panthers who were active there in summer 1969. The following summer I worked in my "own milieu" (lower middle class, predominantly white)—a mural on the choice between racism or unity—and helped organize a larger mural in Cabrini by William Walker, who initiated the Wall of Respect. It really was crucial for me and led to our founding the Chicago Mural Group (today called Chicago Public Art Group).

The Chicago Public Art Group deliberately sought to revive certain craft attitudes, reimaging the artist as worker, as skilled worker, the idea of apprenticeship and the legitimacy of collective work (which goes pretty much unquestioned in the performing arts). We often felt closer to and more understood by our colleagues in the performing arts than our studio artist colleagues. Certainly we looked to claim the mantles of Giotto et al—the Gothic tradition really more than and against the Renaissance of artist-as-genius. We especially emphasized collaboration as a positive challenge and desirable way to work (usually two artists collaborating and jointly leading a team).

The most important cultural event I worked on in the past ten years was the first round of Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America, in Chicago. We began with four or five, formed a coordinating committee of over twenty and eventually were able to involve over five hundred visual artists, performers and poets. For once it really felt as if there were an arts community here which cut across a lot of lines: Anglo and Latin, community artists and exhibiting artists, "commercial" and alternative spaces (mainly folks from the feminist galleries), radicals and liberals. I think we were all amazed, but also exhausted. It was primarily an organizational and curatorial effort more than aesthetic/political.

In the arts, where one might read an upsurge of politicized consciousness and activity in the last five years or so, there is no coherent mass movement. What one sees is a series of partially overlapping networks between different disciplines, different racial/linguistic groups, etc. Alliance for Cultural Democracy is the closest thing to a meeting place of networks. But oppressed national and minority groups naturally go to their own conventions as priority and consequently are way underrepresented in relation to membership/audience base of the groups represented at the ACD annual Conference. The lack of significant multi-racial forms and forums nationally and locally, the lack of multiracial work or even real dialogue at the local level in most places, in most disciplines, is an absolutely major obstacle—and a problem which makes me consider the use of the term "movement" to be somewhat premature.



Mural, Public Art Workshop, Chicago, Illinois

DONNA GRUND SLEPACK, Oregon City, OR

When the first atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima in 1945, human beings within 300 meters of Ground Zero were instantly vaporized by the searing heat of the blast, leaving behind on the pavement a curious dark stain, surrounded by an umbra of light. These images were shadows of

human beings, caught in the midst of motion during the first few seconds of that initial nuclear holocaust. They provided the image and theme for *The Shadow Project*, originated on August 6, 1982, by New York artist and environmentalist Alan Gussow. The next year, I helped coordinate the event in Portland, Oregon. On Hiroshima Day, 1985, Gussow and I coordinated *The International Shadow Project* in which some 15,000 participants in over 400 communities in 25 countries painted silhouettes of human beings engaged in various activities on public streets and sidewalks. The silent testimony of these anonymous human silhouettes dramatized what would remain after nuclear war.

Although all the shadows were individually made, they revealed a generic similarity and formed a link between all the makers. Many local projects added their own creative inventions and were organized around a particular theme. One group painted basketball and tennis players on all the outdoor playgrounds and courts in their community. Another painted only animals. Others combined their shadow painting with a ritual dance. The basic organizing involved gathering supplies, conducting information and training meetings, postering, press conferences, and follow-up. *The Shadow Project* was designed as an international art event. It was not a random act of vandalism. It received a great deal of media response, but perhaps more importantly, it allowed the viewers themselves a direct experience, forcing them to see themselves as potential nuclear shadows.

After the Portland project, we videotaped interviews of people on the street. One woman was visibly aghast as she stood in front of the painted shadow and realized the prospect of nuclear vaporization, an unfamiliar concept to most people with whom we spoke at that time. This woman later became active in the nuclear freeze campaign. One activist who did not initially support the project changed his mind when, walking to work one day, he found clusters of people hovering over the images and observed for the first time strangers talking to each other about the horrors of nuclear war. If the project stimulated such curbside debate, then it fulfilled a major goal.

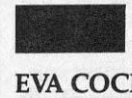
The Shadow Project worked because the image itself was poignant and riveting; because the process was a unique form of communication, challenging the status quo in form and content; it was executed by individuals for individuals, yet it was collectively produced. Every participant became an artist and could leave a mark. This served to break down the barriers between artists and non-artists and between art and life. The effectiveness of protest art cannot be determined by high art's standards but rather by its capacity to raise consciousness, to teach and to inform, and to urge people to question, reflect and act. The test of protest art is reflected in the power it gathers and releases, rather than in the price it commands or the artist's skill in rendering.

Other strategies: Since I believe that art ought to confront people in the course of their daily routines, I have designed several political postcards. Some of the texts: *Nuclear War—The Mistake You Can't Learn From; Silence Is the Voice of Complicity; Peace—a Gift that Lasts; Resist Legal Injustice or Live Comfortably with Atrocity;* and *Please Go to the Left*—for people who seem to be in need of direction.

I also have a very large button collection which I hope some day to turn into my tombstone. I want to put the political buttons under plexiglass in a public place with an *eternal literature table*! In 1981, I organized a political art calendar as a way to get in touch with socially concerned artists all over the country. In May 1981, I did a public conceptual/performance piece called *Yellow Ribbons* after the Iranian Hostage Crisis and the TV-induced hysteria it evoked. I felt the yellow ribbons should symbolize the human rights violations that occur in the United States, such as police brutality, inhumane prison conditions, the harassment of political activists, people of color, and the poor. We discovered people were very surprised to hear that these occurred in their own country.

In 1984, a student from my art class at Portland State University produced a *Day After Market* in Courthouse Square. Specialties, displayed in labeled tin cans and boxes, included a *child preservative,"* a book titled *I was OK. You were OK,* and cans of faith, hope and charity. It was a fine use of black humor and a successful media event.

On Mothers' Day 1986, with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, we did a public performance as a *tribute to women's courage* in homage to the mothers of Latin America who have taken great risks to protest the disappearance of their children. Because we organized around the festivity and neutrality of a holiday, people were pleased to accept our leaflet, along with our good wishes. They even thanked us.



EVA COCKCROFT, Artmakers, New York, NY

Of course there is a progressive cultural movement in the U.S. It's us and we are it. It began long before I became a part of it and will continue after I have left it. It never really died (between the thirties and now). Right now, since Reagan came into office, there has been a boom in progressive and committed art. For a time (perhaps even now) it has actually been (is) fashionable.

I first became involved in 1967 when I helped to organize an Angry Arts Show as part of the Vietnam War protests. A few years later, in 1970, I started to get involved in the community mural movement. In 1972, I painted my first mural at a woman's center in New Brunswick, N.J. Since then, I have been involved both intellectually and as an activist in protest and demonstration art of all kinds from murals, stencils, and billboards to articles and exhibitions of paintings. All of it is personal and all of it is political. Every so often I see someone being moved, affected, even changed by our efforts—and that makes it all worthwhile. For example, this past summer, Artmakers painted an anti-Crack mural in West Harlem, at 142nd Street and Hamilton Place, where it could be seen by people in the crack house and drug dealers on the street between Hamilton Place and Broadway. Last week, some of the people we were working with up there told me that the crack dealers have moved away and they thought the mural might have helped to make that happen.

When you paint a mural in a community, you become part of that neighborhood temporarily in a way that is much stronger than if you only live there. You're out there every day, on the street, and after a while people start to talk to you, follow your progress. Because you are out there, they get involved with you and what you are doing, especially the kids. Often, there are children and young people working with you and while you are working as a team, you become a kind of family with your own jokes and your own quarrels. I mostly worked with youth, but I've worked with old people in a senior citizens' center. It's a real learning experience because, in some way, they let you into their lives and you begin to discover some of what they know and you never suspected.

I have spent many years living in Latin America, so the struggle around U.S. intervention is very important to me. This is why I was one of the founders of Artists Call and have devoted so much energy to furthering the Latin American struggle. Sometimes I will do work specifically on Latin American problems. For example, in October 1986, Joe Stephenson and I painted a small mural at the La Lucha site on the problems of the undocumented workers and refugees with the *migra* as a companion piece to a ceramic mural on the disappeared in Guatemala. At other times, however, the Latin American element seeps in, almost unnoticed, into a piece on another theme. I think that the struggles in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Cuba are crucial to the future, not just of the Latin Americans but all of us.

Growing up and out

● What went on in 1986? A lot of progressive arts organizations seem to be celebrating their tenth anniversaries this year—the magazines *Fuse* and *Heresies*, the Alliance for Cultural Democracy and the Organization of Independent Artists, and alternate spaces Franklin Furnace and Printed Matter, among them. It might be worth analysing the decade and the survivors.

The Alliance for Cultural Democracy (ACD) celebrated its tenth with its largest annual conference yet. "ImaginAction II" took place in Boston and was co-sponsored by the Roxbury Community College, with support from the Mass. College of Art. ACD is a national liaison group for community and progressive arts groups. (It used to be called NAPNOC; complaints are still being raised about its name, but at least the "knock-knock" jokes have disappeared.) In Boston, three full days and nights worth of plenaries, workshops and events raised all the usual and unusual issues facing cultural workers today, and raised them in an unusually warm and creative atmosphere.

There were representatives from England, Australia, and South Africa. Topics ranged from SWAPO to Vietnam vets organizing with music, poetry, video, and painting; from theater work with inner city teenagers to "Native Development," to rural storytelling to murals, the culture of alcoholism, and labor (with small and large L). There were tours to Boston's two Afro-American museums and to murals in Black, Hispanic, and Chinese communities. There was a participatory art event in which stories and "meaningful objects" were exchanged, gospel singing by Jane Sapp from Highlander in Tennessee, a striking shadow play on Harriet Tubman by the Underground Railway Theatre, and an extraordinarily mouth-watering resource room concocted by self-described "resource-room artist" Jim Murray.

The most popular workshop was the two-part "Black Art, White Art" led by Liz Lerman and Rebecca Rice from Washington, D.C. ImaginAction's poster, by new board member Wen Ti Tsen, reflected ACD's stated multiculturalism; it also sparked debate about whether this was a truthful or a wishful declaration. Although the majority of ACD's members do work cross-culturally, cross-racially, etc., the membership itself is mostly white. Meetings of the regional caucuses and the Board of Directors (which is the organization's only, and volunteer, staff) mandated more thorough and more honest work on the role of multiculturalism.

"Peace Hunger Kitchen," in the Rotunda of the U.S. Senate, Washington D.C., created by Georgina Forbes with Jim Schley, Nancy Cressman and others. October 1986.

photo: Reinhard

When new board elections were held, the number of people of color on the board was more than doubled.

While anyone who goes to an ACD conference is impressed with the commitment and the quality of the dialogues, many are still puzzled about the concept of cultural democracy. Arlene Goldbard and Don Adams, former NAPNOC staff, have been developing the theory for several years now and have just completed a book on the subject. Until it appears, we recommend three smaller works that illuminate the subject, all available from *Cultural Correspondence* (505 West End Ave., NYC 10024): Adams' and Goldbard's "Cultural Democracy" (50c), Charles Frederick's "Culture and Community Development" (50c), and the beautifully designed English contribution, "Culture and Democracy: The Manifesto" ($3.50) by the British sort-of-counterpart of ACD—Another Standard, based in Manchester, which was represented at the conference.

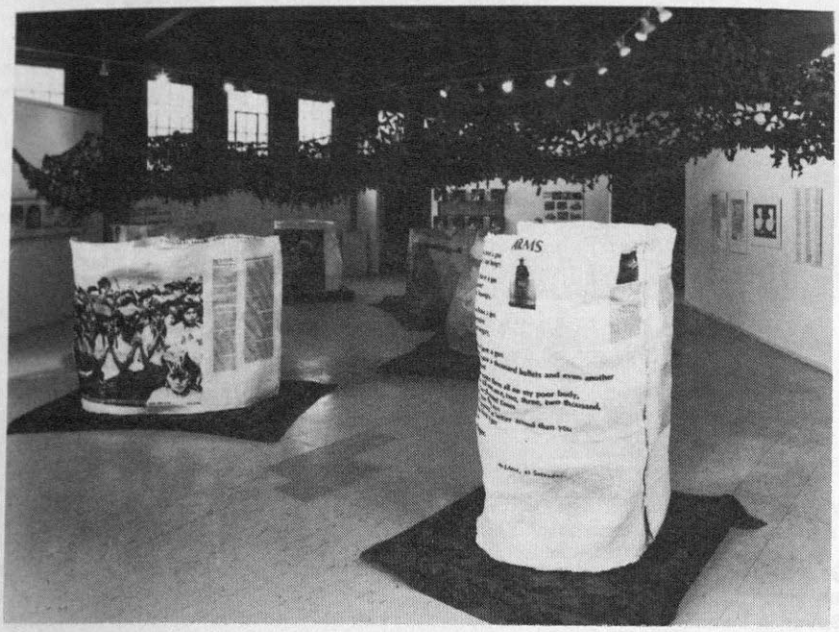
Read them, and join the international exchange about this growing movement which considers culture (to quote the "Manifesto") not as a "marginal question, but an essential proposition for socialists to act on . . . It argues that to bring into existence a society of equals, it is necessary not simply to take power in the conventional senses understood by the traditional Left, but act to change the nature of the ways power is understood, shared, and practiced."

ACD's next conference will be in San Francisco, in June 1988. The ongoing project for constructing a "Cultural Bill of Rights" will continue in the meantime. Synopses of the Boston conference' plenaries will be available in the next issue of *Cultural Democracy*, which is included with the $25 individual membership (ACD, POB 2088, Station A, Champaign, IL. 61820).

Peacing Together

● On August 3, two Americans, two Britons, and a member of the Moscow Trust Group were detained in Moscow by the KGB for handing out smuggled leaflets giving details on self-protection against radioactive fallout, combining protests of Chernobyl and Hiroshima. The Americans, Anne-Marie Hendrickson and Bob McGlynn, are cultural activists from Brooklyn and among those who publish two iconoclastic cultural anarchist newsletters: *The Sporadical* and *Shoe Polish* (528 5th St, Brooklyn, NY 11215). They point out that this was "the first time American and Soviet activists had done such a thing in the USSR. We were able to demonstrate that *détente* from below is a practical alternative to superpower Cold War politics." Cultural democracy at work.

ALL OVER THE WORLD, ALL THE TIME, AT ONCE.



"Guatemala: The Road to War, " by Freda Gutman

● To honor and support the women of Greenham Common, who have camped out around a U.S. Cruise Missile base in England for five years, a New York artist has organized an "art/politics/performance/action." In *Ground Zero is Everywhere*, Susan Kleckner has arranged for 50 women to "camp out" (live and work for a week each) in the window of a Soho book store. The year-long piece began in December, 1986, and will culminate in a book, video, and exhibition by participants. Places are still open. (Contact Kleckner c/o SoHoZat, 307 West Broadway, NYC 10013).

● From Czechoslovakia, The "Gong for (Inner) Peace" project has been proposed by "Marek" in Prague, who suggested that on August 5 everyone in the world should ring bells: "The Gong symbolizes art and sound as release of power . . . Think and Act and Gong Globally!"

● Alarms continue to ring in Nicaragua despite the increasingly repulsive revelations about White House/Contra activities. After spending two months in the war zones last year, Vermont artist Georgina ("Dinny") Forbes created a giant puppet tableau called *Peace Hunger Kitchen* (with the help of Jim Schley and Nancy Cressman). Under the aegis of Senator John Kerry, the piece was installed in the Rotunda of the Senate's Russell Office Building in October. It was removed a day early after complaints from other senators that it was "too political." The tableau depicts three figures in a Nicaraguan kitchen; one is a shoemaker, and the shoes surrounding him are labeled with the names and ages of Nicaraguan contra victims. Hand painted signs asked "Is a body worth more than a spirit?" "What does walking in another's shoes mean about walking in my own shoes?" and"What am I full of when there is no room for peace?" Forbes made *Peace Hunger Kitchen* in support of the fasting veterans on the Capital steps. She is now proposing a new nationwide project which the Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America network may help coordinate. It involves brigades going to potential bombing sites in Nicaragua (given informed predictions of an April invasion by U.S. air forces to cover contras on the ground). They would construct banners, tent tops, and other graphic/pictorial messages visible from the air and thus become an artistic peacekeeping/monitoring force. (For information and further suggestions: Dinny Forbes, RR #1 Box 55E, Thetford Center, VT 05705).

● Xchange TV will present "New Nicaraguan TV" at Artists Space (NYC) in February. The show will emphasize the use Nicaraguan producers have made of popular U.S. genres like game shows and soap operas. (Contact Annie Goldson, 212-260-8438).

Being Human

● An Ambitious art installation about the genocide in Guatemala was shown last year in Montreal. Freda Gutman's *Guatemala, the Road of War* is a four-part piece centered on six large cast paper sculptures draped with camouflage netting, local weavings, and news items; each represents a different village. The other components are ten drawings ("The Huipiles"), eight dioramas and texts ("History"), and an antique stereoscopic section ("Economics") which places the "relationship between food production, trade, hunger, and militarization."

Gutman's show joins Marilyn Anderson's traveling exhibition of photos, portraits, texts and color-photos of weavings called *Granddaughters of the Corn: Guatemala, Women and Repression*, which originated in Rochester, NY. Anderson also circulates a slide-tape show about the relationship between traditional crafts and survival in refugee camps. She quotes *The Popol Vuh*: "Children, wherever you may be, do not abandon the crafts taught to you by Ixpiyacoc, because . . . if you forget them you will be betraying your lineage." (The show is available from Mayan Crafts, 1101 Highland St., Room 506, Arlington, VA., 22201; rental is $15 for two weeks.)

● In support of the extraordinary brave people (mostly women) of GAM (Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo), who are the only human rights organization functioning in Guatemala, a group of New York artists are making a videotape featuring the photographs of Jean-Marie Simon and the first-person testimony of Eva Morales, a GAM member in exile, who has lost 18 members of her family. Guatemala has less than 3% of the total population of Latin America, but more than 40% of all *desaparecidos* in Latin America are Guatemalan. Over 38,000 people have been disappeared, a large number of them Indians. The "democratically elected" government of Vinicio Cerezo, still ruled by the Army, does not support GAM, which makes the FINDING Campaign—the subject of this video—particularly crucial. FINDING stands for FREE Individuals Disappeared in Guatemala. For $5 you can "adopt" a disappeared person, receive information about that person and urgent bulletins about actions, and wear a woven bracelet for him or her. The bracelets are woven by refugees from the terror in Guatemala; wearing them, talking about them, is an important part of the process. (Contact: The Committee in Support of the People of Guatemala, 225 Lafayette St., NYC 10012).

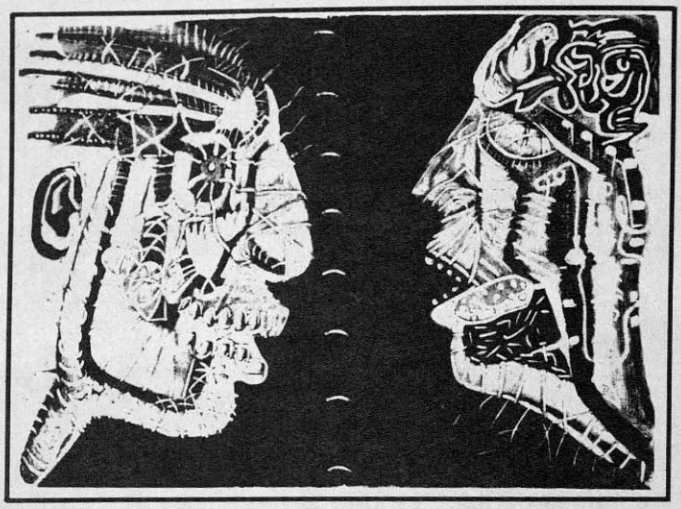
● International human rights was the subject of a unique art exhibition organized by Linda Goldstein Frickman at the Arvada Center in Colorado. The show, held in conjunction with Amnesty International, was titled "Prisoners of Conscience." The 24 participating Colorado artists each chose a prisoner from Amnesty's files and made a work of art relating (sometimes very indirectly) to the case. In the handsome catalogue, the featured names are those of the prisoners, not the artists—an appropriate homage in itself. As Frickman points out, the artists "paint, dance, write, and sing for those who no longer can."

● The U.S. has its own human rights problems. Elizam Escobar is a Puerto Rican prisoner of war serving a sixty-year federal prison sentence for fighting to free Puerto Rico from colonial domination. He is also an accomplished writer and a painter with a degree in fine arts. A handsome catalogue of his work, with color plates and essays by Jose E. Lopez, Lucy R. Lippard, and Bertha Husband, has been published by Friends of Elizam Escobar (available for $7 from Editorial el Coqui, 1671 N. Claremont, Chicago, IL. 60647). Less than a week after the publication of this catalogue, and the opening of an exhibition to begin a national tour of his work, Escobar was uprooted from the federal prison in Oxford, Wisconsin (where he was allowed to paint) and moved to El Reno, Oklahoma, where prison officials have told him there is no place for him to paint. A petition is out to demand Escobar's transfer back to Wisconsin, where his friends and family can support his need to make art. Send letters to: Director Federal Prison System, 320 First Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20534; and to Warden, FCI El Reno, POB 1500, El Reno, OK 73036. (Escobar's prison number is 88969-024.)

Bridges

● In Denver, Chicano artist Leo Tanguma constructed an extraordinary shaped portable mural—*Despues de esta Cruz (Beyond This Cross*, a 45 x 33' flaming cross swarming with figures and representing "the crucifixion of Central America on the Cross of American Imperialism." Its jagged shape reflects the pain it portrays and the aggression with which its subjects fight for justice. Tanguma and Mary Meadows were the chief organizers of a two-day mural symposium in Denver last April, which included participants from New York, California, New Mexico, and Colorado. The Tanguma cross was also a feature of "Image Wars"—an Artist-Call sponsored exhibition at the Center for Idea Arts, billed as "Denver's first oppositional art show," and co-curated by Pedro Romero and Lucy R. Lippard. Meanwhile, in Boulder, a street theatre group called "The Outside Agitators" was performing a "game show," "Truth or Lies," in front of their striking prop—an expressionistically painted 8' high Reaganocchio with an expandable 12'-nose. In November the same Ronbo was presciently converted into a CIA man as campus activists at the University of Colorado protested CIA recruitment.

● All over the country, Vietnam veterans are organizing in strength in reply to the military buildup in Central America, warning of "another Vietnam." Some of them are artists, and two exhibitions are being planned about the artist's perspective on Vietnam—at the San Jose Museum in California and at WPA in Washington, D.C. The Vietnam Veterans Art Group (VVAG) travels an exhibition of art and memorabilia; the group is steadfastly apolitical and the work is all across the spectrum in terms of styles and politics, but the lessons are there to be drawn. (Contact Eva Sinaiko, 300 Riverside Drive, NYC 10025.)



Perfiles en un Album **(Profiles in an Album), 1983 by Elizam Escobar**

● A stunning group of political art works from South Korea will be shown first at A-Space in Toronto and then at Minor Injury in Brooklyn. The "Min Joong" movement ("Art of the People") is a "multidisciplinary phenomenon concerned with the recovery and self-conscious attempt to locate a Korean identity apart from and vis-a-vis foreign influences." The show includes populist banner paintings and woodblock prints as well as the work of three young "postmodernists" who work with photographs, appropriation, Heartfield-like montage, and media criticism. Opposed to both Japanese and U.S. imperialism, the Min-Joong artists have had their works destroyed and some have been arrested. This is postmodernism without the bland distancing that infects some local varieties.

● UPFRONT went to the Second Havana Bienal in Cuba at the end of November. The first Bienal covered Latin America, and this ambitious follow-up covered the whole Third World—some 2000 works in the Museum of Fine Arts alone, plus some 30 auxiliary exhibitions, workshops, a conference on Caribbean art, a billboard show out on the highway, a school playground project, and more. Newyorican Marina Gutierrez (showing with Puerto Rico) won an honorable mention for her work in memory of the late Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta. Among the smaller exhibitions was "Over the Blockade", organized by a committee of U.S. artists and writers as a permanent gift of some 60 works for the artists and people of Cuba. It included, among others, Jimmie Durham, Houston Conwill and Sol LeWitt (whose three large sculptures did not fit on the plane from Mexico and will arrive later), Claes Oldenburg, Barbara Kruger, May Stevens, Howardena Pindell, Jacob Lawrence, Mark di Suvero, Michelle Stuart, Mel Edwards . . .

● Art students at the College of New Rochelle in NY are planning "The Art of Ending World Hunger," a "massive gathering of young artists from all over." Proceeds of exhibition and auction will fund a project in sub-Saharan Africa aimed at "decreasing the infant mortality rate and increasing self-sufficiency." The show "in support and solidarity of the vision of youth" will take place on April 26. To participate, contact EARTH, POB 510, Angela Hall, College of New Rochelle, N.R., NY 10801.

● Back home, the mural movement is going strong. In San Francisco, an innovative mural sculpture for the Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union was dedicated in July. The multicultural artists' group called itself M.E.T.A.L. (Mural Environmentalists Together in Art Labor). The three exotically shaped steel pieces are painted on both sides with polyeurethane epoxy showing images of dangerous working conditions, shape-ups, historical strikes. (See *Community Murals*, Fall, 1986, for a full account by participating artists Miranda Bergman and Tim Drescher.)

● And a mural scandal: *We Have Paid in Full*—a mural painted by Mike Alewicz and some 100 local helpers last spring for Hormel's striking workers in Austin, MN, and dedicated to Nelson Mandela, was sandblasted by the trustees of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 "to eliminate further embarrassment for Hormel." The attackers destroyed the figures' faces and the solidarity messages. As filmmaker Chris Spotted Eagle said at a local protest, "Freedom of speech is not just words. It's also pictures." Another mural in the same Labor Center's basement had also been destroyed less than two months before. The power of art always becomes clearer when there are attempts to suppress it.

● Another kind of mural graces the two subway platforms at New York's Spring Street and Sixth Avenue. Chilean exile Alfredo Jaar's anonymous photographs—enlarged and monochromatically tinted—covered every advertising space, offering a powerful

photo essay on the goldmines of Brazil, manned by Amazon River Indians. Images of figures struggling up cliffs and ladders under the weight of huge sacks of mud were juxtaposed against gold prices in the world's capitals. The piece was titled "Rushes" and the artist was making a parallel between the gold rush and the subway rush, between two poles of modern life. In the gold mines, workers also lose control of their lives and become obsessed with the idea of gold. (They are paid by the government, to fend off modernization, which would cause massive unemployment and supposedly be even worse than the current exploitation.) "It's a game of survival, just like the people in the subway, surviving until they win the lottery," Jaar says.

● Craig Condy-Berggold has been working with the Canadian Farmworkers Union for several years and has produced a 12-piece photo-montage exhibition that is shown in public and in art contexts to call attention to unsafe working conditions. (The farmworkers in British Columbia are often Turkish and Greek immigrants.)

● *I Would Like to Tell You a Story* is an innovative "postmodernist" organizing tool, a collaboration between artist, union, and workers telling their own stories in "visual dramatizations" that constitutes a new approach to the representation of working people in social documentary photography. (The show travels: contact Condy Berggold at 4730 Imperial St., Burnaby, BC, Canada V5J IC2.)

● Seattle artist Bonnie Vierthaler is travelling an art exhibition "for the breathless . . ." Entitled "The Joy of Smoking . . . An Antidote to Cigarette Advertising," it is aimed at schools, to immunize young people against seductive ads. "Our kids are 'streetwise'; let's make them 'ad-wise' and prevent this insidious addiction," she says. Her collages are glossy magazine cigarette ads "doctored up' with images from medical journals to make them a little more honest." (Contact Vierthaler at 301-949-2719; or 207-348-9978).

"Black Inspiration" Mural by Robin Michals, sponsored by Greenthumb/Artmakers Inc., at Malcom X Boulevard, Brooklyn, N.Y., 1986.

Pages

● Jorge Caraballo from Uruguay has published a small and acute artist's book—*Breve Historia del Arte en Latinoamerica (Brief History of Art in Latin America)* which consists of eight news photos with one-line captions: "Gesturism" (demonstrators with fists raised), "Hydrocinetism" (fire hoses turned on demonstrators), "Cave Art" (the Junta and hierarchy, saluting), "Realism" (the view from inside a prison cell), "Graffiti" (a communist slogan), "Mail Art" (an accusatory letter), "The School of U.S.A." (riot police with shields), and "Mass Art" (a protest march).

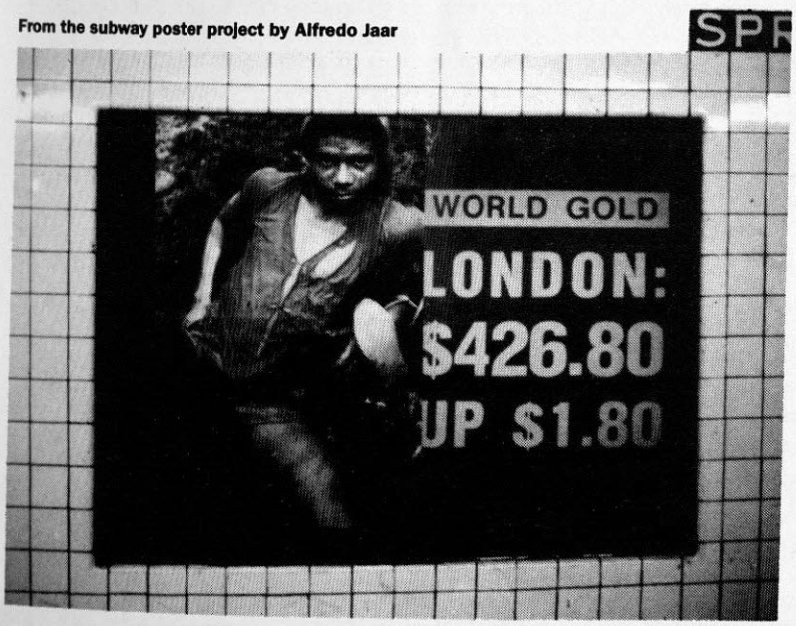
● *The New Pages* (POB 438, Grand Blanc, MI 48439) is a newspaperformat periodical published triannually that provides extensive and invaluable resource sections; No. 11, 1986, covers alternatives in print and media, resources for the struggle against Apartheid, and an overview of the "micro press" described as "guerrilla warfare artists armed with photocopiers and words."

● *Heresies* and *Helicon Nine* devoted their most recent issues respectively to activist art and art for peace. *Third Women* is a new journal focusing on Hispanic women (848 Ballantine Hall, c/o Chicano-Riqueño Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.) Guy Brett's *Through Our Own Eyes: Popular Art and Modern History* (New Society, 1986) ranges from the Chilean *Arpilleras* to the Chinese peasant painters to Greenham Common and is a must for all of us—sophisticated and committed. If you need books, bumper stickers, buttons, t-shirts, posters, crafts, music, and other antidotes to impotence and isolation, here are some of the best catalogues to consult: Northland Poster Collective, 127 N. Washington, Minneapolis, MN 55401; Printed Matter Artists Books, 7 Lispenard St., NYC 10013 (catalogue is $3 and is a work of art in itself); Art in Form, 2237 Second Ave., Seattle, WA. 98121 (contemporary art publications); Syracuse Cultural Workers, Box 6367S Syracuse, NY 13217; Peace Resource Project, POB 1122, Arcata, CA 95521.

Warnings

● And finally, two new anonymous groups are born to bite the hand that doesn't feed them, giving the Guerrilla Girls some company: PESTS, with a black hornet logo, plans "to bug the art world" on behalf of artists of color, so as to "reverse art world apartheid" and "generate positive interest in artists of color." (PESTS is also putting the bite on its supporters; contributions can be sent to POB 1966, Canal St. Station, NYC 10013-0873.) In Los Angeles, "Mothers of Medusa (MOM): Western Conscience of the Art World" has a snake as its logo. MOM made her debut in November when "Los Angeles finally got it up in the contemporary art world with the erection of the new Museum of Contemporary Art and the new wing of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art." Her daughters distributed 1,000 snakes ("rubber of course—it's a protective device") "in the grass, under paintings, on the cheese trays, in bathrooms . . ." The snakes bore messages like "Welcome to MOCA . . . it costs a fortune to keep the men in their place," and "Where are the women? A) On the Wall B) Behind You?" MOM also hit the National Video Festival with such low blows as "Welcome to the AFI—All Fellows International . . . Dick or Deck, What's the Difference?" (Contact: MOM, POB 875403, L.A., CA 90087-0503.)

From the subway poster project by Alfredo Jaar



PADD ACTIVITIES

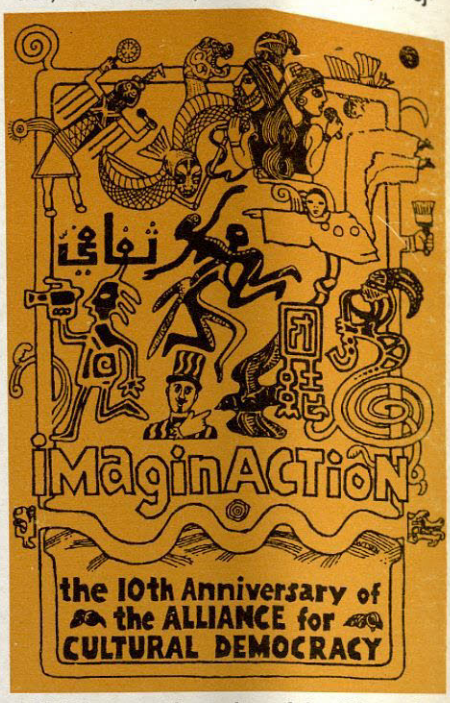
PADD STATEMENT

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.

UPFRONT BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE: $4.00 each. No. 5 Hispanic Art from Outrage; Who's Teaching What to Whom and Why?; plus National News. **Nos. 6-7** Not For Sale—A Project Against Displacement; Street-An Image Brawl; Cuban Photography Now; Out of Sight, Out of Mind (1): Native American, Black and White Artists in Search of Democracy; Turning Points in the Lives of Art Activists; International Art News, etc. **No. 8** Cultural Democracy as a National Movement; Artists working with Labor; November 12 Anti-Intervention March; The Making of a Political Document; Sisters of Survival's European Tour; Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America; Not For Sale. **No. 9** State of Mind/State of the Union Preview; Art Against Apartheid; Sue Coe and Anton van Dalen Talk; Not For Sale—The East Village Art Scene; Out of Sight, Out of Mind (II); Asian and Hispanic Artists; Carnival Knowledge: Feminism, Art and Pornography; Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America; Update and more. **No. 10** Special Section analyzing State of Mind/State of the Union; Public Access TV; Art Against Apartheid; April 20 Demonstration; NY Street Theatre Caravan; Fred Holland; 4 pages of International News. **No. 11** Special Issue on Displacement. The Homeless; Call for Coalitions; Aging; Women Working Out; political clowning Symposium; La Lucha Continua Mural Project; Guerrilla Girls.



PADD is a proud member of the **Alliance for Cultural Democracy** and recommends it fully. For information write P.O. Box 2088, Station A, Champaign, IL 61820.

PADD
339 Lafayette Street
New York, N.Y. 10012