LAST ISSUE

WINTER 1987

THE MAGAZINE
THAT KEEPS
GOING
FURTHER

THE BAD BOYS OF SOVIET ART

The Russian Avant-Garde Forsakes Siberia for NYC

CANADA'S
MOST
WARM-BLOODED
ANTHOLOGY OF
WORDS AND PICTURES

NEW WORK BY

CHRISTOR LER DEWONEY • JEFF SPALDING • MICHAEL MERCER • QUENTIN CARON • BLAKE BROOKER • DAVID GILMOUR MARK JARMEN • BLUCE PASHAK • JO ANNE WILLIAMS BENNETT • CHRIS CRAN • PAULETTE GILES • DON GILLMOR • KIRK MILES



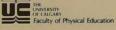
Denise Clarke & Anne Flynn

in collaboration with Blake Brooker, Ronnie Burkett, Richard McDowell & Infradig. Featuring Lisa Doolittle, Murray Marshall, Vicki Moreland, and Terri Willoughby.

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id Gilmour's novel about a failed writer's ent into hell is written with both subtlety of smanship and genuine emotional intensity.'
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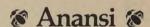
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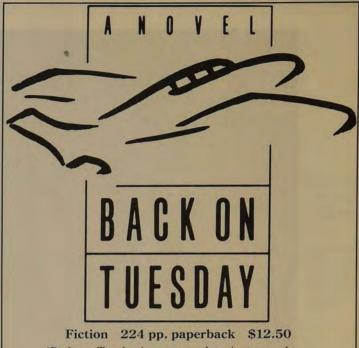
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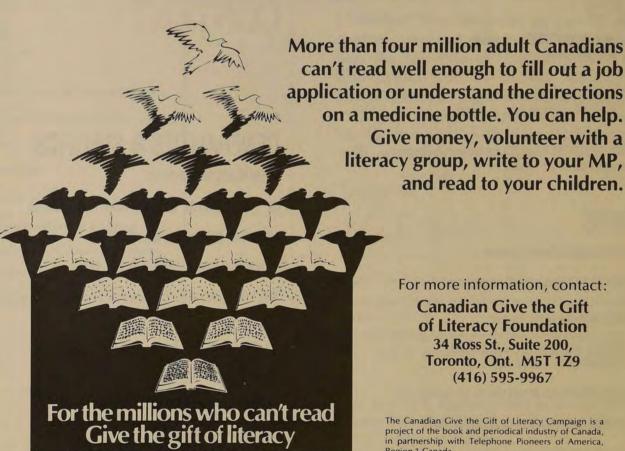


'Back on Tuesday is an up-to-the-minute psychological novel. It projects a special type of modern madness that I equate with the end of the human line...this portrait of Jamaica with its strange, uprooted expatriates is truly amazing. WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS

'David Gilmour's novel about a failed writer's descent into hell is written with both subtlety of craftsmanship and genuine emotional intensity.'
NORTHROP FRYE

The Coach House Press Toronto





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JEFFREY SPALDING
Night Light 1984
Oil on Canvas 168 × 244 cm.
Collection of the Artist

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COVER

KOMAR and MELAMID Double Self-Portrait as Young Pioneers 1982-1983 Oil on Canvas 182.88 × 127 cm. Collection Martin Sklar, New York Courtesy of the New Museum of Contemporary Art

he Stalin Style has been big in the Soviet Union for over fifty years. But in the early seventies the inevitable occurred: a complex parody of the style emerged as the first avant-garde art movement in modern Soviet history. At the forefront were Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, an art team that now lives and works in New York City. This was one of the key paintings from that era, a double-edged commentary on the Communist version of boy scouts. But the painting paid for its place in Soviet infamy when, during an underground exhibition in a Moscow field, it was destroyed by state-sponsored bulldozers. For more, see page 16.

LAST ISSUE

Founded 1983 Winter 1987

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Canada: Canadian Periodical Publishers

Association, 2 Stewart St., Toronto, Ontario M5V 1H6

Winnipeg Periodical Publisher's Association, 3rd Floor, 347 Donald St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2J2 U.S.A.: Cornucopia Distributors, 1504-14 Ave., Seattle, Washington 98221

Ingram Periodicals, 347 Reedwood Dr., Nashville, Tennessee 37217

LAST ISSUE Publishing Society #604, 815-1st St. S.W. Calgary, Alberta T2P 1N3 (403) 263-3232

LAST ISSUE is published quarterly (December, March, June, September) by LAST ISSUE Publishing Society, ISSN *0826-6972. Second Class Mail Registration *6386. Subscriptions: One year-\$12.00 / Individuals, \$16.00 / Institutions and Overseas. Printed in Canada. Copyright 1986. All rights reserved. Requests for reprints of articles should be made in writing to the Publisher. We welcome submissions of all kinds but are not responsible for unsolicited material. Deadline for Spring 1987 is January 15. Please type and double-space all material. If return is requested enclose a S.A.S.E. LAST ISSUE Publishing Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts, the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts, Alberta Culture, the Calgary Region Arts Foundation, Western Canada Lotteries, and the Alberta Manpower S.T.E.P. Program.

KIND OF AN EDITORIAL

ne of the novel things about producing a magazine called LAST ISSUE is that it gives one carte blanche to change everything from one issue to the next. Notwithstanding the utter stupidity of this act with respect to conventional magazine logic, it does at least open the possibility of a certain kind of fun.

Last time out it was an attempt to encapsulate the essence of the magazine in five words or less (an achievement, incidentally, that a freely evolving creature like LAST ISSUE would soon outgrow anyway). What we came up with was the label "KIND OF AN ART MAGAZINE". Three weeks later, this arrived in the mail:

□ CHUCK STAKE ENTERPRIZES ■ IMAGES AND INFORMATION(sort of an art magazine) □ ART CATALYST □ ART AS INFORMATION □ DADA TRACK & FIELD □ BOREDOM PARTY OF CANADADA □ PARACHUTE CENTER FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS □ CANADIAN ARTISTS' REPRESENTATION, CALGARY/ALBERTA	INDIVIDUAL: CHUCK STAKE MISS STEAK DON MABIE WENDY TOOGOOD WENDY MABIE DATE: NOTE:	
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Sept 20/86 Dear Last Issue (KIND OF AN ART MAGAZINE): I note that the sub-title of your magazine sort of, or kind of, sounds an awful lot like the sub-title of IMAGES AND IN-FORMATION (SOIRT OF AN ART MAGAZINE). IMAGES began publishing in March, 1975 — I just thought it was kinda strange, sorta strange, that the sub-titles would end up being so similar. Sincerely, Out Statu		

Clearly, Mr. Stake, one of the following must have occurred:

- (a) Something like what biologists call "parallel evolution" must have taken place.
- (b) We ripped you off blatantly.
- (c) We ripped you off cleverly, having consulted our lawyers to learn that changing "sort of" to "kind of" completely exonerates LAST ISSUE from copyright infringement.

In any case, the fact of its disappearance from our masthead should end the debate. At this point a better topic for discussion might be our apparent mutual inability to produce a genuine art magazine.

For our part, it stems from a belief that there's much more to life than art, coupled with the knowledge that including art tends to make a magazine nicer to look at. That's our excuse. We trust yours is equally well-founded.

ON THE FRINGE OF SUCCESS

In five years, the Edmonton Fringe Festival has become North America's biggest showcase of grass roots theatre. This August, for the fourth straight time, the Fringe doubled in size. Over 130 shows played to an audience of 140,000. It was a howling success. The only problem: if too many people start showing up, then it's not really the fringe anymore, is it? For now, a snapshot remembrance.

Photography by Ron Checora

Edmonton's Old Strathcona District: Everything Fringe was In again







ames were big: lurid names, zany names, names to show that your production was truly on the fringe. The names also had to show that it was going to be funny, because everything was funny. Funny was big. So why bother to call your show Improvisations, by the K Avenue Players, when you can call it Possible Nudity, by Possible Nudity. (Speaking of which, was there ever any question whether there would be nudity?) Best Name of The Fringe had to go to playwrights Michael D.C. McKinlay and Paul Morgan Donald. Check it out: Papa Died Under One of Those Great Big Heads On Easter Island-soundtrack by The Silent Heads. If you can get more fringe or funny than that, make your bookings for Gone With The Fringe, Edmonton, August, 1987. Mind you they did try, and came awfully close: Geeks In Love by Jeffrey Hirschfield had the added drawing power of a subject most of us can really identify with. "For anyone," said the playbill, "who has ever been in love, or for anyone who has ever bitten the head off a live chicken. Guaranteed

Papa Died Under One of Those Great Big Heads On Easter Island





Geeks In Love by The Phoenix Hot Summer Nights Company



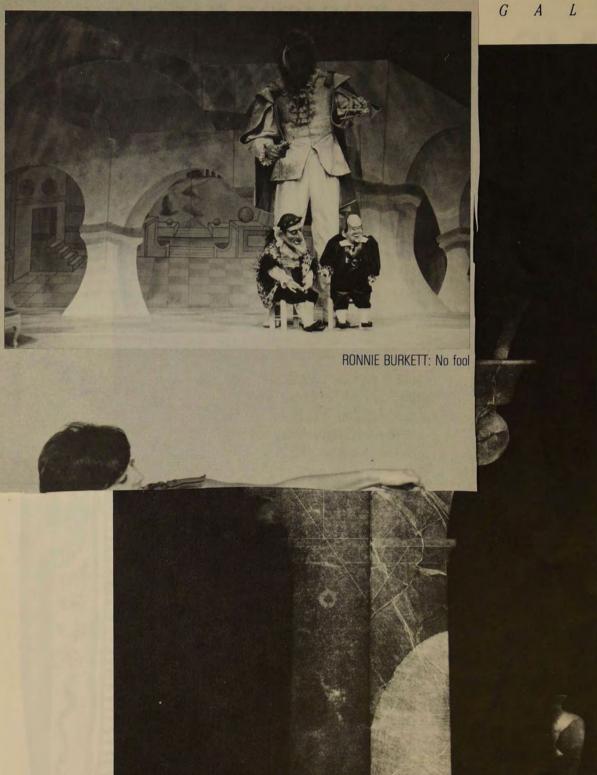
Soap On The Rocks East Of Edson



ELAINE CALGARY in Trying To Get Through To You

to make you pay money, sit for a while, and leave." Another good one, especially if you've had the misfortune of being in Edson, was Soap On The Rocks Book II: East of Edson. "Lust, power, greed, love, hate, and the whole damn thing." As for personal names. dancer Elaine Calgary scores moderately. Also, like many Fringe performers and critics alike, she made sure the word "lewd" always appeared in the billing. It gave reviewers plenty of license to describe the act, called Trying To Get Through To You, thusly: "humping and slithering over a nest of chairs." Once again this year, half-baked minstrel antics made up a significant part of the 130-odd acts. Nobody, though, harkened back to the Renaissance with the consummate skill of Ronnie Burkett and his Theatre of Marionettes. In Fool's Edge he pulled all the strings on seven characters and a wickedly funny script by Blake Brooker. Finally, we close our little scrapbook with an outfit that threatens to put the "C" back in Klass for good: Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, a company dedicated to preserving the traditional values of jazz. Can I get a rim shot?□

G A L L E R Y



European Capitals 1986 Hand-done etching, series of 25. 50 × 60 cm.

KEN WEBB

Born in Alberta in 1950, Webb studied at the Alberta College of Art and the Royal College of Art in London. A master printer with an international reputation, Webb has recently embarked into the world of painting. Webb teaches drawing and printmaking at the ACA and his work is represented by Lea Heath, Evelyn Amis in Toronto, Thomas Gallery in Winnipeg Edmonton's The Front, and at the Canadian Art Galleries in Calgary.



RONNIE BURKETT: No fool

THEATRE CALGARY

MARTIN KINCH • ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Limited Edition Series

SOUVENIRS*

by Sheldon Rosen Feb. 18-Mar. 1 An island in the South Pacific. Under the surface the revolution bubbles—or does it? From their deck chairs surrounding the pool at the Hotel Paradisio, the tourists aren't sure, as they sift through the hallucinatory realities of the Third World.

 Contains language and scenes which may be objectionable.

TRUE WEST

by Sam Shepard Apr. 15-26
A sometimes violent, often hilarious, account of the growing tension between two brothers—one a Hollywood screenwriter and the other a drifter and man of the desert—as they try to create a meaningful picture of the "true west".

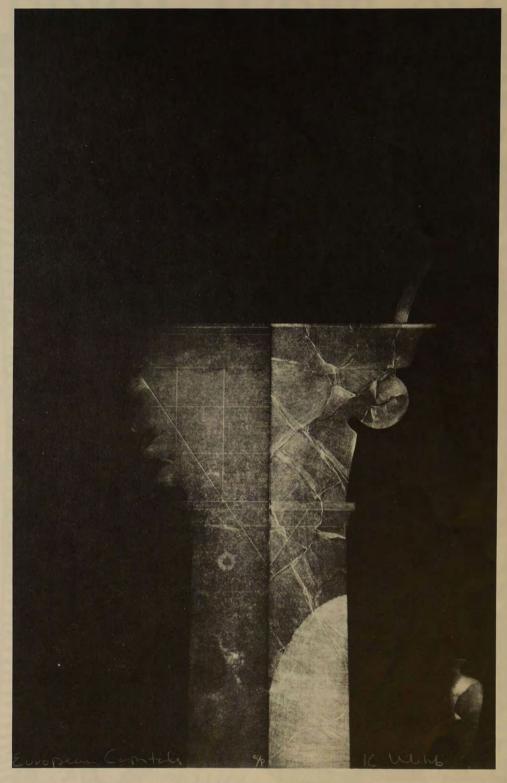
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T H E

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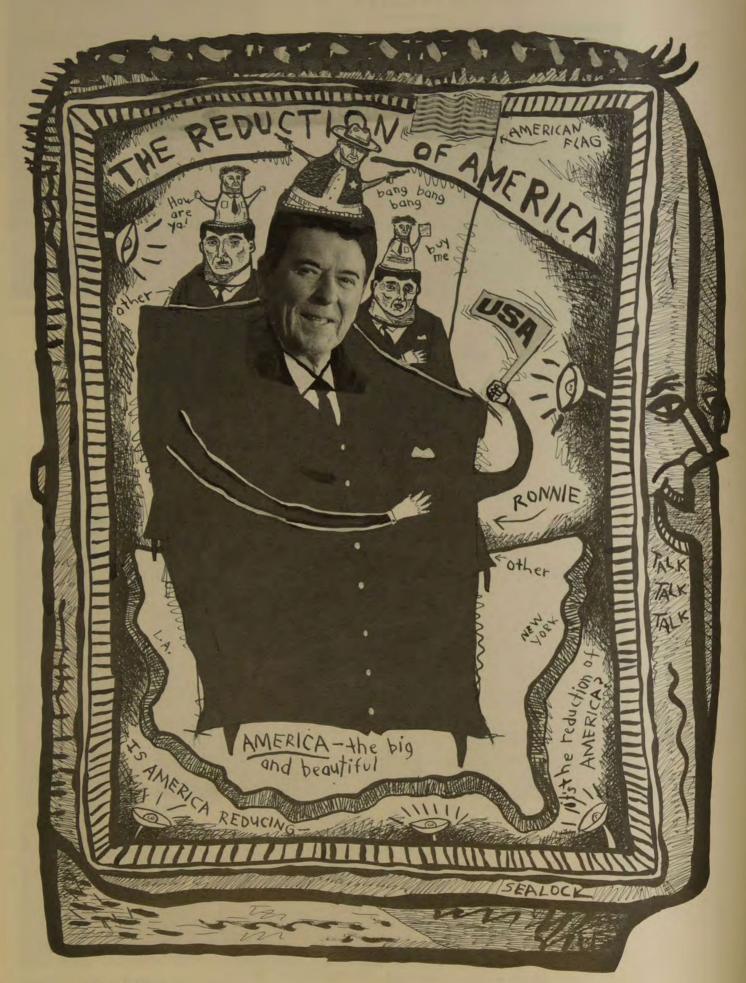
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AMERICA WRIT SMALL

The United States

is so intent

on distilling its

symbolic essence,

it's threatening

to boil itself

clean away

ot too long ago, while sitting in a darkened theatre waiting for another deathless entertainment, I witnessed the preview for Rocky 4. In one quick clip I saw Rocky vowing never to box again; Apollo fighting a Russian mutant and dying in the ring; Rocky at the funeral, star-spangled resolve taking shape in his hooded gangster eyes; Rocky arguing with da wife ("No, you promised..."—"A man's godda do, etc.") Rocky training American style; Ivan, the ass-kicking Soviet pituitary violation, training with more technicians than a moon launch. And then...two fists colliding and

Even the dimmest of viewers can guess that Rocky is going to win this one. Having seen every essential plot turn in chronological order and given an ending that's a lock, the question arises of just what is going to coax six bucks out of the public to actually go and

In fact, what lines them up is the expectation of a hurtling surge of adolescent emotion when Rocky bleeds and staggers his way to ideological victory. They know exactly how good they'll feel when, after suffering like Christ at the hands of a godless bolshie, Rocky lays the dude out with a haymaker that comes



all the way from Hoboken. This is not a movie—it's On the Waterfront without all the bothersome characterization, moral shading and tough-to-follow subplots. Stripped down to a cartoon theme, the film itself is essentially a 110-minute advertisement for a single emotion. In some cases, the modern film is even further distilled, to the point where an entire viewing offers no more in the way of an experience than the hook line used to advertise it: "Go ahead. Make my day."

The idea of constructing a movie around a single marketable emotion, such as jingoism, often makes for uncomfortable entertainment. There is a tendency, as with *Rambo*, to reduce unfortunate periods of history to a much more satisfying and concise fiction, and then have the fiction cheered as history. In fact, everything in America is currently in the process of being reduced to something that will fit inside the average hip pocket. And it's not the White House that's calling the final shots; now it's Madison Avenue where the concepts are being crunched

The ad boys themselves seem to be aware of their growing responsibilities, and even they

by Don Gillmor

are simplifying their own simple world view. In the old days, if you were flogging decongestant, you opened with a shot of the moody sufferer, domestic murder hovering over his relationship with an otherwise bubbly wife. Then you cut to the scientific proof, demonstrated by moving lines in a human schematic, the restless product searching out throbbing pain centres. After that reassurance, we returned to the guy with the blocked passages who is now in the kitchen helping with the dishes. Unblocked and playful, he nudges the little woman in a frank prelude to pants-to-the-ankles kitchen table sex. Sixty second commercials pointed the way.

These days, American sinus victims are more likely to see a 15-second spot that features an eagle landing on the marbled bicep of a U.S. Marine Corps drill sergeant who is leading a group of black kids in the national anthem during halftime at the Superbowl. The voiceover says, "When America gets stuffed up, it damn well does something about it." To not

use the product would be treason.

It's not just that America is reducing vast tracts of itself to unlikely symbols, it's the distance between those symbols and what they are used to represent that is unsettling. The relationship between taking a bullet for Uncle Sam on a Communist beach doesn't have that much to do with lite beer, but that doesn't stop the connection from being made.

No single word sums up the eighties as adroitly as marketing. It will be what Woodstock was to the sixties (despite its latecomer status).

The fiction of the Marlboro Man is well within the parameters of advertising canon. Madison Avenue has an adjustable set of ethical standards, which would be fine if they were only promoting soap, but the dictates of that industry have invaded the rest of the world and blurred certain distinctions. For every detergent manufacturer that an ad agency has on its client list, you can find two senators. three religious organizations, a couple of cities, assorted presidential hopefuls and the National Handgun Association. And each of them is reduced to a catchy slogan, jingle or photograph of something that America is a sucker for.

Symbols are great in their place but it's not necessarily healthy to have them replace the thing they're supposed to represent. Entire first year philosophy courses have been built around this supposition. Instead of an effective military, America has settled for dangerous looking marines in enlistment ads, bloated defense budgets, daredevil celluloid fighter pilots, and a PR campaign that delivers the message that America doesn't take any shit. Not even from Grenada. Emblems designed to hit the right emotional chord have distanced the public from certain realities; the Pentagon routinely pays \$700 for a hammer yet they haven't had a clear cut, tickertape military victory in forty years. There is a trend toward skipping the specifics and moving right to the marketable generalities of the matter. If America can no longer whup anyone it wants to, the live bait salesman in Jessup, Georgia sure don't wanna know about it.

RONNIE AGAIN

Marketing is largely a process of stamping the desirable baggage from a given image onto the brain of the demographic mark. To that end, realities are blithely distilled down to those qualities most likely to yield a saleable

mythology.

The Marlboro Man ignores uncomfortable truths about life in the saddle (it's boring, underpaid and everyone uses trucks) and instead creates a lean individuality that squints past the less attractive facts of cigarette smoking. If the myth isn't true, at least it's well established.

Certainly Reagan has played a part in this. The great communicator has gained that reputation largely because he is able to reduce complex issues to anecdotes that middle America recognizes and understands. This wouldn't be such a bad thing were it not for the fact that it has become clear that Reagan understands most issues only as anecdotes. He is not interpreting for us, he's just telling us what he sees from up there. Avoiding irksome details, he has a tendency to present his weltpolitik in terms of Hollywood Westerns. The settlers (America) are hard workin' and god fearin'

and they don't want any trouble. But if the Apache (Salvadorans, Nicaragua, whoever) want trouble, they are damn well going to get it. They may kidnap Becky (assorted diplomats. nuns, etc.) in the first reel but the Cavalry (Battleship New Jersey) will ride in there like all get out and save her before her gingham dress is soiled. And they'll set up a program to teach the Apaches how to use a knife and fork

Things have changed since Jimmy Carter was president. He magnified the complexities of running the world's most powerful country. He made everyone realize, quite rightly, that no one person could effectively steer such a behemoth, and even if someone could, it sure as heck wouldn't be Jimmy. He was a decent. thoughtful man and he made everyone nervous as hell. Everyone aged while Carter was in office, himself most noticeably.

Reagan, on the other hand, has reduced the responsibilities of power to coaching a small mid-western college football team. Everyone has a nickname like Dutch or Blackie, it's a crisp autumn day, they're three points up and strapping on helmets to stick it to the other guy. Reagan has sparked a return to Eisenhower government; when the going gets tough, the tough go golfing. He brought America back to a Norman Rockwell sensibility that downplays the frightening complexities of the eighties.

Keagan's failure to stake out the moral high ground on the issue of South Africa was politically disastrous partly because here was a case of an issue that had already reduced itself. The subject of much emotionally charged debate, South Africa had come down simply to a question of moral outrage. When Reagan announced in a dithering speech that although the U.S. was opposed to Apartheid, sanctions weren't the answer and maybe we should re-examine the question etc., he went against his own greatest strength as a leader. He complicated an issue which had already been stripped down to its moral infrastructure. No football anecdote was going to bail him out of this one.

Though decidedly addled, and more dangerous than a gutshot grizzly, Reagan is, well, sort of nice. He is America's surviving grandfather, now that Cronkite has passed out of the public eye. He sits the country on his knee and tells them stories that don't always make sense, head bobbing slightly, but still handsome for a guy his age. If he occasionally tells the same story twice in an evening or falls asleep at the bargaining table, he is nevertheless the hoary patriarch and you should have seen him When

He Was Good.

It doesn't matter that he was never very good at anything. He hasn't really done much other than walk through some pretty bad movies and wait until California got nutty enough to elect him Governor. But America was good. Reagan is a symbol of America's salad days; breezy confidence, winning one for the Gipper, a poor but honest kid with a dream-America before Willy Loman started to seriously fuck up. Reagan has always survived and prospered on the basis of what he represented, not what he was. He never really was anything, strictly speaking, but he was able and is able to evoke certain values and attitudes. As a leader he's little more than a class valedictorian but as a symbol he's the bee's knees, and given the choice America will go with the latter every time.



America has always traded hard in the currency of symbols. Washington, D.C. is a civic embodiment of that. It is an impressive city, rich in patriotic imagery and the resonance of democracy. Scores of neoclassic government buildings dominate the downtown area. Eagles, flags and stirring aphorisms carved into monuments litter the landscape.

In the Nathaniel Hawthorne Tavern, "An American Bar", in the Ramada Inn just south of Washington's P Street, I sat watching the coverage of Len Bias' death on the six o'clock news. Len Bias was the talented University of Maryland basketball player who had just been signed by the Celtics when he died of a cocaine overdose. For four nights, a series of updates kept me informed of Len's family's feelings, the views of two girlfriends, assorted teammates, lawyers, on-the-spot newsmen, the janitor of the dorm where he died, and bystanders who had crowded around the reporter and weren't too clear on who Len Bias was, a failing that didn't disqualify them as interview subjects.

Deaths come and go on the six o'clock news but nowadays they are likely to arrive in nameless groups lacking the impact of a single dog-saves-boy-from-drowning story. But here was a news story that sufficiently resembled a Movie of the Week to make an impression. Bias was seized as a symbol. The announcer of channel 3 solemnly pronounced that Len was "a tragic symbol of college sports and all that they have come to stand for." Packaged right this could be more than a news story, it could be a screenplay.

I watched night three in the Nat Hawthorne Tavern with Jerry, a regional manager for a southeastern textile concern who was visiting D.C. with the three kids from his first marriage. We had struck up a casual conversation while waiting for our respective tables in the Paul Revere dining room at breakfast that morning.

"That boy grabbed the brass ring and then stuck it straight up his nose," Jerry said when the Len Bias Hour started. Jerry had an accent like Huckleberry Hound.

I nodded and took a sip of my Bud.

"Let me tell you a little story," Jerry said. He had been in the bar for a while before I got there. He told me a story about a guy at his high school in Monroe (pronounced MON-roe), North Carolina. This ol' boy played a little ball. Basketball that is, which is what a little ball is in that neck of the woods. Joe Lon was his name, and he could talk a ball through a hoop from just about anywhere, inside or outside. In the State finals he was covered by a guy who fouled him with everything short of a pipe wrench but Joe Lon wasn't bothered.

"You want to know why Joe Lon waddin't bothered?" Jerry asked. "He was doin' the botherin'. Thirdy-tew points worth. That boy had NBA stamped on his ass. Then he went off there to Vietnam and come back paralyzed from the dick on down. Now he sits on the porch of his folks' place in Mon-roe drinking George Dickel from a water glass and passing out in the afternoon when the flies start to get bad."

Jerry slumped back in his chair to give this epiphany the moment of bitter reflection that was its due. I could see that his story held great wisdom, at least to Jerry. He didn't need Bias' action. He was carrying around his own private parables, displaying them like Trojans in a wallet in an effort to explain just what kind of a sport he was. For Jerry, Joe Lon packaged up a whole series of complicated things and presented them in a form he could cope with. Whether the story was about wasted youth, the tragedy of war, some dark Faulknerian inadequacy of Jerry's, or simply barroom oneupmanship wasn't clear. What was clear was that Joe Lon represented something.

that Joe Lon represented something.

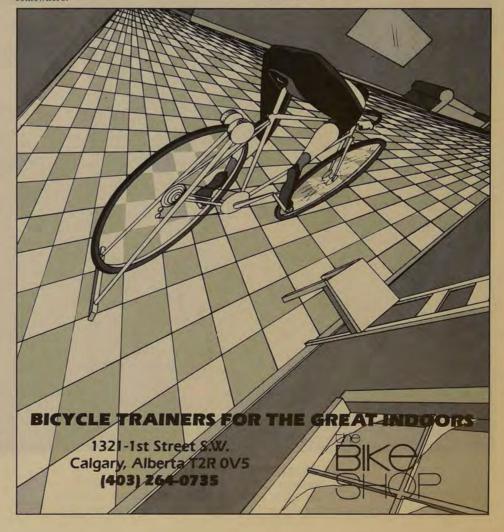
It could be that Jerry had never known
Joe Lon, that he had in fact claimed the anecdote from another beery raconteur who may have lifted it himself. Maybe Joe Lon was actually a kid who was a second string forward on a losing team who shot himself in the foot to avoid the draft and is now a hobbling gas attendant at the Mobil Station on route 41.

Maybe it just grew into a throat catching parable as it was passed from feed salesman to regional manager across the southeastern seaboard. Even the Marlboro Man had to start somewhere.

So many things are hard to understand. Trickle down economics is a mystery; not one living human can explain Beirut; the Latin American satellites are starting to blur—all that is known for sure is that one of them is the next Vietnam—and the tax system is a labyrinth. The deficit has reached numbers too great to make an impression. (Occasionally this is broken down to something more accessible like "every citizen of the U.S. over the age of 12 owes \$640,000"; but there is still the question of who they owe it to; Japan? American Express? Ardell's General Store?)

When you come right down to it, no one in America truly understands the plots on Miami Vice, how George Bush got to be VP, the stock market, any of Thomas Pynchon's books, the oil crisis, the electoral process, what it was that Charo was famous for, greenmail, Elvis' death, what happened to the middle class, vitamins C and E, why Michael Jackson wears one glove, or why Blake doesn't ditch that limpid dip Krystal and jump back in the sack with Alexis.

There are so few things which can be easily grasped. Joe Lon (as anecdote, not as Mobil attendant) emerges from the rubble of ungainly concepts and cumbersome issues as a symbol of.....something. When the Joe Lon story is optioned and appears next summer in wide release with Sly Stallone, a happy ending (he starts out an alcoholic, goes to Vietnam where he becomes a basketball star and returns home to win the State finals with a 30-foot jumper) and a soundtrack by Springsteen, I will be the first to stand and cheer. Joe Lon is truly a hero for their times.



DISTORTERS OF

Canada is about to get its first look at the only avant-garde art movement ever to emerge from contemporary Russia. From November 18th to January 23rd, the Glenbow Museum in Calgary will present an exhibition entitled SOTS ART. Organized by The New Museum of Contemporary Art, the exhibition features work by 10 Soviet artists, now mainly expatriates, who emerged as a subversive group in Moscow in the early 1970's. Their inspiration: Soviet Socialist Realism, the richly iconographic "official" style that became artistic dogma under Joseph Stalin.



ALEXANDER KOSOLAPOV

Manifesto 1983

Oil on Canvas 180.34 × 167.64 cm.

Courtesy of the New Museum of Contemporary Art

LAST ISSUE WINTER 87

SOVIET REALITY



LEONID LAMM
The Guard Nikolai 1984
Oil on Canvas 104.14 × 104.14 cm.
Courtesy of the New Museum of Contemporary Art

To put Sots Art in historical perspective, here is a passage from the exhibition catalogue prepared by The New Museum of Contemporary Art. It is written by Margarita Tupitsyn, who acted as Guest Curator for the show.



LEONID SOKOV Threatening Finger 1975 Wooden Mobile 34.29 × 19.05 cm.

here was an air of mystery around Komar and Melamid's exhibition at the Ronald Feldman Gallery in 1982: the lights were dimmed and the large, dramatically lit canvases were not in familiar styles of contemporary art, but seemed to be painted in-of all things-historical and classical styles. Swags of drapery, columnated architecture, and classical muses, were combined with a veritable who's who of the Kremlin-Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev-making the imagery even more strange and distantiated. Moreover, the exhibition was presided over by a larger-than-life bust of Stalin, an authentic Socialist Realist painting, and other trappings of totalitarian imagery. For the American viewer, then, the exhibition marked a displacement or dislocation to a foreign time and setting (not unlike Walter Benjamin's reaction on first seeing the Kremlin in 1926, when he remarked, "All the colors of Moscow...converge at the center of Russian power")

What seemed puzzling about this alien
"empire of signs" was suggested by its title
—Sots Art—which signalled the fact that the iconography was drawn entirely from the signs of the Soviet cultural and political heritage. For American viewers, unfamiliar with these national icons or their meanings, the exhibition prompted specific, political interpretations. However, this literal reading of the works—especially in the context of heightened U.S.-Soviet antagonism ran counter to Komar and Melamid's intentions. As they said, "To us, Stalin is a mythical figure. We are not trying to do a political show. This is nostalgia." While it may be true that Stalin is a mythical figure for Americans and Russians alike insofar as he was an omnipotent, paternalistic leader, few people in America can regard his image as a source of nostalgic longing. It is just this type of peculiarly nationalistic response to cultural signs which characterized the particular "otherness" of Komar and Melamid's imagery, which distinguished them as somehow different in the context of contemporary art. One was forced to ask then: Why would Komar and Melamid turn to these ideological images in New York, where they had come specifically to escape the particular Soviet use of cultural stereotypes and censorship?

Complicating the answer to this question is



KOMAR and MELAMID

The Origin of Socialist Realism 1982-1983
Oil on Canvas 182.88 × 121.92 cm.

Courtesy of Ronandl Feldman Fine Arts, New York

the fact that in their 1982 exhibition, Komar and Melamid did not create a new style, but resurrected a movement which they had inaugurated ten years earlier, the movement they called Sots Art. At that time their ideas coincided with those of other artists, such as Alexander Kosolapov, Eric Bulatov, and Leonid Sokov, and Sots Art became the first avant-garde movement in contemporary Russian art. But the radicality of Sots Art went beyond its uniqueness in the context of strict Soviet restrictions on art production; rather, its critical importance lay in the fact that the Sots artists proposed to view Socialist Realism not as mere kitsch or as simply a vehicle for bureaucratic manipulation and state propaganda, but as a rich field of stereotypes and myths which they could transform into a new, contemporary language, one able to deconstruct official myths on their

own terms.

In emigrating to the West, the Sots artists realized that in addition to this rich vocabulary of visual signs, the official style of their nation also carried a psychological weight, inspiring them as emigres to recreate certain provocative images of their past. As Komar and Melamid observed, "It's only in America that we have really perceived ourselves as national Russian artists, so to speak. Indeed, a 'national' artist does not create himself artificially, he's born like that, it's like a birthmark." Thus, first in Moscow and later in New York, Sots Art manifested itself as an epic and nationalistic discourse. Ironically, even though these artists were opposed to the usage of national signifiers by the Soviet state, their art remained staunchly pro-Russian, in opposition to the predominant forms of Western culture.

The term "Sots Art" was first coined by Komar and Melamid in Moscow in 1972. According to them, a friend who had come to their studio had seen their paintings based on Soviet mass-cultural imagery and concluded that this work was a Soviet variation of American Pop Art. Later Komar and Melamid, intrigued by this comparison, invented a similarly generic term: Sots Art ("Sots" being short for "Socialist"). Also at that time-though independently-an older Moscow artist, Eric Bulatov, began to appropriate the same imagery. Unlike Bulatov, however, who never attempted to exhibit his Sots Art works, Komar and Melamid took a risk. In 1973, when they were invited to have an official show under the auspices of the Youth Section of the Union of Soviet Artists (of which they were members), they brought some of their Sots Art pieces for a preview. Seeing these works, the committee members became hysterical and immediately announced the cancellation of the exhibition. Shortly thereafter it was announced that the artists-"the distorters of Soviet reality"-would be expelled from the Union.

This shocking decision only inspired Komar and Melamid to more radical behavior. They began to organize unofficial performances and apartment shows. During one such apartment exhibition, the police suddenly arrived and arrested all the viewers and Komar himself. In 1974, Komar and Melamid began to organize a large exhibition which would inaugurate Sots Art as a movement in Moscow. They were joined by Alexander Kosolapov (whose first works in this style were made in 1972), Alexander Yulikov, and Komar and Melamid's students, the collaborative performance team of Victor Skersis, Mikhail Roshal, and Gennady Donskoy. Together these artists produced a manifesto, written in a left-wing constructivist mode, and were photographed near the Mausoleum. Later, Bulatov was also invited to participate in the exhibition. Unfortunately, the exhibition never took place as a suitable space could not be found.

In September 1974, Komar and Melamid

decided to participate in an open-air exhibition then being organized by a group of unofficial modernist artists. This exhibition later became known as the "Bulldozer" show, for when a number of these artists gathered their works together in a field on the outskirts of Moscow on September 15, government bulldozers over-ran and damaged the artworks. Komar and Melamid's painting, *Double Self-Portrait* was completely destroyed. This overreaction on the part of the Soviet bureaucracy aroused a storm of international protest and led to the prompt organization of a second, official open-air exhibition. This second exhibition, held two weeks after the first, was named "Izmailovo," and anyone was eligible to participate. Many nonartists as well as artists of all types produced works especially for this unusual show. After that day, the situation improved somewhat for the older modernists, though younger artists, like the Sots artists, continued to show only in unofficial apartment exhibitions. One of the most popular sites was the studio of the sculptor Leonid Sokov, who joined the Sots Art move-ment in 1975. Ultimately, the Sots artists were never able to exhibit publicly in Moscow as a group.

Although Sots Art never became a widespread movement, its importance cannot be overestimated. The Sots artists were the first to confront Socialist Realism's structure as a conventional metaphysical system with carefully developed pictorial and verbal icons. Socialist Realism constitutes a "political ideology that, in the name of a Marxist hypothesis, is articulated with the finest examples of...the 'metaphysics of presence.'' This presence manifests itself by imposing on every Soviet citizen an inescapable sensation of the tangibility and concrete reality of such abstract concepts as Marxist-Leninist truth, bright historic destiny, or even Lenin, Stalin, and Marx, who are, according to official sources, always alive and with you. The Sots artists, for the first time since the official establishment of Socialist Realism in 1934, proposed a deconstruction of that culture's divine claims and utopian assumptions.



LEONID SOKOV

Eye Glasses for Every Soviet Person 1976
Painted Wood 41.91 × 39.37 cm.
Collection Norton Dodge

This specific project—to dismantle the system of sacred referents of totalitarian art without abandoning its generic features and mythical language—differed sharply from earlier examples of Soviet "unofficial" cultural manifestations. The phenomenon of "unofficial" or "alternative" Soviet culture first emerged in the late 1950s with the Khrushchev regime's relaxation of the state's ideological control over cultural life. At that time, a rather small group of artists—among them Lydia Masterkova, Oscar Rabin, and Vladimir Nemukhin (those who in 1974 organized the "Bulldozer" show)—first saw a number of American and contemporary art exhibitions and as a result began to experiment with various modernist tendencies.

Considering Socialist Realism as mere kitsch, these "unofficial" modernists of the 1960s defended abstract painting and the remote fantasy of symbolism. Their principal aim was to remove art from the politics of culture; they believed that there could be a "neutral zone" in which art could exist autonomously.

Yet, in official art circles—throughout the 1960s still largely dominated by Stalinist apologists—this unofficial modernism constituted a tangible political opposition, for it weakened the monistic sense of Socialist Realist doctrine. These two cultural forces—Socialist Realism and unofficial modernism—remained in opposition up to the mid-1970s, at which time the power balance in official institutions began to shift toward a moderate position, and the elite of the cultural establishment began to show signs of tolerance of, and even interest in, modernist styles. In fact, some official artists began to appropriate various elements of the modernist vocabulary into their own art, and to absorb into the official Soviet system the proclivities of their unofficial counterparts.

At the moment of this uneasy reconciliation between officialdom and modernism, the presence of Sots Art was problematic. First of all, though somewhat unintentionally, the Sots artists created a new form of resistance to the cultural establishment, demonstrating once again that any art functioning beyond the framework of the system becomes potentially radical. Secondly, since the Sots artists appropriated and repeated verbal and pictorial icons of heroic Socialist Realism, they re-awoke the style, uncovering the "trace, the graft, whose traces [had] been lost." For them, heroic Socialist Realism—at that time becoming an eyesore in both official and unofficial circles—underlay the powerful psychological dimension of the Soviet Union's common history and to simply ignore it (while perhaps desirable) was in the end impossible. Instead, Sots artists countered with the bold gesture of appropriating those very Soviet cultural codes in order to deride, deflate, and aestheticize the codes themselves.

MELAMID SPEAKS

Remarks by Alexander Melamid, taken from a conversation with Heather Elton that took place during a performance and lecture visit to The Banff Centre.

On their early artistic inspiration: We began with what were important things to us. We were depicting our wives and our relatives and friends and our obsession with big portraits of the leaders. And then we painted these dark, heavily varnished pictures in a neo-classical mode because we were nostalgic, not only about Stalin, or this particular time, but about all the great paintings from the past. It was an anti-modernist notion actually. Since our childhood, when we started to study art, we only had examples of good realist art of the past. All other art was prohibited and out of view—everything that happened after the Impressionists. And so our image of great art, even now, is filled with dark heroes.

On love/hate for Soviet ideals: For us they go together. We were brought up on these images, on these ideals. Of course in the Soviet Union

we would constantly say that life was miserable. But still, the memories from this time are very good for us because they are a part of us. We were only children at the time, and sometimes your childhood memories are very warm. Later we discovered that Stalin was a bad guy, but it is a part of our body and our history and our warm remembrance, so we depict them. We cannot get rid of this idea that Stalin was bad, but on the other hand we cannot get rid of the idea that he was the great father of all Soviet children.

On official Soviet opposition to their art: There is no direct opposition to the imagery, but in the last few months some articles have appeared in which our names were mentioned as bad guys. In the Moscow newspaper and the magazine Soviet Culture we were held up as an example of anti-Soviet art, bad art. But the notion of opposition is long and complex. In the Soviet Union they are not really very critical at all. They are a lot like us, they feel the same ambivalence about everything in their being. It's as if you discovered your girlfriend is a prostitute—it doesn't mean you didn't like her.

T H E

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BRUCE PASHAK

Born in Calgary in 1951, Pashak studied painting and drawing at the University of Calgary and at the Instituto Allende in San Miguel, Mexico. He tends to ignore art world trends, retaining a deep fascination with the beauty of the human figure and an appreciation of the enigmatic smile. Pashak's work is represented through the Paul Kuhn Fine Arts Gallery in Calgary.



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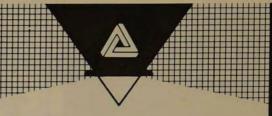
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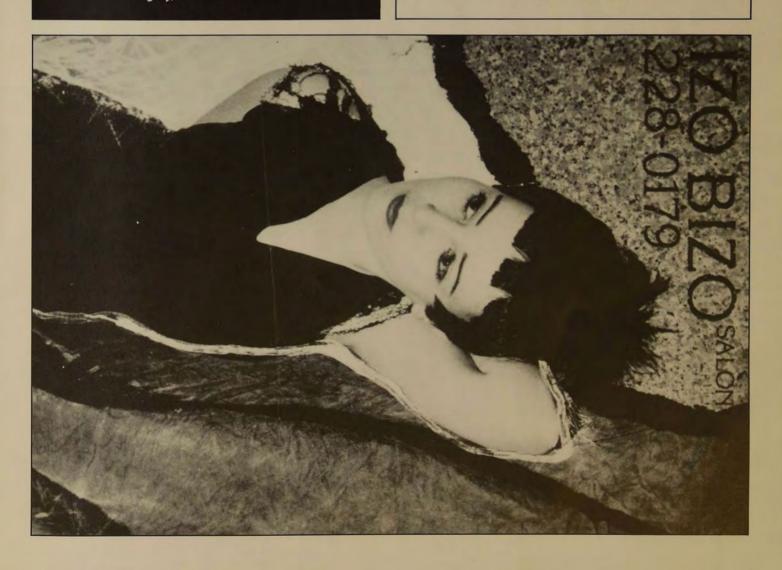
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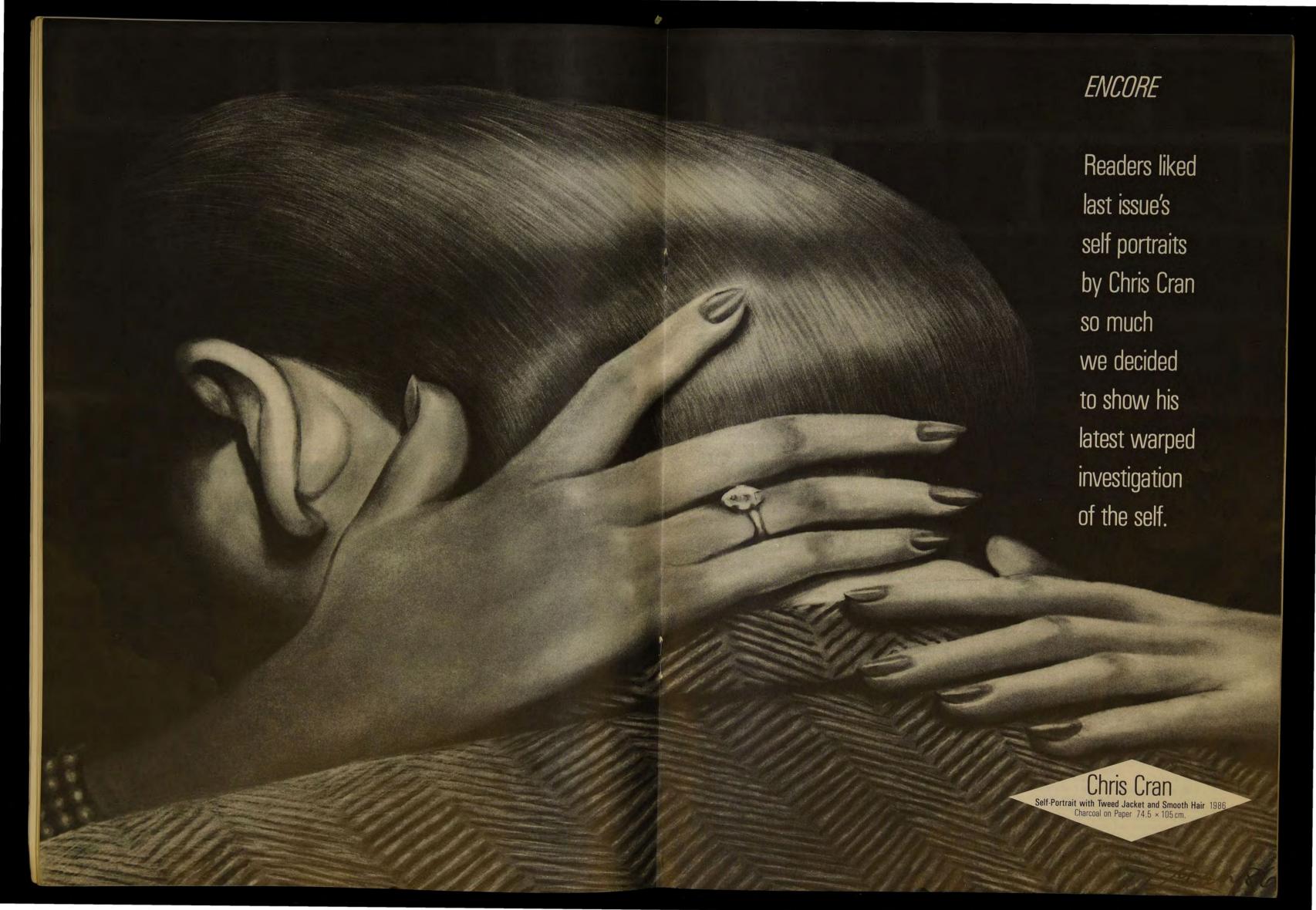
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EXCERPTS

Books, books. Don't let a busy month prevent you from buying the books you know you'll like. Absorb this, LAST ISSUE's handy sampler of eight choice cuts from some of the season's best books. Books of distinction. Books upon whose dust jackets William S. Burroughs is singing like the whipoorwill. Books to try on like hats.

BACK ON TUESDAY

A new novel by David Gilmour published in 1986 by The Coach House Press. A Toronto native, Gilmour is also a playwright, a former managing editor of the Toronto Festival of Festivals, and a political speech writer. This is the foreword and first chapter of the novel, the prelude to a failed writer's descent into hell; fuming, plotting, and drinking overproof rum in the gaudy Jamaican night.

No I didn't kidnap the child. You can't kidnap your own child. Well you could, I suppose, but I never would. No, that wasn't it. Nor was it as simple as I pretended at the time: that I simply took her to Jamaica without telling her mother. Anyway to my credit I was cold sober when I did it. At the beginning.

It must have been the photograph that set things off, although I didn't know it at the time. I'd dropped around J.'s apartment to pick up my daughter's bicycle helmet. It was ten o'clock on a muggy September morning and the place was empty. I'd often been in the apartment since we split up. And while it was none of my business, sometimes, when I was there alone, I couldn't resist a little snoop around—a peek at the phone bill, the long distance calls, the notice board, the odd letter...nothing creepy or lurky, just a casual look around. I mean I wasn't tearing back the sheets or anything.

By now she was living with a guy who looked like a Turkish terrorist. He was sort of interesting really, although I had a bone to pick with him and it had nothing to do with J. He got honked at a party once and threatened me. He had me backed right up against the kitchen fridge. I must have run that scenario through my mind a thousand times in the weeks that followed. It made me feel sick every time.

When I was in the apartment, I checked out his papers too.

Over a period of time, a generous period of time I have to admit, it became clear to me that I was less and less of an issue in her life. My books vanished, got lent or the child scribbled in them. My father's gold pocket-watch disappeared. It wasn't a question of her pushing me out of her life. I was just slipping away, a natural evolution. I was being shelved and I knew it.

We seldom talked; when we did it was about the child, about babysitters, sugar fits, about who was picking her up after daycare and so on and so on. But there was no time between us.

It was annoying, painful but temporary I thought. A year went by, then two years. And things only got more distant, more business-like. She'd 'gotten over' me, to say the least. In her apartment I found the reminders of my unimportance painful. To be blunt about it, that's why I stopped snooping around.

So this one hot day I'm scratching around looking for Franny's helmet. And I see a letter and a photograph on the kitchen table. No, I say to myself, leave it alone. I even congratulate myself for my strength of character.

But I couldn't resist a look, a tiny peek. It was a picture of a lovely apple yard. It must have been spring because the grass was still flattened and there were red knots of sprouts on the trees.

And there they were: Franny, J., the terrorist and J.'s father. They were looking at something with great interest, a house maybe, a willow branch, who knows. That's not the point. The point is that, corny as it sounds, it was the picture of a family. And I wasn't in it. And, to put it delicately, they didn't look any the worse for it.

I picked up the helmet, went back down the stairs and back to the film festival office. I said nothing to J. But now, looking back on the events of the next twenty-four hours, I think that must have been the start of it.

Yet when I think back on that summer, it wasn't as chilly between me and J. as it seemed at the time. Now, with a cooler head I remember moments of undenied intimacy, refrains of the old magic—an ease with each other that we shared like a mutual skin. She came into my office once and in front of everyone asked if she could borrow my toothbrush. She wanted to brush her teeth because the terrorist was flying in from Vancouver that afternoon. But that didn't matter. It seemed like such a trusting gesture, the closest we'd been in some time. It was, if nothing else, an admission of shared history and I was proud of her.

And then there was the time in the hallway of her apartment. We were both in a frantic hurry, I can't remember why, and J. was flying about, smoking a cigarette, washing the dishes, talking about firing the babysitter when suddenly, in the middle of it, she decided to change her shirt and she took it off without missing a beat. Or

turning her back. It was the first time in three years she did that. It was as if we were so engrossed in the conversation that we forgot we weren't together anymore. Or perhaps she was in too much of a rush to remind me that we weren't

And when I caught myself looking at her, trying to keep at eye level, I had, I confess, the sensation of looking over a very high building, the same way I used to feel when I slept on the couch of one of her boyfriends and at three o'clock in the morning I'd hear her slip quietly out of bed and tiptoe into my room. 'Are you awake?' She'd whisper and even in the dark she knew my eyes were open.

That afternoon in the hallway there was a glimmer of that, but in the next seconds I felt myself retreating as if through inverted binoculars.

Those isolated moments...and others, barely audible refrains which, I sometimes suspect, only I heard.

One afternoon, I found myself walking behind her on a quiet street. It startled me. She didn't know I was there. She seemed preoccupied, deeply absorbed in her own thoughts. I had the uncomfortable sensation of being about to interrupt a very private moment. I wanted to duck down a side street, to leave her to it when, abruptly, she turned around as if guided by intuition.

I was just thinking about you,' she blurted out. I should have pressed the

point. I should have looked right at her and asked. But I didn't.

What could she have been thinking? Was she wondering how long it had been since we were together? Was she wondering what it was we'd loved about each other? Or was she thinking that she didn't know what I was like anymore? Anyway I didn't ask. But I've often wished I had.

And would it have made any difference? At some point we all think about

everything, even the dead.

Perhaps I tried to hang onto J. too long. Too many visits, too many lingering phone calls...twenty dollars here, thirty dollars there.... 'Say J., can you spot me a fin til Friday.... How's the health insurance?... I think I've got strep throat coming on.... Listen, I just popped in to see Franny, I should have called.... Just the pork chops, please, I'm in a bit of a rush.... Say J., do you think they'll mind if I come to the party too?'

No wonder she despised me near the end. You can't run away from home if

you keep popping in for dinner.

Indeed I find it difficult to understand how I could have been so naive to think that things could possibly go back to those other times before, when she had a boyfriend and I had a girlfriend and we hung around all night, saw the dawn rise a million times in a delicious conspiracy of friendship

And this business about Jamaica, about taking the child with me. It was, I suppose, a way of upping the ante. God knows, it may have been years before she noticed if I'd gone by myself. But we're not in school anymore. That stuff doesn't work anymore. It's obscenely out of date.

Besides it'll never be the same between us again. And I suppose this is the last kick at the can before, in my own heart, I too let the whole thing go.

But back to the photograph. I was working for J. at the time, natch. She'd hired me to write the program book for that fall's film festival. The day of the photograph, that was the day the book came out. It looked terrific, gleaming black covers, the pages were in the right order, none of the advertisements were upside down. It was really all right and that was the most you could hope for. Besides I was thirty and I'd never published anything before. It was a big deal and perhaps I made a little too much of it.

We were in the office, right after a little celebration in the hotel bar downstairs. I was there. So was J., so were a dozen other people—fundraisers, secretaries, so and so from the Godard retrospective, the box-office manager, the patrons' committee, a couple of drivers, the hotel manager—everyone sitting around smoking cigarettes, drinking beer, chatting about the festival, the book, a bit of gossip, jokes, all that.

Outside it had turned into a filthy day: dark clouds, low and ugly. It looked like trouble. From where I was sitting it looked more like a winter's afternoon than five o'clock the first week of September. You could see cracks of lightning fire over

the lake.

Then the rain started.

And then the phone rang. Amid all the chatter no one heard it, except J. There was a moment which even at the time struck me as odd. She was staring at me. The phone rang again and she kept staring, waiting, or so it seemed, for me to pick it up. It was like a command. She'd been drinking-we all had-and when she drinks her



Oo it's true I suppose. When she stopped paying attention, I found it infuriating. To have her eyes flit away in the middle of a conversation, to have her reach for a phone; to have her ask me a question only to lose interest in the answer.

What stung was that it was unintentional, all the more painful because it wasn't meant to hurt. But it was an indifference that left you totally impotent, as if when in total exasperation you threw up your hands and shrieked 'You're not listening. You never listen. You never touch me anymore; you never.

You find yourself braying like a goat with its head caught in the outhouse door. And she looks at you with calculated bewilderment.

'What are you talking about?'

We all have ways of punishing people. J.'s was to forgive them. Mine was to disappear. Ten years ago, at the end of my first year in university, I stopped by her place one spring evening to find a note on the door. 'Please. No visitors until after the exams.' It was J.'s handwriting but her roommate's idea. She'd objected to my comings and goings. This was J.'s way of dealing with it. I found it mightily offensive and vanished into the record room of the Central Library for four days-as long as it took her to find me.

Then it was back to more sunrises, scrambled eggs, cigarettes and Leonard Cohen records.

I don't recount this story with any pride; its implications don't escape me. I say it straight for the record. I disappear when I'm hurt.

I realize now that she won't come after me anymore. I can wait in the record room until the century changes and she still won't come. Somewhere back there she stopped noticing if I didn't call, if a day or a week went by without us seeing each other. She doesn't notice if I leave without saying goodbye.

And it's odd that it bothers me after these many years. Perhaps I'm whining but it's hard sometimes to feel that invisible, as if she might reach right through me for an ashtray.

face becomes pale and the skin is drawn taut, almost translucent, over her high cheek bones. She looked deathly. And strangely angry as if some tape, some image unconnected to the room, was running through her memory and had settled on me the very moment the phone rang. I reached over, taking my eyes away from her and picked up the phone.

It was Taffy, Fran's babysitter. She was phoning from J.'s apartment. A fuse had blown; there was no power. The two of them were stuck in the kitchen, in the black. And I remember thinking: Then change the fuse. But she couldn't; she'd never learned how. I was a little drunk and I said, rather testily, 'You're nineteen years old and you don't know how to change a fuse?' I knew what she wanted. She wanted someone to race across town in the rain and do it for her. And I found that irritating. So I told her, in some detail, where the fuse box was and how to change

'How will I find the fuse box?' she queried. 'It's too dark.'

'Take a candle and light it.'

'What will I do with Franny while I'm in the basement changing the fuse?'

Take her with you,' I said evenly, perhaps too evenly because I saw J. shoot me a frown across the room. She hadn't picked up the gist of the conversation but she recognized the tone. I put the phone down.

J. asked, loudly, from the other side of the room, what the call was about. I explained.

She paused and I knew what would happen next.

Affecting bewilderment, she snapped, 'Why don't you get into a taxi and go do it?

She didn't raise her voice but the annoyance was picked up around the room and some of the conversation fell silent.

'Because I told her how to do it.'
Then I added a lie. 'I told her to call back if she can't do it.'

'But why don't you just go and do it?'

'It's your apartment,' I retorted. But it came out wrong. It sounded truculent, petty and I had a sudden sinking feeling that the room had turned against me. By now all but a few people were listening. They were staring at their drinks or lighting cigarettes or pretending to be absorbed by something else but they were listening and it made my heart thump with self-consciousness.

And then I sank further into the quicksand.

'She's nineteen years old! I think it's outrageous that a nineteen-year-old who's entrusted with our child can't change a fuse.

It struck entirely the wrong note. I might as well have launched into a tirade about 'young people today.' Coming from a man who didn't learn to cook until he was twenty-eight...it sounded ridiculous, even to me. The words tumbled weakly from my mouth and plopped straight onto the floor.

J. said nothing, savouring the hole I'd dug for myself.

The room chilled another ten degrees. I swear I heard someone say, in a voice brimming with contempt, 'Why doesn't he just go?'
'Why don't you just go?' J. repeated. Her face was pinched. Even her eyes

'She'll call if she can't do it.' My voice went up a register. I sounded like a frightened adolescent. I had completely lost control of the situation. And had made myself look like a boor in the process.

'If there's a problem,' I started in...but she interrupted me.

And then it snapped.
'I don't want to!' I screamed and my voice broke again. I slammed my hand on the desk, knocking beer bottles into the air and upsetting an ashtray. I came around the side of my desk. J. retreated behind hers. The office emptied; they scattered like cockroaches; they didn't put down their bottles or pick up their purses or butt their cigarettes; they just beat it. No one was smiling. In a minute J. and I were the only ones left. And a secretary; she was too terrified to move, sat at her typewriter, stony faced, pecking mechanically at the keys. A head popped around the corner, hissed, crooked a finger. The girl jumped to her feet and slipped out of the room.

'Gene,' she said conciliatorily. I slammed the desk again.

'Don't use that night-nurse tone on me.

'Gene, I was trying to ...

You were meddling, you cunt. You were sticking your nose where it didn't

'You were being a cunt, that's what you were doing. I had it under control.

You messed it up. So take charge; go home and change the fuse.

Then I remembered she was afraid of electricity. In those seconds, while the crack from my hand on the desk still echoed, I remembered that I had never seen her change a plug or a fuse in all the year's I'd known her. That made me cold and bloodthirsty. 'She can't change the fuse,' I yelled. 'You'll have to go home and help her. You'll have to do it yourself. You'll have to stumble around in the basement in the dark or the two of them will sit there all night. You're the boss; you're in charge.'

I took another step towards her.

'I don't have time,' she said, a flutter in her voice. She was on the run. 'I have too much to do here. I'm behind; everything starts in a week; I can't leave.

She must have felt herself slipping because she changed beats. She adopted a cool, professional tone but there was a tremor; it was such a transparent attempt at diplomacy I had to laugh. She didn't want to change that fuse and it was dawning on her that she might have overplayed her hand.

But I was hot, too angry to defer. I wanted to stay mad for a while

She paused for a second, looked down, then made a curious gesture with both hands, as if she were pushing down the lid on a garbage can. Now the voice was even more rational and I knew she was panicking. I confess, not without a little disgust, I wanted to run her to tears

'I have a board meeting at six. I haven't booked one of the Casavettes films.

He's calling here in half an hour ...

She rhymed off a list. 'I can't leave.'

Fuck them.

'I can't, Gene.

I was getting closer to her.

'And don't speak to me as if I'm crazy.' I was very close now and I said, in a whisper, 'Just go.'
She looked at me and I could see she was frightened.
'Get out of here,' she said.

'No, you go.

I thought she'd fire me on the spot. But she didn't.

'The book is a mess,' she said quietly. 'It's full of mistakes. I should have got somebody else.'

That staggered me.

'You drink too much. You shouldn't have proofed it when you were drunk. I shouldn't have hired someone who couldn't keep it together the last three days.

'I wasn't drunk. What are you talking about?'

You were drinking that stupid overproof when you were proofing the art boards. Peg told me.

I sat down.

Now this is my office. Get out,' she said. I looked up. I opened my mouth; I wanted to tell her I hated her, how glad I was I'd left her, fucked around on her. But I heard the words as I thought them; they sounded so petty, so wounded, I let them crash around inside my skull until they came to a halt. Besides, there's leaving and there's leaving. I may have left but she didn't come back.

We sat there, hearts beating, like two trapped animals, neither looking at the other while outside the rain poured and the lightning cracked, and we heard nothing of it through the thick glass of the window panes. For the first time in three years I

had a craving for a cigarette. They were on her desk.

From

THE BLUE SILK UNDERWEAR OF THE INCREDIB MISS RAINWA

A book of poetry by Gail Harris, published by The Coach House Press. Harris studied literature at the University of Victoria and currently resides in that city. She is the editor of the west coast literary magazine Random Thoughts and a co-organizer of poetry cabarets in that city.

Jerks

A young man often remains a Jerk for a long time. Or I should say, a Jerk remains a Jerk, for a Jerk cannot properly be termed a Young Man. That is not A Common Derogatory Term, such as Jerk is.

The Indianapolis Speedway is a Popular Meeting Place for Jerks. As is the Studio 54 Discotheque in New York City. Jerks enjoy an atmosphere of tension and the attitude of a race. They often forget to attach their helmets Securely. The sun has set in a Jerks eyes more than one time.

The number of men on my street at any given moment multiplied five times and divided by four Equals all the Jerks I've ever met in a lifetime. There are fifteen Jerks for every fire-hydrant in New York. In Chicago, Jerks outweigh the police force.

Five Jerks balanced on top of one another make an interesting pyramid, but the way to heaven is trickier Than you'd think. There is a fourteen-hole golf course for Jerks in Miami.

There are eighteen-hundred ways to free yourself from a Jerk and one of them is to squeeze yourself through A keyhole. Another is to sleep in the cesspool

under the porch.

If you find a Jerk by mistake, just drop him in the nearest mailbox. The Federal Government always

Has need of Jerks. There is a Jerk in every gentleman.

If you find that you yourself are a Jerk, do not be crushed. Reform is not impossible.

The Los Angeles Freeway, after all, is driven on by millions of cars. But yours need not be one of them.

If you are under thirty, relax. You still have a few years. If you are not, Bathe your face in tepid water And step forward, a New Man.

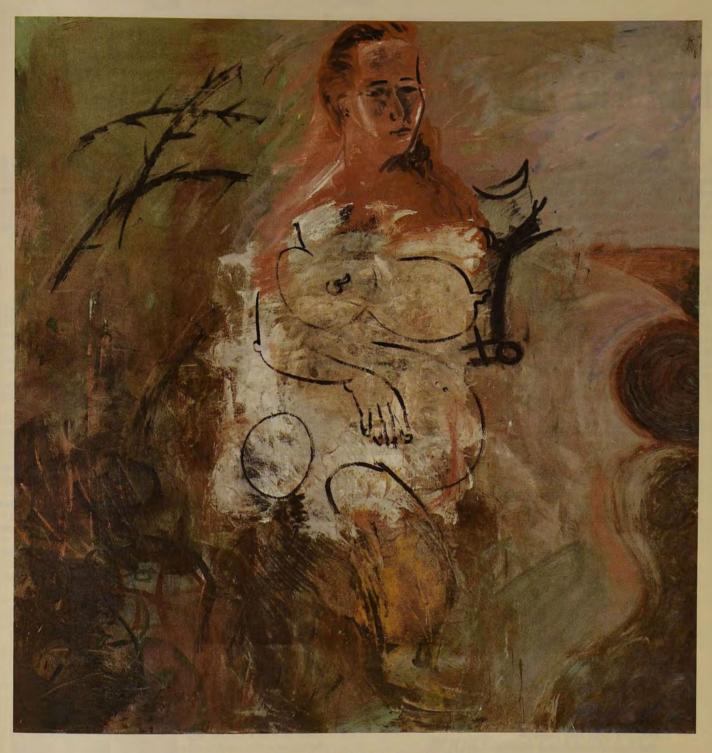
If you try to photograph an angel

Its head always comes out too close To the ground as if Praying to Mary's feet or some other virgin Messing up its routine in heaven They say the angels never speak To God except through a golden tube, which Hung down like a drainpipe. Transmits any necessary messages Straight to his feet, where the seraphs lie Stroking his ankles. And it is they, Not the cherubs, who deliver In high-pitched eunuchs voices the Requests for holidays or exemption from service. If you try to photograph an angel it always Comes out all wings, drooping Like a dog's ears, spread out like A turkey's legs on New Year's Day.

T H E

F L O A T I N G

G A L L E R Y



With Child 1986 Oil on Canvas. 152 × 157 cm.

QUENTIN CARON

A native Calgarian currently residing in New York, Caron graduated from the Alberta College of Art in 1975 and completed his MFA at Columbia University in 1986. The "New York experience" seems to have lured him away from his precise surrealist watercolours in favour of more oily terrain. Familiar still is his depiction of odd, mythic creatures in lurid landscapes, but the expression is definitely neo. Caron is represented in Calgary by Paul Kuhn Fine Arts.

KILLING THE SWAN

A book of poetry by Mark Anthony Jarman, published in 1986 by Press Porcepic. An instructor at Mount Royal College in Calgary, Jarman received his MFA from the University of lowa's Writer's Workshop. His previous book, *Dancing Nightly In The Tavern*, won the 1984 Writer's Guild of Alberta award for short fiction. He edits several journals, including *Dandelion* (Calgary) and *Tendril* (Boston, Mass.).

Union Bay

Pilings as much water as wood Trees driven into the strait's floor to root anew Veined by shipworm, the sea sleeps against them Coalsteamers gone, tracks torn from pier

Two channel markers blink offshore
Coke ovens lie abandoned in hillside brush
1913, police catch raiders from
Lasqueti Island in Fraser & Bishop's General Store
In the room I drink in
discussing separation with a woman
The judge had the American hanged

A dredger is beached under the ruins of the trestle Fog covers the window liked faded wallpaper Her face reflects blue floating out over the Island Highway I appear older in the glass Like the sepia photos of miners and smugglers high above the bar

Oyster Lease-Keep Off

Coal chips and shells smother the beach A heron balances one leg on a slagheap

A pretty woman pulls at moss between planks Says again, It's for your good I'm doing this I hear masts ringing

A wind from China climbs the blue spine of the Beaufort Range
Valleys exhausted of coal
Yet further uprootings to come
Kenworths swoop down mountains
Fifteen gears howling through wild lilies, sea blush, upland starflower, stonecrop

Slashed balsam hug the chains Flatbed slams onto the highway two feet from us Cuts between our reflected faces A driver gambles on roads being unchanged

Day's light is being taken
The pretty woman peels aged wallpaper
Has to leave
Separates with ease one thing from another

DOUBLE EXPOSURES

A book of snapshots and vignettes by Diane Schoemperlen, published in 1984 by The Coach House Press. After an eclectic career in Canmore, Alberta, Shoemperlen now works and writes in Calgary. Earlier works of prose and poetry have been published in such journals as Canadian Fiction Magazine, Quarry, Event, Descant, and The Malahat Review. She was recently awarded the Okanagan Award for Short Fiction. In Double Exposures, Schoemperlen takes snapshots from her own family's archive and recreates a fictive world around their blurry characters and settings.



At supper, my mother talks on and on about the shop, the hair dryer that still won't work right, all the women who refuse to let anyone else touch their heads but her. Whenever she meets new people, she always looks at their hair first.

She puts another pork chop on my father's plate and he looks at her as though

She puts another pork chop on my father's plate and he looks at her as though he's never seen her before. She doesn't seem to notice. I am still too young to understand what they might do to each other. This is from the time when the kitchen cupboards are red. My mother puts the kettle on for tea, orange pekoe. I am messing around in my mashed potatoes and will not look at my father. I am afraid to leave them alone together for long.



In two years, Anna will be drowned in a boating accident on Cameo Lake. Her hair is water-coloured when they find her and Natalie wants to think that the silver fish swimming into her mouth are coming out poems. But everyone assures her it couldn't be true.

Stewart Bush will blame himself for Anna's death because he was drunk in the boat at the time. Natalie was minding the baby. After the funeral, Stewart will take the baby to his parents' home in Michigan, where his father owns a car lot. He will stay there and take over the business when his father retires.

But of course this story isn't true yet in 1951.

From

THE LATE GREAT HUMAN ROAD SHOW

A novel by Paulette Jiles, published in 1986 by Talonbooks. Jiles is the author of two books of poetry, of which *Celestial Navigation* was awarded the 1984 Governor-General's Award for poetry. Her prose poem *Sitting In The Club Car Drinking Rum And Karma-Kola* was released this fall by Polestar Press. *The Late Great Human Road Show* is set in the city of Toronto after The Bomb. It concerns a motley crew of urban survivors whose bizarre interactions make an astute comment on life in the city.

Roxana refused to take off her Joan Collins wig in order to try on the bush hat. Her own spiky haircut, bleached into a "V" in front, was growing out of its salt-and-pepper grey so she had taken to wigs. When people came back, and they'd probably come back all of a sudden, she wanted to look elegant. The best wig she'd found so far was a sort of Tina Turner job with a lot of zinnia-coloured sunburst spikes erupting out of the crown; but the Joan Collins thingie was for everyday. She iammed the bush hat over the wig.

"Christ I bet I look like Bozo the Clown," she said to the empty sporting goods store. She waved the fishing-rod around as if casting. She had always hated sporting goods stores; all that pointy hard stuff like huge knives and jungle camouflage pants and fishing reels and rope and shovels and rifles, all of it looking like it was meant with serious, not fun, serious intent. Creepy. Repeat: serious. Brown and military green never went well with her complexion; she was definitely a Winter, with blue tones under her dark skin. But whoever heard of hunters running around in pinks and blues? Not Roxana Raintree. But if she were going to make it to Florida she would probably have to have some of this stuff. The question was: What? Which stuff? She looked around; what kind of mind did it take to even think up all this lunatic hardware? She took up a sort of vest with little bullet diapers in rows.

"I bet I look real swave and deeboner in this shit," she said. She talked to herself in an attempt to refill or re-invent the sound landscape of normal society, which persisted in remaining accusingly empty. No radios, no television, no movies. Plenty of tapes; but they sounded hollow.

The fishing lures jumped and glittered on their revolving rack. She walked down the aisle and saw the glass case with the compasses inside. One of them was tagged Silva Ranger Map-Reading Compass \$78.95. Hot shit. Now, of course, she would have to get maps. Roxana would freely admit that she was nearly illiterate.

"But figures, I'm good at figures." Creative people don't have to read maps. Being a dancer and street singer put her in the ranks of the artists. You have to let people know that. They think you learn how to sing and dance by practising once a week in the kitchen. Exotic dancers are artists as well; she'd only done a rug act once in her life and here she was wearing this army crap. You'd think she'd been recruited or something. Into the fucking forces. "Arrggghhh." She reached around behind the case and fished out the Silva Ranger map-reading compass

behind the case and fished out the Silva Ranger map-reading compass.

"Creative people don't have to read maps," she said. "But hell, eighty dollars, that's enough compass to get me to Florida. Eighty dollars is a lot of compass."

She found it had a kind of flip-up mirror with which you could either look back over your shoulder to calculate where you'd been or check out your make-up, either one. The compass sat on a clear plastic plate that was marked off for 100-meter units. Meters! Why didn't it say miles? Evidently you were suppose to lay this thing down on a map and it would tell you where North was. And then what?

There was a book lying next to all the Silva Ranger compasses that said *How To Read A Compass* but she figures it would be full of enormous technical words and it would be confusing and irritating to read it. Her hands glittered with heavy jewels and the camouflage hat didn't look too good with the mink jacket. And the stores always made her uneasy. In the silence, under the stares of mannequin heads, she always wanted to keep looking over her shoulder. She took off the bush hat and threw it on the counter.

Roxana then flipped up the mirror to look back over her shoulder and check out her Estee Lauder cosmetics (For The Over-Forty; Why Should Women Of A Certain Age Cease To Be Glamorous? Why indeed?). She looked into the mirror and saw a big zebra skin on the back wall. Maybe she should take it with her; like, for camping. It would look classy anyhow. And as she looked at it, the zebra skin slowly began to move, and then she suddenly realized it had turned its head and was staring at her with live, shiny eyes.

Roxana screamed.

The zebra lept sideways, crashing into a rack of rifles, which fell down, and then it went banging over against the circular revolving rack of down jackets, entangling itself in a red Eddie Bauer, and then, making little neighing noises, smashed into a glass case. The glass broke and the zebra saw the front door open, and the sunlight streaming through, and bolted. Roxana was frozen. She heard its little hooves pelting wildly with clacketing sounds down Parliament Street.

Roxana realized she was standing open-mouthed with the Silva Ranger compass clutched to her chest and her wig askew.

She began taking deep breaths to prevent herself from having a heart attack and walked carefully to the door. Little drops of blood sparkled redly across the floor and made a trail down the street. The zebra had cut itself on the broken glass case. Behind her a few articles continued to crash to the floor, and then it was silent.

"It must have got out of the zoo, right? I bet somebody went and let out all the animals from that big zoo outside the city." She looked over to where she had first seen the zebra. Broken packages of wheat germ had spilled out of the dried foods rack. "There you are. He was into the wheat germ." Roxana was sorry she'd scared him away. It crossed her mind that she might have considered *eating* the zebra. "Gak!-" That's what she got for hanging around these sporting goods stores. She grabbed the book on how to read compasses and went out, snatching up her bicycle from the rack out on the street.

»key words



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F L O A T I N G

G G A L L E R Y



Let's Make Ideals 1986 Mixed Media, Oil on Masonite. 60 × 60 cm.

DAVID CLARK

Born in Calgary, raised in England, Clark studied painting at both the University of Calgary and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Since graduating, Clark has worked in a variety of disciplines: painting, sculpture, performance, video, and audio. This piece, inspired by a found postcard, uses a compositional similarity with certain Renaissance paintings to comment on the notion of vanishing points, both from art history and sociological perspectives.

DOWNFALL PEOPLE

he 1986 winner of the prestigious Seal Books First Novel Award, and the attendant \$50,000. Written by Jo-Anne Williams Bennett, the novel is published by McLelland & Stewart of Toronto. A social anthropologist from Ottawa, Bennett is currently an adjunct Assistant Professor at Queen's University. The novel was formulated from her experiences in remote West Africa, where Bennett completed work on her doctoral thesis on education and culture.

Later on he made love to her very badly. He did not spend any time at all on preliminaries, apparently assuming a state of full arousal on her part. Instead, he hoisted himself directly over her, propping his chest two feet up above hers on rigid arms, elbows jammed, veins bulging with exertion. From this detached, superior height he accomplished a series of awkward pelvic push-ups, from which exercise, in very short order, he found his own relief, his face squeezed into an ugly rictus with pleasure.

with pleasure.

Likki was too surprised even to protest. She had not imagined it would be over so soon, and she participated with a mixture of stunned amazement and sociological curiosity. (Things were bad indeed for the Third World's women. Poor nutrition, poor water, poor housing, poor health care, and now, to crown it all, poor sex.) There was little in this for a woman—only the minimum contact required for male satisfaction; it was mating by remote control, a copulation so ill-adapted to the ends of either affection or passion that when lbn Sinna had finished Likki could willingly have excited him to the deal, release the most for rower for rower for the protection of sex could be a sex with protection of the protectio have consigned him to the devil-along with many of her notions of cross-cultural relativity. She knew, for instance, from John Lavender, that the "missionary" position usually adopted by Westerners, was almost universally deplored by the rest of the world as a brutal and crushing custom. Could the untouching copulation she had just experienced really be considered an improvement? Or was it, she wondered, the unenviable consequence of female circumcision? Had the removal of pliant female sexual flesh been paralleled by the exclusion of sensual dalliance between lovers? Or had dalliance perhaps been the first to go: men revenging themselves on women's bodies for the secrets they held so well and would never speak?

There was another possibility, of course. It might be that it was lingering foreplay and languorous intercourse that needed justification. Maybe functional, childperioducing sex was really the norm. Maybe youthful, robust societies did not indulge in drawn-out, sensuous lovemaking. Perhaps only a society that could produce a

in drawn-out, sensuous lovemaking. Perhaps only a society that could produce a nuclear bomb for every 10,000 citizens could also produce books on the multiple

Likki cast an anguished glance back to the long tactile hours Roger used to tease across the surface of her body. She sighed, then reached for the man lying next to her, now an inky abstraction amid the shadows of the room. "Let me show you how we do it," she suggested to him.

Morning came. The village was full of early sounds; mothers still full of sleep, calling for firewood and water; babies screaming through their first scalding hot bath of the day; pots being searched for leftovers; goats playing tag on the rooftops; hens purring softly to their chicks in the cool silk shade of the houses.

When Gbendlele brought round the porridge (she had soaked and pounded and stirred it herself), she could tell that her plans had met with success. There was a certain quietness about the pair who had bedded together in the fifth courtyard. Ibn Sinna could not keep from yawning. Even as he progressed through the litany of the morning greeting, he could not keep his tongue from wagging at the sky.

"What's the matter? Haven't you slept well?" demanded Gbendlele with a show of irritation. She was a woman who enjoyed being in charge even if others were discomforted by it

were discomforted by it.

'In fact, Grandmother, I am weary.'
'But I gave you my best sleeping mat.''

'There was nothing wrong with the mat."

"I gave you my best room.

"There was nothing wrong with the room."
"I gave you a woman who desired you. Was there something wrong with

"No, nothing wrong," he said, but he wore an abstracted expression.
"You are thinking about your wives," said Gbendlele slyly and she made an obscene gesture with her hands. "Well, I can fix that, too, you know." She paused. "But you know already that this problem is easy to mend. Stop in to see me before

"Herbs?"

'Yes, if you want them. There is other medicine, too."

Ibn Sinna yawned.

"Go back to bed."

He stared. "Go, Go." She limped out of the courtyard, banging on the shutters as she

passed.

Likki appeared in the doorway of the room. She had tied a cloth of purple sunbursts about her body, like a Kpama woman. He knew just which corner to pull tomake it drop off her all at once. She looked at him expectantly, hoping without admitting it. Ibn Sinna yawned again.

"Are you sleepy?" she asked, remembering how she had resurrected his desire. He had proved an apt pupil, intrigued with matters of cultural compromise,

a student devoid of embarrassment.

"Are you not tired?" he replied.
"Do I have to be tired for you to be tired?"

"Yes, let's lie down." She saw he would gladly come to her again if she would admit to wanting him.

He laid a damp cloth over the calabash to keep the flies away from their porridge and followed Likki back inside the room. Light seeped in around the door and shutters. Just enough light.

It was only in the quiet afterwards that Ibn Sinna's blackness seemed strange to Likki—his body hair, like so many delicate springs snuggling close to his body and the deep-as-space muzzle of his arms, an intergalactic midnight.

"Are you black all over?"

"You have seen me!"

"I haven't!"

"What are you doing?"
"It was dark. And I was busy, with other things."

"Is that it?"

"It's true."

"But now it is not so dark."

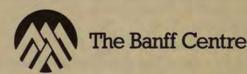
"No." She touched him, laughing at herself in her mind. She had expected lighter genitals, a pink surprise deep in the heart of darkness.

"Are you black inside, too?" she asked.

"Inside!?"

"Umm.

"Umm."
"Only my skin is black."
"How do you know?" She wanted him to be different everywhere, still hoped to escape something in her own condition.
"Your skin is white. Are you white inside?"
She overlooked the question. "Is your soul black?"
"My soul!" He pushed her playfully. "Yes. I think we can take it that my soul is very black. Yours, too, is now black."



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From

GOODNIGHT DISGRACE

A new play by Michael Mercer, published in 1986 by Talonbooks. Born in England, Mercer now lives in Vancouver, British Columbia. Previous credits include ACTRA's Best Writer for Radio Award and National Chair of the ACTRA Writer's Guild. Goodnight Disgrace is the story of the often stormy friendship between the young Malcolm Lowry and the established writer Conrad Aiken. The play itself was conceived after Mercer's love of *Under The Volcano*, by Lowry, led him to the aging Aiken's doorstep in 1967. Aiken died in 1973, but his reminiscences led to this tale of sexual and artistic rivalry, alcoholism, and enduring friendship. It was first staged by Shakespeare Plus in Nanaimo, B.C.

Scene Four

A beach, Cape Code, Mass.—late summer, 1929. LOWRY and AIKEN hold the bottles from the last scene. They are drunk, happy, and have arms around one another.

LOWRY & AIKEN: singing

My pa he can curse, my ma she can cry, They'll all forgive me in the sweet bye-and-bye. I come from heaven, and to heaven I'll go, But it's what's in between I'm awanting to know.

LOWRY: Avast the chorus!

AIKEN: I don't know the bloody chorus!

LOWRY: To hell with it then. They sit, and LOWRY puts an oyster shell he is holding up to his ear.

AIKEN: What are you doing with those shells?

LOWRY: holding a shell to his ear. Listening to the sound of the sea.

AIKEN: Malc, you jerk, they're oyster shells! You can't hear the sea in oyster shells!

LOWRY: holding a shell to AIKEN's ear. Sure you can. It's a question of point of view. Here. Listen.

AIKEN: Come on...!

LOWRY: Shhhhh.

AIKEN: listening to the shell. What am I supposed to hear?

LOWRY: whispering. The oyster's dream of the sea.

AIKEN: chuckling and dropping shell. "I too have heard the sea sounds in strange waters." Beat. Remember that? You wrote that. Your first letter to me

LOWRY: Second actually. Not counting all the self-conscious attempts I tore up. But here's to the first, and the courage I somehow found to peg you to take me on as... the sorcerer's apprentice.

AIKEN: after a pause. The summer's nearly over.

LOWRY: I thought if we both ignored it, it might just keep sailing on.

AIKEN: What'll you do now?

LOWRY: Out of my hands, old boy. Keep my promise to my father. Return to merry England...prepare for Cambridge.

AIKEN: Maybe it won't be all that bad.

LOWRY: Come on, Conrad. You detest that world as much as I do. Creeky old dons with the souls of twice-boiled haddock; overfleshed matrons tottering about the greensward with orange squashes and Bath buns in their liver spotted paws...
"I say, what a ripping idea, papaw."

Beat. And I'm sure that's the uplifting side.

AIKEN: amused. I wish I could disagree. Pause. You'll finish the novel, I hope.

LOWRY: In time. Thanks to you and your bleeding ebb and flow. Beat. It'll take a while. I've absorbed so much of you...I don't know where I begin any more. I feel like a little, not-so-accomplished Aiken.

AIKEN: Don't underrate yourself, Malc. You absorb so fast it frightens me. Really.

LOWRY: after a pause. And what happens to the big Aiken now?

AIKEN: My divorce comes through...I'll marry Jerry...provided she's still speaking to me after this summer.... Live off some free-lance for a while. The plot of a third-rate novel, eh?

LOWRY: You'll never fall into that, Conrad. Whatever you do, it won't be third-rate.

AIKEN: Don't give me false hopes, child. I'm going to serve you a warning. Now. Culture...and remember this...

LOWRY: Yes, master.

AIKEN: LISTEN! DAMN YOU!! Culture is not passed on voluntarily from the old to the young. The young take it. Take it, Malc. It's not a question of gifts. It's a question of theft. Maybe even...a form of destruction.

LOWRY: Is that how you got it? Theft?

AIKEN: Even now, when I'm shaving, I find myself trying to look like my father.

LOWRY: I have to confess...these days when I'm shaving...

AIKEN: You shave?!

LOWRY: ... these days when I'm shaving, I try to look like you.

AIKEN: There you go. Transmission of values. Oh dear! I have such a hard time trying to look like my father. I really do.

LOWRY: Why?

AIKEN: I look like my mother.

LOWRY: Poor woman!

AIKEN: Seriously. Don't laugh. Her only outstanding quality was her pigs. She drew the most fantastic pigs. Fat and smiling with little watch-spring tails. They were the essence of piggyness.

Beat. 1 can't draw a pig to save my life.

LOWRY: Here's to your pigs...and an unforgettable summer.

AIKEN: God. Yes. Malc, you've given me something. Hope, maybe. I don't know. It's not just the crass flattery of having a disciple. Much more. For a while there I was beginning to feel that the best was over.

LOWRY: Just beginning, Conrad.

AIKEN: Damn right. The bare beginnings. Damn bloody right.

LOWRY: You know, I was beginning to feel a bit at the end of things too.

AIKEN: For Chrissake! You're nineteen, you little bugger!

LOWRY: And a bit. But keep in mind, old bird, I've fulfilled all my early dreams... shipped out on a freighter, knocked about the ports of the world: Kuwait, Kowloon, Canton...places people spend a lifetime simply hoping to see.

AIKEN: You're still a child, you idiot!

LOWRY: pulling up trouser leg and pointing. See that scar...side of the kneecap. That's a bullet wound...

AIKEN: That's a gravel rash!

LOWRY: ... I got winged during a Boxer riot in Hong Kong.

AIKEN: The last time I heard that story, you lying little scut, it was Canton.

LOWRY: The trauma of an experience like that. It mutes the mind.

AIKEN: You said Canton. Very clearly.

LOWRY: I was drunk...probably pissed.

AIKEN: Canton. You said Canton.

LOWRY: Well, damn it, Conrad! You know these Chinese towns.

AIKEN: They all look alike, I suppose! See that scar? In the shape of a cross?

LOWRY: You cut yourself praying.

AIKEN: I got that fighting a romantic young liar who is under the raving delusion that he's going to be the greatest novelist since Dostoi-bloody-evsky!

LOWRY: Say you don't mean that.

AIKEN: Come here, boy. Give me one of those bear hugs of yours. Godalmighty Malc, I'm going to miss you. I do believe in you. Maybe that's the problem. I believe in you too much.

Blackout. Musical Bridge: Noel Coward singing Just Around the Corner."

From

THE IMMACULATE PERCEPTION

A new book by Christopher Dewdney, published in 1986 by the House of Anansi Press. In a series of luminous and highly inventive "snapshots", Dewdney takes the reader on a guided tour through the geography of the brain. He even includes a glossary, of everything from the anthropocephalon to Wernicke's area. Christopher Dewdney is the author of seven books, including *Predators of the Adoration*, nominated for a Governor-General's Award.

True Heart, Cruel Heart

Only the ultra-sane can afford reality. Only the sane, with that manic edge that depressives would insist on calling psychopathological, can withstand, while maintaining a position of pure faith, determinate reality. That which we call the 'self' is purely the product of neurological activity in the brain, an epiphenomenon. Consciousness is to the brain as the shadow is to the body. However, because consciousness can influence itself it transcends the deterministic barrier of pure materialism.

Consciousness can crawl back through the mirror and truly inhabit the paradox of doubled being, of self consciousness. Our consciousness, perceived as immaterial and able to engage in the most ironic of self-speculations, is at root composed of the same infinite energy and light which fuels the heart. As the brain is to thought and the genitals are to sex, so is the heart unto truth.

When we know this, our natural empathy for other human beings is increased exponentially, for we can totally identify with their existence relative to an absolute reality. We are all the products of a miraculous evolution whose engine was cosmic chance. For when you have stripped yourself down to your original self the universe will become a lattice of information, in every part consistently different from itself, where you need look for miracles no further than your own hands.

You will see everything as an occasion, all objects will become events, a rock or planet merely occupying a location and volume for a period of time. You will be able to apprehend the entire being of the men and women you meet. If you look into their eyes you will see everything they have done and who they are. And some eyes will appear like fractured glass, impervious to your gaze. And others will be sensual ports on beings you will instantly love.

Writing

A work of literature is revealed to its author much as if it were a hidden order of nature. Once begun, the natural trajectory of a written train of thought elaborates an implicit order. The first sentence carries within it the blueprint for the whole subsequent work, much as an embryo contains the code for the adult organism. The inexorable systemic permutations, the intrinsic logic of la langue, fused on a deep and archetypal level with the author's individual style, becomes its own strategy of propagation, of crystalline accretion. The solution out of which these linguistic crystals precipitate is human consciousness.

The whole of a work of literature can be inferred from its parts as the parts can be inferred from the whole.

Unlike an uncovered law, however, the progeny of the original sentence can mutate and return to the site of their inception to alter it, like an endlessly self-manipulative teleology. Not only is such the atemporal and incestuous nature of literature, but also the paradigm of consciousness itself.

Re-writes as the enactment of self-observation, the paradox of consciousness.

The World Soul

The world soul always establishes itself in the emptiest cultural or media structure available, it flows through the medium of least resistance. The world soul moves strongly in the intellectual lacunae of creativity. It will manifest itself in the most mindless of pop songs, trapped in the hollow spaces in the radio waves, the spaces between to reach us so coldly.

Entropy and Limerance

The second law of thermodynamics states that the entropy (disorder) of a closed system increases with time. The universe can be regarded as a finite system.

Phenylethylamine is a neurochemical which has been detected in the brains of people who are in love. It is thought to be the mediator of limerance, an intense obsession with another person. It is present in minute quantities in chocolate.

Lateral Mobility

The leisure class consists of two levels of income. The distance between these two levels is the mean income of the middle class. As the leisure class is defined by iconographic taste and disposable time a couple with no dependants or 'singles' without a mortgage can easily gravitate towards the social vortex of the leisure class, whereas the lower middle class, even with a higher disposable income, is barred by harsh economic necessity. We have the odd situation where the middle class can enter a 'higher' social class by disposing of its assets.

Food

Food debases the free-trade zone because essentially it is invaluable. People will and must pay anything for it. Anorexia nervosa is the 'pleasure' of the leisure class.

Facial Features

As most people age, their faces permanently assume the dominant emotion of their lives, reflect their mean emotive posturing. On public transit one sees too much servile resignation. Like actors in the theatre of our lives we grow into a role, our faces a caricature of a fictional identity we affect in order to cope with reality.

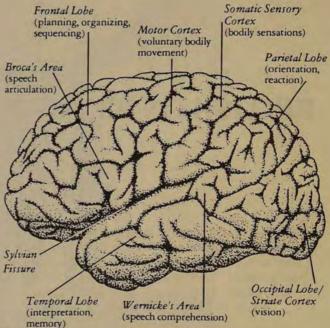
faces a caricature of a fictional identity we affect in order to cope with reality.

What strange shapes we assume in order to survive. And out of the total spectrum of human potential for personality what strange ecological niches we seem to carve for ourselves.

Facial features themselves are signifiers, though qualified as such only by their presence or absence. Individual variation is as variable as individuality. Visages can differ wildly, monstrously and yet a face will still be recognized and treated as such. Lipstick will be applied to the edges of the cavity beneath the nose, ears will generally appear on either side of the head.

The Cerebral Cortex

View of Anthropocephalon or Dominant/Left Hemisphere



Glossary

efferent Outgoing impulses, commands. That part of a neuron which transmits outgoing impulses.

eidetic images Retinal images which are neither *phosphenes* nor hallucinations.

Mental images so intense that they are almost equivalent to observed reality.

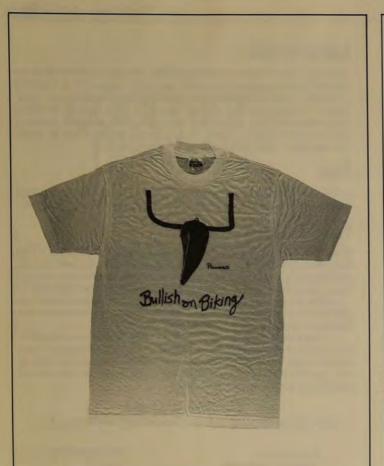
ego In this text synonymous in usage with the I perceived by the self, the self-identity, psyche *etc.*

entropy According to the second law of thermodynamics the entropy (disorder) of a closed system increases with time.

enzyme A complex protein which acts as a catalyst for specific chemical operations necessary to the continuation of life. In the human body there are many enzymes which orchestrate the metabolism. The complexity and intelligence of these operations seem to place these highly sophisticated and complex molecules in the realm of consciousness. They are produced within the cell and are expressed genetically by DNA.

enzyme recognition failure The failure of an enzyme to detect a difference between molecular 'shape' of a foreign protein and one with which it enacts normal cellular transactions.

epiphenomenalism The philosophy that consciousness is purely the product of cerebral processes and cannot alter those processes. As the shadow is to the hand so is consciousness to the brain.□



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PERFORMING ARTS



T H E

F L O A T I N G

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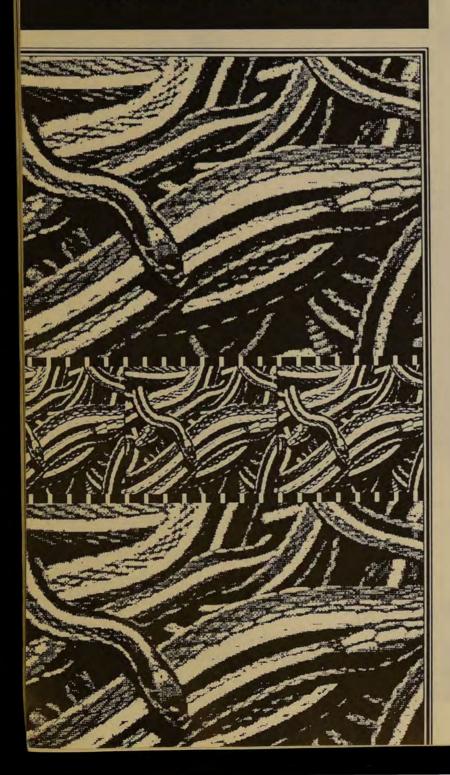
Kananaskis #12 1986 Chalk, Charcoal on Paper. $111.75 \times 76.2 \, \text{cm}$.

BARBARA MILNE

Born 1956 in Windsor, Ontario, Milne graduated with a BFA from York University, Toronto. She currently lives in Calgary. Her work derives from drawings sketched on site of Alberta and British Columbia landscapes. Milne's work is represented by The Susan Whitney Gallery in Regina and by Paul Kuhn Fine Arts in Calgary.

GENERALITIES & SPECIFICS

LAST ISSUE's usual junket to Document File X. One turns the page and—prays for mongoose.



LIVE FROM MONTREAL

A mixed bag of poets on the Dromos Editions label

Past Audience, Future Vacancy

Hearing that, said to this, in labour A star-startled image of a Continuing Sun-drenched island, An Absence of More land, Morin Heights, Mount Royal, Landed water, the fishnetted waves, Absent waterline, end to approaching Unapproachable end, that's all there Was in the moment before, and after It said we were indeed it was, the Skychild beckoning through to an Awkward goalpost, a tape-varnished Celluloid cinema screen. And the furtively furious end so Simply beginning again, at the last Loading dock, and under the camera's Eagle eye, an unrecorded eardrum, A cluster inside The Missing Molecule, Absent from Absence, The Doomed Instant, A time marching forward, Away from the Unapplauded miracle, At last at Noontide the moonless Harbinger ending off each unworthy Sunset harangue, to synchronize the Watches, the half-watches, the Ghostly Quarter-seconds, flash of Nuptial atoms Inside the Crypto-Syllabus, a manner Of stairwell-winding molecule, Another Hearty Diamond-shadowed electron at Point Zero, the stagecraft fermenting Through the floorboards: To hear Of That, a saying said To This.□

-John Rieger

Information Power

I invite pleasant weapons to view butchers gruesomely warehoused gangland-style within huge apparently dead buildings

where educators celebrate large thoughts and pleasantly secluded workers dream solemn deeds

insiders, dreaming sweet squarely balanced concepts

I have spoken to the people in the know and they have told me where to go Preferably away Actions invite fate There is absolutely no danger of me finding out exactly what is going on

Drinking long elevated wind Acquiring blank abandon

-Jean-Luc Bonspiel

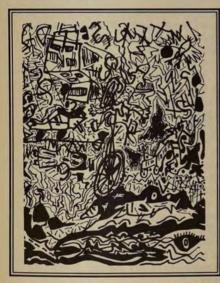


Illustration taken from Dromos Editions Schizotexte 1986

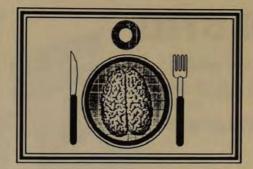
Failure Analysis

Getting back to the task at hand, let me underscore, the prevailing mood of toughness by following this backup argument, which we may call "Child Process":

Where road conditions are atrocious, small boats will move in to recover the debris. Ignoring the brain, the dissent will remain leaderless, and in this example, Machine Infinity will colonize the senses. New ideas, new technology. Falling walls and flying glass. Makes for an incredibly smooth ride in the land of crushed Tonkas.

No more seething malcontents and crying icons. You see, I got a heavy love load, friends, and fields of snow will melt to pavements of fresh grass for our clients in love forever. When a potential level husband finds a secretary on diet, when Brad finds Sue, that's when in this example X is no longer possible, and the legally blind will marrow through the balsa crowd like an excited fleet handing the hammer to a brotherhood of big Americans.

-Alan Lord



Untitled Jackpot

from my ludicrous self to your lady my life is a mess regret to say all our hearts have been broken into busted into tombs of the royal rich unconscious the lost lone lone lonely furtive kissed ambushed by the fatigue of a conversation oh how i tire of all this silliness that wings in my heartpart and leaves me dry like an old cutting board from self that two times itself / modernistic man and woman in the mud bath blood bath here i give this from the penurious poet the furious poet i who am afraid of names for love snatched and left me in the grave yes afraid of names that's me so i lose addresses in the imaginary pocket of memory gutless fallible unlike my pope flapping me headless

it's a feeling it's like a feeling doctor that there are no more pastures no more pastures left to graze in it's a feeling like i'm always alone that love isn't possible and that my body is stuck in some kind of train i want to get out i want to get out but somehow i'm shot in the arm shot in the arm and i'm tied down i'm tied down and i can't get out i can't get out i can't move i'm a repeating movie i'm a repeating movie it's like i said it's like a feeling dad it's like a feeling doctor that there are no more holes no more holes left to jump into

let's change the song let's say jelly fish sliding harbours pennywhistles i stayed up all night friday night wishing i were wishing well let's say maybe the man in the moon or bells in the bay let's say ballet in your fingers let's say furtive ambuscaded kissing in the fatigue of conversation a la vietnamienne let's point out fully cropped moons and lenten time balconies let's say wild tractors and Meccano sets galloping grunting nuns wild denizens of faith let's say my heart was yanked out when was 7 8 or 9 and then the bottom fell thru let's say rock n'roll at some joint on St. Denis the Beatles Elvis on the juke gliding teenagers on the floor us maybe could perhaps relive

let's say sad jelly fish do the jelly fish when you're a kid let's say the cathedral and the great Canadian shield let's say St. Helen's island i went to St. Helen's island who's St. Helen beats me i'm a dead rager and rager for hope then i split split down the dime slope and over the Jacques Cartier i walked i walked and got scared scared vertigo vertigo imagining fainting falling all over the side thru the hole somehow getting caught crazily

let's say compare notes in the summer day oh DaDa oh Mama it's wicked it's evil it's alive it's love it's a baby it's me talking it's like i said it's a feeling like a feeling doctor like a feeling lady my life is a mess fit for a t.v. show let's say i'm an alcoholic with 3rd. degree burns and you're a house wife a divorcee with no place to go let's say jelly beans and some kind of something else i don't know how to end

i'll stop□

-Clifford Duffy

NO TRADE IS FREE

Some facts and opinions about this year's cultural debate

by Mary-Beth Laviolette

Free trade and cultural sovereignty are all loaded words. Mixed together, they can produce an explosive combination of lofty rhetoric and bold proclamations: "Is the National Ballet on the table? Is the CBC on the table? Is the Neptune Theatre on the table for negotiations with the U.S.?" asks Nova Scotia Liberal MP, Dave Dingwall. He's liable to hear in response something like, "A belief in cultural identity is something to which most Canadians would, at best, pay only lip service," the comments of Michael Hind-Smith of the Canadian Cable Association.

The media has been awash with this kind of discourse for many months. In most instances, it's been more emotional than informative; leaving the public uncertain and, more importantly, unclear about the possible ramifications of free trade on culture. Let us now step back, look at a few facts, and hear some of the varying opinions about the cultural repercussions of a hypothetical trade deal with the United States.

Free trade, at its most basic, involves the elimination of tariffs or duties on imported products. On paper that sounds simple enough. But, in the annals of Canadian history, free trade has never been that straightforward. Instead, free trade—or the lack of it—has played a significant role in the formation and subsequent development of this country.

At one time, Canada—as British North America—actually did have free trade with the United States, thanks to the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. That all ended in 1866 when the U.S., unhappy with British support of the Confederate States in the Civil War and pushed by protectionist sentiments in the fishing and lumber industries, instituted tariffs. The Canadian response to that action was the creation of a common tariff-free market between Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia under one dominion called Canada. The year was 1867.

Later, in response to the ending of reciprocity and as a means of fostering economic development within Canada, John A. MacDonald inaugurated the National Policy of 1879. Predicated on making the West a supplier of raw resources and, more importantly, a captive market for Eastern products, the National Policy established a system of tariffs designed to assist central Canadian manufacturers by making imported goods more expensive, and to promote east-west trade through the railways. It is the National Policy, over the long term, which has helped shape Canada into the lopsided economic entity it is today.

With all of the complex forces that are at work in the modern economy, it is difficult to predict the overall effect of wholesale adjustments to the Canada-U.S. trade picture. If any forecasts can be made at all, it is best to consider it one sector at a time.

What effect might the abolition of tariffs have, for example, on the visual artist? "Virtually none," says Jane Condon, outgoing president of Canadian Artist's Representation. This is because works of art are already duty-free and like most cultural products have historically been excluded from GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Art—as the old saying goes—knows no borders.

One of the few exceptions to this is in the area of crafts. Canadian crafts are dutiable in the U.S. and vice versa. At present, if a Canadian wishes to get around the tariff he or she must have each individual piece classified as a work of art. But this process, according to Peter Weinrich, executive director of the Canadian Crafts Council, is time-consuming —requiring photographs and documents submitted ahead of time. "It's a hangover from the old days when art was marble or bronze and crafts were ceramic," says Weinrich.

Currently, the rate of duty on crafts can be

Currently, the rate of duty on crafts can be anything up to 23%. That is, a pot sold to a U.S. gallery for \$100 will arrive there at \$123. "Given the current rate of exchange, coupled with the possible abolition of tariffs, Canadian craftspersons would have considerable advantages in the U.S. market which they don't now possess. We're probably the only sector in the arts that might stand to benefit directly," comments Weinrich cautiously.

Another benefit of free trade will be cheaper art materials. In general, most art supplies are dutiable and the immediate source of many is likely to be the U.S., with tariff rates varying up to 15%. But, as Weinrich points out, how much benefit there is for the artist will depend on the cost of the materials relative to the value of the finished product. For a painter, duty-free materials probably won't make that much difference. In the area of ceramics and fibre, however, the ratio will be more significant.

On the surface, it looks like free trade will barely make a ripple in the visual arts—which probably accounts for their low profile in the media debate. Both Condon and Weinrich, however, are not content to let the issue rest. "Free trade may have no immediate implications for the visual arts but there is the question of cultural sovereignty and that is a concern for all artists," stresses Condon.

Still, the connection between free trade

Still, the connection between free trade and cultural sovereignty is not necessarily an obvious one. Particularly when, as Mavor Moore, former chairman of the Canada Council, puts it, "Canada has always had a roaring free trade in culture. There is hardly a nation in the world more open than we have been to the cultural winds from everywhere."

But according to Weinrich, tariffs are not the issue in culture. Instead, it's something called "non-tariff barriers" which, depending on the eye of the beholder, impedes the free exchange of goods and services

of goods and services.

Non-tariff barriers are, in general,
measures taken to protect and promote the
activities of the various interest groups in
society. Such barriers can be incredibly
convoluted—including everything from tax
laws to public subsidies. In culture, examples
of non-tariff barriers are Canadian content
regulations, foreign-ownership restrictions,
Bill C-58 (which denies tax deductions to
advertisers in non-Canadian media), postal
subsidies, and a host of other supports
designed to foster Canadian cultural industries,
and hence, the larger principle of cultural
sovereignty.

It is these kinds of measures many fear will be removed because free trade policies, aside from eliminating tariffs, usually attempt to minimize practices such as subsidies and investment restrictions, in order to create what is euphemistically called a "level playing field". However, considering the amount of American penetration, "the field is already pretty uneven," writes author Marian Fraser. 'It could become wildly unbalanced if our cultural subsidy tradition is destroyed." In a similar frame of mind is Canada Council's Head of Visual Arts, Edythe Goodridge. "I don't think we can afford to trade off very much in the cultural end. We have quite unique structures and the question is whether or not the issues arising from free trade are going to undermine those.'

Not surprisingly, many want culture offlimits at the bargaining table. This includes Edmonton film-maker Allan Stein who, speaking at an Edmonton free-trade symposium, urged that certain cultural industries, such as film, not become a part of the talks. American companies, he notes, already get 95% of the film distribution profits in Canada. The point that Stein and others make is that talking about free trade is a little absurd when you have nothing to bargain with except non-tariff barriers.

Chairman of TV Ontario, Bernard Ostry, though, suggests a slightly different approach. "Unaware of the degree to which their compatriots own Canadian cultural enterprises, Americans believe Canadians too, possess cultural sovereignty." It is time, therefore, in the trade negotiations "to send a clear message to our U.S. partners to let them know who we are, what we stand for and how much we are willing to spend on cultural development to ensure our sovereignty." He concludes, "There need be no contradiction between negotiating freer trade and insisting on our sovereign right to develop our culture."

If Canada were to do this, it would not be alone, suggests Peter Roberts, Director of the Canada Council. In an interview in the Globe & Mail, Roberts listed a number of countries such as England and France which enforce ownership quotas. Ostry, as well, mentions countries like Mexico, Australia and Spain who have taken steps to promote domestic involvement in the distribution of cultural products. The Americans, of course, do not look favourably on these actions—but for the most part they have had to live with them. Despite this, however, some fear that the mere existence of trade talks will give the Americans sufficient motivation to push, and push hard.



The Canadian's Vision of the U.S. Border taken from The U.S. or Us? by ERIC NICOL and DAVE MORE. Published Autumn 1986 by Hurtig Publishers.

If non-tariff barriers were to become an issue at the talks the cultural sectors most likely to be affected would be publishing, the electronic media, and film. As a consequence, these sectors have been the most vocal in sounding the alarms. Looking for evidence of American intentions, many point to a 1984 U.S. study entitled "Trade Barriers to U.S. Motion Picture and Television Prerecorded Entertainment, Publishing and Advertising Industries', under CBS chairman Thomas H. Wyman. In the report, Canada is identified as a major culprit and the U.S. government is accused of failing "to voice effectively its objections to trade barriers that are imposed by foreign governments under the guise of political or cultural concerns." Comments Marian Fraser: "The lobbying thrust of the U.S. cultural industries is not protectionist. It is expansionist." And from a slightly different point of view, Mavor Moore: "It seems that Canadian culture, however feeble or fragile some Canadians consider it, takes the form of a weighty problem to many Americans....

Goliath is complaining about David's slingshot."

How far the American government is willing to act on such complaints is currently a matter of intense speculation in Canada. A lot of the speculation is, of course, highly coloured by each individual's overall view of the U.S., and underlined by the Canadian penchant for navelgazing. In fact, Canadians give little real consideration to the American side of the situation.

It is probably reasonable to conclude, as the C.D. Howe Institute did in a study completed last February, that unless blanket exemption can be negotiated, some cultural issues will be discussed on a piecemeal basis. This will, no doubt, cause many to shudder at the prospect of opening a Pandora's Box. It could be an awfully difficult box to open—fraught with perils not only for Canada but for the Americans as well. In the end, both countries will probably decide it is not really worth the effort. Why? Because non-tariff trade barriers are not necessarily a one-way

street and that includes the way all governments operate. Yes, Canada subsidizes, but so do the Americans—lest we forget their policy towards wheat sales.

It is on this basis that some, like Saturday Night editor Robert Fulford, believe that the chances of negotiating an agreement with restrictions against non-tariff barriers are highly remote. He argued in an article entitled "Blaming the Yanks" that non-tariff barriers, in this case those which stimulate domestic activity, are part of the reason why governments are in business. "You can have an agreement that will eliminate direct tariffs and you can establish a trade commission that will regulate trade relations between the two countries. But you can't say to Canada, You'll never subsidize again. That's preposterous. What about their laws regarding the dispersal of defense contracts and having the Pentagon subsidize the American economy? That kind of an agreement can't be written. It would never be agreeable to either country."

be agreeable to either country."

Michelle Dauray, Director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, also admits that the issue of non-tariff barriers is the equivalent of a can of worms for both parties. "They have internal barriers to trade, we have the same. There are comparisons all over the place." Even in the arts, the impression that Canada is doing all the subsidizing is not correct. "The level of private sector support to the arts (in the U.S.) is much lower than most people would expect. Around 20% of earned revenue is in fact from donations." The rest of their funding derives from audiences, and, although to a lesser extent than Canada, from public sources like the National Endowment for the Arts and state-sponsored arts councils. The Americans also count on an elaborate system of tax incentives to buoy up their cultural juggernaut.

Several months later, after publishing his controversial article, Fulford still thinks that, "The arts groups are probably too worried and upset about something that isn't going to happen. On the other hand, the federal government has made so many dumb moves, as exemplified by the 10% tariff on imported books, that you don't know what they might do."

And that is precisely where the problem lies. Over the past two years the Canadian government has made all sorts of well-intentioned noises about preserving cultural sovereignty, identity, integrity, etc. In a speech Prime Minister Mulroney gave last winter at the University of Chicago, he even went as far as to explain to his audience that "When it comes to discussing better trade rules for cultural industries, you will have to understand that what we call cultural sovereignty is as vital to our national life as political sovereignty."

Despite all this, however, there is the lingering question about whether or not the Canadian government fully understands the fundamental link between culture and all the bits and pieces which make it a tangible reality. The 10% book tariff, in retaliation against the American tariff on cedar shakes and shingles, is not exactly reassuring. For this reason, among others, arts groups will have to continue their vigilance—mindful that the Americans have their own ways of subsidizing and protecting their culture. And that in itself is worth reminding our trade officials in case they start getting too eager about giving away concessions.

ANATOMY OF A NEW PLAY FESTIVAL

A briefing by
Alberta Theatre Projects boss
Michael Dobbin

The Calgary theatre company recently announced a new annual festival that will take place this January. Artistic Director Dobbin was interviewed by Linda Earl.

Is there a connection between the timing of this pilot festival and ATP's contribution to the Olympic Arts Festival at the same time next year?

No. This is the pilot for our concept of an annual new play festival. Year two just happens to fall in the Olympic year. We have yet to sign a deal but we do have an agreement in principle from the Olympics to include our new play festival as part of their overall festival. The agreement in principle is that we will be doing a festival of new Canadian plays, numbering five, at least three of which will be produced here at Alberta Theatre Projects, but the control of which we will have in total.

How does one commission a new play?

A commission here can be started at a number of phases. In the case of *Penumbra* we commissioned it from the very discussion of the idea. Linda Zwicker had this play and I was interested in the idea so we collectively continued on a contract basis. Linda is a former Albertan and an award-winning radio playwright. She is a woman of the theatre who quit to be a writer, which I think is a very brave gesture on her part.

Penumbra is a kind of refuge play. It's a play about people in crisis, emotionally, physically and sociologically, and it's set in a telephone crisis room among other places. The challenge for Allen MacInnis, who will be directing it, is to take the wonderfully textured voices and create a physicalized 3-D theatrical experience. This play has gone through at least two workshops. The last one was very successful for Linda, in that she was able to make some very serious decisions about these people, to say, "Yes, we will see these people and yes they can be doubled or tripled. We don't need fifteen people. We may only need five." That kind of thing.

How did the Sky Gilbert piece *The Postman Rings Once* come about?

It was approached in a very different way than Linda Zwicker's commission. I wrote to Sky and asked him if he could write a play for me. I was actually in seclusion doing my preparation work for 'night Mother, which was two years ago, and along with my research material of books on suicide, my set model and all the things I needed as a director, were some magazines and newspapers that I was trying to find time to read. Among them were some issues of The Body Politic. In three issues in a row I found very positive articles on Sky Gilbert and his work at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

in Toronto. He had been getting very good, what I call legitimate above ground press, for his work with what is primarily a gay-oriented theatre. And ever since I left Vancouver and spent five years in Kamloops, I had been wrestling with this issue of how to provide a vehicle through the theatre which would help to address the whole issue of living in a conservative community and the process of "coming out". How do you deal with the parents who reject their children, the employers who fire their employees, the teachers who pretend there is no such thing as sexuality in school, and the people who abandon the brave soul who comes out to his friends only to discover that he's offended them somehow. There are a whole lot of kids who are dealing with sexuality earlier than they might otherwise want to simply because they are trying to beat the right wing

So I wrote to Sky and said, I want something. I don't want a Toronto play. I want a play that speaks to the people in a small town or a relatively conservative city, in Canada, about who we are, and about the whole process of accepting one's sexuality, whatever it may be. Well, he was ecstatic about someone asking him to write the kind of play he himself had been thinking about.

What about the third play?

When I saw David Bolt's Winning in workshop at Theatre Calgary I liked it. It's set in a very ordinary place. It uses the imagery and the focus of a lacrosse game. The children on the team, their parents, and the coach deal with some very contemporary issues, 1980's issues for very 1980's people. It's an interesting

analysis of some questions, concerns, and joys that I think a lot of parents are experiencing today. It's about people and that whole thing of expressing your personality through your children. But as yet I'm not totally familiar with the total implications of the lacrosse game imagery because I'm not that familiar with the game. It poses the question of whether it's sport or war, and whether relationships are positive sparks or a sparring match. Of the three plays we're doing it's the least familiar to me because we didn't develop it. But that's exactly what this play festival, if it becomes the annual event that we're looking towards it being, will become: a resource for showcasing plays that we believe are ready to be launched into the marketplace.

I know it's a close-knit theatre community in Canada. How are they reacting to this in Toronto?

First of all I believe that the East-West anxiety in this country has manifested itself more boldly in the theatre community this past year than ever before, and I don't know why that is. It may have something to do with the virtual collapse of the theatre community in Vancouver and the fact that a lot of those people are moving to Toronto. Or it may have to do with the fact that there is a certain amount of stagnation even in Toronto. If you ask my opinion, the major theatre centre as far as energy and cohesiveness is Edmonton, and that burns people in Toronto. I am not amused and I am certainly very concerned about the reflection in the theatre community of the same East-West animosity that has been around for far too long in this country. I believe that if our new play festival succeeds we will have a lot of support from people in the theatre and outside it. But I also believe that we will have a major job in convincing certain components of our own community in the major cities of this country that having A centre—not THE centre, but A centre recognized for its development of new Canadian theatrical work-is legitimate in Calgary. One of the things I have heard is that there is a real concern that we don't have the drama-turgical expertise at ATP, or in Calgary, or in Western Canada. And I say, where did the dramaturgical expertise in Eastern Canada come from, and when did it start and who trained those people? Well, they all evolved and that is exactly what we will do here.



CHANGING BODIES

The wish to be a fish

by Blake Brooker

A passage from the one-act play *Changing Bodies*, produced this year by One Yellow Rabbit Theatre of Calgary. It starred Michael Stirling-Green as Reverend Kevin, the would-be fish seen in the midst of his bedroom musings. Blake Brooker is playwright-in-residence at OYR, and currently at work on a new play.

When I discovered this book on reincarnation everything fell into place. I realized with great relief that I had already been a fish, or at the very least a sea creature, and with a little luck I would be one again. My life of research and experimentation began right then. I resolved to become a fish once more. The sooner the better. If not in this life, then the very next. I didn't want to blow it and show up an owl or a lizard. I certainly didn't want to come back a Western Man again. Nothing would stop me. Until that point I had imagined God to resemble Santa Claus...

Unzips the sleeping bag and lets it fall to the bed.

...Santa Claus with a stern expression, as though he was reprimanding an elf for pilfering, or a reindeer for excessive masturbation. After my studies I had a more realistic, a more mature view. I discovered then what I still believe today: That the true face of God can never be one entity. I believe he looks like a cross between Reveen and Jacques Yves Cousteau. Bald. A goatee. You get the idea.

Crosses to the tank.

High school ended, the religious studies club conducted its last meeting. I remember the final motion: "Be it moved that I shorten my nickname from Reverend Kevin and that even after the end of this club I dedicate myself to the changing of my body." Moved, seconded, carried, recorded and signed by me, Rev. Kev.

Anoints himself with tank water.

PRIZE

Canada is a great place for mounting experimental theatre in off-the-wall outdoor locations. A prize for this season's furthest off the wall goes to Don Stein and Rick Roberts for Azteca no Yume (aztec dreams) at the Newfoundland Sound Symposium. Part one took place in a theatre, then the audience was herded onto a bus and taken to the St. John's railyards for the climactic second act. The ensuing symphony involved four charging diesel locomotives, marching Scottish pipers, an African percussion ensemble, a fire-eater on stilts and increase and i stilts, and various dancers and electric guitars. And in case you couldn't hear it, the whole thing was simulcast on 93.5 FM. It was all in a day's work.□

> Scene from Azteca No Yume 1986 Courtesy RICK ROBERTS



Scene from Changing Bodies 1986 Courtesy One Yellow Rabbit

I adjourned and went to my first job. It was in a fish factory. I can remember my parents asked me about it as I came home at night covered in blood and scales. "It was a bit like school," I said. I told them it was a cleaning job, but someone had to do it.

Moves downstage and mimes working at the factory.

I worked at the conveyor belt. Small bins of headless fish rolled past from gutting on their way up to grading. That was the part like school. From eight a.m. to five-thirty p.m. was to make sure they were placed correctly in the bins, tails to the left, heads, I mean necks, to the right. One bin passed every eight seconds. Split bellies to the bottom, dark backs to the top. Fifteen headless friends stretched out on salted ice.

Glances furtively over his shoulder.

My supervisor's name was Yogi, and he made my life at the factory miserable. He tried to make me wear rubber gloves, which I refused to do. I didn't mind getting scales on my skin. In fact, I preferred it, and hoped they'd somehow set an example to my skin's cells. (conspiratorially)

Y'see I'd heard how deaf people's vision sharpens to make up for the loss of hearing and how blind people's hearing does the opposite to somehow recompense for the loss of sight. I hoped handling the fish would do the same thing for my skin.

I liked the work and I did a good job. But everyone talked about me behind my dorsal fin. (conspiratorially)

Every so often I popped a stray air bladder into my smock. I needed it for my research and they just would have used it for fertilizer

One time I got caught, and Yogi used it as an excuse to fire me. On the way out he called me, "a fuckin' fish freak!" I said, "Thanks, Yogi," and left. I knew it was time for a

Crosses upstage to his lobster suit. He dresses during the following.

I had dedicated my life to fish and it had gotten me nowhere.

I was jobless.
I lived with my parents.

was still a man.

I knew it was time to broaden my horizons. Within myself I knew the answer to my great question. And I responded in the same way as the immortal Billy responded to the immortal Capt. Highliner: And I could hear his kind voice ask, that familiar homey growl, I heard him ask in that soothing, masculine timbre, he him ask in that soothing, masculine timbre, he asked me, voice purring like Marlon Perkins on Spanish fly, he said, "Have you ever been to sea, Kevin?" And like Billy before me I said, "No, no Capt. Highliner, no." And not like Billy before me I slapped him and told him to keep his naughty nautical hands to himself. And I said, "no," and then I knew the answer.

Strikes a romantic pose with his trident.

The view upon the sea has the widest horizon of all. And that was where I wanted to go.

THE POET AND THE SUPERHERO

What is poetry but comic books without pictures?

by Kirk Miles

Supergirl in the Blossom Factory

French perfume between spread thighs. "We want the jewels" whispers the

Eiderdown man.

Who taught her to dress like that? The cape. The red lipstick.

Now young criminals come crashing on a night of mystic blue

making diamonds from desire their reptile tongues are after you.

In the blossom factory a dancing serpent a date for three.

We began our love designing dungeons in your father's rumpus room, &

later listened to the speech of flowers & other voiceless things.

In the blossom factory lovers tie themselves together with barbed wire

& when

the Xenonman comes to cut them free electrons spin for eternity.

On a Whimsically Adulterous Night with Batman's Wife

Bat-wine poured into wing shaped glasses. A stuffed insectivorous by the linen closet & the Xenonman undid buttons

"Holy moly, Batman, how about another game of squash?" Misty green hand on white pearl. One button after another.

The usual female problems, her story & other banalities. Robin's excessive drinking. Lilac perfume mixed with

formaldehyde. Down the blouse one by one, like an undertaker.

(Oh Superman! Superman! Where were you when the deed was done? Does your X-ray vision not see time?)

One cool kiss on the inner brain. A lover's tongue to dry the vein.

Catwoman Meets Sid Vicious

I want you so much I have poisoned your jailer,

I have sent you flowers & a box full of chains.

(& when they met did Justine give Juliet a flower? Who slapped who?)

All these things were running through Catwoman's mind as she

stuffed her lifestyle inside a briefcase & handed it to Sid. He,

(for his part) learned to play master. Studied cat torture.

But now,

her panther teeth have Sid clutched where it counts

(around the throat)

On prancing feline feet she drags the body home.

She'll keep this kill. The bedroom littered with the bones of other men,

this is not love stapled to the back of a tax form.

(oh nol)

The soft caress of a cheek disguised as a bleeding nose.

Desire wrapped in razor blades.

When the Xenonman,

1

When the Xenonman,

all dressed in green snaps the polaroid with you in the scene

& LED switches from 259 to three,

when does he come to steal your teeth away?

& you are crackerjack box apartment with mouse

& grandmother on kitchen table screaming so you stop

to take a picture & she develops looking as if

X had just walked in the door & a lifetime later he does

while she is being washed in a white room

in a white shroud.

Looking much like death herself besfore she died my grandmother

made love to the Xenonman.

II

& when the Xenonman comes will you & I go with him

dancing & laughing like she did on her wedding night?

(two lovers kiss with teeter-toter tongue)

& when the Xenonman comes he takes grandmother waltzing

hand in hand by the emerald sea.

& when the Xenonman comes in virescent light

will we build a fire on main street? Who will shoot it out?

& when will X come for you,

for me?

ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

playrites'87

january 18--february 8

penumbra

by Linda Zwicker

winning
by David Bolt

the postman rings once by Sky Gilbert

PlayRites '87 festivities will include lunchtime play-readings, an Alberta Playwrights' Cabaret, workshops, open forums, debates, post-show bar with live music, and special appearances by various Alberta theatre companies.

PENUMBRA opens Jan. 18 and runs to Jan 23. A theme of sanctuary runs through this play which functions on several different levels. Joyce is a long-time volunteer in a distress centre. In the midst of her own crisis she meets Paul and discovers where help really begins. Linda Zwicker is an ACTRA-Award-winning writer whose radio plays have been widely praised. PENUMBRA is her first stage play. It is rich with tension, humour, and humanity.

WINNING opens Jan. 24 and runs to Jan. 29. The play takes place in a motel room in a small town. While a group of 10 year kids compete in a regional Lacross tournament, their parents vie for each other. This comedy-drama is about modern couples, relationships, human foibles, and "winning" in the game of life. David Bolt is an actor-playwright from Toronto. WINNING was first workshopped at Theatre Calgary.

THE POSTMAN RINGS ONCE opens Jan.30 and runs to Feb. 4. Two young men find fantasy, romance and Lana Turner in an Alberta bookstore. This fantasy-comedy is a bright and hilarious depiction of young love threatened by social convention and religious doctrine. The simple message packs complex emotions and arouses long discussions. Sky Gilbert is Toronto-based. His plays have received much attention--as much for style as for content.





A.C.A. TURNS SIXTY

This year the Alberta College of Art is celebrating the 60th anniversary since its humble beginnings as a small afterthought to a government technical school. Over the years the school has evolved, under the leadership of people like A.C. Leighton, H.G. Glyde, Illingworth Kerr, and Stanford Perrott, into one of the largest art education facilities in the country.

the country.

This fall, to commemorate the event, the ACA Gallery presented an exhibition entitled Founders of the Alberta College of Art.

Organized by Gallery curator Val Greenfield, this is part three in an exhibition series designed to give the public a complete visual statement on the Who's Who of College alumni. In the case of Founders this translates into 43 artists, many of whom were teachers, and covers the period from 1926 to 1963.

Over the years the Alberta College of Art has managed to play an important role in the cultural development of the region. Many of its graduates have gone on to pursue careers as professional artists, and the college itself has left its imprint on the community's artistic make-up. The ACA—unlike some other art institutions in the country—has never subscribed to a dominant school of thought about art. Instead, the institution has spoken with many different voices, a diversity that continues to be reflected in the character of Calgary's visual arts scene.

It remains to be seen what kind of art school the ACA will be in its first decade of independence (on July 1st, 1985 the institution was granted autonomy from the larger Southern Alberta Institute of Technology). The heady days of seeking autonomy are over, and the growing pains have begun. Despite being over sixty years old and one of the largest art colleges in the country, ACA continues to have a relatively low profile—both nationally and locally. If there is anything Founders and the previous two exhibitions (which cover the period 1963-1984) elegantly demonstrate, it is time for the college to step out.



MAXWELL BATES (Graduated 1927)
Prairie Woman 1947
Oil on Canvas 64.5 × 49.5 cm.
Collection of the Glenbow Museum

THE LATE GREAT HUMAN ROAD SHOW

a novel by Paulette Jiles

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Well, almost abandoned. There are a few people left, the ones who slept through the evacuation. And there is a large pregnant cow, on whom all of them, in one way or another, come to depend.

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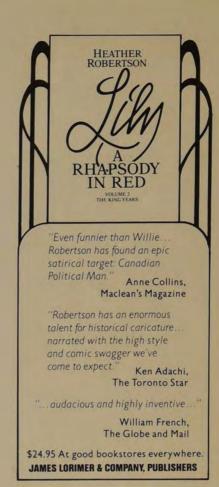
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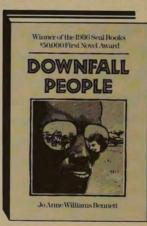
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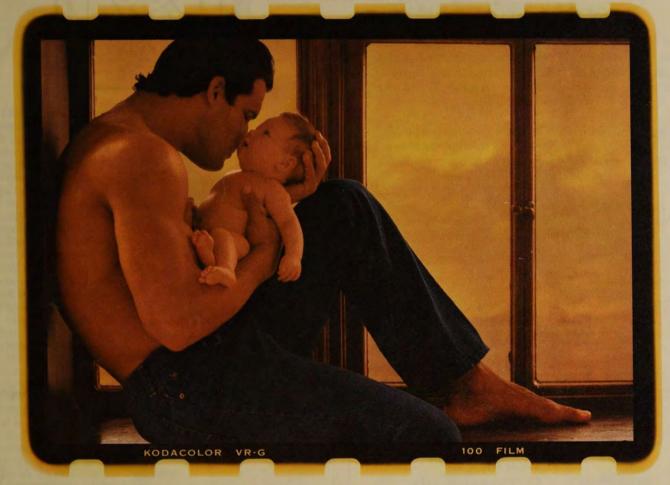
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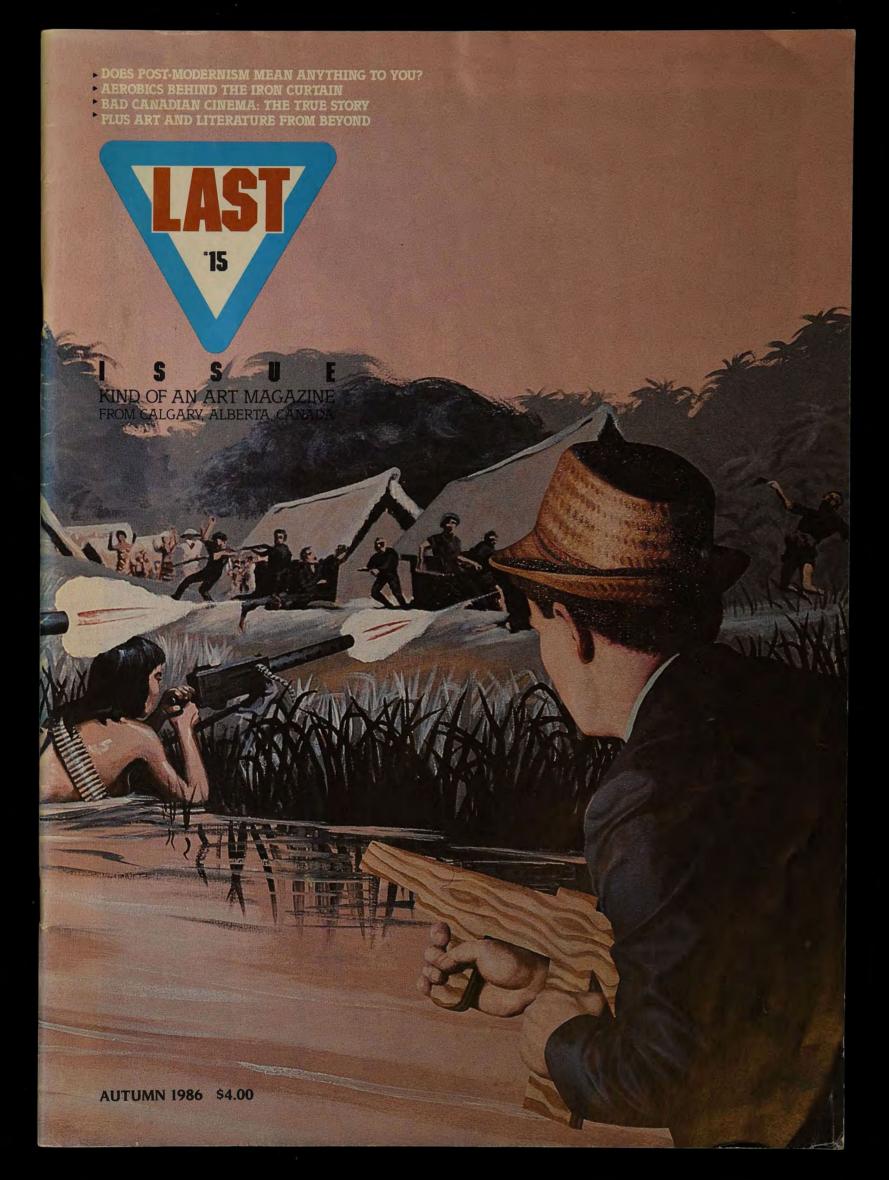


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CHRIS CRAN

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CHRIS CRAN

Our cover artist enjoys a rich (and richly illustrated) fantasy life. For the past two years his work has consisted of large realist renderings of himself, in the foreground, as he blithely confronts the life-sized one-liners that populate his fertile imagination. A clever wit comes naturally to the boyish-looking Cran, now 37, but not so his immaculate brushwork. He learned that when as a Calgary art student with an extraordinarily large family to support, he turned his hand to commissioned oil portraiture. And although realism had not previously entered his personal work, he says, "Once it got into my hands, I couldn't get rid of it." Unfortunately, each work in the current self-portrait series takes months to complete. But LAST ISSUE sends you this message anyway. "Buy a Chris Cran painting each and every day!" At Stride Gallery, Calgary .

LAST ISSUE

Founded 1983.

Vol. 4, No. 1 (Issue 15). Autumn 1986.

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Printer

Paperworks Press

Typesetting

Edwords Studio
Distribution

Canada: Canadian Periodical Publishers

Association, 2 Stewart St., Toronto, Ontario,

West Coast: Cornucopia Distributors, 1504 14th Ave., Seattle, Washington. 98221

Correspondence LAST ISSUE #604 815 1st St. S.W. Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 1N3 (403) 263-3232

1+1

(403) 205-3222

LAST ISSUE is published quarterly by LAST ISSUE Publishing society, #604 815 1st St. S.W. Calgary, Alberta T2P 1N3 (403) 263-3232. ISSN #0826-9972. Second Class Mailing Pending, SUBSCRIPTIONS: One year S12 00 Individuals, S16.00 Institutions and Overseas. Printed in Canada. Copyright 1986. All rights reserved. Request for REPRINTS of articles must be made in writing to the publisher. We welcome SUBMISSIONS of all kinds but are not responsible for unsolicited materials. Deadline for WINTER 1986 is Sept. 15, 1986. Please type and double space all material. If return is requested enclose a S.A.S.E. LAST ISSUE Publishing Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the CALGARY REGION ARTS FOUNDATION. the ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE LITERARY ARTS, the ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE LITERARY ARTS, the ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE LITERARY ARTS. the ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS. ALBERTA CULTURE and the ALBERTA MANPOWER STE.P. Program.



LAST WORDS FIRST

A priest, a lawyer, a welfare recipient, and an artist were all out golfing together. It was a typical day on the course: The sandtraps yawned and the wind blew both ways at once. Everyone was having an especially dismal time of it, except for the artist, who was playing an uncanny round and was several strokes under par.

On the 18th tee, the priest was overcome by frustration, and began to lament, "God above, what's wrong? I feel like I'm in top form. My tee shots are divine, my approach game is heavenly, and I putt like I'm blessed. But I never seem to be able to break 100."

"Neither can I," said the lawyer, "yet I have every possible advantage. My clubs were hand made by a former NASA engineer and they're oversized by two inches. I use special balls from an illegal factory in Mexico. And my golf shoes alone cost \$25,000. But the way I'm playing is almost criminal."

The welfare recipient too was upset about his game. "Some days I get real lucky and I feel like I'm about to have a good round. My ball will bounce off a sprinkler head and end up two inches from the hole. I'll manage to get a free lift out of every hazard I land in.

And I usually play with guys who give me every putt shorter than ten feet.

But I don't know—it never seems to be enough."

Finally one of them turned to the artist and wondered how he managed to score so well.

The artist slowly bent down and teed up his ball. "Well, certainly I pray. I pray like the devil."

"Can't hurt," said the priest.

"And quite frankly, I cheat like mad," the artist said, as he waggled his club.

'Sometimes it's your only option," said the lawyer.

"And sure, I'll admit it," the artist continued, "I'll take whatever I can get from the powers that be."

"What's everyone looking at me for?" said the welfare recipient.

But the artist went on as he readied his backswing. "I guess there's just one reason why I'm taking you chaps to the cleaners today." Then he proceeded to launch an enormous drive, 395 yards all the way to the green, where the ball hit the flagstick and dropped in for a miraculous hole-in-one and a course record 61.

When they finally came to their senses, his playing partners begged him, "How? How on earth do you do it?"

After a moment the artist spoke. "Gentlemen, I thrive on the unexpected. I loathe it when a scenario is laid down before me, when it's common knowledge what I'm about to do next." He paused for a moment to count a small wad of hundreds. "So for that reason, old socks, I keep one simple rule: I never, ever appear in golf jokes."

And with that the artist, and the welfare recipient, headed for the clubhouse.



Welcome back to LAST ISSUE. Yes, we went away for a while. No, we haven't changed anything except for, as usual, almost everything. But we continue our biases toward variety, novelty, quality, and Alberta-centricity, and we remain quasi-commercial. Enjoy the magazine. If you don't see something, ask. And finally, big thanks to all the champions who chipped in. No golf pun intended.

LAST WORDS FIRST



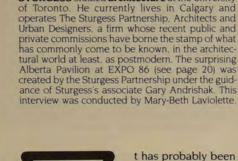


The term "post-modern" has recently been used to describe everything from furniture to haircuts. Certain people toss it off as if its meaning is as simple as a definition in a dictionary. Others view the expression as a sure sign that a more convenient pigeonhole could not easily be found.

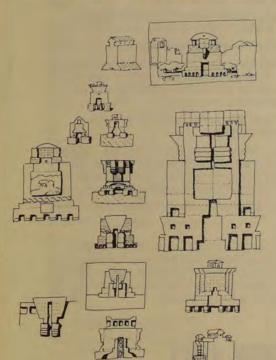
To help shed light on an increasingly obscure concept, LAST ISSUE consulted experts from the fields of visual art, music, literature, drama, architecture and dance. We began each interview with the same question: Does the word Post-Modern mean anything to you?

Raised in Montreal and Calgary, **JEREMY STURGESS** studied **architecture** at the University

DOES THE WORD POST-MODERN MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?



t has probably been a stronger word in architecture than in the other arts and perhaps, in that sense, it is a more dangerous word. Postmodernism in art or music seems to me to have more positive connotations. In architecture, it has really become associated only with the style. And that's its own death. As soon as it becomes a stylistic phenomenon, it becomes a fad. I think this has happened to the post-modern aesthetic in architecture and consequently, post-modernism is not an issue any longer and, as a move-



∀ What characterizes the post-modern style? People associate post-modernism with two-dimensional classical ornamentation to the building (i.e. arches, greek columns, urns, etc.). However, these buildings are not necessarily different than modern buildings. They're still boxes. I think the AT&T building in New York (designed by Philip Johnson) is a prime example of that.

ment, it is dead.

→ Do you mean that the AT&T building looks like a regular high rise except that it has a different treatment of the top, the facade and a collonaded arcade at ground level, and its reference to classical styles of the past determines it's post-modern

Yes, all of those features are obviously post-modern and in many ways, it is a lovely building, but for me, it is no different than a lovely modern building...a high rise box. I think what Michael Graves is doing is really post-modernism but he is an exception in that he has a real understanding of classical architecture and therefore can build in the 1980s from a classical sensibility what the public has come to understand as post-modernism. So Graves is creating from a proper post-modernistic perspective but his buildings are not. So that's the danger of it and that's why it had to die.

∇ What does modernist architecture look like? Explicitly, modernistic design has to do with the ideas of the Bauhaus, which is about buildings being pulled back to their bare essentials. Modernism also has had a million terrible rip-offs of a beautiful idea. Modernist ideas have to do with light and space. A wall of glass or windows results from these concerns. I guess the name 'post-modern' is a reaction to modernism and although I think Graves is the best proponent of post-modernism. I doubt if he uses the term to describe his own work. It should be called something else, maybe 'classicism'. The best modernist architecture functions on classicist lines. Louis Kahn was very much a modernist who worked with classical overtones. As for Graves, his greatest instinct lies in his classical training. I don't think anyone can be a post-modernist or a modernist until they learn to be a classicist. Certainly Lam. influenced by modernism because it's all around me, but my interest is in understanding classical forms, classical proportions and classical details. That is what the post-modern aesthetic is really about. Postmodern architecture has reminded us that there is an alternative—the endless glass. minimal ornament, lack of a sense of room

A lot of modernist buildings have had a tendency to be isolated and monumental. In many cases, modern buildings have not accommodated themselves very well to older environments. Do you agree with that? Post-modernism is often thought of as being more humanistic because it seems more interested in the local context of the neighborhood in which it is built.

Oh, absolutely. People like buildings they can relate to rather than places which are sterile, remote and inhabit concrete plazas like icons to themselves.



Michael Graves Portland Building 1980 Right: Michael Graves Tea Service 1980

 ∇ The Seagram Building (1958, New York), designed by Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson, is often cited as a landmark in modern architecture. Is there a post-modern building that functions in a similar way?

I guess, for me, it was Graves' Portland Building. That is probably where postmodernism began and ended as a style. The building is not that great. I think it is ugly but it became a landmark important enough to generate all the rip-offs. You know, everybody is saying, "Oh, I want to have garlands on my building." Graves, though, has been doing much better things since. The Humana Building (Louisville, Kentucky) is infinitely better than the Portland Building but it's not post-modernism anymore, it's something else. I don't know what you call it.... Post-modernism has made architecture popular, which is really amazing when you consider that modernist architecture was really ignored by the general populace.

∇ Why was it ignored?

A lot of people found it offensive. It upset them. Modernist architecture—when it was badly done—became so close to the functionality of engineering that people must have thought that architects had sold their souls. The reason why I have a problem with the word post-modern is because I think modernism was the aberration. For me, modernism was post-something else. Although it was new, modernism was reactive and not part of a natural progression.

∇ Reactive against what?

Well, to everything from Victorianism through to neo-classical to Art Deco. So you have to wonder if those architects had any intention of changing the world, or did they think that everybody wouldn't copy the modernist building? One of the main rationales for modernism since 1940 was that it was such an economical way of building and it gave everybody the prescription on how to build cheaply. Architects were content to let masons build little stone walls in England and Poland. They didn't need them anymore because of the steel industries and pre-fab packaging. I suppose it was the consummate result of the industrial age. We tend to make buildings that are very easy to build because we're not interested in learning how to make complicated ones. The Alberta Pavilion (Expo '86 in Vancouver) is a complex building and it was hard to build but architects normally don't design things that are any more complex than a box.

With post-modernism, we are just picking up where we left off in the 1920s with the Bauhaus. It's getting back to that normal pattern with the progression of the more beautiful and less beautiful types of architecture. It's not a question of having to react to anything. It's a question of getting back to thinking about beautiful buildings. beautiful rooms and beautiful places. So that's what post-modernism-the best part of it-means to me. It shouldn't be called post-modernism though because it is using the wrong word to react to. It implies a reaction to modernism and perhaps in a sense that's true, but more importantly, it's a continuation. It should be new-something. Somebody said New Humanism, maybe that's it

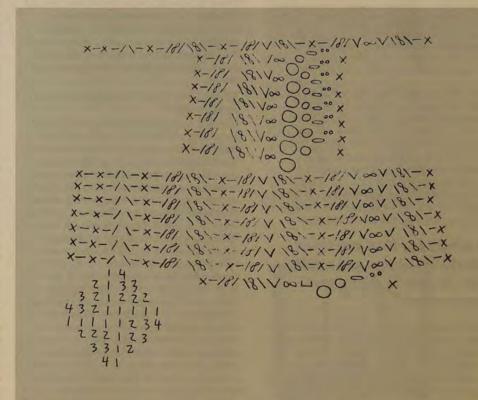
2 In the past dozen years, the American composer PHILIP GLASS has emerged as the pre-eminent figure in the musical avant-garde. Writing for film, theatre, dance, chorus, opera, and his own group The Philip Glass Ensemble, he has won audiences ranging from the world of classical music to the farout fringe. His compositions include Einstein On The Beach, the album GLASSWORKS, and the score for the film Koyaanisqatsi. He is presently completing his fourth opera, The Making of the Representative for Planet B. He was interviewed by Mary-Beth Laviolette.

I never think about my work that way. However, I think there is a modernist aesthetic which separates contemporary work from everything that comes before it. If you want to call it post-modernism that's okay. In music, I became aware of it through the music and writings of John Cage, and I would say that almost everything after him becomes post-modernist. Cage is closely associated with people like Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and Marcel Duchamp. I think they created the post-modern aesthetic.

Specifically, what we are talking about is a perceptual idea. In music, the modernist aesthetic had to do with issues of tonality, serialism and dissonance. With postmodernism, the ideas stem from a completely different idea of what the art object is and how it functions. If you look at the work of Johns and Rauschenberg and read Cage, what you come away with is the idea that a work does not exist by itself. It has no independent existence. It only exists in relation to people who are perceiving it. Cage made it clear that the audience completes the work. Therefore, what you are essentially talking about with post-modernist aesthetics is a relationship, which is true of all the people that come after them. We have to credit that generation for this idea. For example, a work like Einstein On The

Beach has no text or libretto. Almost anyone can make up a story to go along with the music and the visual images. The idea that Bob Wilson and I had was that the audience would attribute a specific meaning to the work on their own. Instead of saying what something means, we say only that it is meaningful. We're really talking about how music or art functions in relation to the person viewing it. The post-modern aesthetic from my point of view rests firmly on this idea. There is no such thing as an object of art. Instead there is a relationship between a person and the thing that is perceived. The nice thing about this idea is that it connects us very much with the rest of contemporary philosophy, contemporary physics, quantum mechanics... everything.

∇ Do you think the post-modernist aesthetic makes things more accessible to the audience because it is more concerned with the relationship between the viewer and the work? P.G.: Well, it depends on what audience. I think for a 19th century audience the answer would be no and for a 20th century audience the answer would be yes. Remember, these ideas don't come out of a vacuum. The public has been quick to respond to the work of Johns, Ornette Coleman and Bob Wilson. This work has the possibility of actually speaking to large groups of people, but I wonder if that would have been true a hundred years ago. It might have sounded too mystifying in another time. The work springs from the cultural milieu of which we are a part. I alluded only briefly to quantum mechanics and philosophy, but it is important to take a look at it because it questions the basis of perception and relationship, which is what the post-modernist aesthetic is all about



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LALALA HUMAN STEPS Scene from Human Sex 1985. Choreography: Edouard Lock



groups lock began working in theatre and film at Concordia University in Montreal. He has collaborated with various choreographers, notably Lawrence Gradus and Hugo Romero, and dance groups like Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and le Groupe de la Place Royale. In 1980 he founded LOCK DANSEURS, which later became known as LA LA LA HUMAN STEPS, for which he has choreographed numerous pieces including the Jean A, Chalmers Award-winning Oranges in 1982, Businessman In The Process Of Becoming An Angel in 1983, and his most recent work. Human Sex in 1985, This interview was conducted by Heather Elton.

I would say that any artist worth his or her salt would not be able to define post-modernism. I think it is a very hard term to define. It implies that it is postpresent. The problem right now is that a lot of the creations are a result of an anarchistic situation where creators will begin to develop formulas that appear to them to work better than others. The critics, facing this escalation of creativity, are beginning to play dual roles, critic and historian.

"I would say that any artist worth his or her salt would not be able to define post-modernism."

They are trying to define a movement within the movement, as opposed to waiting a number of years and seeing it with an historical perspective. We are living in a glass cage. One of the things you can define is that it is a movement that is happening on a more rapid pace than the previous movements to it have.

∇ Is it affecting all art disciplines across the board?

Well, it is a cycle feeding back into itself. The media have become more involved with art over the past decade than they have previously and consequently, they are doing their analyzing in the kitchen instead of waiting for the dinner to get to the table. The media is covering the creation process and is also altering it. You are seeing the snake eating itself. It is making life as an artist very different living now than before.

 What kind of dance is being defined as postmodernism dance?

Dance is a strange thing because it hasn't been very well defined. It has been isolated from the other art forms. It is not saleable. It doesn't come up with a product. Both painting and music have a piece of something that is created by the creator and then sold. Dance is happening during the time it happens and there are no clear ways to record it. Even theatre will have the written word to record its passage. Dance has only coupled with video and film, which are inadequate. I think that dance is different right now than it has been in the past. I think that it has integrated itself into culture, into a faster road of culture than it was before. Dance is a very immediate form of presentation. As the world speeds up and takes on this deluge of information, I think dance is more apt to present a very quick snapshot of what is going on. Because it is not saleable in a product sense, it is still very difficult to define what it is that dance is doing. It is so diverse....

What specific choreographers are creating pieces in a post-modern form?

That is a dangerous statement. Let us put it this way. I think that the attitudes of the choreographers defining the new statement are movement-based. I believe that it is those choreographers who deal most with movement who are on the cutting edge, because movement is the part of us that is the most irrational and immediate to stimulation. So if you are giving society a polaroid of their instinctive reactions, then you have to do it through a movement media as opposed to a staging or decor type of medium.

 ✓ Is that why they seem to put the movement within a larger context of music, text or image? Performance art started in the 60s and said there is no reason to isolate an art form, so let's try to integrate. The problem that they encountered was that one person has trouble controlling all the various elements. There is a tendency to see one thing done well. They have a tendency now to bring in specialists, so if you are involved in the choreography, you don't necessarily get involved in the music. There is a sensation of bringing strong art forms together and then creating somewhat of an anarchy on stage and let the audience have their ear or eve meander through this tapestry and define their own storyline, as opposed to the traditional relationship between music and dance, where one or the other was strong but not both at the same time. It raised an important question (if people are looking at so many different components at once) as to how to get them to open up in the audience. I think an important factor is the level of stimulation. There must be an over-stimulation so that the structure existing in the mind crumbles-for a minute of vulnerability, there is a newness of experience. In order to do that you have got to build up layers of stimulation on that stage. Someone sitting in front of the TV is being bombarded by up-to-date, stateof-the-art visual and oral stimulation. You can't go from that environment to a stage environment and have something that is less than that level. The artist must make a decision based on choice. He must know what the world is like now and then make a conscious statement. He can no longer come into a situation and say, "Well, I choose to ignore the world. I will do what I want to do and I don't care what the results are." It has to be done with an idea of what the external environment is about.

∀ How does your own work fit into this?
 I like to express the complexities I think the human body is capable of and that means pushing the visuals of the dance to places where they don't normally associate dance with. I also like to sense that there be a risk factor in the theatre because I think that risk initiates hope and passion.

□ Do you consider LALALA to be working in a post-modern form?

LALALA is the most complex movement that I can do and put into a technological situation, not because I like technology or that I am saying, "Look at my new gadget," but because we are in a technological situation and we might as well use it. I like to feel that the human being is

coming out on top of all this. For example, I am working on a movement detection device. It will analyze movement but it is invisible to the audience. Basically, whenever you happen to be moving, it will have a very strong sound response. That goes back to my childhood. I liked to feel that I would move my hand and the whole world would react to it. It is an old need and technology is giving us this power, but it is still an illusion. Onstage I am saying this is a symbol but you can still see the human being behind it. That kind of relationship with technology is important.

√ Is there anything about that relationship that is post-modern?

I am dealing with things right now that no other choreographer has had to deal with in the past. In order to get an audience excited about dance. I have to do things that I don't think were necessary 20 vears ago.

∇ Are other contemporary choreographers facing the same challenge?

There are a lot of very different kinds of experiments happening and some of them are traditional. There is a lot of stuff with the trappings of newness, but if you scratch behind the surface, it is not very unlike what was happening 10 or 20 years ago, so it is a strange world.

∇ Can you be more specific? You don't want to use names?

No. The art world is a slow changer. The faster changers are the ones where you have the mass appeal because then you have this irrational big group of people who don't give a damn, they just impose changes left and right. But when you talk about elitist art forms, you still have a lot of people controlling that aspect considerably and it's very hard for them to change over. Take Pina Bausch. She is a very important choreographer but I wouldn't say she's on the cutting edge, by any means.

∇ Who is on the cutting edge? You probably don't know them. That is one of the reasons why they are there.

∇ To a certain extent, you are on the cutting edge because you have created a new movement vocabularu.

I would say that that is one definition. If you want to know what is on the cutting edge of dance, you take away the costume, the music, the decor-you take everything away and put the dancer in the studio. You look at the person doing the movement and if the movement appears to you to be unlike anything else you have seen, then I would say safely that they are on the cutting edge of something.

∇ So dancing on point shoes to hardcore punk is not on the cutting edge?

Not if you have taken everything away and the person is doing ballet-no, no, no. It is like doing Shakespeare with punk drag.

post-modernists?

I think that judgment is definitely best made from the outside. It is the furthest thing from my mind. I really don't give a damn about what I am supposed to be doing. As soon as I label it I stop being creative about it. I am just making a formula

Robert Wilson and Philip Glass Scene from Einstein On



PHILIP McCOY has taught drama at the Univer-PHILIP MCCOY has taught drama at the University of Calgary since 1968. He received his BA from the University of Arizona and his Ph.D. from Tulane. A film and **theatre** critic for the CBC, he has published numerous articles and plays. McCoy is currently the president of the Calgary Region Arts Foundation. He was interviewed by Heather Elton.

It only means something to me in terms of modernism. The term post-modernism has to take into account what it is post to. I think we have to realize that postmodernism is really a term that is most clearly defined in architecture. A lot of the ideas that have come out of post-modernism in architecture have been adopted or reinterpreted for the other arts

There is a post-modern movement in theatre. In theatre, modernism, assuming modernism is referring to Ibsen on, presumed that art was socially useful. It was used to illustrate and help solve social problems. Ibsen does that, and Brecht, to start people thinking about how they could affect change. Even a modernist like Antonin Artaud thought that theatre could somehow get back to the primal roots of emotion. And in that way, it could be cathartic. Artaud referred to the theatre as a filling station where you could go to get filled up with new ideas and become a better person. The post-modernist, especially in the theatre, has abandoned those ideas. The post-modernist is likely to say, This is my vision. This is what I feel. This is what I put together. This is what I have made, take it or leave it. If you find it beautiful, or meaningful or moving, or if

you find a message in it, that is fine.

But I didn't start from the assumption that I was going to try to do something for you. And that is interpreted in the theatre as narcissism

∇ Who are some post-modernists in the theatre? Robert Wilson is perhaps the foremost practitioner of post-modern theatre performance. He started with an interest in deafness and autistic children. He started from a modernist, social consciousness, with his early works exploring the modes of perception of people who are different from us. Wilson started working in the late 60s and through the 70s. His most famous work is probably Einstein On the Beach, which Philip Glass did the score for. There are others like Richard Foreman with his Ontological Hysteric Theatre: Lee Breuer. with his Mabou Mines group (the name taken from the Nova Scotian town where they workshopped their performances); or Spalding Gray, with the Wooster Group.



Robert Wilson Sketch for Einstein On The Beach 1976

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA Scene from The Deputy by Rolf Hochhuth. Director: Philip McCoy. Designer: Douglas McCullough. 1986



otograph: Douglas McCullor

These are artists who have collected around them a group of collaborators who are willing to work for years sometimes on what amount to autobiographical, narcissistic works—performance art pieces which really explore the history, the aesthetics, the preoccupations of one person. They are interesting not because they reveal any truth about your own life as a member of the audience but because they are just interesting

Now in the theatre, post-modernism has found its shape in revivalism. For example, Richard Schechner's troupe, The Performance Garage, did The Bacchae and they called it Dionysus in 69. The whole point of the reinterpretion of Euripides' The Bacchae was to show its relevance to the modern world. Vietnam and all the humanist concerns of the late 60s were embodied in that play, so it had social usefulness. In the post-modern era, one is likely to do The Bacchae with a nod toward Greek theatre history. Or, one might do it in a straight revivalist form, combined with elements from the Greek theatre, from Kabuki, or Elizabethan tradition, or maybe throw in a Baroque costume. And if one is asked why, he says. "Because I wanted to, because it looks good, because it is elegant, pleasing and aesthetic." One doesn't feel inclined to justify the work he is doing on the basis of some social or political or other goal. So that is the first thing about postmodernism: One feels free to get up and perform, create or enact actions, images which do not have to be justified, even in terms of plot, character, situation or goal.

∇ So it is the obsession with style that characterizes post-modernism in theatre?

Well, that is putting post-modernism down because it's almost impossible to look at it except in the context of what we have been living with for the past 100 years, which is that art is useful and that everyone in the theatre should have the same experience. The post-modernist says that the person sitting next to you may have a completely different experience. Some of Wilson's post-modernist pieces go on for 12 hours and people come and go as they please.

What is the playwright's relation to the postmodernist theatre? Are you saying that you can
take any script and turn it into a post-modern

production?

Yes, I think post-modernism in the theatre is primarily a production term. I suppose you could say that Sam Shepard is moving towards post-modernism because increasingly. Shepard's work is less a critique of society than a kind of bizarre picture of society.

But there are post-modernist novelists so why aren't there post-modernist dramatists?

Well, for one thing the theatre is always 10 years behind the other arts in these areas

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5 An instructor in the English Department of the University of Alberta, **SHIRLEY NEUMAN** specializes in women's and modern **literature**. She is a founding member and director of Longspoon Press and of NeWest Press. Neuman is co-editor, along with Smaro Kamboureli, of a book called *Writing Canadian Women Writing*, due for publication this fall. She was interviewed by Heather Elton.

I think a post-modern work is a work in which there is not an automatic assumption that the work describes the world. Instead, the assumption is that the work talks in some way about the language we use to describe the world. This is not to say that literature is only about other words. It is to say that while literature is words about other words, it is also about the way in which the discourse we use creates our social and psychological reality.

∀ How is post-modernism being used in literature?

Post-modernism is being used against closed form. It is being used to open out form, to open out the novels so that we are no longer into monologic discourse. The importance of this for writers is that it has enabled them to question the theories by which we think that we make meaning. For instance, they have been using post-modernism to question the idea that there is some sort of absolute connection between the world and the language that we use to describe it. This connection is natural and not arbitrary.

Lee Breuer, Director. Scene from Gospel At Colonus 1984



□ Do we have to read this material differently?
 I think the material directs us to read it with an awareness that language is constructing a world and that we are shaped by that language. In a theological sense, the language we use both creates the world and then locks us into it. The post-modernist test makes us aware of that so that we are always reading with double focus.

What is the relationship between the theory and the literature?

I don't think we can talk about postmodernist theory per se. Instead, we talk about structuralist theory or post-structuralist theory or deconstructionist theory or feminist theory. The term post-modernism refers to a certain kind of writing rather than theory. However, I think that the writing is tremendously indebted to theory: from the work of Saussure and the linguists, who showed us that language was in some sense arbitrary (i.e. the relationship between signifier and signified is not natural), to the work of people like Foucault who talk about discourse, about whole symbolic systems, which involve more than speech, and about the ways in which this is related to power. I think it is related to the people like Claude Levi-Strauss and the structural anthropologists and to Derrida, who attempted to deconstruct what seems to be monologic, and reintroduce a dialogism into the text.

Roland Barthes talks about readerly and writerly text. Readerly text is the one that ties up all the meanings nicely for you and closes the plot. Writerly text is the one that dwells upon language and the way in which language creates meaning without this kind of closure. In this sense, post-modernism is more closely aligned with writerly text and through that process, opens out its form.

□ Do you think that there is more room within a post-modernist structure for a feminist perspective? Yes. But I wouldn't say that post-modernism is by any means necessarily feminist. I think that there are some post-modernist texts that are decidedly misogynist. But because post-modernism makes us conscious of the way we use discourse as power, and the fact that our so-called truths are constructions that can change, it allows a passage of entry for feminist discourse. I think the same kinds of conditions that have made post-modernism possible have made feminism possible.

It was, in some sense, an epistemological movement that led us to question the ways in which we make knowledge. We are coming back to the idea that there is no one logos, one knowledge. Where this is attractive to feminists is that the one knowledge has always been appropriated by men. And so if we say that there are many knowledges, if we move into a theory or technique that talks about multiple differences rather than binary opposition, if, as post-modernism does, we talk about dilogism rather than monologism, then we make room for the feminist critic to come and say, "Yes, this is your knowledge, this is my knowledge and they need not be the same."▼

6 BRUCE FERGUSON was born in Lethbridge, received his BA from the University of Regina, and has since curated some of contemporary art's most provocative exhibitions. His credits include O Kanada, a video exhibit for the Venice Biennale, Space Invaders, and the internationally touring Eric Fischl, which stopped at the Whitney Museum in New York. Ferguson is perhaps Canada's most sought after curator. After working for a number of Canadian galleries, he prefers the role of freelance **exhibition producer.** This allows him to work on his MA in Media Studies and to teach Art History at Concordia University. Ferguson is currently producing an exhibit of Tony Brown's work for the Winnipeg Art Callany.

It's a shorthand for the crisis of representation that has occurred in science. philosophy and most other fields in the last twenty years. I do think there are some essential differences between natural science and social science, but the general recognition is that no framework of analysis is ever objective. And the result of that is a crisis. This recognition comes to a kind of culmination with the shift from a mechanical industrial society into a so-called postindustrial information society and it occurs in North America somewhere in the late sixties. Another way of looking at postmodernism is that it's shorthand for postanalytical philosophy, post-individualism, post-classical notions of sculpture and architecture, etc., and in a certain sense post-ethnocentric Western views of the world.

∇ What do you mean by the word "representation"?

If you use language as an analogy and say that in every field there are languages or particular ways of describing the world, those languages have always been assumed to have some kind of reference to an ostensive reality. I think that what has gone into crisis are all those languages; it is now realized that those languages are not in fact infallible. They are constructed by people's imaginations and interests, that they are not representational.

 What are some of the characteristics of postmodern visual art?

First of all, I don't use the term. I use the term ultra-modernism or hyper-modernism because I think what we are facing in a certain sense is a deeper probe into modernism as a Western project. It is not by any means over. What characterizes it are things like the concept that there is no such thing as a "universal" vocabulary for the visual arts, such as abstract art's assumption that color, form and so on would have a kind of "universal" character. In retrospect, that language (abstract art) represented specific interests and one of those interests was a belief in progress. But "progress" as an idea representing modernism is no longer a believable thing.

When we study the history of modern art, it is often taught as a progression of different schools and 'isms' like impressionism, post-impressionism, cubism, etc., until you get to the end of WWII and-boom!-there is abstract expressionism and it's as if art has finally progressed to a higher plane. That's right and it's presented as a linear, evolutionary discourse. And that is precisely what is in crisis. We now recognize that it wasn't linear and it wasn't evolutionary and it (abstract art) repressed all kinds of other things in order to make itself a dominant discourse. Some of those things it repressed were things like Dada, and collage, and the strong attempt by certain avant-garde artists to join their aesthetic activities to political activities. Contemporary work now is reinvestigating some of those repressed sides of modernism in order to discover something like the "local" in every situation

∇ If artists today are reinvestigating different forms of expression, what are the implications for the audience?

Dick Hebdige (author of Subculture: The Meaning of Style), using the example, I think, of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, says that in any stage of development of a thing there are four stages; it doesn't matter if it is a motorscooter or a work of art. First, there is research and development, which can be anything from a simple idea to the actual investigation of the idea. Secondly, there is production. Thirdly, there is mediation which is inter-textual. For example, in the case of a work of art one mediation is the art gallery or the museum, another is something like journalism, newspapers, art magazines or art education. And finally, there is consumption. The term I would use, in the visual arts, is "reception"

As far as reception is concerned, we don't know to a large extent what happens because the discourse about art has usually focused on the moments of production. What the discourse (i.e. criticism, art history, etc.) tries to describe is what something means in terms of what the artist meant. Very little work has been done on reception or how the audience perceives a work of art. Yet, if we look at other models such as television, there has been an enormous amount of research done on audience reception. However, about 60% of all TV pilots never make it to the air and the ones that do, there is about a 50% success rate. Despite all the knowledge about what the audience is going to like, there is still an enormous failure rate in TV which means we still don't know much about reception. We still don't know what people do with meanings. That's what interests me now is that the artists that are taking this up as an idea are both allowing for the multivalency of meanings and are also attempting to take into account possible receptions by the audience. The difference for me, between modernism and hyper-modernism is a shift from concentration on production to distribution. How can you distribute meanings that can be interesting, different or subversive? There is consideration for the fact that the audience is intelligently making decisions about meanings all the time. There is a deeper respect in a sense.

 Why hasn't that concern been a part of the modernist agenda? Why has the interest in audience reception been so minimal?

I think it begins in the 19th century with romanticism and its belief in subjective, personal points of view. There has been a tremendous amount of discourse in the past about the artist as an individual visionary, somehow seeing beyond or above the rest of society. This has carried on through 20th century modernism and a belief in private, individual languages. I think now, however, in the theories of language we discover that there are no such things as private languages (i.e. personal points of view): that all languages, in a way, are common property.

 What does that do then to our whole notion of originality? That the outstanding artists have, through their art, developed something unique because they have a special vision, a special private language?

It's only a theory but it admits in some ways that an individual—although s/he may have specific perceptions, memories and experiences of the world—is also connected to the fabric and the network of society. So it throws the notion of originality into deep crisis. The way John Tagg explains it is that since all meanings are collective meanings, all works of art are always collectively produced. Because of mediation and reception, its meanings have been collectively produced. The only works that aren't are the ones that are never seen by an audience.

□ Do you think this threatens the mystique of the artist as a visionary?

 Sure, if they are believers in the traditional

myths.

✓ In your work as a curator and critic, have you run into artists who are anxious about this?

Well, the resistance is the sense that then somehow the power moves from the artist to the curator or critic, which I think happens. But it only happens because the theory is new in a certain sense. If you look at an artist like David Salle, he has taken that notion as a direct raison dêtre for the production of his meanings and so has Robert Longo and Cindy Sherman. The notion that the image is in some way an echo of another image or that it has traces that are already there. Instead of looking for originality, what they use is that echo.

What happens of course is that on another level of discourse, the myth goes on even stronger than ever at the market level. So that although on the critical level, it threatens artists, it really doesn't threaten the market place which is always able to return to the myth of originality and subjectivity.

 Many people identify post-modernism as being something that makes reference to the past. Therefore, in post-modern painting, it's okay to paint a neo-classical landscape; or in post-modern architecture, it's okay to design a classical-styled building. Modernism in its pursuit of progress rejected the past while post-modernism celebrates it and reuses it. What are your feelings about this aspect of postmodernism?

You're right to say that this kind of activity is labelled post-modernism but it is certainly not what I mean by it. I think that's the dangerous side of post-modernism and I think that people who are still hanging onto modernist values see as the danger of post-modern pluralism, in general; that it allows for completely reactionary activities. Post-modernism, like the technology that it is grounded in, has both a liberating aspect and it has a potentially regressive and debilitating aspect.

I think the stuff that I'm still interested in probes more deeply into modernism and its assumptions. It assumes not "progress" but more the possibility of moments of epiphany or liberation. Again, the way Dick Hebdige describes the crisis is that we have no future. We have the horrific event of the second world war signified by the atomic explosion and the concentration camps and in a sense the future has already been taken away from us because it has been signified out of existence by the real possibility of a nuclear holocaust. So what we have, for the first time in the history of modernity, is only the present. We don't have a future, which is why some of that return to the past is there. It's a kind of nostalgia for a time and place when there was a value and a belief. The real probe into modernism, I think, is to find out how we can live in the present. How can we live comfortably in a highly institutionalized and technologized society. How do we do that? Not returning to some kind of myth of Greek gods. This is our problem-we can't count on the future anymore

GALLERY

Christine Turnauer Elijah Jules Shuswap Indian photographed in 1985. Silver print. Originally from Vienna, Christine Turnauer apprenticed with fashion photographer Frank Horvatt. This summer she is travelling with a tent studio, photographing Canadian Indians. Her work is available at the Folio Gallery in Calgary.



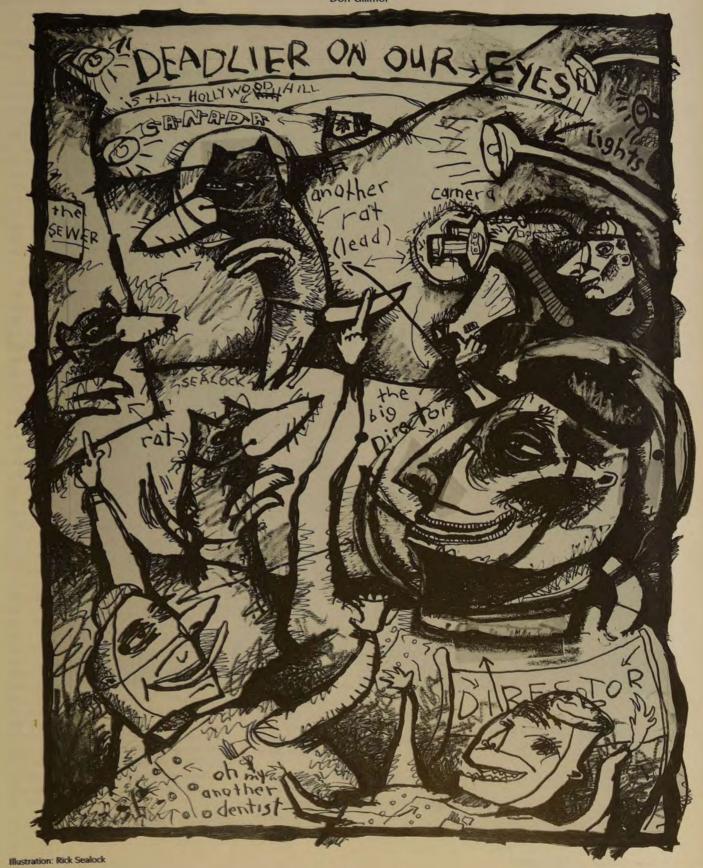


HOLLYWOOD NORTH: THE FINAL CHAPTER

QUESTION:

HOW MANY DENTISTS DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE A CANADIAN FEATURE FILM?

> by Don Gillmor



uring the glorious tax shelter days of Canadian film making, a film entitled Deadly Eyes was made in Toronto. Never released theatrically, it revisited the rats-running-wild-in-the-sewers theme that had been plumbed in Willard, a film that had modest box office success in 1971.

The Canadian producers had a casting problem in that Toronto had barely enough rats for cancer research and those were strictly of the white laboratory persuasion, not the great grey sewers-of-Paris model that drama is made of. Importing the correct species from Buffalo was vetoed by Toronto health authorities and DeNiro couldn't be persuaded to lose 140 pounds and dye himself grey.

Eventually, the crisis was met by rounding up all the available dachshunds in the city and dressing them up as rats. The dubious wisdom of this move was precipitated by the Hollywood axiom that bigger (or more) is better. What is scarier than lots of rats? Lots of big rats. What is scarier than either of these is the notion that anyone is going to think that twenty dachshunds with rubber tails are an army of giant rats. The producers felt they had happened upon one of those happy accidents of casting that had, in a previous era, given us Humphrey Bogart in Casablanca rather than the originally scheduled Ronald Reagan.

So every morning a group of makeup men who had been lured into the business by Garbo's cheekbones are sitting in a sewer dressing dogs up as rats. The dogs are terrified, expressing their lack of trust in the director's decision with repeated doggie mistakes. And they don't look too much like rats, though by all accounts they don't look too much like dachshunds either.

Deadly Eyes was ultimately unable to find distribution and has since been relegated to the same kind of exposure, if not the critical kudos, usually reserved for the Super 8 annals of Florida vacations. But this cinematic misadventure is not alone in the vault. If one were to venture down into the damp basement of Canadian film and suddenly flick on the lights, more than vulcanized dachshunds would be scurrying for cover.

Deadly Eyes was one of hundreds of films made possible by a tax break first offered to film investors in 1974. Through a system known as leveraging, dentists in search of a tax shelter could invest \$10,000 in a film and write off anywhere between \$20,000 to \$50,000. The result was that investment capital for films was a lot easier to come by than dental appointments. The dentists were all huddled around shooting sets in Scarborough waiting to meet James Coburn.

As a device for stimulating industry

through private investment, leveraging is not without merit. But whether an accountant with a mailing list of orthodontists constitutes an industry is open to interpretation. Despite the lack of any real credentials, a lot of people were able to raise a lot of money under the pretense of making a Canadian feature film. This arrangement didn't escape the gaze of the Ontario Securities Commission who decided that film investment was, after all, investment, and as such should be under their telesis.

Producers (that is, people without jobs who had vaguely been involved with film in the past) realized that the brokers were in fact a legitimate, pin-striped and bonded sales force whom people would trust with huge sums of money, something that fewer and fewer people were willing to do with the producers. They further realized that these guys didn't know diddly about the film business

So the producers set out to sell the brokers. A script, even a good one, would look like Sanskrit to the average reader and was of limited value as a sales tool They needed a handle as well as a foot in the door of the lucrative American market. These two concerns neatly dovetailed into the solution of building scripts around available foreign stars. The producers recited a list of well known actors to Pitfield, MacKay, Gonniff and Schwartz, threw in a Canadian supporting cast and crew, and the package was born. Richard Burton, James Coburn, Christopher Plummer, Donald Sutherland and Oliver Reed all did some of their worst work in our country and were paid handsomely for it. Theirs became the faces that launched a thousand tax shelters.

Armed with these household names, the brokers had a package they could carry into the offices of Manny Finkleman (of ear, nose and throat fame), offering him Britain's finest thespian in a role being created for him by one of Canada's leading waiters. A limited number of ten thousand dollar packages were made available to those investors who wanted a little stardust to fall into their portfolios. The brokers began to collect commissions with a Klondike fervor, not to mention discount dental work and wholesale electrocardiograms.

This was the dawn of the "how many dentists does it take to make a movie" era in Canadian cinematic history. The answer turned out to be "how many have you got?" Producers were able to set budgets on a cost-plus basis that allowed them to take wildly inflated salaries off the top. Half the budget would go toward shooting the film with the other half divided up between "name" actor, producer, director and accountant, the latter often the most creative force involved with the film. And all it cost was a return ticket to Los Angeles to get Donald Sutherland back home and a three hundred dollar lunch at Fenton's with the brokers.

What the brokers and their clients didn't know was that the producers rarely had a distribution deal. This meant they had almost no chance of recouping the cost of the film and were in fact under no clear mandate to make a film. But films they made, these cinematic pioneers who bravely forged ahead where the Lumière brothers had feared to tread. Films such as Agency, Deathbite, Double Negative, Powerplay, Cries in the Night, Circle of Two, Mr. Patman, Utilities, Bells, Deadly Harvest and Me?, this last a film whose only print was conveniently lost.

Not having the clout or connections to set up a distribution deal before shooting, the producers were forced to sell the finished product on the open market on the basis of its commercial potential, or failing that, its artistic merit. The result was usually a limited run on the Time Air flight between Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie. Occasionally the CBC would spring for a film to round out their summer schedule, allowing the bedridden to catch Deathbite on some Sunday afternoon sandwiched between Jesus on the Mainline and The Sashatoon Hog Report.

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This arrangement didn't sit too well with the investors who were denied the privilege of telling Max, the ticket taker at the Glenway Cinema, that they had swear-to-God practically produced the picture and their wives had had lunch with Paul Michael Glaser. It became unsettling that not a single attending member of the Stockholm conference on "Gynecology and the New Woman" could claim to have seen a film he had invested in. Questions were asked.

The producer assembled the concerned investors, removed his Foster Grant wraparounds and pensively nibbled on the frames.

"Artistically, it's a masterpiece. Frankly we think it's among the best work that Richard has ever done." Pause to stare wistfully into the grain of his cowhide pants. "Unfortunately, gentlemen, art doesn't always sell popcorn. You and I," nodding to Manny and Morry, "we are surrounded by Philistines. In three years when the public is ready for this film it will do to the film business what An Officer and a Gentleman did." Ciao.

DON GILLMOR is a frequent contributor to LAST ISSUE, and numerous other publications. He is the co-editor of the humorous collection *The Easterner's Guide To The WestThe Westerner's Guide To The East.* He lives in Montreal. Really lives.

With money increasingly hard to scare up and much of our indigenous talent living in L.A., it seemed we had reached an impasse of sorts. We were in fact riding off into the sunset, clapping two halves of a coconut shell together and trying not to look at the camera. It was generally held that we had exhausted our attempts at defining a national cinema, and now we could go back to Hockey Night in Canada as the protector of our heritage with the knowledge that we had tried, sort of.

There was to be, however, an ill-fated addendum to our goofy moviemaking efforts. Not content to let our gutshot film industry crawl off into the woods to die, Peter Waldman, a Toronto producer, came up with a plan: make foreign films right here in Canada. Why not? he argued. They're cheap to make, you can use black and white stock, non-professional actors. and you don't need a script half the time. While not blockbuster material, they are guaranteed a good run at Art Houses and universities and can be sold to Pay TV as well as the CBC. Waldman further argued that foreign films often look like documentaries, and weren't we the best documentary film makers in the world?

Convinced that he could lead the country out of the shadow of American product with his plan, Waldman launched Artfilmm, a company designed to finance and produce four foreign films made right here in the land of the slap-shot. Waldman's initial scheme to throw a lavish fundraising party in a rented Forest Hill home was less than a howling success when he failed to deliver Al Waxman as promised and the caterer failed to deliver anything without a certified cheque. The potential gold card pigeons weren't impressed and most had left by ten o'clock none the poorer for the experience.

Undiscouraged, Waldman took his project to one of the major banks, which was flat out not interested until he injected an audacious clause that offered the branch manager script approval in exchange for a \$200,000 line of credit. The manager, Inge Haverstrom, had an undergraduate degree in Drama from the University of Alberta and felt, presumably, that this was a perfect opportunity to marry her aesthetic sensibilities to her MBA. The domestic foreign film was about to be born.

Waldman felt that the first project needed a hook, something that would attach his ersatz efforts to the legitimate European cinema. He found it in an alleged sequel to Fellini's City of Women to be entitled City of Women Golfers and filmed on location in Oakville.

In a phone interview from his residence in the Bahamas, Waldman explains his

"With Golfers we hoped to attract that group that was already going to foreign films on a regular basis. It was high concept with a twist, and it had a high recognition factor built in. Basically we were building a bridge to the European form... acknowledging our heritage. This wasn't a ripoff thing. City of Women Golfers was a very quality project from day one."

Day one started with an ad in the

Oakville Beaver that asked for "Women 21-50, pert, blonde, six handicap or better, ability to shop essential." Artfilmm's temporary offices on Lakeshore Road were besieged by phone calls and in one 48-hour period Waldman and Inge Haverstrom, who had taken a leave of absence from her duties as bank manager, looked at over 1100 applicants. Said Haverstrom, "We were amazed. Virtually all of them were perfect for the film. We felt we couldn't realistically use more than five hundred so we simply picked them at random."

Haverstrom, who was becoming an increasingly influential force in the project, wrote the first draft of the script herself. "We wanted to use golf as a metaphor for life, but not in a literal sense," she recalls in an interview at her Leaside apartment. "We were searching for that European feel ... we didn't want the audience to understand the film until the second cappucino."

In a casting coup Waldman managed to get Sandra Post for the lead role and persuaded George Knudson to do a (nonspeaking) cameo as well. Shooting started with Waldman as director and he and Haverstrom sharing producing chores. Lazlo MacTavish, a Ryerson graduate with one European parent, was hired as cinematographer and allegedly offered "points on a net/net basis", an arrangement that has yet to clear the Ontario Court of Appeals.

Constantly running her hand through her hair and breathing such statements as "Golf...we were mad for it," Post lends a European sense to her cloistered world.

The first cut of the film was a cumbersome 61/2 hours long and consisted largely of Post, dressed in a black suit and Lacoste shirt addressing the camera in a nostalgic monologue. Ostensibly enroute to receive the Top Woman Golfer's Award. Post takes the audience on a tour of her childhood experience, invisible to the rest of the characters in the film (the 500 shopper/ golfers). This trip serves to reveal the events that made her into a champion, taking us from her bedroom full of plastic putters and trophies to the ninth at Happy Meadows, where she lost the Teen Southern Ontario Open by a single stroke in 1969.

With a Gitane never far from her mouth and a treasured six iron as a pointer, we witness Post's evolution from clubhouse naif to top-ranking pro on the L.P.G.A. tour. Constantly running her hand through her hair and breathing such statements as "Golf... we were mad for it", Post lends a European sense to her cloistered world of birdies and bogeys. Knudson, who has little to do other than effect a look of existential angst in his peach alpaca, trails after her on a wobbly bicycle, never acknowledged by Post. The French subtitles lend a stamp of authenticity, and true to form represent only about half the words actually spoken.

The premiere was held at the Palm

Theatre on Lakeshore Road and was touted as the social event of the season. Audience reaction to the trimmed down but still lengthy epic (four hours) was mixed. Those who were in it felt it was an important film rather than an entertainment and was redeemed by providing them with an opportunity to sport a \$1500 dress. Their husbands felt it wasn't particularly important and made less sense than a four iron chip shot. Doris Anderson, film critic for the Oakville Beaver, tempered her review with the accolade "contains some of the finest shopping scenes on film".

Ivan Sabanski of the Hamilton Spectator was less charitable. Under the headline "Golfers Stuck in Sandtrap" he described the film as a handheld suburban attempt to cash in on a genre it patently didn't understand, and lacked both the charm and depth of the last Smokey and the Bandit outing. The review went on to refer to Oakville alternately as Jokeville, Dopeville and NoHopeville.

After the glitter of opening night, Golfers played to a near-empty house despite the distribution of free tickets to the residents of neighboring Milton, Hornby and Puslinch. It had become apparent that the sound-track by Loverboy was failing to draw the young crowd as hoped.

Wilbur Peterson of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce explains its commercial failure: "It really wasn't about golf...it didn't have any shots or anything and there wasn't any nudity which I think most people expect from a foreign film. You can watch nudity in foreign films without feeling like a creep. If it's art, you're generally safe."

As the entire credit line had been exhausted on *Golfers*, \$130,000 of it still unaccounted for, no money was available for the remaining projects in development. Meanwhile, Waldman left quite suddenly for the Bahamas. There, he felt he would have a better perspective on the Canadian film industry, which he said was going through "the death throes of adolescence".

Among the abandoned projects were Bring on the Worms, a sobering look at the morals of Mississauga's small business community, Barrel of Rotten Promises, a damning portrait of pilferage at the Molson's plant, and Cabbages for Heidi, the story of a young girl growing up in Red Deer during the turbulent Alberta separatist years of 1978-79.

Inge Haverstrom hopes to produce Bring on the Worms herself and has written the screenplay with Donald Sutherland in mind for the lead. "I think the mistake we made with Golfers was in not getting a name actor. If we'd had Margot Kidder or Leslie Nielsen I really believe that the project would have flown."

Facing two lawsuits, the loss of her bank job, and limited opportunities to raise capital for future projects, Haverstrom remains undaunted. "This business... I don't know, it gets into your blood. If I can't make it work here in Toronto, I have enough producing credits that I can always go to L.A. and find something."



ZA SOCIALISMUS ▼ ZA MIR (FOR SOCIALISM—FOR PEACE)

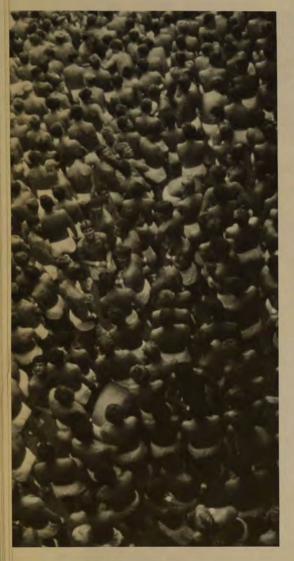
Aerobics, Eastern-bloc style. Once every five years all of Czechoslovakia gets together to flex its muscles. A report from Spartakiad 85.

by Heather Elton



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BELOW: The class of the field—13,000 Czechoslovak soldiers stream into Strahov Stadium for the climactic final performance at Spartakiad 85. This sequence transpired in an incredible twelve seconds. Opposite: Views from Spartakiads past; historically, a national zeal for working out in unison.



y any standard East or West, it is an aweinspiring spectacle: A socialist mural come to life-Prague's Strahov Stadium, at 200×300 metres the world's largest playing field, covered by 14,000 identically-dressed gymnasts moving in unison with uncanny precision. Plodding symphonic music—the Slavonic Dances by Dvorak-blares from loudspeakers, interrupted only by dry slogans uttered in a triumphant voiceover-"For Socialism, For Peace." "Strength, Beauty, and Health." Arms swing in unison. Lines of fresh-faced athletes become circles, then pyramids, then human fountains. Each group spends no more than 30 minutes on the field, to be replaced by the next routine: soldiers, factory workers, adolescent boys swinging bolos, young girls waving coloured sashes, middle-aged women with hoops. In all, 160,000 participants and 400,000 spectators take in the two-day spectacle.

This is Spartakiad 85, the climax of Czechoslovakia's year-long celebration of physical fitness and the "triumph of socialism." It took place in Prague in June of 1985, as it has every five years since 1945, when Czechoslovakia was liberated from Nazi rule by the Soviet Army. But it is not simply the Soviety influence that spawned this unusual phenomenon. A mania for fitness—and public displays of collective vigor—have been present in the Czechs and Slovaks for over a hundred years.

The ancient city of Prague was, during the 1300s, the cultural capital of Central Europe. And although frequently rocked by wars and external domination, it has through the centuries harboured significant pockets of intellectual liberalism. The roots of the modern Spartakiad, indeed the roots of modern physical culture, originated there in the middle of the 19th Century.

It started with a man named Miroslav Tyrs, whose interest in strength and health led him to devise a series of all-purpose exercises to be performed en masse for improved fitness. Tyrs also saw a political advantage to be gained by encouraging large groups in what amounted to a recreational form of regimentation (and privately sought to harness such power to oppose the Austro-Hungarian cultural and political oppression then confronting his people).

Ouietly he taught various groups of workers to perform the exercises. Their enthusiasm grew, and by the time of the first public demonstration in 1862, Tyrs had formulated the basis of an entire popular movement. He called it "Sokol", meaning "Falcon", with the hope that adherents would be as agile and fearless as their icon. The principles were Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; their motto—"LET US BE STRONG". The performances were called "SLET", meaning "FLY TOGETHER", and as a nation they united in demonstration against Austro-Hungarian cultural and political repression.

The Sokol movement grew, and the tradition of worker's mass performances symbolized a particular brand of socialism that lurked just below the surface of Czech life right through the First World War. It culminated in 1921 with a Sokol demonstration of unprecedented size, called "Spartakiad", after the Greek gladiator, Spartacus, who was said to have led a successful slave rebellion against Rome in 71 B.C.

Czechoslovakia fell under Nazi rule during WWII, but despite its Sokol-inspired will to fend off the intruder, it was liberated only when the Soviety Red Army pushed the Germans back in early 1945. From that point on, Czechoslovakia's Spartakiad became—like every other aspect of life—a tool to be manipulated for the greater good of international socialism.

Indeed, the USSR had itself quickly copied the 1921 Spartakiad at home, even as the still-capitalist government of Czechoslovakia had outlawed it. But by 1948, when the Communists seized ultimate control in Prague, Moscow saw the wisdom of bringing back the Spartakiad—with a significant change: All references to Sokol were banished, replaced by notions of pride and allegiance more amenable with Soviet ideals.

Now, the Soviets could capitalize on the already-existing structure of physical education in Czechoslovakia, to further implement a massive physical culture program upon which to forge a new society. They staged the mass displays as proof that the party had support and approval. There was, however, one essential difference: Participation was no longer voluntary.

The scope of Spartakiad 85, as both a demonstration of physical vigor and socialist co-operation, is a shining symbol of how successfully the Communists have used an







existing ideology to serve their own interests. In order for the entire Czech population to have embraced physical fitness after WWII, sport was no longer seen as a pastime but as an essential need. This mass acceptance could not have been engineered without the full use of the powers and resources of universities, institutions, factories, trade unions, and social organizations. Programs were developed around the homelife and the workplace so that everyone would become responsible for the physical fitness of the nation.

Today, it seems these ideals are almost unchallenged in Czechoslovakia, where calisthenics are a common feature of daily life. Spartakiad represents the high flowering of those ideals, a rare celebrational expression of the artistry behind the everyday ritual of exercise; sport as religion.

Indeed, the thousands who make up the kaleidoscopic atoms of Strahov Stadium are a kind of elect. Preparations for Spartakiad participants begin a year in advance. However, the theme and choreography have already been developed by three "authors", gymnastic instructors who have been selected from a field of hundreds. Instructors then teach the movement to groups across the country-in schools, union halls, army parade grounds, universities, factories, social youth leagues, and recreation centres. Municipal and regional competitions are then held in mini-Spartakiads around the country. In all, one million participants are narrowed down to the 160,000 who proudly troop onto the field in Prague.

By then, each composition requires only one final rehearsal, which is concentrated merely on the task of moving on and off the field guided by patterned steel disks. The routine itself is not practiced at this stage, even though the final group of up to 14,000 has come together for the first time.

By the time the 200,000 spectators have taken their \$7.00 seats, the scale of the event becomes overwhelming. What first seems to be a logistic impossibility soon takes on the appearance of clockwork. As the French painter Fernand Leger wrote, upon viewing the post-war Spartakiad in Prague, "When I was told that the mass exercises lasted more than four hours each day, I was horrified at the prospect. Good Lord, how could I endure this! Yet I did, so magnificent was this spectacle. The colours, the unending variety of the groups, the symphony of the tanned bodies moving in a single rhythm...

Forty years later, the magnificence of the Spartakiad has not dulled. There is something about seeing such large numbers moving in unison that remains unforgettable. Even as a Western tourist, inside the Eastern bloc for only a few weeks, I found the degree of co-operation and friendship to be spine-tingling. Yet almost imperceptibly a resentment began building that left me quite numb by the end of the two-day programme. The dazzling interplay of form was overwhelmed by the blatancy of the content. The lack of subtlety in meaning was like being hit over the head with a hammer, and possibly a sickle.

The pure co-operative spirit at the heart of

Spartakiad seems tainted when viewed as an adjunct of Soviet ideology. A ceremony which sprang from Czechoslovakia's own nascent form of socialism now symbolizes a far different brand. One is wary of the levels of revisionism that make it almost impossible to know what is going on in the minds and hearts of these outwardly joyful Czechs. Are they, in fact, as the programme notes explain, celebrating 40 years of "liberation" under the Soviets? Is it simply the exhilaration of national pride? Or are these people happy just because they get a few days off work and a free trip to the Gothic city of Prague?

Ultimately, Spartakiad unites sport, society, and politics in a way that most Westerners would view with considerable suspicion. Ironically, though, I had only recently returned to Canada when a friend summoned me to the television to watch a peculiar special about Spartakiad being aired during a football halftime on the Canadian Television Network. CTV President of Sports Johnny Esaw was speaking with Canada's Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, Otto Jelinek. Esaw hailed Czechoslovakia's Spartakiad, making enthusiastic overtures to have the Minister implement such a program in Canada.



Clearly there is a complex individual and collective reality. On the official side, the Spartakiad offers a solid foundation for controlling the masses. Unlike the West, where free leisure time is a reward for participation in society, Marxist ideology seeks to eliminate social evils by directing leisure toward constructive ends. By improving the fitness of the population it enhances their capacity for work, reduces sick time, and prolongs the working lifespan. Then, too, the mass physical demonstrations help foster a zest for military defense. It's no accident that the climax of the Spartakiad is provided by the largest performing group of all, the field of soldiers whose feats of gymnastic precision cause the previous civilian efforts to pale. Social control, labour, and defense: undeniably the Soviet-approved goal of the Czech sports movement since 1945.

On the human side, nevertheless, physical culture-even mass physical culture-must have its benefits. Judging from their enthusiasm, the Czechs seems to derive considerable satisfaction from their ritualized recreation. It offers a rewarding area of relaxation where the imagination is at ease to distract, at the same time helping the individual to become more resilient against the pressures of a highly disciplined industrial society. Here, there is little means of escape into pop culture or religious ceremony. It also helps to re-integrate those who have been uprooted socially and geographically, and it permits a rare bit of pleasant camaraderie outside the vodka bar.

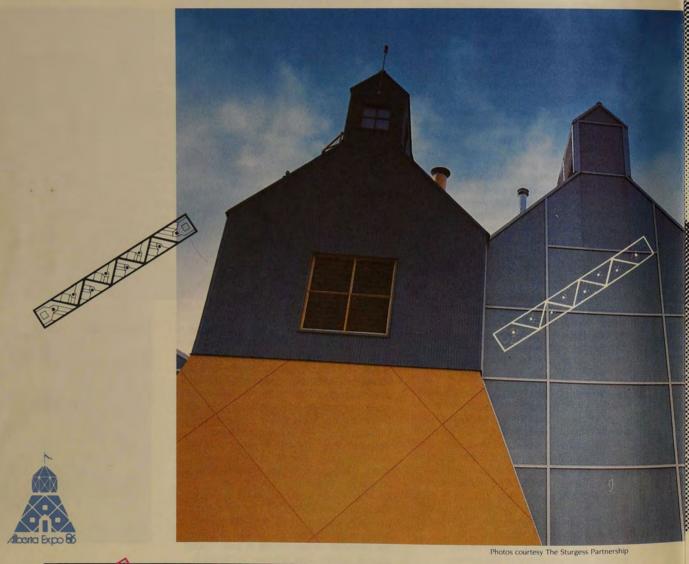


Yet Jelinek did no more than agree that it might be a wonderful idea. The Minister shied away from committing to such a potentially volatile aspect of the larger issue, that of mixing sport with politics, a debate that continues to rage in the West.

On the other hand, it might be argued that we are already heading toward Spartakiads of our own. The corporate fitness workout, the 5:15 session at the aerobics club, pumping in time to a video drill sergeant; our own habits are not that far removed from the synchronized masses of Strahov Stadium.

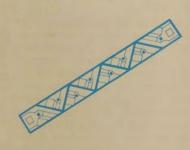
In a world many believe is getting weaker, sicker, and uglier, it would appear that the pursuit of strength, health, and beauty strikes a global chord \blacksquare

SURPRISE! ALBERTA SHOWS OFF ANOTHER FACE











designer Gary Andrishak of the Alberta he wanted the world to see at Vancouver's Expo 86. Remarkably, Alberta bureaucrats agreed. Over a field of 68 competitors they chose this quirky, contemporary building that Andrishak created alongside his colleagues at The Sturgess Partnership in Calgary. And so far, at least, it's given all fairgoers an architectural landmark in a sea of modular construction. For other Canadians, the pavilion shows a whimsical and inventive side of Alberta that is seldom acknowledged outside of the province. And for Albertans themselves, it has provided the hallmark of an exhibitive success: controversy. On editorial pages and phone-in shows, the habitually bored square off against the habitually incensed. Happily, it's enthusiasm that's bubbling out on top. As one letter-writer put it: "In the two years I've lived in Alberta, this is the first time I've ever been proud of the

place." Hip. Hip. Hooray▼



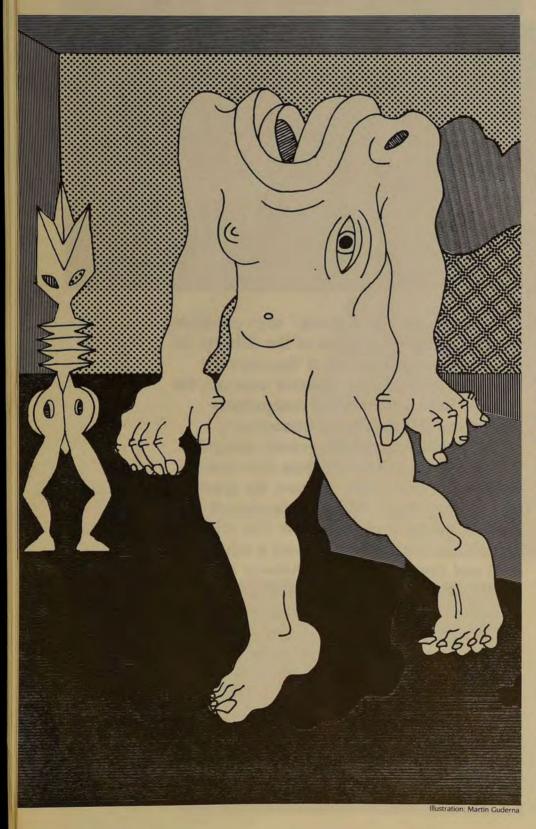
Uniforms designed by Bente Pilgaard



From The Man With Flowers Through His Hands, by Michael Bullock, published in 1985 by Melmoth Publications. Bullock is the author of twelve volumes of poetry, seven of fiction, and two plays. He retired from the University of British Columbia's Creative Writing Department, where he holds the rank of Professor Emeritus. In addition to having his own novels translated into many different languages, Bullock has translated around one hundred and fifty books and plays from French, German and Italian.

THE MAN WHO LOVED RUSTY IRON

by Michael Bullock



A man greatly attached to rusty iron was hunting around among the nettles beside a barn. Coming upon an old plough he dragged it out into the open. No sooner was it revealed in all its red corrosion than the man fell deeply in love with it. With some difficulty he dragged it to his house, where he placed it in the centre of his front garden. Every day at sunrise and sunset, when it was at its reddest, he stood admiring it. One morning he observed to his amazement that the plough had thrust out root-like extensions into the soil. From that moment on the plough appeared visibly larger every time he looked at it. Finally it towered above the roof of his house, which in fact was no more than a cottage. The man knew that there was some action he was now called upon to perform. A moment's reflection revealed what it was. He climbed up to the highest point of the plough and stationed himself upon it like a flagstaff, holding in his hands, like a flag, a tea

Having received this crowning touch, the former plough changed into an equally rusty ship and moved off past the cottage, past the barn beside which the man had found it, to a disused and largely dried-up canal, through tall bulrushes and clusters of osiers, breaking through every obstacle that stood in its way, including old wooden bridges and even, when necessary, brick bridges carrying roads.

Eventually its destructive but inexorable progress brought the ship to the confluence between the old, disused canal down which it had sailed and a larger, still actively flowing waterway.

The ship launched itself out into the water, but such was its rusty and dilapidated condition that it quickly sank to the bottom, leaving only its human flagstaff and its tea towel flag showing above the surface.

The man and his humble flag quickly became a landmark in the area and were, of course, the means of saving other vessels from running aground on the sunken ship upon which the man was standing.

When he finally disintegrated and sank beneath the water along with the tattered remnants of his makeshift flag, the skippers of the vessels he had saved from disaster erected a monument to his memory which was, at the same time, a warning of the sunken ship on which it stood

Thus the man's understandable affection for rusty iron gained him a well-deserved immortality. His is an example we might all follow to our advantage, or wherever our own particular canal may lead

From No Fixed Address: an amorous journey, by Aritha van Herk, published this year by McClelland and Stewart. In 1978, van Herk won the \$50,000 Seal Book First Novel Award for Judith, and has since achieved international prominence. This is van Herk's third novel. She is Associate Professor of English at the University of Calgary.

ANOTHER INCURSION BETWEEN TOMES

by Aritha van Herk

"Books," says Arachne. "Let's go shopping. I need to buy Thomas a book of maps and I don't know how to read. You can help me find it."

So they take the Mercedes and end up on Seventeenth buying bagels. "There's a bookstore down the street," says Thena. "Let's try that."

Through its glass windows the store looks crowded, but they push the door open. A hushed and shifting crowd stands listening to a man read.

"Oh no," says Arachne, "not again. This happened the last time I got near books."

"Wait," hisses Thena, "isn't he that famous poet, the one who writes all those filthy poems about women?"

"I don't care," says Arachne. "Let's go."

But Thena has already wedged her way between attentive backs and Arachne can only say "Shit" under her breath. She settles her rear on a ledge of coffee-table books where she can stare out the window while she waits. The poet is reading poems all right. His voice rises into passion and desperation, descends to gloom and cynicism. Arachne squints at the shoppers passing on the sidewalk, their necks pulled into their collars, their breath hostile. She twitches, she digs the wax out of her ears, she looks through a book of antique cars and is almost ready to leave Thena there when the poet's voice stops and the standing audience applauds.

She finds Thena with a glass of wine in one hand and an oyster impaled on a toothpick in the other. "Let's go."

"Not yet. We showed up just in time. Have some wine."

"How come the wine?"

"Oh, they're launching this guy's new book of poetry. Got to spill some wine on it"

Arachne helps herself to a liberal glass and a chunk of cheese. The poet is autographing his book for people, tossing back hair and witticisms while he scrawls his name on the flyleaf. He is approached with coyness, mostly by women, who ask him, "Would you mind, just say to..."

"He shouldn't mind," says Arachne to Thena. "They're all buying his book."

"That's the idea." She sniggers. "He was every bit as bad as I thought he was."

"How come?"

"Couldn't you hear? Women are nothing but—"

"Fauns, angels, gold, waterfalls, rice, birds, windows, daydreams, trumpets, jewels, knives, caves, fortresses, bridges, accordions, cookies, chalk, teeth, can openers, grasshoppers, hourglasses, idols, bread, lagoons, magnets, lightning, meadows, mountains, motorcycles, oracles, ninnies, songs, umbrellas, volumes, tomes, they are the penultimate muse." The poet has run out of breath. "How did you like my poetry?" he says to Arachne.

"I couldn't hear."

"Humphh," says Thena. "It's typical. Masculine view of the world."

He grins at Arachne. "Do you think so?" She shrugs, takes a swig of wine.

"Women are muses. Our whole life is spent trying to understand them, praise them, capture them, worship them, win them, overwhelm them, love them—"

"Destroy them." Thena is not deflected by the poet's concentration on Arachne. "You're no different."

"And you love it," says the poet.

"Humphh. That's what you think, that's what you want to believe."

"What do you think?" he says to Arachne again.

She shrugs. "I dunno."

"Raki," says Thena. "You know what happens. Huh. Either we're rocking them on our laps or keeping the world a holy place or dressing up in black underwear"—here she jabs Arachne with her elbow—"to get them excited. It's all a hoax,

The poet throws back his head and laughs. He has good teeth, he's proud of them, it's his vanity over his teeth that prevents him from smoking a pipe. "I see. You're the straight man and she's the executioner. Here, let me give you a copy of my book. You can use my poems as examples."

He scribbles his name and holds the book out; neither Thena nor Arachne reach for it and he finally thrusts it toward Thena. "You'll get lots of use out of it, so take it. Enjoy."

He moves away and Arachne says, "You've made a conquest."

"Not me, you, with your deliberate refusal to listen. He loves women that play hard to get."

The poet is back with a bottle. "May I?"
Thena holds out her glass. "Sure. It will
make the conversation go down better."

Arachne laughs and joins her. "Why not? Didn't think drinking had anything to do with books."

"Oh, it does," says the poet seriously, "very much indeed. Where would we be without the grape to inspire us? Are you a poet?"

"Me? No, I'm a sales rep."

"An underwear salesman," says Thena viciously.

"You're making it up."

"Oh no."

"And you?"

"I'm a housewife par excellence. Firstclass, neurotic, valium-motivated, divorced, tied to two bratty kids and mad as hell. And it's all your fault."

"I didn't do anything."

"That's what they all say. Come the revolution every one of the men on trial is going to say, 'Me? I didn't do anything. I'm a nice guy.'"

"And you're going to be Madame Defarge with your needles and your black wool keeping track."

"Right. Off with his head."

"Who's Madame Defarge?" asks Arachne.

"Oh, innocence. You should stay away from your friend here, she'll corrupt you."

"I've already tried," says Thena gloomily.
"It doesn't work. She won't cooperate."

All three drain their glasses and Thena says, "Well, Raki, let's go. I need to buy a clock. All my clocks are out of joint."

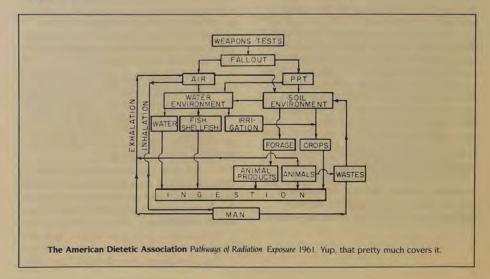
"I'm in town for a few days," says the poet. "Can I take you for dinner?"

Thena looks at him in disbelief. "Not on your life."

He looks at Arachne. "What about you?" Arachne shakes her head. "I don't know anything about poetry."

"I don't care."

"But she does," says Thena, taking Arachne's arm. "Come on, Arachne, let's get out of here before he really turns on the charm. Thanks for the book. See you at the guillotine."



"Contraception and Childbirth", a chapter from The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier 1880-1930, by Dr. Eliane Leslau Silverman, published by Eden Press in 1984. Dr. Silverman is Professor and Coordinator of Women's Studies at the University of Calgary and a frequent lecturer.

SEX AND NON-SEX ON THE FRONTIER

by Eliane Silverman

Marriage meant children. Women normally expected that babies would follow soon after the wedding. Whether the marriage was satisfying or not, the major source of women's identity in the frontier world lay in the children they bore and raised. A traditional, if profoundly limiting, means of defining women was by their function. What were women for? Quite clearly, one of the answers was that women were for having children. Women themselves accepted their procreative function as their first purpose, assuming that giving birth and raising children validated their existence in society. No matter what else they might do, this raison d'etre transcended in importance their economic, creative, or political capacities. Indeed, their activities in other realms tended to become meaningful only in conjunction with their generativity. Raising children was itself creative; they engaged in political activities to make better homes and better families; they worked and produced for their families. When women were defined as function, their activities could be subsumed within the survival, and perhaps the triumph, of their family. They continued to marry, bear children, and offer their hands and their hearts for their families.

So it might seem. In fact, the women with whom I talked provided some evidence that they were seeking, even if only unconsciously, some control over their bodies, their labour and their lives. They did not acquiesce in bearing as many children as their reproductive cycles would allow, nor even as many as might be useful in a labour-short society. When limiting birth, as many of them tried to do, they were attempting to give shape to one part of their lives, to order events by a conscious imposition of will. While social disapproval, medical mismanagement, or unpredictable fertility might defeat their attempts, contraception and abortion were a major, and sometimes subversive, way for women to assert, even if only to themselves in a whisper, that they had selves that might exist apart from their generative function.

I often found that discussions of birth control had to proceed rather delicately. I came to believe that the inhibitions about the practice and the discussion of contraception lay precisely in the subversive aspect of that act of taking control.

Women spoke discreetly and often with caution of their own or their neighbours' attempts at controlling births. Knowing that their actions defied not only acceptable standards, but even more intensely, definitions of women, they were slow to discuss birth control, reluctant even to discuss what they had heard about the subject.

Many women, in fact, had heard very little about contraception. Abortion and birth control, and even distributing information about them, were illegal. Doctors were loathe to direct women towards family limitation; certainly single women, as far as I can discern, could not hope for their advice. Nevertheless, despite inadequate sources, women sought information from neighbours, from relatives, from magazines, and sometimes from husbands (especially in the case of Jewish women, whose husbands brought with them from Russia some knowledge of the condom). Women sought that information, though few of them found helpful answers and. like Dorothy King, expressed both resignation and frustration.

¬¬¬ For my part nowadays I think two [children] are enough. There wasn't any such thing then. It seems it was our lot. My grandmother had quite a funny saying. She used to say, "The good Lord taught us how to have children but he didn't tell us how not to have them.

The women who attempted "not to have them" used a variety of contraceptive methods, including the diaphragm (which they obtained with difficulty), prolonged nursing of babies, condoms, withdrawal, and abstinence.

∇∇∇ Most of the people used the rhythm method. There was a diaphragm too, and different jellies that were supposed to help. The doctors weren't supposed to tell you. One doctor would say, "There are methods that some doctors can give you," but he wasn't equipped to give it. After my son was born he told me, "This has got to be your last. I won't guarantee your life if you have another one." I read certain American magazines at the time. I read about different ways; this jelly, and some tablets, and some kind of ring. I wrote my cousin in the States and asked her about it, and she told me what to do. I went to this doctor in Calgary and he fitted me. I went to a drug store in Calgary to buy a rubber diaphragm; no drugstore here in Canmore had those things. If I knew, probably lots of others knew too, because there was an awful lot of people in town that only had a small family.

∇∇∇ One family that only had two children, the woman wasn't too well, so they didn't have them. Another woman I knew when I was quite young nursed her baby until she was four years old so she wouldn't have another one. With me that wouldn't have worked at all.

▽▽▽ A family of seven children seemed unusual. I think there were a lot of Scottish people in our area, and it seems to me they're more restrained, with the Presbyterian upbringing.

There was no sex talk, no birth control talk, nothing. I never heard it. Maybe people asked their doctors. Also, the men knew more. The men knew what to do from the time they're kids. They talked about it. One friend of mine had only two sons. Of course, her husband wasn't very faithful to her, so maybe,...

VVV They didn't know any better. There was one lady that was well known, who wrote books—oh, Margaret Sanger. [A crusader for birth control.] I know my mother didn't want so many. Once she went to see a doctor who gave her some medicine to take, and she did lose the baby. The last baby she had was born dead. She nearly died with it, too. Myself, my health went between my second and third. Then we got smarter. Somebody sent some safes in the mail. I don't know who gave our name. We used them a while, but I was ashamed to go and buy them in the drugstore.

▽▽▽ We had our birth control: when we were out working, we didn't feel like having sex. We were too tired. You hear about families with thirteen children; that lady must not have gone to work.

∇∇∇ When I was ten there was another baby. In the meantime there was at least one miscarriage that I remember. I remember coming home from school. Mom being in bed, and the doctor being there. Mom never told us the facts of life in so many words, but rather in general conversation. We didn't learn it from animals because if anything like that was happening, my father wouldn't allow us around the barns. But Mom told it in telling her life story, and of course, having two older sisters, I learned a lot of it that way. But that time I seemed to know what had happened without being told. She was a person who didn't have regular periods, and she'd be three months pregnant and wouldn't know it. This made it very difficult for the old-fashioned method of birth control. Too, Father was opposed to birth control, and even at the times when he agreed, like to the French safe, I don't think he carried it out. He was a very sexual man. Well, what I'm saying is, he's still alive, and old!

VVV You know, I think that for a lot of the women, sex was a mechanical thing, where they didn't look at it as we do now as a form of love. I think a woman looked at it as something that a husband had to have regardless of love or emotion, but also, if she was a strong-minded woman she could say no and not feel that she was depriving him. My husband's mother was a very poor English person. She had to get married; they had one child. Then when she came out here there was another, and another one two years later. From then on, he was locked out of her bedroom. Of course, she didn't like him anyway, but it made it easy. It was easy for women who hadn't built a real relationship.



Arthur Nishimura P.B. Silver print. 1985. Born in Lethbridge, Alberta, Arthur Nishimura is an instructor of photography at the University of Calgary. He is currently working on a book about the Old Man River with naturalist Andy Russell. Nishimura's work is available at the Folio Gallery in Calgary.

VVV This is why there were more unknown mistresses on the side. And with the rhythm system so unsafe, the women must have sensed that their husbands were going to a prostitute. There was no open prostitution in Calgary like in later years but, my goodness, the bank manager was having affairs and another old geezer was sitting in the show feeling every young girl's legs.

VVV Back then, a man or woman could go through their whole life and not experience it, and not do them any harm. But now, in our modern day, you wouldn't dare admit you hadn't had an experience: you're looked on as pretty odd. I think that sex was not as important then.

Most Catholic women agreed that contraception was not socially or religiously acceptable; yet even she evinced a kind of stubbornness over the control of her body, at least after having given birth to five children.

Contraception cannot be discussed without adding abortion to the methods of limiting births. Whether legal or illegal, women have always resorted to this method. Its illegality seemed never to inhibit its use, although it certainly increased its danger and intensified women's fear and guilt. Talk of contraception often moved imperceptibly towards discussion of abortion as a necessary method of birth control.

∇∇∇ In my day, nobody knew much about birth control. It was just like a secret. You might get it in a book; I used to ask a nurse I knew what it was all about. All she told me was this rhythm method because she was a Catholic. So I tried to follow that. That ovulation I just couldn't understand. I was thirty-eight when I had change of life. I had six children. Some of the other Metis women knew more than me. I guess the priests didn't approve, but the women figured that's the Indian way, not the white man's way. They used a black bag, from the bladder of a bear. They'd dry it, then mix it with some liquid, and then they'd lose the baby. There must be medicine in that. They figure that's okay. It's from the land and they figure it didn't do any harm. Well, the priest didn't know it.

∇∇∇ My parents must have practiced some kind of contraception because my mother had seven children, two of whom died, but they were married when Mother was barely twenty. So there was a lot of time to have had more. Once I came across a condom in my father's vest pocket. In fact, ours was a larger family than most in the '20s, so people must have talked about it more than they'll admit. There was probably more abstinence too than there is now. And once, when I was about twelve, I went to a knitting class. I could hear two women talking about something, very hush-hush; one of them was saying to another, "She used a knitting needle." I remember thinking that the way they were talking would probably cease if they knew I was listening. I knew it was something adult.

∇∇∇ This woman had done something to herself with a knitting needle. She had a miscarriage, but she was flowing and flowing. She got weaker and weaker. She got so weak you'd think she was wax. I said, "Tom she's dying." I took a basin, washed her face, put a dress on her. We had to carry her to the car, where we put pillows. She nearly died in the hospital. They didn't have blood plasma like now. She was in the hospital two or three weeks. It wasn't the first time; I guess she had already done that before. She didn't have any more children after that. I think they used to watch, you know what I mean? When they had intercourse he would probably just take it out. That's the only way we were doing it, and I got so that my heart wasn't in it.

VVV Some people got things from their doctor. They had tampons; I don't know what they were made of, but they had slippery elm bark and some other things in them. Or they'd take huge doses of Lydia Pinkham pills, and of course they had ergot. Doctors performed abortions, too. I know that they did, ever since I can remember. When I was in high school, about 1915, they used to go down to Great Falls, Montana. I remember a doctor friend of mine saying, "I wish to God I could close that clinic down there and start one here. The girls don't get proper care down there ■

From Sandinista: A Novel of Nicaragua, by Marie Jacober. Published in 1985 by New Star Books Ltd., it won an Alberta Writer's Guild Award. Ms. Jacober is also the author of another novel, The Mind Gods. She lives and works in Calgary.

GOOD LUCK, SENORITA

by Marie Jacober

These were not clouds like any Jadine had known. They were not layered, like clouds at home, but bunched instead into pillars vaster than mountains, utterly motionless, filled by the high sun with a thousand shades of shifting light. The plane moved among them without haste and without effort. Here everything was insubstantial; the wingtips passed through cathedral walls as a sword through a shadow.

If she had been happy she would have thought it magical, would have given herself over to fantasies of queens and beasts of legend, would have given names to the translucent temples and peopled the thundersky with gods.

Once she would have done that, but it was not possible any more. There were no gods left, unless they were gods of nightmare. Down below, in that scrunched-paper landscape laced with rivers, too far for any eye to see and too close for any mind to bear, young men in trim green uniforms were searching for people to kill. They were not particular; almost anyone would do. And back in Kerry Heights, Pennsylvania, her brother had been buried at the crossroads.

"Look." The man beside her, the Panamanian, smiled and gestured toward a small city coming up fast on their left. "Chinandega. We will arrive very soon."

Chinandega. It was only a name to her, a spot on the map she had pored over before she left. She knew nothing about it, or about any of these places with curious names that sounded as if they should be Spanish but were mostly Indian. Jinotega. Esteli. Matagalpa. Matagalpa—the loveliest mountain resort in Central America, the man from Panama said, until the guerrillas ruined it.

"I use to really like Nicaragua." He had told her that at least three times since they left Mexico City. He always spoke English, even though her Spanish was very good. "It was...how do you say?... muy sencillo ...a simple life here, you know. People were happy. But now..." He sighed and shrugged as it seemed only Latin Americans could, a gesture that could brush away a leaf or comment on the whole of human history. "Now I do not come here except on business. Last summer I go with my daughters to Poneloya, to the beach, and when they play in the water they find three...cadaveres...I do not know in English ... '

"Cadavers," she said. "It's the same in English."

"No," he said. "You have another word."
"Corpses."

"Yes, yes, corpses. They find three corpses. All cut up. A terrible thing for a child to see. Terrible. I do not bring my family here any more."

Years ago—the Viet Nam years—she would have asked him what about the children who lived here? Wasn't it terrible for them and did he ever think about that? But that was years ago. Now she just wanted him to talk about something else.

He picked that up quickly. He was gallant. He talked about all sorts of things and she found herself not listening, found herself remembering the oak-panelled office lined with books and smelling faintly of fine incense, the dignified priest with artist's hands explaining why the Church could not bury her brother in sacred ground.

Her mother understood. Even her father, who didn't like priests much and went to church only when he had to, understood. Everyone understood. It was a question of fundamental moral principles. Holy ground was holy ground. You could lie and steal and commit murder; you could eat or drink or work yourself to death; you could grow fat with so many sins that you wouldn't fit an ordinary coffin. But they'd wrap you in flowers all the same, and march you down Assumption's broad aisle, all in their best black with the organ straining at the windows to let the stench out; and they'd give you a good clean hole at seventy-five dollars a square foot and pray you into paradise. You could do damn near anything and they'd tuck you in like a good Christian when you died.

What you could not do was walk out onto McKinley Bridge at three a.m. and feel the cold that came from the water and the steel mills and the remorseless eyes of cars that came from nowhere and passed into nothing; what you could not do was stand there and look at it all and say fuck you and walk into the river. You couldn't do that and expect a decent burial. It was a question of principle.

She became aware of silence and turned guiltily. The Panamanian was watching her, looking puzzled rather than offended.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I was distracted."

"No matter." He smiled. "You are expected, yes? Someone will meet you?"

She smiled inwardly at all the implications in that. And then kicked herself. He was a nice man. Maybe he was just being nice.

"Yes," she said. "I'm expected. I have relatives here."

"Ah. You are part nica then."

She looked up sharply. She had never thought of it that way. Her Nicaraguan grandmother came to the States to study music, married Pennsylvania Irish, and died young. The Hall clan of Kerry Heights had a lot of exotic relatives scattered around the world, to whom it sent occasional Christmas cards and from whom it received an occasional visit. But it never thought of itself as anything but American.

"The nicas are good people," he said. He paused, glancing out the window as the plane slowed and circled. "They will soon put an end to this nonsense of revolution. You will see."

Soon? That surprised her a little; she thought they already had. She'd read Time and Newsweek and all the papers faithfully until she left-mainly to calm her family's hysteria. The press rarely mentioned Nicaragua. A back issue she'd picked up in the library told of a big sweep made last winter against the Sandinista guerrillas. They had killed the guerrilla leader -killed him and taken pictures of him laid out under a mango tree, and chopped off his fingers (some said it was his head) to send back to Managua as proof; she couldn't remember his name. It seemed quite clear that the revolution, such as it was, had been crushed. The government under President Somoza had just ended a three-year state of siege-though, of course, the reprisals still went on. Mopping up, they called it. That got mentioned now and then. Priest Claims Seven Peasant Families Massacred-two columninches on page 37, next to Jackie's flu. Mopping up. Cleaning out the AP/UPI trash bin.

"I thought it was over, more or less," she said. "There's been nothing in the papers for weeks."

Her companion smiled, just a little but with a lot of irony. "The papers do not understand Latin America very well." He didn't say whose papers. He didn't have to. "It is better here now. Very much better. But it is not over."

She considered that, less troubled by what he told her than by the fact that he had needed to. It was amazing, she thought. You knew you could not believe the media. You knew it like you knew your own name, yet every time they caught you off guard, you believed them anyway.



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"So there's still a lot of fighting, then?" she said.

He shrugged. "To fight much you must be...numeroso...you must have many people. The guerrilleros are few, two or three hundred, no more. But there is still very much subversion."

The distinction was less than clear to her, but she did not pursue it. They were landing. The Lake of Managua dipped into view and swung away again as though a child spun it on a rope. She caught her first sight of the city, Managua, scattered, weed-grown, not a city at all but a huge, permanent encampment, dusty in the sun and muddy in the rain, hot and clamourous and violent. And she was, finally, afraid.

The hot wind hit her instantly as she stepped off the plane, whipping her hair into her eyes and pinning her skirt against her legs as though it were made of canvas. The air was cleaner than she had ever imagined air to be and the light was liquid, drowning everything. The Panamanian carried her tote into the terminal and said goodbye to her in the customs line.

"Good luck, senorita. I hope you will be happy here."

She smiled and thanked him. You couldn't tell such a nice gentleman that the very idea was ridiculous, that happiness was the last thing on your mind. Even though he should have known, should have guessed that you didn't come to a place like this in order to be happy.

Precisely why you did, though, wasn't at all clear. You wonder about it while four cousins talk at you at once and the car jolts and veers through streets that amaze and bewilder you with their undirection, with their sheer weight of visual contradiction—streets of shacks and streets of riches and streets of weeds; walls and fences scrawled with paint, with harsh twisted letters screaming at the sky: DEATH TO SOMOZA! FSLN. POWER TO THE PEOPLE! FSLN. PATRIA LIBRE O MORIR! Free homeland or death. FSLN.

It stands for Sandinista National Liberation Front; that much you know for sure, and you remember the professor who said that he had never heard of a national liberation front that was either national or liberating, or in front of anything at all. You never liked him and you don't necessarily agree, but the graffiti offends you. It reminds you of Viet Nam: ten long years of dying for Ia patria and killing for Ia patria and all I want for Christmas is my M-16...

No one in the car mentions the existence of a revolution, but you stop at a red light and in a vacant lot beside the road is a smashed car, stripped to the skeleton, laced with bullet holes. You know the Panamanian was right—that it's far from over. You pass ten, maybe fifteen military vehicles, some of them mounted with machine guns and mortars, all of them bristling with men who seem ready to shoot at anything that moves.

You will not be happy here. You didn't come for that. But for what then, to this place of death and light?▼

From in the second person, a book of poems by Smaro Kamboureli published in 1985 by Longspoon Press. Kamboureli is presently completing her doctoral dissertation on the contemporary long poem in Canada. She is also co-editor, along with Shirley Neuman, of a collection of essays called Writing Canadian Women Writing, to be published this fall by NeWest and Longspoon.

AN OPEN PARENTHESIS

by Smaro Kamboureli

July 7, 1977: at the International Airport in Athens I board a Pan-American flight to New York City. I can already envision my homecoming. I will come back from the States with a graduate degree in American literature, with an understanding of American culture, with a greater competence in the English language. As I take a last look at the Greek landscape, nostalgia is already my invisible companion. It embraces both my past and my future. My present is practically non-existent. I am up in the air. My farewell rituals culminated a week prior to my departure date. I burnt my diary, the beginning of an aborted novel called A World of Silence which I had started when I was sixteen, and pages of bad prose poems heavily influenced by my reading of the French surrealists and symbolists during my high school years. I now think of this act of burning as a betrayal of myself, but a week ago it seemed to be a way of erasing personal traces, traces of language, whose absence could set me free and open to receive what is on the other side of the ocean. No matter what that burning in the kitchen sink meant, it was a gesture that defined me through language. It was the written word I was after. For the written word has always been after me. Playing hide-andseek with one's mother tongue is one of the many ways of adopting a second language, of entering into the labyrinth of Language.

August 1, 1978: I haven't seen myself off to Greece yet. Instead, I cross the American border at Fort Erie and enter Canada. I carry in my purse my passport and the journal I kept the past year, a journal written in broken English. English words put together in Greek syntactical patterns.

December 5, 1983: Winnipeg is my home. I am writing my dissertation on the Canadian long poem. I am married to a Canadian. I dream in English. I write in English. And I've become a landed immigrant today. A status that legalizes my feelings about this city, about Canada, that allows me to live permanently where I already feel at home. But this permanence is provisional. I inhabit a plain that has many edges.

ii

This is the first time I used the word immigrant with reference to myself. This word hits me in the face and in the heart. It ejects me from what I cannot leave (my past/my Greek language), and throws me into a place that constantly excludes me

on the principle of difference. My ideas, my habits, my amorous moods, my temperament are, quite often, not seen as expressions of me, but as specimens of the Greek stereotype I am supposed to represent. How can I explain that, although I am a Macedonian like Aristotle, I am not a mimetic being, a signified brand. I am expected to be homogeneous at the expense of my personal heterogeneity. I've said "No" to those who invited me to recite Homer by heart. I've given no response to those who described to me, very vividly, the dirty washrooms they visited in the small island towns of Greece.

iii

Immigration is a form of abjection. It is a desire for a yet unknown object, a desire that kills its subject. I sit beside myself in everyday life. I look over my shoulder when I write. I said that I'm at home here. Yes, but I don't feel at home with myself. My immigrant condition affords me the (perverse?) pleasure of a doubled view. My language is the window that looks onto my home and into my homelessness. My language knows no boundaries. It does not express the geography that puts labels on writing, speech, thought.

iv

It is perhaps natural for Canadians born in this country to want to trace their origins, to visit the places their ancestors left behind a long time ago, to try to learn the language of a past they didn't live. It is definitely difficult for recent immigrants who came over to Canada with their families, or left their countries as refugees, to cope with their duality, to measure both the old and the new country. But it is almost impossible for me to practise these measuring tactics, these acts of discovery. I am an immigrant here without a family; I am an immigrant who left my country not out of deprivation or disillusion. To look back would mean for me to undergo an Orphic journey, to marry the possibility of a re-encounter with my past, to be lost in the shades of a world that cannot absorb me now, to be caressed by memories that belong to my other. For I am not the same person I was on July 7, 1977. I am what I've become after I got lost in the open space of the Canadian prairies. I am what Canadians have made of me, those anonvmous faces that turn toward me when they hear my accent (not my voice), those friends who embraced me and my otherness together.

v

Writing in broken English does not mean translating from one language into another. It is instead a translation of contrasting systems of perception, a simultaneous rendering of the past and the present. Broken English is written in the rhythm of a being that lives beneath language. This being exists through violent silence, instinctual knowledge, restlessness. Its language is the bastard child of the coming together of two selves, of two geographies, of two languages. This being suspends itself on the edge of dying and of giving birth. It has an aleatory nature, for it is constantly becoming its other, what it is not, what it can be, ultimately, what it is being

GENERALITIES & SPECIFICS

STORY

CAVEAT SCRIPTOR

by Billy Little

hen I was a naive and callow youth, I started writing novels to make the moola to support my poetry writing habit. For a couple of years I was represented by a powerhouse agent at the second largest literary agency in the world, but my third

literary agency in the world, but my third novel earned me a big and final farewell: "It may be the generation gap, Bill," she wrote me, "but I believe in beginnings, middles, and ends, complete sentences." Another of life's cruel little lessons. Contrary to popular belief, novel writing is not the path to quick and easy riches.

To make a short sad tale shorter and sadder. I haven't composed a novel in nearly nine years. I still write the odd story and think of myself as a fiction writer, but primarily I'm a poet known for my crazy poems, flamboyant dressing and hedonistic japery. Sometimes though, when I close my eyes, I can feel Dr. Zhivago trying to claw his way out the end of my fingertips.

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GENERALITIES & SPECIFICS

STORY CAVEAT SCRIPTOR

by Billy Little

hen I was a naive and callow youth, I started writing novels to make the moola to support my poetry writing habit. For a couple of years I was represented by a powerhouse agent at the second largest literary agency in the world, but my third novel earned me a big and final farewell: "It may be the generation gap, Bill," she wrote me, "but I believe in beginnings. middles, and ends, complete sentences." Another of life's cruel little lessons. Contrary to popular belief, novel writing is not the path to quick and easy riches.

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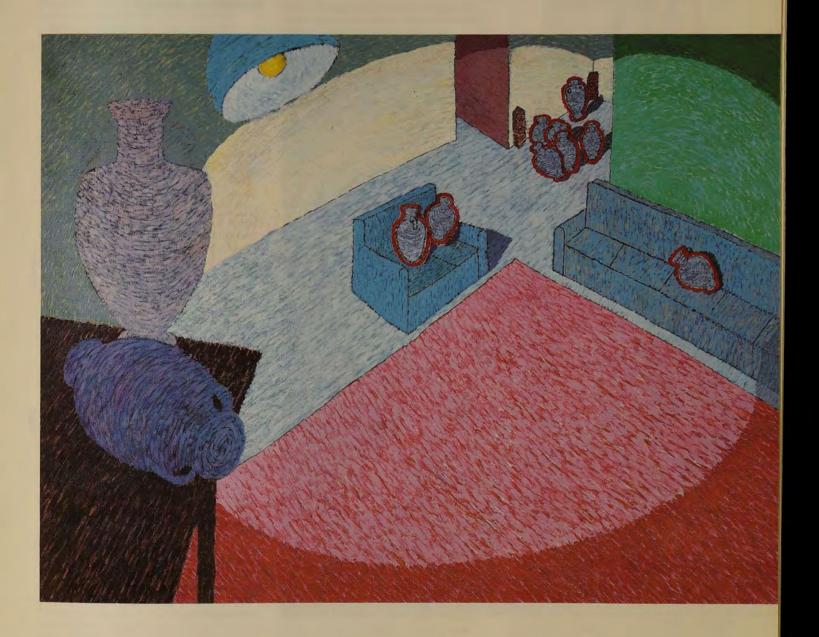
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ESSAY

BETWEEN WOMEN AND MUSCLES

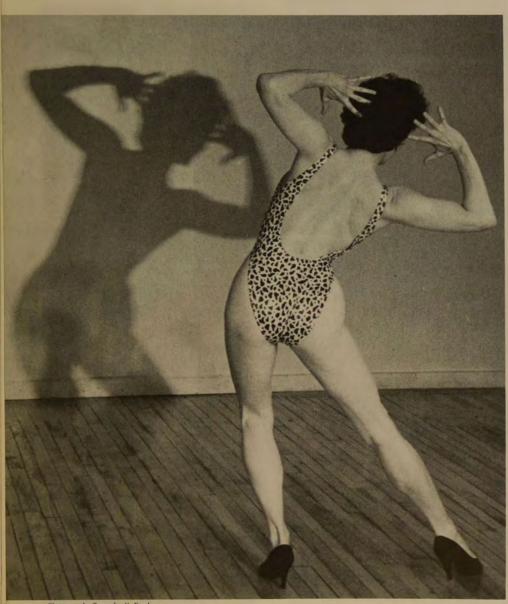
by Jean-Pierre Le Grand

uess what? Muscles are in again. After being shunned by the media for over a decade, the full-blown red-blooded fiber is back. Our sure sign is the fact that the Boss is wearing them in almost every picture you can find. In the years B.N. (Before Nautilus) he was just as scrawny as any...artist. And north of that flimsy border, our own Corey Hart shows off just as much of a positive, fleshy image. Bare coincidence?

Not that muscles are in just because Bruce Springsteen is wearing them. It actually happens the other way around. Those shapely lumps on his shoulders are part of an image, and you don't make it all the way to the top if *every* detail does not appeal (even if you do look absolutely natural, casual and comfortable). The fact is—the rippling North American Male is back. Back from Vietnam. Back from Feminism.

How is it that what was superficial and unsightly yesterday is now considered attractive? As usual, different stories can be told. The line of reasoning here is that mainstream *managed* the return of the muscle by recycling fringe subcultures: Namely those of punks, homosexuals, and both health and feminist movements.

With the banners of feminism and antimilitarism flying high in the last decade, the body went into transition. It could no longer be used as a show of brute strength, an object you paraded around in order to impress and dominate. The arrogant display of bulging biceps spelled aggression, all too clearly implying brutal conflict between weak and strong and between the sexes in particular. More symbolically, it echoed of conflict between nations. In a nutshell—image-makers had to deal with a new consciousness.



Photograph: Ormasby K. Ford

With the wind turning against him, Mr. Universe retreated to a very small, unobtrusive corner of the world (read: media). An era of enhanced physical consciousness was ushered in. Jogging, aerobics, yes. But there were also yoga, rebirth, stretching, rolfing, tantrism, shiatsu, karate, samahdi tanks...even walking took a new meaning. Seen as a stepping-stone from repressed feelings to consciousness, the body was opened to more all-purpose exploration. It became a field of heightened awareness, of personal research and development. tapped to free emotions, to awaken sensations that you could not buy. A mythical aura was transferred to the body-mind symbiosis. This episode is an essential aspect of what the media baptised-more or less sympathetically-the "Me Generation." Meanwhile, at the far end of the social spectrum there lay another, unexpected, influence.

Punks were born amidst the smoldering ruins of hippiedom (London, circa 1975). Their whole legacy: a lived-out, burnt-out Dream, a debt to history. No Future, they thought. So they went the opposite way. First they got rid of the tired, wilted flowers. the colours, and any remote reminder of the wildly optimistic vision that had made their forefathers and mothers so ecstatic for a while. Black is the way to go, and forget about those long necklaces and sweeping Indian robes, girl, you'll just get caught up in a street-cleaning machine or some bureaucracy. Stay lean, look mean, always be ready to fight back. Black leather and tattered T-shirts displayed taut muscles. A hard, impenetrable image, rather than a tough one. Hard and straight, as opposed to soft and round, which did not seem to get anyone anywhere, anymore. A reaction, a provocation. An answer to past and present insensitivity.

The Nautilus muscle has no real destiny but to work out on one machine after another.

Although, in an obvious way, homosexuals also did their fair share of worshiping the body, women probably brought about the actual change. It was, after all, Jane Fonda who worked out the appeal of the new body for women. But she did so after the pioneering work of Lisa Lyon, the first to show how a woman's body could attain a real blend of strength and feminity. Not to be underestimated was the influence of women's self-help groups, exchanging information on feminist issues and health. These groups contributed to foster the idea of health as prevention for aging and illness. Eventually, by a strange twist, preventive health branched with the fitness craze—which was not to wear that name until women joined up, really making the figures leap skywards.

First it had been health, stretching, jogging, dieting. Then came bodybuilding. Once dear Jane in sunnyside-up California had made it fashionable for women to sweat it out in pink and grey-striped stretchers, the move into the male sanctuary of the weightroom was inevitable. Strength was badly needed to meet the demands of keeping up with the class.

So, like men, women originally had a number of reasons to take to the gyms: They wanted to counter heart disease, arteriosclerosis, cholesterol, premature aging...and fat. Mostly fat. Progressively and unobstrusively, fun for health became working hard to fit the "look". Sweating for what, if not a little to please those males, hardly aware of the attention at the time, busy as they were trying to catch up with the new definitions.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Universe was beckoned from exile, this time introducing a mate to his image. Most were left speechless, contemplating the new woman, her proportions completely altered, basking for a moment in the limelight. Being worn by a female character somehow made muscles shed the offensive-weapon look. Now merely part of a successful wardrobe, they were on the road to respectability again. And what about the male counterpart? Surely nobody was interested in that oversize hunk? Wrong. Fluttering eyelashes, admiring glances: an audience was born.

As they gained muscles in the gym and built up confidence in other areas of life, women felt less threatened by the traditional-almost archaic-display of muscular male power. There were other dangers: subtle discriminations, difficult relationships, new situations not provided for in the cultural how-to book. And somewhere in the early eighties, many women reached the point where they were tired. for one, of men behaving-or trying to behave-as women. Tired of men so understanding, gentle and wet with dishwater they seemed to dissolve onto the kitchen floor. Shape up, guys. Find a form according to your new priorities. We like assertive men, was the writing on the wall. Not dominant, violent or aggressive males, but sure-footed ones, and, yes, with some kind of strength. Bold enough, in some cases, to wear an armful of muscle while still making it clear that violence is not on the agenda. Not the strength to oppress, but to give a hand—as partners—in this godforsaken world that so efficiently builds up our fantasy of leaning on a strong

The Nautilus muscle has no real destiny but to work out on one machine after another—and impress. It is more intent on creating itself, on building its own image than on destroying others. Of the show of strength, this machine-made muscle is mostly the show.

So muscles have been 'recycled.' They went through the purgatory of ridicule and shame, circumnavigated through a few subcultures, and now they're, well, cute. All in a little over ten years. The bottom line? Seduction. Nothing wrong with that. The only unfortunate thing is—the warhawks of the silver screen have jumped at the chance to don the new look too. And it works for them as well

JEAN-PIERRE LE GRAND is a freelance writer living in



GOING TO THE BANK AT THE EATON CENTRE

by K. Jane Butler

I have recently learned that I live in this mortal world, along with all of those other people on the subway. I have learned that even in a public place where I do nothing. I am not invisible. I am not invisible, nor am I transparent. I am a mass of cells and tissue. Tissue paper, bank books, \$1 bills. I am the first surviving being made up entirely of tissue paper. Able to move quickly, silently through crowds at the Eaton Centre, able to live for 29 years without aid of deodorant or antiperspirant. Without sweating. Able to climb stairs without making a sound, and to sign my name so quickly no one notices that I have come and gone. But but but but I AM NOT INVISIBLE. Despite the fact that I am made solely of paper, it remains that I AM A PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION. Tissue paper has mass, contrary to my earlier, ill-informed conceptions. Dry dry dry very dry, no sweating on the pages, never, would that I should enter my own name on my tissue paper ledger of a big body. Every time I open my mouth, little shreds of newsprint flutter out.

The truth is I am a big black woman trapped in a pale, short, tissue paper body. What am I going to do?▼

GALLERY



ABOVE (AND PREVIOUS PAGE): Blake Senini The Last We Saw of Them 1985, oil on plaster, wood and steel, $200\times90\times18$ cm., two views. In his recent sculptural work Blake Senini has made constructions with two viewpoints: obverse and reverse. Senini is an instructor at the Alberta College of Art. His work is available through Canadian Art Galleries in Calgary.

Photograph: Kevin Kanashiro

BELOW: Don Corman Ants and People 1985, 75 × 200 cm. From a series of colour photographs he found as castoffs while working in a photo lab. Corman graduated in 1980 with an MFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. He is presently an instructor at both the University of Calgary and the Alberta College of Art, as well as the co-founder and President of Stride Gallery.

HUMOR

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SKEPTICISM

by Warren Fick

re there many left who can still recall the halcyon days of skepticism? Man, what a time! Philosophers tossing off skeptical roundhouse punches like they were nothing at all. Old Craytlus wandering about wagging his finger at folks. Not even speaking, mind you, but just dishing out the "tsk, tsk, tsk" of the compleat disbeliever.

And how about Davey Hume? Now there was a fellow who could make you believe that nothing existed! I sort of miss those times; life was simpler then. Of course there was so much less to refute, philosophically speaking. One had only to point out that humans were both fallible and prone to error, and bingo, you had yourself the foundation of a fairly weighty bit of epistemology.

But lately the world's filled up with so much...stuff, philosophically speaking. Total skepticism could end up being a full-time job. Not to mention that it could cost you an invitation to join the Young PCs.

So how does the layman go about coping with the flood of speculation to which we are constantly exposed? With a hearty dollop of mitigated skepticism, that's how. It's something most of us have been doing for a long time without ever putting a name to it.



Photo courtesy Southern Alberta Art Gallery

Of course there are still some ideas which we can accept outright, no questions asked. Like when Fred busts through the front door and yells, "Wilma, I'm home!" you know that he is, in fact, home. If you should hear a similar cry from a Blue Jay hitter, however, you had better double-check the score card. Like as not he's still rounding second and the outcome is far from certain.

This is what modern skepticism has matured to. Not so much an absolute disbelief as a very robust doubt. We're skeptics though, and damn proud of it.

Although it has a foot planted firmly in the tradition of absolute disbelief, modern skepticism has come through a trial-by-fire very much its own. It arrived fast on the heels of large-scale post-war industrialization and with it came a working class who had a pocket full of disposable income, a smart little wardrobe and no place to go. This was a breeding ground for "subject area" skepticism, a disbelief in the knowledge held in specific areas. One of these areas was personal fashion, which came under the gun quicker than you could say, "Made in Hong Kong." This was manifested in the usual, class conscious ways.

The In Crowd has always been able to smirk cruelly at those of us who have failed to wear the correct combination of Paisley and clam-diggers to our Grad Dinner. From there it was only a short step on the continuum to see businesswomen exercise their skeptical wiles by sneering from behind fanned fingers at their bruncheon date's sense of style. "He did how many tucks? No, darling, I don't doubt it for a minute. It's just that I can't imagine what they've done with all that skin." Women were the original provenience of this personal skepticism, but business (fashion and otherwise) has forced men into the fray.

Case in point: I recently overheard a couple of surf punks comparing the relative bristliness of their gelled flattops while at the same time eyeing my Wallabees with what can only be described as skeptical glares. It requires just a small hop of faith to reach the boardrooms of the nation and imagine the skeptical tragedies which will soon befall businessmen on parade.

McNulty rises to provide the supply-side assessment of the fourth quarter and the whole corporate structure gives his Brooks Bros. three-piece pinstripe the old round eye. Later, over ammonia hockey pucks in the executive john, the talk is all fashion. "Frankly, N.B., I'm a little skeptical about McN's choice of Calvin Klein accessories for the supply-wide image." Women beware, your once secure domain is soon to be overrun.

As with fashion, worldly consumers have never hesitated in displaying skepticism with the state of sport—or the sport of state, for that matter. What has been most disquieting is their inability to distinguish the two

Fashionable sport and sporting events have come and gone, while an undercurrent of skepticism concerning what's to be played, and what's to be avoided like a herring milkshake, has remained.

Genteel folk have tended to give a wide berth to sporting challenges where the champion has a moniker like The Grand Wahzoo or Louie "Shark Boy" Delargo. Those of us with more pedestrian tastes continue to play host to Mr. Skeptical when he brings around sports in which the players change horses whenever the nags seem tired. Although we are able to appreciate the fact that spectators are encouraged to park their cars at the edge of the pitch and drink.

The point to take away from this is that we have struck a fairly stable course of skepticism as it concerns sports. This unfortunately has not been the case with politics, the sport of state.

Let's lay our political cards on the table. As a group, we political consumers have shown very poor taste. Outside of a handful of island principalities where the benevolent dictator is a cruel but fair pot-bellied man in a grass skirt, the remainder of the world's population should be placed on constant skepticism alert. Give our leaders an inch and they'll take a foot—and then order 3,000 pairs of shoes to put on it.

The worst of the lot are the "democracies". Nations whose populace elects a representative-style government are natural magnets for skepticism. And so they should be. How much faith can we be expected to put in leaders who feed us bad tuna and free trade?

Cut a wide swath of skepticism through writers who claim they need to work.

Skepticism in politics, although it has shown some improvement, remains far from perfect. I suspect that as our political wherewithal improves so will the numbers of benevolent dictators in grass skirts. Call it a hunch.

Which leaves us with the arts. The last Wall of Jericho outside which an army of skeptics has camped for so long that artists have come to include us as part of their still lives. We have been both the subject of the work-in-progress as well as the butt of the running joke.

For too long art has remained a secret society along the order of Masons, lawyers and the RCMP. To this end it has been governed from within by people with secret handshakes who discover new "isms" the minute the hoi polloi decode the old ones. Art and artists have, by and large, been immune to the forces of reasonable doubt. Fortunately that's about to become so much mixed media-on-mattress as we prepare to enter the Golden Age of Skepticism. To lead us from the wilderness there will have to be a bold new class of layman: Skeptics so incredibly gullible, so utterly naive, that art and its secrets pass through them like grain through a goose.

Their manifesto, Coles Notes For The Holistic Skeplic, isn't on retail shelves yet but I've been able to cull from the rough draft a few tips to pass along to the great unwashed:

- 1. Beware the artist who wants to engage you in some serious banter on neoHockneyism. Or who is out in their suit of lights doing a little Saturday shopping—espresso and an airy loft, please.
- 2. Be skeptical of artists laughing and/or crying about the lay public's artistic sensibilities. Their Council grants have been refused and sales to the demon Corporate Sector are slow
- 3. Take one giant step back from and do a slow appraisal of poets high on lyricism and the bold new wave of South Americans. Gauchos or gigolos, I'd like to know.
- 4. Arch at least one eyebrow in the direction of architects who describe their work as magic realism, claim they really wanted to have fun with this one, or whose buzzword seems to be "whimsy". Don't let small children near these people.
- **5.** Cut a wide swath of skepticism through writers who claim they *need* to work. That they have this hard, gem-like flame inside that's chewing their guts to ribbons. That they have lived with their characters for so long that they're a helluva lot more real than you, pal. If these people were any more self-serving, they'd be a cafeteria.
- 6. You may use the expression "that's interesting" with dancers who explain in impassioned gasps how their next work will be a movement piece incorporating Bantu rhythms and the "spiritualism and all that stuff" of the Dark Continent. And they really do call it the Dark Continent.
- 7. Be polite but curt with playwrights and actors workshopping a hot performance piece titled The Life and First Downs of Peter Lougheed. Open skepticism should be avoided as it may get you a visit from Don Getty's kneecapping squad.
- 8. A musician who claims to be scoring the previous group's work should be treated with sympathetic doubt. Double-dog-dare them to take the skeptic's challenge. Look straight into the mirror and say, "You look marvelous, my friend, but you may not exist."

If skepticism is going to make a concerted run at the soft underbelly of the arts it will require a degree of fanaticism. There is no reason that Canadians cannot be on the cutting edge in this season of doubt. If people insist on speaking to you in tongues, answer them in kind. Greet the Information Age with the only language which has wider acceptance than American Express. Skepticism—don't leave home without it \P

ESSAY

SEXIST LANGUAGE

by Jack MacIntosh

f you are a woman in our society, acquiring valuable things such as dignity, respect, and admiration on the basis of your abilities will be harder for you than it is for a man, and the amount of them you get will be smaller than the same amount of effort would produce for a male. This is true statistically. Of course it is not true of every woman and every man, but not every cigarette smoker dies of cancer either. Unsurprisingly, this discrimination is both mirrored in and supported by the language we use.

Linguistically the two biggest problem areas are the misuse of words like 'he', 'man', etc. as if they were gender neutral, and the use of derogatory terms for women, of which the most common is the use of 'girl' to refer to adult women.

'He' and 'man' are not gender neutral in English. If they were we could speak with ease of the average man's menstrual cramps or morning sickness, and we could remark, unproblematically, that what men really like is making love with other men. For 'people' is gender neutral, and the remark that what people really like is making love with other people is the most trivial of truisms. After all, what's the alternative?

Even if someone believes they're using such terms in a gender neutral way, they're wrong, since the rest of us don't hear them that way. To take a parallel example, it's no use claiming to use the terms 'gook' or 'wop' in a neutral way, if others *hear* them as derogatory. If words aren't heard as neutral, then they're not: language is a team game, not a solo enterprise.

When 'he' is used it is a natural assumption that only males are meant, for the amount of conversational effort required to make it clear that all persons, or all adults, are intended is minimal, and giving the maximum amount of information the conversational context allows is a strong linguistic requirement.

Another relevant point is this: processing linguistic information involves a considerable amount of pre-conscious sorting. A whole network of synonyms and associations is called into play before any cognitive processing is done. By the time we're aware of a word, its associations have already been invoked, and 'he' and 'man' have male-oriented associations.

In the law, too, gender neutrality is a myth, even when there are statutes expressly specifying that terms such as 'he' and 'man' refer to all competent adults. In such cases (male) judges have typically ruled that where punishment is at issue, women qualify, where rights are involved they don't, despite the express statute to the contrary.

What's wrong with calling women 'girls'? Simply this. If women are called girls they will be treated as if their skills and abilities were the skills and abilities of girls, not of women. Abe Lincoln was once asked, "If you call a dog's tail a leg, how many legs has a dog got?" He replied, "Four. Calling a dog's tail a leg doesn't make it one." But the full answer is more Orwellian. If we really called a dog's tail a leg, we'd know dogs had five legs, and we'd say, "You know, dogs are weird, they've got too many legs, and one of them is really funny."

To take an example from another realm of discourse, consider the implications these points have for the use—common among U.S. politicians—of referring to Caribbean and Latin American countries as their 'back yard'. You own your back yard and, within pretty wide limits, you can do what you like in and with it. And if that's their back yard, we all know what their front yard must be. You own your front yard as much as you do your back yard—you just keep it a bit tidier, that's all.

When order is important to us, language mirrors it. We distinguish sharply between "They got married and had a baby," and "They had a baby and got married." So our habit of putting male labels first ('man and woman', 'husband and wife', or worse, 'man and wife', 'Mr. and Mrs.') is interesting.

Indicate title, say the forms, and offer:

Mrs.

Miss Ms.

What is the rationale of this ordering? It's not alphabetical order, not length, not specificity. But perhaps the order is just an accident? Right. One of those interesting inevitable accidents. "Anyway, it doesn't matter." "So let's vary it occasionally." "Oh, that's just silly." Uh huh. There's nothing wrong with putting important things first, but since that is our convention, we shouldn't habitually put males first.

It's sexist, too, always to choose males when offering favourable comparisons or considering role models. We should try to be as good at playing chess as Szuza Polgar, as good a logician as Ruth Marcus, as good an actor as Glenda Jackson.

Our language is sexist, and we should change it, just as we would if it were racist. Yet people resist this. Why?

Such change involves new constructions: the old words are inappropriate, and so are the old cliches, so there is some linguistic work to be done, and work is hard.

New uses sound strange. "It sounds funny to call girls 'women." One reason people, women as well as men, find it strange is that calling women 'women' brings the adulthood of women, and particularly their adult sexuality, out into the open. In our society that upsets people.

Such change is threatening: if you've been getting respect because of some accidental feature of class or race or gender, you're going to be afraid of a change that reveals these as unimportant when what is in question is your ability and worth.

Finally, beginning to act morally, when you've been acting immorally, requires admitting to yourself and to others that your previous behaviour was wrong. That's hard. Consequently, this is something about which people become very defensive. Incidentally, we won't have even begun to approximate to morality in this area until a remark such as, "Well, I guess I am a bit of a male chauvinist, ha, ha" sounds exactly as acceptable as, "Well, I guess I am a bit of a racist, ha, ha."

How are these problems to be overcome? The use of disparaging terms is easy; don't use them. Nor does the pronoun problem appear insoluble. We can use 'she or he' ('s/he') or 'she' alone. We can avoid pronouns, or use a plural grammatically. Or ungrammatically: morality is more important than grammar.

The solutions become easier as our awareness of the problems increases, and we begin to find sexist usages increasingly grating. Bobbeye Sorrels suggests, "The solutions to sexism lie in commitment and common sense." Three and a half centuries ago Descartes noted that everyone is so convinced of their own good sense that it is the one thing no one desires more of. So all we need is commitment. And we don't even need much of that, because every little bit is a start, and every start makes the continuing easier

JACK MacINTOSH is a philosophy instructor at the University of Calgary.

A TEXT FOR IMAGES

I am curved against this space I fill. I am bent to each second of time I exist, curved against the weight.

I am curved to the infinite possibilities of light.

I know time by the light.
Dove gray near morning. Slate
gray at the end of the night.
As red as blood is red
in the morning.

Time would not move from the loss of this.

Light is caught in your hair, caught in your eyes. I would see light now at this moment and forever. Time would not move from the loss of this.

Time does not move from the infinite possibilities of light.

Murdoch Burnett

POEM

A DREAM UNFINISHED...

YOU DO, WHEN

-bert

V

What do you do, when there, coming out of the water, and climbing onto the dock in the dark, dank, richly laden, overembellished, melting chocolate brown atmosphere of some mystical equatorial environment is a large; very large, shark, tuna-like crazed fish. And in its fin is a 45. I mean a gun.

He, or she, is dripping, slimy wet, with moss, algae, seaweed and the like, hanging, and sliding down its slippery scaled surface.

The dock bows under its tremendous dead weight. Its eyes stare blankly at you. Unable to focus, yet ready to move forward on its one huge workable tail fin. If you can imagine it. You grow conscious of the dark brown misty; I would say swamp-like water behind the fish. Maybe we could give him, or her a name. Why not, Bert; could be either gender.

Nevertheless, here is this huge fish, it must stand at least 6 feet tall.

And it, I mean Bert, is still aiming this 45 at me. Time seems an eternity at that absurd moment. The distance between the 2 of us must be 20 feet.

A long dock. It's an old dock; years past, resting on its decayed moorings in this over bearing, almost theatrical, maybe baroque, steaming, aged jungle.

I do not like it here. But,
I do enjoy the heat. Yes I
relish that forbidden essence
that emanates from my
imaginary tropical jungle.

A jungle that has ended, and is now surrounded with thick soupy brown water. I hold this image fast, etched, almost painted with thick strokes in my mind. I blink it remains. I turn, the fish, still stands frozen in its somnambulence.

Now I look down and re-access this convoluted dilemma, almost with twisted pride. But, quickly short lived. Back down staring eye to eye with, Bert, so named. Do I see him moving; perhaps just the movement, swelling of the old dock; heaving of the massive water. Pulsing of my erratic heart beat.

Out of the corner of my eye Spanish moss, thick, like a husky maiden's hair, hangs in tangles. Begins to slide, down, into that soupy substance I see as water.

Quite frankly I now find myself becoming annoyed at the aggression of this presumptuous gun-toting fish.

Although, one must admire Bert's perseverance in his/her lonely, stoic, and kind of a sculptural stance of fortitude, against all odds.

Odds that are stacked, unfortunately, in Bert's favour.

Bob Jordan

PAGE 36

GALLERY

Ulrike Voll Hide and Seek 1985, mixed media on paper, 56 × 76 cm. Originally from Hamburg, Ulrike Voll presently lives and works in Calgary. She has shown there recently at Canadian Art Galleries, and at the Evelyn Amis Fine Arts Callery in Toronto.



STORY

GOODBYE TWICE

by Ursula Pflug

f it could end simply it would be like crumpling up your napkin and tossing it onto the plate just as the Great Waitress in the Sky reaches to take it away. In real life it's different; there's always another restaurant, another menu. You always get involved in the whole thing again: The Rent, The Food, The Cigarettes. Especially The Cigarettes.

That's the way it used to be; this time the world really is ending, and I'm finally getting around to reading The Tibetan Book of the Dead. It always seemed boring before, but now I like it. I especially like it because I can always tell what's going to happen tomorrow just by reading a page or two.

I do most of my reading at the Blue Ox. My friends and I have a table there, outside under a tree. A real tree, not one of those spindly downtown facsimiles chained to a post. This tree even gives shade. That's why we drink at the Ox; they're still into real trees and rollerskates.

My mornings are spent sleeping the deep endless sleep of the unemployed. Noonish I wake up and go down to Fred's for my poached eggs on brown. When the third cup of coffee hits my bloodstream I crumple up the telltale napkin and kiss the waitress goodbye twice. She thinks it's because we used to go out; I haven't the heart to tell her she may never see me again. I put the bill on my lengthening tab and cross the street to the Ox, my copy of the Dead tucked under my arm like tomorrow's daily news. It just kills my friends.

"What's the score, dinosaur?" This from my friend Brian, a real sharp shooter, as I roll up one afternoon.

"Mt. St. Helen's is going to blow tomorrow," I say, calm as a cop with a first time offender. My people are not impressed. They are busy discussing fishing tackle. My friends used to like to go fishing like nothing else.

"Listen, Danny," says my other friend Ron, "just because you think you know what's going to happen tomorrow, doesn't mean you're enlightened." Ron read the Dead ten years ago, when it was on the reading list. He still knows the lingo.

"No," I admit, "but it helps."

"How

A mountain exploded the next day, as foretold. Brian and Cory and Ron heard about it on the music box, driving home from fishing. They found Danny at his table at the Ox.

"Catch anything?" he grinned, a real newspaper featuring a highly explosive photograph spread across his knees in the Dead's customary spot. They griped at him, bought him beers, and despite his protests took him to the racetrack where they all fell on the turf to the tune of his reticent guesses, and so, when Danny advised them all to invest in cigarettes, they ignored him. They also made him walk home while they drove to the Ox in time for last call.

Time, what was left of it, was on Danny Lynch's side. He enjoyed his walk, listening to the thick summer air breathing in his ear.

In the morning he invested all his money in cigarettes. He hocked his tape recorders, his Apple II and his VTR, and dropped the cash gained thereby into cigarettes also. Afterwards he rolled his way through the shady Chinatown streets, carefully picking his way through the dogs and distractions, till he found his chair under the Ox's tree. He sat there for a month, drinking borrowed money and thumb printing the pages that became thinner each time he leafed through the book till they were almost as translucent as time had become to their reader.

In the morning he invested all his money in cigarettes. He hocked his tape recorders, his Apple II and his VTR, and dropped the cash gained thereby into cigarettes also.

His debtors began to mumble; their voices rose to a mutter and at last reached the ominous peak of threatened revenge, when, suddenly, there were no cigarettes to be had.

You went to the machine and pushed Player's, there was nothing so you tried DuMaurier, and, thinking you'd settle for Medallions, you found even these empty. You mentioned it to the bartender, who looked unhappy. You noticed the twitch in the fingers of his right hand. "It's gotten that bad," you said. Sighing, he suggested you try Fenton's, the variety store around the corner. You took him up on it and found they had only menthol brands but you bought them anyway, what the hell, they were cigarettes.

"Sometimes," said Clara, a wistfully anorexic blonde, "a cigarette is the only thing you really have."

"Yeah," grumbled Brian, "even if it is a fucking menthol.

"Cigarettes can take so long," sighed Danny, grinding out his half smoked Player's in the deserted ashtray. Then he watched everyone leap.

The next day they were rolling menthol tobacco out of tins and squabbling over a stray pack of American Camels.

'I'll trade you a fresh smoke against my debts," offered Danny to Keith, the nastiest of his creditors.

"I got my own frosted cigarettes, pal."

"I didn't think they made Player's menthol," said Danny, in a voice as low as the cut of Clara's dress.

His accumulated debts were written off in the time it took to dispense with what was left of the pack. By the end of the day Danny's smokes were going at a fin per deck and by Friday they were up to a

On Saturday a bodyguard hired him. He had been reaching into his cigarette bag when Nasty Keith loomed up, eyes pinned and tracking, a blade to Danny's ear. Cherry Blossom, a skinny Chinese girl, had been sitting quietly at the table all week, rolling out of a dry and dwindling can of Cameo. She had Keith over the fence and racing the sidewalk for the curb so fast you could hear the skin leaving his face for the concrete. He never bothered anyone again after that, chewing on toothpicks for the rest of his days and the world's.

"What's the score, Van Gore?" said Cherry Blossom as she deftly applied first aid to Danny's damaged ear. He gave her an untouched pack of Lucky Strikes in memoriam of the great save. She followed him everywhere after that, and by the next week he could afford to pay her rent as well as his own. Not that it was necessary by then, for Cherry thought it too dangerous for Danny to sleep alone. She did her job very well.

She ordered him a bulletproof 007 Bionic Briefcase from New York. Danny was touched, and he figured it was as good a place as any to stash the few packs of smokes he traveled with.

As the world reeled ever closer to its imminent end Danny found life to be more blessed than ever before. He still had cigarettes, he was still reading tomorrow's papers a week early, and although he knew less and less what to do about it, he no longer cared. He could afford cocaine. He had credit everywhere. He fell in love with Cherry Blossom, which surprised him. They hadn't mentioned that part in The Book.

His clients from the Ox took him out to dinner. His drinks were always on the house; the cigarette man knew how to draw a crowd. Danny felt like the effigy of the deceased, a paper version of himself, being offered food so that his spirit, already long absent from the world, might gain sustenance for its journey.

There were only a few pages left to go of The Book, with the carton stock down to match. The closer Danny neared the last page the more he noticed that the news was news to him.

"I wonder what will happen when I finish the book," said Danny to Cherry Blossom one morning over a breakfast of Bloody

"I imagine you'll find something else to read.

'Let's go to New York."

They traded a retired Detroit pimp two cartons of American Kools for the charter of his Cessna

During the flight they sipped from their flask of Cuervo Gold, smoked Dunhills, and Cherry told Danny all about cigarette tag, which she had played in the schoolyard as a child. "If you could yell the brand name of a cigarette just as you were about to be tagged they couldn't get you. The catch was you weren't allowed to use the same one twice. I was always It because I could never think of anything other than Black Cat. They had signs in the store windows for them that were so nice."

As the world reeled ever closer to its imminent end Danny found life to be more blessed than ever before. He still had cigarettes.

Manhattan was so hot it reminded Danny of the closeness of heat and cold, the old grade school science class trick of touching both in sequence and trying to tell which was which. He heard sirens everywhere. The crowd was like the first time he had seen "When Worlds Collide," on his neighbor's television when he was six and his parents had been out. It had caused nightmares for months afterwards. Danny didn't have nightmares now; he had had them all before. There were still sirens and it was only then that Danny realized that his briefcase siren had gone off unnoticed, like a Magic Snake in a lawn full of Cherry Bombs. and Cherry and the cigarettes with it.

There was only one place to go. Danny rollerskated across town to Times Square. It was on his way there that the flames began. He remembered the last time he had taken this route, to meet his lover when he was eighteen. It was perfect; Danny felt exactly as he had then. When he reached the Square he lit his last cigarette, a Dunhill he had fortuitously remembered to stick behind his undamaged ear. He opened the Dead to the last page, he read, and when he was finished he watched

URSULA PFLUG is a freelance writer and illustrator living in Toronto. Her fiction has appeared in Only Paper Today, NOW. This Magazine. and New Bodies. an anthology of Canadian science fiction. Her illustrations have appeared in Outst Consoling Forum and extensions. Quest, Canadian Forum, and other periodicals.

FISHING & SUICIDE

Richard and I went fishing to kill some time we found hanging in our lives.

As I took a fix on the lake I thought about this idea of killing time with a fishing rod. It seemed suicidal

(in a Tom Thompson way) each cast into the lake slowly reeling it back to then cast it all away.

"I can smell rubber burning. What are you thinking about?"
Richard asked in his typical GONE FISHING way.

"Fishing and suicide."

I said like Buster Keaton looks.

On the lake fish were rising like links in a chain creating waves. "Fishing & Suicide huh? Sounds like something Red Fisher on acid would come up with. You wanna beer?'

We drank and fished and talked some more.

"What are you thinking Richie?"

"I'm thinking how it would be neat to see a Japanese B movie monster taller than the mountains rise up out of the lake and go on a rampage that don't end till next Thursday.

The fish stopped rising. The lake became calm. I looked at it and wondered.

"B movie monster huh? I think we should get wasted."

I put my rod on the rocks leaving the fly on the lake as I twisted up a number.

Richard sat down beside me and asked.

'You know what I hate about fishing? Everything."

Michael Dryden

WORK BRIGADE

for breakfast beautiful hearts returned to standing position the marching band was swallowing its mouthpieces in a juxtaposition with steel the parade was jumping on top of itself grind me down to sand tip the hour glass and we will give money to prop up our favorite military regimes coffee on the table oil in the waters on saturdays baptism of chains we fed the rubble with the past 40 hours work week we wiped the sweat from our drilling again with the

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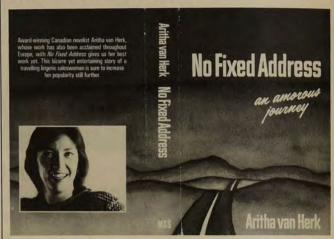
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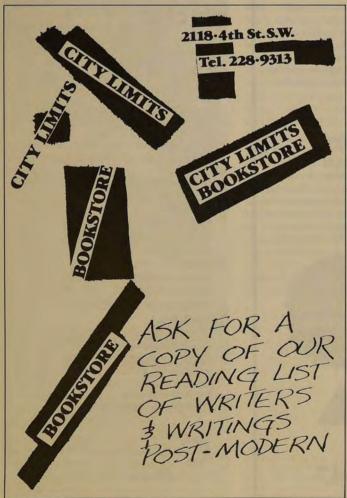
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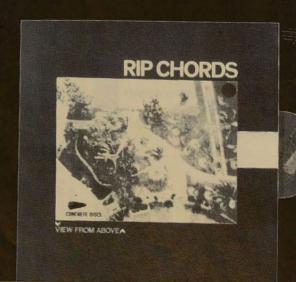


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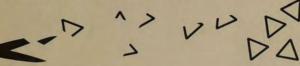
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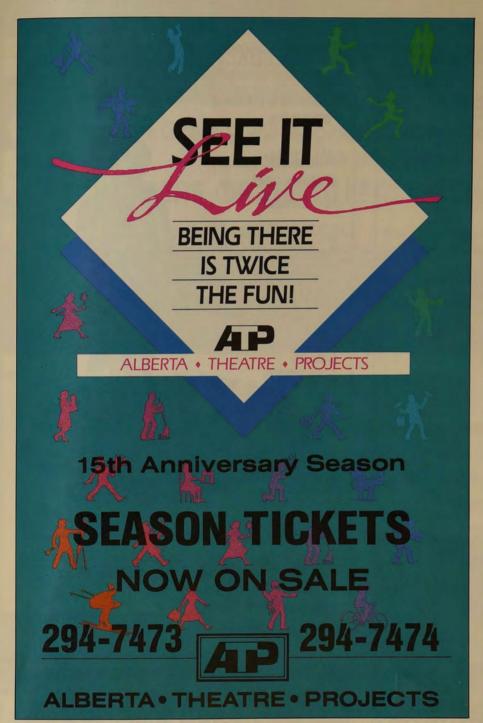
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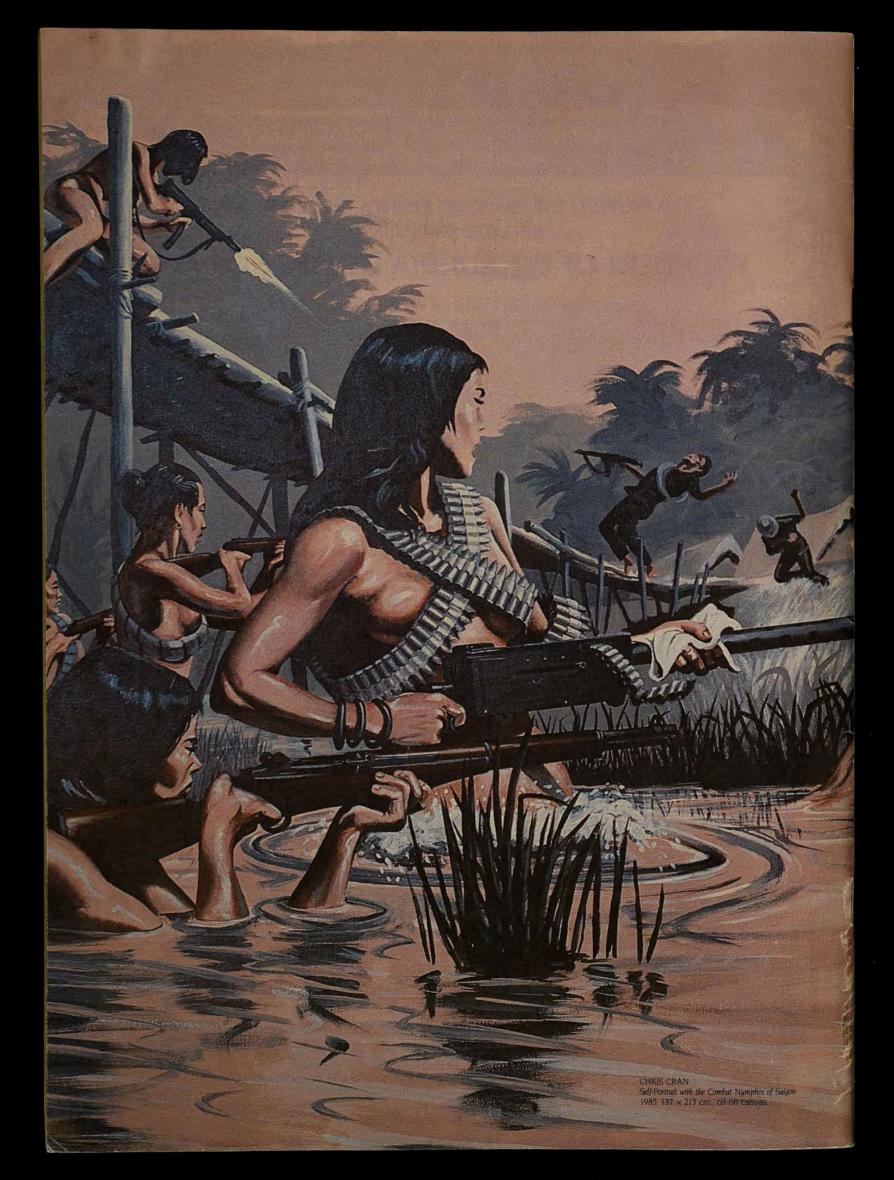
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THE MAGAZINE THA COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO CARRY ON FOREVER

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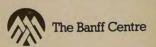
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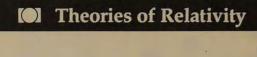
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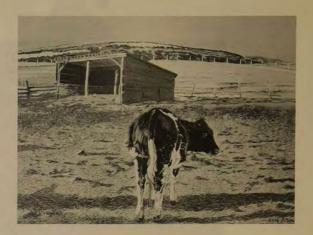
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THE FLOATING GALLERY



Sam In The Pink (Portrait of Sam Snead) 1987 Oil/Oil Stick on Canvas 210 cm imes 165 cm

BILLY J. McCARROLL

California-born and a graduate of California State University, McCarroll now lives and works in Lethbridge where he is Chairman of the University of Lethbridge Art Department. In celebration of the game of golf McCarroll has produced a substantial volume of work largely appropriated from the How-To book *Sam Snead's Natural Golf.* The above image was inspired from a portrait of Sam in *Golf Digest*.



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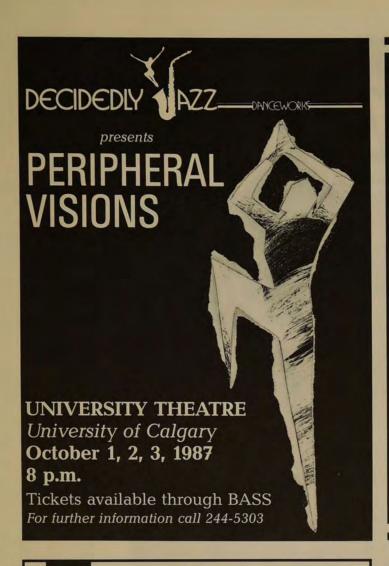
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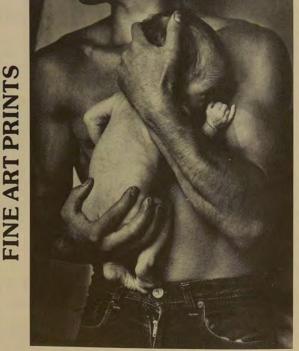
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MARTIN GUDERNA Surf, Oil, 1986

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Advertising Sales Heather Elton, Pam Bulla, Jane McConachie, Shari Proskow, Susan Elton

Business Manager Bruce Calderbank

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Printer Paperworks Press

Distribution Canada: Canadian Periodical Publishers Association, 2 Stewart St. Toronto, ON, M5V 1H6; Emma Marion Ltd. 2330 East Hastings St. Vancouver, BC, V51, 1V5

USA: Cornucopia 1504-14 Ave. Seattle, WA, 98221; Ingram Periodicals 347 Reedwood Dr. Nashville, Tennessee 37217.

Correspondence LAST ISSUE Publishing Society 604-815 1st St. S.W. Calgary, Alberta T2P 1N3 (403) 263-3232

-

LAST ISSUE is published irregularly by LAST ISSUE Publishing Society. ISSN 0826-6972. LAST ISSUE is indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index. Second Class Mail Registration 6386. Second class postage paid in Calgary. Copyright 1987. All rights reserved. Requests for reprints of articles should be made in writing to the Publisher. LAST ISSUE Publishing Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Alberta Foundation for Literary Arts, the Alberta Foundation for Performing Arts, Alberta Culture, Calgary Region Arts Foundation, Canada Council, Western Canada Lotteries and the Alberta Manpower S.T.E.P. and P.E.P. programs.

EDITORIAL

W ith this issue LAST ISSUE will have reached its self-proclaimed destiny. This is the last issue. It may seem unfortunate that LAST ISSUE will cease publishing just when it appears to have reached a level of editorial consistency and maturity. The reason for this decision is simple. There just is not enough money to put the necessary systems in place to publish on schedule.

Although funding agencies have been supportive over the past few years LAST ISSUE has never managed to overcome a chronic lack of money. It is no secret that magazines need significant investment capital during the first few years to allow them to build a strong readership and advertising base. LAST ISSUE has come as far as it can without such capitalization. Because the future does not appear to hold any magic solution we are reluctant to continue under similar impoverished circumstances.

I feel less regret at the discontinuance of a magazine which has reached its goal, the establishment of a unique editorial direction. Perhaps LAST ISSUE will have created an impulse for kindred publishing projects.

I would like to thank all those individuals and organizations whose efforts have helped sustain LAST ISSUE over the years:

Especially the subscribers and readers, who have been most patient in awaiting each issue.

The contributors, who donated lively and original material for very little reward.

The publishing houses, who saw the value in showcasing contemporary Canadian literature.

The funding agencies, who possessed the vision to see how such a product would contribute to Canadian culture.

Our advertisers, who had faith in a readership with diverse interests.

All those individuals whose dedication and commitment allowed each issue to come out.

But most of all I must salute the people whose talents have given rise to the rich Canadian culture which originally inspired me to produce LAST ISSUE, which gave me the very reason to continue as long as I did, and which will undoubtedly inspire me to greater achievements in the future.

> Heather Elton Publisher/Editor

GENERALITIES & SPECIFICS

Our correspondents left to their own devices. This issue: A scholarly appreciation of Mr. Peanut. Genuine poetry. The ancient mystery of Elvis P., solved. And metaphysics from the deepest darkest campaign trail. Go ahead, vote with your eyes.

Photos courtesy Museum of Modern Mythology





THE MUSEUM OF MODERN MYTHOLOGY

by David Carlisle

I f materialism is the religion of the West, then the icons of the faith are its advertising characters.

For most of us, Mr. Whipple, Cap'n Crunch, Ronald McDonald et al. are like movie extras in a film being made about our own lives: benign, familiar beings whose lively movements, faces, and voices accompany the everyday dramas of life. Upset stomach? It's Speedy Alka-Seltzer to the rescue! Heading home from a camping trip? Smokey the Bear says Only you can prevent forest fires!

Until five years ago there existed no single organization devoted to the collection and study of advertising, advertising characters, and related forms of mass communications.

Until five years ago there existed no single organization devoted to the collection and study of advertising, advertising characters, and related forms of mass communication. Then, in 1982, San Francisco artists Ellen Weis, Matthew Cohen, and Jeffrey Errick decided to formalize their love of advertising memorabilia by founding a new museum—the Museum of Modern Mythology.

memorabilia by founding a new museum —
the Museum of Modern Mythology.
Supported by over one hundred members
in the Bay Area and beyond, the Museum has
sponsored several successful exhibits in San
Francisco. A 1985 display held at The Cannery,
in the city centre, drew audiences of over
15,000 people.

Calgary writer David Carlisle spoke recently with Ellen Weis, the Museum's executive director. At the time, she was hoping to add to the archives an example of "Chicken Boy", a human-bodied, fowl-headed mascot for a chain of now-defunct Los Angeles fast-food restaurants.

Let me try to figure this one out: Chicken Boy is half-man, half-chicken, and he's offering passersby a bucket of Chicken Boy Chicken. In other words, a bucket of himself. Is he asking me to become a cannibal?

Intriguing, isn't it? Some of the characters in the collection make a similar association between the product and the people who eat it. Pilsbury made some important changes to its Dough Boy character, the chubby little fellow named Pop'N Fresh. Originally, Pop'N Fresh was a lot more talkative than he is now—He'd chatter away at you during the TV commercials. Then Pilsbury surveyed the viewers, and they said it made them uncomfortable, uneasy—

Because the commercial was actually asking you to gobble up this adorable, talkative little guy?

Exactly. The viewers said they weren't sure why, but they much preferred a Pop'N Fresh who just giggled when you poked his tummy.

Although the museum supports a huge collection of advertising memorabilia, you often use the term "modern mythology" without reference to advertising. Was that a conscious decision?

advertising. Was that a conscious decision?

Modern mythology can mean any form of communication that's used to convey meaning on a mass scale. Mythologies reflect and speak to our own culture in a variety of ways; advertising is just one of the most important.

What other kinds of mythology do you hope to

We'd like to exhibit record cover art, TV commercials and shows, comic book art. Right now we're displaying original animation cells for commercials. Of course, people love to identify the characters they grew up with as kids: that's one of the great appeals of advertising. My job is to provide a framework for studying and exploring the characters by helping to organize examples of the characters themselves.

What kinds of patterns do you look for when you document the history of advertising characters?

Certain characters stem from folklore — like the Lucky Charms leprechaun. Other products come to life, like Mr. Peanut. Or they can reflect qualities with a special appeal for the consumer. Mr. Peanut, with his cane and monocle, brought a touch of elegance to a very ordinary food item.

How do you track down some of the major characters in the museum? I see you've printed a post card showing a "Doggie Diner" doggie being loaded onto a truck for a final ride.

When the fourth-to-last Doggie Diner in the Doggie Diner yestaurant chain closed its

When the fourth-to-last Doggie Diner in the Doggie Diner restaurant chain closed its doors, the owners donated a ten-foot Doggie to the museum. We've also got a giant Jolly Green Giant in the museum entrance, and perhaps now . . . Chicken Boy!

How hard is it to obtain original advertising art for the museum?

That can be a real problem, because often the agencies that created the characters didn't keep track of their creations through the years. All the original Smokey the Bear art has disappeared, for example. So we're really happy when an agency or collector can track down some original samples and donate them. People are doing that all the time. Also there are over three hundred pieces, largely advertising doll figures, that Jeff (Errick) has donated to the museum.

Is there *really* anything more to the collection than just fun — a chance to take a trip back to our own childhoods?

Certainly a lot of it, for most people, is nostalgia. And that's great. We want people to have a good time recognizing all their old friends. But if the Museum has a more serious purpose, I guess it's the chance to draw parallels and make connections between our culture as it existed before mass production and these new mythic characters. The bottom line is that humans will persist in communicating basic myths despite the apparent dominance of technology in our lives. Advertising represents the confluence of art and commerce. And it's one of the art forms that has emerged from the change in culture we experienced at the beginning of the century.

The kinds of mass production that led to . . . Chicken Boy?

Chicken Boy, and Goofy Grape, and the Ajax White Knight, and Mr. Clean — all the members of our extended modern family.

THE BALLOT THAT EXPLODED

A new Short Story by James L. Swanson

A hand reaches out of the water.
Waves lap at my feet. The sunny sand is warm. Children frolic in the breath of the sea.
When a child goes under, I pull her out.

When a child goes under, I pull her out.
A shadow falls. Shuddering, I look over
my shoulder. Smoke blots the sun. We must
leave.

Where are the kids? Bobbing under water, eyes open and unblinking. How could I have been so careless?

A hand reaches out of the water. Out of the painted water, frozen on a billboard. Splashed across the billboard, heavy seas froth in a storm. Bylines clatter in chaos. For God so loved the world. Everlasting life. The traveller blus by Angelynes

blurs by. Apocalypse.
Peaking a hill on the highway east of
Burns Lake, I pick up an instant replay of the
intercontinental ballistic dream. The dream we
all must run. That I am running. Just return-

The highway leads beside the still waters of British Columbia's lake country. Burns Lake. Fraser Lake. Francois Lake. Decker Lake. Babine Lake. Lousy with lakes. Lily-padded lakes. In the rain True North is detected by the swagger of the satellite dish.

The job market jives on the radio. "Livein house maid . . . skidder operator . . . parttime office clerk. Phone the Canada Employment Centre near you."

Powerlines buzz across the road, electromagnetic kazoos. I have a cousin who shrieks if a fuse blows. "I'm going blind," she bellows, checking her pulse.

Along the shoulder, grouse grin like stones. Tire shreds smirk like ravens.

This morning when I went out to my car, one of the tires sported a bulge the size of a breast. The breast of the preacher's daughter, banded by an evening gown. Last night in Vanderhoof, she filed her nails while the candidates spoke. Her immaculately groomed father afterwards whispered, "Armageddon is God's great plan." You could have heard a paring drop.

When I got to Kal-Tire the bulge had gone down. The man at the garage gave me a spare baldy. He said, "Don't worry, it will last a few days."

When I get to Prince George, I'll junk this crate, tires and all. I'll take the Greyhound home to McBride.

At midnight in the bus depot, immigrants will argue politics. A man will say, "Vote for the NDP, they kinda weak."

Another man will respond, "I don't bother to go up to the poll. They're so nice when they want to get in, but once they're in, they won't waste their time talking to you. I'd like to blow up the whole Parliament."

"God knows," said the incumbent, "God knows the atom bomb is the worst thing that

ever happened to us. Nobody but nobody takes it seriously, and many sleepless nights have been spent in the House of Commons over that very question.

It's the summer of eighty-four and the roadside bristles with placards. The orange NDP posters are weathered and shabby. Wherever one has been planted, a patch of the Progressive Conservative glad bags surround and strangle. Red, white, and blue.

At forums throughout the riding, the Conservative incumbent claims that Canada is on the threshold of a new and promising era. The New Democrat candidate claims to be setting new standards of door-knocking. The Liberal doesn't think the rich should pay more taxes. "I pay plenty," he swears.

The Rhinoceros sat by the door of the Telkwa bar with his nomination book, solicit-

The Rhinoceros sat by the door of the Telkwa bar with his nomination book, soliciting the required thirty nominees. A furniture refinisher signed as a stripper. A stripper signed as a fur trader. The national animal.

The highway curves past a cemetery the size of a suburban back-yard. "We're here for a good time," sings the radio, "not a long time." Posted along the road are the CBC frequencies, drifting from town to town. "When Roto-Rooter's here, all your troubles disappear." An agreeable nod becomes a nervous tick.

Two bears cross the road. Two porcu-

Two bears cross the road. Two porcupines tried. Food for the raven. The western sky hangs like purple linen. Sunbeams spot the rolling hills. Snow white peaks rise out of evergreen forest, earth's nipples suckled by the wind.

It was on a hike in the hills near McBride, earlier in the summer, that it dawned on me to throw my hat into the ring. Mountains rose round the compass. A sawtoothed ridge loomed over a saddle. The hair on back of my neck stood on end.

On the mountain peak, we each placed another rock on the cairn. Under a cloud of mushrooms, we mutely communed with the ancestors. Descending, we loped across the meadow like moose. Granite babbled in alphabet soup, a symphony of preverbal pronouncements, a scene of old saws.

The worst that can befall a guide is to lose his man. "The Lord shall destroy the earth," said my friend. It furthers one to cross the great water.

Radio silence. Say the magic void, not

On Canada Day I took the cake. A hundred bicycle racers had kicked off at rocky Mount Robson and pedalled the eighty kilometers to McBride. The community threw a picnic in the park by the railway station. The baker, who will fall to his death, baked a huge maple-leaf cake.

Our Honourable Member came to the party. He got the first piece of cake. He took a couple of nibbles. "Here, you're a growing boy," he said, handing me the piece of cake. "You need this more than I do." I ate it. An auspicious omen. I ate a couple more. To walk the plank.

Later, Joe Clark came to town. His riding shoulders ours along the Great Divide. Joe told the crowd to vote Tory so that Brian Mulroney could be prime minister. A local wrangler shouted, "Brian who?"

After his speech Joe came over and shook the wrangler's hand. The wrangler gaped at his paw and said, "I ain't gonna wash my hand for a year."

"It looks like you haven't washed for three," joked Joe.

The NDP is planting rumors that Joe can't swim because his head's too big.

arrived totally concerned with sound. I tend to think in language listening at myself rather than looking at myself."

A flurry in the water. An osprey rises from the deep, wings dripping, talon hooked on fish. Thunder under the lake.

Supper in Houston tonight, where another waitress on the Yellowhead Highway will find a table untipped. At the candidates' forum, four bics will flick when a voter pulls

out a cigarette.

Messages on the radio. "To Joe Charley at Bear Lake, will be flying in today, from J.B. To Chief John Patrick, meet at the development center tomorrow. To Eunice at Grassy Plain, can't make it up this weekend, from Bill." Tonight the doors to the Houston auditorium will be open to the cool of the evening. As the candidates speak, dogs will bark in the late summer twilight.

"To Patricia Tom, call home." Down the road runs the Bulkley River. A salmon, on its way to spawn, will burst into the atmosphere, arch in its trajectory, and return to the waters. Outward ring the rip-

- James L. Swanson is an author and Sixteenth Century scholar who lives in McBride, British Columbia.

THE **PLAYBALL VACUUM**

Gerry Gilbert

ancouver, Canada. Montréal, France. Toronto, Germany. Just kidding. But Vancouver's more like your Canadian city; and if you get up early enough, Montréal is just like the right angle between, say Amsterdam and Rio; and if you stay up late enough, Toronto is a cute thing to say, somewhere between Moscow and Beijing, the long way.

rom the Downtown Eastside, the bright back porch of Vancouver, today, the world looks round. And 'round. Expo's gone the way of all money, where nothing grows. Some of us living beyond our means's cost us all a peaceful summer. Progress pissed here. What once were hills of innocence, now are pools of naïveté. That fleet in the harbour wasn't the world coming to Vancouver, it was the U.S. Navy on its way to Nicaragua. All right, I'll vote; but is what can be done base enough to turn, from acid to tears, the pain eating at us? No, but I know what you mean; if you know what I mean; and what else is knowledge? Only in Vancouver? 'pity.

A h, a pint. A couple of hours of October the twentieth left. Twice in years gone by I've found myself wedded today, so today I've been lying low and paying very little attention to day. Kept my distance quite nicely, going to bed at dawn this morning for three hours and napping this afternoon a couple of hours, then again this evening. I'll just sit in this bar here and talk to myself about being in love, I mean Montréal. That's what this paragraph is about. "With your language and mine," I said, "We can say twice as much about the same thing." But it isn't the same. We don't even have comedians in common. Just the money. I was amazed how all the signs at last in French make Montréal a new city. You can start learning the language right away, simply by saying all the words you read about you in French. I was translating words like "Radio Centreville", when spoken to me in English, back into French, so I could understand them. I very quickly started calling the Globe, "le Glob". I loved it there. I loved it being none of my business, none of my ideas, none of my style. I could have arrived standing up straight in my accidentally old leather jacket and naturally torn jeans, but I opted for tweed pockets and brand new airline-proof bright blues and a studious slouch. I don't need style. This book doesn't need structure. It's the way you move, not counting, counts; and anyway, I arrived totally concerned with sound. I tend to think in language, listening at sound. I tend to think in language, listening at myself, rather than looking at myself. I arrived totally concerned with myself, too, as travellers will, but that didn't last long. I mean, I didn't last long. I had the great pleasure of becoming someone else, someone listening to a strange tongue and beginning to hear in it a little. Someone who'd stayed homegrown, meeting people who'd done likewise. Someone meeting people who'd done likewise. Someone told ("and this is the last time we tell you") to hold his romantic parading at arms' length and see it as olden, oversized, tattered - vintage, to be worn like the antique uniform it is, with classical laughter, flamboyant aplomb— or go cold. "Poésie en Anglais de Vancouver," the poster said. I read nutritiously, taking care to chew each consonant, taste every vowel, suck the juices from all the lines, and stay within the calorie limit. I heard cartilage snap as my ribs stiffened but I didn't miss a bite. For a moment there, I was a poet in Québec. The top leaves on the trees atop Mont Réal went gold. But, like Labour Day becometh night, here I am back in the Twentieth Century's broken promise, Canada. Another pint,

ood ensemble work amongst art-Good ensemble work amongst artists in Toronto, as there is within each community. The city is vibrantly Italian, Portugese, Irish, Wasp, Jewish, Chinese, East Indian, West Indian, and so on; but the city at large, like Canada, is an abstraction, a CBC of empty theory - the actual communities pitted against each other in the service of as brutal a Capitalism as ever. The vitality of small organic communities fades in the face of the

cynical opportunism the system demands. Artists aim for national or international suc-cess rather than local relevance. The bigness of the city just means more room for the forced enthusiasm of artists hungry for success. Individuals become smaller and smaller. Intellectual freedom becomes competitive privacy. Generous civic emotion becomes puzzling your way through political self-inter-est. Utopian idealism is no substitute for solidarity. One would expect artists to articulate the common experience; not to fashion inane entertainments, privatized enlightenments, placebo dreams, careerist gestures — and call it art. The best, of course, proceed gracefully, even disgracefully, through it all; but the bourgeois perks of living at the centre of the empire are a fatal distraction. It must be like wading through sticky shit, to be so smart and so helpless. Hey, you guys, I'm just kidding! But vintage clothes in Toronto do look so just plain worn out.

— Vancouver poet Gerry Gilbert is, in every respect, the real thing. The Playball Vacuum is just one of a series of ruminations Gilbert made recently under the title The Fall of '86.

BULLET

David Preston

- The bullet could have buried itself in his brain in an explosion of blood and bone, but instead it shattered the window and vanished into the lead-grey clouds.
- Various configurations proved to be of great interest. Power lines outside intersected the window frame at mysterious angles. Seen from the proper perspective, the wooden bar bi-secting the window at its midpoint lined up perfectly with nearby rooftops.
- The cracks in the window only added to the complexity of the network of intersecting and overlapping lines. Distance became an intan-gible abstraction. Formalism had conquered
- The bullet hole itself was something of an eyesore. Providing a clue to the casual explanation of the cracks, it somehow diminished their esthetic purity.
- But sometimes, the face of a pedestrian passing by on the sidewalk below would appear in the bullet hole, undimmed and undistorted by the surrounding glass. Endless hours were spent finding the optimum viewing position for such an occurence.
- The broken window has been replaced. The view is no longer interesting.
- David Preston is a freelance writer living in Montreal.

ELVIS AND ME

Another true story, too true maybe, By DON GILLMOR

guess I was 16 when I began to notice it. It was a sense of déja vu when I looked in the mirror. I'd think: I've seen that face before, and somewhere other than the mirror in the boys room at Brigham Young High School, Salt Lake City. I'd look in that mirror and tell myself that someday everyone would know the face of Elvin Dinkert. There was a slight upward curl at the corner of my lip, like I had been snagged by God's invisible fishing line. Trolling for sinners outside Vernor's Drugstore he had caught part of my upper lip and yanked a bit. But he had failed to land me. I was the one that got away.

It was 1967 everywhere else in the world and I was wasting my masturbating years in a town that had six religious radio stations. One Friday I dyed my hair black, kicked Brother Anderson the math teacher in the nuts and walked out the school doors to a new life. I walked over to the Har-Mar mall and hung out at Baskin-Robbins.

Mel Ogway, blond captain of everything and missonary-to-be sat down across from me. "It's not too late to repent, Elvin," he said earnestly.

"You're right," I said, "It's too early. I'm going to live a little first." Mel shook his head and went home to

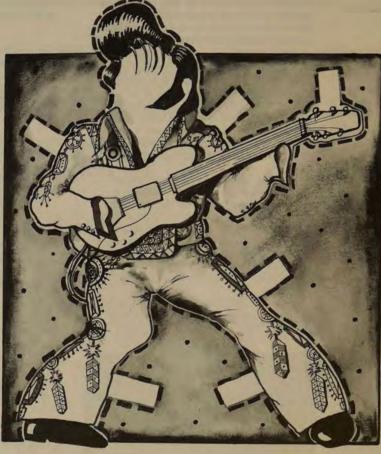
Mel shook his head and went home to Ozzie and Harriet. I left Baskin Robbins and bought a pink shirt, tight black pants and a red guitar at the J.C. Penney. The clerk was a woman of maybe 34. She had hard curves and harder eyes that had seen too many assistant managers who were bored with their wives. Her name tag said Medea-Sue. I told her I'd wear the new clothes; she could sell my old ones to one of the dipshit Osmonds.

"You ever think there was a better use for your morning boner than whizzing?" she asked as she rang up the sale.

"I ain't never going to find out in this town."

She smiled at me. There was a world of damnation in those lips and I was looking for a one way ticket. "You got a motorcycle?" I asked her. She nodded and we left.

She was leaving a dead end job and a chance to get felt up by sixteen guys in golf shirts at the company picnic. Me, I didn't have that much. A few foster homes full of blond people and a weekly religious message from



the geek who delivered the government cheque I was entitled to as an orphan. I strapped my guitar across my back and held tight to Medea-Sue as we put the lights of SLC behind us. We drove like fire across gasoline, Eureka, Nephi and Cedar City went by like flashes of lightening.

At midnight we got to a roadhouse outside Aztec, New Mexico. It was a wet, whistling, redneck beer joint and every eye was on Medea-Sue when we walked in. She was wearing tight red matador pants and no top. Her breasts pointed forward like a pair of setters sighting a bird. A fat Mexican guy reached out to grab her and I slugged him. He sailed backwards into the jukebox and a record fell on the turntable and started playing, an instrumental version of "(you ain't nothing but a) Hound Dog".

"Sing us a song, pretty boy," one of the rednecks yelled at me. The crowd was getting

I jumped up on the bar and pulled my guitar around and started singing. I strutted down the bar, singing and sneering. The lyrics came to me like a Gospel revelation; I'd never heard the tune before in my life. "Yew ain't nuthin' butta hound dog, cuh-ryin' alla time..." I rocked and swivelled and pretended to play my guitar. I threw the guitar down into the crowd and it was caught by the fat guy I had slugged. He was smiling and tapping his foot now. I wiped my brow with a cocktail napkin and stuffed it down the blouse of a middle aged alcoholic lizard. She coughed out a little cigarette smoke and collapsed. The women were screaming. Medea-Sue was undulating and staring at me with open hunger. I shimmied and shuddered and rolled my eyes like the Lord had possessed me. But I knew there was no room for the Lord with the company I was keeping inside me.

I did two more numbers for the folks, drank a dozen Falstaff beer, beat four truckers arm wrestling, hustled 80 bucks and change at the pool table, then Medea-Sue took me to the adjoining motel. The whole room applauded when we left.

Everything Medea-Sue showed me that room was illegal in New Mexico. We did things that would've got Lucifer suspended from Hell. That woman was the devil in nylon hose. We went to

sleep at seven A.M., woke up at noon and made Carthage, Missouri by ten. Another roadhouse, another performance and another shabby motel. A sixteen, I was the proud owner of a life.

We made better than 600 miles a day swinging through the south: Sulphur, Oklahoma; Palestine, Texas; Athens, Tennessee. The crowds loved me and Medea-Sue almost broke my collarbone every night with her special ways. We headed north: Alexandria, Virigina; Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; Ithaca, New York. The good times seemed to be going down like cherry wine. But something was wrong.

cherry wine. But something was wrong.

In Lima, Ohio, Medea-Sue lost her temper for no reason and smashed my guitar against the tailfin of a '61 caddy. By the time we hit Lebanon, Oregon, she had become moody a lot of the time. She smoked like a grass fire and read magazines in the motel room for hours. Sometimes she didn't bother watching my show. When Ed Sullivan came on the T.V. in the Toot Sweet Motel in Glasgow, Kentucky, she threw one of my motorcycle boots through the screen. "I swear I hate that Ed," she said, lighting another cigarette.

When I finally left the Bidea-wee six months later I weighed 314 pounds and my brain had shrunk to the size of an avocado pit."

n February I woke up in the Bide-a-Wee Motel in Dublin, Georgia and she was gone. On the mirror, in red lipstick she had written, "Don't step in my blue suede hell". I didn't know what that meant. We had circled these United States six times together on her mo-United States six times together on her motorcycle, visiting every state in the continental U.S. except Nevada. I had sang, lip-synched and pretended to play my guitar in a thousand sawdust joints on a thousand lonesome highways. She had dislocated my spine playing "the brahma bull and the cowgirl" in a motel in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. That woman had been everything to me woman had been everything to me.

I was hit by what doctors nowadays label a clinical depression. I sat in the motel and ate and watched television. I ate burgers, fries, grits and gravy, mashed potatoes, sweet pota-toes, peanut butter and banana sandwiches, hamhocks, barbeque, chocolate pie, red beans and rice and butterscotch sundaes. I watched television till they played the Star Spangled Banner. When I finally left the Bide-a-Wee six months later I weighed 314 pounds and my brain had shrunk to the size of an avocado pit. My hair was lank and greasy and my side-burns had spread over my swelling cheeks. My cheekbones disappeared in April. My eyes looked like they'd be the next to go.

I figured I had to get out of the Bide-a-

Wee; there were too many memories for me there. My old clothes didn't fit me anymore but Alva Bodean, proprietor of the motel, made me an outfit out of 30 yards of plastic wallpaper she had left over from doing her trailer. It was white with little sparkly things all over it. I got out on the road, a 300 pound teenager in a circus outfit, and hitched a ride to Vegas. I figured I needed a change of

A trucker gave me a ride straight through to the Sahara Hotel on the strip and let me out in the white heat of the early afternoon. I booked myself a room with a heart shaped bath tub and walked around the town a bit. It was 1968 and the joint was swinging. The big news was that Elvis Presley was making a comeback. I'd heard the name before but couldn't put a face to it. Everyone talked about it like it was a big deal so I figured I'd check it out for myself. I got scalped for a \$90 ticket from a weasel in the lounge who was dressed worse than me.

The Aladdin room was packed when I got there. A thousand women were sweating in their seats, their breasts heaving in anticipa-tion. When Elvis walked in, lean and mean in black leather, the place went crazy. He looked familiar but I didn't know why. The women were all screaming like the last kid to die in a horror film. He gave them a smile that was 2/3 sneer and about a dozen of them fainted. He was mesmerizing. He sang "Hound Dog" and suddenly I knew where I'd seen him. His picture had come with a wallet that my first foster family had given me for my birthday. I'd seen that face every time I'd checked to see if my Trojan was still intact. Right up until the principal had taken them both away in sixth grade. But I'd also seen that face every time I looked in the mirror. The cheekbones, the dyed black hair, the curled lip. That was my face up there. Or at least it had been my face, before two years of groceries in six months had pumped it up like a marshmallow.

The place got hotter as the music heated up. I was sweating like a Mexican road worker in my plastic suit. The women were screaming louder and the music was picking at me like a vulture. Wild thoughts flooded my brain. I staggered out, pouring sweat. I had to sit down and think. Something had happened in there. I went up to my room, ordered a bottle of Jim Beam from room service and turned on the color T.V.

On the television, a man in an orange sport shirt was interviewing a woman in a worn looking gingham dress. She looked like she'd just made a movie about the Depression. She had a pretty face with no make-up and her hair was drawn back in a bun. Only her

eyes gave her away. It was Medea-Sue.
"Now let's get this straight," the interviewer said, "You first met Elvis in Tupelo,

"Yes sir that's true." Medea-Sue replied. She seemed small, almost pitiful. "The year was 1951. I was a sixteen year old virgin."

Photo: Gyl Raby

Andy Curtis as James Keegstra in One Yellow Rabbit's production *Ilsa, Queen of the Nazi Love Camp.* According to Keegstra the holocaust never happened. This would come as some surprise to the except and at the Campanian to the except and the surprise to the except and the except and the except and the surprise to the except and the exc prise to the ex-commandant of a German concentration camp and his favourite employee Ilsa, madam of the camp brothel. The black musical comedy was written by a team of writers headed by Blake Brooker, first recipient of Theatre Cal-gary's Laura May Kutney Playwright Award. ■

"And you taught him how to sing, how to move and how to pretend to play the guitar?"

"Yes sir I did. We were powerful in love."
"And you had a child by Elvis, am I right?" I took a long pull of sour mash whiskey and sweated into my wallpaper. "Yes, I did. I had a son. We was gonna get

married but Elvis made it big and he run out on us. He bought me a Cadillac and I drove to Salt Lake City to become a Mormon nun. I had to put my boy up for adoption," she said, starting to cry. "I just pray our love child is safe in some loving Mormon home. I plan to use the money from the lawsuit to find him and raise him . . . buy him the things I never could.

I switched off the television and lay down on the king sized bed and stared up at my reflection in the mirrored ceiling. I took a drink of Jim Beam and pondered my adolescence.

THE **SYRIAN STAR MAKES** THE SUMMER DEADLY

Anthony Friedson

After his Mary died, old Nicholas D's face went dry. His brows would drop in the mirror with morning emptiness. He was sad as his chisels rusting with horror on the bench in his termite dusted shed.

He saw his sons honorbent on their Sunday visitsyoung Nick, thin and wry behind Pat, his sterling wife; Peter sprawled on the sofa waiting vexed and gay.

Sometimes after lunch he'd try, humming through the rooms by Diamond Head, to catch a tune and pound back the old strong dances until the record in his brain wound down. Then he'd sight his cataract lenses

and pull in the mulled outline of the dead volcano Mary loved to paint. So we found him lying with a bared grin one light on the floor of the den among his clatter, safe till the dog days come

- Anthony Friedson lives in Honolulu and works as a writer and literary editor for Biography. A former teacher of creative writing at the University of Hawaii, he has read recently in Calgary, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Vancouver, and Portland.

HARVEST TIME

poster

A Chinese Festival poster celebrating the mid-autumn harvest. The Chinese calendar is designed around the moon. August 15 is the beginning of the Chinese lunar calendar and a Moon Festival is held at this time celebrating the

harvest. Feasts of ripe fruit, vegetables, fish and moon cakes are eaten across China.

Festival posters commemorating different festivals are common in China. They usually contain images of beautiful girls, fat babies, flowers, or big fish. There is a story that during the Spring festival a poor bachelor in the countryside, who didn't have enough money to get married, bought a festival poster of a beautiful girl for his wall. When he was in the fields working she would come down from the poster and do his washing and cooking. When he came home dinner would be on the table. One day he pretended to go to work and when she came down from the poster he captured her and they fell in love. When the emperor saw how beautiful she was he took her to the palace. The peasant was so lonely he killed the emperor to get her back.

Auntie Cháng'é(r):

This poster refers to the traditional Chinese legend about the Moon Goddess. In olden days, when there were ten suns in the sky, she was married to a knight who was very cruel. They say her husband took his bow and arrows and shot all the suns. Being very unhappy the goddess swallowed a magic elixir, stolen from her husband, and flew to the moon, with her rabbit. It is believed that she still lives there today and is very lonely. The Chinese want to show her that times have changed for the better in China and the poster images represent notions of progress and prosperity resulting from the *Four Modernizations:* industry, agriculture, military, and science and technology.



Television: The television represents China's industrialization. It is also an obvious symbol for a move towards westernization and the inclusion of Western ideology in the future.

Carp, Chicken, and Flowers: Food, fat babies and flowers symbolize prosperity for the new year and refers to the current abundance of food in China through the agriculture modernization movement.

> The Spaceship:
> The Spaceship represents the
> Science & Technology
> modernization. The inscription
> China: Year 2000 indicates that
> the future of China involves sophisticated technology and space travel.

EXCERPTS

Why hang around bookstores like some kind of literate hobo? Instead. browse the new titles courtesy of LAST ISSUE's regular round of excerpts. Herewith: Reflections by one of Canada's pioneer bohemians, Elizabeth Smart. A strong debut by poet Anne Michaels. One woman's 1908 voyage to the far north. Poems from your town and Chinatown.

IZABETH SMART

SECRETS

Elizabeth Smart was born in Ottawa in 1913 and died in 1986 in London, England. Although she published a relatively small amount of work in her lifetime, she is internationally recognized by virtue of two masterworks of prose — By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept and The Assumption of Rogues and Rascals. Her mother being a close friend of Mackenzie King, had By Grand Central Station removed from bookstores in Canada at the time of its first printing in 1945. It was not reissued until 1966 by which time she was lost to the Canadian literary consciousness. Published in 1986 by Deneau Publishers, Necessary Secrets is a compilation of Smart's journals written over an eight year period Secrets is a compilation of Smart's journals written over an eight year period closing in 1941. Editor Alice Van Wart is currently working on the second volume.

September 21

G od, come down out of the eucalyptus tree and tell me who will drown in so much blood. I saw her face coming out of the mist by the dying gera-

It was angular with the tears that should have blurred with liquid her unendurable torture. Her body was bent like a broken bow waiting for the wound which swung in perpetual suspension above her. But her eyes Oh my god pierced all the protecting veils that covered my imagination. Bleed me too in this terrible pool of birth.

Is there no other channel of deliverance? At first my reporter eyes gave no communication. By severing all the wires I functioned severally. But who could be proof against that future ghost holding pity like a time bomb in its look of agony? What gangsters of forgetfulness of justification can nature find, or you, god, engage, to quiet these thieves of endurance?

On her mangledness I am spreading my amorous sheets, but who will have any pride in the wedding red, seeping up between the colossus thighs

whose issue is only the cold semen of grief?

Not god but two bats and the spider of guilt keep the rendezvous and shame copulates with every September housefly. My room echoes with the screams she never uttered and under my floor the vines of remorse get ready to push up through the damp. The cricket drips remembrance into my ear lest I mislay any item of cruelty's fiendish itinerary. The trap is springing and I am in the trap.

But it is not easing or escape I crave when I pray god to understand my corrupt language and step down for a moment to sit on my broken bench. Will there be a birth from all this blood or is death only pouring out his fatal prime? Is an infant struggling in the triangular womb? I am blind but blood not love has blinded my eye. Love lifted the weapon and guided my crime, locked my limbs when the anguish rose out of the sea to cry Help and now over that piercing mask superimposes the cloudy mouth of desire.

have locked my door but terror is ambushed outside. The eucalyptus I have locked my door but terror is amousted outside.

I batters the window and all smitten Europe wails from the stream below. The ghosts will appear at the black squares unabashed by the pale crosses of the sash, for Jesus Christ walks the waters of another planet bleeding history from his old wounds. All lives are lost in the confusion. The coughing of the sheep in the lost hills of Dorset, of the gassed soldiers, of the two-year-old child with croup roll into one Avalanche of calamity with the insensitive stamp that broke the heart of the harlot. America with Californian claws clutches at the Pacific, masses her voices for frantic appeal. They roar like Niagara. They shake the synthetic hills. The sand of catastrophe is loosened and every breast is marked with doom. But the cheating cicada arrives first to lie all's well in god's ear which measures time so generously, and the woodlice are rocking their babies under the log. Anxiety lies still while his eye makes its vast and convolutions.

Standing a thousand feet above the sea, how does my adoring shadow look with the fishes of death swimming through its hair? Pearls float up from Mozart's oyster for a prettier noose, ring-a-rosing the ghoulish vision. When we meet and I clasp the deceiver in my arms our liquidation will poison the sea. But not tonight. There is no moon. Threateners of life are horrible enough and she my penalty lies gasping on the land. Shuddering like a coward I dare not grasp either life or death from the gruesome palm that offers them. Cut, the rocks breathe their accumulated gases and greedy castor tree casts them up and down the canyon that is so in love with tragedy.

Under the redwood tree my grave was laid and I beguiled my only lover to lie down. The stream of our kiss put a bridge around the world where love like a refugee sailed in the last ship. My hair made my inglorious shroud and kept the coyotes at bay while we wrote our hieroglyphics with anatomy's futile tools. The silver seeds split on the ground had grown giant fangs when we opened our eyes. The wind boomed triumph sounding the heaviest notes on our vulnerable spines. A smile like a cobweb was fastened across the mouth of the cave of fate.

Fear will be a terrible fox at my vitals under my tunic of behaviour. Oh canary sing out in the thunderstorm, prove your yellow pride. But there is no tangible knock on the door of my sanity, nor decipherer for the code of the eucalyptus thumping on my roof. I am unnerved by the opponents of god and out of earshot. I must spin ghosts out my hope to oppose the hordes at my window. If those who look in see me descend to barricade the door, they will know to much and crowd in to overcome me. The parchment philosopher has no traffic with the night and our conception of the price of love. With smoky circles of thought he combats the fog and with anagrams defeats anatomy. I posture with his weapons, balmed with nicotine herbs.

Moon, moon rise in the sky to be a reminder of comfort and the hours

when I was brave.

But the gentle flowers able to die unceremoniously remind me of her grief that drowns all ghosts, and though I swing in torture from the windiest hill, more angels weep for her whose love runs in blood into all the oceans of

What did she hold in protection when the ship pursued the storm and she fought the cancer her lost child gnawed within? I have broken her heart

like a robin's egg. Its wreck reaches her finite horizon.

What was your price Gabriel, Michael of the ministering wing? What pulley from headlong man pulled you up in the nick of time, till you gushed vegetable laughter and fed only off the sun?

The texts are meaningless; they are the enemy's deception. My foot danced by mistake over the helpless and bled no solace for my butchery. Tell me how to atone for the dove in the eucalyptus who speaks with thunder of the future's revenge. My heart is its own destructive just to beat out the truth.

Tell me this gush ushers in my wonder.

A wet wing brushes away the trembling night and morning breathes cold analyses into my spectre-waiting mind. The vines assume their social are the state of the spectra with abildren's forgets.

air, ingratiating green with children's fingers.

he impotent eucalyptus stands gaunt as dawn. But faint as a dream and definite as death my possible phoenix is a graph totemed in the sky breathing like a workman setting out on a job.

Elizabeth Smart outside "The George" pub in London, September 1949.



Photo: Tambi Muttu

Courtesy Georgina Barker

ANNE MICHAELS' THE WEIGHT OF ORANGES

Published in 1986 by The Coach House Press. Michaels is a resident of Toronto and has composed music for theatre, taught creative writing at university and school levels and worked as a publicist for performing arts companies. Her writing has been published in many Canadian journals. The Weight of Oranges is her



Words for the Body

Landowska, overheard during a heated argument on interpretation: "You play Bach your way, and I'll play him his way.

We knew we'd reached Dunn Lake because the trees stopped Chilled and sweating under winter clothes we stood in the damp degenerated afternoon. We grew up waiting together by water, frozen or free, in the summer under the cool shaggy umbra of firs, or in the aquarium light of birches. It's always been this way between us. We reach lakes and then just stand there. Silence fills us with silence.

When we were fourteen you read to me about Landowska, who tottered the world and stopped the sun when she held a note'. We argued over interpretation until we were sixteen and discovered Casals: 'the best musician learns to play what's not on the page'. We decided music is memory, the way a word is the memory of its meaning. The first time I knew what we were trying for I was waiting on the back porch while you practised. Piano flickered the leaves. evening in perfect summer, temperature the same inside and outside my body, night a pigment in my skin. In that swathing twilight I knew you'd had a lover. Everything became part of that new perception. The yard disappeared.
Sudden as my sense of your body,
I knew you were attempting silence.
To move an audience until they aren't listening. We believed in our head's perfect version, but you couldn't make your hands, and I couldn't make my words, pronounce it. Even now when I hear you play I think of a lover, gasping at the gate of another, who suddenly knows

love has no power to make it right.

The summer you stopped playing we were driving home from the farm, windows full of stars on the dark highway, legs bare on the vinyl seats, night air cold and new as from the sea. In a voice that came from the highway you described the blackness where music waits, tormenting until you draw it out, a redemption. Then the fear of forgetting notes disappears, the fingers have a memory of their own.
You spoke a kind of hunger that makes pleasure perfect.
Then you said how it was to be opened and tasted by a hall full of people. When we reached home you were crying.
Within a month you stopped playing.
You stopped sleeping.
Eighteen years old, exhausted,
holding to the idea of perfect sound.
End of summer, raining morning, your head in my hands Across the room a jar of flowers made its small fire. Curtains held their breath against the wet screens.

Dunn Lake. We skied there gracelessly through the woods. Desperate light pressured black trees to hold their pose The moon reached under the ice where the lake moved, obedient. Night pressed its thumbs over our eyes. Too dark to take the way we came, we went by road. You reached the farmhouse ahead of me, I saw your figure in the porch lights.
We ate watching the fire,
logs collapsing under the weight of the flame,
flames collapsing with their own weight. Almost no word spoken since our silence at the lake, you said you'd play again. Over two years since your hands were yours. You asked, smiling, face torn with shadows from the fire: 'haven't you given up the perfect word yet?'

Fingers have a memory, to read the familiar braille of another's skin. The body has a memory: the children we make, places we've hurt ourselves, sieves of our skeletons in the fat soil. No words mean as much as a life. Only the body pronounces perfectly the name of another.

This morning your letter. A photo of redwoods in winter, the half frozen pond. Remember the way we walked each other home one block further, one block further the way we skated in the ravine, late winter afternoon, so cold the air seemed to magnify the world, sky the colour of plums. We sang in harmony on the ice, breath echoing white under the bridge, our fifteen-year-old bodies perfect and young under winter clothes, warm from skating and singing, trees along the ridge a black lace picket fence against a plume of orange like a comet's tail where the sun had been. Remember climbing the hill, already dark, and stopping to hear trees shake their branches, how we'd enter your parents' warm house in a daze of images. Remember once, mauve and yellow tulips on the dining room table, remember the music when we said play those colours

and turned Bach's Anna Magdalena the colour of yellow, the colour of mauve. Remember that October, standing in your farm's back field, half a mile apart, while daylight collapsed under the weight of darkness, and trees thick with burning leaves shouldered the stars. Music emerged from those moments, from air, like a room's white dimension in the window at nightfall. Any discovery of form is a moment of memory, existing as the historical moment — alone, and existing in history - linear, in music, in the sentence. Each poem, each piece remembers us perfectly, the way the earth remembers our bodies, the way man and woman in their joining remember each other before they were separate. It's over 25 years and every love poem says how your music and my words are the same: praising the common air, the motive, the memory. To praise memory is to praise the body.

And I find myself describing the joining of hips and eyes, the harbours of thighs and lips, as the singing of two small bodies in a dark ravine, as two small bodies holding up the night sky in a winter field.

AGNES DEANS CAMERON'S THE NEW NORTH

n 1908 Agnes Deans Cameron of Victoria, B.C., journalist and suffragist, undertook a six-month journey down the MacKenzie River, accompanied by her niece. Together they are credited with being the first white women to travel to the Canadian Arctic. The New North was first published in 1909 to instant acclaim by readers in Canada, Britain and the U.S.A. It was republished in 1986 by Western Producer Prairie Books.

In this excerpt Cameron describes her visit to the oldest white settlement in Alberta. Once a bustling metropolis, Fort Chipewyan can only be reached today by

A t seven in the morning on Sunday, June 21st, we enter Lake Athabasca, and catch our first glimpse of Fort Chipewyan. An acceptance of the invitation, "Come shake your leg," has kept the men busy half the night hot sequence of Red River jigs among "pieces" on the lower deck, and we have this superb sweep almost to ourselves.

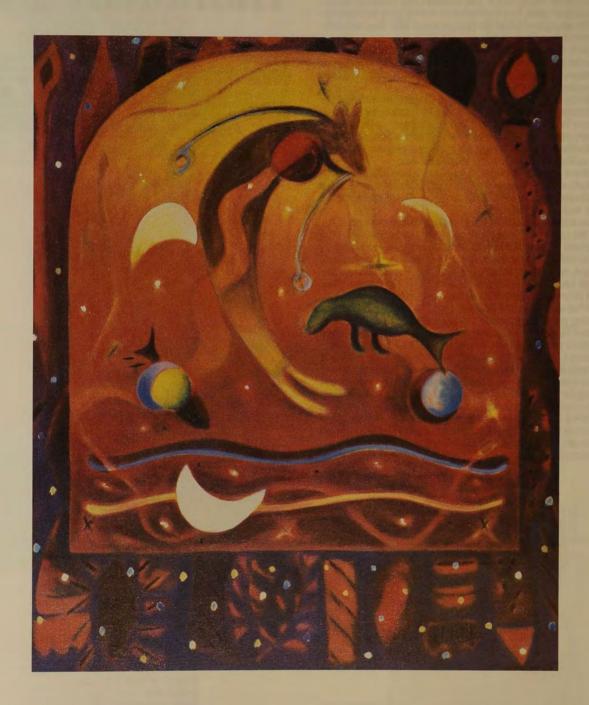
The great lake-scape is blue and green and grey and opaline as the sun strikes it and the surface breaks to a south wind. Ours is the one craft on this inland sea, but overhead a whole navy of clouds manoeuvres, the ships of the ghostly argosy doubling themselves in the lake. As we draw in the village

ghostly argosy doubling themselves in the lake. As we draw in, the village takes shape. What haunts us as we look at the white houses, that crescent beach of pinkest sand! We have it! It is a print, an old woodcut of "Russian America" that we used to pore over in the days when one wore "pinnies" of flour-sacking, and "hankies" were made from meal-bags.

At one end of the village are the little smithy of the Hudson's Bay Company and the pretentious buildings of their establishment. At the other gibbous horn of this Athens of the Athabasca rise the steeples and conventschool of the Roman Church, with the free-trading post of Colin Fraser. Midway between is the little Church of Franker. school of the Roman Church, with the free-trading post of Colin Fraser. Mu-way between is the little Church of England, and higher up and farther back the barracks of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. The white-washed homes of the employés of The Company, little match-boxes dazzling in the sun, stretch from one end of the beach to the other. In among the half-breed populace stalk policeman and priest, red jacket keeping the dark-skinned people straight in this world and black robe laying out conditions for the world to come. So is Chipewyan fate chequered with the *rouge et noir* of compulsion and expediency. compulsion and expediency.

Continued on page 18

THE FLOATING GALLERY



Desert Icon 1987 Oil on Canvas 65 x 60 cm

MARSHA STONEHOUSE

A Calgary resident, Marsha Stonehouse received her B.F.A. from the University of Western Ontario. She recently spent six months travelling and painting in the Australian outback. *Desert Icon* is part of the *Dreamtime Series*, a body of work investigating aboriginal mythologies.

F ort Chipewyan is the oldest post in the North, and every boulder of red gneissic rock, if we could interrogate it, has a story to tell. Peter Pond, of the North-West Company, in 1778 built a post on the Athabasca River thirty miles to the south of the lake. The far-seeing Alexander Mackenzie, in the interests of the same company, sent his cousin Roderick ten years later to build Fort Chipewyan on the lake, and for over a century this was the entrepôt and emporium of the whole North. The Hudson's Bay Company meanwhile were maintaining a post, Fort Wedderburne, not far away on Potato Island, and upon the amalgamation of the Companies in 1821 they took possession of the present Fort Chipewyan.

This metropolis is one hundred and twenty years old. Chipewyan was doing business at the same old stand before Toronto was the capital of Upper Canada, while Ottawa was still unheard of, and when of Chicago not even the

Fort Dearborn nucleus had been built. 1788!

There is a living as well as buried history in Chipewyan. A stroll from one end of its lacustrine street to the other is lush with interest. We call upon Colin Fraser, whose father was piper to Sir George Simpson. Colin treats us to a skirl of the very pipes which announced the approach of Simpson when-ever that little Northern autocrat, during his triumphal progress through a

bailiwick as big as Europe, made his way into a new fort.

With the echo of the "Gay Gordons" in our ears we pass into the largest convent in the North country, managed by the Grey Nuns of Montreal. Sister Brunelle came into the North in 1866. Forty-two years in a convent-school of the Northland! It makes one gasp.

These Indian schools, assisted by the Canadian Government, catch the little Indians in the compass and held their provious school banches from the

little Indians in the camps and hold their prey on school-benches from the age of four to fourteen. One boy is dumb, another a hunchback. In a corner we came upon a poor old derelict of the camps, a Cree woman, paralysed and mentally deranged, who within these quiet walls has found harbour. The kiddies are taught one day in French and the next day in English; but when they hide behind their spellers to talk about the white visitors, the whisper is in Chipewyan. What do they learn? Reading, (vertical) writing, arithmetic, hymns, and hoeing potatoes, grammar, sewing and shoemaking, and one more branch, never taught in Southern schools. When the fall fishery comes, the nuns kilt up their skirts, slates are shoved far back into desks, and shepherdess and sheep (young brown moose!) together clean the whitefish which are to furnish meals for a twelve-month to come. If fish be brain food, then should this convent of Chipewyan gather in medals, degrees, and awards, capturing for its black-eyed boys Rhodes scholarhips ad lib.

Back of the convent stretches a farm with an historic record. It was from this explosure tilled by the priests and their protests that the sample of

this enclosure, tilled by the priests and their protégés, that the sample of wheat came which at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in competition with the wheats of the world took the bronze medal. This wheat ran

sixty-eight pounds to the bushel.



Agnes Deans Cameron

We step into the old man's smith and he turns to greet us with an out-stretched hand and a "Good mornin," in richest Doric. The date 1863 cut into the wooden foundation of his forge marks the year when Wyllie came to Chipewyan. He was born in the Orkneys, and had never seen a city in the Old World. Coming out to America in a sailing vessel of The Company by way of Hudson Bay, he threaded the inland waterway which brought him to Chipewyan without seeing a city in America. Torontonians think the hub of the universe is their capital on Lake Ontario. A smart young man from Toronto filtered in one day to Chipewyan, and asked the old blacksmith, "Came from the Old Country, didn't you? What did you think of Toronto?" "Naething, I didna see the place."

Mr. Wyllie has never seen an electric light nor a railway train nor a two-storey building nor a telegraph wire nor a telephone. In the forty-five years in which he has presided over this forge, the limits of his wanderings have been McMurray on the south, Fort Smith on the north, Fond du Lac on the east, the Chutes of the Peace on the west. To him these are innocuous days of ease, in which we are falling into luxuriousness with all its weakening influence. "It was much better in the old days when we had only dried meat and fish-oil. Nowadays, when we have flour and tinned meats and preserved fruits, all my teeth are coming out!"

ANNE CAMERON'S THE ANNIE POEMS

The Annie Poems was published in 1987 by Harbour Publishing Co. Ltd. Anne Cameron was born in 1938 in Nanaimo, B.C., and now lives in Powell River. She is the author of *The Journey*, a women's western; two collections of Northwest Coast Indian mythology, *Daughters of Copperwoman* and *Dzlarhons*. The television script and novel *Dreamspeaker*, won seven Canadian film awards and the 1979 Gibson Award for literature. Her other film writing credits include *Ticket to Heaven, A Matter of Choice, Homecoming* and *Drying Up the Streets*.

Punishment

They found a stranger lurking near the village his skin darkstained with the blood of the slain child ... he wanted me to

he cried repeatedly he wanted me to but then he got scared and I had to stop his screaming . . .

They took him to the sea stood him in water to his hips at low tide A throng from his hair to his bound wrists face turned upward to the rain feet fastened to large rocks his hamstrings severed his testicles hanging from his neck ... he wanted me to but then he got scared and I had to stop his screaming.

They went back to the village leaving him to the rising tide his dead seeds cooling against his chest I went to him my clamshell knife in my hand my words killed him my clamshell knife merely released his spirit through the skin of this throat

my words killed him ... I wish I'd never known you ... my words killed my brother ... he wanted me to and I had to stop his screaming . . .

JIM WONG-CHU'S CHINATOWN GHOSTS

A book of poetry published in 1986 by Pulp Press. Wong-Chu was born in Hong Kong and raised in British Columbia, where he worked the Chinese Canadian cafe circuit, eventually settling in Vancouver's Chinatown. He attended the Vancouver School of Art and produced a major photographic essay called *Pender Street East.* He is a founding member of the Asian Canadian Writers Workshop. His work has appeared in numerous periodicals.



Photo courtesy Pulp Press

ice

was the first time anyone remembers it happening

the fields froze in our village in south china

we broke some not knowing what it was and took it to the junk peddlar

he thought it was glass and traded us a penny for it

he wrapped it up in old cloth and placed it on top of his basket

of course the noon day sun melted it

by the time we came back with more he had gotten wise

baptism 1909

god an easier word than christian . . . kisjin

his tongue grinds like dry bread bumping against each syllable

missus murray reverend murray's wife corrects him for the ninth time

krrrrriiiistttiiiiaaannnnn

he stares at this woman giant then timidly offers her an O

kooooooooisjin

IN THE SKIN OF A LION



MICHAEL ONDAATJE

Contemporary Canadian Literature from

KEY WORDS BOOKSTORE
1130 Kensington Road, Calgary T2N 3P3 283-3463

APPROPRIATION

When does borrowing become stealing? In this special LAST ISSUE forum, a panel of 12 observers discusses the artistic leitmotif of the 1980 s



APPROPRIATION: The making of a thing private property, esp. one's own; taking to one's own use without right or authority.

The act of taking possession of something seems to be a gesture of the 80's. One need only think of Madonna's blatant version of Marilyn Monroe to realize that this decade is preoccupied less with originality than with taking possession of things which have staying power. So what if we have seen it all before. As television critic Tom Shales suggests the eighties are the Redecade: repeating, replaying, rerunning, retrieving, recycling, and remaking.

Appropriation in one form or another has always been around. Picasso once said, "All artists borrow, great ones steal." Today however, appropriation is taking on special significance to the point of becoming another weighty word in the jargon of the cultural intelligensia

In a series of interviews LAST ISSUE discusses the issues surrounding the appropriation debate from a variety of perspectives. This includes individual artists who are blatantly borrowing from other sources to shape their own personal style, as well as others who use appropriation to question notions of originality and the value of self-expression. In a larger context, the act of appropriation can be seen in terms of one culture taking or borrowing from another. This interaction raises political and ethical issues. Insofar as this relates to museums, the ethics of borrowing occurs in the acquisition of and presentation of materials from other cultures. Is it a mutually beneficial exchange or is one culture being appropriated inappropriately?

JEFFERY SPALDING

Nightfall (Study) 1984

Oil on panel 121.5 × 60.8 cm

Nightfall is reminiscent of 19th Century romantic landscape painting.



DAINA **AUGAITIS**

Daina Augaitis is presently the Curator of Art for the Walter Phillips Gallery at the Banff Centre. She comes from Vancouver where she was with the Western Front since 1983. Recent curatorial creditional designs of the control of t its include Luminous Sites and the October Show. She received a B.F.A. from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. In an interview with Heather Elton about her recent exhibition Transference, Augaitis discusses the sociological implications of the act of appropriation from the perspective of contemporary

Let's talk about the exhibit Transference. What does the term appropriation mean in the context of that show?

I see it as an artistic strategy in many

ways. It is something that comments quite significantly on our culture, which is what art ultimately always does.



STEVE PETERSON Turf 1986

Is appropriation a concept that is being

explored in the art world at the moment?
I think so, certainly. Most of all I think it questions things that were important to modernism like expression and originality. Originality is a key word here. In *Transference* the artists are questioning the validity of originality being of prime importance. The artist is no longer seen as a visionary with the answers. The idea of ambiguity allows the viewer to bring his/her own experience to the art. In other words there is no one single way of understanding the meaning in these works. It really depends on the viewer.

With traditional modernist works was there one way of understanding the work?

I think there was when you think of high modernism or minimalist formalist sculpture which had a lot to do with pushing the material to its purest form.

What kind of comment do you think photographer Don Corman is making

about our society?
In Transference when Corman pilfers through a reject bin in a photo lab and uses photographs that have been taken by ordinary people, he is commenting on the process of selection in photography and how that has been built up as being of key and primary im-portance. He is really limiting and changing the entire scope of the selection process by bringing other people into it. It moves the focus from him as the originator to someone else who remains anonymous.

Do you think the meaning comes in the act of appropriation itself or in the content of the images?

First and foremost it's in the act and in his selection process. The act of appropriation, I think, is the most significant aspect. In the exhibition, Steve Peterson is making the strongest comment on what is occuring in the world on a political level. The text of the piece, Turf, suggests that we are repeating the same battle over and over and the dog in the instal-lation does the same by defining his own turf (which they often do by pissing). The implica-tion of the border is to suggest how useless it is to have boundaries and borders and coun-tries fighting and defining their tries fighting and defining their own turf.

In Chris Cran's painting of the artist's face in your home, is he commenting on the relationship between originality and the art market?

Chris Cran's work reflects back to the situation out of which appropriation arose, that being, the question of originality and style which is attributed to money. Cran says let's not play around with the idea that art is not a commodity item. We can't deny the economic focus helping the place of rigins and follows: focus behind the play of rising and falling styles and the progression of "isms" within the art world. What is horrifying is the speed with which it all happens and how the whole time frame gets broken down. I think though that is also a reflection of our world in the sense that it is not pure. The idea of modernism reflected a purity of form that became very imporant and today in North America there is no cultural purity. We are the melting pot and what happens out of that is what some people call Hybridization. I think how it translates into art is that you have a mixing of media and you have a sense of things being fractured in the

// ou walk into a hotel suite and the marble bathtub is plastic and the wool rug is acrylic and the panelling is fake. The idea of real and the original is no longer relevant today."

work. There is also the notion of the non-real in the world, nothing is "real". You walk into a hotel suite and the marble bathtub is plastic and the wool rug is acrylic, and the panelling is fake. The idea of the real and the original is no longer relevant today.



Painter Jeff Spalding lives part of the year in Bob-caygeon, Ontario and the other part in Lethbridge, Alberta. Among other things he serves as the Di-rector of the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery. He attended University of Guelph (B.A.), Ohio State University (M.A.), and Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (M.F.A.). Spalding discusses with Mary-Beth Laviolette the roots of appropriation in contemporary art and its effect.

You commented that appropriation is

about cynicism. Can you elaborate? In Christopher Lasch's book *The Culture* of Narcissism - American Life in the Age of Diminishing Expectations, his point is that we now have very little direct experience with the world. That we simply have a mediated experience of the world. For instance, those of us who are interested in nature watch nature programs. We rarely go out and experience it. We watch life as spectators and even when we encounter an experience, we already have a set of mediated expectations. Lasch also points out that we don't expect much any more. We turn on the television and usually don't expect to find something riveting or engaging. Anyone who is a veteran watcher of T.V. can usually spell it all out before the program is even fin-ished. So there is this notion of diminishing expectations and we're passive about it.

So how have our diminishing expectations affected culture?



My Face in Your Home 1986 CHRIS CRAN

Photo: Don Corman

By the late Sixties, early Seventies, there was this idea that all the great novels had been written and all the great themes were doomed to be repeated endlessly. This attitude led to a kind of cynical withdrawl from the attempt to make new stories. And if you couldn't create anything new why reveal your ignorance of that basic fact. So you avoid it. I think that kind of analysis speaks about the withdrawal from narration that occurred in art in the Sixties and early Seventies.

Now we find that artists are bored to death with that withdrawal and are trying to make some attempt at reintegrating narration, telling a story, making a comment. But, while we all knew that it was incredibly intelligent as an analysis of culture that nothing new could be done, the last thing you, as an artist, could possibly do was to give up on that thought and return to "Well, I want to do a love song". That's just impossible. So the only way, apparently, for smart people to have feelings is to appropriate other people's feelings. So you can say, "Well, I'm just making note of this attraction that we seem to have in society towards things that are overtly romantic and so I will quote Niagara Falls or I will quote the escape to the tropics, but I don't have those feelings myself. No, I'm too smart for that. I'm too jaded to want to have excitement, adventure, warmth. I don't need that. But I'm going to show you how smart I am by quoting to you how dull other people are by still wanting this"

So, appropriation, in a sense, is an enormously cynical way of regenerating and reintroducing narration, stories, emotion, you name it. What appropriation does, and all that nonsense about analyzing culture is to say, "I wanna swim but I don't want to get wet. I want to test myself but I don't want to be found wanting or failing. So I want to quote Soviet art or I want to quote romantic painting but I don't want people to judge me to be inferior, to have failings or to be vulnerable. I especially don't want to look dumb and so I'm going to appropriate images which protect me psychologically from failure." If it fails you just say that all you were trying to do was to draw people's attention to this image. Therefore, appropriation is a hopelessly middle-of-theroad approach. The possibility of failure is an important human issue and to protect yourself from failure is probably to protect yourself from success as well.

But what about your most recent work whose subject matter is Niagara Falls. When I look at those works I think of the 19th Century and romantic painting. What are you doing with your work?

19th Century and romantic painting. What are you doing with your work?
One, I don't exactly know. So that's an enormous step for me. Before I definitely thought I knew everything about my work. However, the content of the painting is not to make fun of, or to nostalgically wish for the 19th Century.

The average smart artist would say, "Niagara Falls, sunsets and all that stuff is totally suspect because you can't have those experiences anymore." But twenty-five thousand people a day go up there and are moved by it, so to dismiss their experience is patronizing. It is a shame that artists, who are supposed to be receptive and perceptive, have completely turned their backs on some of the larger and most compelling images that are available to us in North America. Those images have been left to the amateur watercolourist, and the weekend photographer. So some of that goes into my work. I also use those images because they have instant, recognizable meaning in relation to another time, another place and

A ppropriation is a hopelessly middle-of-the road approach."

another set of art hopes and aspirations. They show how much we have changed. It is not my intention to have people look at the paintings and say, "Oh, the 19th Century. Isn't that ironical. He's making fun of that period." I think that attitude is totally dull. It comes down to making fun of another's efforts and that is a very low order of human endeavour. I think what is to be really valued is *trying* something, no matter what it is.



ARLENE STAMP

For the last five years, Arlene Stamp has produced a series of works which appropriate directly the images of the late naive painter, Gladys M. Johnston. Stamp began this series while still residing in Calgary where she earned a diploma from the Alberta College of Art and a B.F.A. from the University of Calgary. She currently resides in Toronto. Mary-Beth Laviolette discusses with Stamp how the format aspects of her work bring into focus not only the issue of originality but also the ethics of appropriation.

You have said that the word appropriation is not well suited in terms of its usage in contemporary art. Why?

Well, emphasis seems to be more on 'the taking' rather than on 'the making'. Whenever I hear the word appropriation I think of taking something and running away with it, and that's not how I use it in my work at all.

For the last four years or so your work has involved appropriating the images of Gladys Johnston. What is your intent?

My original intent was to take away the burden of decision-making usually associated with painting - the choosing of the subject, composition, colours and all the decisions that have to be made as you paint. I wanted to remove those decisions so that I could concentrate more completely on the act of painting. It served that purpose very well.

Can you describe what you did with Gladys Johnston's work?

I was xeroxing my own work at the time that I was introduced to Johnston's work. I thought it would be beautiful translated by colour xerox. When I saw the colour xerox translation of her paintings I was overwhelmed with the impulse to paint these xeroxes on a large scale.

You used the xeroxes as your source of information?

Yes, I didn't think of myself as taking liberties with that information at all. I was working to recreate that information in paint as closely as I could but working to get into the space of the painting. That was the problem I set for myself.

You are now using Johnston's drawings. What are you doing?

I was sent some black and white xeroxes of her work and when they arrived I didn't do anything with them for a long time. But I came to enjoy the surface qualities of the paper as recorded by the xerox as much as the drawings. My recent plexiglass drawings make use of both kinds of information.

So far the reasons you have given me have to do with formal concerns. In a review in *Parachute* magazine, the writer said you are attempting to explore the concept of identity through the appropriation of the art of another woman. What is your response to that?

I think I must have been confident that my identity would not be lost even in this situation of working from her material or I wouldn't have done it. It is a challenge to identity. For instance, I think my recent collaboration with Elizabeth MacKenzie and Janice Gurney explores the whole question of identity within collaboration or within appropriation more directly. We are really challenging the ways in which artistic identity is usually established. If you think of identity as being related to aspects of personal style, then it will be difficult distinguishing one artist from another because we are using one another's methods. So part of our point is that identity lies elsewhere.

Where do you think identity lies?

I hope it lies in what we traditionally call the content of art. We've titled the show Acknowledgement because we want to acknowledge the cross-over and the debt we all owe to one another. Identity is not something we are totally in charge of ourselves.

In other words, the act of making art is not just the grandiose vision of one single individual?

Exactly.

Do you think there are instances where appropriation is not ethically appropriate?

I can think of one instance where a woman was asked for a drawing and it was incorporated in a way that she found very distasteful. In that case I would say that the appropriation was a violation and I don't think that I would condone that. But now even as I speak I realize that of course, Gladys Johnston didn't see what I did with her images. But I didn't do anything to her work. Whereas in the case I just cited, the woman's work was taken and violated in some sense. So I don't know. We're redrawing the lines and I think the question is a very pertinent one and I am certainly running into some difficult questions in connection with this Acknowledgement show. And then there is the question of money. Should money change hands when images change hands? How much acknowledgement is enough? I left the name of Gladys Johnston on the paintings certainly. That was a very important part of acknowledging where those images come form. But when you're dealing with a living artist, how much is enough?



GLADYS M. JOHNSTON Untitled ca 1970
Oil on Masonite 50.5 × 39 cm



ARLENE STAMP Gladys M. Johnston Series: Untitled #7 1982 Oil, wax medium on canvas 175 × 135 cm



VICKI **ADAMS**

Dance has been fundamental to the life of Calgary born Vicki Adams Willis. She has studied a wide range of dance techniques but her focus has returned to jazz - a dance she defines as rhythm, soul and improvisation rooted in the black vernacular. She feels that there are few places today which approach jazz with these elements as a base. As head of the jazz division in the University of Calgary's Programme of Dance (where she has been teaching since 1973) and as Artistic Director of Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, she is working to preserve and promote the rich history and unique spirit of jazz music and dance. In an interview with Lisa Doolittle, Willis talks about the cross-cultural roots of jazz dance.

Can you define what the term "borrowing from other cultures" means in dance? Would you call it an influence?

There are a lot of cases of direct borrowing. For example, jazz is a hybrid that has grown out of various dance forms, whereas originally it was a two way borrowing. When the African slaves were brought to America, they apparently were exercised on deck with

the Irish sailors who would jig as a part of this experience. The Africans picked up the foot-work of the jig and applied the hip and pelvic movements, ribs and so on to it. Those were the beginnings of tap, as a North American version of step dancing. The Cakewalk used European spatial patterns with African based movement. So it wasn't pure African movement that was happening in America. Jazz grew out of this marriage between African and

In America black vernacular dance was done in black theatres and dance halls. Whites took the movement, put it in their theatres, and tried to take credit for it. There were several whites who claimed they had invented the Charleston, whereas it had been done by blacks for centuries. It wasn't called the Charleston, but the movement was the same. And these social dances in turn influenced the art of dancing.

Why would the black dances be adopted

by whites? What was the interest?

It was something so totally foreign to what the whites had seen. Before the twenties, whites were only exposed to European social dance, and this newfound freedom in the torso and the complex rhythms must have fascinated them. People were looking for a thrill, it was a crazy age of drinking gin and listening to jazz music.

So for a white person to dance like this was very naughty.

The clergy did a thumbs down on the whole thing and they warned that the end of the world was just around the corner. Initially

the whites didn't really understand where these rhythms were coming from, so their dancing became a watered down version of what the blacks were doing, and they missed the essence of what the movement was all about. The movement evolved out of centuries of African movement and the blacks were in tune with these complex rhythms. But also, jazz music and jazz dance were both born out of the black struggle in America. When the whites got their hands on it, they copied the shape of the movement but it certainly didn't have the intensity nor the passion.

Do you think borrowing is still going on? In what way?

I'm thinking of Jack Cole. He started out in the Denishawn company and learned East Indian dance. Recognizing the similarity between the polyrhythms used in East Indian music and those in several jazz music forms, he performed East Indian dance to jazz music. He wasn't even borrowing, but rather was taking the authentic dances and changing the music to make it more accessible to western audiences

Did he present it as his original movement?

No . . . he definitely gave credit where it was due, but people started saying "Oh, this is modern jazz dance." And he would say, "No, it's not jazz. Don't label it, it's just what I'm doing right now". But because it was done to jazz music, people called it jazz and it in turn influenced and became a part of jazz dance. influenced and became a part of jazz dance. Then people like Luigi went on to combine ballet with jazz. In many cases it would be hard to say who took what from whom.

Today, jazz continues to be influenced by social dancing - all the street forms such as jazz, boppin' and poppin', breakdance, etc., as well as by other more "formal" dance techniques such as modern and ballet. I think it's something that constantly happens, I'm not sure that anything original is happening anywhere. Newness seems to come out of a marriage between two forms, or amongst several forms, or evolves out of an existing form.

So it is not really an issue in jazz dancing, about where you are coming from? You don't have to identify your sources, that's

not an important thing to do?

I feel that I have to do that. Most jazz people probably do not. I think it's shocking that most really don't know their roots. The connection to tradition is lost along with the sense of value. I think you have to understand where something comes from before you can take it anywhere. Otherwise it remains a terribly superficial experience.

Do you think that the borrowing was ever particularly inappropriate?

Sure, in jazz music as well as dance, and in music forms such as rhythm and blues. Elvis Presley is an example. He took black movement, black sound, and exploited them, and all of a sudden a "new" thing was happening. It had of course been happening in black theatres and music halls for years but naive white America thought this was a new way of moving - there's Elvis gyrating his hips well that's an old snake hips form that had been around for years in black America as well as Africa. A lot of this sort of exploitation happens in the music business.

Is there a point where you say that's stealing, where it stops being

I think that point is where credit isn't given to the people who deserve it. A lot of times whites really pushed the feeling that they had invented something when quite obviously they hadn't. Often they actually stole some and put their names on them. To me songs and put their names on them. To me that is out and out theft. I have no problem with borrowing from anybody because I think that's what makes the world interesting. As long as you try to remain true to the roots and as long as you work with integrity and commitment, I think it's exciting.



Marsha Stonehouse is a painter who resides in Calgary. She received her B.F.A. from the University of Western Ontario and has pursued further studies through the Banff School of Fine Arts. In her search for what she calls the "life force", Stonehouse has incorporated other cultures' mythologies into her work. Recently back from a journey through the Australian outback Stonehouse describes to Mary-Beth Laviolette how the aboriginal dreamtime has influenced her.

Your work reflects a strong interest in other cultures. Can you elaborate on this aspect?

Art is not just a matter of making paintings but also a matter of personal growth as an artist and as a person. Through other cultures I can find out who I am personally and what my own culture is missing. I want to somehow bring that into my own work and, I guess, indirectly back into our own culture.

You have spent time on the Nazca culture (Peru) and recently you were in Australia to learn about aboriginal mythology. Are you concerned at all that some might view this as cultural voyeurism?

No, because I know the honesty with which I'm doing it. My intentions are not to adopt, for shallow reasons, other cultures' mythologies. What I do comes from a very deep drive that I trust implicitly and so for that

reason I don't worry about it.

One reason why I like to go to other cultures is that we tend to think of everything in terms of 'property'. What is ours is ours and what is theirs is theirs. I think we get caught up in polarities: good/bad, left/right, black/white and we end up missing the things we share in common. The fact that we are even talking cultural appropriation results from he talking cultural appropriation results from being part of a particular culture that is driving us to say, "This is American mythology, this is Canadian mythology, this is Swiss mythology." I find that attitude to be problematic: because this person is an Inuit, I can't understand or share his mythology.

How have you expressed what you learnt from the aboriginals in your work?

There's a real cross-section. Some images overlap with the strong feelings that I had about being in the desert, especially at night. Consequently I have done a lot of night skies. Some deal with landforms while others are more concerned with the mythology. For example, I have taken one myth that the aboriginals have about the Rainbow Serpent who is a mythological creature that formed the rivers. It's a wonderful story about joining the Milky Way and how the rivers eat into the sky. In the piece where I used the Rainbow Serpent it ended up being a river.

What do you want the viewer to get out of these images? The viewer doesn't necessarily share your knowledge or under-standing of aboriginal culture.

In the end I want to make a piece that is visually interesting, has content that can be taken on many different levels and that has some magic in it. I would be happy if someone gets all those three.

Are there inappropriate forms of appropri-

Oh yes. I think the commercialization of Native work is definitely a problem, especially when you start to see aboriginal totems on tea towels. It's not done with any understanding of what those images are about. Our culture is notorious for lifting images, taking them out of context and ruining the sacred qualities associated with them. We live in a glut of images without meaning.

In my work I want to maintain its integrity, especially if it is a sacred image, and to present it in a way that respects it. I'm sure there are a certain number of artists who are appropriating other images and ideas because it's trendy. I don't agree with the fashionability of art so I tend to be very skeptical about that kind of appropriation. I don't think it comes from within.



Born and raised in New York's post-beat art world, Acker is becoming known as one of the world's most innovative writers of contemporary literature. She now resides in London, England. Acker is the author of *Don Quixote, Great Expectations, Blood and Guts in High School* plus four other novels, several plays, and a flushript. One of her plays, *The Birth of Parkly and Allera and Aller* a Poet, was produced as an opera at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In 1983, Acker was signed by Grove Press under a multi-book contract. In an interview with Heather Elton, Acker considers the use of appropriation in her own writing and questions the value of self-expression.

p eople don't own sentences or words. You don't make up the meaning of a word."

How do you see the term appropriation

manifesting itself in literature?

Appropriation in literature is an old tradition. This business of fiction, of writing or making up your own stories is fairly recent. Up until the time of Shakespeare a writer would often use a story that was already known. Actually what is *new* in literature is more the idea of creation. In terms of modern literature, most people for the last hundred years have been concerned with originality and expression. This has a lot to do with the marketplace; where you make new commodities and they're sellable.

In your writing do you actually lift entire sections from other people's novels?

I work pretty much as a cubist. I write about the same amount every day having one text, or even a few texts, in front of me and copying them. Then after thirty days I look at the material and try to figure out why I did it. Then I put it together in a story, or more likely a novel if there's more form.

After you've got the story . . . Well, after I've done the thirty days of weil, after I've done the thirty days of writing, I then look at it and try to figure out what the theme is. There's always something motivating me and in a way it's like searching for what the thing is. Writing to me is more an act of discovery than an act of making something up.

ething up.
What I think a lot of novelists do is express some part of their life or somebody else's life. The act of writing a novel for them is really just to write down what they already knew they were going to say.

And you approach it not knowing what you're going to write? Exactly.



In Egypt, the end



Genet takes Janey with him and they travel through North Africa, through Rabat across the inland through Fés to Oujda, through Tiemsen the city of oases, straight north to Oran, and then, just as summer hits, along the Algerian sea border through Algiers and Bougie down to the mysterious city of Constantine.

In Constantine Genet makes Janey put on the double black dress of an Arabian woman. A dress about twelve feet in length thrown over the head, belted around the waist, then pulled upward at the belt, so three

skirts fall from the belt to the ground. Two eyeholes permit the women to see.

From here Genet and Janey travel along dust-filled roads, through small villages almost nameless to Tripoli, and along the seacoast through Agheila, through Derna, through Tobruk, as fast as they can, until they reach Alexandria.

Inside an Alexandrian brothel. All the women's houses in the Arab section are brothels, so to speak, but this is especially a brothel because its women cater to foreigners. In Alexandria women are low and these are the lowest there are. For them there is no class struggle, no movement of the left, and no right-wing terror because all the men are fascists. All the men own the money. A man is a walking mass of gold

The rooms are done in gold. Extremely think tapestries cover the floor. A large silver cask, lying on a small wooden table, decorated on its outside by leaves and branches contains layers of incense and honey The scene is two whores talking professionally. It is clear that the whores regard what most people regard as (them)selves as images. Sex, that unblocked meeting of selves, is the most fake thing there is

At the end of this scene a crippled drunken lobotomy case walks into the brothel. He controls the

Janey to herself: Genet doesn't know how to be a woman. He thinks all he has to do to be a woman is slobber. He has to do more. He has to get down on his knees and crawl mentally every minute of the day. If he wants a lover, if he doesn't want to be alone every single goddamn minute of the day and horny so bad he feels the tip of his clit stuck in a porcupine's quill, he has to perfectly read his lover's mind, silently, unobtrusively, like a corpse, and figure out at every changing second what his lover wants. He can't be a slave. Women aren't just slaves. They are whatever their men want them to be. They are made, created by men. They are nothing without men

I have to decide what the world is from my own loneliness.

Janey and Genet are locked in neighbouring cages in gaol. Their bodies stink to high hell. They're whispering

Janey: I think a war's coming.

Genet: That's no news. Wars are capitalists' toys.

Janey: I'm not talking about a war. Terror is everywhere and it's increasing. Genet: You stink more than this gool does. You lousy stinking pervert.

Janey (still whispering): The night is opening up,

to our thighs,

like this cunt which I'm holding in my hand cuntcuntcuntcunt. and we descend

like we're in a tunnel or a cave inside the mind,

night is opening all all murderers all you makers of violence come out of your holes. the final Maker of Violence is my thighs, and my bloody fingernails, and the teeth inside my cunt.

Please night take over my mind I don't like this poetry I can't stand to live anymore because Genet won't beat me up anymore.

(A man who murdered his parents begins to act out the murder for the millionth time. Genet and Janey

Dim light has gathered through a tiny hole high up in the wall. Suddenly it goes black. In this blackness, caused by a power blow-out, the upper-middle class women and the cops smash store windows, beat up bums with chains, and wander about. A young black man sticks his hand under a ten-year-old girl's tight yellow sweater.

Janey: Let us pray to madness and suffering and horror.

Genet: We're going to die soon. Why don't you think about freedom instead?

Janey: The night is opening up, like my thighs open up

when there's a big fat cock in

End of abstract haze. Now the specific details can begin in the terrible plagiarism of The Screens. The writing is terrible plagiarism because all culture stinks and there's no reason to make new culture-stink.

from Blood and Guts in High School by Kathy Acker published in 1984 by Grove Press.





A lot of people here are really curious as to why you appropriate porno text?

A lot of reasons. People don't own sen-

tences or words. A word is a community, the meaning is a community act in terms of language. You don't make up the meaning of a word. I like very much the idea of appropriation in that term.

I was trained by poets in America, by the Black Mountain School mainly. I was taught that you are a real writer when you sound your own voice. It was all about "me". I am the great writer, I'm going to write the great classic. And to use someone else's words is to go against that. And I really hate that. They're a bunch of macho pricks, really.

What about porno text then?

It is part of the hatred of the macho prick society. I grew up with a poet and it was a very elitist group. I never really wrote poetry but that was who I hung out with. I really wonder at the elitism of the whole thing. It seemed as if they had, due to a use of language, narrowed concerns away from the political totally and made for real isolation in the United States so that only people with degrees could read them.

It became very formal.

Yes, and in a way it is very obvious. You can see in England how great literature is used as a political tool to keep the classes segment as a contract of the classes. parate. So I really want to use texts and now I'm using science fiction, and I feel very happy about it because it's just another way of trying to battle that grand culture business. And another thing about porn is that I like it.

I read some of it, and I don't see how it differs from actual porn text.

To tell the truth, that's one of the areas where I do my own writing, because that's just pure pleasure for me. And there's something about writing porn, because there's so little content, there's a very limited number of things you can describe, really. You're just dealing with what I call pure language, really with rhythm. And you can almost write a porn text by using five words and no more.

What are you trying to do with pornographic text?

I'm not trying to do anything with it, I like it. In my recent book I wanted to see what would happen, when the Algerians took over Paris. I wanted to see what a post-revolutionary society would look like in sexual terms. So there's one chapter of the book where I try to see what sexual acts would look like after a revolution, which is the area of taboo - which also centres around language because so much language is based on taboo.

In what sense? I don't understand. Well, if you take the Lacan model seriously, when you enter the symbolic society you enter via language. We're very, very deeply controlled by language in many, many ways. The institutionalizing of language has degenerated it into what we hear on television. It is only a one-way system. T.V. talks to you but you don't talk to the T.V. The attack on language would be on institutional language.

So that takes us into the soft underbelly of

Yes, absolutely. I think so. And pornography, it's very funny, I wonder sometines why it is such a hot issue. Is it the poverty, rape, . . . no, I take rape to be a political act, not really a sexual act. Except that women are defined by their genitals. It's an act of violence.

Feminists are definitely fighting to see women in a different light than how they are presented in porno text. That's probably why so many feminists have problems reading and determine your work and trying to understand if you're making a point with it, and why you're using it.

I just think that evenutally feminists are going to have to deal with taboo. And at that point they're going to have to do things that aren't allowed. If there's any hope of breaking down the male hierarchy and finding out what the feminine would be, you have to break through the inevitable taboo.

CYNTHIA NOVACK

Residing in New York, Cynthia Novack is a dancer and anthropologist who teaches at Barnard College. She has a PhD from Columbia University in Anthropology and is currently writing an ethnographic account of contact improvisation. She choreographs and performs with *The Richard Bull Dance Theatre*. Cynthia speaks with Lisa Doolittle about the role of cultural borrowing in the development of art forms.

Does the term "appropriation" or "borrowing from other cultures" mean anything to

All art appropriates other art. It really is the basis of how art is made. Art really is a social activity. We have to be careful not to portray a colonialist power as the appropriators and third world countries as pristine untouched cultures. So, the question to me boils down to where the power relationships are unequal or problematic.

Perhaps appropriation is what happens when intrusion accompanies it. For example, Picasso is considered a brilliant artist whereas African sculpture, which Picasso used as a source, is considered ethnic, not "real" art. So the original source is rejected as not being something that can be appreciated or experienced, and the borrowing, the imitation of it, is something that brings in millions of dollars.

Throughout American history, American Indian dance and Afro-American dance has been suppressed and ridiculed. People were actually not allowed to perform it. On the other hand, you have white performers imitating it and being allowed to go ahead and do their art. I think that is an instance where we start seeing more than just influence, or borrowing. It starts to feel exploitive, a rip-off. That is the closest I could get to defining when appropriation starts to be a political question.

What are some instances where "primitive" cultures borrow from western culture?

West African popular music is a really extraordinary fusion of African and Western music. Nigerian Juju music uses Western instrumentation and certain kinds of Western chord progressions. It is clearly a blend of two kinds of music. Yet, I don't think anyone sees that as a kind of cultural appropriation that is wrong. And also, it's great music. It works.

What kind of communication happens when we take from another culture? What do we interpret out of something that's not familiar to us? For example when we see a dance company from, say, Senegal, what are we getting?

That's an enormously complicated question partly because it's hard to generalize about an audience as well as about the people who are presenting it. Are we seeing a 'typical' Senegalese company? What does that represent in the whole spectrum of Senegalese dance music and theatre? As a theoretical issue, I think whenever a person from one culture sees art from another culture that they interpret it partially through the art with which they are already familiar. So what they see first are structures or ideas or devices or experiences that are something like what they're already familiar with, and then they may notice things that are very different. Often the viewer will see these things and simply dismiss them because the unfamiliar elements can't be deciphered. The viewer has no experience with which to make sense of them. But it's also possible for people to just look at

the work, and absorb, and make whatever they can make of it. I'm all for cross-cultural artistic activity and exposure.

In fact the more exchange you have, the less likely appropriation is to be a problem, a rip-off . . .

Because the materials that are being used as sources are gaining exposure. You can have a chance to compare Picasso to the original; and you can hear not only Paul Simon's music, but the South African musicians on their own records. So it doesn't become such a political issue anymore.

Can you talk about the role of influence from other cultures in Western dance history?

Western dance history reflects a kind of fascination with the exotic, with "the other" that permeated a lot of the realms of culture throughout especially the 19th century. Romantic ballet, actually even 18th Century ballet, used oriental dances and Spanish dances done totally within the style of ballet. Early modern dance borrowed from other cultures like American Indian dance, but particularly the far east. I'm thinking of Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn who used Eastern dance for a kind of inspiration in creating a "new" dance. But subsequent generations were a little embarassed by their attempts and started to look more to American cultural history to find sources and inspiration for dances.

Potatau's Song of the White Man



From Songs of the Maori King by Stephen Chan published in 1986 by Sono Nis Press.

Oh, but he is not as bland as his pale skin suggests. He is fired by ambitions. Thus he embarks around the world. I hear he sailed to many new lands.

In many new lands whole nations resisted him. With fire and great ardour the nations greeted him. He only fingered his embroidered coats.

This single gesture was the greatest insolence. He would march to his death in resplendent dress. He would dirty a gold thread or two.

Our lives also hang by threads. The white man marches over us. He sings in his seats of government.

His white queen sings on her throne. Thus the Maoris made a throne for me. 'Sit here Potatau, sing here and lead us.' The Maoris run back and forth.
They spread maps and plan campaigns.
They drill with muskets and send out spies.

We ape his ways. We are undermined in our preparations. How easily he wins.

The white man does not march his armies every day. The armies carry muskets and bayonets. These are only the final implements.

The white man causes us to doubt. He himself has no doubts. It is not that he has a queen. He has no empathy. Our resistance is full of empathy.

The Maoris made me a king. I am the symbol of defeat.

Religion U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson Time Magazine's Poem 50 51 52 53 can buy a bottle of Scotch, can ease some of the racial tension dressed in a deaconess' dark blue, nunlike robes. (The following poem was found in the Canada edition of Time magazine for April 30, 1965. For those who would like to check the source, the page numbers are indicated.) The U.S. Dean Rusk's muscular attack on top of the iceberg with a bowlegged, gangling walk where he froze several toes, is loaded with strontium 90. Even in the Roman Catholic Church 54 55 56 57 p.17 18 19 20 21 nice guys always finish last: a miniature world's fair in itself, all of it imported from France. Modern Living To the brewing and distilling industry Negro voters in Mississippi are so easy to operate, distilled, blended and bottled in Scotland. 58 59 60 61 Back in Detroit, Romney looked positively rosy, though his talents were respected even in socialist Britain. The Toronto-Dominion Bank along with more efficient processes, submitted his resignation last week with an even older, mellower whisky. 62 63 64 65 Ban-the-Bombers in lanky locks, (while Wilson sucks on his pipe and listens) buy up all steel-producing firms like the third little pig of legend. The International Nickel Company flew like a cast of characters (I didn't even know they had one), to expand the market for alumnimun. 66 67 68 69 Every day is Bastille Day, with bombs and rockets, the weather turned bad. Religion, morality, and knowledge Another Dutch oilman, one of the most creative circus clowns, is a piece of sculpture designed by U.S. Architects. 70 71 72 73 The Pharaohs are fading, Giants still thrive in British Columbia, 5-year-old Canadian whisky devalued Argentina's once proud peso. Artifacts dating back to homogenized Hollywood sex surrounded by barbed wire, deserve even more of Canada's truck business. People Hither hopped Hubert 74 75 76 77 tailored to your needs: sheeps and goats scatter, attempting repairs. The Hemisphere The American people 78 79 80 81 Rochester's police filed a suit to have Alliance Credit Corporation stowed under the seat a maximum amount of time for business. will try to steer outsiders to the Russians. 42 43 44 45 - From Seventy-One Poems For People by George Bowering Medicine A collection of poems published in 1986 by Red Deer College Press. Recipient of the Governor General's Award for poetry (1969) and for fiction (1980), Bowering is the author of nearly forty books of poetry, fiction and criticism. He lives in Vancouver and teaches literature at Simon Fraser University. Get a CANADIAN kicking the habit, haunted by the fear of its orbit around the earth.

Do you think that people still borrow as freely today? What is the difference?

I think that artists who borrow often do so with a much fuller awareness of what they are doing and with a real attempt to be sensitive and appropriate. For example, Martha Graham's *Primitive Mysteries* dance really is inspired by Native American dance and is not an imitation of it. It was done with appropriate respect and has become a great work of modern dance in its own right.

Afro-American dance has made an enormous contribution to American tradition and there have been times when part of that contribution has been made through an appropriation where blacks have been ripped off. While we might want to condemn that and make sure that it doesn't continue happening we also have to acknowledge that the dancing that we do today is in some ways as much African as it is European. That's because both blacks and whites borrowed from each other. I'm thinking a lot about this question of black dance and it's a very complicated one.

There are terrible examples of rip-off but at the same time, there were legitimate finds by tap dancers who simply participated in developing this dance form. So while it's a terrible crime that someone like Bill "Bojangles" Robinson never became the film star that he could have, I don't think that you can then turn around and say that Fred Astaire ripped off Bill Robinson. Astaire was an artist in his own right. When you have these conflicts that are actually reflections of very deep racist structures that permeate every aspect of the culture it's a mistake to focus in on individual artists and say "Look, here's the problem. These artists are ripping off other artists."

Here you're dealing with something that runs through the whole fabric of the entertainment business, the structure, the way in which people get produced and promoted. If you are going to talk about appropriation, you have to address these sociological issues. It's not always clear cut, but I think it's important to think about these issues otherwise you start to fall into the trap of saying "Well, nobody who is white can play jazz or nobody who is black can do ballet." That seems to be fairly ridiculous. Art is one of the venues in our society where there can be all kinds of interpretation and interaction and flexibility.



SARAH MURPHY

A resident of Calgary, Sarah Murphy is a writer and visual artist whose first novel will be published this year by NeWest Press. She has published fiction in a variety of Canadian publications including the recent *Amazing Space: Canadian Women Writing*, and her artwork has been shown in New York, Toronto and Mexico City. She currently works as a teacher of English as a second language and as an interpretor and translator of the Spanish language. She is on the Board of the Syntax Arts Society and will be the 1987-88 president of EM Media. Her interest in the issues of cultural appropriation date back to her days of residence in Mexico. Sara Murphy talks here with Heather Elton.

All art appropriates other art.

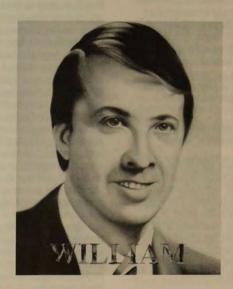
Picasso is considered a brilliant artist, whereas African sculpture, which Picasso used as his source is considered ethnic, not real art."

Does the term "appropriation" or "borrowing from other cultures" mean anything to you? How does it manifest itself?

There's a book called *The Rockefeller Primitive Art Collection*. In the introduction they talk about having this art museum and how the Rockefellers are being so generous to take these art objects and reproduce them so the people of the United States can own reproductions of genuine art. There's a wonderful process involved in this. First you take the artifact from Africa so that the Africans will be missing this part of their art; you appropriate it and then you sell it to the working class in your own country which "has no culture".

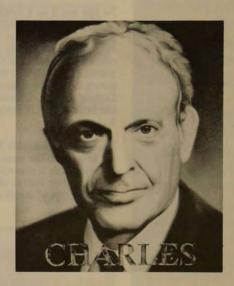
Continued on page 34

THE FLOATING GALLERY









Corporate Portraits 1986-7 Oil on Canvas 97.5 cm x 80 cm

STEPHEN HUTCHINGS

Born in Halifax and educated in Toronto, Hutchings currently lives and works in Banff where he is the founder of Altitude Publishing. A fascination with producing billboard-size charcoal drawings has recently given way to traditional oil painting techniques. Hutchings appropriated his portrait style from the Globe and Mail financial section.

APPROPRIATION: A CASE IN POINT



The ethical aspects of appropriation are currently being debated internationally over a situation which developed recently in Alberta. Calgary's Glenbow Museum is putting together the \$2.6 million display of some of the rarest North American Indian artifacts from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. The museum is collecting these objects from over 100 institutions in 30 countries around the world for the 1988 Olympic Arts Festival exhibition *The Spirit Sings*.

The Lubicon Cree Indians, living in Northern Alberta (who have been involved in a bitter land claim dispute with the federal and provincial governments for the past 49 years) have launched a boycott against the exhibition. The Lubicon find it hypocritical that the very people who are sponsoring an exhibition glorifying the proud cultural past of the Indian are the same people who are currently decimating their culture by destroying their land. As part of the boycott the Lubicon have asked the international museums not to lend artifacts to the Glenbow Museum.

LAST ISSUE has interviewed a few of the key players in this debate in an attempt to determine if it is an act of inappropriate appropriation.



JULIA HARRISON

Julia Harrison is Curator of Ethnology at the Glenbow Museum, a position she has held since 1978. As such, she has co-ordinated several major exhibitions, been responsible for major ethnological acquisitions and manages an international ethnological collection of over 30,000 items. She has an M.A. (Anthropology) from the University of Calgary. Heather Elton discusses the issue of appropriation with Julia Harrison from an anthropological perspective including the ethics of presenting "primitive" artifacts in a museum context.

Does the term "cultural appropriation" or "borrowing from other cultures" mean anything to you?

Cultural appropriation is part of the process of cultural change. We not only develop and change from within our own culture but we are influenced by other cultures. The term appropriation is often used in the sense of a dominant culture absorbing something from a minority culture. I think that the imbalance of power theory is often over-emphasized. There's no meeting between two cultures where there isn't a two-way exchange.

So you see it as a symbiotic relationship?

Yes. Cultural interaction, or exchange, is pervasive at all levels of society and is not restricted to groups that come into physical contact. Everybody has a ghetto-blaster, and is listening in all parts of the world to contemporary music, largely produced either out of England or the U.S. Cross-cultural encounters can be first hand or second hand without actual contact.

Some anthropologists believe that art, as we know it in the western world, doesn't even exist as a concept in "primitive" cultures. Rather, Native objects are endowed with feelings of dread and awe, instead of aesthetic ennoblement. They are connected spiritually and mythologically to their environment. It is believed that if an aboriginal person and an European were to see the same exhibition of "primitive" artifacts, the aboriginal person would see not form but content, not art but magic or religion. Is this a dilemma that modernism has forced us into?

I think that's a very broad statement and I don't think it's totally accurate. There's a beautiful example in the book that will accompany the 1988 exhibit. It's the story of a Dogrib woman in the territories who was separated from her people after being taken as a slave. On her journey back she was met, I believe, by Samuel Hearne (this was in the late 1700's), where she had set up her winter camp. He was amazed by this woman, because although she was totally alone and had very little chance of encountering anyone, she had taken great pains to decorate all the objects that she made for herself. She had a desire to imbue her possessions not only with a spiritual power that her traditional designs may have incorporated, but also with color and design in a simple aesthetic sense. It's a very eloquent statement and one that disputes very strongly the idea that non-western peoples have no real formal concept of art. It depends on your definition of art, but if it does not incorporate the idea of a culturally innate sense of aesthetics then we're sadly misconstruing our-selves and, I think, other cultures. Cultures all over the world separate out those who can create a bowl simply to fulfill a function. A bowl that is beautiful to behold and has been enhanced by the maker's aesthetic sensibility is universally recognized. In that sense we can never say that in Native cultures there is no concept of art. Certainly most objects, to a certain degree in most Native cultures, were functional but there is also a value given to the qualities that we in our culture attribute to an art object.

There seems to have been a desire on behalf of the western world to de-ritualize. Is it unrealistic to expect museums to show artifacts within their actual context by reinstating the ritual?

Well, one has to be careful that you don't offend people by displaying the private publi-



BALL-HEADED CLUB Iroquois type, 1846-54 Wood, paint, feathers: 65 cm Courtesy Glenbow Museum



COMB N.W. Coast, early 19th C. Wood: 7.5 cm × 14.5 cm Courtesy Glenbow Museum

cally. There is a great sense among Indian groups, for example, that the ritual context in which objects are presented and used is a private context. Even within their own cultural group it's not something that is publically known. The idea of recreating the context has to be done very carefully and I don't think it should ever try to mirror it exactly.

With regard to the 1988 exhibition, *The Spirit Sings*, do you think the North Amer-

ican Indian culture has been appropriated appropriately or inappropriately?

If you're talking about appropriation being the physical acquisition of objects, ethical appropriation would ensure they have been acquired legally, and in morally correct ways. One of the things that we have found in developing the 1988 exhibition are records that a lot of this early material was appropriated ethically. Some tend to generalize that a great plundering took place and certainly in some cases, it did. But we're finding that a lot of material we can document was given as a gift or sold to a person. And it's part of a historical situation when you look at material that was made for sale. This was an economic endea-

What would be an example of inappropriate appropriation?

When objects are taken illegally or immorally. If you are talking about appropriating their culture rather than their objects, I don't think that the Glenbow Museum is trying to appropriate or acquire Native people's culture. We are trying very hard in the 1988 exhibit to emphasize the world view of the Native people who made these objects in the early contact period. We are trying to say that this is the Native world that inspired the creation of the objects. We are trying to impart some sense of the world from which they came and what they meant in their culture.

In the case of *The Spirit Sings* for the '88 Olympics, the Glenbow has been accused of being more interested in glorifying a dead culture than in preserving a living one. Would you care to comment on this?

Fundamentally, what we hope to do with the exhibit is to show Native cultures in a particular time period, to reveal the roots to



DRUM Ojibwa type, 1823 Hide, wood, paint: 40.1 cm \times 4 cm Courtesy Glenbow Museum

" \ ultures all over the world separate out those who can create a beautiful bowl from those who create a bowl simply to fulfill a function."

those traditions and to show Native cultural diversity within Canada. This will give visitors a direct link to Canada's continuing Native traditions that survive today.

What role should a museum play when it becomes involved in international politics?
Let the politicians fight amongst them-

selves. If museums allowed themselves to be taken political hostage we would sell our-selves down the river. We would become a political forum. The only thing that's going to ensure our survival is to remain as apolitical as possible. I look at museum collections in the same way I look at university libraries. They contain knowledge. If libraries closed their doors to people who don't toe the same political line they would be challenging academic freedom and access to knowledge. If museums are to continue making a valid contribution to society they must remain objective.



Bernard Ominayak is the Chief of the Lubicon Cree of Northern Alberta. In an interview with Heather Elton, Ominayak states his objections to the proposed 1988 exhibition The Spirit Sings.

What is your objection to the proposed Glenbow exhibit *The Spirit Sings?* Our objection is that the sponsors of the show, oil companies and the Alberta government, are the same people who are out in our area and destroying our people. They are try ing to tell the international world how rich the Native culture is in this province, and that

Do you feel that the government and the oil companies are trying to gain respectability and credibility through this exhibi-

Well of course. On the one hand they're trying to gain that respect internationally and at the same time say look how well off these

Native people are in this province and what a rich culture they have and so forth. The reality is a totally different picture altogether.

You don't have a vibrant and rich culture? Not in the sense that we had in the past. Our whole Native society is in jeopardy.

If the Lubicon had land once again, could your culture remain intact?
Well, at least we'd have a fighting chance.

Do you think that by boycotting the proposed exhibit at the Glenbow it will give you leverage in negotiating for your lands

claim settlement?

If the federal or the Alberta governments don't like the boycott, they could negotiate. If they wanted to, we could settle this in a mat-ter of days, we'd be out of the way and the boycott would be off. But until we can get some signed agreement in place, we don't have any intention of slowing down or backing off the boycott.

What kind of image of the Indians would you like the international community to

We're using the boycott to talk about what reality is really like for the Native people in this province and country. If the international community could see the other side then it would be up to them to judge for themselves as to what they felt Native society was and is.

You don't feel then that the viewer will get an insight into contemporary Indian culture through the historical artifacts?

No. There's a great difference between the past and the present. What's happening now is that our people are slowly being killed. I think a lot of times our people would be far better off if someone came up to them and got rid of them instantly. Anything so that we wouldn't be dying a slow death.

I know that on reserves there are cultural centres and museums. If a person were to go there instead of to an urban museum, to look at an exhibition of Indian artifacts, would they come away with a different message or understanding?

I think if people were to compare the artifacts of the past with the people of the present and to the state of the society of those particular people, they would be able to judge for themselves what's happening.

Is there any point at all putting these artifacts in a museum?

I don't know what to say because I haven't really thought about it. But I do think that if you're keeping an artifact you have to have the consent of the aboriginal people and make sure the true picture is shown.

If you manage to negotiate a fair land claims settlement and the boycott is called off would people from Lubicon Lake visit the exhibition?

What we're faced with right now is our whole economy being down. Most of the people are on welfare. We don't have much choice (as to where you go) to see any show at all.

Now if our livelihood and way of life wasn't destroyed then it would be a different picture.

But as it stands right now, it's really just a

show for white people in the city?
That's right. And again it's glorified by the same people who are doing the damage to the Native people, in our area.



DUNCAN CAMFRON

A native Torontonian, Duncan Cameron is currently Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Glenbow Museum, a position he has held since 1977. Cameron has worked as a journalist for the CBC and has held teaching positions at Western University, York, University of Toronto, Harvard and Colorado. He began his museum training at the Royal Ontario Mu-seum and has been a professional member of the Canadian Museum community since 1956. Heather Elton interviews Duncan Cameron about the ethics of museum borrowing and the dispute surrounding the Glenbow Museum's 1988 exhibition The Spirit Sings.

Will you comment on the new amendment to the code of ethics that was passed by the International Council of Museums stating that: "cultural material should not be used in any way detrimental to the group that produced it and museums should only exhibit the cultural material of aboriginal people if they have the agreement of the Native involved.

The clause has to do with whether or not we are perpetuating the stereotyping of aboriginal peoples and if I or our curators have consulted the originating aboriginal people about how we are dealing with their material.

In the long term it is reasonable, if you have aboriginal collections, to ensure what you have to say is not a western European view of their world, which is contrary to the aboriginal view of the world. But then this is usually what ethnologists do.

The amendment is a kind of motherhood statement and it has nothing to do with any particular exhibition. This resolution was not directed at the Glenbow Museum but was addressed to all museums of ethnology.

The reason it was cited in connection with Glenbow now is because the Lubicon Support Group tried to put through a resolu-tion in committee last fall that related specif-ically to Glenbow 1988 exhibition. It was roundly defeated. So they had nothing else left to refer to but this Resolution 11 which has nothing to do with the exhibition. In fact mu-seums in North America, including the Glenbow, are far more responsible in terms of sensitivity to Native perceptions of the cosmos than they are in European museums. Many of the European curators have never been in North America. Many haven't been active in the study of Indian or Inuit culture, but they are very cause oriented. Dr. Lunkbaek, from the National Museum of Denmark, who re-fused to loan artifacts, has never been in Canada and has never done research in North

His refusal raises that interesting question "who owns this stuff?"

The state of Denmark owns it on behalf of the people of Denmark, but he happens to be very sympathetic to Native issues. I am not questioning his right to take that view, I just wish he was an informed person.

Will this amendment have much effect on the way museums borrow from other cultures?

It is important that these positions be debated, laid down in writing, amendments passed, but there is no way in which these rules are enforceable and the institutions will carry on doing what they think is best. In terms of Glenbow, we constantly exchange in-formation with Native groups and share our

In what kind of capacity?

They offer their historical perspective.

There is a lot of information that is exchanged amongst us. It is not often very public because we are dealing with private matters and we have a long standing relationship with the Native community. We especially don't need a code of ethics written for people in Canada by someone in Denmark who has never been

Were Indians ever consulted about the 1988 exhibit or did it really remain as a white phenomenon?

The involvement of Native people took place once we decided what we wanted to do. The involvement of Native people, when you are dealing with historic ethnology a few hundred years behind you, raises an interesting question. Who are the people who are going to be knowledgeable about Micmac cultural history in the seventeenth century?

Anthropologists?

That is the dilemma. You have a situation where the anthropologists, ethonologists and the historians who tend to be knowledgeable also tend to be non-Native. One of the things we are addressing is the need of the contemporary Native people to have access to the in-formation that scholars have accumulated

Is it important to them?

There is a real desire on the part of Canada's Native people not just to maintain cultural patterns but to have access to their early traditions which may have been lost somewhat in the oral tradition.

What use do they have, as Christians in a contemporary world, for their old myths? Native religion is alive and well. This is

one of the things that we want to illustrate with the exhibition.

So you believe that their cultural past is of great interest to them?

It is their cultural present. The idea that Native culture died is not true. If someone tells me that we destroyed Native culture and that all groups are acculturated . . . and if they see the show and say how great Native culture was back in the old days, then they have missed the whole point. They are also misinformed because Native culture is vibrant, real and powerful.

How do you think that the Indians will really benefit from this exhibition?

I would like to think that a lot of people

seeing this exhibition will rethink the whole business of Native culture in our society.

Some people have said that the Alberta government and certain oil companies are using the Olympic exhibition to gain respectability and credibility.

This exhibition was conceived at the Glenbow in 1983. Then we had the need for several things - official approval from OCO, which we obtained; a sponsor which we went looking for and found. Glenbow owns the rights to the intellectual property and international copyright on the show. We can't be in-

To what degree are you being compromised when you take the Queen's shilling?"

fluenced by OCO, Shell or a government. It won't be improperly exploited or misrepre sented. The idea that we are being exploited is a very interesting one but I can't follow the argument. The museum controls the content, the interpretation and the presentation.

From being involved in an art organization I understand the constant need for funding from external sources; and I am also sensitive to the dependency that often comes

... there is no dependency ...

... it is important to know what side our bread is buttered on and often we are encouraged to act in the interests of those organizations to guarantee continued sub-

Are you suggesting that we are prostituting ourselves?

It does raise ethical questions.

Not for us. There is no way that we will surrender our ethical responsibilities.

So you think it is ethically sound to take money from anyone, regardless of what their interests are?

What I am trying to say is that when someone sponsors us it doesn't mean that we will be manipulated. I believe in the good faith of our sponsors.

Sure, but isn't it somewhat hypocritical to take money from sources who aren't acting in the interests of the native people? To be more specific, from the very sources who are currently decimating a

culture by destroying their land? You are taking a global issue back to a local issue of a small Cree band in Northern Alberta. If I follow your argument, artists across this country should never take any money from the Canada Council or any govern-ment organization because they all represent capitalist interests or the policy of Mr. Mulro-ney's government. If you take a Canada Council grant are you condoning the government? If you are not prepared to bend to its policies then what are you doing with the grant? Perhaps all artists and museums should not take any money from governments, foundations or corporations and go bankrupt. There is an issue here which most of us have lived with throughout our adult lives and that is to what degree you are being compromised when you take the Queen's shilling? Because the degree of compromise in our case is nil, you have raised a non-issue.

You have said that you personally sympa-thize with the Lubicons as far as their land claims go.

We are talking about appropriation of culture, political influence . . . all these things are generalities that I can deal with. Now, we decided what we were going to do four years ago. We are acting on our own behalf.

But you are becoming involved in a very real political issue.
We are not becoming involved.

Then people are trying to involve you.

We are doing what we think is right and

proper and appropriate to our institution morally, ethically and professionally. We do not intend to be influenced by any outside group. The idea that we are being exploited or manipulated is a media fantasy. We are presenting an exhibition in the best spirit of museum scholarship and interpretation. Of course contemporary issues are of concern to us. We have dealt with them in the past with the Metis exhibition, for example, but in this case, we are dealing with an historical exhibition. We happen to be a target for various political action groups. But this show badly needs to be done and we are going to do it and the fact that there are political whirlwinds surrounding the Olympics will probably cause them to brush against us time to time.

Why did you take a defensive position and allow them to antagonize you? Why couldn't everyone have worked together for mutal interests?

You would have to examine the political motivations of others. We have done nothing but continue to develop and carry out this exhibit. It seems to be convenient for others to make us a part of a political issue that we are not a part of. We don't settle land claims.



A leading authority on Indian affairs, Joan Ryan is currently Chairman of the Anthropology department at the University of Calgary where she teaches Native studies. She received a B.A. (Psychology) from Carleton, a M.Ed. (Psychology) University of Alaska, and a Ph.D. (Anthropology) from University of British Columbia. Ryan has been published extensively in journals along with her book Wall of Words. Ryan recently resigned from her post on the Board of Directors at the Glenbow Museum over the dispute around the exhibition The Spirit Sings. In an interview with Heather Elton, Ryan discusses the ethical and political issues surrounding the controversy.

Is there anything ethically wrong with the concept behind *The Spirit Sings* or with the Glenbow's interest in attempting to gather and document a culture?

The Glenbow is quite legitimately trying to put together a top-notch show of Indian artifacts from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries which have no context any longer because they're so far removed from contemporary cultures. The issue from the Lubicon point of view is that the major sponsor of the exhibit, Shell Oil, is among those who are literally destroying the lands and lives of the Lubicon Cree people. So, it is contradictory to put on an exhibit of material culture and say "look, Canadian Indians are wonderful and here's the richness of their culture", while at the same time the Lubicons are doomed to cultural extinction.

So the deck is loaded.

The deck is very loaded against the Lubi-cons. The Glenbow Director could have asked the Board, whose members have considerable political clout and influence with the government and with the multinational corporations, to urge them to negotiate a settlement. It could be done in a month.

And then the boycott would be off and the show would go on. Why do you think they weren't interested in doing that?

Because the multinationals and Province are anti-Indian. Secondly, their view is that a 'a bunch of Indians" aren't going to stop their show. Certainly Lougheed (and now Getty) has been very pro oil and gas development. When he was Premier, Lougheed was responsible for setting up the Heritage fund and for much of the oil boom. It is kind of crazy to think that the Province would be cooperative because they are the ones with the most to lose in the aboriginal land claim. But the point is that in the long run if they supported and participated in a decent kind of negotiation process, they could have their oil and gas. It would just delay them; the oil is not going to rot in the ground while people negotiate.

The position of the Glenbow's Director, Duncan Cameron, is that art organizations have to get the money from somewhere. He approached different sponsors for monev and certain ones came through. The intellectual copyright for the exhibition remains with the Glenbow. So he believes that if this is the reason to accuse him of acting unethically then any artist who accepts money from the Canada Council, without condoning the Mulroney govern-

ment, is a hypocrite.

That's totally irrelevant to the point I'm trying to make. The lack of ethics came in Duncan's own behaviour, *not* in trying to solicit money for the show. He said that the Glenbow could not act politically on behalf of the Lubicon situation but then turned around and got Canadian ambassadors in Europe to deliver his misinforming letters and to make phone calls to directors of museums and to ministers of culture, especially in those countries whose national museum curators had decided not to lend their artifacts. That is political activity at the highest diplomatic level. I understand that one of Duncan's justifications is that they "al-ways" involve the diplomats when negotiating an international loan. I understand that; to negotiate a loan is not a political activity. To pressure somebody into lending and to pressure somebody into lending and to pressure somebody into ignoring the plea of the Lubicons to boycott is a political activity. Duncan cannot have it both ways.

He sees himself being dragged into a political situation which he doesn't want to be

a part of.

He dragged himself into it by doing everything in his power to make the exhibit possible. Letters go out of the Glenbow under his signature saying that this dispute isn't really an Indian issue but is instigated by the misguided white advisors who are egging the Indians on. That's untrue, it's also a racist statement because it implies that Indians can't make decisions for themselves. In the Lubicon case, any of the whites involved act at the request of the Chief. We don't initiate any activity. The letters signed by Duncan Cameron had misinformation in them. For example, he said he had strong Indian support for the exhibit. Really, he has a few Indian people on a committee who may support him but the national, provincial and international native organizations have written supporting the boyMaybe he has support from the bands that are contrary to the Cree's political position. The Inuits are interested in seeing

Some of the treaty bands have actively opposed the boycott, two bands have said they will remain "neutral", but the umbrella organizations have provided written support for the Olympic boycott. Duncan told the Europeans that they could ignore these letters because the organizations didn't represent anybody. How can a national organization not represent anybody? Can you imagine being a Dane or a Frenchman or an Austrian receiving a bundle of letters from the Lubicons with copies of let-ters from IFN, IAA, AFN, the Metis Association of Alberta and Canada, etc. all saying we support the boycott and then you receive a letter from the Director of the Glenbow which says we have a strong local Indian support, ignore those letters, they don't represent anybody? That's what's unethical. Not that he's trying to put on an exhibit.

Who will really benefit from this exhibi-

The Glenbow will and maybe some of the general public. One argument which Duncan offers is that the exhibit will "enhance" understanding of Indians in Canada and give people a view of Indians that they will never otherwise have. My argument is that museums seldom succeed in doing that. Most people don't buy the catalogue where all the educational information is contained. A lot of people don't even read the labels. What they do is wander through and look at beautiful things. They just wander through and say, "Oh, isn't that mask interesting." They learn nothing about the artist or his/her culture and much of that is not communicated in the labels anyway. I don't buy the idea that if the exhibition doesn't happen, the international community will miss a great learning opportunity. They will have missed the opportunity to have seen some nice artifacts, none of which will tell them anything about the contemporary cultures.

But the Indians themselves. Do you think they have any real interest in seeing these very old objects?

I think a few people do and some for very specific reasons. Either it came from their family and they've never seen it, or they may be artists or carvers or beadworkers who want to see how it was made. But very few Native people will even see the show. There are close to 800,000 people of Native descent in Canada. How many will be here?

In terms of their own contemporary cultures, is there a continuity to these artifacts, connecting their cultural past to the cultural present?

Not much. With most of these objects curators know what groups they originated from but often they don't know how they were acquired or who made them. It might be an Ojibwa object, but they may not know what specific group it came from. It's hard for me to see how contemporary Indians could link into this unless that information was available. Indians, like ourselves, like to look at beautiful things. I've talked to a few people who said they may come because they're interested in seeing what some of the old objects looked like and how they were made. So they are looking at the exhibit as "objects", not as parts of their own cultural context.

In the form of a book.

Later in the introduction the guy says, "and these marvelous works of art . . . we found them most often in the most terrible conditions." For example, there was this statue that was being used as a doll by an African child. It sounds perfectly fine to me, but the guy seemed horrified by this. This raises the question that somehow the child did not de-serve this doll but Rockefeller did. I find that really interesting, it's almost as if the artwork, besides the Rockefeller validation, becomes real when Western culture notices it. One other incident comes to mind. Remember the Grassy Narrows incident? They were poisoning the river where the natives on the reserve get their fish. People said it was just alcoholism and that was the reason they were all starting to shake and drop dead. When they finally analyzed the river it was so polluted they couldn't eat the fish. The Indians were dying of mercury poisoning. This isn't exactly "cultural appropriation" but the same company polluting the river decided to sponsor a Great Canadian Landscape art exhibition to show they really cared about the landscape.

Is there such a thing as appropriating a culture appropriately?

If you take it literally which means to make property of, then there probably isn't any way to appropriate appropriately. If you take the general meaning of it, that you make something your own in order to understand it, then it is absolutely necessary to appropriate.

What if somebody sells you something or you obtain an object morally or legally?

The question is who buys and sells whom, because very often there's a coercion at the base of that. In the picture El Norte, the girl finally sells her mother's gold chain. That's

a legally valid act but the pressures that brought her to do that are somehow invalid. That often happens within what happens with the so-called primitive cultures. On the other hand there's the attitude to the buying and selling of art which says, "Well if it's not yours don't use it." And the problem with that is that it blocks understanding. How the hell are you going to understand people if you don't look at what they do?

Can we say that art has an in-built univer-sal language which allows us to get a shared perspective on it or can we only ever participate with our own frame of

A little of both. You can't get out of your own frame of reference so you are always in some way participating from your own frame of reference. However, your frame of reference changes as you participate. And I think that's important and something we often forget.

Some anthropologists believe art as we know it in the western world doesn't even exist as a concept within "primitive cultures". Rather, these objects are endowed with feelings of dread and awe, not of aesthetic ennoblement; they're connected spiritually and mythologically with their environment. Do you think this dilemma is a result of modernism? Has modernism forced us into seeing things out of their context?

I think the alienation of the art object goes on historically about three hundred years in Europe. What happens with modernism is that our aesthetic gets turned around. We go back to the so-called primitive stuff but we've already alienated aesthetic beauty as a separate facility rather than a facility that's integrated into our lives.

What do you mean by alienation?
I think the separation of form and content takes place within the whole realm of renaissance analysis that goes into modernism. As far as what the primitive world would see and what we would see, I believe that we would both see the same thing. The form would be there but the value you put into it would be completely different. What we have done is decided that form, the method of carrying something out, is separate and also contains a higher emotion than emotions of awe. fear, love and passion. Somehow the aesthetic emotion is thought of as a higher realm. That's where the difference comes in. The idea that you separate form and content in a very absolute way is one that has developed over a fairly long period. In modernism it reaches the extreme. Modernism will incorporate anything that is aesthetically appropriate.

Can the meaning of these artifacts ever be conveyed with the blood wiped off?

Probably not completely. But in some ways I'm not sure the attempt to convey that meaning isn't somehow intrinsically worth-

Is it realistic to expect museums to show these artifacts in an integral way?

They could try harder than they do but I don't think they can really do it. If everybody who showed these things stopped showing them at all but we continued in the same economic relations with the people that produced them you'd have a much worse situa-

Because there would be no context to understand their culture at all.

And yet there'd be no change in the exploitive relations that we have with the Third World. So it would just be furthering our cultural blindness to our neighbors.

WE are governed, for the most part, by the kind of people we would avoid if we needed a good plumber.

- George Woodcock in The Canadian Forum

O people really have to be such sheep?

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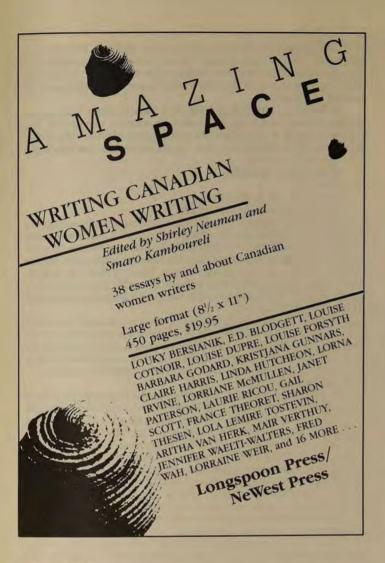
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Continued from page 36

Without thinking, he leapt over a gate and found himself in a courtyard which, luckily, led into the next street. His own agility surprised him. The light! He must stay close to it. As he walked — he couldn't run anymore — he zigzagged from one streetlight to the next. The sound of the red boots met him as he reached a main street all lit up with neon lights.

The eternal solitary now sought out the company of others; he lingered near a group on a streetcorner, mixed in with people leaving the movies, followed them discreetly. So long as he was in the company of other humans, in the light, the boots could do nothing to him. There was only the sound that

followed him, a sound that he alone seemed to hear.

Gradually the sidewalks emptied. Thouin made the rounds of the bars and, when they closed, went from restaurant to restaurant. Eventually morning would come and with it, peace. The footsteps continued to pursue him but Thouin became so used to them that he no longer paid them any attention. Sometimes the silhouettes of the boots would appear in a driveway, sometimes in a darkened portico. Thouin turned his head away and kept on.

Daylight came. No more apparitions, and the hammering of the high

Daylight came. No more apparitions, and the nammering of the high heels faded. Already there were more people: labourers coming back from the factories or on their way to work. He could go home.

The bus stop was crowded. Thouin wished he was at home, asleep. Then, once again, he heard the sound. In the full light of day! It was clearer than ever. Would he never have peace and quiet? The sound came closer: a woman wearing boots emerged from the subway station. Red boots the same in every detail as the ones Thouin had thrown in the river. He leaned against in every detail as the ones Thouin had thrown in the river. He leaned against the wall and closed his eyes. In spite of the cold he was sweating. "Just a coincidence. An unbelievable, horrible coincidence."

But that unmistakable sound?

The woman took her place in the line and began to read a magazine. Thouin could only stare at the boots. They were so undeniably real that he could think of nothing else. Or, at least, his thoughts tumbled by so quickly that he didn't notice any particular one. Suddenly one of the boots began to tap on the pavement — just as the apparition had tapped in the alleyway. The two boots ogled him, their proud eyes full of hatred.

We've caught up with you. Murderer.'

The same voice. The same boots. Everything began to spin and Thouin, who had resisted terror the whole night through, now submitted. Howling, he leapt on the woman, threw her to the ground and began choking her. Her widened eyes turned up; her death rattle was over at the same moment that the boots ceased to struggle. Thouin laughed derisively. The witnesses had

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been unable to separate them in time. The woman was dead. The man, suddenly calm, almost dazed, waited without moving for the police to come and

This murder was impossible to figure out. No motive; the murderer didn't know the victim and the inquest established that he had led an exemplary life. His co-workers, nonetheless, pointed out that Thouin had seemed different the past few days. Insanity was considered, especially as the murderer offered no explanation. The judge referred the accused to the psychiatrists. Thouin, hoping for understanding and trusting these professionals would be able to enlighten him with the help of a complicated Latin

word, recounted his terrible story. The psychiatrists were unanimous. They declared Thouin unfit to stand trial and put him in a mental hospital.

The patient soon stopped claiming to be sane. He took life as it came. He was sheltered, fed and looked after. Finally his life unfolded smoothly and without surprises. He was a model patient, respectful of the rules, quiet and willing to help. He was ... happy. As he had to take treatment and since he had to talk during these long appointments, Thouin amused himself by tracing the origin of his fetish. The psychiatrist viewed him with respect, almost friendship.

But the remission was short-lived. First there were footsteps in the night. Thouin was unable to sleep. Finally he talked about them with his doctor, who prescribed sedatives. Stunned by the drugs, Thouin now passed every night in a semi-coma. But instead he heard the boots during the day. They followed him on his walks, pursued him down the corridors of the hospital.

The model patient became irascible and unpredictable. He had crises. He complained about hearing voices. Then came the hallucinations. In spite of the drugs, he began to howl at night. Then his violence turned on himself. In the morning he was found covered with bruises and cuts. A real psycho. Every evening the sick man was tied to his bed.

The psychiatrist wasn't sure what to think: this man's fantasies seemed so real, he was so persuasive when he asked for help. Nor could the psychiatrist explain the footsteps that the orderlies said they heard at night, nor the footprints in the courtyard under the window of Thouin's room. Worst of all was the poor man's death. He was found one morning, still tied to his bed. The iron springs were all twisted and his bones were broken in dozens of places. Thouin was crushed like a tiny creature that you grind under your heel.

hen he awoke his sheets were all tangled up. One of the boots had fallen to the floor, the other was half hidden by a pillow. It was while shaving that he saw the marks on his body: here a scrape, there a scratch, somewhere else a bruise. He must have hurt himself on the sharp edges of the high heels as he turned in his sleep. He was late. Thouin picked up all the shoes and threw them in a heap in a corner of the room. Later they could be straightened out, but now he had barely enough time to make it to the office. That morning, finally freed from the stupid obsession, Thouin was in great spirits. He was able to work in peace.

Thouin loathed disorder. In the evening, even before eating, he tidied his apartment. The red boots were placed conspicuously on a table. They would not join the others in the cupboard immediately.

They're not looking at me the way they used to.

No longer as haughty and stubborn, they had been tamed. Thouin embraced them tenderly.

The next morning, when he woke up, he had a shock. The boots were in his bed. But when he had gone to sleep they had been on the dresser, he distinctly remembered looking at them as he turned off the light. "Don't tell me I'm a sleepwalker."

He had spoken aloud. It was reassuring to hear a voice, even his own. He pushed away the boot which was pressed close to him.

'It has the eyes of a lover.'

He got up to put them in the cupboard, then threw them towards the back. He felt morose. It was depressing to think that he could be getting out of bed during the night and wandering around in a trance. He told himself he should never have brought the boots home. He decided to shove them into a

corner and try to forget that they existed.

The following night he was wakened by a knocking at the door. He grumbled and got up. But was silenced when, to his amazement, he realized that the blows were coming from the cupboard. He switched on the light and the sounds stopped. Might he have been dreaming? Or perhaps the noise came from the neighbour's. Then a thought occurred to him which he pushed away: the boots. It was too ridiculous. But he went closer to the cupboard

Fearfully, he pressed his ear to the wood. Nothing, of course. He had been dreaming. A nightmare. He went back to bed but he didn't turn off the lights. He tried to fall asleep but he was afraid that the noise would start again. That would eliminate the nightmare explanation. It was nearly dawn before he finally drifted off, but Thouin woke up at his usual time. Even before the alarm stopped ringing he screamed. The boots were with him in bed!

He rushed into the kitchen, gulped down a glass of water and tried to calm himself. A sentence ran ceaselessly through his mind: "They opened the

cupboard door. They opened the cupboard door. . . ."

He could hardly convince himself that he had been sleepwalking again. Finally, he got up the courage to go back to his bedroom. The boots were lying on the bed, inert like any other ordinary object. There was just enough time for him to grab his clothes and rush off to the restaurant for breakfast.

Though no one said anything, everyone at the office saw that he was falling apart. All day he thought about the terrible night, relived again and again the moment of waking, and searched for some rational explanation. He was so distracted that for the first time ever he was reprimanded by the office manager - much to the delight of his fellow workers. Then, in the afternoon, he was called to the telephone for a personal call. But to his repeated, "Hello,

..." there was no response. No voice, only the hammering of high heels.
Thouin hung up. Everything was going to pieces. He tried to tell himself that someone had discovered his secret and was playing a nasty joke on him. But the sound he had heard over the telephone was that of the high heels of

the red boots, a sound which - until then - he had only imagined. No one else could know their peculiar rhythm and tone. Without offering any excuse he got up and rushed out of the office. He even forgot his briefcase.

For a while he wandered around, and then he had a preposterous idea. Finding a pay telephone, he dialed his own number. The telephone rang four times and he was about to hang up when someone picked up the receiver.

"Who is there?" Thouin demanded, in a broken voice.

No answer, just the hammering of the high heels. Thouin was livid and his heart pounded wildly, but he persisted.

"Is that you?"

A single tap of the heel. "What do you want with me?"

A mewing, perhaps the gentle hiss of two pieces of leather rubbing against each other. Thouin shook so violently that he could hardly hang up. Tottering, he sank onto a bench. Gradually his body grew calm. But not his mind, which kept turning over questions to which he had no answer. These moans of a cat in heat - they made him shiver. The boots were calling him, crying for him, reproaching him for his absence. Closing his eyes he saw them again: beautiful, proud, determined and stubborn.

'No. These are only objects, things without life. The truth is that I'm go-

This idea made him feel better but still he could not go home. Instead he found a hotel. Safely enclosed in his room he went over the events of the past few days and analysed the situation.

"Hallucinations! My eccentricity has become an illness. I should see a psychiatrist. But that's unnecessary. I'm only exhausted. Overworked. On the edge of a nervous breakdown. Or right in the midst of one. I'm going to take a holiday and go somewhere for a while. To a country where people go barefoot or in sandals."

He dozed. Just after midnight came the knock at his door. Immediately his fear returned, even worse than before. He reasoned with himself. The chain was in place. It was an employee, another guest, someone at the wrong door, even a fire. Anything rather than . . . more knocks, this time impatient.

"Yes, yes, I'm coming." He touched the doorknob.

Who is it?

The mewing. He burst into tears.

"I'm crazy; It's nothing but madness." Again the cat's appeal. Panic-stricken, Thouin pushed a dresser against the door and then threw himself sobbing onto the bed, his head buried under the pillow. In spite of the fact that he held his hands over his ears, he could still hear the boots pacing up and down the hallway, stopping from time to time in front of the door to growl in a low voice. This went on the whole night. Finally at dawn it was quiet. Thouin sank into a sleep filled with nightmares. He was wakened at noon and asked if he was going to keep his room another day. He paid his bill and left.

For hours he wandered through the city. He was exhausted, but he had nowhere to go. Take a trip? The boots would search him out at the end of the world. Since it was useless to run, Thouin resolved to face the situation. He kept moving until evening, and gradually a plan took shape. He went back to his apartment. The boots were on the small table beside the telephone.

As if they were waiting for a call."

Thouin saw both reproach and joy in their eyes. He took the boots in his arms and pressed them close. At first reticent, the boots gradually warmed themselves in his heat. Finally, they were limp in his arms. Thouin reached the bed. This was the moment he had chosen to act. He seized their throats and squeezed will all his strength. Instantly they understood his intention. Their eyes filled with hate. They struggled, they swung from side to side, they tried to hit him and he had to hold them at arm's length. As they fought Tho-uin felt muscular waves rippling through the leather. But despite his disgust for these beasts, Thouin remained in control of himself and of the situation. The box was on the floor, open. He shut the boots inside and tied on the lid. The boots were still wriggling but they were cramped and couldn't get up enough momentum to break the cardboard.

Thouin realized he was sane after all and this observation only added to his terror. He was dealing with living beings, beings which had loved him and now hated him. Absurd, but nevertheless true. He didn't try to explain or understand. Now was the time to act. He had admitted the impossible and this

brought with it the inevitable solution.

"To get rid of a living being, you kill it." He went out with the box under his arms. The things kept struggling inside. He walked to the bridge and, battling his vertigo, began to cross it. Below, far below, flowed the river. In the middle of the bridge, in spite of the pleading woman's voice that he so distinctly heard, he let the box drop into the emptiness. As it fell it twisted. The string broke and the cover flew off. The box turned upside down, the air slowed its descent, the wind carried it off. Side by side the boots plunged into a swirl of water. They did not resurface.

reed from his nightmare Thouin felt ten years younger. He would invent an explanation for his absence from work and everything would return to normal. In a little while he would no longer think about the red boots. In a month he would laugh at the whole affair, sure he had been dreaming. Already he was beginning to doubt his own memory. He had almost reached the end of the bridge when he heard a step behind him. He swung round: the sidewalk was

empty.
"It's in your head. Take a deep breath. Calm down." He continued on as though nothing had happened, but the step continued to echo his own. The characteristic tapping of the red boots! Gradually his assurance crumbled. While walking along a dark street he became so afraid that he began to run. The sound of the high heels tapping on payement followed him like a shadow. And inside his skull, the same woman's voice was accusing him

You killed us! You killed us!"

He had to escape. He plunged into an alleyway and though his lungs burned he ran at full speed. Success! No more sounds of pursuit. He was only a few steps from a well-lit street. After a few more cautious detours, he would be back at his house. Suddenly he saw them, ghostly shapes in the semidarkness, a reddish haze in the dull light. They were blocking the exit. He stopped, frozen to the spot, terrified. The boots were at least ten feet tall. He stood there with his mouth open, panting. He couldn't move. One of the boots, at least its ghost, tapped its toe impatiently on the pavement.

"Murderer. Murderer. You are condemned. We are going to crush you." Run back down the alley? They would catch up to him in no time. Thouin was afraid, afraid. He was going to die in the shadows like a rat.

Continued on page 35

THE FLOATING GALLERY



Red Head 1986 Painted Wood

GORDON FERGUSON

Gordon Ferguson is a native Albertan and a graduate of the Alberta College of Art. He completed his M.F.A. at the University of Montana in 1981 and currently teaches sculpture at the Alberta College of Art.

THE RED BOOTS

A short story by Jean-Yves Soucy from Intimate Strangers published in 1986 by Penguin Books. Soucy is a journalist with Radio-Canada International and Radio-Québec. He is the author of *Un dieu chasseur* (Creatures of the Chase), winner of the Prix de la Presse and Les Chevaliers de la nuit published in 1980.

rom the day that he saw them, Thouin was unable to forget them, and what he most feared, happened. During all his twenty-six years as a civil servant, he had taken special care to avoid disruption. Now he was thrown into turmoil. After a lifetime of mild desires, easily satisfied or sup-ressed, Thouin was now tortured by passion. He *had* to possess them, to have them all to himself, to be able to love them whenever he wanted. He struggled briefly, then turned around to inspect them. From that moment on, their image was with him all the time, even at work. Because of them he was unable to sleep. And during the day, the same upheaval . . .

Exhausted and worn down, he made his decision. It was evening. He wanted them right away, but, of course, he had to wait until but, or course, he had to wait until the next day. The hours stretched out endlessly. He tried to read a book. Then he switched on the television. Finally he went to bed hoping to fall asleep. It was no use. He saw them in all their beauty, imagined the softness of their skin and their odour. What would his

life be like when they were his? Entirely different, that much was clear.

The next morning he called in sick: his first absence since that devastating flu nine years ago! Then he went to the bank so he could pay in cash. Suddenly he was seized by fear. Surely they were the only ones; what if they were gone? Now he regretted his stupid indecision and delays. He flagged a taxi and had to restrain himself from telling the driver to go more quickly. What a relief to see them. They were slender, artistocratic, absolutely elegant. He went inside.

want those red boots in the window."

"They're the only ones I have. I don't know if the size . . ."
"It doesn't matter," Thouin interrupted.

Buying new boots for his collection usually made him fearful and timid. Not this time. In fact he hardly recognized his own voice. The salesman seemed unsurprised and said nothing more. Thouin laid out the equivalent of a week's salary without blinking an eye and then left the shop, clutching the box to his chest. Crazy ideas filled his mind. He might be hit by a car and die without having a chance to touch the boots he had so lusted after; a thief might knock him over and run away with his parcel. Thouin walked faster, gripping his treasure more tightly.

Finally he was home. He delayed the moment of opening the package; when he decided to break the string his fingers trembled with emotion. Deli-cately he positioned the boots on the table, then hastily he pulled back his hands. Now he was intimidated! His reaction surprised him and he laughed aloud. But he didn't touch them again.

Photo: Heather Elton from Along Dark Streets

lack of respect.

Then he placed them on the bureau. The whole afternoon he watched them; and in an almost offensive way they stared back from on high.

place.

Afraid of disturbing the boots he

perched at the corner of the table, hardly able to eat his dinner. Instead

of contemplating them the way he wanted to, he could only glance at them surreptitously. But they were

superb! The light played on the contours of the glossy leather; the high heels and the arched insteps gave

them an aristocratic bearing; the doz-

ens of eyelets through which the laces disappeared were like so many pairs

stretched out on the bed. He felt un-

sidered the idea. The whole thing was

beautiful, but they were only objects,

just like the others piled up in the closet. He was going to get up, take them to bed, possess them. Then they

would be his, just like the others. He sat up, decided. You're going to be put in your

at arm's length. He didn't want to hold

them too close. That would show a

As he picked them up his hands were uncertain, and he carried them

becoming ridiculous. These were beautiful, even extraordinarily

He went into the next room and

That . . . presence in the kit-

Presence? For a moment he con-

of eyes staring at Thouin.

comfortable.

chen!

The atmosphere in his apartment became so uncomfortable that he decided to go out for supper. A waitress came up to him and suddenly her flat, low-heeled, white shoes became the red boots. The illusion lasted only a second but was so strong that Thouin thought he could hear the tapping of high heels. He paid his bill and left.

Outside a woman approached. She was wearing red boots. Thouin watched closely and the mirage disappeared. But again he heard the same footsteps as in the restaurant. Agitated, Thouin went into a movie theatre. As he expected, while he was still walking down the aisle, the red boots appeared on the screen; he left without even sitting down. On the way home he became furious. How many days had he lived as a mere extension of these boots? Because of them he had even missed work! Until now he had made sure that his shadow life was confined to its proper time and place. This obsession had lasted too long.

Possession conquers desire."

That decided the matter. When he returned, the innumerable watching eyes were filled with terror. Terror mixed with contempt. He bore the accusation without flinching.

I'm going to teach you a lesson."

To add to the humiliation he positioned other pairs of shoes on the furniture. They would be the audience.

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