

RealTime

free

Dialogues

Long & Kohler: dance
Phelan & Tait: performance
Katz & de Jong: music

Music

Sydney Spring 5
IHOS Opera
Hip Hop

Visual Arts

Experimenta 1994
PICA, 24 HR ARTS
Casula Powerhouse
Philatelic, Stills, Rea

Techno-Arts

ISEA Helsinki
Siggraph94 Florida

Electronic Arts

Bad Boy Bubby
Natural Born Killers
Arts Today

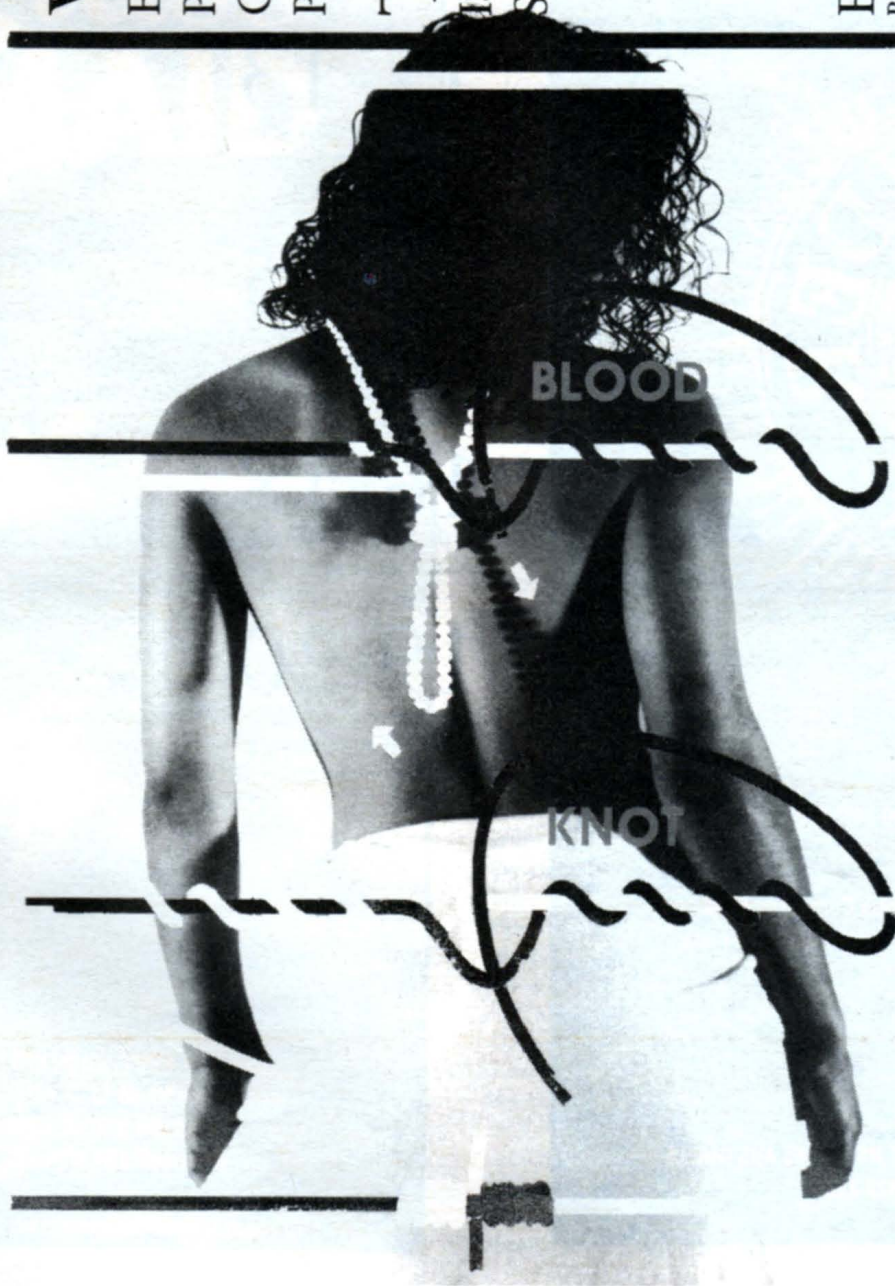
Theatre & Performance

Kelly, Koca
Mackiewicz
Artaud, Muller
Spoken Word

Plus

The Very Short Sports Column
At Short Notice

Theatre
Performance
and the
National
Arts



Words, sound, dialogues resound in Real Time 3. Ian Maxwell hears the music and reads Hip Hop in Sydney's west echoing the Spoken Word survey by Mikhali Georgeos. Vikki Riley's Riot Grrls give lip. AnneMarie Jonson Earwitnesses Sound Performance at this year's Experimenta and follows the microphone lead to the wig of Bad Boy Bubby. There's a matrix of electronic sound and the noise of opinion in John Potts' report on the International Symposium on Electronic Arts (ISEA) in Helsinki. Real Time 3 is full of lines of dialogue, interviews with composers, choreographers, writers, directors, curators. Tap in.

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Appetites and Divas

Director Gail Kelly talks about female performers cutting loose

Gail Kelly worked miracles with Canberra Youth Theatre in the early 80s, has directed *Circus Oz*, *Sidetrack*, *Legs on the Wall* and collaborated with Open City. She's currently directing Club Swing's *Appetite* and The Party Line's *Desperate and Dangerous Divas*.

Annie Davey, Kathryn Niesche, Simone O'Brien, Lisa Small are Club Swing, a performance company who radically improved their skills by training at a trapeze school in Paris in 1991 and collaborated with Gail and Robin Laurie in 1993 on how to interpret these skills from an imaginative base. With Gail as director the group worked up a show in Melbourne and Sydney, premiered it beyond the Fringe in Adelaide's 1994 Festival and, after a good if shocked reception, find themselves on the way to Perth's Artrage.

Gail says *Appetite* is about sexual repression. She describes two performance spaces, one aerial (a trapeze), the other a banquet table. The table is the site of frustrations, uncertainty about desires, anxiety at being watched by an audience. But in the air above the table - abandonment, flight, instincts defying gravity. The performers express themselves through food experiences - one grinds



Simone O'Brien in *Appetite*

Michelle Stanley

coffee beans endlessly saturating the audience with the sound and smell. There are two fastidious nibblers building an almost unbearable tension. An

autoeroticist fucks cakes and eats them off herself. Everyone eats roses.

At *Appetite*'s beginning, the audience are fed strawberries from a performer's thigh, by the end of the show, they ravenously mob the banquet table for potato leftovers, the remnants of an eight-tier cake and coffee beans. The rose-petal strewn table they plunder looks like a painting, says Gail, not a little under the influence of the UK's Bobby Baker. The performers share their cake and seductive looks. "The audience then go home and fuck."

Why? Because in the air the performers feel free to touch, to get sentimental and S&M, to leap into and fall out of love, look directly at each other, explore taboos. The air is full of risk and irony and the erotic.

And this is not a linear narrative, says Gail, it's a reverie, it's about states of being and giving the audience particular experiences for their minds and stomachs (and ... ?). Probably a good idea to have a light snack before the show.

Some of the audience were angry, feeling they'd been 'lesbianed'. "Yes, says Gail, *Appetite* is informed by lesbian experience but most of the heterosexual audience relished the performance's erotic openness. 'Too much parody and irony for it to be written off as closed lesbo-erotic.'"

The Party Line, of which Gail is a founding member, "constructs new spaces for the feminine to perform in." The company is based in Sydney though members come, as so often in Sydney, from everywhere and overlap with Club Swing. The big difference, Gail says, is an interest in theory (with their dramaturg Peta Tait) and that they don't use their physical skills as the starting point for a show.

Their second show is *Desperate and Dangerous Divas* for Tony Strachan's outdoor program for the Melbourne Festival. Thanks to a Lincraft sponsorship and a helping hand from the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, Angus Strathie (of *Strictly Ballroom* fame) will create spectacular costumes for the show's divas played by Celia White,

Simone O'Brien, Edwina Entwistle, Anne Catterton and Diana Carr.

At Melbourne's Southgate, *Divas* will be on the run, escaping from an opera house — five women whose repertoire of the feminine doesn't read in shopping centres and public places. They don't know how to handle open space, they run, they're stopped, they perform their finest moments (death), later they re-invent themselves, creating a new performance bordering on burlesque.

"Each performer plays a character from one of these operas - Cho Cho San, Violetta ... and because this is an outdoor, on-the-move performance the costumes make this absolutely clear. There is no trapeze, instead there are gestural and dance movements including butoh and contact improvisation influences, falls and throws. I've always wanted to do a physical show on the ground. We'll break through the crowds and make space - frocks are good for that."

Are you having a go at opera? "The form, yes. The most popular operas are still nineteenth century ones in which women are sacrificed and which preserve a negative version of the feminine. But I do like opera. It is total theatre." Gail sees her work as always being shaped musically rather than by narrative.

"This is very different from the contemplative *Appearing in Pieces*, our first show, at The Performance Space, but it has the same preoccupation with space (shared there with the audience) and looking back to the past to see where we're going."

Gail sees The Party Line as her main concern, the core of her work. She has a fantasy about the company working with a sculptor who is into pliable materials for performers to interact with. In the meantime, the performers are encouraged to take classes to extend their skills, next it's martial arts.

Club Swing appear at PICA for Artrage. *The Partyline* can be found on-site in Tony Strachan's outdoor program for the Melbourne Festival in October.

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Busting Rhymes

Ian "Max" Maxwell Maps Sydney's Rap:
Hip Hop Culture in the Suburbs.

*What the fuck is happening?
Is Sydney turning into the home of
Rodney King?
Los Angeles is the city we're becoming
In the west of Sydney we saw people
running
From a gang involved in a drive-by
The first one for S-Y-D-N-E-Y
Why on earth does it happen here?
A gang involved in a drive-by
He was only 18 - why did he die?
Sydney rap crew Illegal Substance:
Drive-by*

It's the very stuff that *Real Life* and *A Current Affair* live for. Apocalypse in the suburbs. A rap crew from suburban Sydney busting attitude-drenched rhymes

one friend and you can have quite a satisfactory game. One-a-side cricket is far less exciting than a one-on-one half court basketball game in your driveway.)

And last summer, a sports editorial, once again in *The Herald*, this apostasy: that Michael Jordan is better known in this place, 'the suburbs', than Shane Warne.

There we see it: lurking behind this account is the dangerous, predatory, alluring figure of the African American man.

And with him, that dangerous, predatory, alluring music: rap.

But then again, it's the same question, isn't it? The rappers ask "What the fuck?"

mileage from polite society's supposed terror of, or distaste for, the latest in a series of American cultural contaminants, while the rapper boyz secure a degree of cred, establishing their street status through their highly charged, equivocating accounts of the mean streets.

So, what is going on? Is it cultural imperialism? Is this contemporary Sydney youth culture as a wannabe simulacrum of the g(angsta)-funk posturings of NWA, Ice T and their ilk? Or is something altogether more interesting going on?

Let's find out. What was this 'Villawood drive-by', for example? Over to Mick E and DJ ESP of Illegal Substance...

ESP Friends of ours were performing there [Villawood] and we went to see them and after the show, after everything was finished late at night...inside there was a fight, between the Lebs and the Blacks, and the Lebs got kicked out, and they came back and did a drive by.

Mick E I mean that's American...

Salt'n'Pepa concert at the Ent Cent. Or even knowing who MC Solaar is, or getting into the jazz-hip hop fusion thing.

No, I mean rap as cultural formation: Hip Hop. A becoming culture that organises lives, that lives are organised around. MC Absolute Zero of Liverpool crew Voodoo Flavor tells me that "ninety per cent of my life is Hip Hop. The rest of it I'm asleep". Veteran graffiti writer Blaze echoes the sentiment, willing to push his account of his own investment in the 'culture' of Hip Hop even into that remaining ten per cent: "I eat, breath and sleep Hip Hop".

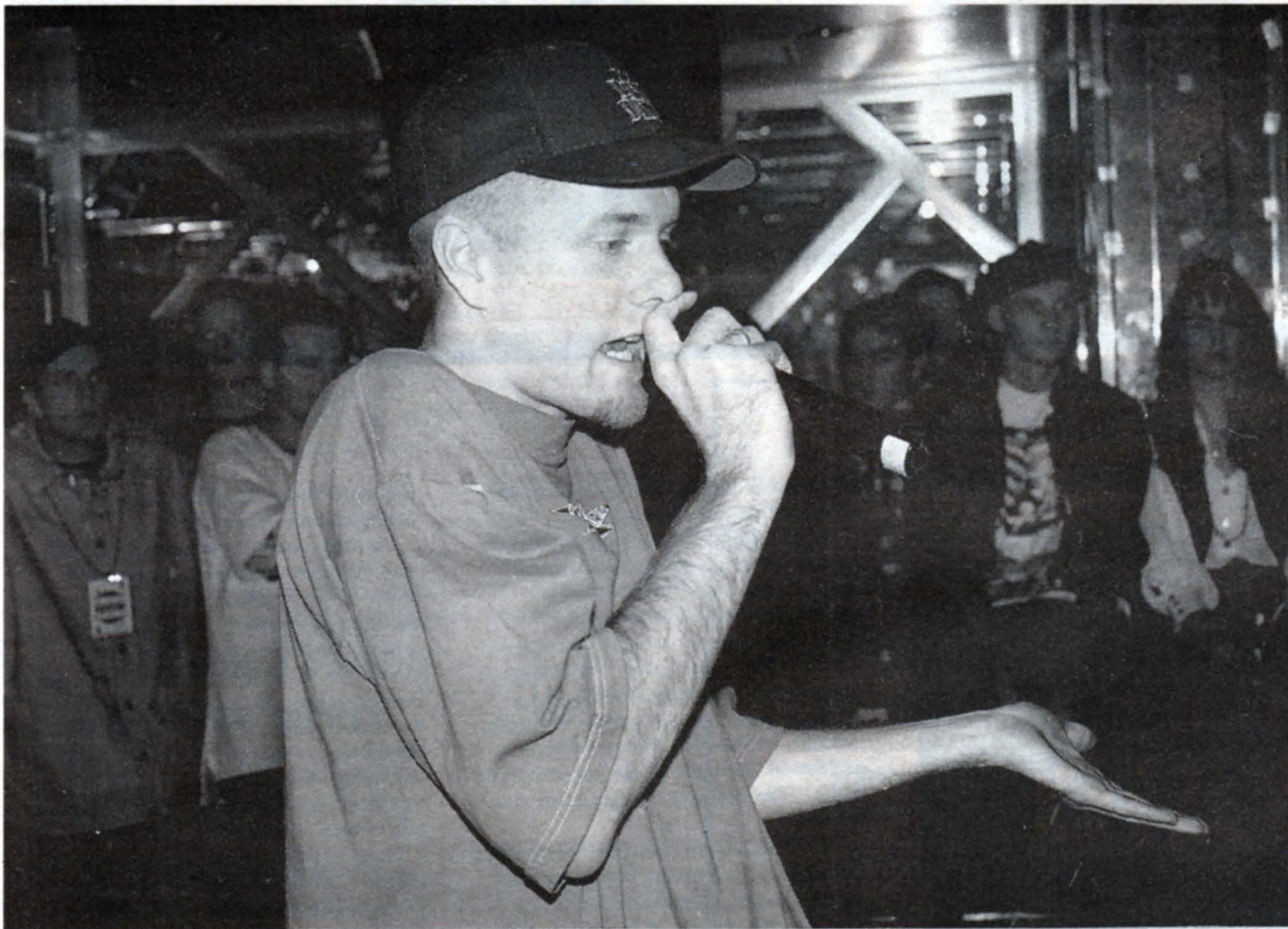
Here in Sydney. Or rather, there, in Sydney, the Sydney 'out west', Sydney hip hop's ur-scene. A landscape, in Illegal Substance's rhyme, of "Lebs" and "Blacks", the latter a reference to the Samoan youth "gangs". A multi-cultural territory that defies a conventional mapping. A territory marked out by graffiti-tagged railway lines: make enough marks on enough trains, and you can be "king of the line". A train tagged in, say, Casula, will run throughout the Sydney system, taking your name and your style with it. A cartography of trainyards, where you can throw up an outline on a laid-up Tangara. Where a "burner", a really dope (good) graffiti (master) "piece", will be photographed and collected in a hundred scrap books. Where your name will circulate and precede you throughout the dispersed community that calls itself the Hip Hop Nation, a community sustained by this compulsive writing of self onto walls, onto trains, into lyrics, and by the carefully cast "shout-out" nets, broadcast by hip hop radio shows on 2 SER and MBS FM, or on BOX-FM in Wollongong. Sustained and re-invoked in fondly recounted memories of break-dancing battles on the marble terraces under Parramatta office blocks "back in the dayz", the early 1980s (the designers of one particular building had provided external power points into which ghetto blasters could be plugged, to pump out the old school break beats). A constant calling/writing into being.

This is a different Sydney, one that defies centre-periphery logics. "Roams", for instance, is a Lebanese-Australian from Werrington who raps in a guttural, throat-stripping Arabic roar. From "out west" Roams looks across and talks about "the city". But he doesn't mean the 'inner city': he explains that he means Granville. My urban cartography is jolted (again). Far west crew Def Wish Cast engage in classic hip hop antiphony with their pogo-ing audience: suburb names are shouted from the stage, "St Marys...Penrith...Mt Druit", and are met with the air-punching response: "Westside...Westside...Westside!" I ask rapper Def Wish what this 'Westside' that he and his crew rhyme about is. "What do you show someone who wants to see 'Westside'?" I ask him. "That's it man..." He gazes over the plain (we are sitting at St. Marys station): "There's nothing here." Here is a suburban Sydney, a place that, well, isn't.

But Def Wish are having us on. There's plenty there. Just none of the things that seem to count.

Roams raps: "Nobody knows who I am and no one seems to care..." But he knows who he is, where he is coming from, where he's going: "I wanna sort of like do an album here that's like hip hop culture from where I'm from here, then I want to go back there [Lebanon]...and I want to get a bit of culture from there and maybe hook up heaps of Arabic tunes with my rhymes, and like English rapping and Arabic rapping..."

Easy as that. There is culture here—Werrington, Sydney, Australia—and, according to Roams, that culture is called hip hop. And there is culture there, in Lebanon, and Roams is going there, and then he'll come back here, and he'll put them together. And I bet that that is exactly what he will do.



J.U., The Urban Poets

Marcelo Pena

over hard core "jeep beats" about drive-by shootings in Villawood. Suddenly it all becomes clear. The nightmare, it seems, is coming true. An inevitable slide of logic, reading from the first, incipient signs: baseball caps worn backwards and Reebok hi-tops, fat laces and baggy clothes, all marks of this terrifying Future: gang warfare, "colors", the media-mythologised space of the western suburbs as a proto-Los Angeles. Asian gangs in Cabramatta. Rooty Hill as Compton. Werrington as South Central. Watch out! It's happening here, too! The ghetto is on its way.

And not just the electronic tabloids work this fertile ground, it makes great weekend reading, too. Back in June this year, *The Sydney Morning Herald's* Spectrum ran Richard Guilliat's lame recapitulation of the cultural imperialism theme under the ever-so-clever headline "U.S.Eh?" Surveying the spreading of American culture into every corner of Australian youth life, Guilliat paints the tired old picture of culture under threat. He rues the fact that virtually every kid he sees at a toy shop opening in Moore Park is wearing a baseball cap, or a baseball warm-up jacket, that basketball is becoming more popular than cricket. (Although this should surprise nobody: you can shoot baskets by yourself. Add

The highbrow journalist affects a quizzical "Eh?" While *The Herald* journo relies on the establishment thesis of cultural purity threatened from without, with its superior tone of discomfort and puzzlement, its disdainful disapproval, Illegal Substance's rap bespeaks an ambivalent tension, which takes a fundamentally eroticised form: that of an archetypal love-hate. The apparent moral outrage of the in-your-face opening line "what the fuck..." tempered by the coming-of-age satisfaction in the (cultural) cringe-worthy line: "the first one for S-Y-D-N-E-Y", the last spelt out as a hard core parody of the wholesome boy and girl next door Commonwealth Games swim team cheer squad.

Illegal Substance are of course asserting their hip hop credentials. They are, they warn/boast, "hard core". It means that they are in touch with the fictive space of "the street". The phrase invokes also their frankly auto-erotic identification with that figure of the street-smooth black man, the Los Angelino gangsta himself, outside the law, cruising the block in a lowrider pimpmobile, packing a gat [street talk for 'gun'], ruling the block.

Strangely, journalist and rappers are working the same moment of cultural production here. The journo gets a bit of

ESP That's very stupid...

Mick E...the drive-by, but then it happened in Australia, therefore I wrote a rap about it as an Australian issue.

ESP 'Cos to start with, things do happen in Australia that do happen in America, like the drive-by and all that, like people say, mate, I dunno they say like, they'd call Australian rappers fake, but...

Mick E Nah, we're not, because we're talking about things that happen in Australia, even though they may be American things happening, but they're happening...

ESP They did happen in America, but they're happening here.

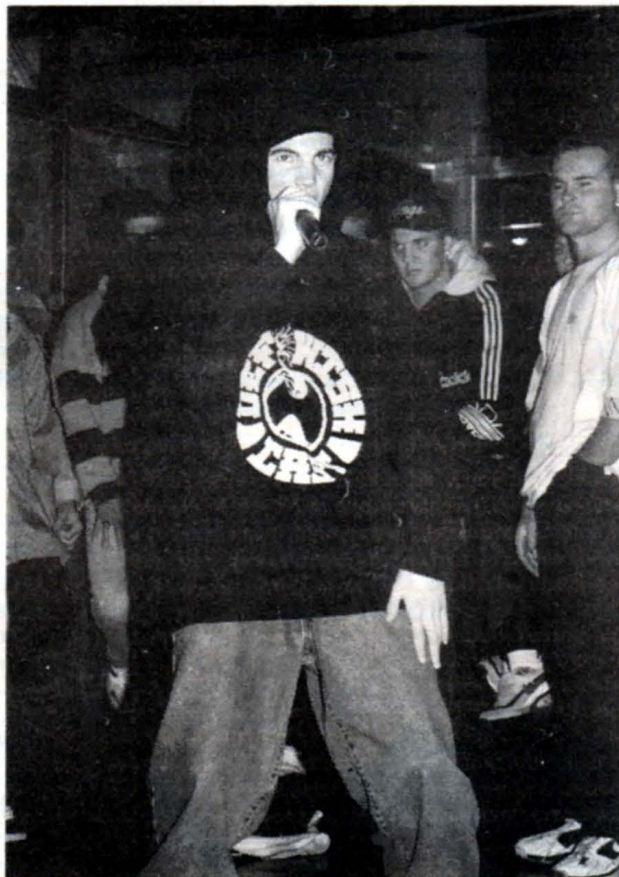
The rapped question, 'what the fuck is happening?', then, is revealed for the rhetoric that it is. Mick, the rapper, doesn't need to ask: he knows what is 'up'. That's what makes him a rapper: he claims street knowledge. Illegal Substance are, he tells me, not 'fake' because "even though they may be American things happening... they're happening here..." But this still sounds assimilable to the cultural imperialism thesis, doesn't it?

Yet I still want to ask the question: what the fuck is happening? What is this? Rap in Sydney? And I don't just mean the rap that you get in (some) clubs, or that you throw into your party mix: "Cool, new Public Enemy..." Or going to the

But, you know, I will be in trouble with the Hip Hop Community, should they read this, because I have used *Illegal Substance* as my initial text. This is a problem. In the view of a large segment of this community, *Illegal Substance* don't really 'represent' the culture. They are, bluntly, "toys". They don't know shit. Their determination to be "hard core" has led them to take, in the view of some, an unnecessarily antagonistic approach to their work. They recently recorded a rap "dissing" other Sydney Hip Hop figures, as well as a prominent "New Jack Swing" DJ, although nobody is really worried about that: hip hoppers generally are not "down with the swingers". But to diss(-respect) people in Hip Hop...well, that's...a problem.

J.U., from the inner-city based Urban Poets, was one of the targets of *Illegal Substance*'s diss. He thinks that the competitive, combative rap battling of the African-American tradition, with its roots in the word play of the dozens, toasting and signifyin', has no place in the Sydney Hip Hop scene. The "culture" here is too delicate to risk such divisiveness, he says. *Illegal Substance* argue that it is the diss rap, the legendary Bronx rap battles, tales of which circulate as part of the folkloric history of Hip Hop as transnational phenomenon, that made rap what it is today. "Battling" increases skills, hones styles, "lifts up" the scene. I watch the argument unfold, up in the studios of 2SER as Miguel D'Souza puts his weekly hip hop show to air. Miguel suggests that it is possible to have an Australian Hip Hop scene that doesn't copy the New

York scene, or the Los Angeles gangsta Hip Hop world. The dispute winds on, soundtracked by a thumping Dr Dre track hot off the import shelves at The Loungeroom (Blaze and J.U.'s shop). "Hip Hop Culture" is negotiated, guarded,



Def Wish, Def Wish Cast

Marcello Pena

challenged, disputed, but, above all, circulates around the undisputed premise: this thing, this Hip Hop Culture simply is, and here, right now, in Sydney, 1994, they own it. They are not being force fed it, nor are they borrowing it from anybody. It is

their culture.

"Fads don't last for ten years!" Ser Reck of Def Wish Cast announces, as DJ Vame warms up the turntables (the ones and twos), asserting this same positivity of his culture, the culture he has helped to create. We are at Site nightclub in inner-city Kings Cross. The event is the launch of the ABC's Open Learning cultural studies and popular music course. I have contributed a piece on Sydney hip hop to the course, and Def Wish Cast have been invited to perform for the assembled academics and ABC suits. They and their friends are uncomfortable as they wait for their set: a clutch of boys and girls in baggy jeans and sweat shirts having to explain who they are every time they ask for a (complimentary) drink. They decide that this is the perfect opportunity to "represent". That is, to state who they are, and to promote not merely their project as a group of performers, but their cultural project, hip hop. Hence Ser Reck's precis of his commitment: "Fads don't last..." You will have seen Ser Reck's work on a wall near you. His graffiti name is "Unique". He has been writing (graffiti) for...well, ten years. He gets paid to do it these days. He is 24 years old.

In performance, Def Wish Cast simply kick. On this particular night, they pull out all stops, 'wrecking the mics' with the anthemic "A.U.S.T. Down Under Comin' Up"; launching into the chorus of "Running Amok":

Is that your head or did your neck throw up?

Three or four of their friends bounce up and down on the dance floor chanting "Westside, westside..." The ABC suits

take steps backwards, pressing the smalls of their backs to the bar. Def Wish Cast continue to 'rip shit up' as they produce an a capella beat box rap; and then the showstopper: Def Wish's "syllable ballistics", a sixty second burst of ragga-rap, an unbroken stream of raucous, burbling rhymes delivered at the speed of sound. Finally, each of the three rappers takes to the floor to break as DJ Vame scratches and cuts the vinyl on the ones and twos. A few circling steps, a lunging move onto the floor, and the break dance moves appear: flurries of arms and legs, spinning torsos, before finally returning to the microphones to once again proclaim the "realness", and, what I always find fascinating, the fundamental benevolence of the hip hop culture of (western) Sydney.

So: What the fuck is happening? Roams, the eighteen year old Lebanese-Australian rapper with his project of uniting the hip hop culture of Werrington with that of Lebanon; Def Wish Cast and their Aussie-accented rap-ales of life in the suburbs, even *Illegal Substance* with their self-confident imitative braggadocio. I am reminded of something that David Byrne said about New York. Writing of the "curvy, slinky" sounds of the salsas, the sambas and chachas singing through the streets, he suggested that "this ain't the America of Dick and Jane books. This is a new exciting country that doesn't have a name yet."

With thanks to Lowell Lewis and Miguel, and respect to all the crews.

Ian Maxwell lectures at the University of New South Wales College of Fine Arts and is completing a PhD on hip hop culture in Sydney at the University of Sydney's Centre for Performance Studies.

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Real Bebe

Karen Pearlman interviews New York choreographer Bebe Miller

This being an article for Real Time about Bebe Miller, the name of it on my computer disc is RealBebe. But who or what is the real Bebe? Could such a seemingly easygoing woman as this really be one of America's foremost, up and

could it be disingenuous?): "Have I been?" On why so many dancers say they want to dance with her (even ones I've met here in Australia who haven't actually seen her work): "Oh, people want to dance like us, but students say that to a lot of people. That's just a way of expressing curiosity about the world and a longing to try new challenging things." As of this year, she has virtually a brand new company of dancers. With regard to training them into her work she says: "It's really more a question of discovering what they do and how best to use it."

Bebe (how else would I refer to her

ricochets. Although she herself has begun to explore more theatrical elements in her work - speaking, working with pro-active designers and with directors - movement is still a fascination for her. She loves to think about movement and to work on "elbows to heels relations" in complex co-ordination that demand speed, ease, fluidity. But for Bebe, the most important factor of learning movement in class is using it to "mine information about what your own body is doing". She's not teaching people to "move like me", but rather using movement phrases as "objectively as possible". In fact, if there is

As we're talking, at the end of her long rehearsing week she starts to slow. She hesitates. She says, "You know what? As we're sitting here talking I'm getting a rush of ideas." She's been troubled in rehearsal by making movement that doesn't fit or say what she wants it to say. She doesn't want to give up on all the years of accumulated information about making great movement, but new discoveries make it "unethical" to go backwards.

Right now she is working on a piece called *Heaven and Earth* about the relationship of the ecstatic to the mundane and finding a balance in the world. Maybe it's sitting in a cafe overhearing tired New Yorkers' conversations or seeing yet another headline about OJ Simpson, she "realises that what is missing is what's outside of the movement. The requiems and gospel music lift it up, but it's the stuff that's not up there..."

She is working out her ideas right here in the cafe, as she speaks, and suddenly I start to feel responsible. Like a midwife or a fisherman whose job it is to catch, but not to mutilate with my own opinions and fingerprints. I try to help, to listen actively but not to pressure her as she haltingly articulates that what's missing is not so much "where do we find exaltation and peace?", but "when in peace can we spare a thought for what we'll make for dinner?"

I want to know how she'll get from that thought to a dance. "I will look at the elements of the idea. Say I have a beautiful, exotic set and I put the *Daily News* in front of it. Does it resonate? Am I narrowing the field? Honing in on the resonators?"

And now I realise that this is "Real" "Classic" Bebe. By making me responsible she makes me part of the work. This is how her dancers must feel, trying to catch, support, and nurture by being responsive, capable themselves, fully present in the process, not intrusive and not absent. For Bebe, being herself is partly a process of making her dancers, students, producers and audiences responsible for being themselves while engaging with the ideas. And partly a process of being responsible for continuing to uncover herself. After all: "People respond to the humanity of what we dance about, to who we are. The mission for me is to think about how I can expand who I am in the company." So RealBebe is in the work. Ironically, she remains elusive. "People never actually see the latest work because I'm always on to the next thing by the time it's performed."

Wendy and Shelley Lasica in Melbourne are organising Bebe's visit and have organised visits by other teachers including David Dorfman and Lance Gries from New York and Lloyd Newson and Greg Nash from England. For more information call (03) 820-8620



Bebe Miller

Lois Greenfield

coming, exciting and tenacious choreographers? In a scene where blowing your own trumpet is pretty much required, she is known for being self-effacing and in fact, it would appear that she genuinely is.

On the question of how she feels about having been so influential, a simple (or

except by her first name?) is coming to Australia in January in 1995 to teach in Melbourne and Perth. She will be teaching movement primarily, her personal, highly developed code of squiggles on top of swoops, snaps in conjunction with suspensions and balances begun by

anything she'd like to be able to impart it is this: "to expand people's idea of who they can be as dancers in a company and as choreographers."

But really, what is this self she would like everyone to have the chance to express, to be, and where is hers?

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Matching Moves

Choreographers Sue-ellen Kohler and Julie-Anne Long talk dance

Julie-Anne Long and Sue-ellen Kohler were students together at the VCA in the 1980's where they learned among other things that you couldn't dance until you'd truly experienced orgasm. They ran with this advice noting at the same time that the life of a dancer could be a bit too closely monitored if you weren't careful. For Julie-Anne dance education brought out her assertive side. Her work these days is disobedient when it comes to form, the shape of dancers' bodies and tasteful costuming. She combines elemental movements (swinging, striding, turning) with everyday gestures and bizarre (sometimes kitsch) touches to create idiosyncratic dance narratives that often include a commentary on movement itself. This is where her work makes connections

the two of them together for *Cannibal Race*, the second full-scale work choreographed by Julie-Anne as Associate Artistic Director of the company. Her first, *Suburban Pirates* involved a cast of three dancers, one actor and 10 performers from the Flying Fruitfly Circus. REAL TIME caught them at the end of an 8 hour day in the beginning of phase 2 of their rehearsal period.

The 8 hour day is a "shock to the system" for Sue-ellen who starts with yoga every day at 6 and is more used to working 4 to 5 hours maximum in the creation of her own works which "take as long as they take - usually most of a year".

So what's a dancer like Sue-Ellen doing in dance theatre? "I've worn a lot of different hats. I worked with Tasdance, a

is someone who throws herself into dancing." The cast also includes a child dancer and appearances by Julie-Anne and Artistic Director, Graeme Watson.

So how's the collaboration going? A long pause as the two try to describe the stage of rehearsals when things could go either way. "Today I feel like I'm too old for this," says Sue-ellen. "In the process of making my own work the patterns of my body have become more particular, my aesthetic sensibilities are more defined".

JA Does it feel risky or scary or are you comfortable?

SE: Ask me when I'm there. How is it for you?

JA A big responsibility. Closer to the way I worked 10 years ago. Normally I let the form develop. In this one I've let the music determine the structure.

SE At the VCA you were one of the musical dancers.

JA Was I?

SE The ones who thought of dance in terms of musical structures. I would have liked to be musical but I wasn't.

JA But look what you've got from not being musical.

anything I'm trying to create something that moves, that moves me, moves along, makes me think of something else - like The Partridge Family!

SE I like movement that in performance actually becomes something else.

JA I love watching what you do but I don't have your patience. My favourite thing is watching people walk and run.

SE I'd prefer to watch walking and running from a great height or upside down.

JA I use steps to bring out the rhythmic quality of ordinary movement. I'm always uneasy when dancers don't look like real people. While I think of it, what did you think about the exercise we did today when I just called out that quick phrase in words, "Back. Side. Step. Cross," without showing the movement myself?

SE You got a whole world in each dancer's version of the words. But what happens to the particularities of those movements in this approach? Do they just turn into your steps?

JA I borrow them for a while but in the performance, the work is yours.

SE I'll enjoy performing it but it's your work - that's the difference.

JA Once we've gone beyond a certain point, as the work settles and redistributes itself, you will have back all you have contributed.

SE You have artistic control.

JA I like to work with people who intercept my vision.

SE But if I did, would you still be able to do what you do?

JA Yes, because I have a strong idea of what I'm after.

SE I'm not sure you can make a work from different visions.

JA Your own work is very personal.

SE Well parts of it are but it's not just my work. It's Mahalia Middlemist, Margie Medlin, Ion Pearce, Sandra Perrin, William McClure. I'm the frontliner - that's all. Working with you certainly helps to illuminate my own process.

JA In your own work you invent from scratch. I tend to work from what's already there.

SE So do I. I seem to be always on the point of knowing what my body is, but never "finding" it.

JA Your work is pretty rigorous. *Cannibal Race* must feel like "time out".

SE Well, that's usually when you stop and eat, isn't it. Making your own work is certainly intense. But here inside my body is not a fortress, it's just another place.

You and I have done a lot of dancing - most of it I never want to do again - all those swings in psyche and age, all those institutions! At the moment, I'm working on a piece called *The Inadequate Body* in which I dance in half a tutu and one point shoe. The other half of my body is naked. At the same time, I'm a dancer working with you on *Cannibal Race* and enjoying it.

Cannibal Race opens October 13 at St. Georges Hall in Newtown, Sydney's second largest remaining Victorian Hall and much needed new dance / performance venue.



Julie Anne Long, Sue-ellen Kohler

Sandy Edwards

with Sue-ellen's very different style.

Sue-ellen Kohler has over the last few years created a body of work which is minimal/epic in its concentration on movement as articulated by particular body parts. In *Hybrid* she writhed in a shallow pool of water, slipping and struggling to stand, while on a circular screen above, her pelvis (among other images) was projected in close up. In *Bug* she literally doubled up with Sandra Perrin, their backs bent into shapes that made their bodies look like insects crawling through the semi-dark.

The One Extra Company has brought

Spanish dance troupe, walked on stilts. I worked with Dance Exchange and the Sydney Front - now there's a contrast! I've been creating my own work for a while now, so when Julie-Anne approached me to work on *Cannibal Race* I said 'Are you sure you know what you're getting yourself into?'

Julie-Anne likes working with people who are not going to give her what she knows. "I've worked with actors, non-performers, all sorts of dancers. You and Trevor Patrick certainly bring a different sensibility to this work. Narelle Benjamin

SE My dance tends to coexist with music and other elements - film, sound, light.

JA *Cannibal Race* actually started with the title. The Chopin came next.

SE What made you choose Chopin?

JA In dance, Chopin is usually interpreted romantically whereas I find an uneasy undercurrent in it. It will be played live by Ben Abdallah and I love the sound of the piano in the space. Some of the music suggested narratives. Some sections are more like states of being within the story. Episodes interlock. But more than



Memories from a biscuit tin

Rea reflects on photography and identity

Freedom does not basically lie in discovering or being able to determine who we are but in rebelling against the ways in which we are already categorised, defined and classified.
Michel Foucault.

My fascination with the camera and photography was initially about memory. When I first started to look at family photographs, I made connections with people in my family I had not necessarily known.

Photography was a way that I could relate and become important in my family. I never thought of photography as an art form or as documentation; it was about carrying messages from the past or showing us what was left of our culture that we could salvage in image form.

My family and many Koori people I know have an absolutely sentimental connection with domestic photography.

From as far back as I can remember every house we visited would have photographs of family members and special events framed and hanging on walls all through the house. Today, in contemporary aboriginal culture photographs are an important way that cultural connections are made. Photography has given us a sense of pride and achievement. It physically links families. It's a way for Kooris who have survived the despair and devastation of ethnocide and genocide to claim back what is visible.

After viewing the framed photographs, the elders would make a cuppa and the albums would come out and that's when you would see and feel the family unity - they would laugh and cry with the happiness and joy of memories, the good old days - as the album was passed around. They never seemed to remember many if any of the hard times or if they did they would laugh at them.

Black and white photos are what I grew up with. My mother was probably the first person that I had ever seen who had such an interest in photos. She used to keep a big old biscuit tin with red and yellow roses on it. Every time we caught a glimpse of the tin, I would say, "What's in the tin, Mum?" Then one day she said, "It's just a tin of old black and white photos of when I was young!" She said that she would show them to my sister and I when we got older.

When that day came she opened the tin and laid the photos on the bed. That was the day I got my introduction to my family history. I was about seven. There were some photos that she had taken although I never saw my mother with a camera. She had stories and memories that came together through photographs. This was

the beginning of my fascination with images.

I became the collector of photographs until my mother gave me my first camera. It was the style you bought from the chemist in the early 70's. I continued to use medium sized instamatic cameras until I was introduced to the workings of the 35mm Pentax manual. I have continued to take photos and tell stories like my mother for 22 years.

I have my own way of telling these stories drawing together family photos, new technology and language to produce my writing through the lens. I construct text and images about urban Koori life and about the politics of being a black girl. Black and white photography has become my blueprint. The photograph triggers memory. Memory appears in colour. Through the process of computer manipulation, I then colour the image relating to that memory and the image takes on a different perspective. It comes alive and text and image merge and inform each other - dictionary definitions combine with the language of Aboriginal history, family events, friendships, politics and my passion or obsession to discover how these photos and their stories connect with the many fragments of my identity.

I remembered that I knew things from my roots, but to remember puts me up against what I don't know
Cherri Moraga, *This Bridge Called My Back*, 2nd edition, NY 1989.

This paper was first given at the 1994 Sydney Writers Festival's "Writing through the Lens". Rea's work is part of Blakness, an exhibition at Melbourne's ACCA in October curated by Hetti Perkins, Clare Williamson with Destiny Deacon.



Experimenta: Sweetblood, a film by Steve Sanguedolce



Experimenta: Kinder-und Hausmarchen Greg Ferris

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AUSTRALIAN FILM AND VIDEO

Reflecting a broad range of styles, genres and forms, **experimenta '94** will present six programs of thematically curated and contextualised new Australian experimental film/video works.

THE AGONY OF AROUSAL

Award winning, prolific, and provocative Canadian filmmaker Mike Hoolboom will attend **experimenta** to present a retrospective program of his work, including *Frank's Cock* (1993), *Mexico* (1992) and *Shiteater* (1993).

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF GENDER

Hoolboom will also present a program of recent Canadian experimental film examining "masculine" and "feminine" identities, includes: *Visions* (Gariné Torossian, 1993) and *Warm* (Wrik Mead, 1992).

FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT MIMA ON (03) 525 5025

EXPERIMENTAL FILM FROM AUSTRIA

Emanating from the underground (in every sense of the word) of one of western culture's most important historical centres; the Vienna based filmmakers of the Austrian Cooperative have, for the past thirty years, subverted every known formal and traditional expectation of the medium. Includes: *Orange* (Adrian Marc, 1962); *15/67TV* (Kurt Kren, 1967) and *O.K.* (Moucle Blackout, 1987).

UNEASY TALES OF DESIRE

A program of contemporary British film and video which examines the tensions between power and lesbian/gay sexuality in contemporary society, curated by UK festival guest Ian Rashid. Includes: *Degrees of Blindness* (Cerith Wyn Evans, 1988) and *Continental Holiday* (David Farrington, 1992).

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COCOON

A program of films by Japanese women filmmakers examining issues of the body, curated by Misuzu Nishimura. Includes: *Plato-Nix* (Yuko Takashashi, 1992) and *Walking Man* (Harumi Ichise, 1993).

EARWITNESS: Excursions In Sound

The Contemporary Music Events Company is presenting a major survey of contemporary sound art for **experimenta**, featuring sound installations and performance at galleries, public spaces and historic sites around Melbourne.

INSTALLATIONS

A major exhibition at the Access Gallery, National Gallery Of Victoria, will profile young and emerging Australian installation artists. Plus **EXTRA TERRESTRIAL**, a curated installation exhibition at the Centre For Contemporary Photography, exploring man's unnatural construction of his 'natural' environment. A forum to be held in conjunction with **EXTRA TERRESTRIAL** will feature artists Jane Goodall, Ross Harley and Emil Goh.

BEYOND DESTINATION

An exhibition of film, video and installation art by artists of South Asian origin. *Beyond Destination* is "about journeying; these journeys are both mental and geographic. They long neither for the comforts of arrival, nor for a nostalgic past, but instead seek out ways to live within this journeying." Includes: *Murmur* (Sutupa Biswas, 1993); *Monsoon* (Maya Chowdhry, 1993) *New View, New Eyes* (Gitanji, 1993). Linden Gallery, St Kilda.



MIMA acknowledges the support of the Australian Film Commission, Film Victoria, Arts Victoria, Victorian Health Promotions Foundation, City Of Melbourne, Visual Arts/Craft Board of the Australia Council, Japan Foundation and British Council. **experimenta** is sponsored by Qilt.

Experimenta 1994

Colin Hood previews this year's event and talks with director Peter Handsaker

This year, the Modern Image Makers Association (MIMA) and the Contemporary Music Events Company have collaborated in producing what will be the largest survey of contemporary electronic art, installation and film for 1994. This unique biennial event will also include seminars, public lectures and presentations by festival guests, and the publication (both electronically and in hard copy) of a comprehensive festival catalogue.

Extending over eleven days, the aim of this year's programs, as with the previous four events, will be "to foster and promote Australian film, video and electronic media related art; by providing broader public access to, and critical awareness of this work in an international context." To achieve this comparison, a number of programs of works by international artists will be run in conjunction with satellite exhibitions and programs.

Previous Experimenta events have profiled contemporary trends in cinema, the electronic arts, performance, and the visual arts, but have also included a substantial retrospective component. Experimenta director Peter Handsaker feels that this year's event will have a more contemporary orientation.

"We don't have such a large retrospective component this time around. There's a larger international component, a broader survey of what's going on in other major centres, including those centres that haven't been represented that often—to also cover topics and themes—from the UK, South Asia and Japan for example—that represent the margin—or the minority within a dominant culture."

Modern Image Makers Association are also working with the Contemporary Music Events Company to produce an extensive survey of Australian sound and time-based arts.

"Rather than trying to work on it ourselves—as we might have done previously—we've found the most appropriate organisation to put together a proposal and a budget to enable us to produce what I think will be a much stronger program for 1994. It's also a model that applies to the international component. What we've done is identified appropriate curators overseas—gone to them and asked them to put programs together."

One of this year's international guests is Ian Rashid, who has curated a number of programs of film, video and installation for the Linden Gallery and the State Film Theatre. *Beyond Destination (Beyond Destiny)*, is an exhibition of film, video and installation by 12 artists of South Asian origin (living and working in the UK, Canada and Australia) and includes work by Sutapa Biswas, Tanya Syed, Alnoor Dewshi and Emil Goh. "The artists in this program", comments Rashid, "resist being among the exiled, of the diaspora, of always referring back to a mythical or real homeland."

Alnoor Dewshi's *Latifah and Ilimi's Nomadic Uncle* provides no resolution to the drift between margin and centre, as the city of London is refracted into multiple landscapes. "The women are not able to map it – nor can they fix their identity against any bulletin board of history. They just continue on against an ever shifting backdrop, exchanging breezy wisdoms and checking out the territory."

Uneasy Tales of Desire, also curated by Rashid, surveys recent British Gay and Lesbian works (film and video). David Farrington's controversial *Continental Holiday* (1992) uses found footage to

explore the multiple worlds of gay tourism, while Derek Cerith Wyth Evans (a contemporary of Derek Jarman) explores desire in vision (through state of the art film and video techniques) in *Degrees of Blindness* (1988).

Curated by Misuzu Nishimura, *Inside and Outside the Cocoon* is a contemporary survey of films by Japanese women. Harumi Ichise's *Walking Man* (1993) uses a Proustian trope of involuntary memory (the tying of shoe-laces) to produce a nightmarish evocation of what discrimination feels like. "I grew up in downtown Osaka", Ichise reveals. "Every Summer, the BON dance festival was held at a nearby shopping area. Everybody danced there – gays, yakuza, storekeepers and so on. Although I loved the energy of this town, the word 'discrimination' has never left my mind." Asako Sumi (whose film *M for Menstruation* also features in the program), will be a special guest for this year's event.

Peter Mudie (from the School of Architecture and Fine Arts of WA) has curated a program of films from the Austrian Filmmakers Cooperative spanning a thirty year period. Adrian Marc's *Orange* (1962-64) is described as a random associative montage film that circulates around the idea of an orange. Valie Export is one of the finest representatives of feminist aktionism. Her work has evolved from "body at risk" performances of the 1960s into complex cinematic

investigations of how the female body (as an assemblage of partial objects) is manipulated by the media and institutional discourses. Two of her films, *...Remote... Remote...* (1973) and *Syntagma* (1993) have been included in the program.

The Canadian film-maker, Mike Hoolboom will present two programs of experimental films dealing with sexuality and gender. The first, *The Agony of Arousal*, is a retrospective of his own work (from 1990-1993), including recent films like *Shiteater*, *Frank's Cock*, and *One Plus One* (all from 1993). Hoolboom's second program, *Archaeologies of Gender*, surveys recent Canadian experimental film which explore "masculine" and "feminine" identity.

Also included in this year's programs is a survey of contemporary French experimental film (curated by Yann Beauvais), a selection of works of contemporary computer animation from the 1993-94 Prix Arts Electronica, plus the Australian premiere of two new works by Stan Brakhage, one of the great vernacular romantics of American avant-garde cinema of the fifties and sixties.

An exhibition at the Access Gallery (in The National Gallery of Victoria) will include installation and time-based work by Joanne Lewis, Michalea French, Greg Ferris, Laurens Tan and Natasha Dwyer. Greg Ferris's *Kinder-Und Hausmarchern* (the title comes from the Brothers Grimm) continues an ongoing project of interactive video narratives which allow the reader/player to redirect the flow of the narrative along branches of their own choosing. Laurens Tan's *Lost Codes (Test Pattern X)*, refurbishes motifs within the SBS test pattern as screens upon which other images may be configured. Natasha Dwyer's computer interactive, *Choose Your Own Aphrodisiac*, is based on the game of stone, scissors and paper, a critical parody

of the system of symbolic exchange governing women as consumers.

Extra Terrestrial is an exhibition and forum to be held at the Centre for Contemporary Photography (from the 11th to the 26th November) and includes works by Ross Harley, Emil Goh and Jon McCormack. Ross Harley's *Digital Garden* is described as "an ongoing computer graphic project which focuses on the changing relations between natural and artificial environments...The *Digital Garden* will imitate the patterns of biological and electronic growth in real-time, allowing the visitor to produce an ever-changing variety of life forms in a garden that is at once familiar and bizarre."

Emil Goh's *Elements* is a "sensory soup" of wind (generated by eight industrial fans), sound, and the visual sensation of fire (produced by a 3 x 5 m video projection). For this installation, the "spectator" will be situated so as to piece together a feeling for the social drama of the riot. Writer Jane Goodall (whose recently published *Artaud and the Gnostic Drama* is reviewed on page 21 of *RealTime*) will speak, along with other artists, at a special forum to be held on Saturday 12 November from 2-5 pm in the Erwin Rado Theatre.

Experimenta - a major exposition of film, video and electronic media art will be held in Melbourne, 17 - 27 November, 1994.

Sydney Intermedia Network will screen Ian Rashid's curated program Uneasy Tales of Desire at 2 pm, Saturday November 12 and Mike Hoolboom's program The Agony of Arousal at 2 pm, Saturday December 3. Both screenings will be at the Domain Theatre, Art Gallery of NSW.



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THE WHITES OF THEIR EYES by Glynis Angell,

Heather McConnell and Charlie Laidlaw

Wednesday Nov 16 - Sunday Dec 4

CAUGHT by Peter Mathers

Wednesday Nov 23 - Sunday Dec 4

THE MAKING OF "DEMOCRACY"

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Earwitness News

AnnMarie Jonson previews Sound Studio, Sydney and Earwitness, Experimenta, Melbourne

1994 (or 1995 depending on which camp you subscribe to) is the anniversary of the birth of cinema. It's probably fitting then, that in the Sound Studio event at The Performance Space in October, film will disintegrate before the audience's very eyes. In *Alchemie*, created by German artists Thomas Koner and Jurgen Reble, acid is poured onto unexposed film as it is projected, and the sound of physical and chemical catalysis is amplified, creating its own audioscape. *Studio*, developed by independent curator and audiophile Alessio Cavallaro, also features a number of Australian artists who work with a variety of reconfigurations of sound, music, the body and the image, using a range of the historical lineage of technologies of sound and image developed in the last century.

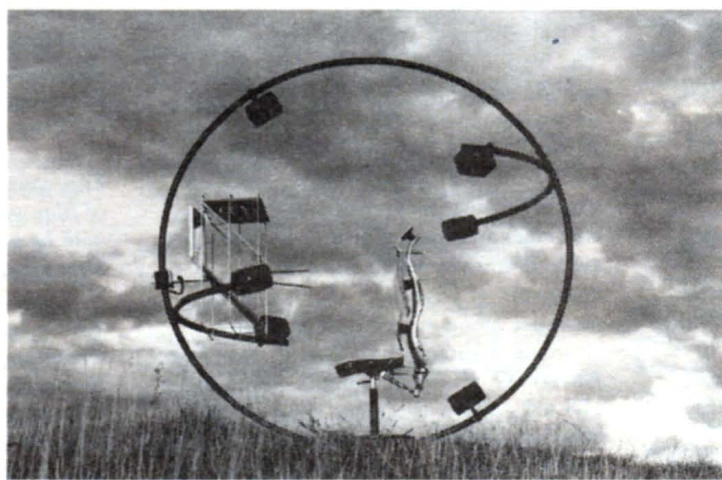
Catherine Hourihan, Gary Bradbury and James Whittington create a multimedia performance which resurrects 'primitive' Super 8 film, a gauge currently battling extinction, projected onto the moving body suspended in a trapeze. Daniel Cole's untitled work uses static projected images and sound drawing from Public Works film footage of 1960s Sydney housing projects. Cole and Jo Frare also present a work with an historical bent, this time drawing on the development of forensic science and plastic surgery. Sophea Lerner's computer-based sound and image work moves *Studio* into the digital age.

Rik Rue's *Everything Changes*, *Everything remains the Same* utilises his extensive library of found sounds in a semi-improvisational aural piece that eschews the visual dimension entirely, as does Charlotte Whittingham's *Signal* to move, which amplifies the sound of technology. Thomas Koner's soundscape, *Kanon*, engages with the subtle margin between the audible and the inaudible, representing the "acoustic shore to the sea of silence outside."

In Melbourne, *Earwitness*, developed

by the Contemporary Music Events Company and curated by Sonia Leber, also challenges the idea of sound as an "accompaniment" or form secondary to the image: a range of practitioners express ideas using sound as their primary medium. A diversity of approaches is the key here; as Leber says, "Sound can penetrate so many sites. It can be used as a means of communication in many different ways." The event, to be held in November at a range of sites including the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art and the Botanical Gardens, showcases many of the most interesting artists working in sound art in Australia in a range of installations and performance events.

The installations are a mixed bag, ranging from interactive computer based



The Talking Chair, Iain Mott

Marc Raszewski

works, to conceptual works and acoustic environmental works. A collaboration between Sherre DeLys and Joan Grounds will result in the engineering of a "new species". The artists use the ambient, exotic space of the Glasshouse at the Botanical Gardens, an environment in which "transplanted sonic artforms" can migrate, cross fertilise and flourish, in a work which challenges the dominant perceptual role of vision. Derek Kreckler's *Boo!* makes a witty, anarchic acoustic intervention in the normally silent and

sacral white cube of the gallery. Graeme Davis creates a sculptural sound garden driven by wind and water. Joyce Hinterding's custom designed electrostatic speakers use 8000 volts to create sonic and visceral energy waves where sound and space intersect: an architectonic acoustic environment is built into nodal points and planes where sound vanishes, juxtaposed with zones of high sonic intensity. Rod Berry's *Sound Dial* transforms solar power into acoustic energy: a set of solar panels activate organ pipes according to the arc of the sun, creating a slowly changing chord structure that 'tells' time audibly.

The performance series covers voice works, improvisations and works which focus on the body as the site of production and transmission of sound. Carolyn Connors will use vocal multiphonics to change physical objects, causing glasses to ring and possibly shatter. Anna Sabiel reprises her *Tensile* series: the suspended body physically orchestrates a subtle low-tech industrial soundscape. Herb Jercher performs a series of actions using sporting and archaic hunting 'technologies'. Jercher

plays with the way that simple physical technologies used in, for example, golfing or archery determine and shape the body's movement through space and time, requiring kinaesthetic stealth, and producing an acoustic consequence such as the sound of the arrow in flight or the crack of a whip. Chris Mann and the Impediments will perform a 'voice triangle' using performers linked by technology but unable to hear each other's voices; the performance works with a notion of information flow which uses the performer as signal processor or "biological computer". Special guests for the festival are New

York artists Ikue Mori, who formed the seminal No-Wave band DNA after moving to the US from Japan in 1977, and her collaborator David Watson.

These events are a kind of barometer for the current interest in sound art and performance, an impetus which has gathered momentum in the increasingly hybridised artworld of the 80s and 90s. Watch this space also for a national state of the art sound survey show to be held in 1995 at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

North to Cyberia

John Potts reports on the Fifth International Symposium on Electronic Arts (ISEA) held in Helsinki

It is one of the few heated moments at ISEA. Rejane Spitz, from Brazil, is chairing the Global/Local panel, provocatively subtitled *Transcultural Approaches To Electronic Art: Do We Really Care?* Are there only token references made to cultural differences, while the digital matrix imprints its Western profile on every colonial outpost? Will the information superhighway turn the whole world into outlying suburbs of Los Angeles? In this one little pocket inside the Congress Centre of Helsinki, Spitz is doing her best to agitate trouble. "How many of you in the audience are not native speakers of English?" she demands. Two-thirds of the audience raise their hands. Emboldened by this showing, she later repeats the exercise, appending a challenge to the one-third without their hands raised: "You English speakers are in the minority! Why are we speaking your language?"

It's true: English is the universal language spoken at ISEA (with the exception of one Romanian video artist, who uses a translator.) English is the dominant language of global media, of pop music, cinema and Euro-MTV. Spitz is doing no more than pointing out its ubiquity, yet she has succeeded in irritating some members of her audience (the ones without their hands in the air.) "What's your point?" - an irate American accent - "what's the problem? What other language can we all speak?"

Spitz refuses to become defensive, even though she acknowledges that nothing else comes close as a common language. Perhaps translators, UN-style, might preserve some of the cultural differences

Soft Core Hardware

McKenzie Wark reports from Siggraph94, Florida

"Welcome to the military-entertainment complex!" That's not what the banner over the Orange County Convention Centre in Orlando, Florida said, but it might as well have. Siggraph is the great annual mating ritual of American computer graphics researchers, scholars, artists, technicians, hucksters and journalists. This year it attracted some 25,000 people.

Most come for the trade show, a handy place to check out the latest software, hardware and other doodads, all at special prices. Also not to be missed is the Electronic Theatre, a weird mix of high art and low commerce, but all brilliant examples of what computer animation can be. This year some remarkable 3D work screened as well.

You can have some weird experiences at Siggraph. Lockheed's promotional video showing how they use integrated computer

network systems to design their warplanes butts up against French computer art in which nudes from all periods of European art history breed and morph and cavort. You can strap sensors on your head and control the movements of a dolphin with your brain waves, or join the endless queues to stick those stupid VR head-mounted displays on and fly about in some cheesy virtual world. Honestly, you'd think people would get bored with all that sooner or later.

Every now and then you see something nice, and it's a pleasure to report that two of the best things on display this year were by Australian artists. Jon McCormack's installation *Turbulence* is a remarkable exploration of the idea of artificial life. McCormack studied maths before doing the film course at Swinburne, and has a rare combination of aesthetic and logical talents.

Turbulence presents a series of truly terrifying animations of non-existent flora grown out of McCormack's own genetic software program. Terrifying because if you contemplate the animations for a while you quickly realise that they exist in a totally non-terrestrial space, and are observed from a totally non-human point of view.

I say non-human rather than inhuman. These things are as alive as triffids and are definitely being watched by something, but

not a person, not even a camera. One only has to contemplate them for a minute or two and a big chunk of 70s screen theory goes straight in the dustbin of history and one is obliged to think again. The 3D animated versions that screened in the electronic theatre have haunted me ever since. McCormack is making what are, from the point of view of present aesthetics, impossible objects. That is what makes them so striking and so necessary.

Troy Innocent's *Idea-On>* is a more modest interactive work, made with off the shelf software, but it had something valuable to offer as well. Computer graphic work is about exploring new spaces, the ones on the other side of the screen, and representing them in our conventional world in ways that us earth and culture bound humans can understand. It is an ontological art, in that it shows that our understanding of being, in this place, this time, is historical and not universal. The confrontation with these most radically inhuman places and times confronts us with striking proof of the contingencies of the ways of being we think we know so well. Innocent's work, for all its post-ironic pop charm, offers an endless invention of new codes of topography and symbol for moving around in these other spaces. In particular, Innocent offers us a way to play in places unknown, by coating them with a sheen of pop iconography.

Both Innocent and McCormack's work are a tribute to what is unique about Australian new media arts training: its combination of technical, aesthetic and theoretical skills. This is a rare combination in the new media art world. Australian artists are inevitably too far from the California based military-entertainment complex to get their hands on the latest tools first. Yet they more than compensate by having a critical perspective and an aesthetic sophistication to their work.

Siggraph certainly offered many much bigger high-tech spectacles. Evans & Sutherland's 3D interactive was a hoot, and SDI Research had one of the first immersive reality experiences with effective force-feedback. When you drove their simulated racing car the steering wheel really did resist you as one's experience of driving and the laws of physics in this world would lead you to expect. This is a rare and difficult achievement. Ultimately, what's more interesting from the aesthetic point of view is not the spectacle of 3D or the sensation of force-feedback, mimesis of this world, but creative explorations of how that other world out there in cyberspace might work when set free from mere mimicry.

McKenzie Wark's attendance at Siggraph94 was sponsored by the Australian Film Commission

feeding into this universal gathering. The discord arising from Spitz's provocation points, at the least, to the assumptions which otherwise go unchallenged about global electronic art: we meet and communicate in the one language, but how much gets lost, sliding away through the gaps where speakers give up their native tongues? Yet the issues are more complex than this, beyond the scope of a simple cultural imperialism model. As every European nation wrestles with the future of a United Europe, connected by information flow and infused with global media, what is the role of cultural difference? Is it subsumed into the transcultural info-net, or does it adapt new technologies to its own ends, resisting the homogenising wave that sweeps around the world?

This is one contentious point within ISEA; there are several others, deriving from speculations on the potential of electronic art forms. Is computer based art a continuation of Western scientism, or a break from it? Does virtual reality present a new metaphysical space for the imagination, or does it merely extend the Renaissance project of mastering space and nature itself? The debates extend to gender-related issues: what does it mean for women artists to work with this technology, the hand-me-downs from the military-industrial complex? The answers to this question, and the others, range from the creative to the reductive; or, at times, the issues peter out in confusion. A panel discussion on gender and technology becomes obsessed with the patriarchal nature of Cartesian rationalism, now perhaps under siege in a world of virtual spaces and interactivity. Yet a (male) American theorist effectively hijacks the debate with a laboured demonstration of the gridding of space. This is one occasion, of several, where our gracious Finnish hosts need to apply the hook from the wings, dragging the speaker and his grid off the stage and away out of the perspective.

ISEA brings together artists and theorists working in all manner of electronic arts. Video, sound, multi-media, interactive CD-ROMs, dance, music, VR, holography, performance, digital photography, digital painting, installations: you name it, it's there on show, it's analysed from all angles in three days of papers and discussions. The one common factor is the computer, as the base for most of this art. As Derrick de Kerchove, from Canada, remarks in the opening theory session, the digital binary is now the universal translator of all substance. What are we to make of this endless flow of information?

Pierre Levy, from Paris University, has an optimistic vision of the future. The Internet, he says, is the first glimpse of a collective intelligence, a group imagination with the powers of growth. "A mutual rebound of singularities," he calls it, in one of many lyrical catch-phrases, even after their translation into English. Hypertext is a "deterritorialisation of the library"; cyberspace creates a community akin to the pre-literary groupings of humanity. "We are nomads chasing after the future of humanity," he proclaims; we will soon "collectively invent ourselves as a species." These are fine visionary statements, and an uplifting start to the symposium; the only problem is that there is nothing here that Marshall McLuhan didn't say thirty years ago. Has it taken the French, with their proud literary tradition, three decades to find this neo-tribal key to the future?

At least Monsieur Levy, via the old-fashioned medium of reading from the printed page, leaves us with some stirring phrases. Volker Grassmuth, from Germany but based in Tokyo, presents his arguments in hypertext: his non-linear assortment of material is projected onto a large screen while he mumbles into a microphone. The content of his presentation, again heavily indebted to McLuhan, provides a glimmer

or two of insight into the media landscape in a computer age; unfortunately, in demonstrating the techniques of hypertext, he has lost the audience, which has become bored and restless. Still he flashes bits and pieces of hypertext onto the screen, but there is no insight now, and he is way over time with no sign of him finishing. WHERE IS THAT HOOK?

The Electronic Art Exhibition is held in Helsinki's Museum of Contemporary Art. What have the artists come up with? The best of them play with the space opened up for interaction between audience and artwork. This is a zone of chance, individual difference, and random creativity: elements not catered for in the good old Renaissance grid. *Talking Picture* by Kimmo Koskela and Rea Pihlasviita of Finland, appears to be a traditional painting of a woman: a semi-erotic representation of a woman reclining in a bath. But as you get closer, you can see her moving, and talking; if you stand in front of her, you can talk to her (in a number of languages.) A small camera and microphone in the frame allow the woman - a live and active video representation - to interact directly with whomever is standing in front of her.

A different form of interaction is possible with *To Fall Standing* by Rebecca Cummins, from Australia. The viewer shoots images with an 1880s shotgun; the images blend into others on video monitors, while drawing attention to a staple twentieth century feature: the fusion of camera and gun.

Interaction can take unforeseen twists, not always desirable, sometimes reprehensible. *Cybersm III* by Kirk Wotford and Stahl Stenslie, electronically connects two human bodies separated in space. Each wears a suit equipped with sensors; by touching a part of his/her body, one participant can trigger a heat reaction in the body of the other. Regrettably, the opening night demonstration of this cyber-connection leaves the female participant, surrounded by viewers, at the mercy of the male participant, hidden from view. "Don't leave me with this man!" she cries, as it becomes apparent that this interaction is nothing more than an electronic feeling-up.

Interaction, however, is rarely put to such ends. Artists aim to create complex spaces where electronic properties blend with individual choice and pre-existing environments. Christian Moller's *Audio Pendulums* connects huge steel pipes to a computer system via video signals. Anyone can alter the sonic environment of this space by moving one of the pipes: the resultant electronic sounds mix with the local ambience: passers-by, street traffic, rustling leaves.

Interactive CD-ROMs are also on display, attracting major interest. The strengths and weaknesses of this form are revealed when two of the artists discuss their work in a multimedia forum. Christine Tamblyn (USA) describes her CD ROM *She Loves It, She Loves It Not: Women and Technology*, as a revisionist history of technology, re-inserting women into technological history. Thematically, this is an important project, but the contents of the work - simplistic and unquestioned fragments of dogmatic text - mock the claims made for CD-ROM as a non-linear, liberating form of interaction for the user. The text-bites are reductive and didactic, with no alternative views: this CD-ROM is of Reader's Digest standard in intellectual content. It leaves several in the audience reflecting on the inferiority of this form to the old-fashioned book, with its complexity and potential for a multiplicity of views.

The CD-ROM was redeemed, however, by Australian Brad Miller's *A Digital Rhizome*. Although its text is drawn directly from the work of contemporary theorists Deleuze and Guattari, it augments this source with a parallel lyricism and labyrinthine quality. There is no didacticism or hierarchy here: the user is

left to wander around the many paths of inter-connections.

The contributions of other Australians at ISEA offered a similar blend of theoretical sophistication and technical finesse. In the area of sound, especially, Nicholas Gebhardt, Virginia Madsen, Frances Dyson and Nigel Helyer gave incisive presentations. The critical dimension offered in their papers was generally unmatched by their American colleagues, while the familiarity with technique provided an edge over many of the Europeans. Gebhardt and Maria Stukoff injected, in their discussion of "Interactivity and the Labyrinth of Forms", a much needed critical corrective to the romantic "revolutionary" claims made for the interactive technologies.

ISEA 94 placed a special emphasis on sound and electronic music: here too some of the contradictions emerged. Electronic works were played in the Sibelius Academy's electro-acoustic chamber hall, with its 32 channels playing through 96 loudspeakers. This hall is literally wall-to-wall speakers. And what are we listening to, through this astonishing technical array? David C. Little, an American composer, uses computers to analyse music and then, by programming chaos formulas, makes the computer generate electronic music. The signs are not good. Here is the music now, and, as you would fearfully expect, it has all the aesthetic interest of a textbook.

But all is not lost in the Sibelius Academy. On the final night, Mari Kimura, a Japanese violin virtuoso,

plays a number of compositions in interaction with a computer program. Here is a subtle exploration of dynamics, a diversity of shapes and colours generated in partnership with the computer. Violin figures are treated, echo longer and longer until they double back, resound in silence as they re-define themselves. This is human-computer musical artistry, a universe away from the "music" eked out by algorithmic plodding.

There are many more things to record, ideas and practices flashing around in these unformed circuits. Computer boffins and digital artists vie for control of the technology. Stelarc puts his stomach on display. Geert Lovink, a Dutchman and a "data dandy", assures us that the European cyberspace will be distinguished from its American cousin by a "profound melancholy", its unshakable European heritage. On Euro-MTV, identikit hosts speak English with a Euro-blend accent, addressing music consumers as "Europeans". AT&T promises its patrons that Europe is now delivered up without national borders or language barriers. But here in Helsinki, in the cobble-stone town-squares and market-places, no-one is rushing, no-one is worrying, and information superhighway or not, this does not feel like an extension of Los Angeles. And as for the language problem, next year's ISEA in Montreal will offer a new twist: the symposium will be held in French first, English second.

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Mouth Off

Mikhali Georgeos surveys
US spoken word CDs

Dateline: Now. The Lollapalooza caravan is crisscrossing America bringing the finest in alternative music to the country's youth, just as it was envisioned by principal organiser, Perry Farrell, once of Jane's Addiction, now Porno for Pyros. Lollapalooza is a rebellious celebration of unfettered youth culture more intensely felt this time around, perhaps, because of the absence of the original headline act, Nirvana. Yet the suicide of Kurt Cobain has not meant a plunge into pessimism for this generation. There are many voices seeking to be heard, and the audience is listening more intently than ever. This year, for the first time, Lollapalooza includes a Spoken-Word stage, organised by writer/performer Maggie Estep, who is soon to release an album on a major label. Suddenly, it seems, there is the possibility that this most curious hybrid genre, Spoken-Word, could win a mainstream audience.

The type of "performance art" broadly defined as Spoken-Word is, of course, nothing new. You could say Charles Dickens was doing Spoken-Word tours when he did his readings across America in the 1840s, or Dylan Thomas touring America in the 1950s. The term Spoken-Word is used to cover all manner of performances and recordings from stand-up comedy to *Hancock's Half Hour*, the poetry and jazz experiments of Kerouac and Ginsberg in America and Adrian Mitchell and Dannie Abse in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, to Richard Burton reading from the canon of Dylan Thomas. All these aspects relate directly to what is

now being presented as Spoken-Word and being embraced by an audience for which the concepts of traditional poetry, drama and literature, or even their experimental alternatives would normally be anathema. From spikey-haired punks to hip hop street kids, Spoken-Word is presenting to them a new "alternative" voice through which to come to terms with what they perceive as an increasingly disenfranchising society.

The common ground that seems to be bringing the various "tribes" of youth culture together is the original "rebel" generation, the Beats - Ginsberg, Kerouac, Burroughs, even Lenny Bruce - and increasingly, the soundtrack that accompanied them - jazz. You only have to look at the rise of so-called Acid Jazz and the success of local bands like DIG (Directions in Groove), on the musical side. Or more explicitly, the collaboration last year between William Burroughs and the Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy - *Spare Ass Annie and Other Tales* (4th Broadway/Island) - on the rap/hip hop side, and Kurt Cobain's collaboration with Burroughs - *The Priest They Call Him* (Tim Kerr Records through Shock) - from the "grunge" side. (Gus Van Zant, another "punk" musician, also collaborated with Burroughs, on *Elvis for Letters* for Tim Kerr Records.)

The absorption of rap/hip hop into mainstream white middle-class culture must certainly have made the concept of Spoken-Word acceptable as a form of expression but white middle-class "punks" have long been "crossing over" into the genre. The most high profile of these have been Henry Rollins, Jello Biafra and Lydia Lunch, all of whom have undertaken Spoken-Word tours in Australia. Lunch founded Widowspeak Productions as a vehicle for her particular form of confrontational spoken and written word in 1984, also releasing work from likeminded "creative renegades", including Rollins, Hubert Selby Jr and Don Bajema,

who joined her on a compilation CD, *Our Fathers Who Aren't in Heaven*. A 3-CD retrospective of her Spoken-Word work, *Crimes Against Nature* has been released locally by Insipid Vinyl.

Rollins similarly set up an imprint for his spoken and written word output, 2.13.61, and teamed up with Los Angeles "champion" of Spoken-Word, producer Harvey Kubernick, to record his first Spoken-Word album. Kubernick's label, New Alliance, is distributed by SST Records, the label Rollins' former band Black Flag set up, distributed here by Shock Records. Kubernick's involvement with Spoken-Word dates back to the 1960s, attending lectures by Ginsberg and performances, before 15,000 people, of his "poem" *Celebration of the Lizard* by Jim Morrison during concerts by his band The Doors. The Doors connection has continued with organist Ray Manzarek collaborating on several New Alliance projects, including Scott Richardson's *Tornado Souvenirs*. The desire to recapture the spontaneity of jazz improvisation and beat poetry saw him recently commission a collaboration between southern Californian punk poet Jack Brewer and free form jazz trio, Bazooka, on *Saved From Death in the Dream World* - pure raw expression, recorded in an hour.

"There are quite a number of different strains coming through in Spoken-Word," Simon Killen, of Mushroom Distribution Services (MdS), points out. "There's a lot of angry social political rant poetry coming from the likes of Rollins and Biafra, and more performance-based things from people like Karen Finley and Laurie Anderson. But there's also a more gentle and instructive - dare I say New Age - style of Spoken-Word, with a lot of soul and consciousness, coming out in the United States."

Coming from that "gentler" end of things are the artists recording for the label Gang Of Seven, distributed by MdS. An

initiative of playwright and cartoonist Lynda Barry (her Ernie Pook's Comeek appears in *Village Voice* every week), and founder of Windham Hill Records, William Ackerman, Gang Of Seven has gathered together a broad range of contemporary "storytellers" from the theatre, journalism, radio, literature and comedy, the best known outside America being Spalding Gray, who has released *Monster in a Box* on the label. The inclusion of comedian Rick Reynolds' *Only the Truth Is Funny* should tell you that, even with the "Angry Brigade" (Rollins et al), humour is often the best "weapon", recalling Lenny Bruce in his more lucid moments. Killen again: "Where Bruce was saying 'Don't let society get you down, fight back', I see the Gang Of Seven artists as people who fight back quietly. They're using gentle humour to cope, telling tales that most middle-class people can relate to - the problems, the joys, the negative things that happen, but wrapped up in a gag." Environmentalist David Suzuki and novelist Peter Mathiesson have also recorded for the Gang Of Seven.

In so brief an overview of the resurgence of Spoken-Word as a viable form, I have obviously had to be pretty selective in my examples, but to counter one probable criticism, the majority of the "running" in the current wave of Spoken-Word seems to be coming from America, but it's worth recalling the work from artists on the other side of the Atlantic, such as the British "punk poets" John Cooper Clarke and Attila the Stockbroker, and the wonderful "dub" poet and writer, Linton Kwesi Johnson. Also worth a listen, especially by aspiring rap/hip hop artists who hope to "represent" the aspirations of their generation, the words of Gil Scott-Heron, the "godfather of hip hop", on *Message to the Messengers* from his latest album, *Spirits* (Mother/Polydor): "If you're gonna be teachin' things, be sure you know what you're sayin'"

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Women's Lip

Vikki Riley does Lunch with the Riot Grrl

For a few weeks in September Lydia Lunch seemed to be everywhere in all forms and guises: as a chanteuse serenading youngsters at local grunge palaces; as a somewhat unwelcome guest on Denton where the host exposed to national television the real male juvenilia which rules and fuels that show; and as the latest victim of the ABC's 'cut-up' formatting on *Review* where the viewer saw grabs of Lydia with her face filling the screen blurring out venom and wit light years away from any pithy agenda of 'cultural critique' the show was trying to insert her into. But the media's misguided bits and pieces of Lydia Lunch didn't seem to matter as her Spoken-Word performances verged on the Shakespearian. Her one act one woman play (you can buy the CD *Crimes Against Nature*), with a variety of voices as the main characters, was delivered with the precision of a hex who talks for a living where even breaths and sighs became live wires, punctuation marks in a narrative that was part trance incantation, part realist effigy.

Half way through the show I wondered why in 1994 Pamela Rabe, performing *A Room of One's Own*, at the Melbourne

laments by Rowland Howard, the first word I remember coming from her mouth was "They" followed by a vivid illustrative narrative invoking the apocalyptic gendered/racial cityscape of New York, coming very close in style and format to pre-rap monologists The Last Poets. "No one cries for the dead, they cry for the living dead...We live in the age of the death of seduction. We are now living in a killing zone of false memory".

That night Lydia Lunch called up the void, the black hole where incurable female souls search for sexual pleasure outside proscribed contexts of social relations. The kind of theatre of expression which is missing from the misery of contemporary Australian cultural events and its stoic reliance on context and metaphor.

A week after Lydia's show a curious fanzine hit the Melbourne streets, *MS 45*, six pages of riveting bare opinions about sanitary pads, record shops and a heavy article about a rape incident which happened to the author/editor of this remarkable fanzine. She names the fanzine after the "exploitation" (by Abel Ferrara) movie and begins her front page editorial by saying "It costs me 30 cents a copy to produce this zine, but since I'm unlikely to be paid thousands of bucks to go on Oprah and talk about 'Well Off White Girls With No Real Problems' I guess I'm getting off cheaply."

MS 45 is the latest in the deluge of do-it-yourself female media which has appeared under the moniker of riot grrls worldwide (ie the Western white trash world). If you are outside the no budget entertainment industry - loud, raucous noise rock, fanzines, op shop/waif/feral mix and match wardrobe attitude - or are over thirty, can't help

yourself quoting Kristeva at women's performance events and consider Bjork empowered and ethereal for singing lyrics like "violently happy when I'm with you", then it's possible that you missed out on this second wave feminist revolution of the 90s. Missed out because it's possible that the riot grrl phenomenon has failed as a real alternative theory and practice movement, largely due to its inherently potent "I refuse it" rhetoric which propelled it in the first case. This refusal was in essence of being swallowed by the mass media and popular culture across the board, Courtney Love not withstanding. Being inaccessible and retro-anachronistic (beat generation syntax meets the rearticulation of punk/new wave styles as rage with feminist corrections) were its tenets; when Kathleen Hanna, lead singer of Washington DC girl group Bikini Kill wrote last year in her fanzine *Revolution Girl Style Now* about an imaginary girls-only sect called yig she hit the nerve endings of its delinquent intellectual force. "Each separate yig sect will have its own particular reading list and I propose that girls who wanna change things start writing stuff on their hands. It will just be a way for pro-revolution girls to identify each other."

So who were/are the riot grrls? People like video artist Sadie Benning, Austrian film maker Mara Matuschka, US/UK musical groups Huggy Bear, Heavens to Betsy, Free Kittens, Bikini Kill, Babes in Toyland, The Riot Grrl fanzines (*Riot Grrl in the UK*, *Bust* and *Revolution Girl Style Now*, or the glossy *Ben is Dead* in the USA and *Grot Grrl* in Australia) blast out a kind of reasoned extra-personalised politics

which make previous femo-anarchists like Valerie Solanas appear to be the countercultural academics they no doubt became. Taking into their music consumer guide orbit Lesbiana, agit prop social critique and a confessional stance of childhood and sexual abuse, riot grrl literary output remains the definitive dystopian disclaimer for a global (male) youth culture's celebration of itself as the only hip and gorgeous troubled generation.

In Australia serious riot grrlism hit its peak early this year with Melbourne groups like Mace (an interesting play between Metal and Punk derived anti harmonies) and Womanal which has only two girls in the group - Phaedra Press on cello and sometimes vocals, and Rachel, who also has her own group called simply Rachel, on guitar - who have managed to cut across death metal grungy boy genres with, until now, mixed results.

Elsewhere, Brisbane groups like Clag transcend atypical riot grrl three chord punk pop with a cute but deceptive casio sound. Their *Manufacturing Resent* CD of late invokes the legend of early eighties of girl-pop Swiss strategists, Kleenex, like so much of this stuff does.

This revisionist flavour to riot grrl output seems to be the key to its relevance. Unlike cyborg girls like Linda Dement and VNS Matrix or performance artists like Linda Sproul, translating a notion of herstory for these fly-by-night groups relies on neither Visual Arts prowess nor a flirtation with Po-mo theory and government funding as a medium and aesthetic for the translation or displacement of a female voice. Of course a naked female voice is a difficult artefact to find in Australian arts and media culture and we are nowhere near getting our own

idiosyncratic version of Spoken Word, let alone a local Lydia Lunch or Exene Cervenka.

Riot grrl cultural forms though, recognise that re-appraisal of the unmapped past (the explosion in the seventies/early eighties of angry and damaged poetic female performers: X Ray Spex, The Raincoats, Young Marble Giants, The Runaways, Joan Jett, Lydia Lunch's various combos) is a crucial project in redeeming a voice at all.

And unlike the current crop of female electronic art terrorists the idea of a female language or narrative is centred on the sound of the female voice - abrasive, histrionic, full bodied and overall persuasive in its conviction. Reading Melbourne fanzine *Grot Grrl* makes one feel both suitably informed as well as over conscious of all the identity/body phobias women suffer on a day to day basis, albeit through the art, prose, poetry and cultural critique it avidly collates. In the latest edition one can read an article about the privatisation of prisons in Australia, a comic strip titled *The Latex Lounge (Femocrats by day - Leather Dykes by night)* and a poem about vomiting blood on Christmas day. The kind of loathing of the self which makes Drew Barrymore a role model for today's teenage girls and the same intimate subjective realism which makes Lydia Lunch's comment on NWA's *One Less Bitch* song refreshingly in sync with the world beyond the sound of her own voice: "You can say rap music is misogynist, but it's misanthropic, which is the beauty to me. It's the only form of music which hates the rest of the world as much as I do, and I will at least verbally violate the entire rest of the planet."



William Burroughs and Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy

Theatre Company might be relevant to anyone interested in contemporary female performance and thought, where the very idea of ranting and raving has to pass through a filter of a tribute to a dead Bloomsbury author and her classic text.

Lydia Lunch along with Penny Arcade and Joan Jett are but a few names from the late seventies who are remembered rather than quoted as formative cultural critics these days but in their own ways are making big impacts in a world where female sexual desire as a potent, dangerous performance zone is only just surviving as a serious political force. Fronting the innovative No Wave group Teenage Jesus and the Jerks at the age of sixteen in New York and releasing in 1980 one of the most experimental torch song concept albums ever made (the now legendary *Queen of Slam*), Lydia went on to celebrate and explore, controversially, the nexus between female eroticism and male sexual abuse, teaming up with 'Cinema of Transgression' underground film maker Richard Kern. At Experimenta in 1990 in Melbourne during the screening of these films - *Fingered* and *Right Side of My Brain* - no less than twenty angry hip young feminists demanded their entry fee back when Lydia appeared on the screen in the act of fellatio revelling in her submissive position with an eerie, awesome little girl voice which was then her trademark mode of address. At her Spoken Word performance though in 1994 a packed theatre could only leave in stunned silence, sans encore as she addressed a not dissimilar audience. Following a melancholic unplugged rendition of Birthday Party and self-scribed

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<i>"Bal-Moral"; A Number of Positions Plus Waves</i> by Emanuele Caiato
<i>Music and Questions</i> by Tom Johnson |
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Sound Boy Bubby

AnneMarie Jonson listens to Rolf de Heer's film

Rolf de Heer's *Bad Boy Bubby* appeared like some perverse teratology in a cinematic landscape strewn with sequins, high camp reprises of Abba and the 'irrepressible larrikinism' that passes for the 90's version of 80's Crocodile Dundeeism. The movie emerged from the chthonic underworld of suburban Adelaide more than a year ago, scoring the Grand Jury Special Prize at the 1993 Venice Film Festival before being picked up by Roadshow for local distribution—hence the bizarre juxtaposition at mainscreen cinemas of Bubby's coming out, Priscilla's odyssey and Muriel's wedding.

Bubby is a feral Kaspar Hauser, teleported into the fin de siècle antipodes. He lives, or rather subsists like a virus dependent on his psychotic mother in a putrid, windowless cesspit set in an apocalyptic industrial wasteland. Bubby passes the time by committing unspeakable acts on the family pet and resident vermin. (Has the RSPCA seen this film?) He fears God and mother in equal amounts and regularly 'services' the latter. Bubby has never seen the world nor another human being in his 35 years; since mother dons a

gas mask each time she leaves, he's convinced he'd asphyxiate in the noxious outdoors. Like an ancient married couple in a hermetically sealed universe the two are set in their quaint little quotidian rituals: she washes him, feeds him sugared bread and milk, and thrashes him; he fucks her, fondles her pendulous breasts and applies her lipstick—Princess Pink. (This movie, incidentally, is a psychoanalytic minefield. It scores an A+ for misogyny and rampant breast fetish. Dr Freud, the chaise longue for Mr de Heer please!)

The deeply pathetic 'comfort' of Bubby's subsistence is shattered when his 'Pop', a drunken low life with a side line as a cleric who 'stepped out' 35 years ago, returns to compete for mother's affections. This cataclysmic event completes the Oedipal interdiction. Bubby is catapulted into the social order, but not before he improvises a gladwrap Christo to sever his family ties.

Bubby's pilgrimage through contemporary Australian suburbia is a mix of violent abuse, the kindness of strangers and humanistic epiphany. It takes in environmental degradation, disability,

institutionalisation, religious fanaticism, pub rock and quantum physics. Norman Kaye appears in a bizarre cameo as an atheistic, church-organ playing physicist who initiates Bubby into the chaotic mysteries of existence: "All we are are random arrangements of atoms. We don't live, but our atoms move about in such a way as to give us identity and consciousness." But one of the most interesting things in this quite remarkable film is the central role of sound. Bubby is an acoustic tabula rasa; he reflects like an aural mirror all that he hears, memorising and mimicking voices and sounds in a kind of innocent echolalia.

Bubby's aural disposition is reflected in the film's sound design by James Currie. The sound was recorded primarily via binaural radio mics attached to Bubby's wig (a system devised by Fred and Margaret Stahl) through which we get to earwitness Bubby's life. In the first part of the film the claustrophobia of Bubby's dungeon is heightened by the incessant hum of the fluorescent lights, whining like the nervous system in an anechoic chamber. Currie "magnifies", the small, inconsequential, normally unheard sounds of the everyday in Bubby's underworld; the scraping of the shaver on his cheeks, the dripping of the tap as Bubby waits motionless for mother's return, mixed into the sound of Bubby's piss dripping through his chair, the rubbing and swishing of the flannel as mother washes Bubby down. And Bubby's voice, close mic-ed against

the spare, aural backdrop cuts through like a knife as he hisses at the cat, crunches cockroaches and punctuates the near silence with occasional bursts of monosyllabic baby-talk.

When Bubby finally sets himself free the aural epiphanies begin in earnest. One of his first encounters is with a celestial Salvo choir mysteriously plonked in the Adelaide docks and reverb-ed to the heavens. Walking past a warehouse after robbing a service station Bubby is mesmerised by the sound of a violin. When Bubby is thrown in jail a phalanx of kilted bagpipe players appear out of nowhere and Bubby goes ballistic trying to locate the source of the sound. Once released Bubby is drawn into a cathedral by a brilliant Messiaen-like organ improvisation by Kaye. A member of the band which Bubby joins—yes, he stumbles into a vocation as a spoken word performance artist—performs an Islamic chant as he relates to Bubby a potted history of religious jihads through the millennia.

The aural preoccupation of the film reminds me of the epigraph to *Hauser*: "Do you not hear the pitiful screams all around us, which are commonly called silence?" But this is a little tragic and portentous for de Heer's often very funny film. As it happens, Bubby ends up in a perverse kind of marital bliss, gambolling with his progeny in a semi-suburban quarter acre—adumbrated by an industrial plant spewing carcinogens over the pansies.

Killer-bytes

Fiona Giles shifts focus on Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*

The usual inverse correlation between audience size and critical approval accompanied the opening of Oliver Stone's much-hyped *Natural Born Killers* in the US. This exemplifies the paradox that the film relies for its success on the media it satirises, while the "quality" discourse it endorses by default is both uncomprehending and irrelevant. A joyous pastiche and long-form mutation of video and film styles, NBK caused *New York Times* senior film critic Janet Maslin to issue the standard over 40s complaint that, like MTV, it gave her a headache. *New Yorker's* Anthony Lane dismissed it as a brilliant trailer for itself.

Meanwhile, the film's premise that mass media turns criminals into celebrities came to life outside the Stone studios in the form of OJ's white Ford Bronco cruising down LA freeways; and the post-production crew congratulated themselves on the timeliness of their vision.

NBK tells of Micky and Mallory (Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis) who join together in a post-adolescent delirium of killing that wavers between meaningless rebellion and political critique. The reviews have compared it unfavourably to *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Badlands*, but a better comparison would be media satires such as *Network* and John Waters' latest film, *Serial Mom*.

One of the film's problems is that it tries to encompass both these genres; but as satire, NBK would have worked better if it had resisted the temptation to flesh out its protagonists and their motivations through psycho-history clichés, such as sexually abusive and violent parents. Similarly, Micky's explanation to the reporter of his bloodlust runs on too long, giving it unwarranted credit, and confusing the issue of whether he is an outlaw-redeemer or an evil psycho.

It is finally a failure of nerve that Micky and Mallory couldn't simply be fuelled by the thrill of television coverage and the seductions of stardom. They work best as half-grown up Gumby figures—pure

products of commercial TV. Since they are members of an audience whose prospects could never match the inhabitants of their TV world, they do whatever they can to achieve notoriety, which for them is merely attention—and proof that they exist.

The drama works best when the two are seen as pawns in a battle between media technologies—in this case film and video. Media is their lifeline, so the two killers always spare a witness to tell their story and ensure fame, but they don't particularly care who that is. The final winner can never be them, but the media which tells it best; and this contest is left open through a wonderfully accelerating convergence towards the end of the film between its cinema narrative and TV coverage.

Robert Downey Jnr. plays the real villain, an Australian TV journalist who whips up the media frenzy. (He studied with Steve Dunleavy to get the accent). Reaching what he hopes is his rating pinnacle with a live-to-air interview with Micky from inside a rioting prison, he loses control of his production to the duo—fittingly, through being enthralled by Micky's theatrical skills—and is the final involuntary witness to their on-going rampage.

The film is visually outstanding, from its opening homage to John Huston to its many high-speed detours through TV dramas and music video—a kind of *Easy Rider's* Halliwell's with hyperactive cross-references. Both Lewis and Harrelson (as well as Downey Jnr.) give great performances, with Lewis' parting shot to a murder victim, "That's the worst head I've ever had!" and Harrelson's "You ain't seen nothing yet," summing up a raucous, whining petulance that could only come from prime-time sit-com suburbia.

The video camera left behind, still blinking, in the final sequence of NBK, is presumably the last witness spared; and it suggests that TV won this round, at least. Yet it still takes a film to make the point.

Splinters

The Oracle

journey of the avatar

December 1994

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Miller's Crossing

PICA Director Sarah Miller talks to Keith Gallasch

Sarah Miller is meeting the PICA (Perth Institute of Contemporary Art) challenge with determination and relish. Given her background it is inevitable she would promptly flesh out the 1994 PICA program with more performance works and an expanded open season, *Putting on an Act*. This is the kind of skill she brings to PICA from her years as Director of The Performance Space in Sydney.

But PICA is not The Performance Space with its single gallery. Sarah has found herself "in a mini-museum" with any number of shows running simultaneously and often big scale shows involving many artists, such as the recent Filipino-Australian exchange exhibition, *Tugmaan* (Ties that Bind) which, because of the distance involved, was initiated and developed by the 24 artists through correspondence - "a good old epistolary relationship".

Next to performance, her interest is in generating more visual artist-run initiatives. Of course Perth has these, and the buildings to exploit, but Sarah wants PICA to encourage more of this kind of activity like the recent *Heavier than Air* - 20 artists, minimal budget, no objects on the floor. Or the off-site PICA Boas project initiated by artist-in-residence Margaret Roberts working with eight local artists. As well the space and facilities inside PICA are

on offer. Artists submit proposals, have access to (limited) fees, technical assistance and publicity.

Equally she sees *Putting on an Act* as encouraging, as it has in Sydney, artist-performers to take the initiative. It gave Sarah and the public a chance to see a huge diversity of work in a relatively contained performance context. The season was, she says, as successful as any in Sydney. She thought it more in the performance art tradition than the theatre/performance drive that typifies The Performance Space. The works she's importing will doubtless encourage ventures into other kinds of approaches. The important thing, she argues, is to establish a context for performers to work in, an awareness of who's working, what they're doing, and what they're part of nationally.

Next year she'll add workshops with experienced performers. Her mission in Sydney was always to encourage young performers "not to reinvent the wheel".

The excellent response to the two weeks of *Putting on an Act* will help generate context but it was not echoed in Perth's one daily newspaper. Sarah dismisses her irritation by reminding herself that the Sydney Open Season was often ignored or patronised by critics but that never inhibited the work or the audiences. PICA, she points out has long been regarded as a

visual arts space, almost as an adjunct to the Art Gallery of WA next door. This is changing, helped by the new PICA cafe and a higher profile for performance. Her own role is different from Sydney where she was known as both artist and director. Here she's director, and it takes a little longer therefore to develop relationships with artists.

To reduce the 'invisibility' of performance of all kinds of contemporary practice, PICA is an active participant in the newly formed Australian Association of Contemporary Arts Associations (AACAO) which includes spaces like PICA in most states. This promises exchange programs and touring packages so that work can travel out of Perth as well as into it. Sarah already has her eye on potential tourers in *The Geography of Haunted Places* with performer Erin Hefferon, writer Josephine and visual artist/designer Aadjie Bruce. "It's quite different from Sydney work, much more text based, dealing with post-colonial issues and commenting on the almost pornographic investment in inherited notions of the 'dark continent' and that metaphor as it has been applied to women's bodies."

"Generally it's exciting to see the amount of performance work in Perth which deals with issues applicable to Nyoongah Aboriginal people in particular and aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations more generally.

"It's much more 'in your face' in Perth." She cites *Ningali* (devised by Ningali Crawford, Angela Chaplin and Robyn Archer for Deckchair Theatre) because of the rich interplay of languages in a solo performance, and *Bindjareb Pinjarra*

(Geoff Kelso, Kelton Pell, Trevor Parfitt and Phil Thompson). The stories, whether individual or collective, are extraordinary."

PICA continues its association with ARX, the next program being "less blockbuster, more artist-driven, more residential, with six Filipino and six Indonesian artists (including two writers) and eight Australian artists (four of them Aboriginal) participating. We provide ARX, an independent organisation, with support and a presenting space."

A forthcoming major Austrian showing of The MAERZ Group (active since 1913) with visiting artists (assisted by the Austrian Embassy), a survey of the modernist project in women's painting in Australia - *In The Company of Women* - curated from the Crutcher's Collection, a tour of Boomalli's *True Colours* (responses by aboriginal artists across the country to the Australian flag), and the National Graduate Show (coordinated by PICA's Belinda Carrigan), which Sarah feels is an excellent national survey of emerging artists, all denote an international and national context that Sarah is determined to place local work in.

Her emphasis, as always, is "a bigger role for artists, as difficult as that can be" and "to make a place for contemporary art practice, not just art but the development of publishing, curatorial and marketing skills, and of debate through informal discussion and forums." In the visual arts, dance, sound, music and hybrid works (she enthusiastically cites Evos' work in promoting contemporary music and sound works) Perth has much to offer ... and more.

Le Gallerie est Mort

The Union Gallery at the University of Adelaide is no more. On August 22 the student-elected Union Board decided to totally de-fund the gallery for 1995, and directed that the remains of the gallery focus inward, displaying student art and craft to complement the Gallery Coffee Shop, which shares level 6 in Union House with the gallery.

There has been a gallery in one form or other at the Union for 20 years, seven directors, and during those years most of Adelaide's leading contemporary artists 'cut their teeth' at the Union Gallery.

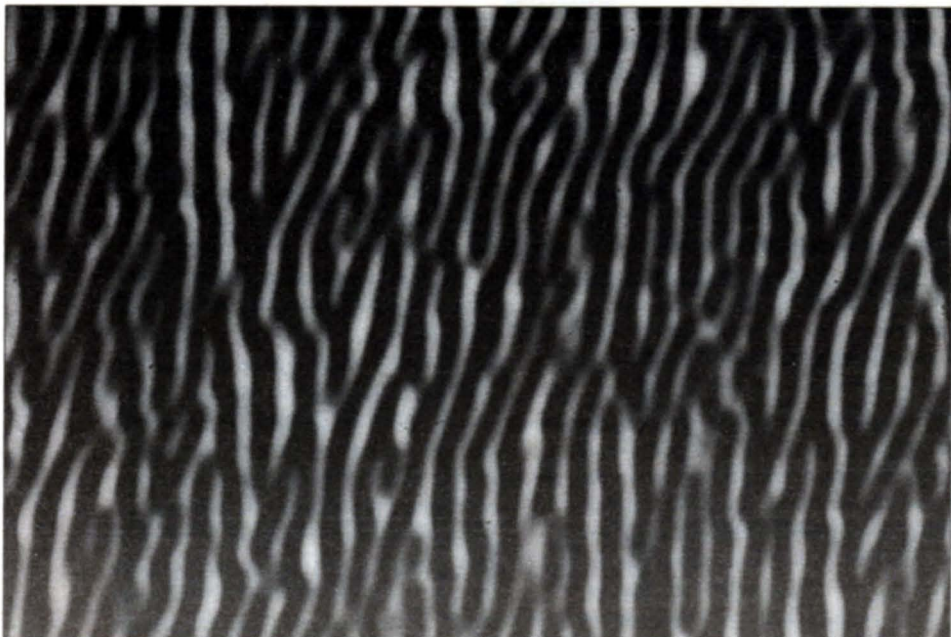
The current director, Paul Hewson, began his three year contract early in 1992, planning, and succeeding, in turning the gallery into a contemporary art space, allied with and complementary to the Experimental Art Foundation and the

Contemporary Art Centre.

In 1993-94 he presented 32 exhibitions with another 32 in Gallery 1 + 1, an annexe specifically for 'new' artists and small projects by "established" artists.

The Union Gallery received more coverage during these years in the local and national general and specialist press than any other Adelaide Gallery. Even so, and despite success in exceeding sponsorship and fund-raising targets, the Board de-funded the gallery "in the interests of students and fiscal restraint."

There are no fine art or studio-based art courses at Adelaide University. The decision represents a considerable loss therefore to university life, the Adelaide visual arts audience, the community and especially to younger and 'emerging' artists. A cultural asset that cost little to maintain has been lost. RT



Experimenta: Digital Garden

Ross Harley

P I C A

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts

Director Sarah Miller

Artrage, Perth's annual festival of visual, performing and public art happening throughout October; November 2 - 5 at 8pm *A Box-Office Success* by Two Dance Plus; Ex-Stasis Theatre's **Creative Development Workshop** - *Body/Image/Space*, November 7 - 27; November 10 - 27 *From the Stones: Nihonga Artists of Hyogo* exhibition and festival from the Hyogo Prefecture and the Japanese Consulate; November 17 - December 18, 25 *Years of Performance Art* curated by the Ivan Dougherty Gallery examining the history of **performance art** in Australia from a contemporary perspective; November 17 - December 4, visiting **Vietnamese artist** Do Minh Tam exhibits paintings; November 30 - December 10, Sue Peacock and Fieldworks **dancing**; December 12 - 18 at 8pm, the Aboriginal Music Theatre Training Program presents **songs, texts, choreography** and **theatre** loosely based on *Romeo & Juliet* in an Aboriginal context; December 13 - 18, the *WA School of Art and Design Graduate Exhibition and Parade* showing the innovative and experimental use of new technology and techniques in the **Fashion** and **Textile** industry. December 20 - January 4, **Gone Fishing!**

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What's The Dish

Putting On An Act at Perth's PICA

A potlatch of performances, menus available on the day, see what the evening's meal offers. Eaters: young, old, devotees, curious newcomers gathering in the dark of the PICA performance space. Open to what comes, in whatever order, but seriously ingesting the performances by Perth artists. Some chefs are 'out there' for the first time, others taking the chance to do something differently. This sample of dishes from selected connoisseurs is not indicative or comprehensive but a taste.

The voices and movements of two women. One is telling a story about language and the other slips away. But she keeps coming back, intersecting the narrative. Insidiously, to entice. Gently interrupting with a tale. A winding story about love - they tell each other.

I liked the dialogue, soothing, dream-like. Very effective. I liked the movement, the risk, sometimes I thought they would never make it. The music sustained the dream, the women attired in 50s frocks.



John Wilkinson, Ivanka Sokol - Stupid Cupid

Bombast & Memory - Andrew Gaynor

In this performance, the artist creates a monument to the 'self', in this case his self. He does this by stacking milk crates on top of each other, one by one, in a frenetic motion, to the flashing of strobe lights and to a thrashing percussive sound track, which builds in momentum propelling the performance forward. With each successive milk crate stacked, the artist takes his place on top and using a polaroid camera gets a snap of himself in the moment. This goes on for quite a while - till finally, his pinnacle reached - the lights go out and we, the audience, file out for a 15 minute breather in preparation for part 2.

After the interval, Gaynor held a condescending self-reflexive chat with the audience in which he explained his performance, in case they didn't quite understand. *Bombast* is an excellent title for the piece - Gaynor managed an irony and piquancy of performance that was refreshingly irritating.

Sounds of Distress (An Incoherent Subject) - Janet Lee & Sarah Coxon

The chairs, the simple set-up. Uncut but sincere.

They move so casually. They balance, fall, trip over themselves, over their words. She tips up and her long floral frock slips off and she slides away.

Yo-Yo - Suitcase Collective - Peta Jenkins & Marcus Canning

A performance piece involving two bodies in white space suits with musical yo-yos that give party light effects when in motion. The effect was achieved through the use of hanging perspex screens which distorted and multiplied the images of the yo-yos in the darkened studio. It is difficult to find 'appropriate sites' for this type of light and body sculpture performance, short, elliptical and abstract. Fortunately *Putting on an Act* encourages the production of enigmatic yet deliciously frivolous performance art.

The I of the Beholder - Mar Bucknell

We sat in anticipation. We sat in darkness. We waited. A silent figure in the front row stood up, walked upstage and disappeared to the right. We waited. The

figure re-emerged with a profile lamp which was placed downstage to light a cyclorama. The figure stood in front of the cyc, presenting himself to the lamp, and then placed a decal plate over it, projecting the word text. He says, 'This is not a text.' (Diffuse laughter.)

The performer disappeared. We waited. He reappeared with a mirror.

'There are no meanings here.' The performer disappeared. We waited. He reappeared with another profile lamp. 'What you see is what you get.'

We waited.

Over the next few minutes, punctuated by several exits and entrances, the performer used a series of mirrors and lamps to reflect light around the stage as we sat in darkness, tracing his progress and his projections. 'This is not corporeal.' 'There are no bodies here.' (De-fused laughter.)

Finally, we were plunged into total darkness. "It wasn't me. I didn't do it. I wasn't there." In that fraction of a second before laughter signalled the end of the performance, we waited uneasily in the darkness for a reassuring light.

Odyssey - Narelle Hurley, Suzannah Edwards, Natalie Miler, & Sharon Birch

Four separate journeys in a space. The audience is seated as a configuration of islands: four coloured cloths where we huddle, isolated on the floor by the spaces between. They've gone to sea. Two are there with their language, uttering fragments in isolation. Two others are moving away, or being moved, by the flickers of candles.

I can't wait for these women to break the distances between them. Wanting so

much for them to rush together, to rush 'n' gush. When she propelled her body into the other's - thank God! At least now its not so sacred, and I'm not a prying eye observing their private cleansing.

Stupid Cupid - Ivanka Sokol & John Wilkinson

Last spot, last night, a delightful insouciance. Our man walks out carrying the bar stool with drink in hand, invoking imagined counters from locations as diverse as Hollywood movies to yuppie bars. He is a smooth talker and although every word he utters is a cliché of failed love or drunken nostalgia for the might-have-beens, we laugh. He seduces us so easily, goddam it!, with his drawn-out pauses, indirect looks, self-mocking asides. Into his orbit, unexpectedly, She arrives in stunning evening dress with coiled rope around her arm. The tempo speeds up and they begin a dance-a-deux, negotiated with coils of the rope around their waists, around their necks and fed with the heat of familiar courting exchanges: "You are so . . . I wanted to . . . If only I/you. . ." Will they kiss? or remain entangled?

Why, why inevitable, why so predictable? Like two ends of a length of rope. They coil inward, turning into the binding length, face to face, all knotted up. This stupid clumsy binding. This stupid clumsy binary. This stupid cupid. But it doesn't end in psychology and the piece is over with a flaunting departure from both of them.

Compiled by Rachel Fensham with contributions from Rachael Romano, Rick de Vos, Mui Min Sit, Erin Hefferon, Janet Lee, Murdoch University

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Artrageous

Real Time previews Perth's alternative festival

Fringe festivals subversively suck the blood of well-heeled international arts festivals, making the most of these institutions they often despise, promoting local talent in opposition to the international, taking a more radical (70s, early 80s) or more partying-cabaret line (80s to 90s) than their increasingly radical hosts (save for Melbourne 1994) and, largely, sticking to the over-adulated Edinburgh model. The free for all, access model is giving way more and more (see Melbourne Fringe report) to cautious artistic direction in parlous economic times, the consequence an enlarged number of programmed frontline acts guaranteed to generate income beyond limited government subsidies. Perth's Artrage, however, is no longer a fringe and fulfils the sometime dream of every Fringe tired of being simply oppositional to stand a part from its Festival.

Artrage's media release claims to have "taken on its own identity to become synonymous with fostering new and innovative local West Australian arts." It offers *A Guide to the Morally Righteous* by "Three fabulous Marching Girls", an exhibition, *Portable Cosmos*, by Matthew Dwyer, of mobile 'phone users in public places, the gay and lesbian artists' collective *That Way Inclined* inviting you into their relationships and their homes for the International Year of the Family, and artists Maggie Calzoni and Marion McInnes inviting you into a condemned

Northbridge house for "unexpected delights within". All of these offer intriguing glimpses of the everyday transformed into performance and new meanings.

X For A Kiss by Piece by Piece Dance Theatre promises even more intimacies with its look "at the cultural identity of the kiss": "Greek poets refer to a kiss as 'the key to Paradise', while traditional Chinese culture regarded the kiss as suggestive of cannibalism. Mothers in colonised Indo China frightened their children by threatening them with the white man's kiss."

Artrage's international guest is the avant garde Kaos Theatre who boast excellent responses to their *Faustus*, their *Medea* and their *Hamlet* in the UK in recent years. Virtual Morality, their Artrage show, promises an exploration of good and evil using starting point materials stored in cyber-space by GreenNet in London. A parallel Perth Kaos Theatre of four performers has been in "virtual conference" with their London collaborators. "Kaos is the first performance group globally to use the Internet as a tool for geographically separate groups within the devising process." What this means in terms of performance, as often with the claims for technology, will have to be seen to be ... experienced.

In addition to the program Club Swing are trapezing across the rabbit fence from the east. Report to follow. R.T

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Top End Tale

Curator Thelma John talks 24 HOUR ART

At a time when contemporary art is under threat, its role questioned, the masses continuing to express difficulty with obscure art of a non-pragmatic nature and the critics eager to dismiss ...

In a place where it is best not to use the word "installation" because the powers that be are yet to grasp the term and the audience in part are still asking, "but where are the paintings?"....

Here where there is no insulation from the elements unless one retreats to an air-conditioned fluoro cell - where myths of man-eating, baby-snatching lifestyles generate, the back-door of the arse-end, the edge, our secret idyll, DARWIN.

DARWIN where 78,000 souls sweat it out for 300 days each year and shiver on their balconies for two nights in July, watching the sun set, the bush burn, the lightning illuminate, the mozzie bite, the rain wash away... the natural rhythm of the elements. Taking for granted miracles like the Parap Markets on Saturday, collecting by routine hellaconias, roti rendang, basil, lime, black rice pudding, mango ice. Calling into 24HR ART, the contemporary artspace nearby to consume some culture while waiting for the fried noodles to cook.

It could be a journey to the red dirt of the abyss of the Kimberly with Sharon Pacey's *Landscape of the Heart*, or to the dry lakes of the Tanami Desert in a barbed wire and paper canoe with Kim Mahood. It could be the first paintings on canvas from Ramingining or the local gamelan

orchestra rehearsing with Indonesian performance artist, Heri Dono, for "kuda binal". Or Pam Lofts bringing the centre of the continent to its northern edge in a nice place to visit... or Annie Taylor mixing dingo imagery with mangrove driftwood (real dingo hair, teeth, bones with photocopies, gold leaf and found wood) in religious souvenirs from lost (imagined) cults.

... always asking what is this place, what is the thread?

We cling on the art takes us into the land, the time, the place, the people. These artists on the periphery are consumed by land, like a chip on the shoulder, absorbed, blinded, inspired, driven. The land acts as metaphor for the body, the journey of exploration is a metaphysical one.

Now and then gallery visitors are confronted by gleaming metal, furry rabbits and slick holograms but the rubber bath mats of biennales in distant cities represent what we, the inhabitants here, like to think we have escaped from. The concerns of the big city are not in our face.

One road leads to Darwin - the "track". The government likes to race cars on it at fatal speed for the fun of billionaires from far-away empires. A sign by the track signifies a speed-limit-free-zone... go for your life! Meanwhile we drive up and down, back and forth. 24HR Art does an exhibition called *drive she said* with playreadings, blood splattered and mangled car doors - sixty works ranging from bark to sound exploring the journey. A road

movie in the gallery. On bark, Marrnyula Mununggurr from Yirrkala shows a Toyota moving through the landscape, and Peter Banjurljurl from Maningrida shows the footprints of the Djankawu ancestors moving across the country. Something for everyone, billy-carts to broken hearts, back seat drivers and arm chair riders.

drive she said follows in the tradition of open members shows. 1990 was *Ideal Format*, in 1991 it was *No Format* - even more scope, 1992 was *the dog show* about the dog's place in Territory life, a debarkle of dogma addressing our dog fetish, 1993 was the *Self Portrait Show*. This is a town where you can participate in culture. Lawyers do play readings, health workers sing work songs in choirs, bikers make bush furniture and writers make visual statements. Audiences cross from one art form to another and artists and performers attend the shows of their peers.

Meanwhile the exhibitions keep coming. *Never, never, never, never* where Darryl's Ozzie Ostrich meets the explorer Leichhardt at a dry well, (soon to be seen at First Draft in Sydney). *Fifty Plus Art*, a group show of works by seven artists over fifty, (three are more than seventy years old!). Never too late to emerge. *girls own territory* - five fantastic territory women artists and their visions which explode the myth that the Territory is a male domain of thongs, beer and Harleys. In *peopleplaces* the top end mob get to see life through the eyes of Centralian artists. The curatorial rationale in shows like these might be based around age or gender or place but always attempts to transcend cultural boundaries, exhibiting work by contemporary Aboriginal artists alongside the work of non-Aboriginal artists and NESB artists, without distinction.

To commemorate the cyclone, 100%

Tracy. All the works are on/of/about corrugated iron - the generic material of the Territory and 24HR Art's corporate icon. "This is no place for ordinary tragedy: Primal fears abound ... where else could you be garrotted by flying sheets of corrugated iron?" from *Dragged Screaming To Paradise* by Suzanne Spinner, Little Gem Publications, 1994.

1995 will see solo shows by local artists Skye Raabe and Ken Burrridge and national artists Neil Emmerson and Wendy Teakel. From dresses/hankies to sticks, a blind woman in a bucket of water via Papua New Guinea cargo cult in a pilgrimage to the self.

24HR Art is a non-profit, non-commercial organisation whose main objective is to provide a supportive environment for the development of innovative contemporary visual art in the Territory with funds from Federal and Territory Governments. It used to be known as the hottest gallery in the world but a Fan Club formed to get all that hot air out. 24HR Art accepts proposals from artists and curators, hosts visiting national and international artists, produces publications, to wit *Cocoons*, *Kerosene*, *Culture* documenting recent Darwin Southeast Asia art exchanges. 24HR Art started in a petrol station, hence the name, and now operates from an old cinema, complete with bio box. 24HR Art has been under the directorship of Chris Downie, now at Noosa Regional Gallery, then Judy Kean, now temporary Curator of Craft at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, and currently Steve Fox, formerly Aboriginal Art advisor at Yirrkala in Arnhemland. (And me).

When in Darwin come and see for yourself.

Thelma John

Intelligent Stamps

Paul Fox puts Real Time in the picture

Ask Paul Fox why he took on the job of director of the Philatelic Gallery in Melbourne and you get two very clear answers, one that the job interview was

He also thought "... in a city where there is no public site for engagement with design issues, why shouldn't a corporate body provide one."

The Philatelic Gallery is a new exhibition space in the National Philatelic Centre with two galleries catering to both the stamp follower and the curious. The lower gallery has a permanent collection, the upper has a program of exhibitions. The lower has Think Design (designed by Mary Featherstone) which "takes the notion of the stamp, gives it a good shake and has a look at what falls out. It's very much about what constitutes graphic design explored in a three dimensional way."

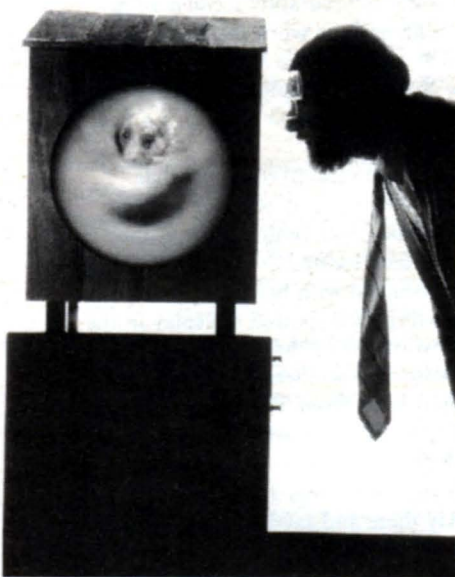
Visitors walk into a room that swathes them in colours and transforms their shadows from black and white to colour as they mix the palate with their movements. Another room has 'hands on' fonts magnetised to the wall for easy re-arrangement. An odd 'exhibit', made of old timber palings and called The Possum Box, allows the viewer to peek in on a taxidermed possum, to study the face, the paws, the tail. Below the viewing points are drawers which can be pulled open to reveal how different artists have captured the essence of possum. The viewer compares their responses with the artists' and is introduced to the 'conceptual possum'. In the printing and design rooms "visitors can reconstruct their own faces, becoming both participant, the observed and object. The world is seen anew."

The upper gallery looks at social and cultural issues through stamps. Fox is intrigued by the stamp's being one of the first forms of mass-produced image paralleling almost exactly Fox Talbot's creations in photography around 1839-40. Fox is also curious about the relationship between stamps and postcards and the exchange of images that has gone on. Both photography and postcards offer him fuel for future exhibitions and we have plenty of appropriate archival materials in Australia.

Fox's exhibition ideas are infectiously lateral and the intelligence he brings to stamps will make this a gallery to watch. He has written extensively on museums,

"the interface between cultures", photography and colonialism. His latest exhibition (curated with Jennifer Phipps) has been *Sweet Damper and Gossip* which explored "the intersections between aboriginal and European cultures on the colonial frontier and how aboriginal people mimicked and subverted European art and representation." Fox is currently working on *Colonial Alphabet*, an exhibition on "how colonial stamp images created an empire of signs." RT

Think Design, *The Philatelic Gallery*, 321 Exhibition St. Melbourne. *Colonial Alphabet*, *Waverly City Gallery*, October."



The Possum Box

intriguingly structured around creative problem solving (and not simply having to extol one's virtues), the second that Fox could see the postage stamp as a starting point for the exploration of both graphic design and the cultural history of Australia.

24 HR ART

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November

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December

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All Power to Casula

On site at the new Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

A small winding road takes you off the highway not far from the Copacabana, left down across a railway line, left to a huge powerhouse with a tall shining stack, a golf course next door and a river alongside. There's little in the way of sign-posting as yet. The roads are dusty. The building unremarkable, other than for its size, until you get inside.

The new Powerhouse arts centre in Liverpool in Sydney's far west is another instance of the shifting cultural centre of Sydney life. The Casula Powerhouse is just down the road from Liverpool proper. It hasn't been used to generate electricity since ... and now has been preserved and internally re-shaped to allow a community to generate art in galleries, studios, a 400 seat flexible studio theatre and a staggeringly large open space for big events and the viewing of art.

The building has become a work of art itself, transformed on the inside by adding to the untouched girders and four gigantic hoppers a floor realised like a painting by Judy Watson and the transformation of huge windows by Robyn Bracken into rippling lines that can be seen inside or out giving the building a new coherence. The

achievement of this design by Tonkin, Zulaikha and Harford is in working with the original rather than against it, opening it out, turning part floors into numerous mezzanines, creating studios with big windows so artists aren't locked off from the community, creating intimate spaces in an epic hall. Best of all is the way the contribution of artists is built into the architecture - not added at a later date, and involving creative input from the community.

It took two weeks to pour in the concrete floor in the Turbine Hall with Watson briskly mixing in coloured oxides. Across the space the colours gently transform from browns to mute reds, oranges and yellows evoking ochres and soil. Sections are glassed in to reveal timber and metal traces of the old powerhouse floor. There are reminders too that the building occupies the site of an Aboriginal midden: the floor is etched with dreamtime-like icons, veins thread across the space like rivers and the names of the four local peoples are carved from metal and inserted into the coloured concrete.

Administrator Frances Butler considers it a major achievement that builders and

artists work side by side rather than sequentially. Tom Strachan's tiles for the toilets were created with a hundred participants (school children, builders, the Mayor, Watson, Bracken, locals) following an effective format (taken from maps, plans, and old photos of the area and the building) supplied by Strachan. The toilets are a work of art.

The theatre has already attracted interest from dance and performance companies including the Sydney Theatre Company which has performed in the building. It feels three storeys high and will have several mezzanine viewing areas from two sides, seating that can be hoisted to any position or collapsed and removed, a lighting rig with excellent access, again drawing on the construction of the building as well as from consultation with writer-director Michael Gow and lighting designer Geoff Cobham. It's planned to open the theatre in April 1995.

A bonus is a dance studio (doubling as rehearsal and conference room) with a sprung wooden floor positioned off the Turbine Hall. The theatre has dressing rooms, a production studio. A hoped-for sculpture studio is intended to complement the theatre production space with participants working in both areas.

The building will also house the City of Liverpool Art collection. The Powerhouse won't have its own acquisition fund but will be constantly exhibiting work in both its galleries.

It's a strange experience to see the

building halfway through its transformation, to relish what is there and to fill in the blanks with Frances Butler's enthusiastic narrative. A great strength of the centre is that its activities have been successfully underway for fifteen years. It will continue taking events and activities out into the community. It is hoped that artists from Canada and India will come to work here.

Already, Casula Powerhouse is a model of a community centre out of which a home has emerged, a transformation wrought by responsive design and the integrated involvement of community, builders and artists, a home both awesome and warmly functional, owing not a little to director John Kirkman's background in theatre and performance (he worked with the Flying Fruit Fly Circus) and administrator Frances Butler's visual arts background. RT

The Powerhouse opens on October 29th with These Passions, an exhibition about the passions that drive the artists Jan Pilgrim, Christine Young, Jennifer Keeler-Milne, Karen Coull and Gail Johns. There will be performances by Echoes of the Cook Islands, Powerhouse Youth Theatre, Triclops, Victoria Harbutt and Anibika Sridhar, Academy Guard (the world champion Liverpool marching girls team), aerialist Scott Grayland, didgeridoo player Matthew Doyle and composer Elena Katz-Chernin with her commissioned piece for the opening.

Cool Snap, New York Summer

Sandy Edwards takes Australian photography to New York

A photographic mission to New York in the hottest part of summer...foolhardy perhaps but never one to turn down a challenge I arrived early July with a (heavy) portfolio of works by seven Sydney photographers (Melita Dahl, Colin Beard, Douglas Holleley, Peter Jones, Grant Matthews, Suellen Symons, Daniel Thompson) and one New Yorker (Lili Almog) represented by Stills gallery, and with a somewhat belated intent to find a gallery to exhibit *Piano Stills* an exhibition of stills from *The Piano* by Grant Matthews.

Handicapped by my jetlag, I allowed myself one day of rest before beginning to work my way through a list of galleries already researched from Sydney, many of whom had been faxed or phoned in relation to *Piano Stills*. I had received a polite "thanks but no thanks," "not right for us". "we are focussed on 'vintage' work", "although we are flattered that you would think of us, our gallery normally shows photographs from between the World Wars", "I am afraid that you have missed the opportune time" replies from approximately half of these galleries.

My strategy was to visit these galleries and others, without portfolio in hand, view the exhibition, approach the desk in a winning manner and do my spiel about *Piano Stills*, while handing out samples of Piano postcards. Once the ice was broken, I would ask whether they were interested in having a look at some Australian photographic work. I knew of course that this was New York and even at Stills we never look at work on the spot but rather slot prospective exhibitors into a viewing day system.

My success rate? Highly variable. Desk attendants loved the *Piano* cards, calling other assistants over to view

them. Thanks but no thanks came back the response from gallery directors. "Timely but not timeless" was one response.

The first gallery to agree to view the portfolio was James Danziger in Prince Street, Soho, which represents photographers such as Angie Leibovitz and Sheila Metzner. As I walked to the lift after dropping off the portfolio I heard a voice say in a broad American accent, "You wanna have a look at some Australian work?" I should have gone back to explain there were no kangaroos this collection. When I went to pick up the folio the next day after first calling as instructed the attendant said "Come this way" so warmly as he swept me towards the inner sanctum that I thought I was about to be given an interview. I followed only to be gestured in the direction of the folio propped on the floor. I picked it up and walked out without a word being spoken.

I must say, along the way I saw a lot of photography. Shows by Cartier Bresson and Lotte Jacobi at the two International Centre for Photography venues, a Eugene Smith exhibition (his small prints a real treat) uptown at Robert Mann Gallery, a woman (Andrea Modica) whose work I was unfamiliar with but asked to see more of at Juie Saul Gallery. She is portraying children in a very different way from Sally Mann, platinum/palladium prints on a very fragile paper called velum. An installation at the New Museum of *Close Ties* by Susan Unterberg which combined photographs and video of mothers and sons (grown up) describing the qualities they liked in each other while their body language described something else. New work by Lee Friedlander entitled *Letter from the People* at MOMA. I had the

pleasure of viewing original prints by old favourites, fashion photographers Sarah Moon and Deborah Turbeville (who had had a show of Mexican images) at Stanley Wise Gallery. In fact you can walk into most New York galleries and ask to view work by any number of well known photographers, enough to convince you of the power of the original print over reproductions immediately.

My longest and hence most pleasurable meeting with a curator came from a personal introduction by a friend who is very familiar with the photographic scene, proof that in New York introductions still account for an enormous amount. The curator was Susan Anthony at the Houk Friedman Gallery. They represent Sally Mann. Her work however is a typical for them, on the walls they have works by Man Ray, Andre Kertesz, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy and Margaret Bourke White worth approximately \$40,000 each. So our contemporary works were not really suitable. However there was a buyer interested in one work, a sunflower image by Lili Almog (he collects sunflower images). The interchange was satisfying and we will keep in touch. One gallery was also receptive, that was the Lowinsky Gallery where the work on the walls was compatible with some of our work and I had a good talk with the curator there.

Lessons learnt from the exercise? New York is one of the toughest markets to break into. This was to be expected. Prices in America are significantly higher than in Australia. Photography is still battling here to be accepted as an art form worthy of investment. There is a lot of ignorance here about things photographic. The number of galleries showing photography in NY is huge (warranting a booklet every two

months just on photography), as compared to a one and a half hands count of specialist photography galleries in Sydney. (Other galleries do show individual photographers within a broader contemporary context).

The market in America is highly specialised and conservative. Each gallery tends to show a narrow range of work. Stills Gallery by comparison shows a broad range of work, partly to compensate for the few outlets around. New York galleries are interested primarily in proven track records and in big names in the contemporary area. So you can imagine where Australian newcomers would be ranked within the system. We are curiosity value only. I have been told that in other cities such as San Francisco there is a much friendlier and open response.

Despite all this I came away feeling reinforced in the knowledge that there is a very lively photography scene here in Australia and the work produced is as good as anything I saw on the walls of New York. It is simply without the glitzy sheen of the Big Apple (not such a bad thing perhaps).

Also I am pleased to report that despite coming away without a *Piano Stills* venue, since returning to Sydney my trusty friend located in New York (Irene Karpanthakis) with her entrepreneurial eyes well-peeled spotted a display in the window of one of the big book stores (B. Dalton Booksellers) of the newly released book from *The Piano* and, after a bit of swift negotiation and amazingly quick service of an overseas courier company, our prints are now installed on display there and sales are beginning to flow in. This is one bandwagon we are not too modest to jump onto. Sales from the successful shows like *Piano Stills* can only help support the work of other artists/photographers producing work of less commercial value.

Piano Stills will also be shown in Tokyo for the month of October at the Weston Gallery at Isetan Department Store and in David Jones, Sydney in November.

Other signals through the flame

Colin Hood reviews Jane Goodall, *Artaud and the Gnostic Drama*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994

"I have reached into my entrails and strewn them about the stage in the form of questions." Today, this remark by The Living Theatre's Julian Beck reads like a comical, if not embarrassing spin-off from the *grand guignol* tradition, but in the 60s it shone like a beacon, illuminating the way forward, beyond illusionism and the decrepit artifice of literary theatre, toward the bodily incarnations of a modern, participatory, theatrical spectacle.

The post-structuralist reading of Artaud by Derrida, Foucault and Kristeva ushered

in a new wave of Artaud scholarship which was quickly embraced by the new textual avant-gardes of theatrical criticism and practice. According to Derrida, the 'bastard' offspring of Artaud (Brook, Chaikin, Beck and possibly Grotowski) had misread the signs of cruelty emanating through the flames. The remarkable thing about Artaud the artist and writer, was the spareness of a body of work to justify his reputation as a theatrical innovator. His theatrical manifestos were found to be empty of promise (in practical terms) while

his stature as a philosophical agent-provocateur had grown to awesome proportions.

Jane Goodall's *Artaud and the Gnostic Drama*, explores a field of Artaud scholarship which displaces the opposition between modernist individualism and post-modern de-centred subject into the *locus antiquus* of dogmatic theology versus heretical Gnosticism. It is also a welcome addition to a small body of literature which has critically addressed the complexity of the failure to produce a body of work (usually attributed to madness or some other psychobiographical 'shortcoming') in the context of the narrative or fictional structures of the artistic oeuvre.

Goodall traces the intellectual re-animation of Artaud through a reading of the "violent dialectics of gnostic drama", skilfully re-working of the *mise-en-scène* of the postmodern Artaud based on the concept repertoires of *différance* (Derrida), abjection (Kristeva), and the split subject in Freud and Lacan. These are then recast in the light of an ancient and "thoroughly dramatised cosmology and ontology" belonging to texts of the gnostic tradition.

"The logic of gnosticism", writes Goodall, "posits an ontological division which is truly catastrophic when it extends to the idea of a double self...it is a sudden vision of the embodied self as alien...the enemy of a new and yet prior self that is at once a visitation from without." Might something similar be said of certain genres of secondary literature which have been pushed to the margin in the successive

waves of 'approved' Artaud scholarship?

In Goodall's reading the play of undecidability (around presence and originality) which guides the Derridean interpretation of Artaud's critique of the dramaturgy of representation (be it in theatre or philosophy) might also be understood via the Gnostic concept of the dialogical contamination of fate (*heimarmene*) and providence (*pronoia*). And that is only the beginning of my re-discovery of this ancient but seemingly effective conceptual apparatus. To my mind, bringing Artaud into line with Derrida, Lacan and the Gnostic tradition clears the way for other creative and insightful realignments of tendencies linking the modern and the ancient.

In Beckett, Duchamp and Artaud, the rejection of the modernist canon of authoritarian personality leads to a theatrical and traumatic splitting of the artistic subject. In addressing the "rapprochement between Artaud and Gnosticism", Goodall reveals the discursive—as opposed to the psychotic—complexity of Artaud's desire to replace the tormented body (the work of an evil demi-urge) with his own demi-urgical and dramaturgical productions. Distancing Artaud from the masculinist heritage of inspired auto-genesis, Goodall argues that Artaud's fantasy of self-creation is more a vilification of the boys-own art of inspired procreation (be it hermetic or modernist/surrealist) than of biological motherhood.

Goodall's account of the dramaturgical structures of alienation, the Heraclitean influence on Leninist Marxism (which Breton mixed with a simplified reading of cabalistic doctrine), and the seamy underside of modernism's hermetic influences will make compelling reading for both Artaud novice and initiate, for both Derrida enthusiasts and re-vamped alchemical modernists alike.

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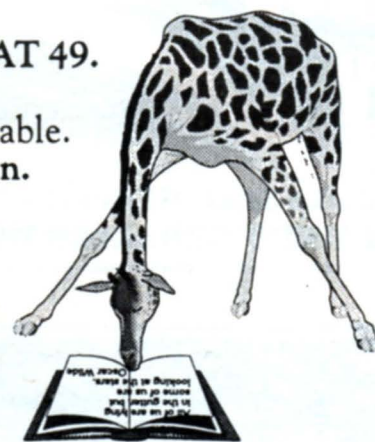
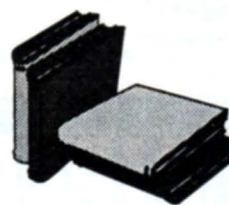
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Mr Wicked 1994

Bosco Rung picks a winner

Take pen to diary, slash a bleeding line through November 17 to 26, committing yourself to daily devotionals at the high church of *This Most Wicked Body*, Nigel Kellaway's saintly 'incarceration' in Sydney's The Performance Space, chorused by the quick and the dead (principal percussionist of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra David Montgomery and pianist Glen Gould 1932-82) and supped by chef superior Gay Bilson (no stranger to performance). Look on in awe 10am-10pm or partake 7 - 9.30 nightly at what price your mortal soul? For inspirational detail, the life of the artist and five bracing willy shots, demand a copy of the exquisitely informative *The Performance Space*, Issue # 3 Spring 1994. A performance that must be seen and more than once (where are the season concessions?). Full report on Nigel's resurrection (or not) to follow in December-January issue, Real Time 4.



Nigel Kellaway

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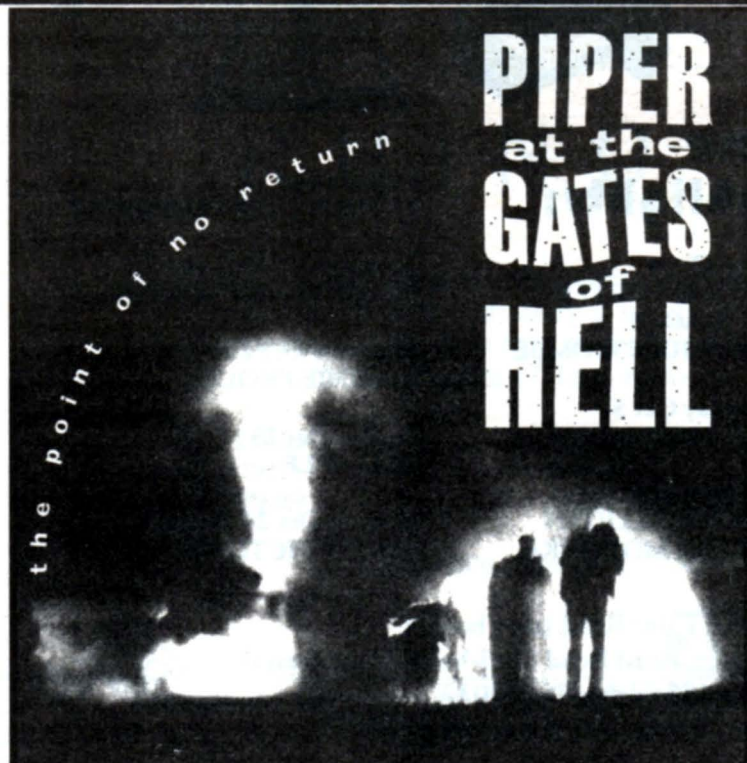


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Expanding Performance

Writers Peta Tait and Peggy Phelan discuss the possibilities

PT I was first introduced to your writing through your overtly political work against the censorship of Holly Hughes, Karen Finley, Tim Miller and John Fleck by the National Endowment of the Arts. What have been the successes and consequences of that campaign?

PP It all depends on how you define success. The NEA funding did in fact continue and for a while it looked as if it wouldn't. That campaign was successfully won but the longer battle remains. At present there's a big controversy over the artist Ron Athey who is HIV positive and was given a \$10,000 grant from the NEA. Athey pierces himself and uses his own blood in his performances. We are having a repetition of the same kind of controversy which has been going on now for six years. The positions are incredibly well entrenched. The Left position defends freedom of speech and the Right insists on standards of decency arguing that artists do have freedom of speech and the issue is not about censorship but public funding of this type of work. The Left position should be arguing for funding as a right to ensure the full participation of everyone in the democratic process. The current conservative ideology pushes the need to conserve money and this gives it a certain popular appeal. So it is conceivable if Clinton loses the next election the Republicans will just fund the major institutions like the Lincoln Centre, opera and ballet, and that alternative arts practices will no longer be possible. It's absurd to entertain an idea that an artist should be slapped down because he or she wants to think aloud in public about the relationship between blood and the body. This concerns not only people with Aids and medical institutions but addresses fundamental questions of life and death in our culture.

PT There is discussion in Australia that North American theory and arts practice, which is dominated by the legacy of this censorship/funding issue, is not relevant here in the same way. What can we gain from your experience?

PP I'm not sure I accept the division of nationalist boundaries around these arguments and struggles. The US Christian fundamentalists are wealthy, well organised and politically astute, particularly in their handling of the media. They are an example of how effective the Right can become whether Christian fundamentalist or otherwise.

PT Nevertheless in contemporary theory about performance art Australians are once again faced with a geographical centrality to thinking about arts practice and the lack of attention given to wider art movements. There is an exclusiveness about how this theorising is set up.

PP Well Edward Said has this wonderful idea about travelling theory ...

PT As opposed to travelling theorists

PP They're related. And now I've spent time here I probably will write about Australia. For example Ruth Waller has

created some amazing gouaches and oils about sitting, watching, waiting, while her partner undergoes a liver transplant going in and out of a coma. This is done in a beautiful narrative almost like a medieval book of hours. When I was writing *Unmarked*, I was unaware that I would

PP There was a strategy in that linkage. There's been a supposition that performance art and so-called radical theatre is the art practice exclusively of the Left and behind that argument is an idea that performance is not art: it's just a bunch of unhappy disenfranchised people talking about the traumas in their lives. I wanted to say that the philosophical questions raised by performance are at the heart of contemporary cultural practice and manifest in many different forms, portrait photography being one form and so on. I wanted to look at the way the Right and in particular Operation Rescue, the anti-abortion group, uses performance for political ends. Performance is not done exclusively by a disenfranchised left.

PT While you question the theoretical positions of seeing and not seeing, isn't there a danger that the art work you

and there is a profound crisis about illegitimacy in the US. The ramifications exceed a moral question as the Right are now invoking dangerous political legislation through what they call welfare reform. The Right have insisted the father is left out of the political triangle and they are also trying to stop welfare payments to women who get pregnant more than two or three times. This is draconian punitive legislation.

PT Yes. That does have a very clear purpose in questioning how to see but when you discuss Mapplethorpe, Sherman and Callè isn't there an issue that you are supporting a new canon? Doesn't this set up an oppositional canon which must be seen?

PP In order to write a book about how to see you have to have things other people may have seen. I'm not so

interested in constructing an oppositional canon but in order to write anything you take certain risks — more people looking at Sherman and Mapplethorpe is a risk I am willing to live with. In *Unmarked* I was trying to make the links between these forms and in particular theatre and performance, whereas in *Converging Realities* you set out to make separations.

PT If performance happens in the moment and can't be repeated as you say, in an unstable present, it consciously sets out to bridge that gap between the constructed and the real even if it fails. Theatre on the other hand, becomes a repetition through the rehearsal process yet it attempts to camouflage the existence of this repetition. We are constantly dealing with the way theatre tries to stabilise time. It can't of course. Performance recognises the impossibility of attempts to stabilise time.

PP As one of your seven readers for *Converging Realities* ...

PT Five. I could only think of five readers. (There are five in my family.)

PP ... I was interested in your insistence that the formalist experiments of feminist theatre may have had a more long lasting impact on the way in which art is going than the actual content. I was just wondering why you insisted so strongly on experiments with forms?

PT I came to that because I was looking at what practitioners are doing rather than looking at the work from the point of view of reception. Reception theory involves writing about meanings in relation to the juxtaposition of content to form in performance. What interested me when I started working on this was the way women practitioners were actually making choices about the use of form in a transition which made form more important. For example they are saying, 'It won't work as theatre if it's not funny.' That's a decision about form. This is happening where the process is started rather than being received and that set me looking at the way form was operating and seeing that

this whole issue of redefining the physical body, the female body in performance, seems pivotal to recent work. However I was faced with a dilemma which I'm sure you recognise: can the critic/cultural theorist afford to criticise contemporary performance in a politically polarised world?

PP That's a huge issue. The danger is that criticism will weaken the political struggle. However, I do believe in negative and positive critiques. In an environment in which the question is still whether performance art is art, then such critiques are always a risk. Nevertheless it's important to find out if there's good work and bad work in the field of performance.



Peggy Phelan, Peta Tait

Sandy Edwards

have some readers in Australia. While you are writing a book you are thrilled if you can think of seven people who will want to read it. (There are seven in my family.)

PT Have any of them actually read *Unmarked*?

PP Not so far, but they're very supportive.

PT One of the reasons *Unmarked* is a very important text is that you theoretically bring together the visual arts, photography, film, theatre and right wing political campaigns. At first appearance there's no obvious link between right wing politics and contemporary arts practice except as theoretical oppositions. Why are you bringing all these fields together?

discuss once again becomes what to see rather than how to see?

PP To me *Unmarked* is explicitly an examination of how to see and, at the same time it's an examination of what people wish you would not see. Part of what I'm doing with Operation Rescue is looking very carefully at what is visible and what is not visible in the abortion debate. There is a reproductive triangle which consists of the pregnant woman, the foetus and the father, and within the theatre of the abortion debate what is seen is the image of the foetus. This allows us to ignore the moral, ethical and economic problems facing the pregnant woman. This completely excludes the role of the father

Poles Apart

Tobsha Learner talks to Bogdan Koca and Lech Mackiewicz

Bogdan Koca

BK I arrived in 1981. I had no expectation of Australian theatre. I knew a little about Patrick White and I knew a few of Williamson's early plays. I wasn't interested in projecting myself in terms of established Australian theatre. I was interested in Australia because of its youth, and in creating something from zero. Pretty naive. I thought Australian theatre would be organized pretty much like German, Austrian or Polish theatre. I thought I would be able to get a full time job with an established company and begin developing my own style. It was a shock for me when I realised that there was no theatre culture in Australia. Australia hasn't got its own theatre yet. Theatre for me is a culture theatre for me is a way of living.

TL Define theatre culture.

BK During discussion with students I realise sometimes that I don't know exactly what theatre is. For me it is an event, where people who put it on know the outcome. But the people who participate as witnesses don't know the outcome even if, say, they know *Hamlet*. The outcome is not the plot, the outcome is the form in which the play or the event is presented. In Australia, theatre is still the plot. In other cultures, not only European but Indian, Japanese and Chinese, theatre is spiritual, educational, philosophical. In Australia theatre is purely entertainment and within very small minority groups.

TL In terms of your experience in Poland ...

BK: Being in theatre in Poland was the natural result of the culture of the country. I didn't start working in theatre as the big decision of my life. We had social positions, we had cultural positions, we were responsible. It was up to us to maintain the quality of theatre which existed before us. Here, it's great for me as a theatre creator to have that consciousness. In Australia you have to create theatre in order to underline your own existence as a creator. Theatre doesn't care for me, I have to care for theatre. In Poland, it was the opposite. The theatre cared for artists. Here we have to consistently maintain theatre, put the oil into the truck because it won't run without it.

TL How does that tie in with the government funding system in Australia?

BK Changes over the past thirteen years since I arrived have been incredibly important. There is so much more support for the arts in general but I feel sick sometimes when we artists in this country wait for bureaucratic support. The major decisions made about what is going to happen are in the hands of bureaucrats and benefactors who don't have the passion of

artists. Their roles are completely different. The structure of theatre is not stimulated by artists in Australia.

TL How did that differ from Poland in 1980?

BK: We did the budget after opening night. We had certain framework of financial support and it was quite open. Of course, our work was censored and oppressed by the government but that oppression created incredible solidarity between artists, which meant artistic decisions were always in the hands of artists. It was a kind of war between us and the bureaucrats who knew we were doing naughty things but we knew that they knew so it was really a very artificial and hypocritical game which actually everyone enjoyed somehow. So it's very difficult to compare that situation to Australia, because everything here is honest and straightforward ... you do what you do. On the other hand, what happens here is that artistic drive is restricted by commercial needs, an incredibly stupid idea because I don't know one theatre, one real theatre in the world which makes money.

Theatre production is a very expensive venture, you cannot support it from the box office. If film, television and commercial theatre supported non-commercial theatre you would have better actors, directors and designers in soaps, in film, in musicals. It will pay off.

TL Has a theatre culture evolved in Australia?

BK I don't think theatre is part of our consciousness, part of our culture yet. We know that it should be. There are more and more good productions and intelligent young people know there is a problem, though they don't know what it is exactly.

TL Is there a dialogue between fringe and mainstage theatre?

BK I think the mainstage regard successful fringe productions as a threat and sometimes adopt them but it's very rare. This is one of the most horrifying things for me. People politely pat each other's shoulders but they don't actually argue. They don't love each other's works.

I come from a theatre world where I love the success of my competitor because it challenges me and I have to come up with something better. I was jealous but I was positively jealous. I wasn't threatened, I was inspired because I had to answer with something. Here it feels that everyone wishes that everyone else would collapse.

We are still talking in the theatre about names, not about ideas, imagination, issues in the artistic sense. We talk about how many Shakespeares, which title is good ... You can't make good art when the artist is more concerned with the frame to put the painting in than with the painting itself.

TL How do you place yourself

culturally?

BK I think my life belongs to me. It doesn't have to be defined in terms of immigration. I am as I am. I don't have any problems with cultural schizophrenia. I feel like a teacher in the old fashioned sense. I like people to improve their skills at the university. I find total fulfilment. I see results ... incredible results.

Bogdan Koca teaches at the University of Western Sydney and is directing his play The Poet, The Women and the Frocks Theatre Nepean, Kingswood 17-22 October and Crossroads Theatre, Sydney 1-12 November. He was awarded the Sydney Critics' Circle Fringe Award for 1993.

Lech Mackiewicz

TL Why Australia?

LM Because it was the most remote place in the world I could think of. The other thing was Australia accepted us. I had been in prison for political reasons. During an interrogation they told me, "Piss off. Take your family and go." Three years later things became unbearable. My wife had a friend who had just come back from Australia and said it was very exciting, wild. Life in Poland seemed doomed at that time with children, no money. Career-wise it would have been wiser to stay in Poland but life-wise ...

TL Why career-wise?

LM I had a full-time job with a theatre company, guaranteed full-time work and I was doing seven plays a year. I was in the movies and doing radio, doing voice overs. You could survive easily and the status of an actor in Poland was much higher than here. The actor was the national conscience. When I first arrived here and told people I was an actor, they'd say, "Oh, how exciting". I couldn't understand their sarcasm. So, I've learned to say that I am a theatre director because when you say you're an actor (with an accent) people say, "But what do you really do?" and I reply, "Actually, I am a shoemaker."

TL Did you have any preconceived notions of Australian culture?

LM I knew my movies. Paul Cox was my number one at that stage... and Peter Weir and Bruce Beresford. I travelled far in Poland to see Australian movies. *Man of Flowers* with Norman Kaye was one of my favourites. I first read about it in a Polish magazine, then I saw the film and then I was working with Norman in a play here.

TL What was your initial impression of Australian theatre?

LM I remember I knew *The Club* and *The Removalists* and *The Department* (I saw it in Polish). I was looking for Williamson plays when I was still in the immigrant hostel and I organised thirty people and the whole excursion to see *Sons of Cain* at the Theatre Royal. I said 'You've got to see Williamson!' Can you imagine people from Iraq, Iran, Czechoslovakia, Poland, China? Everyone fell asleep except for me! But I couldn't understand the Australian accent. It wasn't the Williamson I knew and respected. I was shocked. I thought this must be the only theatre. I was told it was a hit. I almost took a flight back to Poland.

TL How do you think Australian theatre has evolved?

A: It's changing because of the influence of other cultures. People come and bring their ideas, so you have to come up with better ideas or incorporate some of theirs so it's like climbing up together. That's what's happening. There is still friction but whenever I feel like I'm being discouraged or obstructed, I always try to think of an Australian going to Poland and settling there. Would people accept him straight away in the theatre industry?

TL You have been working in Poland now?

LM Yes.

TL Do you consider yourself to be a citizen of both countries?

LM It's hard because I have family.

Each morning, I think Shit! I should settle down somewhere. But I have postponed this question until I die. Wherever the work is I feel at home, sometimes more here, sometimes more there. But you know, I used to be a taxi driver and I remember the day I finally told someone I was from Sydney.

TL You don't feel schizophrenic?

LM A little bit. I wake up each morning with an axe hanging above my head in the form of four children asking me, "Where is our home, Daddy?" I answer, "Wherever we are, that is our home."

TL Do you dream in English?

LM Oh, yes quite often ... of course, with an accent.

TL What do you think about the term 'multiculturalism'?

LM I think this is what Australia is. There was a point politically when it was important that it was acknowledged but now it should be just part of the vocabulary. If anything, now the word makes me grin uncomfortably, because I don't want to be marginalised.

TL How do you see theatre culture in Australia evolving?

LM It's hard to say but I think the definition will evolve itself and then it won't need definition.

Lech Mackiewicz recently directed King Lear for Playbox in Melbourne, played Franz Kafka in Sydney's Griffin Theatre and Sydney Theatre Company productions of Kafka Dances. He is currently directing Felliniana, October 5-16 at Belvoir Street. He is translating into Polish Louis Nowra's Inner Voices, Alex Buzo's Norm and Ahmed and Len Radic's Groundrules. He will direct a production of Inner Voices in Poland later this year.

Tobsha Learner's new play The Glass Mermaid, directed by Aubrey Mellor for Playbox, premieres in November.

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original music by
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Mulling Over Müller

Karen Martin and Jason Saltearn report on the Heiner Müller Conference in Sydney

At the moment of the demise of communism in the GDR, playwright Heiner Müller found himself before a television set in New York watching his fellow East Germans voting to end German communism with their feet as they danced atop the wall. Some five years later, and many miles removed, an international collection of Germanists, Müllerians, literary and theatre critics apparently feeling sufficiently distanced from the events of 1989, gathered in July at the Sydney Goethe Institut for three days of debate and speculation over questions of politics, authorship, textual practice, and, occasionally, performance.

For several decades, the cigar-chomping whisky drinking Müller has enjoyed a reputation on either side of the Wall, as Germany's pre-eminent Marxist poet-playwright and "man of the theatre": heir to Brecht (an advisor to the Berliner Ensemble, etc.). On all but the most erudite of terms, the East German writer is an obscure, even inaccessible, figure in Australia, his prodigious output of texts

having become only recently available, and then, in the approximation of translation.

At times during the conference, one was not quite sure whether the body of the author in question ("Heiner Müller") was a person (a body of flesh and blood), an oeuvre (a body of work), or a critical domain (a body of opinion). This confusion was neither theoretical nor accidental, having its roots in a time-wall that separates Müller and the West just as the Berlin Wall divided the two Germanies. "I like to stand with one leg on either side of the wall", says Müller, believing in the eventual submission of the West to a rising Third World, thereby continuing the trait of a series of German thinkers who have seen the historical position of Germany at the "centre" of a conflict of civilisations between East and West, mirrored in the experience of schizophrenia.

So what happens when a group of intellectuals get together to discuss the issues raised by a playwright whose "poetic barbs" place the conflict of perspectives at the core of his aesthetic? For us, the debate

over Müller's place as the "last German writer" blended imperceptibly with the broader and emergent questions of Müller as most certainly a German "phenomenon", but still more a "German" phenomenon. Although the Conference bore the subtitle "Theatre / History / Performance", theatrical issues arising from his work were in general secondary to traditional German concerns (geo-politics, literature, philosophy, aesthetics) and the familiar academic program of establishing boundaries between "modernity", "postmodernity", "the avant-garde" and the like. It seems just a little bit old-fashioned at this stage to be suggesting that there are affinities between Müller and the "death of the author". Death is such a pervasive motif in Müller (his wife suicided, as did one critic after a performance) that his texts pose the question, both of death itself (Hamlet: "to be or not to be") and also of the theatricality of the particularly German literary death they perform. A transhistorical figure, Müller has made of himself a site, or a battlefield upon which German history plays itself out in the intersection of discourses (Hamletmachine: "I'm not Hamlet. I don't take part anymore. My words have nothing to say any more.")

Whilst Gerst Germunden spoke of the political dimensions of the question of the author, the theatrical implications remained undeveloped, despite Nicholas

Zurbrugg's paper presented in a fashion which emulated the performativity of Müller's texts. Directors and teachers working with the density and darkness of Müller's texts confirmed both their humour and the depth of their challenge to actors who would enter into their space. To approach Müller's writing, one must experiment, as Florian Vassen observed, with a "viewing spiral" of ideas which plays with the "fragments of memory and splinters of future projection" of which they are composed.

The nuances of Müller's texts were insightfully framed by the powerful audiovisuals of Dominik Barbier's highly emotive and evocative 73 minute video study *I was Hamlet*, whilst a second video of Robert Wilson's *Hamletmachine* offered a path into the aesthetics of Müller's art. The sometimes heavy intellectual discoursing of his devotees might have been bridged by the active participation of performing artists who know these texts from the inside. For it was the performances, held at venues around Sydney, Gail Rothschild and Ulla Neuerberg's *Medea Memory Hall* at the NSW College of Fine Arts, and in particular Public Works' pastiche of text .. *in my thoughts I call him Number One*, at the Centre for Performance Studies which brought the perverse complexity driving the memory-images of Müller's work on to the stage and into visibility.

One Man's Medea

Joseph Uchitel directs *Medea* at the Sydney Street Theatre Space

Joseph Uchitel trained and worked in Russia and in the U.S.A. for a decade before coming to Australia. He teaches from time to time at N.I.D.A. and at the Actors' Centre in Sydney where he lives. Currently, for his recently formed East Coast Theatre, he is directing Peter Kowitz in a one-man *Medea*.

He previously directed the same play as a one-woman performance in the late 70s in Russia. "I was very young. It was very successful but also a very intense experience. I've stayed away from repeating it for a long time."

While building his own theatre here and grappling with the pragmatics of costs, he thought himself ready to face *Medea* again and, again, to do it as a one-woman show. Although he doesn't feel any strong sense anymore of being isolated or being a foreigner here, those experiences certainly help him understand *Medea*.

The sudden incursion in *Medea* of barbarian cunning into a civilised network of lies and betrayal seems to Joseph analogous to events like the Bosnian civil war. The decision to make this *Medea* a one-man show was, like his readiness to tackle the play again, arrived at subconsciously and "by accident." Chatting by 'phone with Peter Kowitz about actors he described the *Medea* he had in mind. Kowitz said, "I wish you'd do something like that with me." On the way to work the next day, Uchitel suddenly found himself thinking of Kowitz in this *Medea*. "After all", he thought, "it was written by a man and originally performed by men."

"The word androgyny is a bit strong but the audience have to feel for *Medea* otherwise what's the point of doing the play. But I was afraid of the idea and pushed it away. It came back and

here we are.

"He is playing the role of Medea as an actor. He plays all the roles. You see him creating them in a marathon of intensity. I think it is too easy to fall into irony and sarcasm in this play instead of seeing that *Medea* and Jason each have their own truths and are at each other's throats. It is very English to turn this into wit and sarcasm and to miss the intensity."

How do the audience see Kowitz create the roles? "The set is a huge metal cage with thick ropes hanging down into it. The ropes carry masks. He talks to these masks. He hangs on the ropes. He gets caught in them like a fly in a web. He manipulates them."

Uchitel says this *Medea* is a new experience for him. "I am different. I have a different actor, different design, and we're playing it in the round. We're using a late Victorian translation which our dramaturg Jenya Osborne has made simpler and clearer without removing any of the text. It feels very good. It's ours."

After *Medea*, Uchitel goes into workshop at the Varuna Writers' Centre in the Blue Mountains for a two week workshop with Stephen Sewell on that playwright's new work for the East Coast Theatre Company. Uchitel is interested in Australian writing for the stage and, when he's working, he feels part of Australian theatre. "It's only when you're not working that feelings of isolation and anger rise up. Running your own company keeps you really busy. And *Medea* is very demanding."

Euripedes' Medea, Sydney Street Theatre Space, Erskineville, Sydney 5 Oct - 6 Nov



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Microscopic Epic

Keith Gallasch talks to Constantine Koukias, director of Hobart's IHOS Opera.

Composer Constantine Koukias is in love with scale, the joy of doing anything you want, exploiting vast spaces theatrically and sculpturally, playing with flood and fire, even, he fantasises, moving the seating with the audience on it, and he'll do it, soon. With good lighting, though, he points out, scale can be reduced to the intimate in big venues like the wharves he's used in Sydney and Hobart for *Days and Nights with Christ*. Big spaces allow cinematic possibilities too but with the spectator in the action rather than watching from a distance.

But why is a composer interested in such big spaces? "They generate sounds and I can add them to the score. I can play with near and far, the way the audience hear."

Is the scale of the work operatic, keeping in mind the way the word opera has been somewhat re-defined by Robert Wilson, Phillip Glass and others? "It's early Greek theatre which inspires me. It was music drama, the lines sung by narrator and chorus."

But you have spectacle too. "Our new work, MIKROVION, has industrial machinery, a lot of lighting, lasers and pyrotechnics." More scale? "Small when you compare it to working on a film set. Besides, our work can tour. We have a small number of principal performers, seven in MIKROVION, and pick up the chorus of twenty wherever we perform."

The multiplication of means persists in the eight languages used in the new work including Braille and Morse code. Is this kind of vision driven by an auteur? "No.

I'm a collaborator. I select the texts we're using - Classical, Taoist, Hebraic - but that's only a starting point. What happens to these texts between me and my collaborators is what is important. We respond to two and half thousand years of writing about the body. Sculptor Ann Wulff, our visual director, has drawn directly on electron microscope photographs of tears and semen, drawing us right into these fluids of love and intimacy."

Why MIKROVION? "It means 'small life' and relates in this work to AIDS and the huge impact of something so small. MIKROVION is about the devastating anxiety generated by AIDS, the consequences for love."

"We aim to place the audience in different emotional and sensory states. It will be confronting for some but not others. I never expect, or want, a uniform response."

The scale of IHOS Opera's ambitions is reflected in a schedule that will take the company from Hobart to Brisbane and Sydney and back in 1995 with considerable technical and logistical demands. A concert version of MIKROVION is scheduled for 3 - 5 October in Hobart including the recording of a compact disc version of the work. The full production looks set for Brisbane in 1995 and the Greek Festival of Sydney will host *To Traverse Waters* - a depiction of a Greek woman's journey to her new homeland - in March. IHOS draws not only history into the intimacy of the moment, but also performers and artists and audiences across the country.

MIKROVION

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Image produced by Ann E. Wulff, 1994. Funded by a Sydney College of the Arts Research Grant. Produced at The Electron Microscope Unit of The University of Sydney with the assistance of Ian J. Kaplan PhD.

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Sax Giants Blow In

Steve Lacy and Dewey Redman tour Australia

We don't often have the opportunity to hear and see two of the world's foremost saxophonists both in the same week. There will be no excuses if you miss this important event.

Lacy's prolific career began in the 1950s working with acknowledged masters of modern music such as Thelonius Monk and Cecil Taylor. He has made at least 120 recordings and his fame even reached the Internet where a Steve Lacy bulletin board keeps tabs on news, new releases, tours and back catalogues.

An interview with Lacy in *Wire* magazine in 1992 sums up his approach to music making. He states, "Jazz by its nature, we don't know what it is going to become. Every night I played with Monk, I didn't know what he was going to play. We played the same tunes but always something different. The same with Gil Evans and Cecil Taylor...unpredictability is very important. Jazz that is predictable is just the worst!"

Lacy's sense of discovery has led him to explore many aspects of sound and performance including his participation in the seminal 60s art group Musica Electronica Viva whose wild reworking of Webern songs and texts by luminaries Brion Gysin and Robert Creeley are duly regarded as some of the high points of 60s avant-garde. This has led to collaborations and compositions with The Living Theatre, the Kronos Quartet, and to Lacy's study of the shakuhachi.

Lacy's soprano work, stretching from Bechet to Derek Bailey and beyond, is truly revolutionary. It is almost impossible to

recommend a single current Lacy CD out of the five already released this year. But a good start is his series for Italy's Soul Note label of Monk compositions, or *Songs*, his collaboration with Gysin for Hat Art.

Dewey Redman is another pivotal player who has appeared on some of the most important recordings of the last 30 years. Originally from Texas, Redman went to school with Ornette Coleman and it was with Ornette that Dewey shot to prominence from 1967 to 1972. Redman's work on tenor has been much in demand: by Keith Jarrett for his American quartet recordings, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, and even Alice Coltrane, though Dewey is probably best known for his work in the sometime Ornette repertoire band of Old and New Dreams. Critic John Litweiler wrote of Redman's music in the late 70s that Redman "evolves distinct styles for the serious disparate concepts of Jarrett and Coleman. With Coleman's band his style is close to Ornette's but with others it is not...he has had a lifetime of listening, selecting and practising. For all this he remains one of the very fresh and brightest voices in contemporary music." Even more so today, his work on the Black Saint label with Old and New Dreams' *Tribute to Blackwell* will give you a good example of why Redman is so highly regarded. A recent recording, *African Venus*, with his son Joshua is also a stand out with Dewey on alto, and richly textured musette.

Ashley Russell

**"Oh, joy supreme",
we hear her scream,
"Alfredo!" In he flies.
It won't be long. Soon
she'll be strong.
All wrongs he'll
rectify.
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She starts to cough.
The trip is off.
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In the Air

Previewing the Sydney Spring International Festival of New Music

Roger Woodward's significant addition to Sydney's cultural life is on for the fifth time, the buzz in the air more Xenakis than bees. The first few festivals were regarded in certain quarters as late modernist tinklings and screeches, but the 1993 program opened out with works by Arvo Part and his Estonian peers. Of course, we should be grateful to hear anything twentieth century in Sydney, let alone Australian twentieth century, let alone packed into a couple of weeks by the intrepid Roger Woodward.

Things have improved in recent years thanks to the Seymour Group, Synergy, The Song Company and occasionally the Australian Chamber Orchestra and less than occasionally the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, not to mention some unusual contemporary Musica Viva programming - the Brodsky Quartet, The Edge, and the Balanescu Quartet - apparently the kind of programming that scared the subscribers into scaring Music Viva back into its old hole.

Woodward's Sydney Spring V extends its usual preoccupations with a remarkable and significant jazz input (Mike Nock, the Paul Grabowsky Trio, Judy Bailey with Sandy Evans, the Mark Simmonds Freeboppers, The Catholics), music that doesn't fit (Charlie Chan with the Lab), a celebration of Larry Sitsky's 60th birthday and, in association with Warners Classic Australia, performance and CD by The David Chesworth Ensemble of Chesworth's *The Exotica Suite*. There's a real bonus in the Hungarian percussion group Amadinda playing John Cage's 72 minute *Four 4* (1991).

You expect Cage, Bartok, Ligeti, Takemitsu, Xenakis, Messaien, and it's nice to see some Debussy, Weber, Bloch, Orff and Poulenc on the program with works you'll rarely if ever encounter live, but there are names like Szymanowski and Lourie who are beginning to be heard again (mostly on CD), and others like Roslavets, Mossolov, Taira, Bancqart, Essyad and many more plus a smattering of locals like Boyd and Brophy. Mostly you get one of each, two if you're lucky, and most run at no more than ten minutes. But these are important tastes, clues to be followed, solutions to names overhead or glimpsed but never placed.

The festival's press release announces that, "In the tradition of the Michael Nyman Band and the Gavin Bryars Orchestra, the David Chesworth Ensemble is the realisation of Chesworth's long-held wish to establish a permanent ensemble, capable of performing spectacular stage concerts of his music." Appropriately, they'll play Bryars' *The Old Tower of Lobenicht*. Also on the program are selections from Orff's *Schulwerk: Music for Kinder* ("made famous through its use in Terence Malick's cult movie *Badlands*) and two Chesworth works, *Exotica Suite* (the title also of the Warners Classics Australia CD to be launched at the 16th November concert at the Harbourside Brasserie) and *The Lacuna Suite*. *Exotica Suite* promises "a large and exotic percussion section" and music that "employs a complex network of cyclic melodies and rhythms". *The Lacuna Suite* has its origins in the 1992 Chamber Made Opera production *Lacuna*, a chamber opera in the form of a chess game

of personal and political strategies. The music is built from "non synchronous repeated melodic and rhythmic patterns." Chesworth's ensemble features members of My Friend the Chocolate Cake, the Deborah Conway Band, The Elision Ensemble and the Vince Jones Band.

Again at the Harbourside Brasserie, the site of some of the most interesting and odd contemporary music to be played in Sydney, Charlie Chan will present works live for the first time from her Sony CD released earlier this year. Her music is a curious combination of jazz, classical, ambient and theatrical influences (her compositions for theatre productions include *Akwanso - Fly South*, *Backstage Pass* and *Words Dancing on Water*). On the same October 24th program, Chan is supported by the lab, also with a debut CD on the Ra Tabel label. The lab "are working towards achieving a new genre that combines the acoustic with the technological in a way that allows space and ambience to exist alongside rhythm and feel."

Hungary's Amadinda Percussion Group appear at the Eugene Goossens Hall on October 25th. Formed in 1984, and by the end of the 80s focussing on percussion works of the 30s and 40s, they have committed themselves to recording all of John Cage's percussion works - with help from the composer before his death, including *Four 4* which he composed for them.

Amadinda's repertoire also includes African music and jazz, underlining the eclectic nature of Sydney Spring V. The event has increasingly opened itself to Australian composition and a greater range of forms. The volume of jazz in the program is a reminder that jazz (as internally diverse as it is) is an integral part of the modernism this festival celebrates. The inclusion of Chesworth, Chan and the lab is an acknowledgment of a new context and new possibilities. RT

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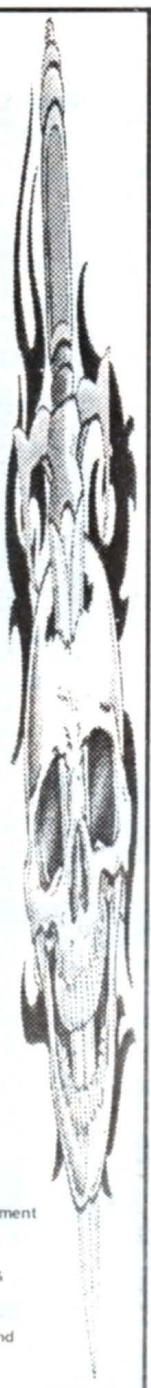
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HUNTER ORCHESTRA ROGER WOODWARD ROLAND PEELMAN	THE DAVID CHESWORTH ENSEMBLE/EXOTICA SUITE	JUDY BAILEY with SANDY EVANS	AUSTRALIA ENSEMBLE THE VIENNA CONCERT	SITSKY AT SIXTY	VIRTUOSO ARTAUD	PAUL GRABOWSKY TRIO	MIKE NOCK/MARK SIMMONDS FREEBOPPERS	CHARLIE CHAN "THE ADVENTURES OF" ... with The Lab	AMADINDA I EUGENE GOOSSENS HALL	AMADINDA II with Australian percus- sionists Daryl Pratt & Vanessa Tomlinson	ABC YOUNG PER- FORMER OF THE YEAR EUGENE GOOSSENS HALL	EUROCONCERT EUGENE GOOSSENS HALL
EUGENE GOOSSENS HALL	HARBOURSIDE BRASSERIE	HARBOURSIDE BRASSERIE	CLANCY AUDITORIUM	HALL	HALL	HARBOURSIDE BRASSERIE	EUGENE GOOSSENS HALL	HARBOURSIDE BRASSERIE	Hungarian Percussionists	Daryl Pratt & Vanessa Tomlinson	EUGENE GOOSSENS HALL	Pierre-Yves Artaud & Roger Woodward
Worldpremiere of Sitsky's Piano Concerto		All Bailey works, with Nova String Quartet	Mozart, Sitsky, Bloch	Lary Sitsky, Laura Chislett, Simon Tedeschi	Brophy, Radulescu, Cage	All new works by Grabowsky	New and recent works by Nock. New Birdland CD "Fire" by Mark Simmonds Freeboppers	First ever public perfor- mance of SONY Masterworks CD	play Cage's Four 4	ART GALLERY OF NSW Xenakis, Cage, Ligeti, African works	Clarinetist Elwyn Leonard plays Poulenc, Debussy	

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Composer to Composer

Sarah de Jong exchanges notes with Elena Katz

Sarah de Jong was interviewed in *Real Time 2*. She composed the music for *The Lights of Jericho* which won the 1994 Prix Italia for Radio Drama. Elena Katz-Chernin came to Australia from Russia with her family in 1975 and later lived and worked in Germany for fourteen years. She composed for a dance piece about Coco Chanel in May and her *Violin Concerto* was premiered by Peter Rundel and the *Ensemble Moderne* in June. In Australia, a five minute work has been commissioned for the opening of the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in October. A percussion work called *Clip* will be performed by Sydney's *The Seymour Group* also in October.

often forget how difficult things like this can be for a musician. But, it was his big moment.

SJ I'm in love with the viola, such a meaty sound. I first took to it when I heard John Cale of Velvet Underground.

EK The bottom register goes into your stomach. I use the string quartet for the basis of a lot of my work. The work is recorded for use in the production. Most German producers don't use live musicians.

SJ It's the same here.

EK It's not so much the finances in Germany, it's a strict tradition about what musicians are supposed to do on the stage. The director would feel they'd have to create a role for them, an angel for

I sampled the strings in a quartet, modulated them, played them backwards and so on to get that surreal sound. One director said to me that the best theatre music is the music you don't notice! You always have to fight for your rights.

SJ It's not so much fighting for me, it's more discussion to achieve an end you're both happy with.

EK But some directors change their mind every day.

SJ I hate directors like that.

EK They're usually the ones who are not sure of themselves.

SJ What was the Schnitzler?

EK *The Lonely Way* for the Schaubühne in Berlin for Andrea Breth, the director of the company. I worked

record them. I make them in the studio.

SJ But if you've got a Walkman you can recall what a sound was like.

EK It's like cooking. You mix the ingredients to get the right sound.

SJ When I was young I listened to the washing machine and the vacuum cleaner working out the makeup of the sounds.

EK In Germany there's a bus that sounds like strings! Almost electronic. Everytime I hear the bus I hear a piece by the composer Rihm. I've collected many sounds. Some from musicians like a marvellous flautist who could play great sounds and had a really unusual voice.

SJ Do you work with the same musicians?

EK When I can, especially for the string quartets - a group from the Hanover Radio Orchestra. We put down a lot of music very quickly. It's a very tight schedule. You can have everything ready and the timing of the play changes and you think, "Where will my music go?" You don't get second chances. These crises only happen occasionally. But when they happen and you've got four tape machines rolling in time with lines and lights ... and operators not familiar with the show ...

SJ For Griffin Theatre's *Passion* season we're using three machines.

EK You have to be quick, spontaneous -

SJ And think laterally, not sequentially. "What is another solution that I can find quickly that I know will have a chance of working?"

EK And have options for the director - until they trust you and go with what you come up with.

SJ Do you compose songs?

EK And sing them. It depends on the play and what the director wants.

Some lines in a play might become a song. I once worked on a small number of lines in Moliere's *The Misanthrope* to make a simple song.

SJ At the end of a production of *Blood Wedding* the actors were supposed to wail. It sounded terrible. Australian actors do wailing very badly. So, I scored the wailing and added some Spanish words from the original text.

It worked.

EK I want to do opera now. I have an idea.

SJ Me too. It will take time.

EK I've worked for nine years without stopping. I've come back to Australia from Germany -

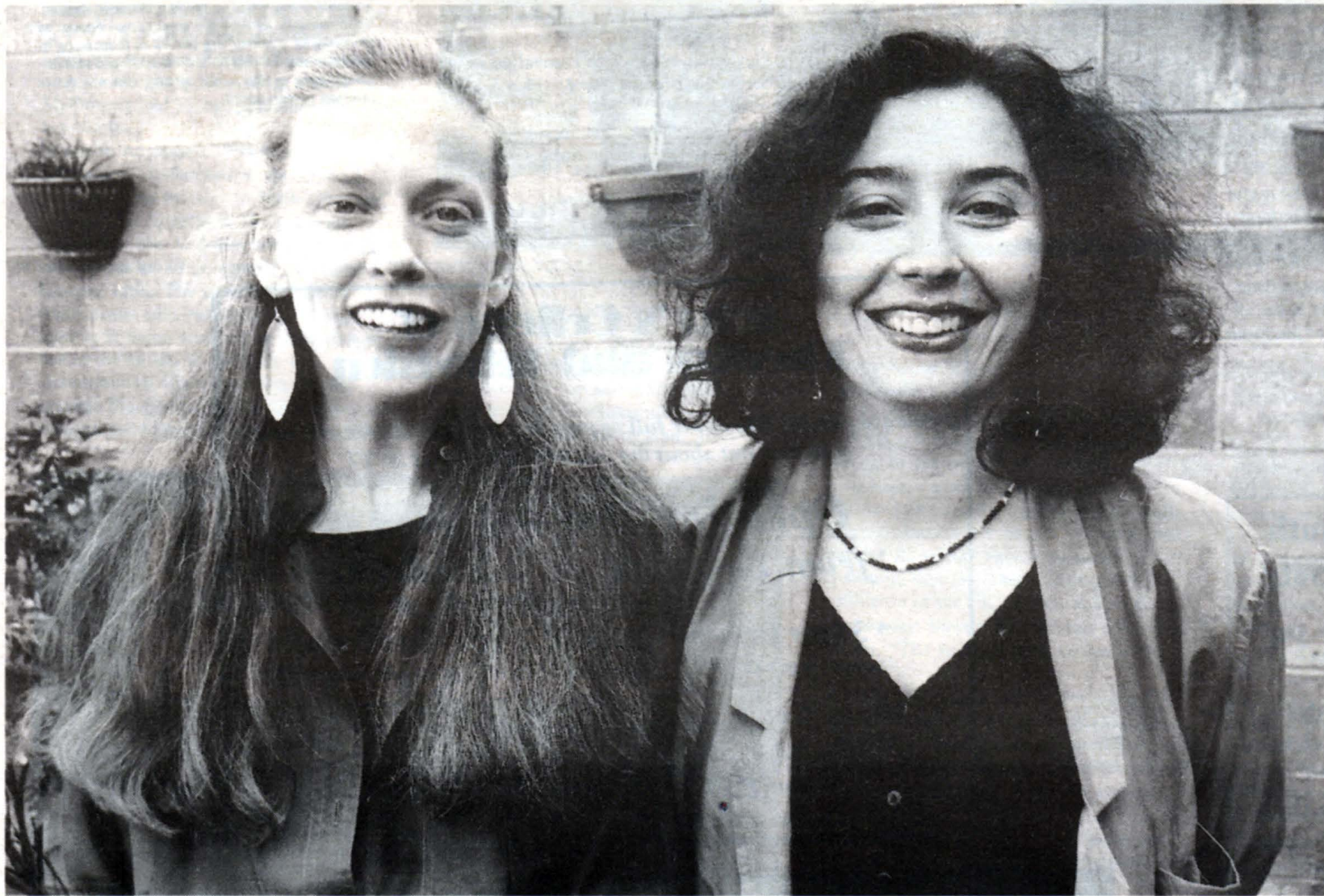
SJ Why?

EK It's better for my children. I like it here. The food is much better than in Germany! Since *The Clocks* I've wanted to write more works outside of the theatre. I've given myself the time and I've written three pieces. I miss the theatre but I need the peace and the space and no one to say "too loud" or "wrong instrument". It's been a good year.

SJ Why an opera?

EK I've seen a lot of modern opera, including Henze's festival of new opera in Munich. I suppose it's the idea of becoming the 100% composer, of making a big stage work—and I'm back in the theatre!

But opera is where words fail. Therefore I want to write an opera with only a few words and every word will be understood.



Sarah de Jong, Elena Katz-Chernin

EK I haven't worked a lot with musicians as on-stage performers. But I worked with Rhys Martin on *Dinosaur* for One Extra Dance Company in 1985 in Sydney. There were six dancers and musicians. They had to move, to speak, so I used very simple things like *Happy Birthday* to work from. The final effect was that you didn't know where movements and words began or left off. I enjoyed that.

SJ In *Drowning in a Sea of Dreams* for One Extra this year, I used a viola player, a good improviser, as a performer. He worked from the material I gave him. Cellos are impossible to move about. Quite often my work has musicians on stage.

EK For me this is pretty rare. I did it with Rhys and recently with the Ensemble Moderne. It took them at least two weeks before they became really free. Not every musician can improvise.

SJ And others don't do it very well.

EK I had an improvising viola player for Wedekind's *Spring Awakening*.

He had to walk and play in the dark and through a narrow space. Directors

example or a 'real' musician. So it was pre-recorded soundtracks and the freedom for me to explore the string quartet. I'd write it and add something else - me playing the piano or singing, improvising, add a trumpeter. Every time I went to the studio I'd also take an object, anything, something to make a noise with, sample it, turn bubbling into a glass of water into an earthquake, whatever. Always improvising, little by little building up a sound archive, visiting the studio twice a week for nine years in Germany.

SJ What role do sounds play in composing?

EK The cue for my work is often visual. The set design is in very early, two months before rehearsal (German theatre is very heavily funded, heavily planned) and I respond to the model and especially to lighting ideas, to colour. I did a Schnitzler that was done in blue light and water and looked surreal. I couldn't use real instruments but I didn't want to go as far as electronic (many directors there are allergic to the sound of synthesizers) and acoustic sound is not so good (they say it sounds like someone playing next door), so

with her about six times.

SJ Do you enjoy collaboration?

EK I love it. She's the one who brought the most out of me. There's a dance director, Reinhild Hoffman, who I met through Rhys -

SJ Who I met in 1979 when he was part of One Extra when I did *The King Stag* for Rex Cramphorn and Chrissie Koltai.

EK Hoffman does German tanztheater.

SJ Have you done any work for radio?

EK Never. I'm interested but too busy plus having two children plus travelling - Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna. I'd be writing concert and recording pieces like *The Clocks* in the middle of rehearsals for *Spring Awakening* and writing for *Peer Gynt* at the same time!

SJ It's not as busy here and the planning is not as tight, but outside theatre and dance, I do work regularly in radio mostly in collaboration with Jane Ulman, most recently *The Lights of Jericho*. Sound is very important to me.

EK Every time I walk I think how the steps are sounding. What kind of floor it is? Is there rain? The click of a light turned on. Too many cars. But I don't

Sandy Edwards

Sport

Tooth and Claw

with Jack Rufus

What are the cruellest words on television? Without a doubt they are these, coming after a pitiful two hours' broadcast of international cricket: "Local viewers will leave us now." So final, so irrevocable. A sinking feeling as the screen goes blank, followed by despair as an inane game show comes on where the cricket should be.

With the summer season coming up, it's time for the big decisions to be made. Complete and uninterrupted coverage of every ball bowled. Give the game of cricket completely over to its true master, television. There are great advantages in this. Crowds can be computer-generated, saving cricket lovers the trouble of actually going to the game. Crowd noise could be provided by computer audio programs, complete with current clichés: "Turn it up." "He's been doing it all day." "Records are made to be broken."

Why not go all the way? Computer-animate the players, the umpires, even the seagulls. Interactive programs could be introduced to keep the viewers involved. Steve Waugh's outswinger not working? Press a button and see the ball swing majestically at a 45 degree angle, catching the edge of Graham Hick's pathetically probing bat! In a bad mood? Take it out on the Pommie batsmen, as McDermott and Hughes send down bouncer after bouncer at three times their normal speed! Gambling, corruption and sheer sadistic violence will reach new heights in the all-digital no-holds-barred game of the future: CYBER-CRICKET.

Tee Off

with Vivienne Inch

Golf has its urban myths and old golfers tell the one about the player caught in a bunker, bashing away at the ball until he buried himself in sand never to be seen again. That's why the recent public pronouncements of poet Les Murray rang a bell as I teed off today. Here is a major player who has impressed us with psychologically complex descriptions of Australian character, his subtle evocations of Australian landscape. Now Les, having driven himself into a bunker of his own creation, is chopping away, sending up clouds of doggerel, disinterring the man-on-the-land as our national symbol! the spirit of the nation in bushfire heroics! and the final divot - you beaut a book of Redneck Verse! A tip from the experts, Les. You don't need a sand wedge. Go in with a pitching wedge or even a 9 iron and try to play a little chip shot, making sure you take the ball out clean. Don't take a big swipe - just play a gentle chip aimed directly at the target. Adopt an open stance to help the hands come through. Get out and get on with it.

What's next

What Next? — Real Time — December 1994 — January 1995

Holiday Special — Responsible Escapism and Bizarre Gift-Giving

CD Survey: MDS Spoken Word, Tall Poppies, Birdland, ABC FM Listening Room, Shock Records

Culture Rash - new books on Australian pop culture, suburbia, techno-arts and digital gardening

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Survey: Jane Goodall rides the wave of new books on performance

Dance, theatre & performance videos — where to find them?

Experiencing Nigel Kellaway's This Wicked Body

Dance Inc. W.A. and Green Mill preview Performance on Film- Lesley Stern on Gena Rowlands

Perth and Sydney Festivals and Sydney's first Fringe

Gay and Lesbian Film Festival preview Stephen Cummins film & video retrospective

The Performance of Shopping — the Remo Department Store and other manifestoes

Weddings — writing vows.

The celebrant speaks

Back page photographs by Emil Goh

Installation:
Conversation, First Draft, September, Sydney

Photographer Emil Goh talks about Conversation

The impulse for this work came from life in Malaysia. Everyone carries ID plus credit cards, driver's licence, club membership. Some people carry 25 cards. The computers that track your existence are all related. If you're further out socially, you're less documented, in fact if you don't have a credit rating you don't exist. Without a driver's licence in the US you are no-one. It's getting that way here in Australia. The nature of this documentation of people's lives drove the installation I created.

You walk into a very dark room. You become aware that you are changing the levels of green and red light. Some people move wildly thinking that it's movement that changes the light, others sense sound, most people whisper - maybe it's the darkness, like a church. Some freak and leave. When they speak loudly enough, they trigger a camera on the edge of a square which marks out an area of high activity. Some are surprised. They want to know if their photo has been taken, reacting as if to security camera. Others try to activate the flash. Some taunt the camera or jokily perform to it as they might to authority. They don't know what will happen to the pictures just as with credit and ID data.

The two cameras sample sound every few seconds and establish a base line level, say 40%, above which they are triggered to take a photograph with a flash. The cameras rotate 0-60 degrees randomly - they are motorised and linked to the film transport system. Both cameras were off the shelf Konica Kanpai built primarily for documenting parties by responding to sound. I stood these on special monopod stands constructed by Rod Nash - simple, stable - 1.5m, average human height.

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At Short Notice

...on paper

Readings at Sydney's Ariel Booksellers throughout October will include Will Self, Patrick McCabe, Shashi Tharoor, Rohinton Mistry and British crime-writer Minette Walters. Robert Adamson and Michael Wilding in November. Christina Thompson, new editor of Meanjin hopes that the latest issue (Pearls before Swine) on Australian theatre criticism will become a text book for theatre studies courses and reminds us that the 1984 issue edited by Jack Hibberd (who'll launch the 1994 issue) is also worthy of the status of text book with articles by Ruth Cracknell, Ron Hadrick, Errol O'Neill, Claire Dobbin, Hilary Glow, Ros Horin and David Kendall. Everyone should read E. Annie Proulx's The Shipping News and Postcards and catch her if you can at the Melbourne Writers' Festival or at Sydney's Gleebooks. 200 Gertrude Street in conjunction with the Melbourne Writers' Festival presents Critical Factors. Six speakers from the visual artists discuss writing about art and the writers who've influenced them. Saturday Oct 15, Malthouse.

....on foot

Tasdance at Sydney's Performance Space Oct 13-16 with Faster than Photos - works by Nanette Hassall, Neil Adams, Sue Healy and New York's Stephen Petronio. Canberra's Vis a Vis dance Succulent Blue Sway in Canberra October 8-16 and Melbourne in January. The always intriguing ("If genitals are the only road to new expression, whose will we see?") Dance Collection in its 1994 incarnation will fill the Performance Space October 26-November 6. At the same venue, top notch workshops with Rosalind Crisp, Dean Walsh and Russell Dumas from October-December. Feral Feats are performing Different People for the 1994 Melbourne Fringe Festival at the Women's Gallery, Fitzroy Oct 8-9 to the music of Mara!

...on the street

The Newtown Thing - Newtown Festival 94 opens with Walking the Street, Newtown Square Saturday Oct 29 from 6 pm with drummers, stilt-walkers, performance poets, fireworks and participating shop-fronts displaying the work of local artists - 2 kms of art. Performances include Dark Fire at Victoria Park Pool and This Thing The Body at the TJ Andrews Funeral Parlour ("throwing open the lids") Director of Melbourne Festival's Outdoor Program, Tony Strachan has programmed Snuff Puppets (child like creatures and gargantuan figures); The Field (dream figures mounted on poles with minds focussed on flight - a kinetic forest through which the audience pass); Tea Ceremony performed by The Men Who Knew Too Much, celebrating tea at tea tables with "tea dances"; Raft Network's Concrete Mountains - a horizontal mountain climbing concept; Legs on the Wall's Clearance - the madness and joy of shopping; The Table - a reminder of the tables of our pasts. Desperate and Dangerous Divas (see page 3) and The Window Man performed in Myers Little Bourke Street display window featuring humans, dummies, everyday objects and budgerigars. See most of the programme at Southgate daily Oct 13 - 29.

...on the fringe

Kayt Arthur previews the Melbourne fringe Festival: This year's program consists of 200 events, and features an unprecedented contingency of interstate and overseas artists. The film and video component includes a first class selection of works from the USA, Australia, England and the Netherlands. The music program has been strengthened by the inclusion of diverse talents like the a capella group Nude Rain and Richard Lewis who will be simulating the jack-hammer throb of Tom Waits' tunes. "The festival has more shape this year," says Director Charlotte Yates, "There will still be duds, but Fringe is managing 27 events. In the past, the open access policy meant the absence of selection criteria. Now we're taking a directorial role and festival-goers can look forward to some of the best from the independent arts arena." Fringe Performance will premiere performances of no more than 15 minutes as part of the National Theatre Showcase (National Theatre, St Kilda). IRAA Theatre will present a program of Austrian theatre and music from Vienna: Theatre Ohne Grenzen. Hugh McSpedden's computer generated art in Blow Up explores a new and stimulating area. Sign Here will feature poster art at bus stops and The Fringe Maze, a life-size outdoor gallery, will display the work of 80 artists. The Writers' Program, co-ordinated by Karen James, boasts books as objects in the exhibition Limited Editions: Beauty and the Book at the State Library of Victoria. "Of our 1,500 members, half are residents of Fitzroy, while the other half come from across the river in St Kilda." To reflect this, activities will take place across the CBD, St Kilda and Fitzroy. "Fringe as an idea should reinvent itself. The unofficial theme of this year's festival is resurgence." She adds with a laugh, "It feels like it." Melbourne Fringe Festival 1994, October 2 - 22.

...on film

Following the success of the first film festival in

Sydney's western suburbs earlier this year, Director, Hunter Corday has announced Film West, a series of monthly Sunday screenings at Greater Union Campbelltown. Season includes Traps, The Wedding Banquet, Love and Human Remains and Riff Raff plus a showcase of new Australian short films at every session. Sydney Intermedia Network is hosting Films from the Land of 7,107 Islands - short films from the Philippines curated by Virginia Hilyard Wednesday October 12 at Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. White Gloves the only National Film Festival of silent, black and white, shoot to show films in the world does one night stands at Melbourne's Lounge Oct 8 & 15, Sydney's Kinselas, Oct 26 and Brisbane's Cafe Neon, Oct 28. Believe it or not John Reid from Canberra School of Art presents his documentation of The Fishman of SE Australia at the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne Oct 3 - an oral/visual work for enthusiasts and sceptics alike. The No-Name Big Little Picture Show an exhibition and sale of small photographs at Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne November 5 & 6. September 30-October 30 CCP presents Ipso Photo, four installations by Chris Fortescue, Margaret Roberts, Marie Sierra-Hughes, Philip Watkins dissolving boundaries between the photo and the non photo. Photographs by Michael Riley (Fence Sitting) and Destiny Deacon (Smiling Dangerously) at Hogarth Galleries, Sydney until Oct 15

...on disc

In the first of its Blur Blue Series, leading to the Year 2000 Olympics, the Goethe-Institut presents Sound Studio (see page 10) at The Performance Space, Benjamin Bagby's Bardic Solo Recital, Beowulf and Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss, one of Europe's finest chamber orchestras playing Ligeti, Piazzolla (the Concerto for Bandoneon and Orchestra) and others - throughout October. Fremantle Arts Centre's Courtyard Music through to December includes Blue Grass Parkway, Flamingo Club, Tuxedo Junction, Phil Garland and the Bush Telegraph, Western Australian Mandolin Orchestra, ARC and the Rita Menendez Band. Bassist Steve Hunter launches his solo CD on the Tall Poppies label at Strawberry Hills Hotel, Wednesday October 19. AustaLysis present Interactions between Asian and Australian Musics on December 3 at the Sydney Conservatorium with Riley Lee guesting, music by Akira Miyoshi, Peter Sculthorpe and Toru Takemitsu.

...in performance

Brisbane's Metro Arts (phone 07-2211527) is presenting an extensive programme of experimental theatre, performance, electronics, interactive multimedia installation and time-based sculpture. Call Joseph O'Connor for more information. Sighted recently at Sidetrack's Contemporary Performance Week 5 Annette Tesoriero in a Rossinian display of operaticism, a celebration of voice, gut and breath or an investigation into opera, image and pornography performed with French horn and viola. In the repertoire. Legs on the Wall's new work Wildheart "leaps across the chasm of lust and morality" and opens at the Wharf Theatre, Sydney December 6.

...on the boards

More perversion! Robert Draffin is directing Rigoletto drawing on Verdi's opera as well as the source of his work, Victor Hugo's The King Amuses Himself. Performed in a carnivale setting by Melbourne's Theatreworks with a strong cast of singers and actors. Auto Da Fe Theatre Company's Felliniada a theatrical mass in tribute to Federico Fellini on the first anniversary of his death written and directed by Lech Mackiewicz. Fellini characters cross paths with the maestro's own story. The play includes footage of FeFe never before seen in Australia. At Belvoir Street Theatre October. For an evening of sthick intelligence try Jackie Mason, controversial, award-winning New York comic at The State Theatre Sydney December 14, Melbourne Concert Hall December 20. Chris Thomson's The Grimmuss is performed by actors 5-14 years old at the Randall Theatre at St. Martin's Centre for Youth Arts - a fantasy set in a time before time where age and wisdom give way to a young girl's intelligence.

...on techno-art

Futurama Art and Technology Expo has announced an extension for submissions to January 1995. Artists (including designers, performers, architects, musicians, media artists) should write to A.I.P. GPO Box 835G, Melbourne 3001.

...on the eyes

At Perth's Court Hotel, Northbridge Oct 1-30 CorpoRealities - with bodies female, gay and pierced, in charcoal, colour pen dogs, I have dogs in my pictures"). Nov 30 at AGNSW. At 200 Gertrude Street Melbourne - works by Kate Brennan, Damien Bisogni, Jennifer Joseph and Sean Loughrey. The Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre Site and Symbol, 32 works by artists including Tim Burns, Ian Friend, Denise Campbell, Robyn McKinnon and others. At Gallery Manuka, Canberra, That's such a pretty dress dear Oct 1-5-Nov 6, an installation by Canberra artist Fiona Davies and The Great Divide, an installation by Canberra artists, Christine James and Sharon Peoples Nov 16-Dec 11. Artspace, The Guntery Woolloomooloo until October 15 Imagination and Metonymy (John Nixon and Lindy Lee), Disclosure - works by Kerry Polliness, Philip Watkins and others. October 21-Dec 3 Attempting Democracy (Catherine Rogers), Inhabit me (like a memory) by Neil Emmerson. In Melbourne Mambo Makes the Emperor's New Clothes (Art Irritates Life) Westpac Gallery, Victorian Art Centre Nov 1 - Dec 4.

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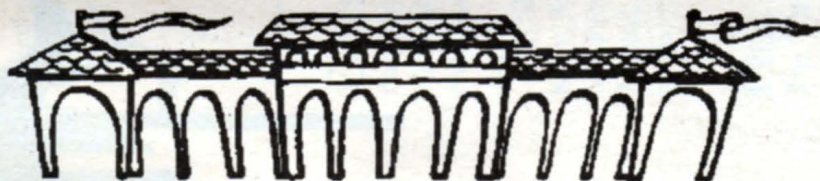
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