

# THE ACT

## PERFORMANCE

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## PERFORMANCE PROJECT

# THE ACT

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The Act

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## NOTES

### This Issue

#### The Body

We will presume that the body is a construction, and we will seek here to treat it in metaphoric and metaphysical ways. Our perspective, outside of biomolecular and bioengineering restraints, extends further for we do not resort to analysis or critical method<sup>1</sup>. Instead, here is the introspective and non-intersubjective.

What we present here are reports of immediate experience, without any agreement on the body in question. Thus, we offer ways of *being of* and *being about*. We offer a sort of basic research.

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<sup>1</sup> We would have liked to present a critical history of embodiment.

## The Journal

### Our purpose is to:

- present a wide range of activity and methods.
- provide an open space for representations to “push and pull and tumble about.”
- re-value “performance” with emphasis on the non-spectacle.
- let the artist speak.
- empower the reader, holding open areas where the reader can act: in addition to being a witness and, above all, more than just a passive witness!
- provide a forum where both artists and critics can address issues on an equal basis, where it is presumed that both address important issues with different methods and forms.
- give voice to the complex and subtle rather than pursuing convenient argument and model building. (“Would it not be rather probable that precisely the most superficial and external aspect of existence—what is most apparent, its skin and sensualization—would be grasped first—and might even be the only thing that allowed itself to be grasped?”—F. Nietzsche).
- allow artists to control the presentation of their work, rather than letting it be used as fodder for commercial enterprise or even *commercial-enterprise-as-art*.

## Jacques Chwat Memoriam



Jacques Chwat. Actor, Director, Teacher, Editor.

*In the theater which was Jacques' life-long love the search is always for the truth, for authenticity. We struggle towards psychic and physical disarmament. To unmask. To be simple. To be authentic. To be. Oneself. Jacques had no persona. He was truly remarkable in that sense. I have never met anyone quite like him. He was there like an oak. Available. Present. He simply couldn't lie or dissemble. He was totally without pretense. What you saw was what and who he was. In all of its complex simplicity. To know Jacques as a friend or a colleague was an illumination, a signpost: this way to the veracity of self. This is probably why he was so loved as a teacher. He was so truly himself that in his very presence he symbolized the highest goal of the theater: truth, simplicity, and natural dignity through which we sense the awesome mystery of man.*

—Andre Gregory

## JACQUES CHWAT (1935-1988)

*Jacques Chwat died of Kaposi's sarcoma on the 8th floor of a building on 88th Street, on 8-8-88. The calendrical alignment would have seemed somehow significant to him, a perfect confluence. For he was in many ways a cabalist who found in circumstances and events the glow of all that which is evanescent and translucent.*

*Throughout his life he walked among the living, guided by the dead. He dwelled instantaneously in the present, for the future with the past. He would trot out faded photographs of relatives long dead, and you would know them and make them live. He returned to his source in an earlier St. Petersburg, to his birthplace in Vilna, to his Eden in Paris. He chronicled his life in countless agendas, recording its skywriting, surrounding himself with the vapor of its trail.*

*Understanding was more important for him than knowledge. I think that he was fundamentally agnostic of ever knowing the truth as other than a philosophical conceit. For him the theater was capable only of illuminating its fringes, never of demarcating the continuum of its structures and terrain. He was adept in this world, playing its games and laughing at its jokes, but he also had an affinity for those who read the forbidden books. His was a dark soul. Only later in his life could one begin to take the measure of its shadows.*

*For him the locus of the theatrical act was a way station, the checkpoint in which the passports of our lives are stamped and visas inspected. I think he knew that, to pass the frontier, we would ultimately have to leave them behind.*

—Joel Honig

## The Art of the Beginner

Jerzy Grotowski

(tr. Jacques Chwat)

...Peter Brook talked to me about the "principlum of the beginner" found among the Samurai. (The same example is used by some Zen masters.) When a Samurai has mastered all the skills and has, to all appearances, arrived at the optimum of practical or, let us say, "technical" knowledge, he must let it all go, discard everything and behave as a beginner. It is said that if he is unable to discard a warrior's knowledge, if he cannot become a foolish child — an animal or a force of nature — then he will be killed. To confront the "opponent" like the Unknown, to remember that this battle may be the last (and hence *the only* battle). To forget all skill, to be completely without skill, to be almost as in a dream: only then, when the warrior is able to not be busy with the thought of victory, does he have a chance...

In seeking a natural state we have two possibilities. The first is by means of training, later abolished, just as in the art of the Samurai, beginning with conscious mastery, on to almost unconscious mastery, then on to the principle of a conditioned reflex, and finally, mastery of the warrior's skills. But at the point that he becomes a *real* warrior he must forego everything.

The second possibility is through untaming. From the moment of our birth we are conditioned, tamed, in everything: how to see, how to hear, how to be, how to eat, how to drink, what is what, what is possible, what impossible. But this second possibility (of untaming the tamed) is very difficult.

When I visited the Peking Opera just before the Cultural Revolution, I saw their classic production of "The Monkey King" where the same role was played one day by a father, the next day by his son. All the elements of the role were identical because in that theater everything is codified — the signs are all the same. I didn't see any difference. Yet I noticed that the public was enchanted by the father's playing the first day and much less enthusiastic with the son's playing the following day. I asked about this and was told, "It is because the son perspires under his arms while somersaulting." In other words, the son was still at a stage where his training was visible, while the father — who undoubtedly trained daily — had evidently forgotten all about training during the performance. This is an example of the *first* possibility. By means of training (or technique used in the classical Greek sense where *techne* means art), the father exemplifies the attainment of freedom through technique...

In a Catholic culture there clearly exists yet a third possibility, the "state of grace" (unpredictable as it may be). A man is about to cross an abyss. He approaches the edge, sees that the abyss is enormous and that there is a tree trunk, a thin tree trunk, connecting both sides. He looks into the abyss, hesitates, then retreats. Then he sees a blind man with a cane who approaches the trunk, touching it all the while with his cane, walking across the fallen trunk unaware that there is an abyss. Can we seek a "state of grace?"

...When we speak of the art of the beginner we speak of beginning, beginnings. What does it mean to be in the beginning? Does it mean to look for historical beginnings, to look for something that once was? Can we ask how performance began, how it originated, how it developed? Yes, we can ask. But that is not what I am talking about, because in thinking of beginnings we often think of children, but in sentimental terms (forgetting the child's ruthlessness, egotism, cruelty), rather than the other, extraordinary side of the child which lives in beginnings: for the child everything happens for the first time. The forest he enters is his first forest. Yet for us, conditioned as we are, our intellectual computer is so programmed that every forest — even one that we enter for the first time — is the same, and we repeat to ourselves, "This is a forest" despite the fact that even the same forest changes constantly...

• • •

Goal orientation is the difficult problem. What is necessary is work, effort, determination — the purposefulness of the work: *making for the center, cutting through a passage*. But purposefulness and goal-orientation are two different things. What is goal-orientation? We have been conditioned by goal-oriented thinking, first to have some conception or plan, then to make efforts for its realization. Then what is causal orientation? Essentially, the existence of certain causes, perhaps like seeds, that we are able to discover, then either encourage or discourage. Rather than prepare a blueprint, in terms of its effect, prepare a range of opportunities — from the seed. Goal-orientation, which may turn out to be useful when applied to certain spheres of life, is simply a mistake in others, or in certain cases, even a disaster. Nineteenth-century physics is said to be mechanistic in character: they imagined that it would be possible to construct an ideal model. Today, however, when we enter a world of either *micro* or *macro* dimensions we find ourselves in an "organic world" — precisely the same term used by Stanislavsky: organic. The contemporary physicists said, "It is as if I saw two trees, or three, or even five trees. They are a manifestation of the same phenomena, yet each one is different. Each physical phenomenon has its own 'individuality' and is different. It is organic and not mechanistic." Where does the difference lie? The "Organic" springs from a seed within which exists a "cause" which is allowed to be acted out. It is something that comes, as it were, from the roots, and is permitted to exist — not something springing from some conceptual model and duplicated blueprints going toward some final point...



## The Planetary Bar is a Very Interesting Place

Jerzy Grotowski

(tr. Jacques Chwat)

...Daily life for many people is like an enormous restaurant or bar where everyone is just looking for drinks, around which is an entire psychodrama of fear and illusory aspirations. If I don't do what is accepted then it's catastrophic: begin dinner in France with cheese, before soup and the main course: an outrage! It's the same in the theater if a director, instead of mounting one production after another, says, "No, I don't want to continue along this route." Or let's say that you have achieved a certain position; agreeable as it may be, you have already achieved it: to hold onto it is stupid; you must let go. But that means having your cheese before your soup: the world expects you to hold onto it — these are the conventions and illusions of the bar. Some cry, some say they're failures, many are drunk. Each makes his confession revealing his nostalgia. Half of modern creation consists of cries of nostalgia shared with spectators, of a nostalgia for a different way of living, a different life. Like Marmeladov in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* who, when drunk, says that he is drinking up all the family money, a fool who sends his daughter into the streets to sell herself. It's all true: he *is* drinking up all the family money. What he reveals is a great nostalgia for living differently. And this moment where Marmeladov reveals this nostalgia, this is habitual creation. All agree that it must change. Marmeladov begins his day with drink, remains drunk, never leaving the bar: the moments of drunkenness and blithering about it free him from any effort to do anything else. You must know how to crash through this drunkenness and do away with it. Or admit, as many do, that it's a natural part of your existence. Because for many it is natural... Some are very wise and accept; they are, after all, the people who built our whole civilization. It may not be perfect; you either accept it or leave the bar. It takes courage. Each of our experiences of leaving for five minutes only to return is one that has failed... Often one can only let go of what one already possesses. Gandhi once said that in order not to use violence you must be capable of violence — because otherwise it is not non-violence, it is simply a lack of courage... Take care of *your* needs. If you need to live on the margin of society, live on the margin, consciously, without thinking of it as a temporary measure. (For me, personally, that's not at all the way. I think that one must live in the very heart of society, then when one wishes, to turn toward the margin). If you are constantly on the margin, don't regret it by thinking, "I can't live the way my parents did; I wish to live differently; I'll do this for three or four years, and then I shall return to my parents' way." Very strange! In that case, isn't it then better to compete with your parents' good example and do what your parents dreamt of but never dared to do? What's essential is whether you go into the bar the way Marmeladov did *or* just in good humor, just with some interest in it. The planetary bar is a very interesting place: have a drink and become part of it. Live outside the bar. Return to it?

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**NOTE:** *The two texts published above are short excerpts from two different lectures held in 1978. The first took place in Warsaw (at a conference for the International Festival of Theatre) and the second in New York City (a lecture I gave at the Performance Garage organized by New York University). The excerpts of these two texts were chosen and translated by Jacques Chwat; he asked me a long-time ago to authorize the publishing of them in **The ACT**. (They were not originally destined to appear in this issue on *The Body*.) I asked him why he chose these fragments especially. He answered: It might seem strange but I think they're important for stage directors.*

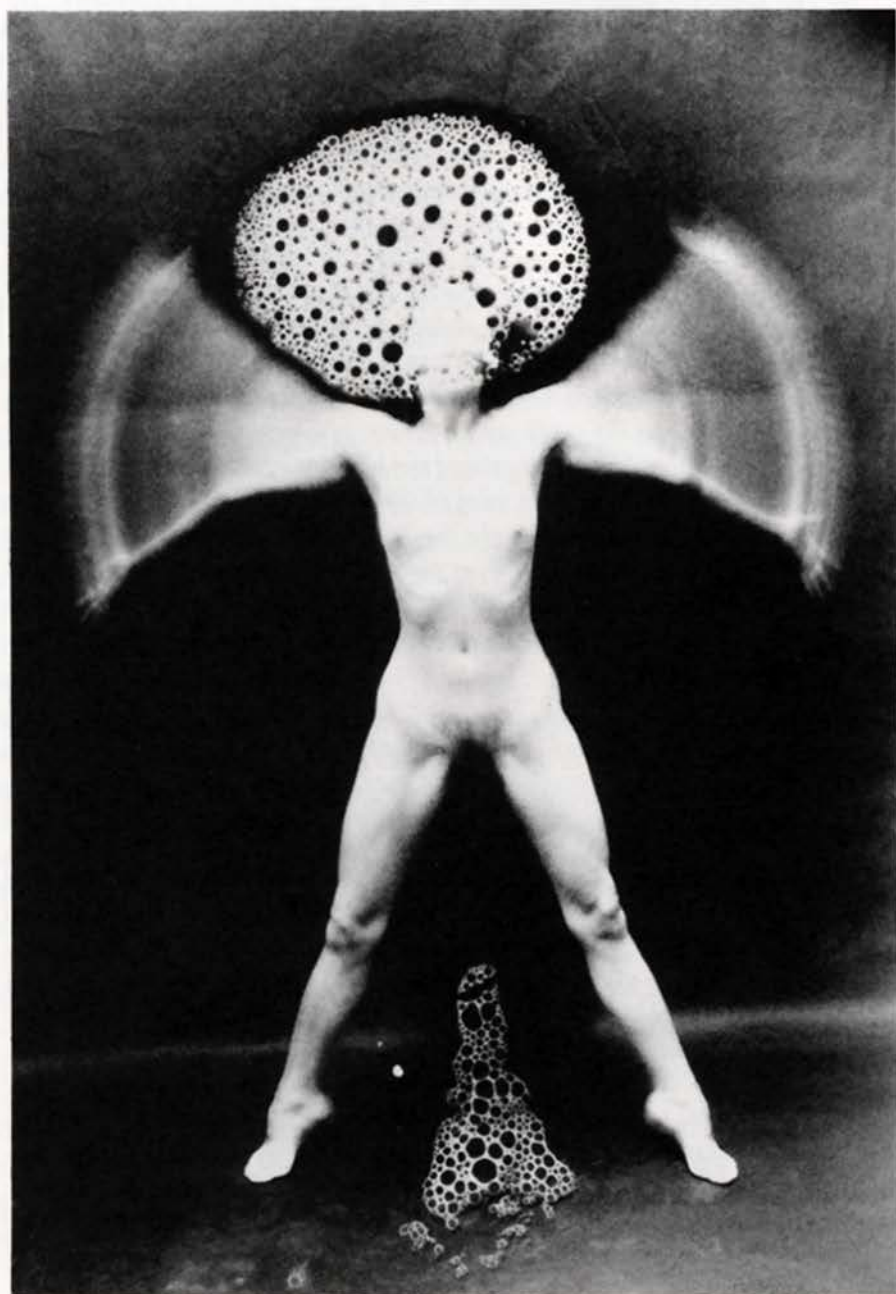
*"Important for stage directors": Jacques Chwat approached his profession, his craft, with seriousness and integrity. Almost striking was the modesty when he formulated artistic objectives and the constancy when he struggled to accomplish them. His professional code can be put in a few short sentences: work in a solid manner, not for yourself as director, but for the actors; never accept directing without a feeling of full responsibility and don't approach any task mechanically, from routine; assure the proper length of time for working with the actors and accept directing only when personally well-prepared. Along with stage directing, Jacques Chwat was very committed to his work as professor of Stage Directing at Hunter College. Some years ago he invited me to Hunter college to speak to his students about the basic principles of "montage" of the performance. He said he wanted me to speak to the future directors about technique, about the craft, but precisely from the perspective of the highest artistic demand — of which the measure and incarnation is Constantin Stanislavsky — so not from the perspective of any commercialism. This is the reason for my invitation, he said.*

*When I met him last summer in New York City, he said that the most important thing for him is simply to work. And he specified the teaching of directing at Hunter College and the work as editor of **The ACT**, which had become for him a very important matter. "C'est tout."*

*I met him more than 20 years ago at New York University when he appeared as a volunteer to help me with instant-translation during a long, practical workshop which I conducted there with Ryszard Cieslak for a select group of students and professors of acting and directing. Many times, through these many years, he accompanied me during lectures in this capacity of instant-translator. But it was always clear that in no way is he just an ordinary translator, but rather a professional colleague with knowledge of the material and real involvement in the matters, a stage director himself, who didn't just know several languages (and so was translating), but who knew and understood the nature of our craft. And who wanted to serve this craft, on the one hand, because of others, and on the other, because of himself.*

— J.G.

# THE



Untitled. Ruby Ray

# BODY

**The knees  
and higher up  
the shoulders**

**The neck  
and higher up  
the eyes**

*The Book of Questions, Edmond Jabes*

"What is eaten is the sunlight. What is excreted is the dark night. The breath of life is the clouds, and the blood is the rain that falls on the world."

"The joints are the most important part of man."  
*Conversations with Ogotemmel, An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas, by Marcel Griaule.*

## THE NOBLE CASTLE

15. Why men are not born with horns or other weapons.
19. Why the nose is located above the mouth.
23. What opinions should be held concerning visions.
30. Why, as one can see from the darkness into the light, one cannot similarly see from the light into the darkness.
32. Why hay is the cause of weeping.
36. Why the fingers were made unequal.
38. Why men cannot walk when they are born, as animals do.
46. Why the living are afraid of dead bodies.

The most striking natural instrument of power in man and in many animals is the teeth. The way they are arranged in rows and their shining smoothness are quite different from anything else belonging to the body. ...*Smoothness and order*, the manifest attributes of the teeth, have entered into the very nature of power.  
*Crowds and Power, Elias Canetti*

With beauty may I walk.  
With beauty before me, may I walk.  
With beauty behind me, may I walk.  
With beauty above me, may I walk.  
With beauty below me, may I walk.  
With beauty all around me, may I walk.  
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty,  
lively, may I walk.  
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty,  
living again, may I walk.  
It is finished in beauty.  
It is finished in beauty.

*Navajo Night Chant. Healing Ceremony in  
Ritual of the Wind, Jamake Highwater*

two: But this is a brick.  
Your heart is a brick.

one: But it beats only for  
you.

*HEARTPIECE, Heiner Muller*

*Scream with your toes!*  
*Your eyes!*  
*Your back!*  
*Your stomach!*  
*Your legs!*  
*Your whole body!*  
*Scream loud!!*

*from: Theater Games For  
Rehearsal, Viola Spolin*

In the beginning there was nothing but mere appearance, nothing really existed. It was a phantasm, an illusion that our father touched; something mysterious it was that he grasped. Nothing existed. Through the agency of a dream our father, He-who-is-appearance-only, Nainema, pressed the phantasm to his breast and then was sunk in thought.

*A belief of the Uitoto of Colombia,  
in Primitives to Zen,  
by Mircea Eliade  
taken from  
K.T. Preuss,  
Religion and Mythologie der Uitoto*

## NEWS ANIMATIONS

### Simone Forti

I've been dancing the news. Talking and dancing, being all the parts of the news. The movement is very gestural, the kind of gesture that happens when one is speaking, explaining and describing, but here the gesture takes on the whole body. What is being explained is a personal vision: that flickering, fluid vision of the world, that we each have, that vision which is fed by the news media. It's a dream-like vision, with visual, kinetic, and verbal components.

I always begin a performance by carrying in a pile of newspapers and using them to make a path to walk on. Often I start in darkness, except for a flashlight dangling from my waist that fitfully illuminates feet, newspapers, and busy hands. Somewhere along the way I get the idea for what topic I'm going to start with, I turn the flashlight off and the lights come on as I shape the papers around on the floor making them into maps, and start talking and animating the human dramas above ground, interwoven with the seismic/tectonic dramas below.

In a way, I work these world activity images, work them out through my body as energy models. I figure the whole of it out in space, trying to sketch all the information out in physical space, to see what my body knowledge of it is.

Though I never know what I'm going to get into in performance, I do have a lot of riffs that start to weave in. And I try to always get into some new stuff, especially if there's something I've been wanting to get my hands into and I don't quite know how to do it. Some wonderful goofy images sometimes present themselves. In a performance I did last weekend, the first thing that came to me was to make myself a bed in the newspapers and to start in about

### Transcript of Work Session at Madbrook Farm 7/26/86 (Excerpt)

When I was traveling a lot from country to country I was always happy to find an English language newspaper. And to hear my language and have that familiar material in my hands. And whether it was Holland or Japan, or Italy, I could always find *The International Herald Tribune* and very familiar stories, follow the stories, and start to understand something. I started to see the roundness of the earth with different things happening around it, started to appreciate that I was in a very lucky pocket, that I wasn't afraid for my life, that I was in a place that was not...there wasn't a war there. And when I went from Holland to London to Australia it was amazing to really fly over a place I'd been reading about and even to put a foot down in a place where really scary things were happening. To look down on the Persian Gulf, and even land in Muskat, and all these Arabs in green pajamas come on with vacuum cleaners and there'd just been a hijacking, and these men came on, we were there in the airplane, we weren't allowed off the plane, it was beautifully hot in the desert, and I dared not to look these men in the face, I was an American, Jew, in Muskat, on the Persian Gulf, and then we took off and I could see the water and the tankers, and the water's so flat and

calm, and the tankers were moving up the Gulf, and I knew there were these, what the papers describe as waves, human waves crashing, or Iranians and Iraqis, and most of them about sixteen or fourteen, crashing waves of humans crashing, and I remember reading in the Old Testament, that I read maybe a hundred pages of, at one time, how in those desert lands, those tribes reminded me of very dry kind of insects like scorpions or tarantulas, and a whole tribe would be there and they'd have their well and they'd have their sheep and not a lot of survival margin and every once in a while one tribe would land on another and wipe them out. And about two people would escape the massacre and go up onto the high ground and wait until they would start to produce again and propagate again and pretty soon they'd be a tribe again in the desert with their being in the sand and their sheep and their date palms and their memory their memory of the massacre and pretty soon there would be enough of them and they would land on the other tribe and massacre them and three people from there would run off to the high ground and start again to

Mayor Koch's plan to house the homeless in old military ships. Then I had him sending them off to the Persian Gulf, and at some point I picked up this page with a big picture of a beautiful model and I was stroking her, and making a continuity from her belly to mine, and carrying on about the daughter of Mohammed, and about the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers being like Fallopian tubes emptying into the Gulf. Then, when after many windings of various related and unrelated topics I felt it was time to finish, my eyes fell on the *New York Times Magazine* cover photo of a young Nicaraguan Contra. "What's to become of them if the US withdraws its support?" had been the theme of the lead articles. I tucked the picture of the young guerilla soldier into bed in the newspapers and made him comfortable. I wasn't satisfied. I looked around and there was the page with the big beautiful affluent New York model. I tucked her in at his side.

Being a dancer I see and understand things through movement. I even see



the news as pressures, wedges, and balance shifts, and anyway, so much of the language of the news media is in terms of physical dynamics: "the dollar in free fall," and Iran sending forth "human waves" across its border and into Iraq. And that's what I dance, and I sometimes think of myself as the king's fool.

It was Berenice Fisher who first got me interested in working with the news. About three years ago I was teaching a workshop called "Work in Progress," and was encouraging people to bring in notes and ideas relating to some new directions they were starting to sense and to explore. Berenice, one of the participants, was coming from an academic background and an involvement in the women's movement. She wanted to develop a way to help people find a more personal relationship to the newspaper and thought that working with movement would be a good approach. She had people work with headlines that had made some impression on them. I don't remember my headline, but I remember my movement. My right hand went off like an airfoil through turbulent air, while my eyes followed my left index finger into the opposite direction. I remember that the headline had posed a kind of contradiction, something about India. Another person working on the exercise had some people helping her. She had three people lying on the floor on their stomachs, their hands behind their backs, their heads raised as high as possible, eyes looking around. It was a work session, people were working, talking, and trying movements. I casually looked across the room and saw those three people on the floor, on their stomachs, hands behind backs, heads away from floor, eyes looking around. And I saw a double image. In my tradition of dance, people often work on the floor.

propagate and to become a tribe and each tribe had their god and he was The God and who was on their side and this was now what I was feeling from what we're calling the fundamental, the rise of fundamentalism is this coming right out of the sand, right out of the sand like scorpions, like scorpions who will arrgth! Arrgth! LLLachth! LLLachth! Aaght! And meanwhile, another thing I read in the Bible was about the year of the jubilee. The year, the year, every seven years when all debts are forgotten. All debts are cast aside, except debts with foreigners, but at least within, within the tribe all debts are cast aside and...why did I think of that now... 'cause I was thinking of what was happening under the earth. I was thinking that meanwhile while Eeengh! Eeengthn! Eeennn... EnnnnEnnnn... Ennnn... Ennn... meanwhile inside, all the organic matter inside the earth is changing, storing, and now with the technology of today is being sucked, siphoned up, and it's very coveted. I'm talking about power. Power. Power beyond hands and feet. Power of stuff that gets burnt. Gets burnt. And it gets hot. It goes like Uargthhh. Or if it's gasoline it goes pickoogh! Pingoom Pingoom Peuuu Uuuu Uuuu Uuuu Uuuu Uuuu...make us fly can make us fly can make us fly can make us fly make us fly make us fly and now we don't have to fly from here to here any more. We can just beam it. That's the new part. Beam it. That's hopeful. Beam it. Beam it. You can just beam it. You can say "Hi mom, I'm right here on Mars. Well, I don't think I'll make it back this year. How are you! How's Eva? How's Mark! Oh great! Oh how'd you do that!" Well listen. Well, you better stir it, you stir it, yea stir it, stir it and then you put put some olives in it. Put some olives in it. Put some olives in it. And the computers. The computers are good. Because they've almost got it but they haven't got it. They almost get it right and then they get it wrong. And that's a good thing. That's a good thing for the guy up on the

high ground. No one should know he's there, not the computer, nobody should know where he is. And the computer doesn't. Because the computer thinks he's here, but he's there. But the readout is that he's here, but he's there. But I spent that money, but it isn't spent. But that money's going to there, but it's here. But they owe the money here, but the money went there. The money went there. What is the money? What is the money? The money is beaming around. The money is beaming. Back and forth. The money is going from the Bank of America, right out through its pores. From the Bank of America...right out through its pores. And it's going to Mexico, and it's going into the private pockets in Mexico, and it's going right back into the banks in Switzerland, and in New York, and in California. And one of these days we'll have the year of the jubilee. You know why? Because

I'm used to seeing all kinds of movement and seeing it concretely. But in this case I saw something else as well. The three were vulnerable. They were in a state of emergency. Prisoners of war.

I had only recently started following the news myself and it wasn't coming easily to me. I just decided I could at least read even if I couldn't remember, and I started to experience, at least during the act of reading, a sense of familiarity with the stories, with the personages. But most of all I started to accumulate kinesthetic impressions and pressures and currents, and accumulations and pending collapses. And I did start to understand more and more, and to do it in a freewheeling kind of way.

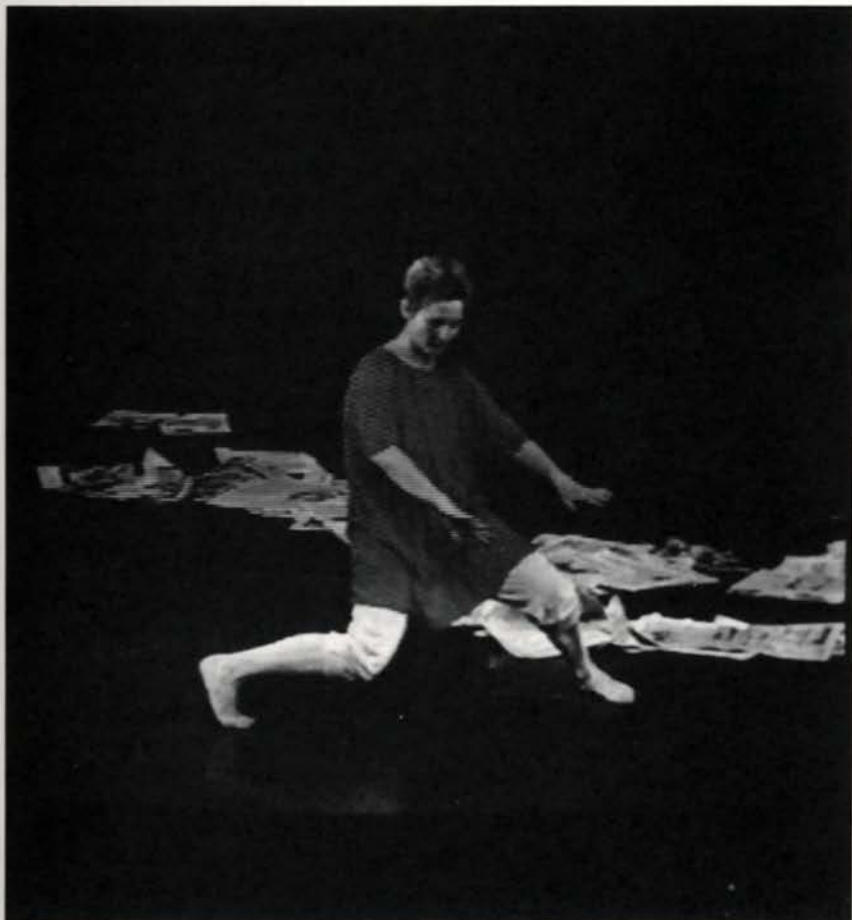


Photo: Davidson Gigliotti from a video by Johannes Holub



the United States is going to have a debt of a trillion. A trillion by nineteen ninety something. I don't know what that is. But it's such that the great powers, the powers that have got a lot of this uuuuaaaggghhhh stuff uuuuaaaggghhhh that they puuuuuuummmmpppped out of the earth. And shaken, shaken out of the earth. They're going to say beam beam. No debt. Beam Beam. No debt. Beam. No debt. Beam beam. No debt. Beam beam. No debt. That's not going to let anybody off the hook. It's going to be the same picture. It's going to be the same picture. They'll call it something else. Like when Gengis Khan came in and brought in a standard coin. And on the basis of that bought all the wealth in the known world. Pearls. Pearls. Pearls and gold in exchange for the standard. The standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. The power of the standard. And as long as there's one standard that's holding everything standard...that's the pax standard. And the minute the standard, for whatever reasons of tao...whatever new evolings and flowerings and finishings happen...that's when all the arrgth! Arrght! weeeeenngggggg start! KKKKhhhh KKKKhhhh! KKKKhhhh! KKKKhhhh KKKKhhhh

Tankers full of oil,



in the water

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### SOME SIMPLE REFLECTIONS ON THE BODY

from the notebooks of Paul Valery. Bolligen Series, Jackson Matthews, Editor.

#### On the Blood and Us

2. When I look at a living thing, what I see and what first occupies my attention is this mass, all of a piece, which moves, bends, runs, jumps, flies, or swims; which howls, speaks, sings, performs its many acts, takes on many appearances, assumes a multiplicity of selves, wreaks its havoc, does its work, in an environment which accepts it and from which it is inseparable.

4. Actually all the body's acts are cyclic in relation to the body itself, for they break down into comings and goings, contractions and decontractions, while the blood itself pursues its cyclic journey round its world of flesh, the continuous circumnavigations wherein life consists.

6. Yet we observe two escapes from the body's life cycle: on the one hand, the body inevitably *wears out*; on the other hand, *it reproduces itself*.

9. I note that our senses provide us with only a bare minimum of hints, which transpose into

# LEVITATION

## Jeffrey Greenberg

On some twenty occasions over the years 1981-83, I levitated. Sometimes this was a mere floating, at others, actual flying and swooping about.

I have stopped flying now in favor of less dramatic, more responsible acts. Levitation is amusing only for so long. In and of itself, it leads nowhere. Still, it was fantastic.

How did I levitate? The happy secret is not so much that I caused it, but that I permitted it to happen. You might think this was trivially easy: simply granting oneself permission to do something, but in these matters, where great pressure is exerted to stay in line, it is not so easy. Usually, I was exhausted and for several hours quite useless. This tiredness never diminished, not even over the repeated acts and it lessened the usefulness of the flying.

I didn't prepare to levitate; that is, I didn't wear any special clothing, diet in any way, change my breathing, nor attempt to hop into the air from the lotus position. Instead, I would be sitting in a chair, or pacing in my studio, thinking, gathering my thoughts — *in some way gathering together a pool of anger* — and, then, as if an explosion had taken place, I would be in flight.

I would tend to assume a kind of "zooming" position, leading with my chin, legs and arms following sometimes stiff, sometimes loose. Landing sometimes was a slow motion stroboscopic process, sometimes a simultaneous vanishing from flight and re-appearance at rest.

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forms of sensibility only an infinitesimal part of the probable variety and variations of a "world" we can neither conceive nor imagine.

### The Problem of Three Bodies

Each of us calls this object My Body; but we give it no name in ourselves, that is to say, in it. We speak of it to others as of a thing that belongs to us; but for us it is not entirely a thing; and it belongs to us a little less than we belong to it...

It is for each of us, in essence, the most important object in the world, standing in opposition to the world, on which, however, it knows itself to be closely dependent. We can say that the world is based on it and exists in reference to it; or just as accurately, with a simple change in the adjustment of our intellectual vision, that the selfsame body is only an infinitely negligible, unstable event in the world.

This My Body obeys or disobeys, favors or obstructs our designs; it engenders surprising strengths and weaknesses connected wholly or in part with its perceptible mass, which at times takes on a sudden charge of impulsive energies that make it "act" in response to

I have been silent about these acts till now, but they must be presented. Especially now when the imagination is so weak.

These levitations are difficult to take... I have trouble reconciling them with what is certain and solid. For one thing, I never tried to photograph them, because I feared nothing would show up; that all one would see would be a picture of a person sitting. So, I can show no "proof." Even worse, I felt then that it was embarrassing, so I didn't invite anyone to witness these events; besides, I wasn't sure that it would even happen at a pre-designated time and place.

Six years later, I have no longing for those events<sup>1</sup> to repeat themselves. I hope only to be involved in work that is more subtle, more imaginative (what could be more cliché than levitating), more communal.

Then, I thought these acts powerful... after all, who can boast that they have violated physical laws; are these not the acts of a super creature? Now, I see the desperation in that flight. Then I saw my acts as proof that reality could be radically interpreted. Instead, I think that I primarily experienced The Grip, the iron clench of culture; for how persuasive were these acts: are you levitating, or doing anything near those acts of flight? So, in that sense, they were a failure.

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*1 Other than the levitations were these acts: passing through solid walls, and simultaneous, multiple appearances*

some interior mystery, and at other times seems to become the most crushing and immovable weight.

The thing itself is formless: all we know of it by sight is the few mobile parts that are capable of coming within the conspicuous zone of the space which makes up this My Body, a strange, asymmetrical space in which distances are exceptional relations. I have no idea of the spatial relations between "My Forehead" and "My Foot," between "My Knee" and "My Back." ... This gives rise to strange discoveries. My right hand is generally unaware of my left. To take one hand in the other is to take hold of an object that is not-I.

...It has unity only in our thought, since we know it only for having dissected and dismembered it. To know it is to have reduced it to parts and pieces. It gives off scarlet or whitish liquids, or hyalines, some of them quite viscous.

We try to decipher these histological cryptograms. We wonder how this fiber produced motive force? And in what way these little asterisms with their fine radicles could have been related to sensation and thought?

# THIS

## Jeffrey Greenberg

I have the right to make this determination, it is not a matter for argument: I am not a machine, an algorithm nor a recursion of signs. I don't wish to set a work in motion nor do I wish to be set upon by a work.

I am not a believer in facts but in the interpretations beings do. These interpretations are not only concerned with language, but in the interpretation of world as *this* world, our particular one. I take up this "interpreting" as a method, and no more, for the world-as-interpretation (relativism) is no more appealing than the world-as-fact (absolutism).

So, then, this embodiment.

READ THIS WORD THEN READ  
THIS WORD READ THIS WORD  
NEXT READ THIS WORD NOW  
SEE ONE WORD SEE ONE  
WORD NEXT SEE ONE WORD  
NOW AND THEN SEE ONE  
WORD AGAIN LOOK AT THREE  
WORDS HERE LOOK AT THREE  
WORDS NOW LOOK AT THREE  
WORDS NOW TOO TAKE IN  
FIVE WORDS AGAIN TAKE IN  
FIVE WORDS SO TAKE IN FIVE  
WORDS DO IT NOW SEE THESE  
WORDS AT A GLANCE SEE  
THESE WORDS AT THIS  
GLANCE AT THIS GLANCE  
HOLD THIS LINE IN VIEW  
HOLD THIS LINE IN ANOTHER  
VIEW AND IN A THIRD VIEW  
SPOT SEVEN LINES AT ONCE  
THEN TWICE THEN THRICE  
THEN A FOURTH TIME A FIFTH

So rude, this beginning, this recursion:  
Vito Acconci's poem/performance from

I took these notes just as he  
was dying:

This is my failure: to have  
returned, to have been  
drawn back. And to this?...  
But, let me tell you of my  
sucessess: I have been two  
places at once. I have  
walked through solid walls. I  
have levitated!

I have been places. I have  
seen things you have never  
imagined.

Kafka wrote in his diary:  
"You have to dive down, as  
it were, and sink more  
rapidly than that which  
sinks in advance of you..."

At this time of endings, to  
re-live the past's agenda for  
us, not to have broken  
through somehow.

I have stood on the corner  
and screamed, "I've  
levitated. I've broken the  
bounds, joined those who  
are my brothers..."

The tragedy is what is not  
past on. The artist of today  
is stuck in an endless  
repetition of newness,  
re-presenting dislocation. I  
have seen countless that  
have no idea that people  
came before them.

I still foolishly yearn for a  
simple answer, for Kafka's

wish: "great clarity expanding without hindrance." What a disaster that would be!

I have wanted to be closer, but the feeling hasn't been mutual. I have been dissuaded, obstacles have delayed me, an impossible gulf prevented me.

I have levitated just above your hands, and you did not feel my warmth. Your photos showed nothing.

You are just like me. I have been embarrassed, foolish, carried on secret masturbation, been self-serving. My incompetence. My lack of talent. I don't mean to throw them in your face, but I am just like you.

Again, my failure: To have merely levitated, to only have broken the laws of physics.

1965. Similarly, Primo Levi, the Auschwitz survivor and witness, ends the *The Periodic Table*, 1986, with the story of a carbon atom:

"...I will tell just one more story, the most secret, and I will tell it with the humility and restraint of him who knows from the start that his theme is desperate, his means feeble, and the trade of clothing facts in words is bound by its very nature to fail.

"...One, the one that concerns us, crosses the intestinal threshold and enters the bloodstream: it migrates, knocks at the door of a nerve cell, enters, and supplants the carbon which was part of it. This cell belongs to a brain, and it is my brain, the brain of the "me" who is writing; and the cell in question, and within it the atom in question, is in charge of my writing, in a gigantic minuscule game which nobody has yet described. It is that which at this instant, issuing out of a labyrinthine tangle of yeses and nos, makes my hand run along a certain path on the paper, mark it with volutes that are signs: a double snap, up and down, between two levels of energy, guides this hand of mine to impress on the paper this dot, here, this one.

But no reflexion, no self-searching brings it closer.  
"Everything rather effaces it."

So, then, this non-revealing. And why this dulling heaviness?  
(mystifying)

Consider this movement, this aloneness:

Standing looking downward, looking at feet, not seeing them/seeing them, whatever. In any case, preparing to raise the left arm. Focusing on it intently, the muscles involved, the weight to be moved, the joint of rotation, the intended speed of the lift... It rises! Dropping it. Again, but this time attending to the onslaught of will... the will to act... Or, perhaps, it merely raises itself...

This isolation, this reduction of moment... Even as I do it, and it is done, I am apart from it... attending to my feet again, the sound of footsteps in the hall, the click of the heater.

These envelopments

"What do you do?" I asked the painted man, feathered, lead arrow-shaped weights piercing and hanging from his penis.

"Nothing am I," was his reply. "Not businessman, artist, shaman, religious man, thinker, fool, idiot, jerk, tool, nor housewife."

(print original paper scrap, 1982)

On Thursday I floated through the roof.

On Saturday I dissolved into a puddle.

On Sunday I exploded.

On Tuesday they told me to get with it, and I returned.

# DRUMMING

## Toine Horvers

In my movement/sound-sculptures I try to arrange meetings between the physical and mental human energy, and time, space and light. Although the form of the performances is often very severe, I am especially interested in the subtle psychological and physical movement of the performer(s), that gives the mostly very meditative actions a lively conscious character in image and sound. In the last years I have worked with voice-sounds and rolling drums for increasing periods of time, for instance as night falls. For *The ACT* I rolled uninterruptedly on a snare-drum for one hour, and I recorded my experiences speaking into a microphone. Without any technical equipment I tried to keep the same volume of rolling.

Here follows the result of my recording:

In fact there is very little activity; it is like an engine that is moving quietly.

I stand very relaxed, and after rolling a while, I am beginning to get the impression that the sound does not belong to me, that it is not I who brings out the sound, but that it is living on its own. So that when the sticks stop moving, the engine keeps moving on.

In this small space it must be a deafening noise, and it is amazing that these little movements of mine are in a continuing relation to the space; in such a way that the sound is filling the space in every little corner.

By speaking I stay very conscious of everything that is happening.

In fact my body is in a sort of continual tension, especially there is a unity between my mind and my body, but it is always as if my body had to stay aware of the danger to stop, the tension of stopping is constantly there. Stopping would be terrible; when this enormous mass of sound, in which I am involved, should vanish; if I don't want this world to fall down, I must roll on.

Sometimes the ticks of my sticks run out of each other, then there grows an asymmetric feeling in my body, then there is a large difference between those two sticks and between the sound that they make, and then I have to rebuild the balance between left and right, until everything is rolling again. In this way I constantly have to make corrections.

When I turn my hands very little, the sound changes immediately.



I begin to get used to the tension that is coming into my body, especially in my right arm; sort of pain.

I have the feeling that sometimes I don't have control over the volume; that it is getting louder by itself.

Sometimes the risk of stopping is so strong, because I cannot conceive that this big sculptural sound is made by my rolling; I cannot imagine how the silence will be after stopping.



Photo: Henk Geraedts

Sometimes the sticks hit each other and then I get scared again.

The tension in my body is growing; maybe it is because I have to remain conscious of this activity; there is no time to dream away or to think about other things, although that would be possible in this meditative action.

Because of the difficulty in maintaining a constant rhythm I fight a continual battle with tiredness.

At the moment I have been rolling for 25 minutes; from time to time there are small waves of new energy going through my body; I am building up fresh rolls all the time: there is a new rotating movement, yielding a propelling power that gives me once again the feeling that I could keep going for hours.

It is getting clearer now that my volume is increasing.

I try to roll with my hands but my body has to go on giving impulses for the power.

As if my body was taking on another position, in which the sticks fall differently on the skin; I need all these feelings as a kind of refreshment.

I have cut the time in pieces, a composition of different fields of movement and sound, like in a meadow with long grass in which the wind has been blowing. In fact it is still a green meadow but there is a lot of movement.

I feel that the rhythm of the roll is escaping from me, but then there is another rhythm, the difference is very subtle. I think that nobody would be able to notice it.

My irregularities in rolling save me from dreaming, keep me awake.

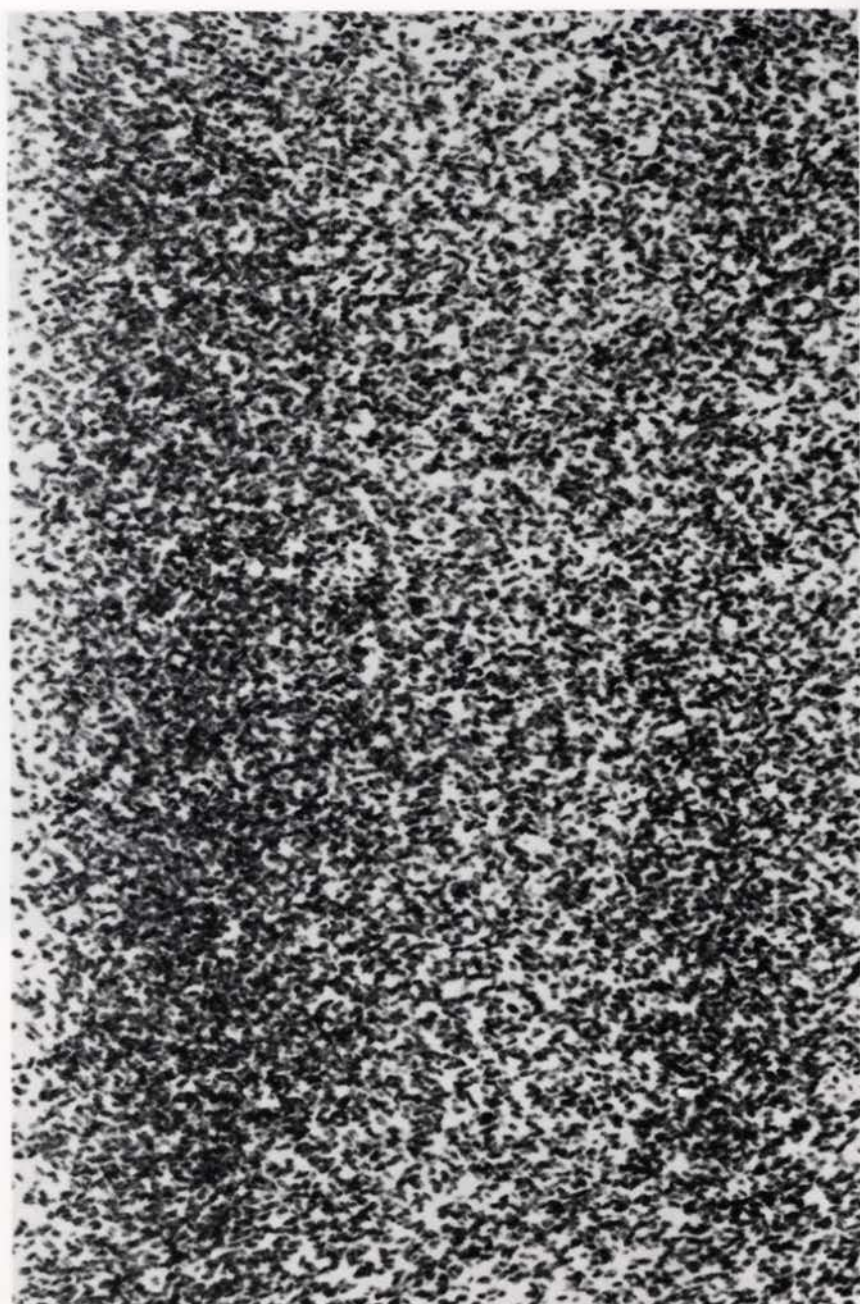
I have the feeling that the high rustling in the sound forms a streaming layer, sort of a non-realistic, non-existent layer, that looses itself from the rest of the sound. So that the ticks of the sticks are real, they have to take care for the mysterious silver rustling sound brought up by the snares of the drum. By controlling the movements of my body I can keep this sound going on; a silver cloud of sound that's constantly passing by. Maybe this is what makes the snare-drum so exciting for me: by means of the snares something is happening outside the real movement of the rolling itself. But the whole thing is able to fall down through one mistake; that makes it also very tense and difficult to talk.

But in the same time I have the feeling that time is being abolished by rolling, and that's another exciting thing with these ring-forts: they are very heavy, massive lumps of stone, but in the same power that makes them raise from the earth, a vibration.

Sometimes the ticks fall together in such a way that they cancel the roll, and a very tiny little change is needed to bring them into the roll again, to equalize the roll.

I feel a strong restrained tension in my body, like the engine is ready to explode, and I can also hear this tension in the roll.

My sculpture consists of a human being who, for a time, is moving, living on the tops of his energy, and by this action abolishes time.



The drawing is the result of rolling on carbon paper for thirty minutes at the same volume, trying to spread the ticks as equally as possible over the sheet. T.H.

## ART WHICH CAN'T BE ART

### Allan Kaprow

It's fairly well known that for the last 30 years, my main work as an artist has been located in activities and contexts which don't suggest art in any way. Brushing my teeth, for example, in the morning when I'm barely awake; watching in the mirror the rhythm of my elbow moving up and down...

The practice of such an art which isn't perceived as art is not so much a contradiction as it is a paradox. Why this is so requires some background.

When I speak of activities and contexts which don't suggest art, I don't mean that an event like brushing my teeth each morning is chosen and then set into a conventional art context, as Duchamp and many others since him have done. That strategy, by which an art-identifying frame (such as a gallery or theater) confers "art value" or "art discourse" upon some non-art object, idea, or event was, in Duchamp's initial move, sharply ironic. It forced into confrontation a whole bundle of sacred assumptions about creativity, professional skill, individuality, spirituality, modernism, and the presumed value and function of high art itself. But later it became trivialized, as more non-art was put on exhibit by other artists. Regardless of the merits of each case, the same truism was headlined every time we saw a stack of industrial products in a gallery, every time daily life was enacted on a stage: namely, that anything can be estheticized, given the right art packages to put it into. But why should we want to estheticize "anything"? All the irony was lost in those presentations, the provocative questions forgotten. To go on making this kind of move in art seemed to me quite unproductive.

Instead, I decided to pay attention to brushing my teeth, to watch carefully my elbow moving. I would be quite alone in my bathroom, without art spectators. There would be no gallery, no critic to judge, no publicity. This was the crucial shift which removed the performance of everyday life from all but the memory of art. I could, of course, have said to myself "Now I'm making art!" But in actual practice, I didn't think much about it.

My awareness and thoughts were of another kind. I began to pay attention to how much this act of brushing my teeth had become routinized, non-conscious behavior, compared to the time I was first taught to do it as a child. I began to suspect that 99% of my daily life was just as routinized and unnoticed; that my mind was always somewhere else; and that the thousand signals my body was sending me each minute were ignored. I guessed also that most people were like me in this respect.

Brushing my teeth attentively for two weeks, I gradually became aware of the tension in my elbow and fingers (was it there before?); the pressure of the brush on my gums, their slight bleeding (should I visit the dentist?). I looked up once and saw, really saw, my face in the mirror. I rarely looked at myself when I got up, perhaps because I wanted to avoid the puffy face I'd see, at least until it could be washed and smoothed to match the public image



Photo: Jeffrey Greenberg

I prefer. (And how many times had I seen others do the same and believed I was different!)

This was an eye-opener to my privacy and to my humanity. It was an unremarkable picture of myself that was beginning to surface, an image I'd created but never examined. It colored the images I made of the world, and influenced how I dealt with my images of others. I saw this little by little.

But if this wider domain of resonances, spreading from the mere process of brushing my teeth, seems too far from its starting point, I should say immediately that I never left the bathroom. The physicality of brushing, the aromatic taste of the toothpaste, rinsing my mouth and the brush, the many small nuances such as my right-handedness causing me to enter my mouth with the loaded brush from that side and then move to the left side — these particularities always stayed in the present. The larger implications popped up from time to time during the subsequent years. All this from toothbrushing.

How is this relevant to art? Why is this not just sociology? It is relevant because developments within modernism itself led to art's dissolution into its life sources. Art in the West has a long history of secularizing tendencies, going back at least as far as the Hellenistic period. By the late 1950's and 1960's this lifelike impulse dominated the vanguard. Art shifted away from the specialized object in a gallery, to the real urban environment; to the real body and mind; to communications technology and to remote natural regions of the ocean, sky and desert. Thus, the relationship of the act of toothbrushing to recent art is clear and cannot be bypassed. This is where the paradox lies; an artist concerned with lifelike art is an artist who doesn't make art.

Anything less than paradox would be simplistic. Unless the identity (and thus the meaning) of what the artist does oscillates between ordinary, recognizable activity and its other role as "resonator" of the human context beyond that activity, it reduces to only conventional behavior. Or if it is framed as art by a gallery, it reduces to only conventional art. Thus, toothbrushing, as we normally do it, offers no roads back to the real world either. But ordinary life performed as art/not art can charge the everyday with metaphoric power.

## **BUILDING MUSCLES**

I remember that in my childhood I read advertisements by Charles Atlas, a strong man, who promised to build my muscles as big as his. It was done by "dynamic tension." You simply pitted one muscle against another, let's say one fist against another fist, pressing as hard as you could. Soon you would have muscles. So I decided I would do a funny play on this. I would attempt to accomplish nothing with the Atlas method. The idea would be to open a door while trying to keep it closed, and to close a door while trying to keep it open. There were two doors in my living room, one to the outside, and one to the garage. For one half-hour, I pushed open the outside door as slowly as I could with one hand, while with the other hand I pulled it back almost as much. I used a lot of effort, tensing my arms and body trying to keep the door moving outward as if it was the minute hand of a clock. That way, the door was fully open when my egg-timer rang at the end of the half-hour. I saw that I was standing on the threshold exactly between inside and out.

With the other door, I went out into the garage to pull the living room door closed (since it opened inward). I began therefore, on the threshold exactly between in and out, and moved slowly outward as I drew it towards me. I pulled with my right hand while I pushed back with my left. Since I was facing the other way this time, and the door knob was reversed, I pulled and pushed with opposite hands.

During the first period when I began practicing my "dynamic tension," I began to sweat and then to shake. I thought this was quite humorous. When the egg-timer rang I was a little faint. In the second half-hour the shaking became pronounced and I wondered what was happening to me. At the end of the half-hour I barely heard the bell as I took my hands away from the closed door. They weren't my hands, they had no feeling in them. I was quite dizzy and couldn't keep my balance.

I kept on shaking and managed to get to my bed to lie down. Several hours passed before I could get up to walk safely. Later, a doctor told me I had nearly put myself into a convulsion because I hadn't breathed normally.

## **ANOTHER SPIT PIECE**

I decided to clean a kitchen floor with Q-Tips and spit. It was an interesting process, very intense work on my knees. I got to see, at close-up range, crumbs, dead flies, pieces of hair that I'd never noticed. (I supposed dogs and babies saw these things). I used up several boxes of Q-Tips and often ran out of spit, which I replaced by drinking beer. Altogether, it took almost four days to clean the kitchen.

I told people about this cleaning activity and they said, "What! You used dirty spit to clean the floor?"

## EYEBALLS WITH MUSCLES

Ken Jacobs

Unlike those of my competitors in the 3-D art business, these pieces last. No instant pop-ups, with nothing more for the viewer to engage in than passive accounting of things fixed in space. Nor zap comin'at'ya's to dodge and dismiss. Here things strain to be! Indeterminacies approach corporeality, only to deny it—that's deep. See them absorb and batten on time, like other dramas. Given time, they reveal further unexpected nuance of shape and placement; they become telling... with your gain of control in *working them*. For this is needed eyeballs with muscles! Flaccid starers, don't apply. You're halfway there, simply reading this with left and right sightlines angling in to meet at this period. Keep the picture level, and angle further, so that one (only one) additional image joins the set observed. If, when observing a set of two forms, four appear, angle further; a grand *fusing* will occur, with the new center figure a glorious hallucination in depth. Don't look away, don't tilt, left or right. Hang in, calmly, allowing things to detail and expand, shift and struggle. Some pairs will stabilize, some determinedly won't. On multiple sets, all but end-forms will swell and hover. Let end-forms attend as decorative chorus, or ignore them, or block them from peripheral vision with your hands, paper blinders, two bathtubs. Let's have no crap about "headaches!" 3-D and headaches...is a cyclopean calumny. They like things flat. If the intriguing resistance you encounter proves a bit much, close your eyes and let any fatigue pass, then gaze a moment into the distance, and go at it again. This angling is a facility two-eyed people have... to develop, and derive an art of, or abandon to atrophy.

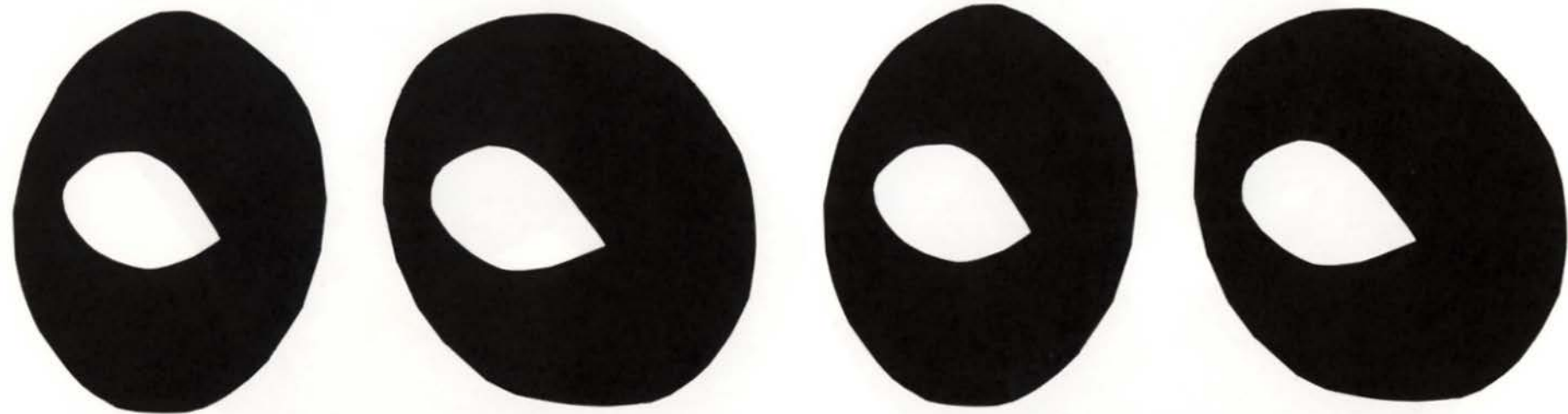
Sometimes it helps to start off training the eyes at an upright finger held just under the middle of an image-set, but suspended some distance before it. Slowly move your finger forward or back until that additional fused shape occurs, and while fixing on that miracle emergence, withdraw your finger. Viewing through a small rectangular frame, the opening 2 to 2 1/4 inches square, eases the process (tape 1 1/4 inch strips of paper or cardboard into a frame). Interesting to look at from different distances, and/or while slowly moving to different (perpendicular) angles of view. Upside-down is rewarding. Except for the squared set of four, you will not be able to birth stereo looking at the sets stacked vertically, unless you have one eye set above the other. In which case, contact me; we can still do business.

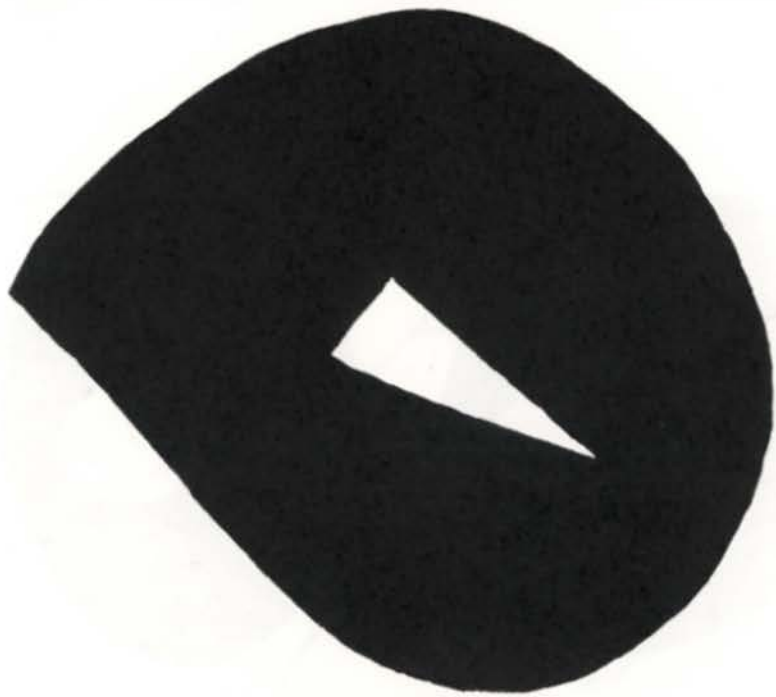
So you know we're seeing eye to eye I'll describe some of what's happening for me in the set above. Three flattened oblongs stretch forward, **Center** furthest. **Right** and **Center** lean left and down in front; **Left** aims past my right ear. Edges are sharp in front, thickening lumpily to the rear. Forms are bent in their middles as if squeezed. **Center** front twists right and towards the horizontal, it's rear vertical. Impossible to resolve **Center** front and rear simultaneously (front and bottom edge remains very restless). Ditto **Right**, not so extreme as **Center**. **Right** front overlaps rear, rear curling under and behind front; shape resembles an ear seen from under the lobe. **Left** pulls in two directions, aspires forward, plunges rear. **Left** seems restrained by weight of **Center** and **Right** pressing in parallel towards it. My gaze moves into the corridor of space between **Center** and **Right**. A long tense pull across open space exists between **Left** rear and **Center** front.

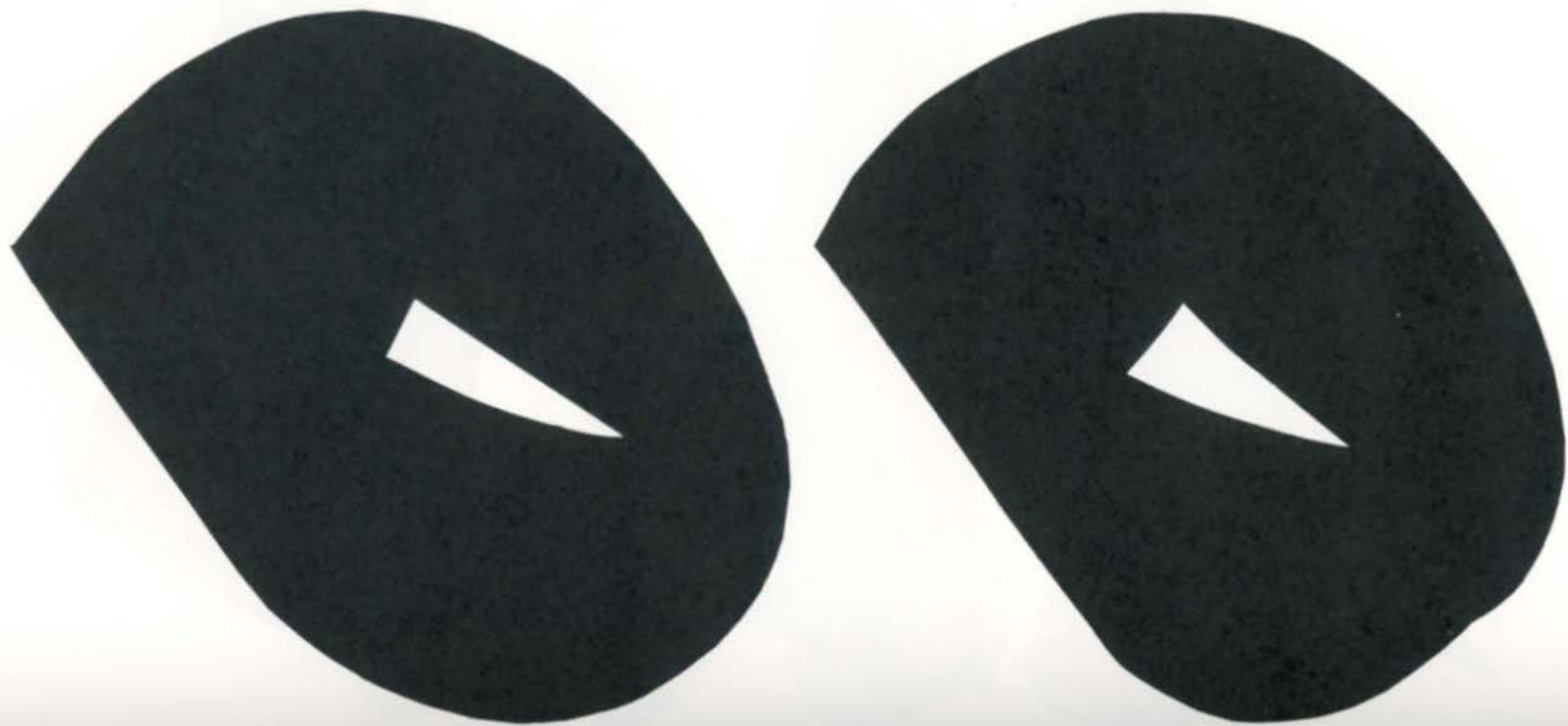




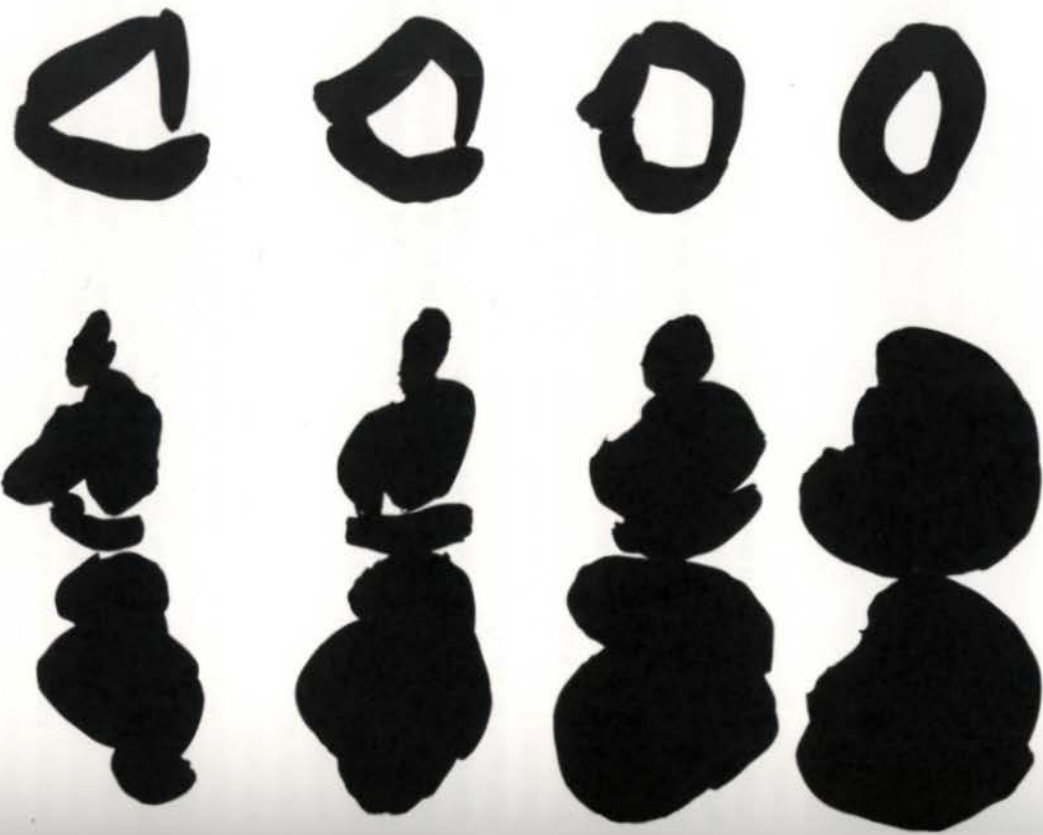












## PERFORMANCES

### Angelika Festa

#### FISH, BREAD, AND BODY

For three days I wear fish compresses. I purchase fish at the supermarket and tie them with white surgical gauze to my left arm, leg, and neck. With the fish attached to my body I spend three days baking bread. The second day I am sick and throw up in the toilet. On the third day, a few friends come. We eat the bread and drink wine and herb tea. Wasps and flies are attracted to the rotting fish on my body and swarm around me. In the supermarket where I buy more fish and flour a customer tells me how in Japan people tie fish to trees when someone dies. Someone else asks me if I recommend fish compresses for sore throat.

•

I was adopted at the age of fourteen. I had three mothers and two fathers. One mother died of cancer in the stomach, another has been dying of cancer of the womb since 1952. One father had epilepsy as the result of a war injury. The left side of his body was partially paralyzed and he was half blind. I had a sister who died in infancy. I have a brother whom I have not seen for eighteen years. I married a man whom I left after four years. I lived with another for twelve years. In 1985 I changed my name to "Festa."

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This is what interests me in the end: the degraded spectacle, voyeuristic intrusions into private lives, rarified images supplanting the ambiguous experience of everyday life, the interruption, when things fall apart which have never been together. And here I see my work as performing for others convertible lenses that magnify on one side and reduce on the other. Except that when everything else is said and done, I continue to bleed more or less in spite of myself. I can imagine it never stopping, going on forever. But I remember the basic paranoia of not really having been. I confess powerlessness by a continued (re)production of superseding values and poses. I do not know of any position that my body can take up without being implicitly pornographic. This, I think has less to do with the body itself, which I do not know what that is, but with the body as a kind of cavity.

You have decided that you do not have to take account of your position. The ethics of it, I mean. And so you bury your senses of failure and rejection in denial and withdrawal, signifying pointedly your sense of superiority: the project of suspending the hierarchy of roles, the ascendancy of your sense of disbelief. And it was not until you began by using your fear and insecurity as a weapon in self-defense with the intention of cutting deep, that I began to see your fear as my terror: the ways of undermining what finally and supremely threatens our deepest sense of belonging. And yes, I see how it cannot be any other way. And yet I am not a fatalist. To think of

responsibility even when there area no choices has been from the beginning my failure.

I had this repeated dream about "the front" as they called it. It was late in autumn, the air cold and crisp. The fields were empty and bare. The men were coming toward me as I stood naked in the field. They shot with their rifles at me. But I did not die. I could not die. All I could do was just stand there, my white belly exposed like a fish, raw and shiny. I was seven years old and had never seen a man. I had never seen my mother and my father sleep together. His head was still bandaged from the trepanning. The gauze was soaked with blood. She lay on top of him, mirroring the large blue female torso tattooed forever on his chest. I have thought about it like alabaster, like lightning. A scream going out the door like a ghost. Even me. Dying. You could be next. Behind the hillside, many are lost. Green faces and yellow feet. Father slept in the kitchen, and TB and I slept with mother in her bed. Once I woke up in the middle of the night, crying. I couldn't talk. I sat at the foot and of the bed and cried. I had shat into my mother's bed and I could not remember doing it. It was just there. And I had done it. And because I could not die, the men opened up my belly and filled it with stones and propped up the body against a tree and began to shoot again. They were saying to each other: "We must heal these wounds. We must heal these wounds."

I covered the chair with a red blanket. I let it fall in a large drape. A gesture of indirect solutions.





## A DESCENDING PHOTO STORY

### A SUBLINGUAL PHOTO MEMOIR

Ammon Denziger

Uri Katzenstein



58/64

After a few conspicuous phone calls  
One beautiful morning.  
...That note was shoved under Jo's front door.  
Jo finally got the message.



Thre ānd wūn  
māke fôr

Mexico, 4 hours later.  
Ice cream drips on tits (2) (She had no cancer).  
(They're listening to 'd' transistor radio).  
(They is mighty content).



**SOON** Junior threatened: "May I spend the afternoon playing with Polly?"  
SILENCE.

Cont.... "But you don't understand. Oh, please...Just this time, Please..."

?



Six years elapse.  
Jo is back home disillusioned (dishwasher).  
The Indian-summer is noisy.  
Jo masturbates excessively.  
They take him away. (who are they?)



## Johnson's dental floss

(he was) The highest-powered-hyper-  
congestive-multi national tycoon in the collective.  
Only they could see through him.  
They were the pages (photographic pages).



space for  
L O G O

Jo got sick. He got what we call Samurai fever and  
ended living amongst plants.  
His descendents, well...  
They have nice cars.

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THE

7 2 3

1 + 1 = 1

Linda Montano

According to my mother I was not visible inside her, that is, the pregnancy didn't show. She was flat and, "everyone was shocked when you were born, Linda." After years of research into my own reasons for why I do performance, I've found this uterine one to be as plausible as any. Haven't I felt a need to shock myself and audiences since then?

We all are encoded at conception and have picked up attitudes and tendencies while in the womb. Behavioral scientists are realizing this and as a result, a new age-ish training course is offered to parents-to-be; preparing the whiz kids of tomorrow by sending them to pre, pre, pre nursery school, The School Of The Womb. In the class, parents are encouraged to read books to the fetus through the mother's mouth, make sounds so sounds at birth won't be startling, etc. You can imagine other permutations.

Having been born before all of that, much of my work is about our mending the past. On the other hand early conditioning and deprivation has produced some interesting and outrageous later manifestations, gestures and actions. The way that I read it is

#### MAKING IT

It was hard enough being an artist in NYC with studio apartments renting for \$1200-\$2000, but it had been 96 degrees outside for the last three days and nights. The heat exhausted them even more than the treadmill that they were on. Doggedly, determinedly, Jennifer and Steven made it work as they had for the last two and a half years — with gallery jobs, putting up walls, consulting, waitressing and sometimes dalliances — the ultimate cause of all their problems. Because when they lived in downtown Manhattan before it was so popular and called SoHo, spaces were large, rents low so that no one had to work hard to eat or sleep. Art then was about a lifestyle which happened in luxurious time/space frames. Now it was business — no longer mental and physical play. The money then was hardly an issue, seemingly to come miraculously from little effort or maybe the sky...that's how easy it was.

Now was entirely different. Both of them had made it, were famous overnight, stars with reviews in *Artforum*, *Japan Times* as well as 150 other newspapers and magazines. To keep everything going, they needed more money yet had less time to make the art that might bring the money. This resulted in extraordinary amounts of stress which they blamed on the system. "Once

I  
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that since I was virtually invisible in the womb, I carried that theme over into my life and later on made an art of it.

With all due respect and thanks to my parents, I would like to illustrate how the theme of invisibility/disappearance/transcendence was first acted out in life....and then, once I realized that I might as well make a career of the actions, how I transferred the theme to matter itself and eventually to myself (performance).

#### Life...Four Ways Of Leaving The Body

1. As a newborn I became allergic to my formula and threw it up. My mother reports, "It used to look like cottage cheese coming out of your mouth." (leaving physically)
2. When 7 years old, I threw up breakfast every morning before school, down my parents new wallpaper because I couldn't tell them that the kids walked on my coat in the cloakroom. After hospitalization, where I never threw up, I told the reason, was given a special place in the coatroom and it never happened again. (leaving physically)
3. When 21, while in the convent, I became anorexic and left weighing 82 pounds. I was getting close to solving the riddle of physical transcendence but the methods were drastic. (leaving physically)
4. When 28, I was in a car accident. It turned over and my astral body left. I remember the feeling when it came back in. (leaving astrally)

you're famous, they think you're rich," Jennifer told Steve almost every night over steamed veggies and Sue Simmon's nightly report. Steve responded with his own worries. "I'll have to call my agent to see if she booked that 10 week teaching gig at Ohio State which should cover the costs of the new video that I'm working on." They often wondered if this is what the Buddhist precept Right Livelihood was all about. Would their pace and need to be in the world so intensely co-produce enlightenment? Or was the work similar to a Herculean boulder pushed up an unquenchable art hill? Maintaining the fame to pay the rent was a dialectic seemingly without solution or merit.

That was the pattern. Days at other people's jobs and nights at their own work; but after four and a half hours in their studios, even that was forgotten. Jennifer's 36D breasts responded first, signaling that there was more to come, anticipating Steven's hot hands. Although they never needed the added excitement, she often put on a red push up bra spilling herself over the top, nipples half showing. "Steven would you like some milk before we go to bed?" she asked appearing at his studio door, pushing her body into his, a Judo-like strength, her ass sliding against his cock which massaged his balls since they were both sitting on an "art" chair that he was working on for a performance at the Kitchen. He felt her up from behind, wanting to nurse but limited himself to touching her amplexity. Reaching behind to grasp the back of his head, she would pull his face into her neck, upper back...his nose nuzzling her hair, smelling everything. She felt him grow even harder if that was at all possible...but

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## Art...a Place To Practice Disappearance Safely...

The above “life” examples are pre-performance ways that I solved things and asked questions. First there was traditional art, done in a primitive way...any time that I used my hands to make a representation of thoughts or feelings, I called that art. It was effective; my method of talking, relating, etc. Can you imagine the joy of discovering a medium and world where the invisible could be made visible? For years I grounded myself with clay, wood, metal. STUFF. Eventually I collaged Catholicism, humor, content—packaged it aesthetically and called the actions performance.

The following five performances represent a gradual shift in the concept of the self:

1. Animal as self.
2. Self as animal/saint.
3. Self as other.
4. Self as one.
5. Self.

1. **ANIMAL AS SELF: CHICKENS**, 1969. I presented chickens in cages for my MFA show. I saw them as a metaphor for me, hoping they would illustrate how afraid and frantic I was.
2. **SELF AS ANIMAL/SAINT: LYING SITTING DANCING AS CHICKEN WOMAN**, 1971-76. By becoming the chicken I

constrained by her ass pushing against him, a mini-bondage. Unable to stand it any longer, he picked her up, turned her around to face him so that his tongue could be satisfied...a hunger that never ended, an eating without food. Their mouths were caverns of delight, caves of pleasure, wet rhythm makers. They played there, slowly at first, giving completely with soft lips, teasing, thrusting, pressing their tongues together as if on a pane of glass...exchanging wave lengths and twin vibrations — ionizing with that watery muscle.

No more was needed but they continued, generous with their pleasuring, giving gifts, getting gifts. His cock was now tight between them, both of their stomachs created vaginal lips, large ones, lubricated with summer sweat and spit that she dropped purposely down on the head of his erection. Like-wise, his balls imitated or became a mock vagina for her clitoris, now hard and large enough to rest between and in their softness. “Who’s first tonight?” she asked, knowing that it was her turn since they traded off every week. It was her turn to be assertive, to ask, to come first or not at all, to tell the truth. “Me first,” she breathed into his ear, “me first and I’ll tell you how I want it.” She led him into the bathroom, hardly able to walk — his penis a divining rod, desiring her ass, her cunt, her cleavage, her mouth...a place inside. Lowering themselves slowly into the hot tub, they sat, re-birthing, breathing, cleaning out old conditioning. “This is sex too, Steven. I’m coming all over, up my spine, in my crotch, around my eyes and it’s because of us. This is what I wanted tonight and more.” The dance was not over, in fact the im-

# BODY.

I

could also be the nun/saint in disguise. By doing the actions on the street, I was drawing in attention that I couldn't give myself and yet learning from audiences how to eventually be with and attend to myself. The endurances were short (3 hours sitting, etc.) but were training me, publicly. And because I had strong messages to not be (from being a non-seen fetus, a woman, a sinner), I could easily become anyone or anything, even a chicken.

3. **SELF AS OTHER: 7 CHARACTERS.** By 1975 I had formalized and made the gift of being able to get out of my own way, a bit more sophisticated and with the help of southern California and its invitation to dramatize, I resurrected in myself 7 personae...and I found it easier to be them, perfect them, speak as them, than I did to be myself. By now I was beginning to ask, "Who is the real Linda Montano?"

4. **SELF AS ONE: ART/LIFE, ONE YEAR PERFORMANCE.** Tehching Hsieh's form is extremely rigorous. With his performances he keeps himself devoted, ethical, focused, in danger, responsible and exhausted. I joined him in the 1983-84 experiment. The intensity of being tied with an 8 foot rope, not touching, always in the same room (there are even more devotions that are too numerous to list) drove me in three directions.

1. Back into the darkness of repressed rage, violence and madness that I am still in the process of sorting out with traditional/professional therapies.
2. Wholeheartedly into the present where being and moving together was like dancing.
3. Into an altered state of union, transcendence and indivisibility that verged on the divine.

provision had just begun. She swam to him, he lowered himself into the water and simultaneously into her clean cunt with the punk haircut.

Lifting her legs over each side of the tub spread her more so that he could eat her higher and deeper. "Harder, harder, yes that's right," instructing him shyly, assertively. With her orgasm, she descended down his body, a slide, a fish-like move eventuating in his cock going deep inside her, becoming an anchor. They moved as if twins *in utero*, safe in placental liquid. "Now let's dry off and go to bed, I'm not finished with you," she said after a half hour of lying together in the water, joined at the genitals, absorbing mucous, rhythm, warmth. By then they were deified, prepared, opened...having set up an atmosphere of trust, exchange and potential flight.

The reality of drying off didn't break the mood or concentration, just tuned it to another level—that of practicality, but done so consciously that it was sensuously sacred. "Do my back, Steven," and he dried her shining skin with an attitude so maternal, so unabashedly adoring, that she cried with gratitude and an even deeper release. "Steven, I can't bear another moment. Do I deserve all of this love?", secretly thanking the years of therapy and hard work both of them had done on themselves to clear any barriers in the way of trust.

They were now truly innocent, as if in Paradise—that guilt free, that available, that giving. And they continued. "Let me on top. I'll slide slowly, then suck you so that I can taste you and myself,"

AM

NOT



**5. SELF: 7 YEARS OF LIVING ART.** After being tied for a year, I knew that I needed to design a long term project that would teach me about the possibility of art being life and life, art. By insuring myself that I am "in art" to create since every minute is framed and taken care of.

Included in the recipe that I have written for the 7 years is an experiment to see if I can get out of my own way and channel another. Each year I invite in a different entity (one matching the intention of the chakra I'm working on) into my body. So for year one. (French accent, sex) Joan of Arc was the guide. I imagined myself as her and used her outrageous courage to cut through my sexual past. The next year I became inhabited by the spokesperson of Teresa of Avila (security, second chakra, Spanish accent). For the third year the first time a living person is the guide... Meridel Lescur (Country Western, heart, green.) Among other things, this piece is reminding me to ask:

**WHO REALLY AM I?**

**WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO RELEASE  
THE HOLD OF INDIVIDUAL  
CONDITIONING?**

**WHEN WILL I BE INVISIBLE AGAIN  
AND EXPERIENCE MYSELF ALIVE?**

Answering these questions is all that I ever ask of my art. That's enough. But if a good performance comes out of it, that's a bonus.

and she began arousing his balls...both in her mouth at the same time as if bowling...propelling them out of her mouth into the penis which got exceedingly harder as she ate. "You are my ice cream, my son, my tower, my father, my god. Fuck my tits, push into my roll." He slid in, wet with her saliva. "Jennifer, I can't wait any longer. Let me come." "Wait," she pleaded, "it's my night. I want to give us more." And she began riding him, all seven inches, in-then out, in-then out. "Use your fingers on me. Let's come together." He knew exactly how to do that, light streaming from his sculptor's hands, setting off a current that flowed from the base of her spine to the crown of her head. "Fuck me, show me how much you want to fuck me. I'll give you everything. Just fuck me. Love me, fuck me." And he did. He did it over and over. They groaned like lions that night, like the earth thawing in the spring, like an electrical synapse in motion, exquisitely timed and synched.

While laying together afterward, consciously moving the energy between them, she didn't have the heart to tell him that she would need the abortion after all, since her pregnancy was fallopian.

**THE  
MIND.**

Colette



## EXPERIMENTS IN MAGICAL CHANGE

Frank Moore

### WHAT I AM

BEING IN A NON-NORMAL BODY HAS MADE IT CLEAR TO ME THAT LIFE CAN BE SEEN AS PERFORMANCE. MY BODY AND MY ATTITUDES TOWARD LIFE BREAK TABOOS AND CHANGE THINGS EVEN BY MY JUST SITTING IN A FANCY RESTAURANT. A SEXY WOMAN (MY WIFE, LINDA) IS FEEDING ME, LAUGHING, HAVING A GOOD TIME. PEAS AND BEETS AND MASHED POTATOES ARE RUNNING DOWN MY MATTED BEARD. FOR ME AND LINDA, IT IS JUST EVERYDAY LIFE. BUT FOR THE UP-TIGHT, HIGH-CLASS SOCIETY LADY AT THE NEXT TABLE, IT IS A TERRIBLY GROSS, DISGUSTING ATTACK ON HER NEAT CLEAN REALITY. I COUGH, LOUD AND LONG. A KNIFE CUTS THE NORMAL WORLD. A YOUNG HOMELY GIRL AT ANOTHER TABLE THINKS, "IF HE CAN HAVE FUN, WHY CAN'T I?"

I BECAME SUCKED INTO PERFORMANCE NOT TO TELL STORIES, NOT TO PAINT PICTURES FOR OTHERS TO LOOK AT, NOT EVEN TO REVEAL SOMETHING ABOUT MYSELF OR ABOUT THE STATE OF THINGS, AND CERTAINLY NOT FOR FAME OR FORTUNE. IT WAS SIMPLY THE BEST WAY THAT I SAW TO CREATE THE INTIMATE COMMUNITY WHICH I, AS A PERSON, NEEDED AND WHICH I THOUGHT SOCIETY NEEDED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PERSONAL ISOLATION...

I AM NOT T.V. I AM NOT THE SHOW. ART SHOULD NOT BE A SHOW. THERE ARE A MILLION SHOWS FROM T.V., MOVIES, SCHOOL, SPORTS, MUSIC, THEATER, THE STOCK MARKET TO THE NEWS AND POLITICS...ALL WITH THE ILLUSION OF PARTICIPATION, BUT WITH THE REALITY OF GRAND PASSIVITY AND SHORT ATTENTION SPANS.

I DO NOT FUNCTION ALL THAT WELL IN THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, CASUAL, SEXUAL, ECONOMICAL, COMPETITIVE WORLD. SO I LOOK TO PERFORMANCE TO CREATE A WORLD OF COMMUNITY, INTIMACY, AND HUMAN INTERACTION. FOR ME, ART IS A MATTER OF SURVIVAL.

### WHAT I DO

I HAD BEEN PAINTING OILS FOR YEARS, PAINTING WITH A BRUSH STRAPPED TO MY FOREHEAD, PAINTING NUDES FROM MAGAZINE PHOTOS. ONE DAY, A RICH WOMAN ASKED ME TO PAINT A NUDE OF HER. MY WIFE SET ME UP IN THE FANCY



Photo: Annie Sprinkle

LIVING ROOM WITH PAINTS AS THE WOMAN UNDRESSED. ON THAT DAY I REALIZED HOW ART CAN GIVE PEOPLE PERMISSION TO DO WHAT NORMALLY IS FORBIDDEN. IT GIVES A FRAME THAT SWITCHES REALITIES FROM THE NARROW NORMAL REALITY TO THE FREEING ALTERED REALITY OF CONTROLLED FOLLY.

I WAS ON THE CENTER PLAZA "SELLING NEWSPAPERS." BUT SELLING PAPERS WAS ONLY AN EXCUSE, AN EXCUSE FOR WATCHING PEOPLE, TALKING TO PEOPLE WHO HAD THE SLOWNESS AND THE INSIGHTFUL CURIOSITY TO STOP AND TALK...A WAY FOR ME TO ASK THEM TO MODEL FOR ME. THESE SPECIAL PEOPLE WERE MY REAL TARGETS FOR MY STREET PIECES. THEY SAW PAST THE MASK OF THE CRIPPLE. THE MASSES USE THE MASK OF THE CRIPPLE TO RELIEVE THEIR GUILT, TO REINFORCE THEIR FRAGILE SUPERIORITY OF BEING "NORMAL," TO MAKE THEMSELVES FEEL BETTER BY THROWING MONEY (UP TO \$20 A THROW) AT THE LESS FORTUNATE AT WHOM THEY WILL NOT EVEN LOOK. THE THIRD TYPE OF PERSON WAS MADE UP OF THE POOR AND THE KIDS WHO GAVE MONEY AS A PURE SPIRITUAL ACT.

THE NEWSPAPER SELLING QUICKLY FELL AWAY. ALL I HAD TO DO IS SIT THERE ON THE SIDEWALK, BEING AVAILABLE TO TALK. IT DID NOT MATTER THAT I DRESSED FANCY, OR HAD A SIGN SAYING "I DON'T WANT MONEY; I WANT YOU."

I NOTICED THE CHANGES IN THE PEOPLE WHEN THEY TOOK OFF THEIR CLOTHES; HOW THEY RELAXED, HOW THEY STARTED TALKING ON A DEEPER LEVEL ABOUT IMPORTANT PERSONAL THINGS. I STARTED DOING PRIVATE PERFORMANCES THAT INVOLVED DIRECT INTER-PERSONAL ACTING OUT OF EROTIC DREAMS. I STOPPED PAINTING BECAUSE IT BECAME TOO STATIC.

THESE PRIVATE PERFORMANCES BECAME THE BACKBONE OF WHAT I DO. WHAT THE PUBLIC COMES TO SEE, WHAT IS USUALLY THOUGHT OF AS "THE PERFORMANCE," IS IN REALITY ONLY THE TIP OF THE MONSTER, THE MAGIC, THE WORK, THE VISION THAT IS CONTROLLING ME AS AN ARTIST.

I DO NOT SEE THE PERFORMANCE AS MY OWN. MANY ARTISTS GET OVERWHELMED BY TAKING ON THE WHOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF PERFORMANCE, BY THINKING THE PERFORMANCE IS THEMSELVES. THEY GET PUMPED UP WHEN A PIECE SUCCEEDS, AND THEY GET CRUSHED WHEN A PIECE BOMBS. THEY GET BOXED IN BY FEAR OF FAILING, BLOCKED FROM EXPERIMENTING. IT IS SIMILAR TO THE SPIRITUAL HEALER WHO FORGETS THAT HE IS NOT THE ONE WHO IS ACTUALLY DOING THE HEALING. THE MAGIC USUALLY LEAVES HIM.

THERE ARE MANY UNKNOWN AND UNSEEN FORCES AT WORK IN A PERFORMANCE. FRANK MOORE, THE PERFORMANCE ARTIST, IS IN REALITY A FICTITIOUS FRONT MAN FOR PERSONALITIES AND FORCES THAT REALLY CREATE PERFORMANCES.

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[lystrata] ONE REHEARSAL NIGHT I DECIDED WE NEEDED AN AUDIENCE, SO I TOOK US TO THE BERKELEY UA MOVIE THEATER WHICH HAS A GREAT OUTSIDE FOYER. THERE WERE LONG LINES FOR FOUR MOVIES. THERE WE REHEARSED. AS THE WOMAN IN THE CAFE SIX YEARS LATER DESCRIBED IT, THESE PEOPLE WERE TALKING FUNNY, IN GREEK STYLE OBSCENITY...PRETTY GIRLS HUMPING GUYS IN WHEELCHAIRS RIGHT NEXT TO THE MOVIE LINES. THIS WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF THE DISABLED HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT... WE CRIPS HAD SAT IN AT THE SAN FRANCISCO FEDERAL BUILDING FOR A MONTH, BLOCKED BUSES, PICKETED JANE FONDA'S MOVIE, coming home...THIS WOMAN WAS AWARE OF ALL OF THIS...THEN SHE COMES TO A MOVIE (SHE CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS) AND SHE SEES WOMEN AND CRIPS DOING STRANGE, OBSCENE THINGS. SHE SAID FOR HER, THE PIECE MADE THE DISABLED MOVEMENT MORE HUMAN AND ADDED HUMOR TO IT.



Photo: D. Patrick. "The Outrageous Beauty Revue," 1980.

WHAT IMPRESSED ME ABOUT THE WOMAN IN THE COFFEEHOUSE IS THAT SHE REMEMBERED FIVE MINUTES OF OBSCENE SILLINESS AFTER SIX YEARS.

THE SHOW WAS IN BAD TASTE, WAS CALLED "EXPLOITATIVE." WHAT MADE IT THUS WAS NOT JUST WHAT WAS DONE, BUT WHO WAS DOING IT...CRIPS, WOMEN AND OTHER "UNTALENTED" UNFORTUNATES. THE FIRST ASSUMPTION OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE OFFENDED WAS THAT THESE WERE ABLE-BODIED ACTORS MAKING FUN OF CRIPS; THEN, WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR WE WERE REAL CRIPS, THE LEAP INTO DUMBNESS WAS THAT SOMEONE WAS EXPLOITING US. WHEN THEY GOT IT INTO THEIR HEADS THAT WE HAD CREATED OUR OWN ACTS, THE NEW WAY TO DENY OUR POWER WAS TO SAY WE WERE EXPLOITING OUR OWN BODIES. FORGET NUDITY. FORGET BEING SEXUAL. JUST BY GETTING UP ONTO THE STAGE WE WERE EXPLOITING OUR OWN BODIES.

AN IMPORTANT CHARACTER: DOTTY. SHE WAS CREATED WHEN AN ACTRESS JUST COULD NOT REMEMBER HER LINES, CUES, OR ANYTHING. FINALLY, I MADE HER A MENTALLY RETARDED FREE SPIRIT, WANDERING AROUND IN SLOW MOTION WHEREVER SHE PLEASED, DOING WHATEVER SHE PLEASED. DOTTY (PLAYED BY DIFFERENT PEOPLE), HAS BEEN CLIMBING OVER MY AUDIENCES EVER SINCE, PLAYING WITH THEM.

the outrageous beauty revue LOOKED LIKE TACKY ENTERTAINMENT PERFORMED BY UNTRAINED PEOPLE JUST FOR FUN. THIS WAS HOW MY CAST ALSO THOUGHT OF IT AND OF THEMSELVES. ONE OF MY MAJOR FAILINGS WAS THAT I DIDN'T PASS ON THE DEEPER PURPOSES, MAGICAL

INFLUENCES, AND HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF OUR PERFORMANCE WORK.

THE TACKY, WILDLY COLORFUL, LOUD SHOW OF BAD TASTE WAS REALLY A COVER, A DISTRACTION OF THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION, SO THAT THE HIDDEN MAGICAL TRANCE COULD TAKE THEM OVER. A TRANCE CAN BE CAST BY SHOWING THEM SOMETHING OUT OF THEIR REALITY. LITTLE KIDS OFTEN BECOME FROZEN ON THE SPOT WHEN THEY SEE ME, MY SPECIAL BODY, IN A CAFE. WE JUST GREATLY MAGNIFIED THIS TRANCE PROCESS IN THE SHOW BY THROWING OUT MANY OF THESE TRANCE INDUCING IMAGES OF TABOOS, OF CRIP ROCKSTAR, OF PREGNANT NUDES, OF SILLY SEX AND VIOLENCE. THEN THE REAL SHOW HAPPENED WITHIN THIS INNER TRANCE.

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THE HEART OF THE WORKSHOP WAS demanding IN VARIOUS FORMS. THE ONLY THINGS OUT OF BOUNDS BOTH IN THE WORKSHOP AND IN THE GROUP WERE ACTUAL SEX BETWEEN NON-MATES AND HARMING VIOLENCE. THIS CREATED A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH PEOPLE COULD ALLOW ONE ANOTHER TO TRUST, TO BE DEMANDED OF. IN THE WORKSHOP, I PICKED A PERSON TO MAKE A DEMAND EITHER ON A PARTICULAR PERSON, ON WHOMEVER HE PICKED, OR ON THE WHOLE GROUP. THE DEMANDED ONE MUST SATISFY THE DEMANDER. THE DEMANDER MUST STAY WITH THE DEMAND UNTIL HE IS TRULY AND FULLY SATISFIED. THIS PUTS BOTH THE DEMANDER AND THE DEMANDED UNDER PRESSURE OF HONESTY AND VULNERABILITY.

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I RETURNED TO THE SMALL CHANNELS, AS OPPOSED TO THE MASS CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION. WHILE MY INTIMATE COMMUNAL FAMILY WAS STILL THE BASE OF MY ART, ONLY LINDA AND I DID THE PERFORMANCE WORK. I WENT BACK TO THE PRIVATE PERFORMANCES TO CREATE A SPECIAL LANGUAGE FOR THE ALTERED REALITY OF PHYSICAL TRANCE.

I WAS HAPPY WITH THIS SMALLNESS. AFTER EVERY PIECE, LINDA AND I WOULD WALK HOME, TALKING ABOUT WHAT AMAZING THINGS HAPPENED, WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DID NOT, WHO CAME. FROM THE OUTSIDE, IT LOOKED LIKE NOTHING WAS HAPPENING. BUT IN THESE SMALL EVENTS, I EXPLORED THE TRANCE — INDUCING GESTURES OF ROCKING, OF WRAPPING BODIES...I CANNOT LIST ALL OF THESE DISCOVERIES OF SMALLNESS.

ANOTHER TOOL I DISCOVERED IN THESE PROLONGED SPELLS IS TO HIDE THE POWERFUL EROTIC RITUALS FROM THE

PILGRIM AUDIENCE BY PERFORMING THEM INSIDE A LOCKED BOX, HIDDEN CAVE, OR SECRET TENT.

MORE THAN EVER, MY PUBLIC PERFORMANCES ARE JUST FRAGMENTS OF A LARGER PERFORMANCE. THE MAIN FORM THAT THE PUBLIC PIECES TAKE IS LONG RITUALS WHICH CREATE A TEMPORARY PHYSICAL COMMUNITY BY USING PHYSICAL TRANCE. THE SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY HAS LED ME TO SET UP A SHAMANISTIC PERFORMANCE SCHOOL, the university of possibilities. THE FOCUS OF THIS SCHOOL IS TO CREATE A MYTHIC LIFE.

### WHAT I THINK

IN A LOT OF PERFORMANCES I SPEND THE FIRST HOUR BORING PEOPLE, USUALLY BY ASKING WHAT EACH PERSON DOES, HOW DID HE HEAR ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE, ETC. I DRIVE IN MY WHEELCHAIR UP TO EACH PERSON AND TAP OUT THESE QUESTIONS SLOWLY ON MY LETTERBOARD. TALKING TO THIS STRANGE PERSON IN THIS STRANGE WAY MAY BE INTERESTING AS A CONFRONTATION. BUT LISTENING TO TRIVIAL CHATTER BETWEEN THIS DISABLED MAN AND EACH PERSON IN THIS "PAINFULLY SLOW" WAY CAN BECOME AN ACTIVE BOREDOM IN A ROOM WHICH LOOKS AS IF NOTHING ELSE WILL EVER HAPPEN. THIS ACTIVE BOREDOM IS A SLOW INCREASING SHOCK THAT MAKES PEOPLE WHO WANT QUICK-PACED, HIGH-ENERGY ENTERTAINMENT SUDDENLY BOLT OUT OF THE DOOR.

IT TOOK ME A COUPLE OF YEARS TO REALIZE THAT PEOPLE WILL NOT DO WHAT THEY CANNOT HANDLE; SO THERE IS NO REASON TO SHIELD THEM, MOREOVER, THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO HANDLE SLEAZY PEOPLE. BORING THEM IS ONE WAY. THERE ARE OTHER WAYS.

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ONE NIGHT I STUPIDLY LEFT A PIECE OF CARPET ON A PART OF THE FLOOR. THE REAL AUDIENCE CROWDED ONTO THE CARPET, LEAVING THE ACTORS THE BARE FLOOR. SO THAT NIGHT, THE AUDIENCE WATCHED FROM THE RUG A BORING RITUAL...BORING BECAUSE THERE WAS NO MAGICAL PARTICIPATION BY THE AUDIENCE. I LEARNED THE HARD WAY THAT EVERYTHING IN THE PERFORMANCE REALITY IS IMPORTANT, EVEN A RUG.

•

THERE ARE PARTS WHICH COULD CHANGE THE WHOLE NIGHT DEPENDING ON HOW THEY ARE DONE. FOR EXAMPLE WHEN EACH PERSON, ONE BY ONE, PUT HIS CLOTHES BACK ON AND



DESCRIBED EACH ITEM. THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF DOING THIS. WHEN THE FIRST "REAL" PERSON SAID: "THIS IS MY RED SOCK," I KNEW THE PIECE WOULD BE SHORT AND SHALLOW, BECAUSE ALL THE AUDIENCE MEMBERS WOULD FOLLOW THE SHORT PATTERN. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FIRST PERSON SAID: "THIS IS THE SLIME GREEN SHIRT THAT BOBBIE LEFT WHEN WE BROKE UP..." I KNEW WE WOULD BE THERE FOR HOURS BECAUSE EACH PERSON WOULD BARE HIS SOUL. I LEARNED HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT FIRST PERSON, SOMEONE WHO WAS SENSITIVE.

•

THERE WAS TREMENDOUS PRESSURE ON ME TO POLISH THE SHOW UP TO MAKE IT MORE SELLABLE, MORE ENTERTAINING. THIS PRESSURE DID NOT JUST COME FROM THE CRITICS, BUT ALSO FROM FRIENDS AND CAST MEMBERS. "ADD RIMSHOTS, TIGHTEN IT UP. THEN THE SHOW WILL BE A COMMERCIAL SUCCESS." "WE SHOULD REHEARSE MORE, THEN WE WOULD BE GOOD THEATER, GOOD MUSIC." BUT THE VISION IS NOT ABOUT COMMERCIAL SUCCESS, NOR REACHING A LOT OF PEOPLE, NOR ABOUT GOOD ENTERTAINMENT, NOR ART. THE VISION IS TO CREATE TRANCES AND REALITIES WHICH WILL BRING CHANGE. THIS IS MY VISION. THE VISION HAS ME. I AM ITS TOOL. IF I HAD NOT STAYED WITHIN THE VISION, I WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST WITHIN THE ARTISTIC PRESSURES. ART SHOULD BE A VISION QUEST.

ON THE NIGHTS THAT THE ACTORS DIDN'T CREATE THE REALISM, I WOULD STOP THE PLAY, GIVE THE AUDIENCE THEIR MONEY BACK, AND INVITE THEM TO RETURN THE NEXT NIGHT. THEY DID. I AM RUTHLESS IN PURSUING THE INNER QUALITY I SEEK IN PEOPLE.

I NEVER CANCELLED ANY OF THESE PERFORMANCES BECAUSE TOO FEW PEOPLE CAME. IT WAS A LAB WHERE NEW MODULES COULD BE BORN, WHERE MAGICAL ENERGY COULD BE RELEASED.

•

PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASK, "WHERE IS YOUR WORK HEADING? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO NEXT?" IT IS NOT MY WORK. IT IS NOT MY CHOICE. IT IS A GROWING, EVOLVING VISION. A PERFORMANCE DOES NOT HAVE A BEGINNING OR AN END. IT BRAIDS AROUND ITSELF, FLOWING ON. ONE THING'S FOR SURE. WE HUMANS ARE NOT THE END OF EVOLUTION.

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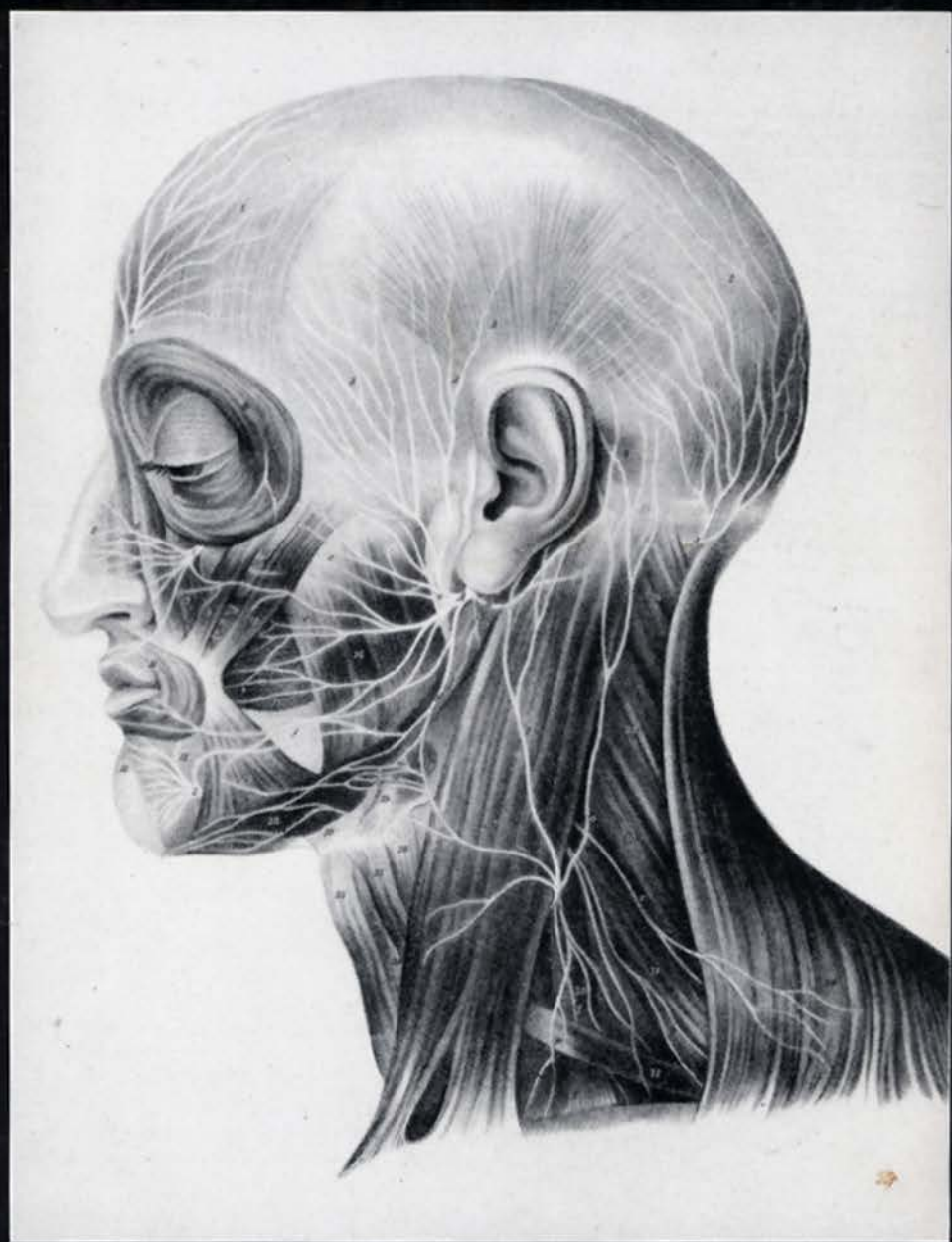
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