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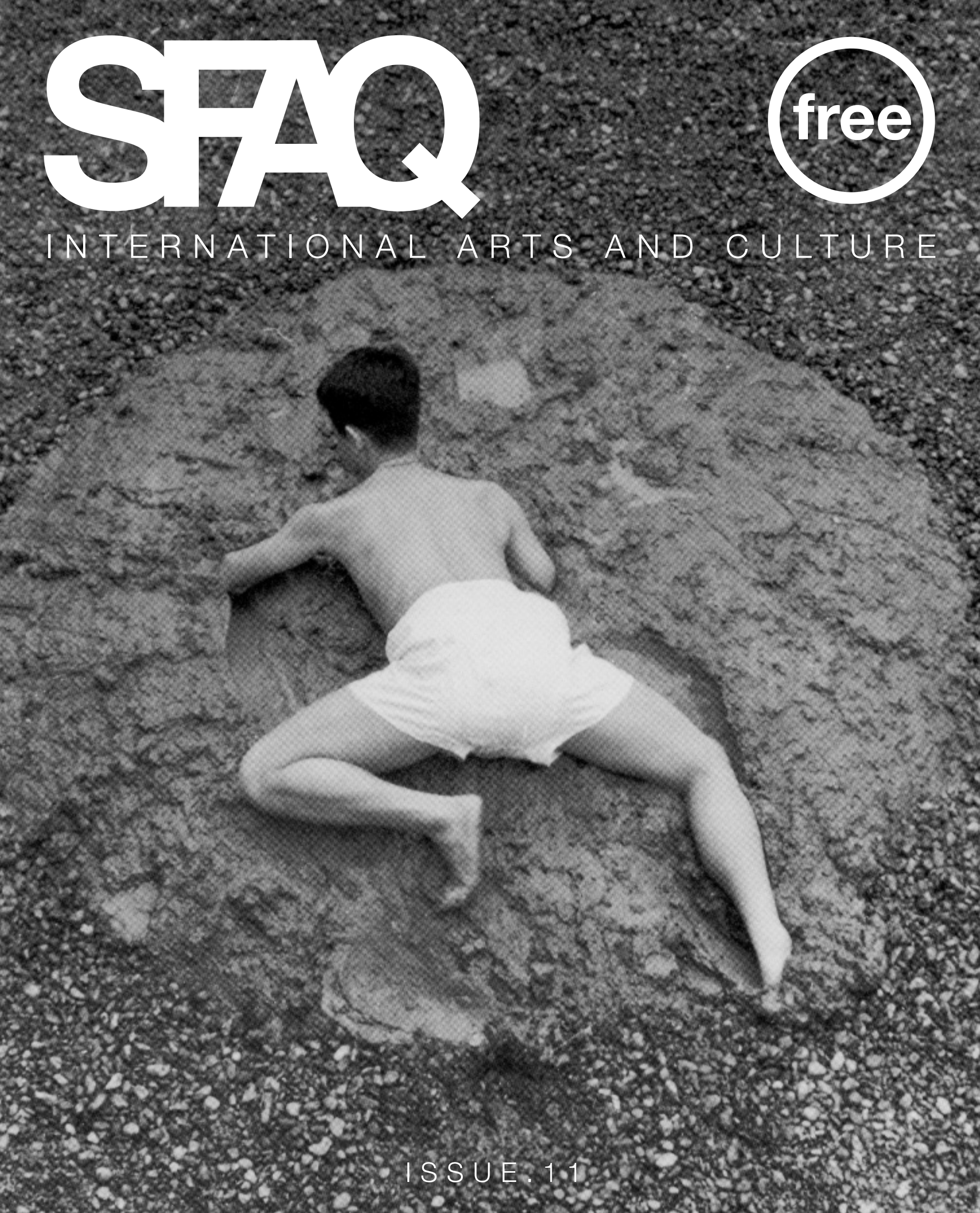

ISSUE.11

RUDOLF NUREYEV
A LIFE IN DANCE

Internationally recognized as the world's most celebrated ballet dancer of his time, Rudolf Nureyev demanded perfection–from the meticulous footwork and athleticism of his choreography to the delicate details of his costumes. Immerse yourself in a dramatic installation of original costumes and photographs highlighting the spellbinding theatricality of the original dance superstar.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 17, 2013

Organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco in collaboration with the Centre national du costume de scène, France. The Major Patron is The Bernard Osher Foundation. Additional exhibition sponsor support is from the Fashion Group Foundation of San Francisco and the Rudolf Nureyev Dance Foundation.

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Rudolf Nureyev in *Apollon Musagète*, photograph © Francette Levieux

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ROYAL TREASURES *from the* LOUVRE
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Exhibition organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco with the exceptional collaboration of the Musée du Louvre. The Grand Patrons are Cynthia Fry Gunn and John A. Gunn. The Major Patron is the San Francisco Auxiliary of the Fine Arts Museums. The luxury hotel sponsor is Taj Campton Place.

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Portrait of Louis XIV in diamond-set frame, ca. 1670. Miniature by Jean I Petitot; mount by Pierre and Laurent Le Tessier de Montarsy. Enameled portrait set in diamonds. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Objets d'art. Photograph RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY / Jean-Gilles Berizzi

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Laura Hyunjhee Kim, *Do You Want Me?*, 2011

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Beth Yarnelle Edwards, *Art and Carol*, 1997.

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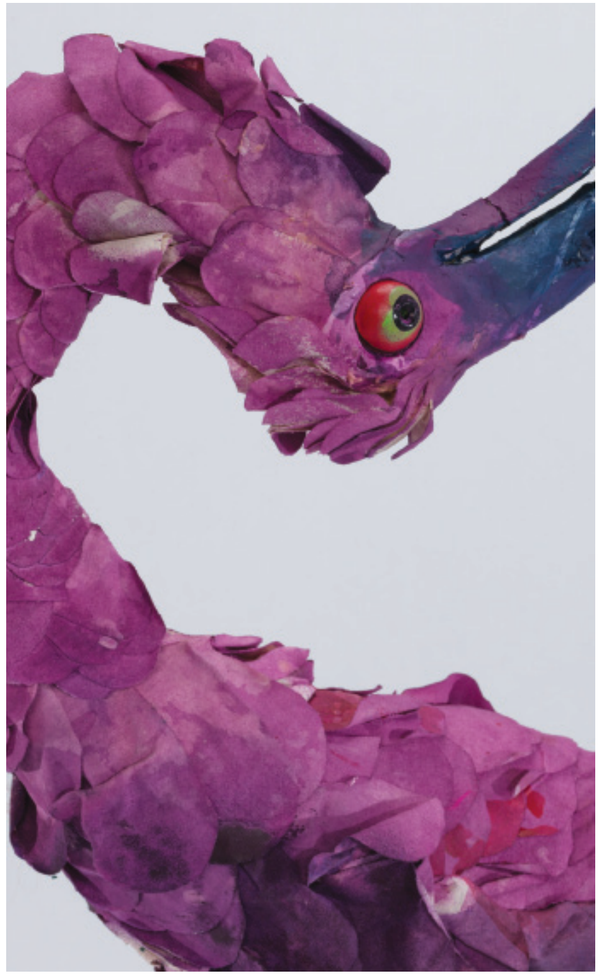
THE PARADE: NATHALIE DJURBERG WITH MUSIC BY HANS BERG



The Parade (detail), 2011, Courtesy the artists; Zach Feuer Gallery, New York; and Giò Marconi, Milan. Photo: Cameron Wittig
The Parade: Nathalie Djurberg with Music by Hans Berg is organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

New Beard, 2011, Courtesy the artist; Matthew Marks Gallery, New York; and Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco

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YBCA's presentation of *The Parade: Nathalie Djurberg with Music by Hans Berg* is supported, in part, by the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation.

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The Radical Camera: New York's Photo League, 1936–1951 was organized by The Jewish Museum, New York, and the Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio. The exhibition was made possible by a major grant from the Phillip and Edith Leonian Foundation, with generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts and Betsy Karel.

The Contemporary Jewish Museum presentation was made possible with the Lead Support of the Bernard Osher Jewish Philanthropies Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund. The Koret and Taube Foundations are the Lead Supporters of the 2012/13 exhibition season.

Image: Sid Grossman, *Coney Island*, c. 1947, Gelatin silver print, 9 3/8 x 7 7/8 in. Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, Photo League Collection, Purchase with funds provided by Elizabeth M. Ross, the Derby Fund, John S. and Catherine Chapin Kobacker, and the Friends of the Photo League, Copyright © Howard Greenberg Gallery.

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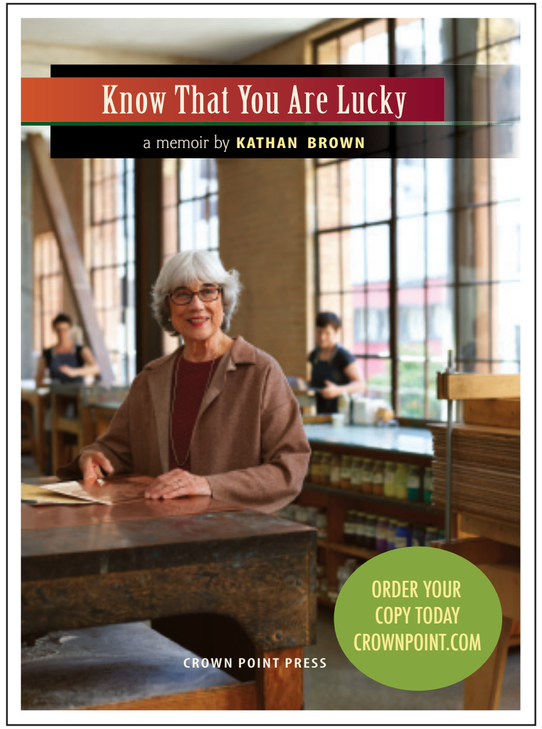

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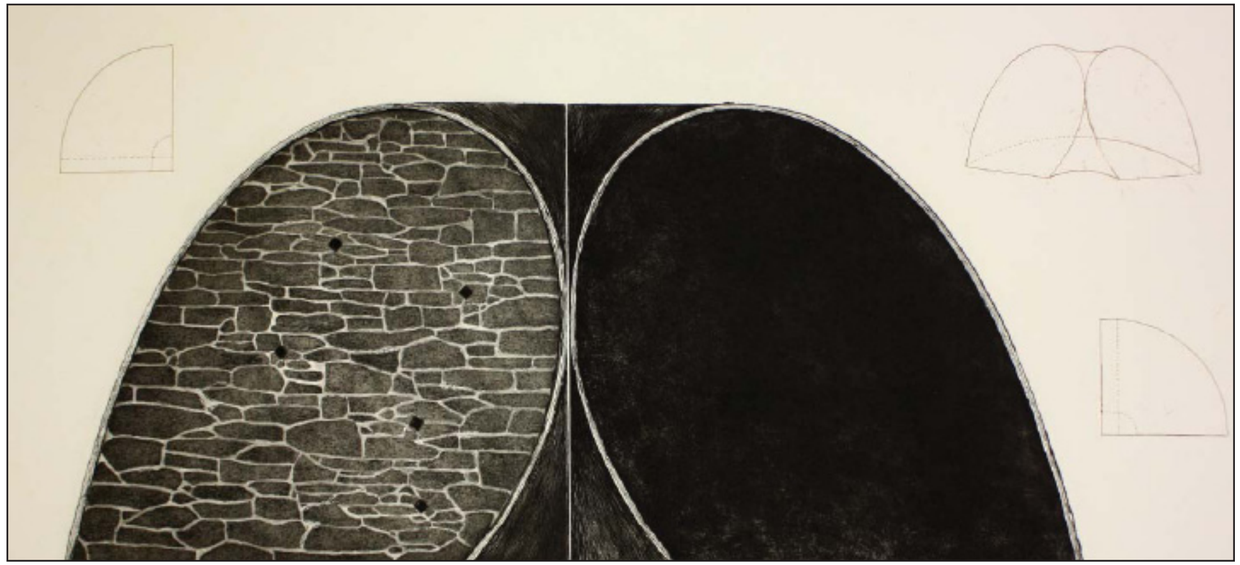

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Paula Moran, A Time That Was, 2012, photo courtesy the artist

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THOMAS WOOD, ***Milky Way Above Meadows Camp,*** Four-color etching and aquatint. *Edition of 50,* 2010.

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December 6th, 13th, & 21st at 8pm $10.00

YOUTH CHANUKAH EVENT:
December 13th at 5pm

MAGO: WITH DOHEE LEE
December 15th at 8pm $10.00

NIGHT OF YALDA (SHAB AL-NADA) PERFORMANCE: WITH FARIBA BOGZARAN AND OTHERS
December 21st at 6pm- midnight

CLOSING PARTY/RECEPTION:
December 21st at 5pm – midnight

JEWLIA EISENBERG has worked with Charming Hostess since 1998; has been a visiting artist/scholar at MIT, CalArts, and the University of Denver; and has performed at the Sarajevo Jazz Festival, Yerba Buena Venter for the Arts, and venues throughout Europe, Uzbekistan, Israel and Palestine.

DOHEE LEE is a composer, vocalist, percussionist, dancer and performance artist. Born on Jeju Island in South Korea, where shamanic tradition is very strong, Dohee Lee mastered Korean dance, Korean Percussion, and vocals in the tradition of Kyunggi-Do. Her art now focuses on fusing these traditional forms with contemporary elements. Lee has presented her work at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, performed at Carnegie Hall with the Kronos Quartet, and collaborated with a wide range of performers internationally.

AMY BERK creates conceptual, sculpture work that typically features household objects. She has exhibited at many venues ranging from Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Museum of Folk Art and Craft, Southern Exposure and Museu du Republica in Rio de Janeiro.

FARIBA BOGZARAN is a scholar and artist who has an interdisciplinary approach to the practice of art. She uses her inspiration from lucid dreaming and her in-depth training in percussion and shamanic studies to incorporate in her creative process. Her formal training is in painting, printmaking, and installation. With the surrealist painter Gordon Onslow Ford, she founded the Lucid Art Foundation, which focuses on art as vehicle in exploring consciousness.

NAJAT EL-TAJI EL-KHAIRY is an artist from Montreal of Palestinian origin. She has a passion to preserve Palestinian Embroidery on lasting porcelain surface. She incorporates, Arabic calligraphy, The Tree of Life, and other ancient (and personal) symbols of generations of her culture."

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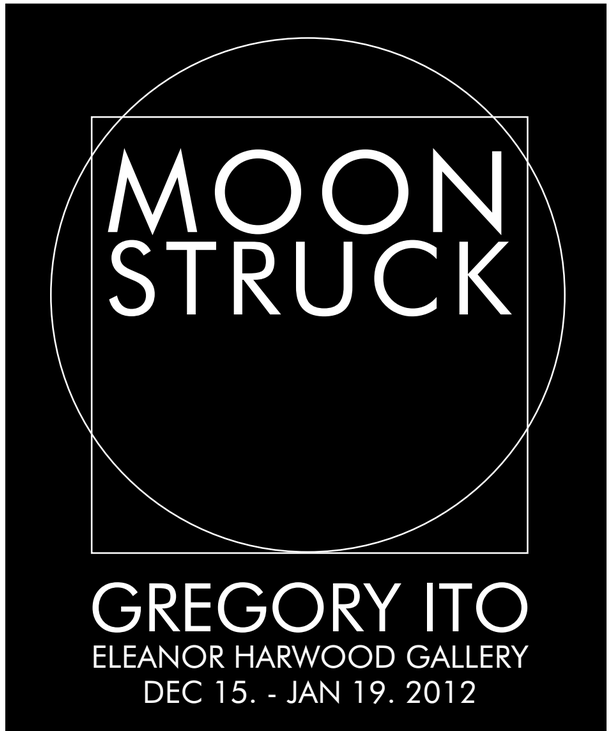
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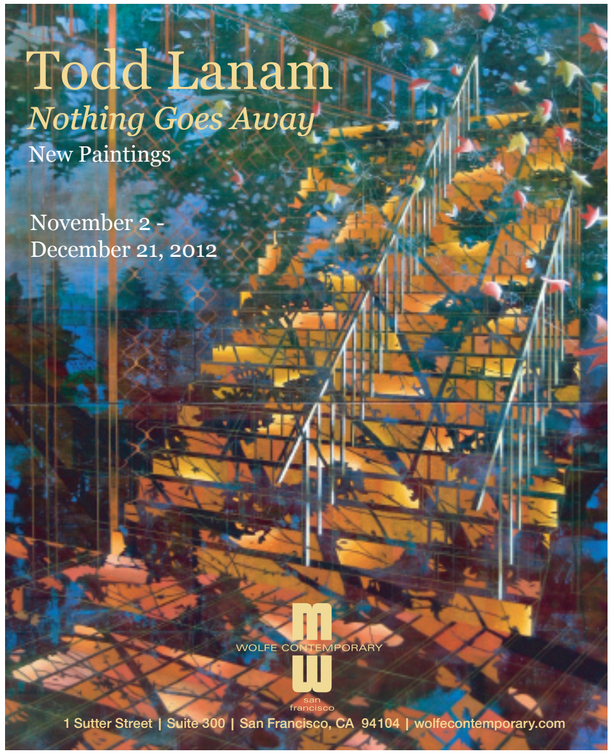
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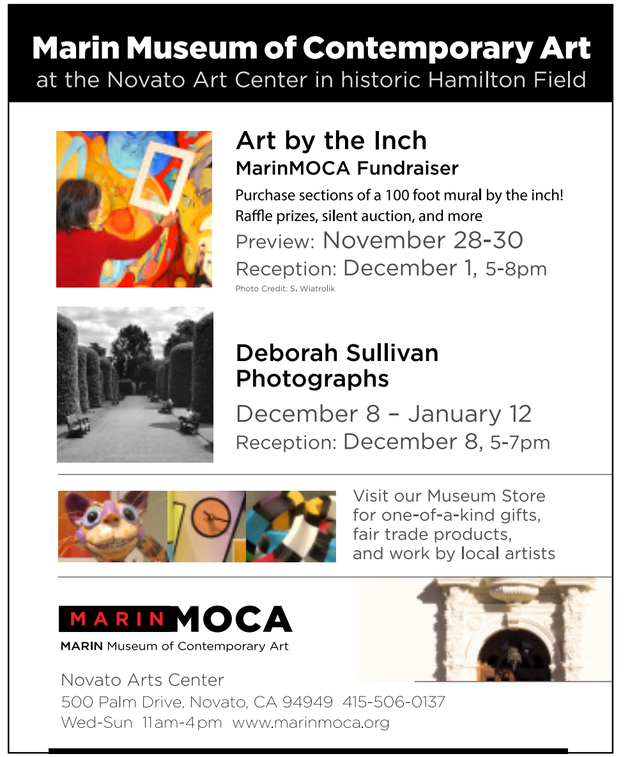
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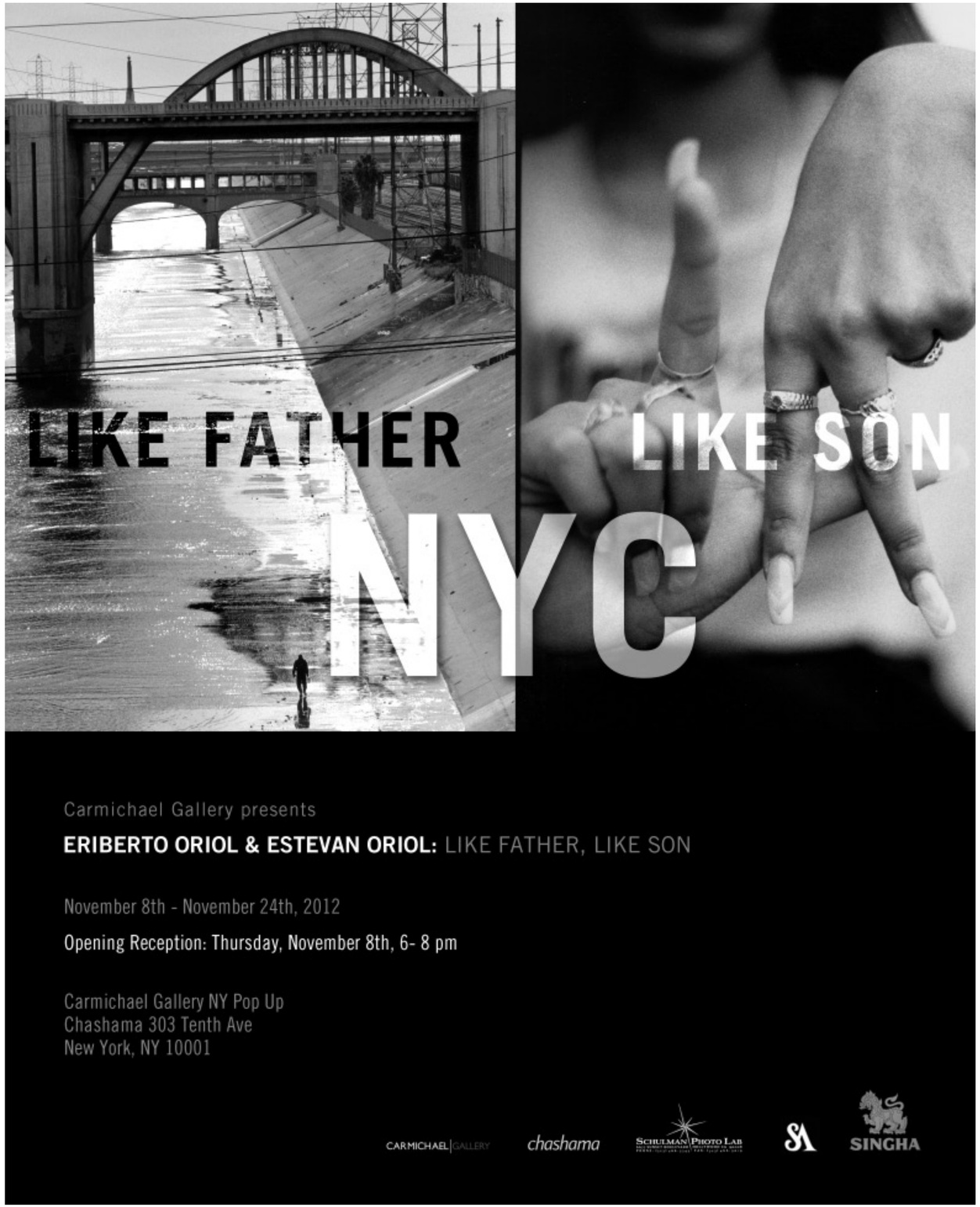
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I don't usually do this whole letter from the editor thing, but as SFAQ is getting ready to go to print with issue 11, I must pause. We would not have made it this far without the good will and unwavering support from everyone that is involved with the publication, both creatively and financially. If you have helped SFAQ, you know who you are, and I would like to take this time to say "thank you, we could not have done this with out you". I would also like to thank Jocko Weyland, contributing editor, for helping me put this NYC themed issue together over the last few months.

A recent aspect of our growth is the international distribution of SFAQ to thirteen countries, allowing our voice to reach across the globe. For me, part of that voice is making sure that the content we publish has some aspect of social action; overtly or sub-textually, with an eye on both the contemporary and the historical. I hope that it can act as a small cultural and social beacon of light in this tumultuous time. What else is one to do when faced with the madness and ongoing tragedy of US imperialism, dictatorship, state sponsored censorship, looming wars, global suffering, inequality and corporate sponsored hegemony. As an independent source of cultural and social information, we hope, I hope, that those supported within our pages can continue to confront these issues - and that art can create a dialogue that informs the choices that define our humanity.

Again, thank you, all of you, for your ongoing support.

-Andrew McClintock
Editor-In-Chief // Publisher // Co-Founder

CONTRIBUTORS

Andrew McClintock
Andrew McClintock was born in 1979 in New York City on the dirty floor of CBGB during a Bad Brains concert. Eight moths earlier his mother Wanda had been fired from her job as nanny for the first family under the Carter Administration after being caught in an affair with the POTUS. McClintock enrolled in Yale University at the age of sixteen, where he received undergraduate honors in Russian and Eastern European Studies (B.A.) and Women's Sexuality Studies (B.A.). He went on to receive a PhD in Philosophy, a Master of Fine Arts and a Master of Proto-Sciences in just under a decade. Plagued with student loans and unable to find a job due to being "too qualified", McClintock joined a group of radical tax evasionists and was involved in the famous "North Hollywood Shootout" in 1997. He spent the next decade incarcerated in Pelican Bay State Prison. Inside, he converted to Islam and met his now wife, Isla Shabazz Muhammed, in a "books for crooks" program that was ironically founded by President Carter himself.

Bettie-Sue Hertz
Betti-Sue Hertz has been the director of visual arts at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) since 2009, where she has organized Wallworks (2009); Renee Green: Endless Dreams and Time-Based Streams (2010); Audience as Subject (2010/2012); Song Dong: Dad and Mom, Don't Worry About Us, We Are All Well (2011); and The Matter Within: New Contemporary Art of India (2011), among others. She was curator of contemporary art at the San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA) from 2000-2008, where she produced several major exhibitions and catalogues including Eleanor Antin: Historical Takes (2008); Animated Painting (2007); Transmission: The Art of Matta and Gordon Matta-Clark (2006); Past in Reverse: Contemporary Art of East Asia (2004), for which she received the Emily Hall Tremaine Exhibition Award; and Axis Mexico: Common Objects and Cosmopolitan Actions (2002). From 2001-2008 she organized several editions of Contemporary Links, a commissioning program where artists including Alexandre Arrechea, Sandow Birk, Regina Frank, James Hyde, and Shahzia Sikander, responded to works in SDMA's collection. Previous to coming to California, Hertz co-organized (with Lydia Yee) Urban Mythologies: The Bronx Represented Since the 1960s (1999) for the Bronx Museum of the Arts and was director of Longwood Arts Project, Bronx, New York from 1992-1998. Hertz has contributed to many periodicals including The Architect's Newspaper, Art Journal, Animation, Collections, Communication Arts, Flash Art, n.paradoxa, and Yishu.

Constance Lewallen
Constance Lewallen was born and raised in New York City. She received her BA from Mount Holyoke College and her MA from California State University, San Diego. She is currently Adjunct Curator at the University of California, Berkeley. Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. As Senior Curator, she curated many major exhibitions, among them: Joe Brainard, A Retrospective, 2001; Dream of the Audience: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982), 2001; Everything Matters: Paul Kos, a Retrospective, 2003; Ant Farm (1968-1978), 2004, and, A Rose Has No Teeth: Bruce Nauman in the 1960s, 2007. All of these exhibitions toured nationally and internationally and were accompanied by catalogues. Her exhibition, Allen Ruppersberg: You and Me or the Art of Give and Take was presented at the Santa Monica Museum of Art in fall 2009. Her most recent exhibition, State of Mind: New California Art circa 1970, co-curated with Karen Moss premiered at the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach, California in fall 2011, subsequently presented at the UC Berkeley Art Museum, and is currently touring three other museums. The University of California Press published the catalog for the exhibition. Lewallen is currently West Coast Field Editor for caa.reviews (College Art Association's online review site).

Dean Dempsey
Dean Dempsey is based in New York City and is currently a resident artist at Villa Waldberta in Munich, Germany, where he is also in the survey exhibition "Next Generation - Contemporary American Photography" at Pasinger Fabrik and Amerikahaus. He is in the permanent collections of the Kinsey Institute, En Foco and Crocker Art Museum. He's appeared in Art in America, Wall Street Journal International and Süddeutsche Zeitung in Germany.

Glen Helfand
Glen Helfand is a visiting faculty member in SFAI's History and Theory of Contemporary Art program. His writing, concentrating on contemporary art and culture, appears in Artforum and numerous other publications, and he has curated exhibitions for the de Young Museum, San Jose Museum, Mills College Art Museum, and Dust Gallery in Las Vegas.

Hailey Loman
Hailey Loman is a conceptual artist based out of Los Angeles, California. She received her BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and currently works for THVM Atelier and Colpa Press as a designer.

Jamie Alexander
Jamie Alexander is owner of Park Life Store + Gallery and Paper Museum Press. He studied design and art history, has been a patron of Bay Area arts for over 15 years and is a board member of The Headlands Center for the Arts.

Jocko Weyland
JockoWeyland is the author of "The Answer is Never - A Skateboarder's History of the World" (Grove Press, 2002) and "The Powder" (Dashwood, 2011), and has written for Thrasher, The New York Times, Cabinet, and other publications. He is the creator of Elk magazine, books and gallery and is represented by KS Art in New York.

John Held, Jr.
John Held, Jr. met founding Gutai member Shozo Shimamoto in 1986, and performed with him in Japan in 1988 and 1993. This is the first time Held has detailed the important contribution the 84 year old Japanese artist has made on post war aesthetics. He examines Gutai in this issue in preparation for a forthcoming San Francisco Art Institute exhibition. Held's two-volume work, "Where the Secret is Hidden," containing over 100 essays composed over a 30-year period, is available from lulu.com.

Kelly Inouye
Kelly Inouye is a San Francisco based artist. Her work documents some of the more obscure aspects of popular culture, playing with the idea of collective memory. She is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute and UC San Diego. She has shown her work nationally, most recently at Morgan Lehman Gallery in New York and Interface Gallery in Oakland. For more information please visit www.kellyinouye.com.

Kenneth White
Kenneth White is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Art & Art History at Stanford University. He edited Millennium Film Journal #54: "Focus on Carolee Schneemann," published in autumn 2011. He curated System Operations, on view at the Eli Ridgway Gallery until December 8th.

Marianne Shaneen
Marianne Shaneen is a filmmaker and writer living in Brooklyn. She's currently in post production on her documentary feature about people who have animal alter-egos. She's also finishing her first novel, "Peekaboo", an alternative history of telecommunications and the occult told by two women. Recent publications include a speculative essay in the Brooklyn Rail about Werner Herzog, "Godzilla vs. The Prehistoric Bison": http://www.brooklynrail.org/2011/05/film/godzilla-vs-the-prehistoric-bison-on-werner-herzogs-cave-of-forgotten-dreams

Mark Van Proyen
Mark Van Proyen's visual work and written commentaries focus on satirizing the tragic consequences of blind faith placed in economies of narcissistic reward. Since 2003, he has been a corresponding editor for Art in America, and in 2006 his monograph titled "Administrativism and its Discontents" was published in the Art Criticism series put out by the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His recent publications include: Facing Innocence: The art of Gottfried Helnwein (2011) and Cirian Logic and the Painting of Preconstruction (2010). Since 2004, he has served as coordinator of the annual Art Criticism Conference at the San Francisco Art Institute, where he is Associate Professor of Painting and Interdisciplinary Studies.

Shelter Serra
Shelter Serra was born in a small coastal town in northern California named Bolinas. His interest in making art started at an early age playing with clay and Legos©, also as a teenager skateboarding in parking lots after school and doing spray paint graffiti murals in San Francisco. Shelter is the son of famed lawyer, J. Tony Serra (who was depicted by James Woods in the movie "True Believer") and the nephew of sculptor, Richard Serra. He studied at the University of California at Santa Cruz and received a Master's of Fine Arts in Painting and Printmaking from the Rhode Island School of Design. Shelter's recent artwork reflects the global spread of technology and how it constantly alters our visual environment. His work investigates our culture's relationship to objects of status and how advertising diversifies consumption. His inspiration comes from many sources including traveling and literature. Shelter has participated in group shows at Alleged Gallery, Marlborough Gallery, Eric Firestone in New York, and at Space 1026 in Philadelphia. He has also exhibited in Japan. Shelter currently lives in New York City and works in his studio in midtown Manhattan.

TOM MARIONI
1969 One Second Sculpture, curate Invisible Painting and Sculpture, 1970 founder (MOCA) Museum of Conceptual Art, curate Sound Sculpture As, 1970 The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art, 1972 Drawing a Line as Far as I Can Reach. Drum Brush Drawings, 1975 Thinking Out Loud, Warsaw, Poland, 1975-1981 editor/designer VISION magazine, 1981 Guggenheim Fellowship, 1991 The Yellow Sound for Kandinsky, radio play, Cologne, Germany, 1996 founded The Art Orchestra, Beer Drinking Sonata, 2003 A Memoir, Beer, Art and Philosophy, 2012 Beer with Friends… Vienna, Paris, Bristol.

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Kazuo Shiraga. "Challenging Mud" at 1st Gutai Art Exhibition, Tokyo, 1955. Photo courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

VITO ACCONCI

Interviewed by JOCKO WEYLAND

"Personal Island 'Floriade,' Zoetemeer (temporary)" 1992. Acconci Studio (V.A., Luis Vera, Jenny Schrider).

Vito Acconci shouldn't need any introduction. His body of work is so extensive and influence so widespread it renders recapitulation redundant. That said, it can be argued that a bevy of current practitioners who weren't born yet when Acconci was editing 0 to 9 with Bernadette Mayer and stalking strangers through the streets of Manhattan in "Following Piece" (1969) owe at least some of their notoriety and success to a pronounced borrowing from his oeuvre. Be that as it may, Acconci doesn't seem too concerned about that at all and he, and the Acconci Studio, remain incredibly active and engaged. On the night we spoke at the studio in DUMBO in Brooklyn, a Merzbow show at St. Vitus in Greenpoint was marked on his calendar. As he graciously left for the deli to get some coffee before we started, I told him I wanted mine with cream and sugar. "I stopped putting sugar in coffee a while back when someone told me there's as much in a New York-style deli cup as there is in a cannoli. I'd rather just eat a cannoli," he said. Luckily I'd brought a couple of Toblerone bars, which we made short work of during the next hour and a half.

Starting at a point roughly in the middle of the last forty-odd years, let's talk about "Maze Table" at the Wadsworth Athenaeum in 1985. It looks like it had a lot of sharp edges. When you first started doing a cross between furniture and architecture did you think people might wonder if you were against comfort?

No, I don't think so. I don't think I can answer that I had anything against comfort but I was thinking more about an idea of sitting, an idea of chair. I was thinking about how people use this in the sense that they entered at any of the four corners and the only way they could get to the middle was to go from one table to another table to another. I thought of, if there were people sitting at this table the person entering now can interfere with the people sitting there, but I certainly wasn't against comfort. Probably twenty or more years later I would at least give some thought to comfort, but at that time I was much more involved with chair as an idea and if it was necessary, if someone wanted to go to a chair, with the thought that they don't know when they want to get up, maybe they want to stay there for a while. Maybe they would start to think, "This is so comfortable I could die here."

> "...Well humor gives you, when you laugh, it's proof that you had some second thoughts. You revised something. You thought things were this way, but maybe they're not necessarily this way. Laughing makes you do a double take."

But from around the same time, though, "Sleeping Dog Couch" looks comfortable for lounging.

Exactly the same time, but it probably didn't come from comfort, it came from the idea of a dog, a dog is soft, everything was soft, it was a rug on the outside, leather, leather on some pillowed-like stuff. But I'm sure at that time it came from if a dog is used as a couch, unless it's a dead dog, it's a good couch.

Prior to all that you did a lot of performances that often involved situations in which you were making yourself suffer, other people suffer, or at least uncomfortable. When you started doing things like "Maze Table," in the mid-1980s, was part of the impetus that you had suffered for your art, in a manner of speaking, and now you were going to make other people suffer too?

I never thought that. I did think that now that I was making stuff for other people I didn't want to make other people necessarily uncomfortable. But with "Maze Table," and this is something that isn't really known, it was done for the Athenaeum's Lions Gallery of the Senses, for the visually impaired. So I wanted to make something that sighted people would not have a privileged view of, therefore I wanted to make it transparent, with glass. The blind aspect was really important, that was its starting point. It was amazing seeing blind people use it because they quickly realized it was glass, they very quickly went through it with a cane, and they did it faster than any sighted person could. They didn't need "sight." It wasn't an encumbrance to them, it was an aid. A maze might be uncomfortable for a sighted person but really comfortable for a blind person.

Who are used to the whole world being a maze. On the subject of comfort again, and this is sort of a "lifestyle" question, do you have sofas at home, do you have soft, "normal" furniture?

We live in a very small apartment, a tiny apartment, in Chinatown, and there's a sofa which we usually use to put stuff on. If we want to sit or be comfortable we lie on the bed, and if I'm sitting I'd rather sit on a stool or a chair, because I'm going through newspapers, or doing work. Basically the sofa was bought because it pulls out as a bed and it's not easy for people to stay over, but it can be done.

So you're not collecting mid-century Modernist furniture?

I love the idea of furniture, but not as fine design exactly. I like design that has two or three directions or two or three goals, more than one thing at a time, that's very important to me.

What's an example? Like, a sectional couch?

No, more if there's a place where two people are sitting next to each other, but the sofa-like thing is so shaped that somebody might be able to sit behind someone, or to the side. I like thickening the plot. I don't like the idea of one purpose and at the same time I love architecture and design I hate it because it makes people subservient to it. I think that can't possibly change until people by using something can change. Whatever they're sitting in, whatever they're living in. Can that happen? There are ways. We've done it with something that has a hinge, so it can be up, or down, but that's not real freedom. Suppose someone wants it to move another way? That's an obsession.

One of the early Acconci Studio projects was "Personal Island," right? Like, every man is an island?

I don't know if it came from that. It came from the fact that I'd been asked to do something at this little park in Holland, the occasion was some flower show, with a very small budget, maybe two thousand dollars. The interesting thing about most cities in Holland is that where there's land there's probably water. So let's do something with rowboats, they're relatively cheap. You drive a rowboat into the ground so it becomes almost a park bench. And there's another rowboat facing it, and it's attached to a circle of grass, so now if you go into that rowboat you can take that out into the water and have your own island. It was a way to do something relatively cheap but also something where, well by that time, I was convinced that people had to do things for themselves.

A noble impulse, though I doubt people are actually going to start doing things for themselves. Possibly that's overly utopian.

They might use their Iphones.

There are a lot of video games to play.

They might have a thousand and seventy friends on Facebook. It's an interesting thing, you can be acquaintances but maybe never friends. Facebook friends. You can skip. It's a great thing about the computer age, you don't have to read anymore. There's a lot of surface, and surface isn't bad. If you go into the surface you can go much more into things in depth. But if you want to read *The Brothers Karamazov* it's going to take a while.

You're going to have to get on your personal island for that. What's neat about "Personal Island" is that it's small-scale and turns a lowly rowboat into an island, which is a thing rich people buy. But this is a different contrasting kind of island. So when was the transition from just you to Acconci Studio?

Well, 1980 was kind of the big change with some of the first pieces, well, pieces were starting to be more publically used, before Acconci Studio started in 1988. There were installations throughout the 1970s and people were part of something but in the 1980s I wanted things to be participatory, though I don't know if that's a good enough word. With "Instant House" (1980) somebody could come and think there are four American flags on the floor, there's a swing in the middle, the person decides to use the swing, and the walls come up and the person becomes implicated or starts something that wouldn't have happened if that person didn't do anything. A lot of people had no idea what the piece was about. A lot of times circumstance makes a big difference. It was first done at The Kitchen, and some people said to me "I didn't understand that piece of yours with the American Flags on the floor." Because they hadn't gotten in the swing so the walls didn't come up. But a few months later it was in the Venice Biennale and there was a corridor with rooms on either side and a room at the end, and "Instant House" was at the end. So as people went down the corridor they inevitably saw it being used and that changed it completely so they knew it was supposed to be used.

As opposed to walking into an empty gallery and seeing it inert. Around the same time, "Park up a Building," and "House up a Building," they have insouciance that could be interpreted as thumbing your nose at the audience.

But why? You're giving people a place to go they would never have had before. During that show "House up a Building" was used by people, as a kind of house. How many times do you get to climb the outside of a building?

Being critical, one could say they were parasitic to their host buildings.

Definitely a parasite. The house took the electricity from the museum, it took water from the museum. You could wash, people stayed there. They usually stayed there part of the day, they didn't leave it a mess.

Around the same time "Garbage City," near Tel Aviv, 1999, though it was never completed seems extremely prescient since now recycling is such an obsession. It was ahead of its time, using methane gas to power things, actually incorporating "reuse" instead of empty rhetoric.

Originally a number of people were invited to make proposals for this garbage dump that was no longer being used. It had been there for almost fifty years, since Israel began actually, and because of the accumulation of garbage it was drawing multitudes of birds and since it was very close to the Tel Aviv airport they were worried birds would cause airplane accidents. They stopped using it, and asked for suggestions. So I don't know if I would have thought of it myself. But once it was presented, we try to take these things seriously. We worked with an environmental consultant from Arup and asked, what are some of things we should know? And he said the most important thing is the methane gas, it's always going to change because the methane gas is going to be constantly released. He also estimated that there was enough methane gas at the dump to generate electricity for probably the next fifty to seventy-five years. I really loved that project, and the guy who asked us, I think he kind of loved it too. But eventually he had a landscape architect do it. I admit, I felt a little piqued. It wasn't the worst landscape architect, but well, we had a grazing field for cows.

You're saying that as if it was of overreaching, but now you have urban rooftop farms and these kinds of ecologically progressive notions are the currency of the day. They might have seemed very farfetched then but they're not ten or twelve years later. On a related subject, you once said, "I'm interested in landscape not just as something to look at, but something to touch."

Can you go through the landscape, can you go under, can you transfer the landscape to somewhere else, and can you treat the landscape as if it's water? You can move water, can you move landscape? I don't know enough about this stuff, but I always think we can learn. We can bring in consultants, we have to, because we can't know everything. Some of the consultants might not have some of the farfetched ideas that we have, but sometimes others do get excited.

Going back to the element of danger, you did something with projectiles in the 1970s?

Not projectiles, the one I think you're referring to, it wasn't exactly a projectile. It was a piece called "VD Lives/TV Must Die." It was a time when I had good titles. Again, these things always had a reason. It was never from intuition, it was always from some kind of logic. It was done at The Kitchen when it was still on Wooster Street. They had a space with five columns in the middle of the space, and I thought, you can't ignore these columns. So I made the columns

"But the great thing about New York is, well, I love Tokyo, but it's hard to see a white person, and in New York you see every possible color, you walk down the street and they're people walking and you have no idea what nationality they are. There's such a mix, cities are about mix, and in New York there's so much incident, I can walk down streets I've walked down a million times before and there's so much to notice."

the supports for two large slingshots made of rubber bands, each rubber band held in place a bowling ball, and each bowling ball was aimed at a television set. A bowling ball, if it were released, would hit the television set, but if it missed it would go through the window and out into Wooster Street. But nobody released them. Maybe they would now.

That puts me in mind Ant Farm's "Media Burn" and the Plasmatics with Wendy O. Williams driving the Cadillac through the wall of TV sets. Did you ever see any Survival Research Laboratories performances?
No, they were reported to me, I knew about them, there were times I was in San Francisco, but I never even met them.

The bowling balls, and S.R.L. around that time they were rigging animal carcasses to walk and blowing things up, and it reminds me of a talk Frank Grow gave at the University of California at San Diego, in 1988 or so, in which he showed slides of S.R.L. performances. The professor, Sally Stein, interrupted him, all in lather, scolding him, saying it was all castration anxiety and masculine acting out.
I don't think my stuff was about that so much, I don't think it came from that. It came from wanting a person in the gallery to at least think, and think can I release these bowling balls? Or, do I want to release these bowling balls?

Give them agency?
That was so important to me, because I think the worst thing about art is that it takes away agency, though it gives the art doer a lot of agency. I might be blind to certain things, but I don't think I did stuff that necessarily caused a commotion. Even "Seedbed." "Seedbed" started from wanting to be with people, but not facing people. It was done very logically. I could be in a few places –behind the wall, above the ceiling, or under the floor. Behind the wall seemed wrong since I would be next to people who were by the wall but not next to people on the other side of the room. Above the ceiling was difficult because it had a relatively low ceiling, between nine and nine and a half feet, so if I took three feet, there was only six feet left for people. So it had to be under the floor, but under the floor meant I had to build a ramp. But you know galleries were different at that time, galleries had just opened in Soho. Ileana Sonnebend at first didn't even ask me what I was going to do. Apparently she was in Paris, and I told people what I had planned and it got back to her, and she called and said, "I hear you're planning on doing something outrageous in the gallery." And I said, "I hope I'm not doing it because I'm outrageous," and she said, "OK." It was a very different time. She knew that the first year galleries were open in Soho, nobody knew that there were galleries there yet, and of course they needed sales, but they needed sales two or three or four years later. In the beginning they needed attention, and they knew they were going to get attention from things like "Seedbed." The same year was the Gilbert and George "Singing Sculpture" show. They weren't going to sell that, but they could bring them into the back room and sell them a Johns or a Rauschenberg.

In the introduction of Kate Linker's book (Vito Acconci, Rizzoli, 1994) she writes that she's going to leave out "the notoriously sexist work of the early '70s." It's surprising that that statement is in there in a book about you, and also it's hard fathom what exactly she's talking about.
Well, she was a very committed feminist-oriented writer, she wrote about Barbara Kruger and Laurie Simmons. It did bother me. At one point we were kind of friends, but I don't know if she ever talked about why she thought that.

It doesn't seem "notoriously sexist" at all, though from that era anything like Survival Research Laboratories, involving violent aggressive tendencies, was deemed sexist.
It was more of a masochistic thing. It was never so much aggressive, though maybe the piece "Claim" (1971, at 93 Grand Street) was, where I was sitting at the bottom of a stairway saying "I don't want people to come down here" and every time I heard someone I'd swing the crowbar. But most people thought it was about the Vietnam War. I don't think it was, except at that time you couldn't help doing anything that didn't seem like it was against the Vietnam War. It was so reprehensible, especially to people of my generation, because, you know, I was born during the Second World War, the "good war," and the United States was the hero nation. A few years passed, and the Korean War, at that time I was maybe nine years old when Truman very justifiably fired Macarthur. And Macarthur came home to parades, it was incredible, we didn't have school so we could go to the parades. But he came up with great phrases like "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." That was a number one popular song at that time. If kids could have voted, Macarthur would have become president. Whereas Truman was a sissy, a guy with glasses.

There's a Philip Hamburger story from The New Yorker a long time ago about Truman signing something like 4,000 copies of his autobiography in Kansas City. All day long, talking to everyone separately, with a fifteen-minute break for a tuna sandwich or something. Talk about durational, endurance-based performance pieces.

Switching gears a bit, in the recent "Wish You Were Here" exhibition at the Albright-Knox museum in Buffalo there's a sound piece of yours, from 1975, at Hallwalls. There's also a great Paul Sharits' "Locations" called "Dream Displacement," with four projectors and audio of breaking glass. He was bi-polar, and supposedly the sound of breaking glass soothed him.
I met him, up there, he took me to this bar where there were nude, or almost nude dancers, dancing around a pole, and at one point I said, "Paul, I've got to, I've got to get out of here, I've got to go to sleep. I know you're enjoying this, but I've got to go." So I left, and apparently, five minutes later he got beaten up.

There's also purported tale about Sonic Youth playing in Buffalo in the mid-80s when they showed projections of Sharits' films behind them while they were performing. After somebody asked, "Who were the projections by?" And they said, "They're by this guy Paul Sharits, he's from Buffalo, do you know him?" And whoever they asked was like, oh yeah, and took them over to where Sharits was on the ground practically passed out, wasted, with his head on his knees, his back against the wall, and said, "Paul, this is the band that just played, they want to meet you." And he flipped them off with both hands, growled, "Fuck you," then stood up and vomited all over them. And the Buffalo people were all embarrassed, but Sonic Youth was like, "Wow, he's so cool!"
Sonic Youth formed in, 1981? Wait, I know when they formed, because they formed in my loft. 1980, around the corner, in DUMBO.

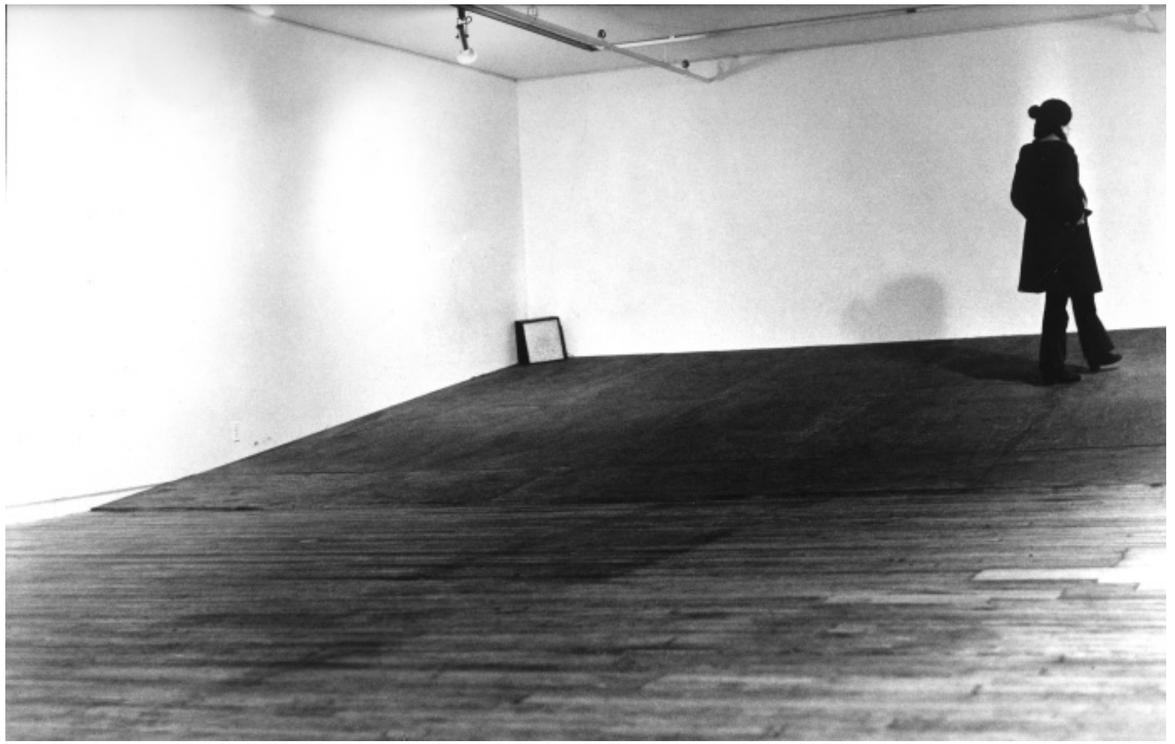
In that piece at Hallwalls, and all of your work with your voice it's very distinctive, your cadence and timbre.
I know, I know how to use my voice. I don't know how I learned it exactly, but I realized that I was so influenced by things, more voice in movies, especially "Last Year in Marienbad." Robbe-Grillet. That text shaped my entire career. I didn't know it would, but a narrator doing a voice as if it's kind of hypnotism, because this a person that's trying to convince this woman they met last year at Marienbad, and at the end she goes away with him. To me that that's the most supreme, of any kind of art thing. It's astonishing. The movie came out in 1961, I was a junior in college, I think.

Were you reading Albert Morovia around the same time?
No, I was reading Alain Robbe-Grillet. Robbe-Grillet to me was, he changed the nature of things. That writing could never be the same again. But it didn't do much. It should have, how could anybody go back to things like Alberto Morovia? But you know Morovia wrote *Contempt*, which really changed things, once Goddard got to it. If "Last Year at Marienbad" for me is the greatest movie ever made, "Contempt" is probably the second. The third, I'm not sure if it's either Hitchcock's "Vertigo" or "Psycho". And people laugh at me when I say this, but also Brian de Palma's "Phantom of the Paradise," this rock version of *Faust*.

We talked about "Bladerunner" once.
"Bladerunner" is up there, the art direction, based on Syd Mead.

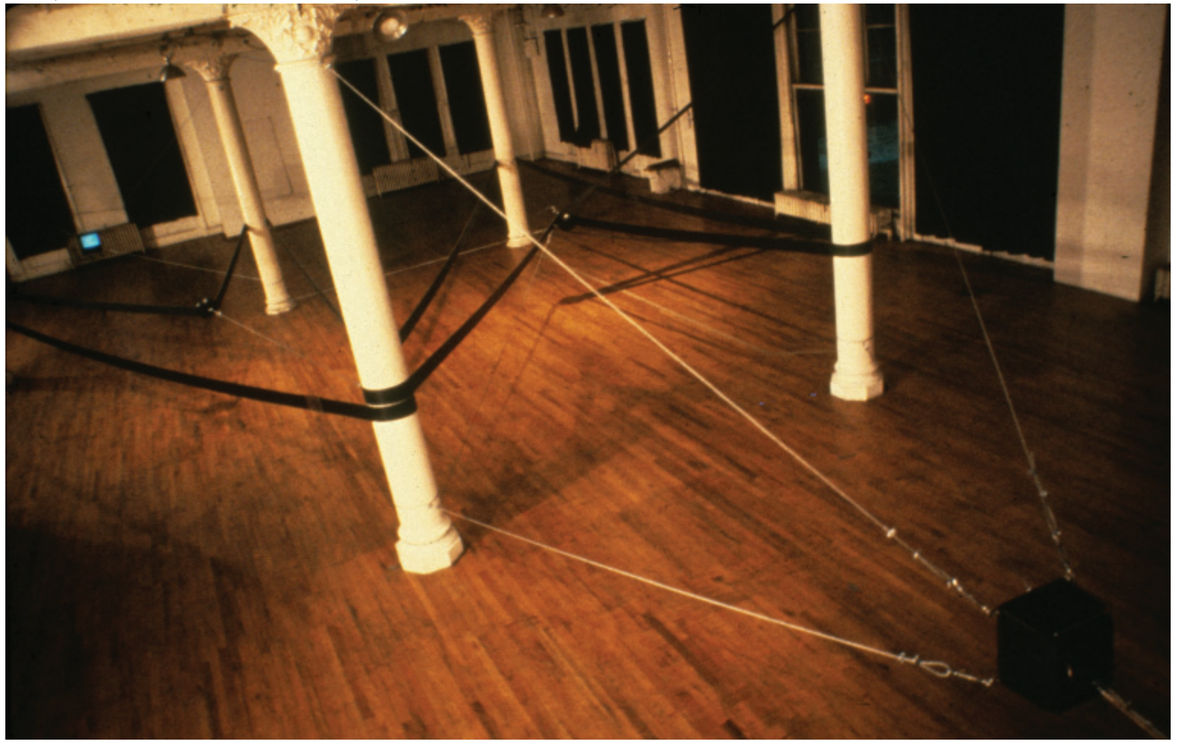
Do you have a favorite city?
Probably New York. I love Tokyo too, and I do like Hong Kong. But the great thing about New York is, well, I love Tokyo, but it's hard to see a white person, and in New York you see every possible color, you walk down the street and they're people walking and you have no idea what nationality they are. There's such a mix, cities are about mix, and in New York there's so much incident, I can walk down streets I've walked down a million times before and there's so much to notice.

Do you think the changes in New York, the gentrification, the whatever you want to call it, has diminished that sense of surprise and serendipitous occurrence?
It has lessened it, but I wonder if just the mixing of people in New York can kind of subvert



"Seedbed", Installation view, January 1972 at Sonnabend Gallery in New York [Above and Below]. Courtesy of the artist.

"Claim", performance documentation. New York, 1971. Courtesy of the artist.



"VD lives / TV Must Die" New York, 1978. Courtesy of the Artist.

"Maze Table", 1985. Courtesy of the artist.

"Instant House", 1980. Courtesy of the artist.

that. Not totally, but to some extent, the great thing about New York is that you can probably get everything though the most terrible thing about New York is the price of space. But only space, you can get food cheap, go to Chinatown, also Indian and Korean restaurants.

It does seem though like at this point New York is almost playing itself in a movie, like a parody of itself.
It could be. You know the Alexander McKendrick movie "Sweet Smell of Success?"

Of course, with Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis.
That's like, I know that New York in the movie doesn't exist but I can't get it out of my head. I love that New York. But, I had to be more careful when I went out, before. Though I still have to be careful when I go home at 4 o'clock in the morning.

I have a hard time with Brooklyn even if I'm just one subway stop away from Manhattan. And DUMBO, I don't know, these ridiculous ads, "More Creativity per square foot" for Two Trees, the developer.

A friend of mine dubbed it "FauxHo," she really nailed it.
When I first got here, DUMBO, in 1980, if I was out at night and coming home at say 1 o'clock in the morning, I would take a deep breath. Though it's only three blocks to the subway station, anything could happen. The first week or so when I was here, a lot of the industrial places had moved out and people had left their guard dogs behind. And in the first week I went out and suddenly this swarm of dogs came up to me, and I thought, shit, what am I going to do? I don't think they're going to try and eat me, though they were possibly hungry. Anyway I went into the subway and sat down, and I thought, why is my ass so cold? Then I realized they had torn the back of my pants. So, what do I do now? Do I go where I'm going? It puts you in a quandary.

Do you have a favorite building in New York?
A favorite building? Well, I love the inside of the Guggenheim. I don't know, I like more in between things, like parts of New York where the grid is broken, parts of the West Village, like where W. 4th street meets W. 10th street. I guess New York is saved by diagonals where everything seems to spread, for a very short time, like around where Storefront for Art and Architecture is, at Cleveland Place. Those surprising places in New York, where it's still a city but it's a different kind of a city, there's an opening. You're not always in the middle of buildings, though you're very close.

When I first saw you speak in 2005 you showed something that really made a big impression in a lot of contradictory ways, the "New World Trade Center" proposal. Where were you on September 11th?
Where was I? I was here, at the studio. I remember going out and thinking, something seemed strange, going to the subway, and realizing, "How come no one is here?" And then going back up, from the subway, I lived on Pearl Street at the time, suddenly I saw people running, and I heard yelling, and this woman saying "The buildings, the buildings, they got the buildings." And I thought, what is she talking about? But then I could see what was happening at the World Trade Center.

When I first saw that my response was a mix of laughing about it, but also, should I be laughing? Even now, but especially then, in 2005, and even more so in 2002 when you did that it was such a sensitive topic. Were reactions really negative? Did people think it wasn't reverential enough?
I don't know if I hang around people enough. Seriously, I don't know what kind of reactions there were. It was part of a show at Max Protech's gallery, he had asked people to show ideas for the World Trade Center, if you were asked to do something there what would you do. I heard reports that some people said, "You can't do something like that, it insults the people that died there." But I thought, OK, once there's a destruction, can we use this destruction to make a very different space than you could ever make before? Bring the outside into the inside. One column is an elevator from office to office, these are columns are waterfalls from park to park.

"I, like many people, got really influenced by the notion of topological space, a space that where the inside leads to the outside and vice versa, the continuity from outside to inside and vice versa, That kind of continuity interests me. What I wish we could do but I don't know how to do it is make a space that doesn't even have surfaces. Can you make a space out of particles, pixels?"

The World Trade Center proposal, it had a component of surprise, almost shock, like, "You can't do that." It was therapeutic because the humor involved. And there's a quote from you somewhere, to paraphrase, that you prefer slapstick over irony, the comedic over the tragic.
Well humor gives you, when you laugh, it's proof that you had some second thoughts. You revised something. You thought things were this way, but maybe they're not necessarily this way. Laughing makes you do a double take.

Let's do some free association. You said that for you Godard embodied the 1960s. Who embodied the 1970s?
Who embodied the '70s? Probably the Sex Pistols.

The 1980s?
The '80s. It wasn't music. I wasn't so interested in music then. The '80s. It was either "Bladerunner" or David Cronenberg's "Videodrome."

With the great James Woods. He's been really quiet lately.
He's such a conservative, he's like a republican.

And he was with Sean Young, and then they fell out and she allegedly left dead rabbits on his doorstep and he filed a harassment suit against her.
And she was in "Bladerunner"! Her presence in that movie was astounding.

Then she disappeared. In another quote, you said that by getting off the page and moving on from poetry you were "finding yourself" and that it was right after the '60s, so everyone was finding themselves. You said you had to "go away" to find yourself. Did you ever feel that you'd gone too far, that you couldn't "come home," so to speak?
At that time finding oneself really was, you almost had to "go away" to get back to finding yourself. Later I thought I the way to really find myself was through other things. Whether it was through architecture, through landscape, through cities. It's like throwing your voice.

I thought self was so, so exaggerated in the late 1960s. I started to think all it could do was go around itself. I loved at that time the Van Morrison songs, but I loved just as much the parts that were almost kind of funny, like a beautiful song called "Ballerina." It's maybe seven minutes. After about five minutes he says "Well it's getting late now." You're not kidding it's getting late! Songs are supposed to be two minutes.

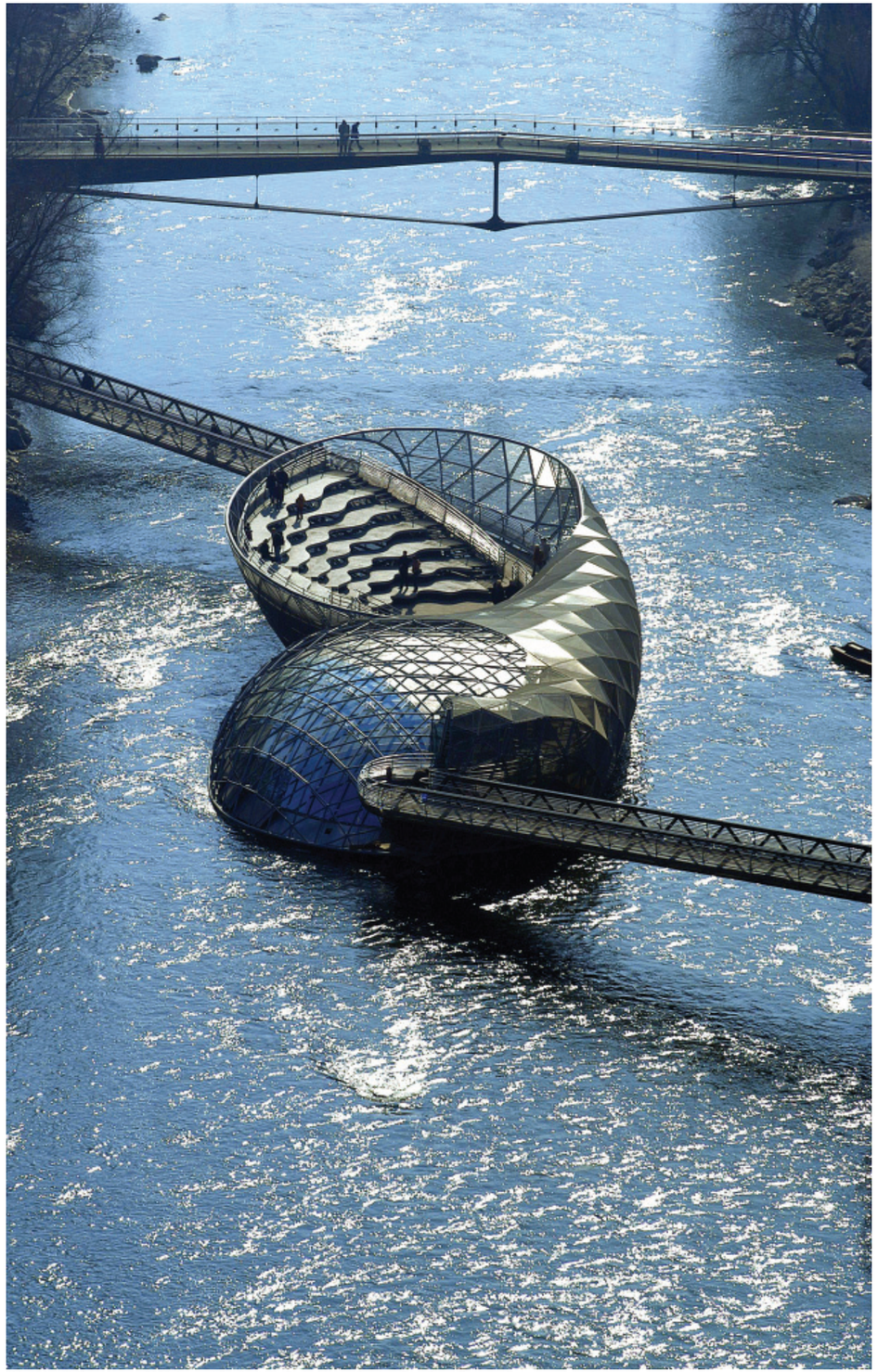
Thank God punk rock came along.
Thank God a scream can't last that long! Maybe the most significant influence of the '60s was Archigram, though I don't think I knew it until a little later.

Your work in the past, and now, with the architecture, the participatory aspect, brings up this idiotic term, relational aesthetics, and a lot of it is a watered down, neutered version of what you and other people did forty years ago. Like, I'm making you Thai food. The things you did, Chris Burden, many others, it just seems depressingly typical how that's gotten to be such orthodoxy now, a degraded simulation or copy, and garnered so much attention without people saying or acknowledging that.
I don't know why people haven't. There's something so wrong. And one or two of those things, when I stopped by, the food had already run out. I don't know if the moves Marina Abramović has made are so interesting. If performance can be repeated it's theatre. I think the best stuff she did was with Ulay. But this recent stuff, the recreations, it's horrifying. She lies down with skeletons. It's become a little sad. But she's become the most well-known performance artist.

That seems like a disservice, the recreations, to what you and others pioneered.
Not just to me, but a number of people. It was kind of interesting, the re-enactments ("Seven Easy Pieces," 2005) she did at the Guggenheim, because she approached a number of people, but she didn't repeat a certain Chris Burden performance. He wouldn't even talk to her, he wrote her a note saying if you continue this you'll be hearing from my lawyer. Myself, I said, look, you don't even have to ask, everybody takes from other things. I admit, I went there, to MoMA, the staring piece ("The Arist is Present") and I thought, I just hope she doesn't see me as she's staring.

When you were writing poetry, and then started doing art, at that time did you think when I'm sixty-five or seventy I'm still going to be an artist?
I think I thought at that time, what does a so-called body artist do when they get older? I also always thought I want to be doing things that have some kind of continuity, but didn't want to do the same things. So I was almost positive that I wasn't going to be doing this when I'm sixty-five. I certainly didn't think architecture. I think I maybe shrugged my shoulders and said, "Well, I guess I'm doing art now." But by the time I was thinking I might be doing art but I can't stay in galleries and museums, because museums are better about history.

Though your work often appears in museums. Have you ever wanted to design one?
Well if someone asked us, yes, we'd definitely try it. But I don't think museums should necessarily be subservient to the art, there should be more of a combat.



"Mur Island", Graz, Austria 2003. Acconci Studio (V.A., Dario Nunez, Stephen Roe, Peter Dorsey). Courtesy of the Artist.

The Guggenheim in Bilbao, at the time it was built people were treating Frank Gehry like he'd invented the next best thing since sliced bread. And when you see it from a few blocks away, wow, it is really staggering. But inside it's an injustice to the art. It's anti-art, a violence against what it is purportedly showcasing. Anything that's two-dimensional and not a huge Richard Serra steel wall gets swallowed up in there.

You know Dan Graham, about ten years ago he said something to the effect that this new architecture, such as Rem Koolhaus, who he had been an early proponent of but then turned against, these buildings are made to look good in photographs, two-dimensionally, in magazines, but aren't built for the people inside of them. All these museums, like the new Whitney.
Well Renzo Piano did some interesting buildings, but not anymore. Renzo Piano is a particular case, and even in conjunction with Rem Koolhaus, because a lot of those places that Piano is doing were given to other architects first. Rem Koolhaus was supposed to do the Whitney. But anytime someone is fired, now they get Renzo Piano. He's become the conciliating architect. Really strange that he let himself be that, because he wasn't always.

Kurt Lewin (German-American psychologist, 1890-1947) with his field theory and studies of group dynamics, that was something that was very influential to you at one time. Is it still?
It was at one time and I still think in terms of it, it hasn't really left me. I still think, if there are two parties, if there are two people, the way I said before, maybe the architecture and the art have to combat each other, that probably comes from Lewin. He has these very simple drawings: this is one unit, this is another unit, now, if this unit wants to make contact with the other one, this unit can have an extended arm that can go into this unit. But if this unit wants to do more than that, now it can start to wrap around and subsume this other unit. And I still think I think that way.

Your work overall which might to an outsider or innocent bystander seem very disparate, is actually quite connected.
It is.

One of the elements that keeps things interesting with the recent architectural ventures is their connection to what you've always been doing, even when you were writing poetry, on the page, and then off the page. Makes it holistic.

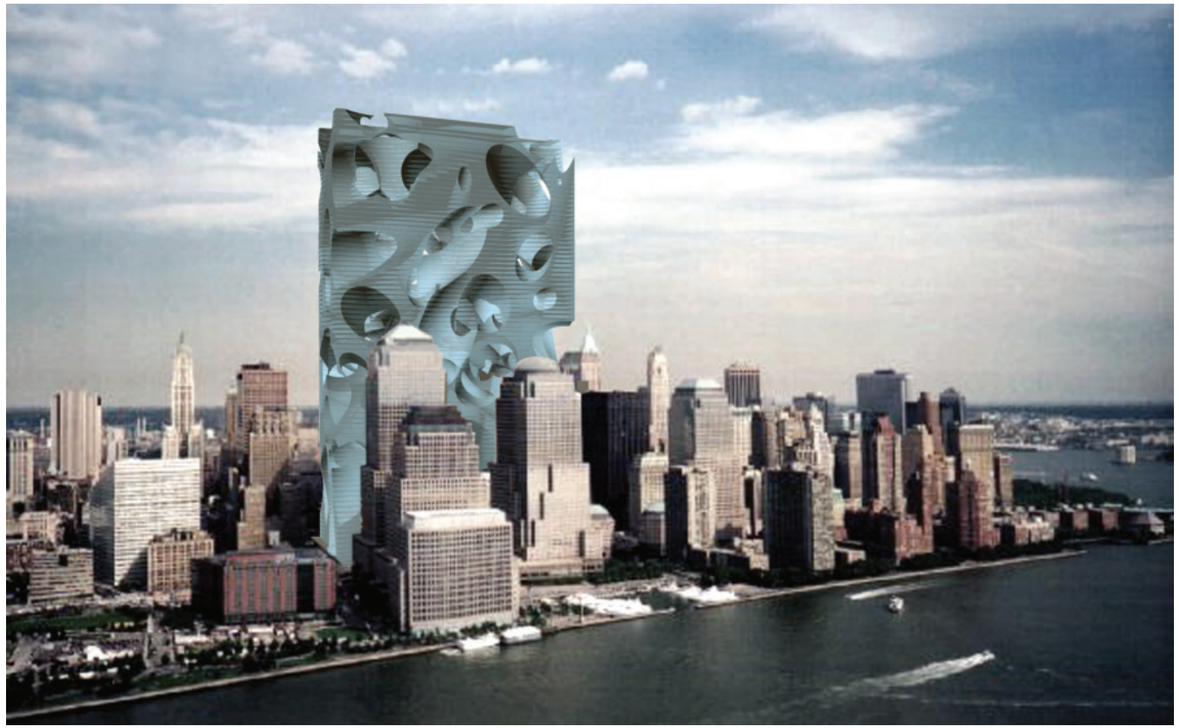
To return to the 1980s and "Maze Table" and "Instant House" there were a lot of sharp angles, but now there is a lot of the opposite, swirls and curves. So there was a time when it didn't seem too cuddly and might have hurt the viewer and now everything is really curved.
I, like many people, got really influenced by the notion of topological space, a space where the inside leads to the outside and vice versa, the continuity from outside to inside and vice versa. That kind of continuity interests me. What I wish we could do, but I don't know how to do, is make a space that doesn't even have surfaces. Can you make a space out of particles, pixels?

Recently, what you did for "Design Impossible" in Milan, that's really wonderful.
You can do that virtually! I want to do that so much.

This might offend you, but it looks almost pointillist, like Seurat, or Sagnac.
Unbelievably, it's like suddenly I'm an impressionist. I didn't think it was going to be that, but I saw it and that's obviously what happens when things become points. That's what the Pointillists did.

That's where you're at right now, in the present?
Yes, but I don't know how to do that physically. For a long time, a few years, I've wished that things could be points and pixels, I wish buildings could be part of the air. I've been using the words "thick air" a lot. This Milan project, this is the perfect time, why don't we go around, and each time you go around there's one more layer of pixels until it gradually disintegrates. And I called it "When buildings dissolve into air & the air re-forms into buildings." It's only an announcement of what it could be, right now.

"When Buildings Melt Into Air & The Air Re-forms Into Buildings", Piazza Duomo, Milan 2012. Acconci Studio (V.A., Kaitlin Miciunas, Julian Rose). Courtesy of the artist.



"New World Trade Center", New York, 2002. Acconci Studio (V.A., Dario Nunez, Peter Dorsey, Stephen Roe, Sergio Prego, Gia Wolff). Courtesy of the artist.

"Storefront Renovations (Wall Machine), New York, NY 1993. Acconci Studio (V.A., Luis Vera) and Steven Holl Architects. Photograph by Paul Warchol. Courtesy of the artist.

JONAS MEKAS

Interviewed by MARIANNE SHANEEN

[Left to right] Jack Smith, Mario Montez, Piero Heliczer, Jonas Mekas, and Andy Warhol at the Filmmaker's Cinematheque for Jonas Mekas' birthday, 1966. Photograph by Matt Hoffman.

Legendary filmmaker and video artist, poet, critic, and founder of Anthology Film Archives, Jonas Mekas, often called the 'godfather' of American avant-garde cinema, turns 90 this year, and continues to indelibly influence the creation, history, and reception of American culture.

Born in a Lithuanian farming village in 1922, he landed in New York as a refugee in 1949 with his brother Adolfas (1925-2011), after fleeing Soviet police, being captured and taken to a Nazi forced labor camp, and being held in German displaced persons camps.

After discovering avant-garde film and borrowing money to buy his first Bolex, he became intensely immersed in the thriving New York art world with luminaries such as Fluxus founder George Maciunas, Andy Warhol, Allen Ginsberg, John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Salvador Dali, Kenneth Anger, Harry Smith and Nam Jun Paik. Living in the Chelsea Hotel and in the emerging SoHo artist loft collective, he made films and curated film screenings of work by radical experimental filmmakers that came to be known as the classic American avant-garde. A pioneer and iconoclast, he, with his brother Adolfas, published the first issue of Film Culture Magazine in 1954. in 1958 he began writing his "Movie Journal" column for the Village Voice, mostly covering independent, underground film, or what he called the New American Cinema.

In 1962, Mekas co-founded the Filmmakers' Cooperative, an artist-run, non-profit organization devoted to the distribution of avant-garde film as an alternative to the commercial movie system that they saw as "morally corrupt, aesthetically obsolete, thematically superficial, temperamentally boring". In 1964, he founded the Filmmakers' Cinémathèque, which eventually became Anthology Film Archives, one of the world's most important centers for the preservation and exhibition of experimental and avant-garde cinema as an art form. In addition to contemporary independent film and video, Anthology continuously screens the Essential Cinema Repertory, which Mekas and others formed in the early 70's, to begin establishing a historical canon of American avant-garde cinema. In Lithuania, Mekas was targeted for his anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet writing and underground activities, and in New York in 1964 he was arrested on obscenity charges for screening Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*, and Jean Genet's *Un Chant d'Amour*.

As a filmmaker, he is best known for his visionary "diaristic" films , such as *Walden* (1969); *Lost, Lost, Lost,* (1975); *Reminiscences of a Voyage to Lithuania,* (1972); *Scenes from the Life of Andy Warhol,*(1990); and his five-hour long diary film *As I was Moving Ahead Occasionally I saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty,* (2000) assembled from fifty years of recordings of his life.

For over twenty years, Mekas has been working primarily with video. Endlessly innovative, in 2007, he began his "365 Day Project", in which he created one video every single day for a year, to be viewed on the iPod and on his website: http://jonasmekasfilms.com

His recent Sleepless Nights Stories (2011), inspired by reading *One Thousand and One Nights*, is an episodic series of intimate vignettes of himself and his life with artists and beloved friends, such as Carolee Schneemann, Louise Bourgeois, Patti Smith, Marina Abromovic, Harmony Korine and Ken and Flo Jacobs. He also has expanded his work into multi-monitor film installations. The Jonas Mekas Visual Arts Center opened in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2007, where much of Mekas' Fluxus art collection is displayed. He continues to make video work and is currently preparing for numerous upcoming shows, such as a Paris exhibition of photo prints from Williamsburg, Brooklyn where he first lived in NY from 1949-52; an exhibition of installations, prints, and sound pieces and a premiere of his new film Outtakes From the Life of a Happy Man at the Serpentine Gallery in London; and a film and video retrospective at BFI Southbank, London. Re:Voir and agnès b. will be releasing a DVD box-set of Mekas' films this year.

"The Creation of SOHO was 100% George Maciunas' idea and project. I would say, George was responsible for completely transforming downtown Manhattan."

When I came to New York almost twenty years ago, the first book I read was your autobiography "I Had Nowhere To Go". Can you tell me about the experience of being in exile, and if you have a feeling of home here?
Home is where you are. That's one interpretation. Brooklyn was originally where I landed after postwar Europe, then I moved to Manhattan, and now I am back in Brooklyn. My home, all my new friends are in Brooklyn.

All the places in which I lived are still in my memory; they are pat of me. I am romantic, but I'm not sentimental about the places from which I've come. My childhood, Lithuania, my village, it's all very real, and I use it as material in my work. I do not believe in remaining in one place, none of us do. We all keep moving to somewhere else and to something else.

Exile. There was a period when I was thinking about exile in conventional terms, Like in "I had Nowhere To Go". But I have transcended that. Now, I think that it was very good that I was thrown out of Lithuania. It brought me out of a small village with a provincial mentality, and threw me out into the world, and exposed me to unforeseen, unpredictable experiences and realities, which made me who I am today.

If I would not have been thrown out, I don't know what would have happened to me. I grew up in a small 20-family village, a farming family. I did not experience city life. I had just finished high school. Usually after high school you go to university, but those normal things, I did not have any of it. Suddenly I was there in Germany, together with French and Italian war prisoners in a forced labor camp. Ten years of my life was wiped out. So it was like I left Lithuania at 17, and when I landed in New York I was 27. And that's where really my life begins, in New York.

My real interest and life in cinema began on the second evening after I landed in New York, when I went to see "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" at the New York Film Society run by Rudolph Arnheim. After I landed in New York, with my brother Adolfas, every day we went to the Museum of Modern Art. We did not miss any film opening. When I look to my lists of what I saw then, those lists are the history of cinema. I also went to every new play and every new ballet…

I've heard you say it sort of saved your life...
Yes, because, after years in the displaced person's camps where there was nothing, then suddenly I was here in New York, I was like a dry sponge, I absorbed absolutely everything, I wanted everything, I was open to anything and everything...there was so much...poetry readings and the Beat generation…so much.

Tell me about your relationship with Fluxus artist George Maciunas - who was also born in, and fled, Lithuania, and came to NY at around the same time that you did. How was Maciunas fundamental in the emergence of SoHo as an artistic centre in New York in the 60's?
I met George first around 1951. In 1954, together with Adolfas, my brother, we began publishing Film Culture magazine. I needed some help with designing, so I asked George to help me, which he did. Ours was always a working relationship.

In 1967 he organized the first Fluxhouse cooperative building on 80 Wooster Street. I joined the cooperative by purchasing the basement and the ground floor (total price: $8,000...), where I began the Cinematheque screenings. George fixed up the place, designed the interior. Since he had no money, I gave him one part of the basement to live and work, until 1977, when he had to move out of the city. Most of the Fluxus performances, and much of what is known today as the classic American avant-garde cinema of the Sixties, were first presented at the Cinematheque.

The Creation of SOHO was 100% George Maciunas' idea and project. I would say, George was responsible for completely transforming downtown Manhattan. Before his untimely death he created 30 artists' cooperative buildings that transformed the dilapidated 100 Hell's Acres area into SOHO. When the idea caught fire and, after a long legal fight -- by George -- the area was legalized for artists to live in, the idea exploded. Eventually it jumped over Canal Street and gave birth to Tribeca. So it's all George. Eventually the project cost him his life. After he was beat up by the mafia in one of the buildings, his health was never the same.

What do you think of how SoHo has changed?
I have been often been asked what would George think about SoHo, seeing what became of his dream of cooperative artists lofts. He would hate it, they tell me. And I say, no no no

Film still from "Report from Millbrook" by Jonas Mekas, 1966.
Copyright Jonas Mekas, courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

George Maciunas on June 9, 1962, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany.

George would have liked it! He would have opened stores of Fluxus clothes, Fluxus shoes, Fluxus furniture, Fluxus restaurants, etc. One thing George never lacked, it was imagination and humor.

Can you tell me the story of getting arrested on charges of obscenity in 1964 for screening Jack Smith's "Flaming Creatures"?
In March 1964, myself, Ken Jacobs, Florence Jacobs, and Jerry Sims, we were arrested at the Bowery Theater for screening Jack Smith's film "Flaming Creatures". A week later, I was arrested again, for screening Jean Genet's film "Un Chant D'Amour". All of us faced six months of prison each. Thanks to Jerome Hill who hired New York's top criminal lawyer, Emile Zola Berman, to defend us, we managed to get away with six months suspended sentences. And a few days in jail. Susan Sontag and Allen Ginsberg were defense witnesses. Jack was never charged.

I have heard about Jack Smith's accusations about you, but I have never heard your side of the story. Apparently Smith said that you kept money that should have gone to him, that you used the publicity about Flaming Creatures to further your own career, that you withheld the original film print... can you please tell me your version of that situation?
According to Jack's later statements, we got arrested because we wanted, especially me, to promote ourselves... He never mentioned, in those statements, that the idea to screen the film to the public was his idea. He prepared the ads and approved the screenings.

I should tell, on this occasion, that it takes those who didn't know Jack to believe rumors that I stole his prints and screened them all over without asking Jack's permission...Those who knew Jack, knew that nobody, absolutely nobody, could have done that - because Jack would have been there to stop it. No work of Jack's could be presented by anyone without Jack's permission. He would have been there to stop it.

As for the original print of "Flaming Creatures" which Jack was telling everybody I stole from him; here is the real story. Jack deposited the original with a film lab in New York that he trusted. But as time went by, he managed to forget which lab it was. Years later, a filmmaker by the name of Jerry Tartaglia happened to work in a place where they collected discarded films from labs. One day among the cans that were delivered from one of the labs, the writing on a can attracted his interest. It happened to be the negative of "Flaming Creatures"! That's how the film was saved.

I have to say, that despite who says what, we were friends. Our friendship through the years went through changes, it was a complicated friendship - it wasn't a friendship of two normal people... But Jack managed to antagonize some filmmakers. In 1964, during the filming of "Normal Love" (with my Bolex...) he promised to distribute it through the Film-Maker's Cooperative and asked for some advance monies. The Cooperative paid for the film stock and labs and work prints. After the advance (about $2000), which was taken from other filmmakers' rentals, Jack decided that he was not going to give the film to the Co-op and refused to reimburse the Co-op for the advanced monies. The fact that the money belonged to other filmmakers was of no importance to Jack. Since it was my decision that the Co-op advance monies for his film, I had no choice but to borrow money from friends and reimburse the Co-op. Jack was a genius but he was no angel...

Can you tell me something about your filmmaking process and the diaristic form of cinema?
It's very simple...There is life around me and there is my camera and there is me. And there are times, moments, when I feel I should film those moments. It's as simple as that. Well, let's face it, I film only certain moments, which means that *that* moment for some reason is important to me, consciously or unconsciously. Mostly unconsciously… It's important enough for me to want to film it, or - it's not even wanting, it's just I have to, I must, I'm driven to film it, I'm forced to film it…

There's so much said about being in the 'here and now', but all the moments that I remember, we did not think about here and now at all - we should forget here and now! That's when we really live!

What is time then for you?
Time did not exist when I grew up, time began to exist only when I began filming. A roll of film is 2 minutes 45 seconds. 24 frames per second. We never thought about time, in my village. I don't think about time even now. Time is not important at all. Okay, seasons - there is a time to plant potatoes, what a farmer has to do in the fields, but that's a different kind of time. You don't think about time, you just live it. We just did what had to be done. You know the rain is coming and the hay is dry and you rush to take it to the barn. Anything that we did on the farm we did because we loved it, it had to be done. But it was not work. We were not workers at all. Work is a modern invention. Workers were invented by the industrial revolution, and we see the results, it's a negative thing. If you pay, a worker will produce, will make instruments to torture people, they will make needles to be squeezed under their nails when they torture people. Workers make these things. Workers will make anything for money, that's why I hate workers.

I have a lot of problems with the word transcendence, but it's something that I experience with your films, something like a convergence of the past and present, an ecstatic joy of the present, a kind of seeing the everyday as ritual…
It's not transcendence, it's the intensity of the moment. It's intensity. I think I'm an anthropological filmmaker. I'm interested in situations, moments that are like eternal, typical to humanity. It's not a question of memory, of looking back, but I'm an anthropologist who is interested in certain moments, experiences, behavior, states, and activities that have been performed many, many times by everyone around the world by different generations. And I seem to be attracted to them, to those that I approve, there are certain human activities that I disapprove of and I ignore them - violence, for example - I don't record them. But there are some activities, some moments, moods, situations, which I want to record as truly as possible. They could be very simple: People being together, maybe eating, singing, where nothing is really happening - but, something *is* happening there. And I'm interested in those moments, in recording them without destroying or distorting them, without really imposing something else upon them. To record it all as truly as possible, that was and still is my biggest challenge. On my website, my 365 days project, that that was and still is my biggest challenge. I watch for those moments. I go through life, life does not exist for me until suddenly something happens, a moment that I have to record.

Your work seems to celebrate the fleeting, transitory nature of everything: the moving image itself, moments, people. You made a beautiful film of Allen Ginsburg's Buddhist Wake ceremony. So much religion and spirituality seems to be about trying to deal with impermanence, and I wonder if cinema is somehow a way of dealing with, or accepting impermanence, for you?
I come from a pantheistic background. Lithuania was never really Christian. Nature was always our religion. I consider that organized religions are at the root of most of the horrors that have plagued humanity for millennia. And it's continuing so today. But I am attracted to the saints, to all those who have achieved high spiritual complexity. It's a subject that I consider very personal and I prefer not to talk much about it. All spiritual life has to do with an aspect of our very essence which is so complex and mysterious that it is better not to talk about it. I will only say that I believe in angels and I am very close to Santa Teresa de Avila… See my film AVILA, on my website.

Regarding Santa Teresa de Avila…do you feel like you experience anything like her ecstatic or trance kinds of states, when you are engaged in making film or writing poetry?
I do not want to use the word "ecstasy" regarding the moment of filming. It's more an "immersion," a total immersion into the moment, into the scene. Same goes for writing. It's not the same as when Santa Teresa de Avila levitated. But maybe it's the same. A total immersion in writing or filming sends one into a kind of levitation, you are not here any longer.

I discovered Santa Teresa de Avila by chance in 1966. She came in a smell of roses, she sent me a message, actually, several messages. So I went to Avila and I met her. And she came back with me to New York. With my two guardian angels and some saints who should remain nameless, she has been my best friend since then. Also...A psychic once told me that during the times of Santa Teresa de Avila (... in one of my "previous lives"...) I was a lieutenant in the Spanish army...

Earlier this year you selected films for a "Boring Masterpieces" series at Anthology. A few of the 60 or so people that came for Andy Warhol's Empire, stayed for its entire running time of 8 hours and 5 minutes. You were the cameraman for "Empire"- what was the experience of making that film?
It was the spring of 1964. My loft was the Film-Makers' Cooperative office; *Film Culture* magazine office; and a hangout of underground film-makers, poets, people in transit. Bob Kaufman, Barbara Rubin, Christo, Salvador Dalí, Ginsberg, LeRoi Jones, Corso, George Maciunas, Warhol, Jack Smith.... I slept under the editing table while the parties were going.
A new issue of *Film Culture* was out and I had asked John Palmer, a young film-maker, to help to carry bags full of magazines to the nearest post office, in the Empire State Building. As we were carrying our heavy loads, the Empire State Building was our Star of Bethlehem: it was always there, leading us… Suddenly we both had to stop to admire it. I don't remember who said it, John or myself, or both of us at the same time: "Isn't it great? This is a perfect Andy Warhol movie!"

"Why don't you tell that to Andy," I said. Next day he calls me. "Andy is very excited about filming *Empire*. Can you help us?"

So on Saturday July 25th there we were, on the 41st floor of the Time-Life building. I set up the camera and framed the Empire State Building. Andy was there to check framing. The premiere of *Empire* had to wait for almost a year. It was a very, very busy period of the Sixties, we kept doing new things, and we had no time to look at what we did yesterday. Ahead, ahead we moved!

So it was only March 6th, 1965 that *Empire* was first screened. Some 200 people came, but they trickled out, one by one. Still even many hours later there were at least fifty people, and everybody had a great time. Andy was there too.

This past July, on its 30th anniversary, I saw it again at Anthology. The film looked greater than ever. Even today, thirty years later, it remains one of the most radical aesthetic statements in cinema.

Yes, almost nothing happens in it – meaning, nothing in the usual, conventional movie watching sense. The film keeps running, time goes, the anticipation begins to mount: what will come next, maybe nothing will ever come. I had completely forgotten what happens in the film. An hour later, suddenly: an ecstatic moment! The whole Empire lights up! What a moment! What visual ecstasy! The audience bursts into applause…

Later, six or so hours later, when all the lights suddenly go out: amazingly, Empire is still there! It's all burned deep into our retinal memory…

Why, that day, with John Palmer, why did we look at Empire State Building and say: Ah, this is an Andy Warhol movie! Already in 1964 Andy had established himself as celebrator of publicly recognizable, iconic images, images that everybody saw every day and which had become imprinted in our minds. Be they people – Elizabeth Taylor, Jackie Onassis, Mao, Elvis Presley – or objects such as "The Electric Chair" or "Empire" – he was attracted by these images of mythic proportions. Not to make money with them, no: he didn't need any money. He was obsessed by images.

"I don't see the city. The city does not exist to me. I see the stones outside there, I see the trees... the storm yesterday. I don't see the city. The city does not exist."

In 1962 or '63, I met Andy on Second Avenue, I was going to a LaMonte Young concert. He said he would join me. LaMonte played one of those very, very long pieces, four or six hours-long variations on a single note. Andy sat through the entire piece. Andy was already doing serial pictures, repetitions of the same image. Stretching time. Jackson MacLow had already written his script/note about filming a tree for twenty-four hours. It was all in the air, *Empire*. Andy was very up-to-date with what was happening in the arts. One could say that *Empire* was his conversation with other avant-garde artists of his day, with minimalists, conceptualists, real-time artists and, at the same time, an aesthetic celebration of reality. As such, it will never date, it will always remain alive and unique.

I saw a photo of you at Occupy Wall Street with a sign that said "money never made anything beautiful…people did!"
Political activities, wars, I have no energy left to pay attention to that. I don't want to spend energy on it. I am pulled by something else. I know some of my friends, Ken Jacobs, he is very involved in what's happening in politics. I limit myself in that area only to what's happening

Film still from rom "Notes on the Circus" by Jonas Mekas, 1966. Copyright Jonas Mekas. Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

Film Still from "Reminiscences of a Voyage to Lithuania" by Joans Mekas, 1972. Copyright Jonas Mekas. Courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

At the factory, December 1964, Andy Warhol, Jonas and others. Courtesy of the artist.

Jonas on West 89th street, 1966. Courtesy of the artist.

to the planet, ecology, I pay attention to that, but that's it. I cannot begin to pay attention to Romney or Obama...

I think of what you're doing in a way as political because it's supporting the arts, community, a way of life...
There are political activities that are positive… and there are also those that are negative. To me, the positive politicians are those people and movements who contributed to changing humanity, the way of life, thinking, feeling, behavior of humanity… how people like Buckminster Fuller affected the world, how we live and the structures in which we live. Or John Cage or the Beats, even hippies, communal life, women's liberation. People laughed, dismissed them, but they left seeds and grew roots and are changing humanity. So those to me are the real positive politics - not what's known as politicians, political parties, etc.

You are largely thought of as a filmmaker, but you have been working with video for many years...
Around 1990 I began to feel that I had done everything that the Bolex permitted me to do, and that I was beginning to repeat myself, even to imitate myself. Just at that time Myaki, a Japanese friend, offered me a Sony video camera in exchange for a piece of video to advertise SONY. I accepted the camera, I gave them some footage. But it didn't end there. I continued fooling around with the camera and discovered that this new tool for making moving images opened new areas of content and technique and form. At the same time some of the film stocks that I was used to, began disappearing and I had a difficult time getting used to new stocks. So I embraced my SONY as something that was sent to me by angels, to move me into new directions.

Are you still working with film?
No, I abandoned film in '89. I saw that video was full of possibilities. When you change the instrument, that changes the content and the form, like if you worked with oils and you switched to watercolors, the subject, the form, the texture, the colors, everything changes. Similarly, 8mm is one thing, 16 another, 35 still another, and then you make a bigger jump from film to video. It opens a different area of content that had not been touched before. As we grow, humanity does not feel the same way about reality and does not see it the same way. As we progress and we move ahead, we want to express, to record those new emerging changing realities. We need different means, we record it with new, emerging technologies. So I see it as a very normal, natural development. There is no need to be sad - oh film is gone! No. Film is there, what was created in film will remain, it will remain with us… that is, if we are wise enough to protect it.

What does working with video allow you to do that film does not?
Video is available to everybody. You can go into any situation without any lights to catch real life, and you don't interfere. Now you can record and nobody even notices. You can run nonstop video for two hours, that opens new possibilities of recording in time.

What does that do to consciousness?
It allows me to watch and wait for those moments that with film I could not do. With my Bolex, I could not record those anthropological moments, but with video I can. It permits us to record new changing aspects of reality…

In 2007 you did the 365 days project-
In 2007, I made one short video every day and put it on my website, a mad project that I do not advise anyone to do. It was very challenging and demanding to make a film every day, which I did for one year. You can see it on my website, Jonasmekasfilms.com. I continue doing it, but not every day.

What has it been like to put your work on the internet?
Each medium has its own way of being disseminated, be it printed word or video, and the Internet is the perfect way to disseminate video works. That's why we created the Filmmakers' Cooperative because nobody wanted to distribute our film works. The same now, Hollywood will screen commercial film, but they won't screen my work, so the Internet is the place. Every new instrument of making images comes with new content and new form, and of course it comes with new methods of dissemination. It's not detachable. It did not appear from nowhere, the Internet and digital and computer technologies. There was a need for it to emerge, to be created, invented.

Do you think there's an intimacy with viewing film that's lost, that's different from the kind of intimacy that you see with watching a video on a laptop, for example?
It's sitting in front of you, on your laptop, so isn't that intimate?

Well, it's different. People romanticize sitting in a theatre -
What is intimacy? It's like this: there are people who say that to watch a western, you have to see it on a big screen. And yes, so many nights I sat in the theater on 42nd Street watching westerns. But then we have George Maciunas - he lived in the basement and he was a workaholic, an insomniac. Whenever I passed by late at night, there he was, sitting and watching on a tiny 7" x 5" television set in black and white, watching westerns. And I was like, really? So I sat and watched with him - and after a few minutes, you forgot the size and where you were, and you were in that other space, it didn't matter at all, you're pulled into that image… it has nothing to do with intimacy.

How did you establish the Film-maker's Cooperative?
In 1962, New York was already bustling with young filmmakers. There were several independent film venues such as Cinema 16, the Charles Theater, Kinesis, Film Forum, etc., where we occasionally screened our films. But nobody wanted to distribute them! The established film distributors thought that our films were amateurish and did not deserve to be seen by anybody. That being the situation, myself and my brother Adolfas, on January 6th, 1962, called a meeting at my 414 Park Avenue South loft, and proposed creating our own cooperative film distribution center. Some twenty filmmakers attended the meeting, and we all voted to create such a center. That was it. The cooperative idea itself wasn't new to me and Adolfas. Our father in Lithuania belonged to the farmers' cooperative, and even as a child, when my father didn't have time to attend cooperative meetings, he used to send me in his place.

There were four or five principles guiding the Film-makers Cooperative: your membership is your film; nobody passes judgment on your film; in the catalog everyone is the same, filmmakers are just listed alphabetically; all income goes to the filmmaker except a percentage that is needed to run the Coop expenses. If somebody calls to rent a film, they have to know what they want, you have no right to suggest A or B filmmaker because that's not fair. A renter can go to the catalog and take a chance on the description. And it's run by a board of filmmakers, the work itself at the Co-op is done by a hired Director approved by the board. MM Serra is the Director presently, it became her life, she believes in it. But she is breaking one sensitive principle of the early Co-op; she's suggesting films to the renters and preparing programs according to her own taste and aesthetics, which is not really in the cooperative spirit, it's already a personal thing. So it's not being run the way it was intended.

I've never really heard your filmmaking described as documentary - How would you define documentary?
Documentary was a term used to describe films in the 1930's and '40s, when films were made with scripts and footage was collected to illustrate an idea. It was always predetermined. With Cinema Verite, it slightly changed. The new technology permitted you to get closer to real life - but still when one makes a film about somebody in prison, his idea is that prison is no good, the person is probably not even guilty, and he tries to collect material to illustrate that. There is very little real, personal material that is not motivated by an idea. In my case, in my filmmaking there is no idea. I never have ideas and don't illustrate ideas, and I follow the moments I record so it is personal, diaristic.

Can you talk about Anthology Film Archives, and how the state of filmmaking has changed since starting Anthology?
Here is today's New York Times, it says, "Film is Dead?". It says that in the next few years film will be phased out completely in all the movie theatres across the country. It will all be video and digital technology. That makes Anthology even more vital and important. We keep projecting film as film and preserving film as film, but there are very few places left who do that. There are some key art museums, MOMA, there are seven film archives I think in

"...it [film] has disappeared already I think. There are no new stocks being made, so when they reach their end, that's it. It's all digital now. There is some 8mm, it still exists...The film industry does not believe in it, therefore, it will disappear. Kodak survived only because of Hollywood, and when Hollywood switched to digital, Kodak closed. But there should be government, museum archives, they will have to do it - they cannot permit to disappear the memory of one hundred years of humanity."

the United States. But even MOMA, they projected Warhol's "Film Tests" series on video! I consider that criminal. So it's important that we are there.

What happens if film as a medium disappears? Do you think there's a future for it?
It has disappeared already I think. There are no new stocks being made, so when they reach their end, that's it. It's all digital now. There is some 8mm, it still exists… in Paris there are people using 8mm, and here too, but it's small. The film industry does not believe in it, therefore, it will disappear. Kodak survived only because of Hollywood, and when Hollywood switched to digital, Kodak closed. But there should be government, museum archives, they will have to do it - they cannot permit to disappear the memory of one hundred years of humanity.

Is there any danger of Anthology Film Archives not existing at some point?
There is no danger because I was smart enough in '78 to purchase the building from the city in auction. The building is so well built because it was originally a prison and a court house, it will last five hundred years, we are safe for five hundred years, and nobody can throw us out.

We have two theaters and screenings are taking place in both of them every day. If the day comes that we have to cut down financially, then we'll cut down the number of programs, but we will still be there. The most difficulty, where we need money the most, is to preserve films, to make screening copies, and for the temperature and humidity control vault. The films can survive for a hundred years, but you still have to make screening copies. We do not screen originals, that would not be responsible because films can be scratched. So now we operate on a $300,000 yearly deficit.

But I'm about to go into fundraising to build a café next door and an extension of the library because we're very cramped. So the café will help financially because Anthology is suffering financially. I think that the café may help us to repay our debts.

Do you think there's much interest in film preservation?
No, no. More than ten years ago, but there are very few individuals, such as Martin Scorsese or George Lucas, who are interested in film preservation. The money is in Hollywood, and Hollywood people are not interested in film preservation.

Tell me about the Essential Cinema.
Anthology opened in December 1970, but the Essential Cinema project started about two years before that. The idea was to select key works by key filmmakers, and screen them on a repertory basis. The selection was to be done not by one person but by five [Ken Kelman, Peter Kubelka, James Broughton, P. Adams Sitney, and Jonas Mekas], so that it does not represent one taste. A variety of information and knowledge came into the selection. We spent three years, and we selected about three hundred titles. The idea was to continue in perpetuity, to keep adding new works and go into different areas - documentary, narrative, French, Japanese, Chinese… but then our main sponsor, Jerome Hill, who paid for the creation of Anthology and paid for all of the prints, died. After Jerome Hill died, his foundation, which he used to pay for all of this, decided that it was just Jerome's whim, totally a waste of money, and they cut the support of Anthology. So there we are, in the middle of this huge dream, and Jerome dies, and suddenly we were at the end of the road, in the desert.

Fortunately, when Jerome Hill died he left us some land in the Florida Keys. So we sold it, for $50,000. I put it in the bank and I said I will keep this for when we really need it. It happened that a building came up for auction, it was in very bad shape… and I went to the auction and they said $50,000! I said yes! The building department said don't buy it, it will cost you $200,000 to fix, do you have money? No, I don't have money, but I'm buying it. As it happened, by the time we finished, it took me ten years to fix it, it cost me $1.8 million... but we have it, thanks to Jerome Hill.

Despite the unfortunate fact that the Essential Cinema project had to be aborted, the classic American avant-garde created before 1972 is very well represented and a part of history. These works were created with no support from foundations or state art councils, they were created by the personal struggle of filmmakers.

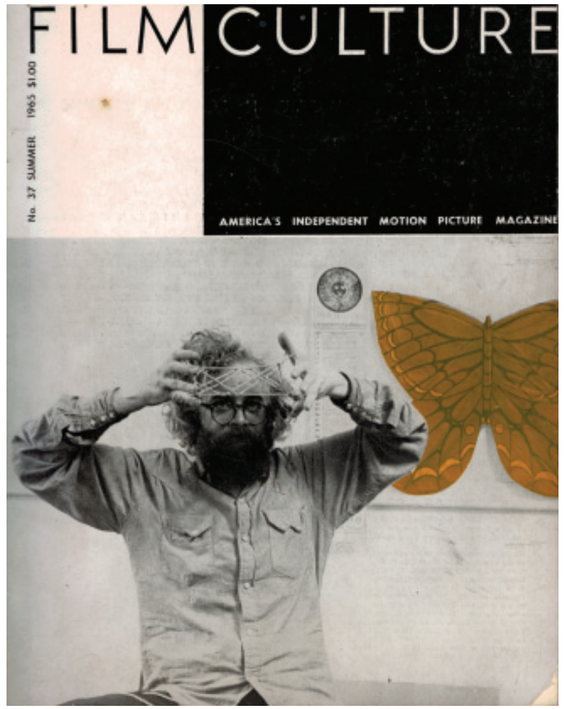
In retrospect, who would you include in the Essential Cinema who weren't originally included?
There were many that came after and were not represented - Su Friedrich, Abigail Child, Nick Dorsky, many very, very important filmmakers. Maybe somebody crazy like me will emerge, who will say: I will do everything, I don't care what I need, what I drink or where I sleep, I want to create the Essential Cinema from 1972 until now... and they can get another crazy person with money, to do Essential Cinema Part Two. But I don't see such a person, so I guess we won't have it for some time.

Your childhood in Lithuania...
I'm a farming boy…I grew up in paradise.

Tell me about paradise.
Paradise is paradise... until those that want to improve the world come and destroy paradise. Everybody in my village was happy and singing and dancing and eating well, until the Soviets came. They said, you are unhappy, you are poor, we will make your lives good now! And then they made hell out of paradise.

I feel like maybe something of what your childhood must have been like, lives in your films in terms of nature, in your relationship to nature, it is always present in your films...
If you see "Sleepless Nights Stories", you will realize how important nature was to me. I grew up in nature.

How does that work when you've lived in the city for so long?
I don't see the city. The city does not exist to me. I see the stones outside there, I see the trees… the storm yesterday. I don't see the city. The city does not exist.



Film Culture Magazine issue number 37, Cover image of Harry Smith. Courtesy of the artist.


On a Fluxus boat trip up the Hudson July 7th 1971, with John Lennon, Yoko Ono and George Maciunas. Courtesy of the artist.

PAULA COOPER

Interviewed by CONSTANCE LEWALLEN

Installation view of Group Show, Paula Cooper Gallery (01/20 – 02/10, 2007) Works included from left to right: Jennifer Bartlett, Carl Andre, Jackie Winsor, Dan Walsh, Sol LeWitt, Julian Lethbridge
© Carl Andre/VAGA. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

In 1968 Paula Cooper opened the first commercial gallery below Houston Street in New York, a warehouse and light manufacturing district where a number of artists lived and worked. It would, of course, become known as SOHO. Her gallery was associated with leading Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, Jackie Winsor, and Jennifer Bartlett and was also a venue for avant-garde music and performance as well as political causes. She is known for her close relationship with artists, many of whom have stayed with the gallery since the beginning. However, she is also always on the lookout for new talent and has recently taken on several young artists. Cooper has seen the art world expand and change beyond what anyone could have imagined, but has managed to retain her charm, integrity, and equilibrium. I talked with her in her Chelsea gallery on September 19, 2012.

Paula, I read something recently I hadn't known about you – that you had a gallery called Paula Johnson. Was that your maiden name?
Yes. In 1962 I opened a small gallery in my home.

And this was before you opened your gallery in SoHo?
Yes, but it was not my first gallery experience. From 1959-1961 I worked at World House Gallery, a space that was designed by Frederick Kiesler. It was a great experience. We showed Giacometti, Ernst, Dubuffet, Bacon.... The first show I installed was Morandi. It was a fantastic experience.

And then you worked at Park Place, right?
Yes. Park Pace was an artists' cooperative gallery on West Broadway at what is now La Guardia Place. I got to know a lot of young artists there, like Robert Grosvenor and Mark di Suvero. After Park Place, when I started my own gallery, I had a few pieces of Mark's, but Dick Bellamy devoted his life to him, really. Now that we've started working together over forty years later, it's so nice. I am not afraid of him anymore (laughter).

Then you opened the first commercial gallery south of Houston in what was to become SoHo. Wasn't that at the same time that Ivan Karp opened O.K. Harris in the same area?
No, I opened in 1968, one or two years before Ivan. I didn't like uptown. I wanted to be in the part of the city where the artists lived. Everybody thought I was crazy.

Did you study art history?
Yes, of course, but I never received a formal degree. At the age of 16 I moved to Europe with my family and lived there for nearly four years. I studied in Athens, Munich, and Paris. When I returned to the US, I went to Goucher College, where I also took studio courses, and then in New York, at the Institute here as a non-matriculated student.

Your father was in the military, right?
He worked for the government.

You still represent some of the same artists that you started with, like Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, Bob Grosvenor….
I know; it's wonderful.

At first you concentrated on Minimal and Conceptual artists. Now your program seems more eclectic. How would you characterize it?
I don't think it's really as eclectic as it may seem.

And recently you have taken on some new, younger artists like Kelley Walker, Carey Young, Walid Raad, Justin Matherly, and Tauba Auerbach. Tauba studied art in San Francisco. I think she is interesting. How do you select artists to show?
In several instances, they have worked in the gallery (Lynda Benglis, Bob Gober, and Justin Matherly) or have been recommended by other artists. I used to be very slow to make a commitment – would have an artist in a two or three- person show, live with the work a bit, and then decide.

In the past, there was a stigma against showing California artists in New York. Now no one seems to care where an artist lives.
Just about everyone I ever worked with has been from another part of the country. It's true that now it's no big deal, but the difference was that Californian artists stayed in California, whereas those from Ohio or Kansas, for example, moved to New York. It was possible to have a career in Los Angeles or San Francisco, but not anywhere else.

Chicago, maybe.
Yes, but the artists there were so different. They could survive.

One thing that has always distinguished your gallery is that you make it available for all kinds of events, political and artistic.
The gallery opened with an exhibition to benefit the Student Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam and Veterans Against the War. Some artists included were Donald Judd, Robert Ryman, Carl Andre, Jo Baer, Dan Flavin, Bob Huot, and Sol LeWitt, several of whom I would later represent.

I know Philip Glass and Mabou Mines performed in your gallery early on. And you continue to host events.
Yes, we do. When I had my first little gallery I had a friend, Steve Pepper, who was an art historian who eventually taught at Johns Hopkins. He was part of Red Grooms and Mimi Gross's group. He always believed in also making the gallery a place for performances and events. He had a space on Broadway and that seemed so logical and appealing. Also, Park Place was the most generous of spaces; they would always invite unaffiliated artists to participate in shows there. My most recent event here was a conversation with Philip Glass, Robert Wilson, Christopher Knowles, and Lucinda Childs on the occasion of a show, *Einstein on the Beach*, which is being performed again. It was wonderful.

Yes, I am looking forward to seeing "Einstein" when it comes to Berkeley next month.
We also have readings at 192 Books, a bookstore that my husband and I have opened. Some of the readers have been Michael Ondaatje, Alice Munroe, John Ashbery, Geof Dyer, and most recently, Martin Amis.

Getting back to how the art world has changed…it is remarkable that not only have you endured but thrived. For example, Christian Marclay's "The Clock"; what a triumph! Did you have any idea that it would take off the way it did?
No, but I thought his previous multiscreen work, *Video Quartet*, was beautiful and brilliant. A short video, *Telephones* was really the beginning.

Yes, I saw Video Quartet at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), and I agree, and the UC Berkeley Art Museum owns Telephones.
The Clock is brilliant and amazing, it's so ambitious--to have had the idea and actually realize it!

I was lucky to have seen it in your gallery before it became the sensation it did, before the lines. Now, more people will have access to it; it will be shown at Museum of Modern Art in New York soon, right?
Yes, and it was recently shown at Lincoln Center and will be at SFMOMA in April 2013.

Haven't various museums shared in the purchase of "The Clock"?
Yes, and I think it's smart of museums to share videos since they are not showing them all the time.

Portrait of Paula Cooper,. May 17,1995. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Photograph by Eric Boman.

"Just about everyone I ever worked with has been from another part of the country. It's true that now it's no big deal, but the difference was that Californian artists stayed in California, whereas those from Ohio or Kansas, for example, moved to New York. It was possible to have a career in Los Angeles or San Francisco, but not anywhere else."

It makes sense.
Yes, it's more exposure for the work and reaches a broader audience.

How do you deal with this new hyper-commercial and vast art world?
I just focus on what I do, I always have—it is the only way I can survive. The art world is so huge now; it's so very different. It's just like everything else; it's all about money, money, money. But everything is, isn't it?

And then there's the proliferation of art fairs to deal with.
We started doing the Basel Art Fair a while ago, thinking I'd better do it at least once in my life, and here we are twelve or fifteen years later, and we are still participating. Lately, I've gotten sort of competitive; I want the booth to look really good, like an exhibition not a shop display.

I've read that some galleries do practically all of them and do most of their business at fairs.
Yes, and now there are fairs in Rio, Dubai, Hong Kong, etc, etc.

The Chicago Art Fair is in a few days. Is your gallery participating in that?
No, We only do the two Basels—Switzerland and Miami—and FIAC, because I love Paris so much.

Wasn't there a time when you were considering opening a space in Paris? I remember running into you there once, when you were looking around. You were with Kiki Smith's sister.
Yes, Seton. She lived there.

What made you decide not to?
Well, things in Paris changed economically and it seemed too much to handle. We had even started discussing renovation of a space on rue du Tresor with an architect. I thought the street name augured well.

Laughter

But, it kind of slipped away. I had previously done something in Paris with Yvon Lambert. We traded galleries. I was in Paris for two months with my children.

And, I seem to remember you had a gallery in Los Angeles briefly.
Yes, I rented Riko Mizuno's space on La Cienega, which Robert Irwin had designed. Helen Tworkov managed it, and I would alternate weeks in New York and L.A.

Artists come and go – how do you deal with that?
Well, it is always hard losing artists, but two artists who were showing with Gagosian—Paul Pfeiffer and Mark di Suvero—are now with me.

What motivates you, keeps you going?
I love every aspect of what I do – I'm very fortunate.

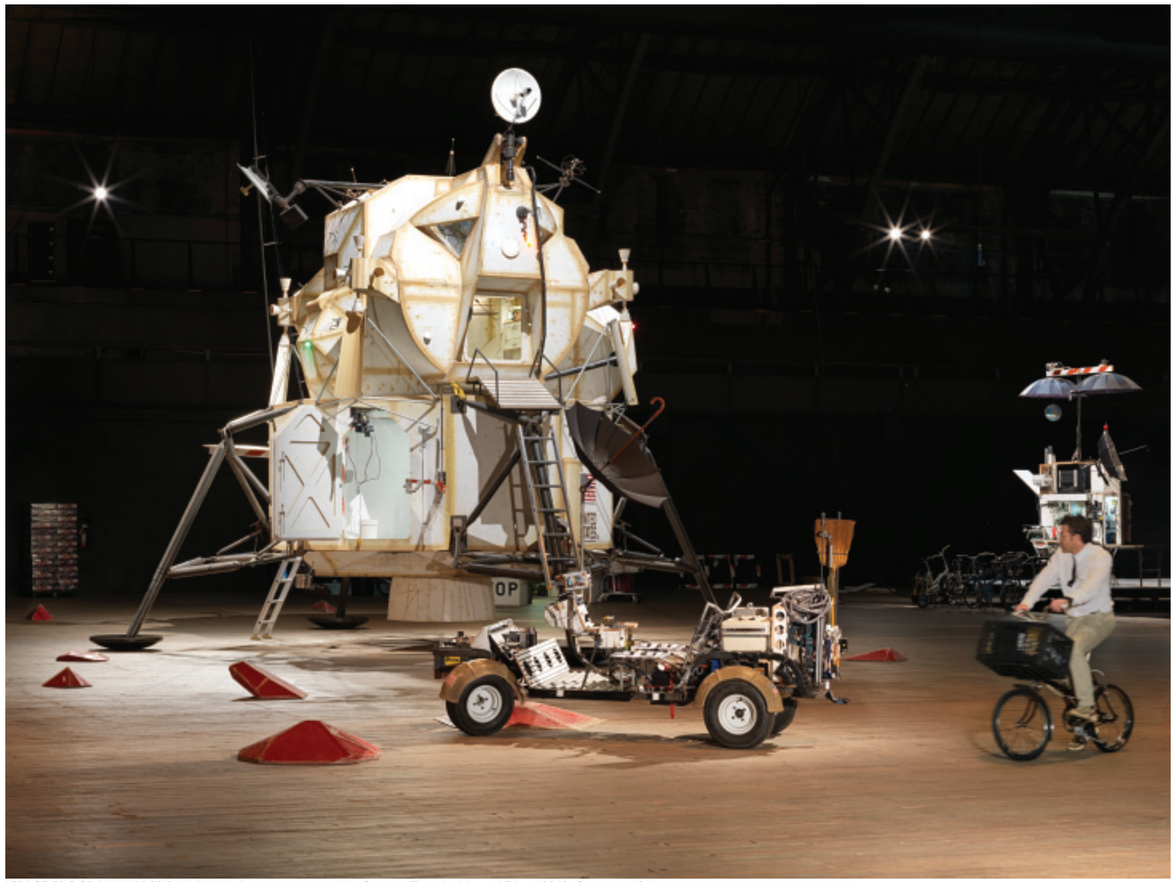
Installation view of "The Clock", 2010. White Cube Mason's Yard, London, October 15 – November 13, 2010 single-channel video 24 hours. © Christian Marclay. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and White Cube, London. Photograph by Todd-White Photography.

Mark Di Suvero, "Chonk On", 2000. painted steel. 19'6" x 32' x 15' (6 x 9.6 x 4.5m). © Mark Di Suvero. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, NY.
Installation view, Mark di Suvero at Governors Island: Presented by Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, NY. Photograph by Jerry L. Thompson.

Tauba Auerbach "Untitled (Fold)", 2012. Acrylic paint on canvas on wooden stretcher 64 x 48 in. (162.6 x 121.9 cm). © Tauba Auerbach. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

TOM SACHS

Interviewed by SHELTER SERRA



"SPACE PROGRAM: MARS". Park Avenue Armory, presented by Creative Time. 16 May -- 17 June 2012. Courtesy of the artist.

SHELTER — I HOPE THIS IS OK — TOM

8.20.12 NYC

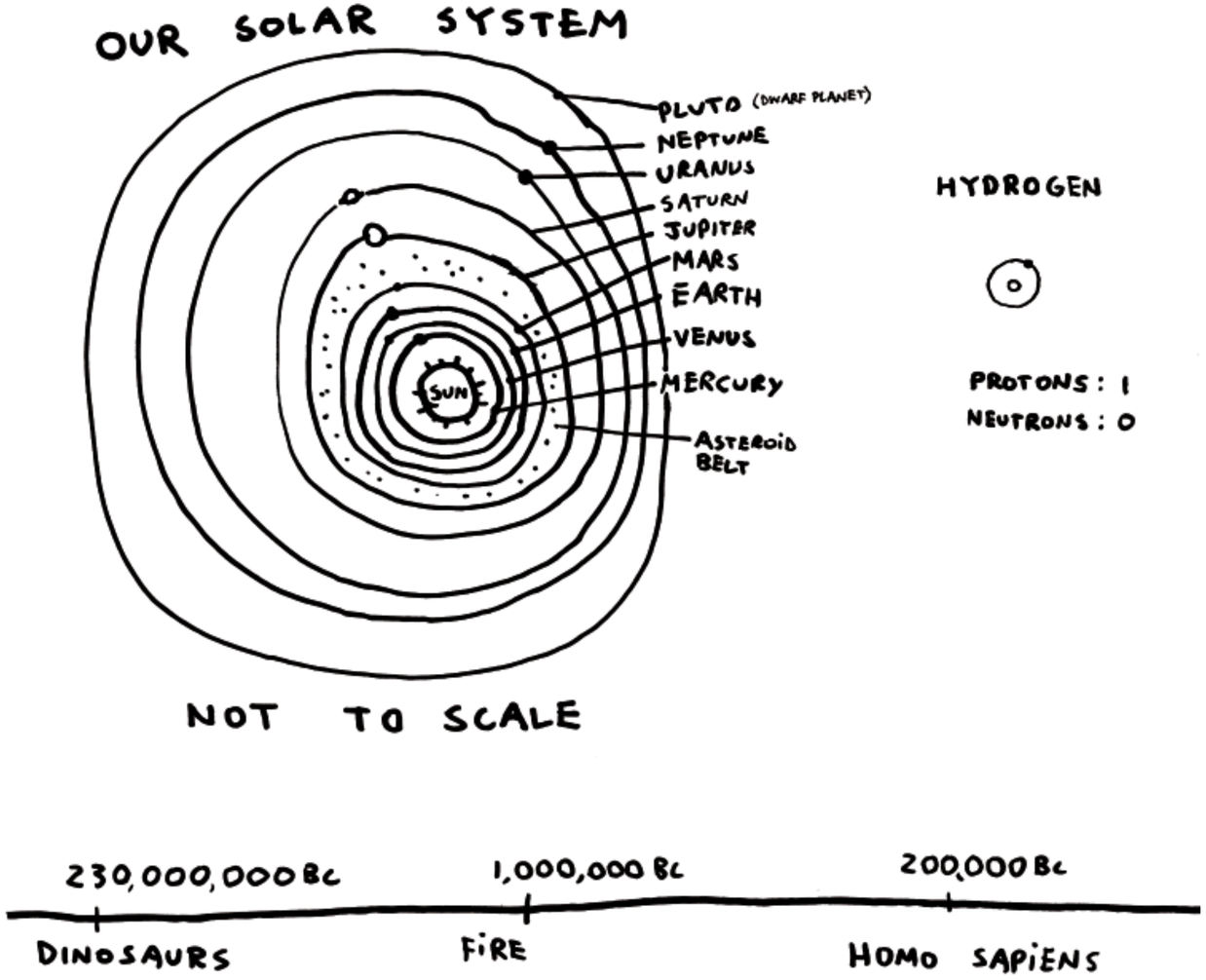
From: Shelter Serra [redacted]
Subject: Hello Tom - not junk mail !
Date: August 27, 2012 9:05:02 PM EDT
To: Tom Sachs [redacted]tomsachs.org

Tom Sachs – just a few questions

1. Who would you want to be if you weren't Tom Sachs?

2. What convinced you making art was an important and vital role in society?

AT FIRST I DID NOT THINK I HAD WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A WORTH WHILE ARTIST. SO, I WENT TO ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL. THE HAZING PROCESS WEEDED ME OUT - THANKFULLY. I DECIDED TO INDULGE MY SELF ON THE WEEKENDS. ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER AND ART MAKING BECAME A FULL TIME OCCUPATION



"Waffle Bike", 2008. Mixed media,105 x 125 x 29 1/2 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

"SPACE PROGRAM: MARS", Park Avenue Armory, presented by Creative Time.16 May - 17 June 2012. Courtesy of the artist.

"Negro Music", 2008. Mixed media. 46 x 79 x 24 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

"Hasselblad", 2008. Pyrography, thermal adhesive, *ConEd* barier wood. 12.5 x 7.5 x 13 in. Courtesy of the artist.

(2. cont.) THEN WHEN 9 11 HAPPENED AND VAN + CASEY WANTED TO ENLIST TO GO KILL SADAM. I REMINDED THEM (AND MYSELF) THAT THE BEST THING WE CAN DO FOR THE CAUSE IS WHATEVER IT IS WE DO BEST! FOR ME THATS ALWAYS BEEN BRICOLAGE + SCULPTURE. ANYTHING ELSE: ARCHITECTURE, FILMMAKING SKATEBOARDING, TEAM MANAGEMENT IS A DISTRACTION.

3. your work distills the reality of an object in a moment of flux; how important is the surface of an artwork to you? What constitutes a finished piece?

MARK SMITH SAID "ART IS A VERB" AND I AGREE. THE SURFACE GOES on LAST BUT IS THE THING YOU SEE FIRST, SURFACE IS EVERYTHING it shows THE politics of THE objects making. ~~FRICTION~~ TRANSPARANCY of materials + PROCESS is PARAMOUNT. in BUSINESS its called "THE point of DIMINISHING RETURN" in ART THE END Happens much later. Because the GOAL is not making the most product for the least money THE "RETURN" IN ART IS THE WORK itself. So WE call it THE "Quitting ~~Coefficient~~ coefficient". its when WE give up. + MOVE ON

4. Is your work a critique, embracement, or comment on the reality of the military industrial complex and permeations into our lives?

ALL of THE ABOVE. I AM PARTICULARLY QUALIFIED to DO THE WORK SINCE IM A PARTICIPANT IN THE CONSUMER CYCLE

KEMBRA PFAHLER

With LIA GANGITANO - Founder/Director PARTICIPANT INC.

Interviewed by DEAN DEMPSEY

Kembra Pfahler photographed in her NYC apartment by Dean Dempsey.

Her characters have the pallet of prescription pills; blue, red, yellow, pink, white, grey and violet. From the Whitney Museum of American Art to Palais des Beaux-Arts, from Deitch Projects to the Swiss Institute, she has terrorized, seduced and refigured underground music and art since the late 1970's. Kembra Pfahler has made her home in the world of occult, subverting hyper-feminized and imagined bodies into her own celebratory creations. Known largely for her cult/punk/metal/glam/shock band The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, she employs a glamorous ensemble of "Karen's girls", a dynamic line-up of colorfully painted women brandishing beastly black wigs teased to the heavens (the higher the hair, the closer to god) and "trademark Divine-inspired high-arching eyebrows" as Bruce LaBruce put it.

I first encountered her work at the Hole, where she and E.V. Day collaborated on an imaginative recreation of Claude Monet's "Giverny", transforming the gallery into a living installation of the French impressionist masterpiece this past April.

I sat down with Kembra over tea and oranges (that came all the way from China) at Participant Inc, a downtown gallery here in New York known for its transgressive and alternative program. For the past decade Participant Inc has been a catalyst for new media, performance, literature and visual art that challenges mainstream pop-boundaries. I was thrilled to chat with Kembra about her new show, as well as get the chance to talk with the founder and director Lia Gangitano about the space and her views on art today in New York and the Lower East Side. I was even more thrilled to get a tour of Kembra's apartment and art studio afterward (imagine the intro to Tales from the Crypt)... Here's how it went down.

Introduce our readers to your exhibition.
This is my mid-career survey but I decided to give it to myself. Lia Gangitano, as you know, is really one of the most important curators and gallery owners in New York. I was invited to have this show, and since the title is a little provocative, this is really one of the only places in the United States that I could have a show entitled "FUCK ISLAND". I'm really grateful to Lia for that. I essentially got to do whatever I wanted, which is rare. Her curatorial policies are very unusual and un-conservative in a very conservative time in New York. I feel like New York is almost now becoming a boutique city. It's so over branded. So I thought I would make a show that is totally unbrandable. If it's unbrandable -if it has a title that is too extreme - then it won't be too popular. Yet being unbrandable is popular to those I want to communicate to. It's like a secret message, FUCK ISLAND.

You mentioned this is the first time you worked exclusively with the male phallus. How's it been sculpting and painting all these ding-a-lings?
Yeah, cocks! It's so fun to say cock all the time. COCK COCK COCK.

These are definitely cocks – not dicks, peckers or wieners.
The massive ones we did at the Robert Wilson benefit over at his place, and the artists educated me on how to make a cock with this kind of foam, and we had to shape it for hours. They had initially made it an elegant cock but all I wanted was a Conan the Barbarian cock, immense and really heroic-a lot of girth. And it was interesting because everyone sculpted a different size and shape they liked, and mine was just Conan the Barbarian. I was thinking of something without subtlety, something from a fantasy or comic book.

You describe this show as a "cock festival [that's] really more like a happy funeral" and that FUCK ISLAND is "celebrating the death of the patriarch". Do tell!
Well it's a huge responsibility to say one comic book-like art gesture could instigate the death of the patriarch, that's a very grandiose statement that we made but we're willing to try. We're willing to try and change the world as we now know it. I do believe that art can create public change and that art can be political. Lia and I were just talking about the ACT UP people in the '80s, these were a group of mainly artists who really instigated change and educated people about AIDS. ACT UP was comprised fundamentally of artists.

We call ourselves "Future Feminists", because we don't really fit in necessarily with the feminists that existed before us. The Future Feminists are more allied with the trans-community, the 3rd. 4th and 5th sex, rather than any binaries. We feel like we would like to have more of a balance in the feminization of our political system, and not have most things run by one kind of person, which tends to be straight white males. We're not going about it hatefully, although some of us are angrier than others, but essentially it's just about the importance of integrating other types of people who are interested in making changes. We feel like there is imminent disaster approaching because of all the harm done to the world. So I guess we're trying to shake our rattlers and make some noise about having this desire to take notice of the different sizes of people, different genders of people, different shapes of people, not just one paradigm of existence.

We're trying to perpetuate an existence that's less harmful, and I think we're doing that one art show, one concert at a time. We don't really do marches – where can you go to the restroom on a march? Where can you change clothes?

The persona of Karen Black, who is she?
Mike Kuchar [brother of the late George Kuchar] used to say, "Your film work is voluptuously horrific!" Before I had Karen Black I did 10 years of Super 8 film and performance without music. So I was doing stuff without the band, and Mike said I was so voluptuously horrific. And then when I was having a change of life, recovering from a violent mugging, I watched *Trilogy of Terror*, and that was a Karen Black movie. I thought "The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black", it was a magical poetic moment. Karen Black, the actress, has an essence that is so broad in film. She's a great American film actress and the band in no way wanted to parody or satirize her. She's so brilliant, so beautiful. I love her in *The Day of the Locust*, in *The Great Gatsby*, *Come Back to the Five and Dime*, with Jimmy Dean where she plays a transsexual and of course *Five Easy Pieces*, the Bob Rafelson movie. She's not necessarily a "horror" actress, nor are we a "horror" band, even though it's in our name. We're just a flavor of horror, and it's an acquired taste.

This gigantic cock in the middle of the room, "Walpurgisnacht" (and for you readers, that translates into Walpurgis Night, a European spring festival usually on May 1) with the octagon stage encircling it seems reminiscent of Stonehenge. Or maybe BONEhenge!
What a great idea, I should place these as a public installation of cocks! I'm going to think about that. It was so great be able to build this stage because I've always wanted to build an octagon round stage that we could do witchcraft on, build a fire inside, roast marshmallows.

"Giverny" by E.V. Day and Kembra PFahler photo copyright E.V. Day , at The Hole gallery 2011. Sponsored by Playboy.com.

"The Future Feminists are more allied with the trans-community...We feel like we would like to have more of a balance in the feminization of our political system, and not have most things run by one kind of person, which tends to be straight white males...essentially it's just about the importance of integrating other types of people who are interested in making changes."

This was such a dream come true…even "Choking Poster" was a dream come true. I love choking posters…this piece is a subliminal message about cock. Do you get it?

The choking?
You know what I'm implying?

Umm…
Do you need one, Dean?

So "Walpurgisnacht", or the big boner piece, is centered on May Day?
May Day! Maypole! Dancing around the big cock. It's an important holiday, and that's where a lot of the cock imagery was born for me, the love of May Day. Dancing around the gigantic cock maypole. This exhibition is actually my gesture, or contribution to that, that's where the initial desire to make big cocks was born, from May Day, from the witch's holiday. I'm not a witch. I don't do any kind of group religion. But I consider myself elemental, which basically means someone who pays attention to things that aren't Christian.

It's great you asked me this, because that's initially what "Walpurgisnacht" was about. I originally wanted to have a big fire happen in the center, where the girls of Karen Black can dance around in a circle. That's where the octagon idea came from, looking at all the different May Day ceremonies. The fire would go in the middle and you'd dance around the maypole. So in a way, that's why I say this show is really celebratory, it's celebrating the phallus. And look what a great time the girls of Karen Black are having around all this cock! What we're trying to instigate is to make room for a different paradigm or conversation. Our ideas of feminism include men, obviously, and we have a desire to make a world that helps men find their own humanity and not have to grow up to be alpha-males who go and join wars and kill people.

As well as wanting the death of the patriarch, we have intense dick-pigginess happening and celebration and appreciation of cock, because we are all dick pigs, in The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, we are out of the closet dick-pigs. So this show has been about reconciliation for me too, how can I be an extreme feminist and be a dick-pig at the same time, you know? This is some of what this mid-career survey is about. I also consider this show to be a retrospective, but of *new* work.

Your last exhibition, which I saw earlier this year here in New York, was a collaboration with E.V. Day in which you both transformed the gallery space into a physical manifestation of Claude Monet's "Giverny", tell us about it.
I didn't know a lot about Claude Monet or the history of the Giverny garden, or a lot about Impressionism. But E.V. Day taught me a lot about light and about ways of seeing this type of art movement that seemed like it was for old fogies, so it was really interesting to go into this old-timey world and investigate what Claude Monet did in his life. It's so phenomenal, to have been so singularly minded and to paint like that for so long. She photographed me in the garden and I was one of the first people even allowed to sit in the actual boat. They were nervous about my nudity, but when I showed up in my costume we were very well received. We made friends with the gardeners and they took pictures. The Karen Black outfit arouses a kind of happiness in people. I don't know why, maybe people are blind sighted by extreme transformation and the obvious time spent to look how we do - their eye balls sort of pop out of their head, which is nice.

Do you consider Karen Black a form of drag?
Oh totally. But it's a different kind of camp, it's not about intentional humor or comedy at all but I do think it's somewhat humorous, especially this show. To make a cockmobile, choking posters and all that, it's one of the funnier things I've done, but I'm not interested in intentional comedy at all. Whereas the drag persona is sometimes about satire or an exaggeration, which I love, I'm not good at real comedy, or monologues. But it is a form of drag, and it requires the same kind of attention. Like I love the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence from San Francisco, I was just with them at the AIDS ball in Vienna, Austria. I saw their costumes and I thought it was just fantastic. Their attention to detail is so specific, as is the detail of Karen Black. I'm so obsessed with the wigs being a certain way, with the eye makeup being a certain way. Does that answer your question? I'm from Los Angeles, I'm not very bright *(she smiles)*.

I was just in LA!
What did you do?

Poppers. But that's not important, so anyway show me your cock tea table.
Well let's have a seat. This is my "Penis Toaster with Tea Set". I love a nice sculpture that includes an activity, when you can activate the sculpture. That's why I made the penis toaster, because it's a sculpture that actually does something. I've been doing this for a really long time and sometimes I'm popular and sometimes I'm not. Being popular is very mood altering for an artist and it's really tricky, so it's really important for me to be detached from any attention I get. Being more popular elsewhere because I'm based in New York is kind of a turn off to me. I'd rather stay here and be unliked.

Before this space was Participant Inc Lia had Thread Waxing Space. It was fantastic; it was there I saw some of my first and favorite shows. She had a great Vaginal Davis piece there and also a wonderful show with all these beautiful Catherine Opie photos.

Lia Gangitano: We're turning 10 in November. Before it was Participant the space itself was a carpet store that acted as a front for drug dealers. And then it was a sex club.

Kembra: A real sex club, full blown. Downstairs was a dungeon!

I'm always a day late. Lia, how does Participant Inc. function uniquely from other New York and downtown spaces?

Lia: To start with we're a non-profit. We've always been on the Lower East Side. We used to be on Rivington and Ludlow. But moving to this location we became more connected to the East Village history. But there are a million histories of the Lower East Side, whether it's graffiti, ABC No Rio, there are a lot of different interpretations of what it is, but I feel like being here we are all this sort of family. I find it exciting that there are so many artists still here. When people look at art and gentrification they think, "oh there's nobody left", but that's not the case. A lot is still here.

Kembra: It's true. There are still strongholds in New York and downtown, a lot of great artists per square foot. When I first came to New York City, Jack Smith was my neighbor on 1st Avenue. Klaus Nomi and The Living Theatre was on 3rd or 4th Street - and they're still around the corner on Clinton street now. ABC No Rio is where I first started doing art projects when I was a teenager in 1979 or '80. I got to do my own art shows there.

Lia: There is so much picking and choosing around old and new stuff, yet in a way I think what is awesome about New York is, things that people might want to historicize are actually not historical, they're current. There is so much overlap with these different generations.

Kembra: I agree, and I'm lucky with my band The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black that by also doing things in the arts has kept our band multi-generational. We started in the '90s and we've gathered a new audience of kids from the art world. There're no punk rock music clubs for kids to hang out in anymore and now music is happening more in the dance world and art world, so I'm fortunate to have that interdisciplinary type of audience of all ages. Experiences have a lot to do with one's value system, what kind of terrain you're observing, because if New York City is a big wide movie screen, you can focus on so many different aspects of what it really looks like. If you're in the mind to find shitty corporate art, you will. I'm glad to see people are still paying attention to this kind of grassroots local scene.

Lia: That whole commercial art bubble never really trickled down on us, partly because we're a non-profit. But it did remind me that being an alternative space at this particular period means we're changing all time. Understanding that part of our alternativity is that we can do really ambitious projects without a huge amount of money. One of the ways we differ in general is that money isn't part of our value system, that we need some huge budget to make something happen.

Kembra: This space is about Availablism, making the best use of what's available. That's a philosophy I really believe in.

What's the night in the life of Kembra Pfahler?
I don't really go out on Friday or Saturday nights in the Lower East Side anymore, it's too hostile. It's a really unfuckable scene, you know, it's an incredibly unfuckable group of people that immerge onto the streets of New York. I prefer to roam around the streets when it's somewhat empty, I love to walk or ride my bike across the bridge. I'm straightedge so I work out a lot, I do something called Gothletics, which is an exercise routine done at night.

I'm sure everybody asks you about this particular performance but I know the perverse readers of SFAQ want to hear it; did it hurt when you sewed shut your vagina?
No…not at all. I had essentially trained nurses do it. And Richard Kern is such an amazing filmmaker, we did that together. The whole energy filming with him was so incredibly fun that the pain was nonexistent. I became a member of Mensa because of that movie, the high IQ group. They invited me to come and give a speech after I sewed my vagina shut.

Can you close with any good jokes?
Hold on, let me think…hold on, umm, no.

The next day I met up with Kembra to shoot some pictures of her at her exhibition. She arrives holding a cat scratching post she found on the street to give to Lia, the gallery director. "Looks pretty new, doesn't it?" she says, turning it in her hands. She first takes position on the elevated cockmobile, where she lays prostrate looking up at the constellation of black, white and grey penises. I snap a few shots and she moves to sit with the Karen Black dolls in a Spiders-from-Mars kind of family portrait. "Want to come see my house?" she asks casually.

She's not in full body paint or three-tiered black wigs but she has a presence that makes everybody - I mean, everybody - take a second look as we walk. Some are intrigued, some are maybe turned on, most are probably a little afraid of her hocus pocus charm.

She opens her front door into a sea of tile red. By sea, I mean ocean, and by ocean, I mean absolutely everything was painted that deep, full red. The walls, floors, ceilings, doors, cupboards, cups, props, computers, frames, shelves, dressers – everything minus maybe her two black cats, Bruno and Archie, and a couple of instruments was coated in red. She showed me some broken ceramic FUCK ISLAND plates that "fell to their death during the show", asking me to take a picture of her with the fragments haloed around her head in deity formation as she laid in posthumous style on the red wooden floor.

Kembra and Rosalie with blue cock "Fuck Island," 2012. Installation view at Participant Inc.
Photograph by Rona Yefman. Courtesy Participant Inc.

"I'm always loosing things in this place; my brain scrambles to differentiate one thing from another. I actually need to recoat everything."

Recoat!? "How often do you repaint"? I ask.

"Every couple of months" she says, looking all around her.

I asked her if she's noticed the apartment (which also functions as her studio) getting smaller over the years, with all the layers of chunky red paint closing in on her. She told me Debby Harry described her apartment as "clumpy" so in gestural defiance to her friend she paper mached over much of the furniture to accentuate the thickness. Take that Blondie!

She gives me a M-A-C Cosmetic gift bag bearing the band logo of The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black (a bat with ball-like teats) containing some of the signature colors of the Karen Black persona. She had said earlier, "I'm sponsored by M-A-C and Playboy, I get up at 7am to suck the devil's dick – you gotta get up early to suck that penis." As true today as it ever was.

I left her apartment thinking about her work, about New York and what it must have felt like when many of the buildings were bombed out and abandoned, when cheap rents allowed for artists, writers, musicians, and everybody else to produce what makes the city what it is today. Before high-rise condominiums replaced dozens upon dozens of classic downtown tenements, displacing neighborhoods and artists with them. But those feelings are partial as I'm reminded New York is probably the same polluted, yet wonderful hell hole it's always been, and that it's still overflowing with art, music and people constantly making shit happen. Kembra hit it on the head when she described the city as a big movie screen, and our experiences depend on what part of the screen we choose to focus on. Some of us are actors and actresses, others are the audience. But, for better or worse, we all participate in the same cultural machine of these five boroughs.

Kembra in bed with "pink cock" and "cockmobile" from "Fuck Island," 2012.
Installation view at Participant Inc. Photograph by Rona Yefman. Courtesy Participant Inc.

Installation view of "Giverny" by E.V. Day. and Kembra Pfahler .view of the bridge and pond at The Hole gallery 2011 sponsored by playboy.com

Live performance photo by Bijoux Altamirano from the performance by Kembra Pfahler called "wall of vagina" at The Hole gallery 2010. Photograph by Bijoux Altamirano.

FIRST AID FOR CHOKING

You must act if there are any signs that a person can't speak, breathe or cough.

SIGNS
- Universal choking sign
- Person cannot breathe, cough or speak
- Person makes high pitched sounds when breathing
- Lips and finger nails may become blue

Ask, "Are you choking?" If the person gestures yes, stand behind the person, wrapping your arms around the person's waist.

Make a fist with one hand

hold it with the other hand against the person's abdomen

between the navel and lower end of breast bone

Provide quick, upward and inward abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver) until the food or object is forced out.

If the person becomes unresponsive,

- Call 911 or local EMS Telephone_____
- Return to the person
- Lay the person flat on his or her back
- Open his or her mouth
- Remove the object if you see it

If the object is not seen:
- Tilt his or her head back
- Begin CPR
- Look for the object each time you open the airway

- Continue rescue breaths and chest compressions until rescue personnel arrive.

State of New York Eliot Spitzer, Governor
Department of Health Richard F. Daines, M.D., Commissioner

"Choking poster", by Kembra Pfahler with Alice Moy, "Fuck Island" 2012, Participant Inc. gallery.

CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

Terminal Velocities

By KENNETH WHITE

"Meat Joy", 1964. Performance: raw fish, chickens, sausages, wet paint, plastic, rope, paper scrap. Photograph by Al Giese. Courtesy of the artist.

Carolee Schneemann editing film in London, 1972. Courtesy of the artist.

Carolee Schneemann holds a singular eminence. Meat Joy (1964), Fuses (1964-67), Up To and Including Her Limits (1973-1976), and Interior Scroll (1975) are towering classics in the representation of feminine sexuality and discourses on the body. Schneemann has made defining contributions to fluxus, happenings, expanded cinema, and performance. She is a requisite figure in any meaningful account of postwar art. While Schneemann's career spans many decades and continents, New York City is the site and content of some of her most brilliant projects. This article offers a brief view into a few lesser-known New York projects and their contexts.

A show of recent work by Schneemann is on view at Gallery Paule Anglim in San Francisco from November 14th thru December 22nd. The show will include a selection of materials from Schneemann's archive acquired this year by Stanford University. Schneemann will speak at the San Francisco Art Institute on November 14th at 7:30pm.

On September 22, 2012, in St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, New York, Carolee Schneemann stepped along the perimeter of the performance floor. With veteran grace, she executed small gestures with her hands like gentle waves, as if to test the air for minute currents. This frame was made perceptible through the time of her movement. It was a corporeal articulation in moments, in units of action drawn by her concentration. In effect, Schneemann measured the space with her body. The audience was gathered on platform risers, seated in chairs and on the floor. They drew quiet as Schneemann walked in a line perpendicular to the crowd, then away to the furthest edge of the floor where her steps were damped by carpet. Schneemann established the ground for the subsequent actions.

She then returned to her original position at the front-left side of the space. She lifted a field whistle and blew once. Fourteen performers in casual, loose clothing of varying shades of blue and green emerged from corners of the church floor. Some arose from the platform risers. Others appeared in regular intervals from a rear door that slammed closed in loose counterpoint to their accumulating bare-footed steps. Each extrapolated Schneemann's lithe clarity. They dispersed and cut diagonals across the full space. One looked upon another, watched. They stalked each other, then sprung. The pair grappled in their running collision. Both dropped to the floor, and went slack. Moments later each would arise and separate as if recharged to find another partner with which to collide. Performers' bodies at rest littered the floor. Others looked for a new confrontation.

Schneemann blew on her field whistle again. The performers made crawling runs across the floor. As they hunched low, their arm swung in caricatured ape-walks. They stared ahead without expression. They set themselves on straight paths across the floor. We watched as the performers inevitably collided with one another, again and again. But as before, when collision occurred each crumpled to the floor as if evacuated of their propulsion. In the previous episode, their bursts of movement, their sudden attacks, suggested a motivation like ritualistic play-fighting of animals. This contrasted against their actions in the second episode which was distinguished by rhythmic swish-thump sounds made their hands and feet. The performers evoked wind-up toys. They were like a mass of random objects determined by indifferent drives. No stalking. Rather, comical steps one to the next until halted by an exterior object. Several thumped into pillars. In one instance, a performer ambled into a spectator seated in the first row and crumpled at contact, as was done in all the collisions. The performers voided their agency. Their energy served simple directives.

Another burst from Schneemann's field whistle marked the third and final sequence. Spinning runs defined the final sequence. Arms outstretched, backs straight, and faces set forward, the performers threw themselves into circular motions. They cast their bodies between competing forces. They wrung their bodies into the execution of actions determined to test the limits of stability. Momentum propelled their trunks and arms against the runs demanded of their legs. Their feet slipped and slapped the floor, catching them for a moment before they launched themselves into another turn. Again the performers appeared like simple machines,

now as tops drawing frenetic helixes. And again each crumpled to the floor at collision, their hands swinging into each other, into solid pillars, at highest possible speed. Their movements resisted self-control. They seemed to find grace in their momentary lift from the floor, but then always crashed, always returned, in resignation to the force of gravity.

In the three sequences of *Lateral Splay*, the group enacted a kind of play between autonomy and collectivity, between their particular character and their status as instrument of Schneemann's instructions. The performers displayed, in playful violence, an oscillation between self-consciousness and a kind of willful giving over of their bodies as sprung tools in the service of external directives. By fulfilling their instructions, the fourteen participants pressed the boundaries of the perimeter originally delineated by Schneemann. Their actions suggested a network of energy in a process of continuous generation and dispersal. *Lateral Splay* was a kind of applied *kinematics*. Kinematics is commonly defined as the geometry of motion: "a branch of mechanics which treats the phenomenon of motion," and is concerned with bodies' "relative positions and their change."[1] *Lateral Splay* is a geometry of motion, a constellation of specific bodies whose drives are continuously transferred, and redirected. How a body comes to move from one position to another is the primary aim of the work: for the artist, a body -- her body, those of her collaborators, those of her audience -- are aggressively determined by multiplicious forces, particularly those of a patriarchal order. *Lateral* Splay was an analytic process by which to "manifest in space" new gestures against the structures of power that move a body from one place to another against its will. In 1962-63, at the time of her conception of *Lateral Splay*, she wrote:

The fundamental life of any material I use is concretized in that material's gesture – gesticulation, gestation, source of compression (measure of tension and expansion), resistance, developing force of visual action. Manifest in space, any particular gesture acts on the eye as a unit of time. Performers or glass, fabric, wood – all are potent as variable gesture units: color, light, and sound will contrast or enforce the quality of a particular gesture's area of action and its emotional texture.[2]

Schneemann's staging of *Lateral Splay* at Danspace Project on September 21st and 22nd, 2012 constituted the artist's contribution to *Platform 2012: Judson Now*, a series of events celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Judson Dance Theater. *Lateral Splay* was first presented at *Judson Dance Concert #13* in November, 1963. Judy Hussie-Taylor curated *Judson Now* as a "snapshot" of the intensive environment of creativity centered at the Judson Church between 1962 and 1966. In those years, Judson was a cultural center. It is difficult to overestimate Judson's impact on late twentieth century art. The present ubiquity of intermedial experimentation, and the incorporation of everyday gestures and common materials, may trace its origins to the path-breaking work of the Judson participants. *Judson Now* is a gift of historical perspective and a showcase of the vital work that continues to issue from its associates. The series continues thru December. Founding members David Gordon, Yvonne Rainer, and Deborah Hay will re-stage Judson-era events or present recent work. Judson associates Simone Forti and Meredith Monk also contribute programs. *The Art of Influence* events aim to underscore the company's contemporary relevance.

At Judson, Schneemann was a painter among dancers. Through her collaboration with the group, the artist sought to break the planar surface of the canvas. She understood painting as a premise as much as a medium. In 1979 Schneemann reflected that *Lateral Splay* "functioned as an explosive and linear refrain, a propulsive jet of movement cutting through the sequences of other works and the materials of the environment." She continued, "it involves a maximum expenditure of directed energy; in rehearsals we practiced with the sense that the runners were particles bombarding space."[3] She sought to ground optical privilege within a complex body. And she explored its aggregate "units of time" across a range of media.

Schneemann was herself a kind of lateral explosion into the New York art scene of the early 1960s. She produced works with the Living Theater, participated in Claes Oldenburg's classic multimedia environment *Store Days* (1962) and other happenings. At Judson she presented several projects, including *Newspaper Event* (1963) and *Chromelodeon* (1963). *Lateral Splay* followed later that year. In 1964, Schneemann returned the audience's stare as a live, imperious *Olympia* in Robert Morris's *Site*. *Meat Joy* was re-staged at Judson in 1964 after productions in Paris and London. In that work, Schneemann distributed mackerel, chicken carcasses, and sausages among loose paper-scraps and paint to performers wearing fur-lined bikinis. *Meat Joy* is one of the most notorious, and earliest, examples of performance art.

Kinetic theater was Schneemann's term for her heterogeneous mode of production in *Meat Joy* and other works of that period. It was a mode that did not hew to given boundaries of artistic disciplines. Rather kinetic theater was a constellation of tactics determined by the artist's access to materials. Further, Schneemann sought materials dismissed as scraps and detritus, the quotidian and everyday. By taking up tools outside the purview of rarified art, she aimed at the larger determinants of taboos. Kinetic theater was a materialization of grievances against the contrivances of power. It was a process of intervention against suppressive cultural conceits, in particular the relegation of women to domestic bliss.

"Dark Pond" (2001-05). Twelve unique watercolor & crayon with digital print layer. 18h x 14w inches each; total 54h x 56w inches. Courtesy of the artist.

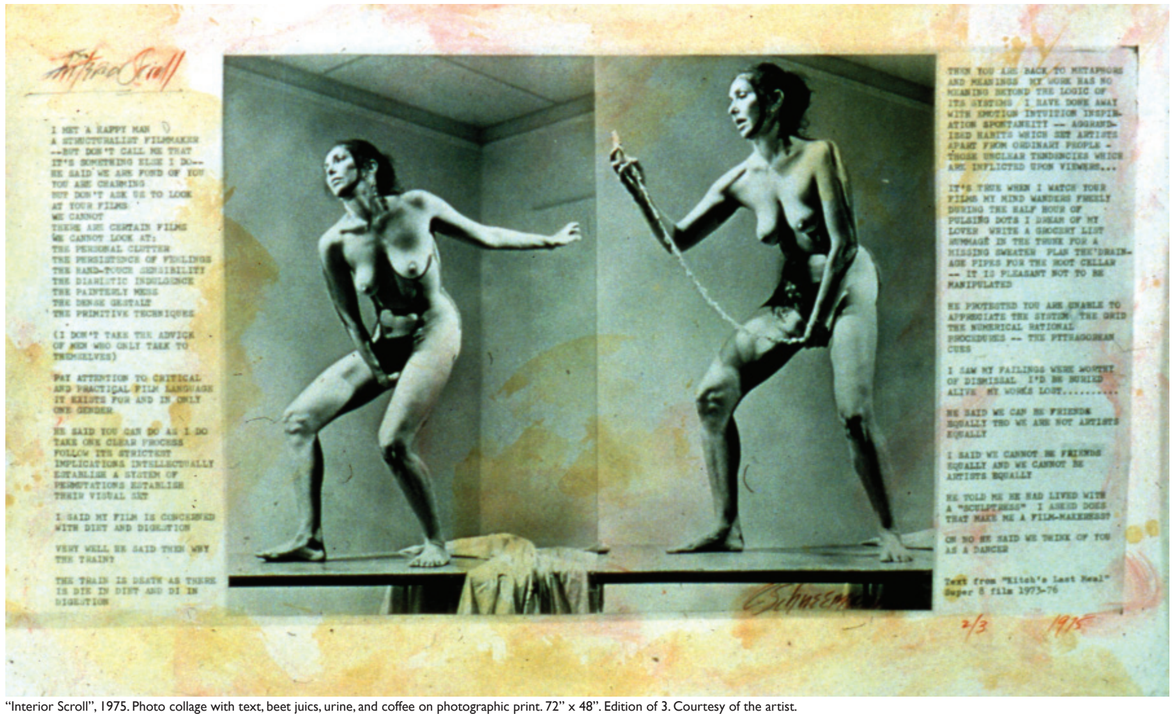
I was supporting myself when I first came to New York as an artist's model. I was lying naked listening to these terrible men, most of them really ruining their students' drawings ... I had to listen to them say everything that would prevent the students from seeing full and well ... Then I come back to the studio where the cultural message was, 'You're incredible but don't really try to do anything.' I would just pick up my hammer and start fracturing my materials with a full arm swing and focused aim. My work was about motion and momentum and physicality. The next step was to see what would happen if the body went in among my own materials. And would my rage at predictive rejection be supplanted by the gendered form exposed, displaced: active, present, and accusatory![4]

Schneemann's kinetic theater works became increasingly complex. *Ghost Rev*, staged at the 1965 New Cinema Festival at the Astor Place Theater in New York, and *Snows*, staged at the Martinique Theater in 1967, are examples of two works of that period in which she incorporated film projections and strobe systems with elements of live performance. They are now considered classics of so-called "expanded cinema." In her poetic text from 1970, "EXPANDED CINEMA: Free Form Recollections of New York," Schneemann writes that the

Nature of material expanded into what seemed possible – or impossible from paint & canvas to light boxes sculpture to the studio as an environment in itself to incorporating the body ... that meant putting my body where the eye had governed the pain on the brush on the arm on the body in the eye vision ... we were expanded cinema ...[5]

Schneemann's *meat systems*, as she referred to her works of the late 1960s and early 1970s made in collaboration with the British artist John Lifton, extrapolated the "propulsive jets of movement," her formulation of performers as "particles bombarding space," into environments. And her work came to accrue more menace. The meat systems were sites of concentrated, cacophonous media technologies triggered by the audience's presence. The artists sought to respond to the increasingly mediated culture of 1960s, and in particular the United States' "technowar" in Vietnam, to follow James William Gibson, by amplifying what mediation commodified, removed, and effaced.

Consider *Meat System 1: Electronic Activation Room* (1970), developed in London and constructed in Cologne for Harald Szeemann's *Happening & Fluxus* exhibition. The work barraged viewers with projections of Vietnam atrocity photographs, clips from radio and pop songs. German television spewed from stacks of monitors. Over-lapping slide and film projections of Schneemann's previous kinetic theater projects further congested the area allocated to Schneemann and Lifton in the Kölnischer Kunstverein. The images lost their representational coherence in their numerous appearance. Together, they became an abstract swirl of light and motion yet with fleeting evocations of the matters they depicted. This materiality was underscored by Schneemann and Lifton's treatment of the walls of their area. The artists covered the walls with white paper in irregular manner. The paper drooped and curled away from the wall. This had the effect of lending momentary, fragmentary sense of depth and weight to the images. The images broke across the white paper "screens." The images peeled away as if they disintegrated on contact, not unlike the flesh of the napalm victims who flickered forth from the projectors.[6]



"Interior Scroll", 1975. Photo collage with text, beet juics, urine, and coffee on photographic print. 72" x 48". Edition of 3. Courtesy of the artist.

"Lateral Splay", 1963/2012, at Danspace Project, St. Mark's Church. Photograph by Ian Douglas. Courtesy of Danspace Project.

"Lateral Splay", 1963. Photograph by Lisa Kahane. Courtesy of the artist.

One entered an intensive micro-scene of apparatuses: the sheer mass of their accumulation challenged a viewer for a share of space. One was crowded out by electronics that were more often given discrete, privileged positions in a home. As Schneemann described recently, she and Lifton wished to "merge" the audience and the images.[7] The *Electronic Activation Room* was not a display of computers or cinematographic devices as aesthetic objects, nor were they simply supports for the presentation of pre-recorded sounds and images. Rather it dissected the fragile threshold of sense presumed in these devices. The result was a multi-sensory attack that intended to evoke in form and content the violent events endured by others that might otherwise seem remote and ascetic exactly for those technologies of communication. Schneemann and Lifton delivered the menace in multimedia.

Like *Lateral Splay*, the *Electronic Activation Room* alerts the viewer to the body as an instrument that is too easily determined by external powers. In the performance, participants rehearsed a series of directions that make visible the contrived codes of corporeal movement, of walking, running, of body language, and the material weight, the forces at work, in one's body. In the *Electronic Activation Room*, a viewer becomes a conduit of culpability seized in a feedback loop lurching into sensory overload. The networks of communication and control were splintering apart. Perhaps through the grating experience of the work, Schneemann and Lifton seem to posit, one would recognize that they were already a performer for machines, as a machine. Passivity is untenable, unbearable. To enter the *Electronic Activation Room* was to become the literal "meat" trapped in a gambit of paroxysmal apparatuses triggered by one's presence yet churning on, indifferent.[8]

In a way, Schneemann's regard for technology and its effects on the body reaches a culmination with *Interior Scroll*, first performed in East Hampton, New York, in 1975. The notorious work is most often cited within a context of works of the 1970s that involved bodily distress and endangerment, so-called body art. In addition to that context, *Interior Scroll* appears at the end of a period in the artist's career in which she immersed herself in discourses of cybernetics and information theory. Her meat systems exemplify this research.

Interior Scroll began as a sketch in red pen: her nude body, one leg propped upon a chair. Her hands pull a strip of paper from her vagina. To the right of her sketch, she wrote "the message," underlined. In Schneemann's mind, women's bodies had always been the medium of a limited series of messages: housemaid, model, muse. "Communication and control," as Norbert Wiener and his colleagues defined cybernetics, was a conceit of male privilege. For Schneemann, any theory of messages could not be disentangled from her lived reality of oppression. The popular McLuhan jargon and cybernetic utopias were exactly that: jargon and utopias. They demanded evisceration. Schneemann's survival, and that of her woman colleagues, depended on their production of new "gesture units," to follow her writing on *Lateral Splay*, within and without the ascendant regimes of technological fetishism.[9]

Schneemann continues to engage the most controversial events and images of our culture. *Terminal Velocity* (2001) and *Dark Pond* (2001-05) exemplify this engagement. In these works, Schneemann took as her content journalistic photographs of the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center terrorist attacks that depict victims falling from the towers. New York City newspapers published the photographs in the days following the attacks. Schneemann clipped the photographs and scanned them. In some frames, the victims appear as indistinct, abstract marks. And Schneemann's ordering of the images gives up no comfort of familiarity, no relief in sequential order, no narrative upon which to cling: from one to the next in its series, the same image is repeated. Schneemann enlarged the images incrementally, suggesting a projection in space, but no change is recorded outside her alteration. We have just the harsh, raw indexes that increase in size from frame to frame. Perspective is frustrated; the grid induces a kind of anxious flickering, a horrific suspense. *Terminal Velocity* is a brutal prism.

Schneemann produced *Dark Pond* simultaneously with *Terminal Velocity*, and continued for several years following. She returned to the images of the falling victims, and others of the twin towers in rubble following their own fall. *Dark Pond* underscores these companion works, among the greatest of Schneemann's career, as not spectacularizations of the 9/11 atrocity images, rather works of a kind of counter-spectacle: resistance against the image by asserting the materiality that was evacuated by the fraught process of representation. For Schneemann, the politics to which the original images came to be attributed, namely revenge narratives demanding further loss of life, redoubled the victims' reification into images evacuated of particular experience. Her marks upon the images are aspirations to meet the victims, to concretize a gesture of reverence and mourning.

Editions of *Terminal Velocity* are now in the collections of the Musée des beaux arts Montreal and Musée départmental d'art contemporain de Rochechouart, where the work is recognized in a tradition of history painting. *Dark Pond* is on view at Gallery Paule Anglim in San Francisco this fall. Schneemann's show at Gallery Paule Anglim is entitled *Remains To Be Seen*. The title suggests remains as in the complex remainders of Schneemann's kinetic theater, her meat systems. Paint, gesture, a body, an apparatus, an image: for Schneemann one is not privileged more than another. Rather they share a continuum of autonomous but interconnected materiality. Each holds a propulsive force. Schneemann's art is a reverent study, an applied kinematics, of the interaction of those forces. Her works, trembling matter, her "gesture units," exhale the energy of their construction, and aim to transfer that energy onward, into her audience. The title also suggests indeterminacy, ambivalence. A committed wariness. "My materials do not solve the question, just continue to open it," Schneemann said in October in Montreal. Remains to be seen: challenges yet to be determined. Work still to be done.

(Endnotes)

1 Oene Bottema and Bernard Roth, *Theoretical Kinematics* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1979; reprint New York: Dover, 1990), vii.

2 Carolee Schneemann, "From the Notebooks" (1962-63), *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), 48.

3 Carolee Schneemann, "Lateral Splay," Bruce R. McPherson, ed. *More Than Meat Joy, 2nd Ed.* (Kingston, New York: Documentext, 1997), 47.

4 Carolee Schneemann, Interview with Kate Haug (1977), *Imaging Her Erotics*, 28.

5 Carolee Schneemann, "EXPANDED CINEMA: Free Form Recollections of New York" (1970), A.L. Rees, Duncan White, Steven Ball, and David Curtis, eds. *Expanded Cinema: Art Performance Film* (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), 95.

6 Schneemann's *Body Collage* (1967) is a precedent for this action.

7 Carolee Schneemann in public remarks at the symposium *Carolee Schneemann, Then and Now* organized by Ara Osterweil at the Musée des beaux-arts Montréal, October 19, 2012.

8 Among the "expanded cinema" precedents for *Meat System 1: Electronic Activation Room* is Andy Warhol's *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* shows in New York (1966-67) and their "disruptive multiplicity," to follow Branden W. Joseph in his authoritative study "'My Mind Split Open': Andy Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable," *Grey Room* 8 (Summer 2002): 81. Another precedent is Stan VanDerBeek's *Movie-Drome* (1963-66), recreated this year at the New Museum in New York for the exhibition *Ghosts in the Machine*. While VanDerBeek retained some of his utopic aspiration in his multi-projection space, Schneemann and Lifton forced a confrontation between a viewer and the projectors, sound system, and computers, that made possible their images and sounds. To be fair, the distinction I make may be attributed at least in part to the vast difference in political and cultural circumstances in 1963-66 and those in 1969-70. My point: in the *Electronic Activation Room*, the potential violence in the matter of communication, in the conveyance technology itself even, or especially, when the technology is attributed with responsive or interactive capabilities, was as much at stake as the content of their bombardment.

9 I elaborate these points in the second chapter of my Ph.D. dissertation *Libidinal Engineers: Three Studies in Cybernetics and Its Discontents*, Stanford University Department of Art & Art

ADAM PARKER SMITH

"Buying ideas is for suckers. Why not just steal them like everybody else?"

On Jul 5, 2012, at 10:59 PM, adamparkersmith@gmail.com wrote:

XXXXXX: Great to see you last week at the wedding. So I was complaining to Brent Birnbaum (with the beard) a few months ago about how hard it is to come up with new work and what a struggle it is for me to completely reinvent my practice after each piece.

I was telling him how sometimes I try and push my practice forward and realize that I have no idea what the next piece or project will be and feel like I may be empty and finished. Brent naturally wasn't making me feel any better. Instead, he was telling me how he has five to ten great ideas every day. When I asked him what was at the top of his list, he told me about a piece that I think is amazing. Really a great piece; so good in fact that I told him I wish it were mine. We were chatting about that for a moment and then I asked him, if he were to sell me that idea, not the actual piece, but the idea for the piece, how much would it cost. We discussed/negotiated for a while, and agreed that the conditions would be that he would sell me the idea, I would fabricate the piece, and then gain all rights to the work, as long as I paid him the agreed amount for the concept. After some consideration, Brent told me that a piece like the one we were talking about would be around five thousand dollars.

I asked him if he would consider selling me something in the two hundred dollar range. He agreed it was possible and the next week sent me a list of ten ideas, all priced at two hundred dollars. One of the ideas that popped out at me was a large pair of Kanye West shutter shade glasses that were cut out of venetian blinds. I sent Brent a check for two hundred and fabricated the piece, which ended up coming out very nicely. I figure we out-source everything these days...why not the actual idea?

I think this is something I want to do more of, and I love your work and the ideas you have, so I thought maybe you would want to sell me something. If you check out my website you can see the piece that Brent sold to me. If you are down, maybe you could email me a list of ideas, and if something strikes me I will pay you and make it. No pressure. I am hitting up a couple people whose work I really respect and whom I think may be up for something like this.

Let me know.

Thanks,
Adam

On Friday, July 6, 2012, at 3:12 PM, XXXXXX wrote:

Adam

Buying ideas is for suckers. Why not just steal them like everybody else? Artists have been doing it for hundreds of years - from Rembrandt to Hirst. Cattelan bragged about it & architects are the absolute worst. Hell, you've probably done it yourself already if you look deep enough.

Oh btw - this idea will still cost $200 should you choose to employ it.

Best of luck,
XXXXXX

On Friday, July 6, 2012, at 3:21 PM, Adam wrote:

XXXXXX thanks. Never even thought of that before. Will pick something out from your website now. Send me an address I can send the check to.

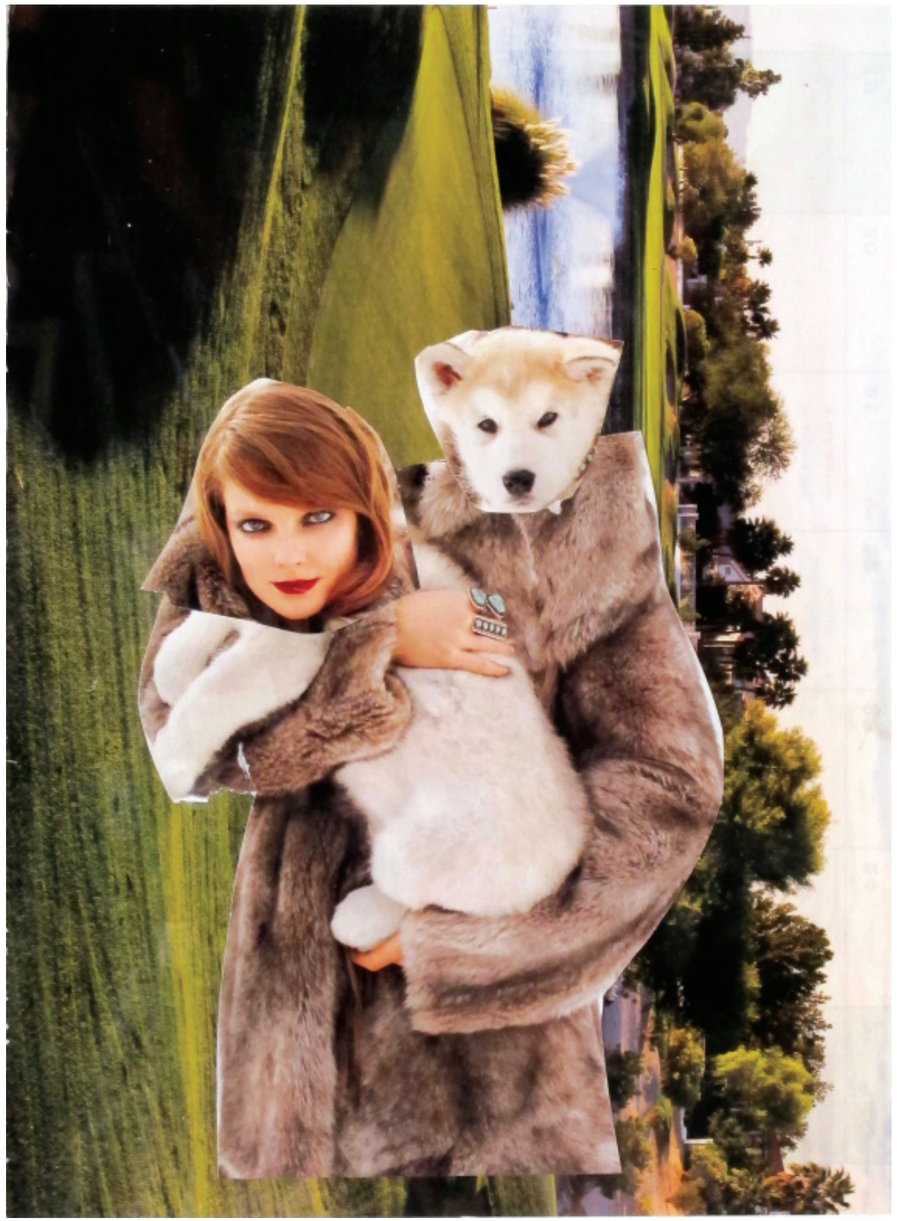
Best,
Adam

"Untitled (Shutter Shades)", 2012. Courtesy Ever Gold Gallery.

MATTHEW HIGGS

Director & Chief Curator, White Columns

Interviewed by GLEN HELFAND



John Hiltunen, "Untitled", 2012, Collage 12x9". Courtesy Gallery Paule Anglim.

"I was interested in the very specific conditions of the Bay Area that fostered these centers – the socially progressive politics of this place in the late '60s and early 1970's. It seemed surprising that centers like this didn't exist in Detroit, New Orleans, or wherever...those places don't have the same socially progressive, intellectually ambitious narratives that existed in the Bay Area."

Curator, writer and artist Matthew Higgs began directing White Columns in New York in 2004. His presence quickly enlivened the venerable artist-run space by implementing a programming style he developed over independent projects in the UK and as curator at the Wattis Institute at California College of the Art in San Francisco. He's an iconic figure who has expanded the roll of artist-run spaces, as he forged a unique bond with Creative Growth, the Oakland studio for artists with developmental disabilities. He has curated numerous exhibitions at White Columns and elsewhere, engaging in what he calls a missionary quest to spread the word about the artists working at Creative Growth, as well as highlight the philosophical approach of the center's founders, Dr. Elias Katz, a psychologist, and his artist wife, Florence Ludins-Katz. In a return visit to San Francisco for a Creative Growth affiliated show at Gallery Paule Anglim, Higgs discussed his curatorial interest in this work, and the Bay Area conditions that foster its vibrancy.

Matthew, it's nice to see you back in San Francisco, for this show at Paule's. The dialogue surrounding work emerging from studios for developmentally disabled artists is multifaceted. Can we start by talking about how you arrived at your continued interest and support of this work?

A lot of people have been interested in what I would call vernacular art, folk art, and what historically has been considered outsider art. I never thought about the relationship between my activities as a curator of contemporary art and this material until 2001 when I moved to Oakland and started working at the Wattis Institute. I came across Creative Growth quite by chance. I'd been to San Francisco once before when I met Harrell Fletcher, a then graduate student at CCAC. He collaborated with Creativity Explored, but I didn't register that there was more than one of these organizations. But as I got to know more about Creative Growth, and especially about its founders, the Katzes, and what I think are quite radical ideas about the relationship between disability and creativity, the more it seemed to me that they thought through a lot of the problems that might be presented to a curator coming to this material. They were very interested in breaking down the categorical distinctions and hierarchies that would exclude this kind of art from the larger narrative of contemporary art.

The Katzes built in the idea that centers like Creative Growth were mostly staffed by professional artists and had galleries where the work was made available to the public. At the same time, they were interested to move beyond this category of outsider art. What they created were really contexts for artists with disabilities of all kinds. I think up until that point I had always thought about this material as being historical, like the Wölfli collection. There was an art historical distance that allowed us to consider this work as something that took place in the past. It was a revelation to me to realize this is contemporary art. The artists are alive, working collaboratively and collectively in these open communal studio spaces.

There's a complexity to the idea of entering into a context like this, a community.

I wasn't discovering this material in that classic outsider art story of coming across Henry Darger's body of work after his death, or finding the old guy working in the woods. The Katzes were very careful to make sure that this activity was taking place in plain view. That their ideas had been published allowed me to think about how might I productively work with Creative Growth, and how might I start to think about working with this material in the larger context of my curatorial practice.

I was interested in the very specific conditions of the Bay Area that fostered these centers – the socially progressive politics of this place in the late '60s and early 1970's. It seemed surprising that centers like this didn't exist in Detroit, New Orleans, or wherever. It became obvious why that couldn't happen – because those places don't have the same socially progressive, intellectually ambitious narratives that existed in the Bay Area.

How did you start exhibiting the work here and in New York?

I had an opportunity to organize a benefit show at Creative Growth. It was a 30th anniversary show called *I Love Music* and I mixed work by Creative Growth artists with art by Peter Doig, Richard Prince, David Muller, and others. It was an attempt on my part to see what happens when you juxtapose these artists. I don't think it really suggested anything in terms of a curatorial breakthrough, but it certainly suggested to me that we could use the larger reputation of artists like Richard Prince to raise visibility, and money, for Creative Growth and the individual artists who work there.

When I moved to New York in 2004, it was almost like a missionary ambition on my part to introduce as many people as possible to this work. I felt compelled to make sure that every single person who is interested in visual culture would find out about Katz's ideas and Creative Growth. I was the first director of White Columns who wasn't from New York and who didn't really have a historical connection to the downtown New York art scene. I felt that we could break down the idea that this was a downtown New York art space, and open up the conversation.

One way we started to do that was to bring in information, and to work with artists from elsewhere, including Creative Growth. We did a solo exhibition by Aurie Ramirez in my first year. It was very well received in the New York Times by Roberta Smith, who historically has been very interested in the work of self-taught and folk artists.

Matthew Higgs photographed by Aubrey Mayer.

"It's not so much community. We're trying to create an organic unfolding network amongst artists where most likely the only thing they have in common is some kind of relationship with White Columns. I like the idea that the organization would, where possible, sustain those relationships over a long period of time."

But what I found interesting was the response from artists. White Columns is essentially an artist-centered organization and they immediately understood the material. They responded either by buying works or expressing a real interest in the work. They became involved with the larger conversation.

As a result, we started to work regularly with Creative Growth and its artists. Every time an opportunity came up to do something in another place I would try and find a way to include or embrace the work from that studio. Over the last decade I've organized nearly twenty-five exhibitions at places like Barbara Gladstone Gallery, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, and galleries in Tokyo, Paris, and Berlin. The idea was to introduce people to the material, to these ideas, and to keep expanding the circle of knowledge, information, and interest in this work. So far it's been a really productive and interesting process. When you introduce the work from Creative Growth to new audiences, the ripple effect of that conversation is quite tangible – there's almost something contagious about the interest in the work.

Isn't there a kind of—for lack of a better word—fetishization to the misconception that that the work is a purer act of expression?
Sure. And I think it's probably the larger historical problematic of any work that's from the self-taught and outside of context. I think the work produced at Bay Area centers differs because of the intentionality of the people who started them. The fact that these organizations continue to thrive four decades later, and continue to produce extraordinary work, has much to do with context. Although the context is clearly different than other aspects of the art world, and the nature of the artists who work in these centers is clearly different, I think they've created a context that is compelling– that artists with disabilities of various sorts just needed a very carefully thought through environment where their potential could be supported and nurtured. The Katzes moved away from ideas about therapy into an environment where artists are encouraged and supported in their creative evolution.

The most remarkable thing is that it's for life. If an artist chooses, or their circumstances allow, for them to work at Creative Growth or Creativity Explored, they can - for their entire life. I can't think of another equivalent.

What do you see as the complicating factors of working with these artists?
There's still a gap between my role as a curator and the artist's intention of the work. It's not resolvable in the way that I can go to a recent MFA and talk in the studio and hear their rational ambitions for their work. The conversation would be fairly two-sided. Clearly, given the nature of some of the artists who work in these centers, the nature of their disability prevents this—some of them have no conventional communication tools. We're simply left with the work. There's an interesting grey area around the work and our relationship with it.

I've been working with these artists for a decade now and it feels like I'm just starting to come to terms with what that might mean. Perhaps in the next ten, or twenty, or thirty years working with Creative Growth I might get closer to some broader understanding of what I'm actually doing and what it means, but I'm not convinced that's going to happen.

All I can do is think in terms of my responsibility to this work, which is not so different than my responsibility to the work of a more conventionally trained artist. I have a responsibility to locate the work in a context that is sympathetic to the artist's intentions.

Can you say something more about the Bay Area context?
What's remarkable about the organizations in the Bay Area is that almost all of the artists live within a thirty minute commute from the centers where they work. If these centers didn't exist we would be unaware of the artist's existence. What it means is that in every city in the world there are an equal number of talented adult artists with disabilities who have no forum; there's no center to encourage and support their activity. The three organizations in the Bay Area [Creative Growth, Creativity Explored, and NIAD Art Center] represent is the tip of something that's so huge in scale that it's overwhelming. This creativity exists. All you need to do is provide an environment and allow it to unfold.

What I found interesting when I moved to the Bay Area is that a lot of the art history is quite secret. A lot of activity is not taking place in plain view. You have to be here for a while to find out about things. What amazed me is that Creative Growth and Creativity Explored existed for twenty-odd years and I didn't know about it living in London.

That aspect of awareness, of self-promotion is thorny here. Since the Bay Area is sort of outside of that network in a more general sense, there just isn't a huge art market. You have done much to bring Creative Growth artists to art fairs and the high profile galleries you mentioned earlier.
I am interested in the Katzes' decision very early on to have galleries where the work was presented and sold. They were very clear about the work being available for sale. Another complicated narrative around outsider or self-taught art concerns economic exploitation. The work was made available for sale, and the money from those sales supported the centers and individual artists. It just seemed like an incredibly clear, clean economy. It captures the ambition for these artists to not only benefit from their creative labor but also to think about the idea that these artists might actually be able to support themselves.

It wasn't like the Katzes were giving me permission, but their ideas allowed me to think about how can we actually assist in developing sustained economies for individual artists, and for the organization itself. It's becoming very important for me to think about how White Columns can function philanthropically.

I'm concerned that the people who are benefiting financially are not some fat cat art dealers but the organization and individual artists. All the proceeds of the show at Paule's go directly to the artists and to Creative Growth. It was fascinating to me that the Katzes thought about this before there even was an economy for some of these individual artists.

I think another great thing about this show is that it implies that sense of the communal studio.
That's what I was trying to do here. In this show I wanted to try and give some sense of the sort of convivial relationships between individuals. John Hiltunen makes really beautiful collage pieces and he is paired with the work of artists from Creative Growth. The pairings are mostly my own, sometimes growing out of a shared quality in the work, sometimes something more serendipitous, and sometimes completely formal. The idea is to create an exhibition structured around friendships that exist within the studio, around the communal nature of the organization and how the work is produced. It's really just an attempt to visualize that in the form of an exhibition without it being a fixed or defined narrative.

There's no common ground. If you teach in an undergrad or graduate program there are all kinds of people there, but there is a common structure, a common language and approach. What's fascinating at Creative Growth is that each artist is almost a completely unique case study in terms of their clinical and personal histories. The only thing that I think is common is the relationship with working together in a communal space over a long period of time, which is really a unique thing to share.

You used the term missionary in terms of promoting Creative Growth, but also I presume there's a degree of that to White Columns itself as an alternative art space. I'm curious to hear about your directorship, how you started there in terms of what you wanted to do and where it might be going.
When I arrived in New York in 2004 I was trying to think about how we could rethink White Columns in the present tense, how we could create an idiosyncratic conversation amongst artists that didn't exist anywhere else in New York. So perhaps moving away from the emphasis on showing young recent graduates, we started to create, I think, a more complicated, but actually more reasonable conversation amongst artists of all generations. We started to work with a lot of artists not necessarily based in the obvious metropolitan centers. We began to work with a lot of senior artists. I also started to present what I would call vernacular art, art that came from other places, or art that came through different roads.

The goal really was to create a picture of art in the beginning of the 21st century, and for me, it was important that it was idiosyncratic. It was important that White Columns felt different from the Kitchen, and from Artists Space, but also different from what was happening in the large commercial market, and in the larger institutions.

I mentioned the idea that we could function philanthropically for another organization or another community of artists. Rather than just being a one-off engagement it really is a long-term commitment on my part, on White Columns' part. That idea of time and allowing a curatorial collaboration to evolve over a decade is a new experience for me. It's like the beginning of an ongoing conversation. It's exciting as a curator to be able to establish a working methodology one that's very different than any of the other methodologies that I have as a curator.

When you started at White Columns, it was a very particular time, a robust period in the art world. How is the space shifting and surviving in a leaner economy?
White Columns was struggling when I got there. I think finally the buoyancy of the rest of the art world suggested that these spaces were unnecessary. This is a conversation that's been going on since the '80s. But it seems to me the spaces were called alternative because they provided an alternative to whatever the dominant thing was at any given time. I'd always been interested in when the word 'alternative' was dropped— it wasn't like one week and everybody stopped using it, but it has evaporated over time. I'm interested in what might be an alternative again. It seemed to me the sort of dominant market led metropolitan centered model wasn't necessarily the most interesting or even ambitious, and what we tried to replace with is a much more complicated story, a story that includes multiple overlapping voices. I organized nearly 200 exhibitions and projects there in eight years, but it might take a decade for these ideas to disseminate and find their way into the larger culture.

Does this lead to some sense of community, or do you see something else happening?
It's not so much community. We're trying to create an organic unfolding network amongst artists where most likely the only thing they have in common is some kind of relationship with White Columns. I like the idea that the organization would, where possible, sustain those relationships over a long period of time. Historically the organization worked with someone and never worked with them again. We may not formally present an artist's work again, but we hope that the relationships continue. The strength of the organization now is a result of relationships between individual artists and their cumulative experiences with White Columns' programs.

How has it fared, the Meatpacking neighborhood has changed and will continue to?
The Whitney museum will open at the bottom of the High Line, but there are more people in the area doing all kinds of things. We're not necessarily an immediate beneficiary of that, but the one advantage of working in New York City and working in a starkly important organization like White Columns with its amazing 40-plus year history, is that we do have access to a critical audience. That allows these more modest conversations to find great resonance.

Judith Scott. Untitled (Fan Head), 2002, Mixed Media 21x22x14". Courtesy Gallery Paule Anglim.

ACT UP NEW YORK: Activism, Art, and the AIDS Crisis, 1987 - 1993. Courtesy White Columns.

BRETT LITTMAN

Executive Director, The Drawing Center

Interviewed by KELLY INOUYE

Installation view of Leon Golub "Live & Die Like a Lion?" Main Gallery, The Drawing Center, April 23–July 23, 2010. Photograph by Cathy Carver. Courtesy of the Drawing Center.

Located in SoHo since 1977 and well-loved for its innovative exhibitions, The Drawing Center is the only non-profit institution in the United States to focus solely on the exhibition of historical and contemporary drawing. Committed to an expanded notion of the definition of drawing and known for its dedication to exhibiting under-recognized and emerging artists, The Drawing Center has undergone a complete renovation and will re-open to the public in November 2012 at 35 Wooster Street. I recently spoke with Brett Littman, Executive Director of The Drawing Center about its history, mission, and upcoming programming.

The Drawing Center is the only fine arts institution in the United States to focus uniquely on drawing. Can you talk a little bit about the significance of that role and how that focus guides the institution?

Going all the way back to the founding of The Drawing Center in 1977, Martha Beck, who was a curator at the Museum of Modern Art in the drawings department, had resigned from MoMA in 1976 along with some people in the print and illustrations departments because they felt that those departments weren't getting enough attention in the MoMA hierarchy. They would propose shows and get green-lit, but then would be put in a closet or a room on the second floor that nobody ever visited. I think Martha had a prescient understanding of where art was moving. Obviously in the late 1960s there were a lot of artists working in a more conceptual mode and drawing became much more important in their practice. Particularly artists working in modes where things could not actually be produced, like Earthworks artists and those working with new materials such as neon, sound and light. There was no funding, there were no museums, no spaces for them.

By the time 1977 rolled around there were already artists for whom drawing was their primary practice. The role of drawing was shifting art historically from something that was preparatory to something that might actually have equal footing with other modes of art production. In the 35 years that The Drawing Center has been around, our purpose has shifted. At first we were in a more defensive position about drawing. We wanted to plant the flag and declare that drawing was important. I would say for about 20 years that generally was the dominant driver of our programming dialog. We were doing a lot of work with both historical and contemporary drawing. We had established the Viewing Program early on and *Selections* shows were very important for artists because often it was the first time they had shown in New York. Overall, through all of this discourse around the medium, drawing started to contain a different level of importance in the context of museums. Also in terms of artistic practice, there were more and more artists for whom drawing was really primary to what they did.

I would say that in the past decade there has been a slight shift. We've moved away from a defensive position about drawing to a more inquisitive investigation about where drawing is going in the future. We no longer need to valorize drawing and restate its importance. That's been established. Case in point: I had lunch with Glenn Lowry one day when MoMA had the Leon Ferrari and Mira Schendel show, the Rothschild Contemporary Drawings collection, and a third show up that was fairly heavily drawing and I said, "Thank you." He asked, "For what?" and I said, "All of MoMA is now drawing." It was ironic in a way that a major museum, the museum that was essentially the genesis of our own founding, had embraced drawing as a medium that could actually be shown in several of their galleries simultaneously.

To me, The Drawing Center has played the most important role in expanding the definition of what drawing is. In the past we've shown a lot of work on paper, which is the de facto definition of what a drawing is. We've also really looked at new media and the relationship between drawing and space through installation and sculpture. Digital media is something we'll explore more moving forward. We've really tried to push the boundaries of what an expanded definition of drawing can be.

Can you talk about those early years? Where was The Drawing Center originally located? How have things changed over time?

In 1977 it was founded on Greene Street in SoHo. At the time, SoHo was still an artistic neighborhood. The neighborhood has changed, it's shifted quite a bit over the past 35 years. Today we are putting down roots again in our second home at 35 Wooster, which was established in 1986. It was really important to me that the institution stays in SoHo. I think the neighborhood is much more viable than it was six or seven years ago. If you remember, The Drawing Center got wrapped up in the World Trade Center site, which did not work out well for us. We had looked at a site on South and John Streets in the Seaport Museum area where we would have built a 30,000 square foot standalone building. However, my feeling about what The Drawing Center does, its core value, is that we exist at a human scale. Drawing tends to be human scale. The galleries that we've had have been very beautiful and people really love them, there's a lot of nostalgia about them. I'm interested in the nostalgia on a personal level because I grew up in New York and spent a lot of time in SoHo. I went to The Drawing Center when it was on Greene Street in 1982 and I started seeing shows there regularly beginning in about 1986 when I would come home from college. I feel very much tied to it and I think it's important for us to stay in SoHo. There are still artists living here. Not as many as there were in 1977. The institution didn't need to grow as large as what we originally had thought. Obviously with the economy going south in 2008 it was a good moment for us to re-jigger our expectations both on a Board level and a staff level.

In the end, what we're ending up with is something that is very much coming out of the conversations that myself, Claire (Gilman), Nina (Katchadourian) and my curatorial staff are having with artists about what they want from The Drawing Center moving forward. We're seeing a lot of artists thinking about drawing in durational terms, performative terms, or in terms of plugging a computer in and running a program. These are things that our gallery just couldn't support before. We didn't have the infrastructure. We had one plug in the gallery so if you wanted to show a video you had to run a wire and tape it down on the floor – it was just kind of 19th Century (laughter). What we're trying to do is stay true to the core value of being human scale and being an institution that takes 45 minutes to visit instead of four hours. We can have a quality experience, and maybe even a challenging experience for the viewer on those terms.

"I believe the future of drawing is looking at it in a cross-disciplinary way....in the 21st century we have to look at all practitioners who draw... I think we would be really be remiss if we didn't incorporate dancers and choreographers, architects, and filmmakers..."

Installation view of Gerhard Richter: "Lines which do not exist", Main Gallery, The Drawing Center, September 11–November 18, 2010. Photograph by Cathy Carver. Courtesy of the Drawing Center.

It's nice to hear that the organization is responding to the needs of artists. So many incredible contemporary artists have been introduced to the broader public by The Drawing Center. How does supporting emerging and under-recognized artists factor into the mission of the organization?

The Drawing Center, like Artists Space when it was founded in 1972, immediately started the Viewing Program, the slide registry, and the *Selections* shows. One of the things Martha recognized in the beginning was that artists who would show up unannounced at MoMA with their portfolios and try to meet a curator would probably be escorted out by security. The Viewing Program is a way for us to keep our ear to the ground and allow an intersection between our curatorial staff and artists. The Viewing Program curator has always been a practicing artist there to offer feedback to artists on an aesthetic level. Not necessarily about pricing work or what galleries to show at. It really makes us quite unique in the ecosystem of the non-profit world. The Drawing Center has always been more aligned with the artist's eye.

In the past there were a lot of alternative spaces that were giving studios to artists like MOMA PS1 in the early days. I think that in some ways The Drawing Center has always been really aligned with the artistic community. The Viewing Program has been a very important program for many artists, several hundred in fact. Terry Winters was in the first Viewing Program show in 1977. Glen Ligon had his first show in New York at The Drawing Center. The most famous example is probably Kara Walker's paper cut-outs in a 1994 *Selections* show. That was the first time that she showed the paper cutouts and her career ended up being catapulted into the stratosphere.

What's been interesting to me is that in the 90s during Annie Philbin's time as director here, a time when a lot of careers were launched, there was more of a lag time between graduating from school and getting a gallery. Today that lag time doesn't exist anymore so the *Selections* shows are less about tastemaking. Though there are many success stories of artists who have shown with us in the past five years, it's a little harder to find the next Kara Walker. Do you know what I mean? *(laughter)*. Our rules are that artists cannot be in school and they cannot be represented by a gallery in New York. Today there are students who are represented by galleries in New York before they even graduate.

That said, I think that the Viewing Program is still very relevant for curators gallerists and collectors. I know from personal experience when I was at MOMA PS1 as the deputy director and we did Greater New York 2005, several of the curators were looking at the Viewing Program pretty actively to source out younger artists or artists that didn't have gallery representation. I know that there are other curators, critics, and galleries that use that resource often for summer shows or when they want to introduce some new talent to their gallery or they are looking for someone who is dealing with a specific kind of drawing. And now that the Viewing Program is online, it's much more democratic in a way. It's also a much more international group of artists. It used to skew about 70% New York and now it skews about 50% New York, probably 20% National, and 30% International. And we now have about two thousand artists in the Viewing Program. Nina Katchadourian meets with approximately 150-200 artists a year for the one-on-one meetings.

It's a great support system, having that level of dialog when you are working on your own is so helpful.

I actually think it's the institution's direct interface with the artists that is the most important aspect of the Viewing Program. The exhibition opportunity is fantastic, and obviously very important. But there are so few opportunities for that kind of one-on-one critique of your work in an intelligent and high-level way. I get more letters from artists who meet with Nina about how incredible the meeting was, how it changed their aesthetic or the way that they looked at their work, than I do from anything else that we do. To me that really then becomes the primary aspect of what the Viewing Program does. The exposure, the shows, those are the dangling carrot at the end of the stick but what artists really appreciate is having that dialog.

Nina [Katchadourian] has an amazing perspective.

I think this also feeds into the Drawing Center's long history of championing the under-recognized, the invisible, and the forgotten. We're not an institution that is necessarily "trendy". We are at an arm's length from the art market. We may exhibit some blue chip artists and well known artists, but if we're going to do a Gerhard Richter show we're going to show work that no one has ever seen before.

Over the years the shows that have really moved people are shows like the Victor Hugo drawing exhibition in 1998. We all know Victor Hugo as a writer but no one knew him as an artist. Particularly during Annie Philbin's time there was a lot of mixture of outsider art like James Castle, or the *Plains Indian Ledger Drawings*, *Shaker Gift Drawings*. The *Ocean Flowers* show that Catharine De Zegher did was also quite influential and opened a dialog between early photography and image making and drawing. It is part of our approach, and that may come out of the Viewing Program idea, that our institution really is supporting artists and ideas that may not have other opportunities.

Intellectually, we like to be creative, and many times our shows are the first time a particular artist has shown in the United States, or the first time the work has ever been seen. Those are all qualifiers, it's a nice little niche for us to inhabit as more and more museums are moving into large scale entertainment shows. I understand why they have to do it, but we don't have those same kinds of pressures to contend with.

Moving on to The Drawing Center's community and educational outreach programs, I know the organization offers some innovative activities for students and families to encourage them to engage with drawing. Can you talk about that?

We have a fairly small-scale but very focused education program. It's a department of one and we serve about 1500 kids a year. We have a program called Drawing Connections where we send a practicing artist into one of four public schools that are geographically close to us. They come and see a show and develop a project based on their reaction to the work that they see. Then we give an exhibition to those students for about a week, usually in April. We really want to make drawing approachable for everyone. We use [John] Ruskin's philosophy about drawing as a way to interpret the world as the lynchpin for our educational programs.

Brett Littman photographed by Michael Halsband.

In terms of community outreach, I think the most innovative thing that we've done are *The Big Draw* and *DrawNow!* programs. *The Big Draw* was really set up as an extension of the UK based campaign for drawing, which was a month long drawing related event. We became, in a way, the US representative in this campaign for drawing. We did the River-to-River festival, which was a summer festival supported by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. We would do large scale drawing projects with artists for families or specifically for kids. On any given day we might reach about 4,000 people through those programs. More recently we've been trying to work with artists that might be outside the realm of visual art; dancers, architects, graphic designers, illustrators, who are using drawing in an effort to push drawing outside of the gallery and back into the world. So we might do a flash mob where we tell people to go to 23rd street and 10th avenue at 1pm and there will be a twenty minute drawing activity there. The programs can reach anywhere between five and five hundred people. It's a really interesting, very interactive way for us to get our message across.

I believe the future of drawing is looking at it in a cross-disciplinary way. Of course visual art always remains the core of what we do but in order to better understand what drawing means in the 21st century we have to look at all practitioners who draw. I see drawing in a lot of different areas, and I think we would be really be remiss if we didn't incorporate dancers and choreographers, architects, and filmmakers, and others who are thinking about drawing into the dialog. The *DrawNow!* programs are a way that we can do a lot more community outreach and engage with the public outside the gallery.

I'd like to talk about your background briefly. You have worked with many prominent art institutions. What did you do before working with The Drawing Center? What does your role as Executive Director involve?

My path is quite unusual. I went to Stuyvesant High School here in New York and was planning to be a doctor when I went to college. But when I went to college at UC San Diego, I did a total 180 degree turn and ended up studying philosophy and poetry. I did not get an advanced degree in Art History, but in the interim between college and coming back to New York I made films in San Antonio. I also worked at a place called The Esperanza Center, which was a peace and social justice center that had a visual arts component. Two anarchist Chicana lesbians ran the center. I ended up doing fundraising for them, and you can imagine how difficult that was in Texas in 1991. Through fundraising and development work I realized that since I always liked art and grew up around it, could write fairly well, was interested in disseminating ideas about aesthetics, I realized I could make a living in the administrative side of non-profit work.

So my non-profit career arc really starts from the admin side at Brooklyn Center, which is part of Brooklyn College. I worked there as a development associate from 1995-6. My career in the art world began at Urban Glass in 1996. Urban Glass was a big studio and glass blowing school located in downtown Brooklyn. I worked with John Perrault who was a well-known art critic who had gone into the curatorial world in his mid 40s. John and I ran Urban Glass for six years and we worked with people like Bob Rauschenberg and Kiki Smith. There were a lot of contemporary artists at that moment who were interested in glass and during that period of time I also started doing a lot of art criticism. I started writing about craft materials, particularly ceramics, sometimes fiber, mostly glass and industrial design. My role there was as deputy director.

In 2001 I became the co-director at Dieu-Donne Paper Mill, which is a papermaking facility that used to be located in SoHo. That was where I started to seriously interact with contemporary artists. We worked with Glen Ligon, we worked with William Kentridge, and we worked with Richard Tuttle. It was run like a small print shop, but it was a great way for me to really learn the ropes and have conversations with artists. Throughout those two jobs: Urban Glass and Dieu Donné, I ended up learning how to talk to and listen to artists. I would say that my whole career has been predicated on those discussions.

I then went to MOMA PS1 where I was deputy director from 2004-2007. At PS1 the situation was that I was in charge of everything but the curatorial department. I was told very clearly that I would not curate at PS1, which was fine. I was really running the whole admin, publishing, marketing, visitor services, making sure everything was working aspect of things. At the time we were doing about 55 shows a year, small and large scale. The quality of people I was meeting was incredible, from Harald Szeemann, the famous curator, to Wolfgang Tillmans to great and interesting younger artists. That was very formative for me.

When I became director of The Drawing Center in 2007, I became director of an institution that traditionally had hired directors who had more of a curatorial background than I did, but the institution was in the midst of a capital project. It was going to move to the Seaport and I was probably signed on to do more of that kind of work, which I did. Unfortunately we cancelled the Seaport project, but I began to curate at The Drawing Center and I continue to do that. I also continue to be an active art critic and writer and I try to fold all of those aspects together, and manage the institution on a day-to day level.

It's interesting that you have such a multi-faceted role within the organization. You mentioned the capital campaign and expansion project. Can you talk about that process? What can we look forward to seeing at The Drawing Center in the future?

We'll re-open on November 3rd with three different shows, which point to new directions for the institution. I'm curating a show called *Diarios* by Guillermo Kuitca, which consists of work made on a table in his studio to which he staples abandoned canvases. Over a six-month period he doodles and draws on the table, so it ends up reflecting a collapse of his aesthetic into the real world. Essentially he cancels out these paintings, which he kind of aborted. When I went to visit him in Buenos Aires he even took down my name and phone number, which will appear on one of the tables in the exhibition. The show will include works made between 2005-2011. Personally, I've been very interested in the more fluid movement between painting and drawing and the shows that I did with Leon Golub and Gerhard Richter also kind of explored that. The Kuitca show is the third show that I've done that explores that relationship where drawing is not subservient or secondary, but actually on an equal level to painting itself.

Claire Gilman, our curator, is curating a show of Jose Suárez Antonio Londoño, who is a very well known Columbian artist. Claire and I are finding through our travels that there is tremendous activity around drawing in various Latin American countries. Each country has its own reasons; it's not something that homogenous. But Londoño has been working on Notebooks or Daybooks. Every day he makes a drawing based on reading that he does. We'll be showing a big selection of his notebooks and some of them have been taken apart so we can show the individual pages as drawings on the wall. That will be in The Drawing Room.

In the basement we'll have a gallery called The Lab and we're going to be doing a show called *In Deed: Certificates of Authenticity in Art*. That show is curated by Susan Hapgood and Cornelia Lauf, and has been travelling. The exhibition is about the certificates of authenticity you get when you buy a piece of conceptual artwork, like a Sol LeWitt for example. We felt that the exhibition was really interesting because it hinges on drawings that are either made on the sheet, or the signature of the artist. So we are viewing writing as drawing as well in this show. It's a little bit of a conceptual show; I don't think that it veers too far from our mission. It will be the only opportunity to see this exhibition in the US, it's been traveling very extensively around the world.

Kuitca, Londoño, and *In Deed*, are all kind of dealing with similar issues although aesthetically each show is totally different from the next. I think it will be fascinating to see how people react.

After that, we will do a show with Alexandre Singh, and it will be the first time that a very young artist under 35 has had the Main Gallery. It will be a very complex installation along with some performances of a piece called *The Pledge*. Alex's work stems from interviews that he does with different cultural figures in different kinds of disciplines. He makes almost flowchart-like drawings by Xeroxing and scanning drawings from which he makes layered collages. He then prints and ties them together with lines drawn on the wall. It looks a little like an IT flow chart. He also often animates those installations with some kind of performance in the gallery.

Guillermo Kuitca, "Diario" (25 May – 20 October 2005). Mixed media on paper. 47 1/4 inches diameter x 1 5/8 inches deep (120 x 4.1 cm). Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

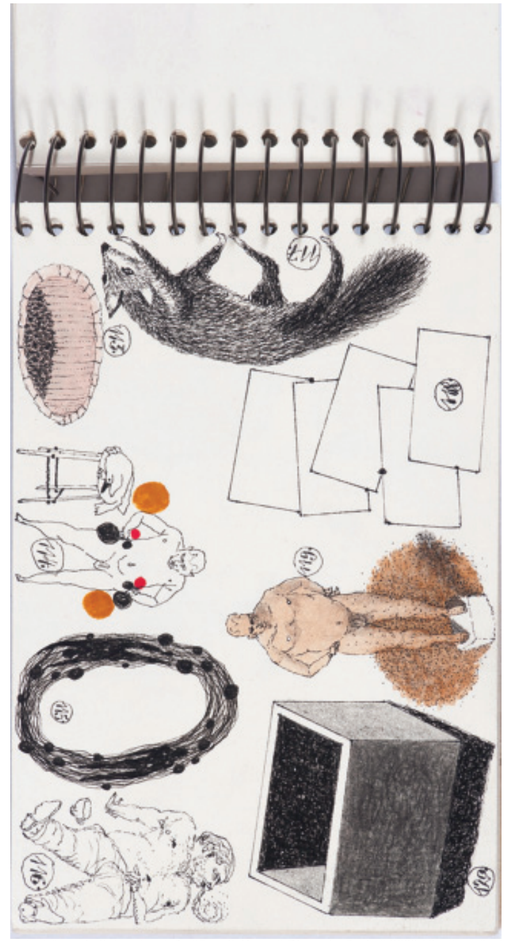
Guillermo Kuitca, "Diario" (25 May – 20 October 2005). Mixed media on paper. 47 1/4 inches diameter x 1 5/8 inches deep (120 x 4.1 cm). Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

We are also going to show the work of Ignacio Uriarte, a young artist from Spain who lives in Berlin. He works with drawing and typewriters. We've been following his work and Joanna Kleinberg is curating that.

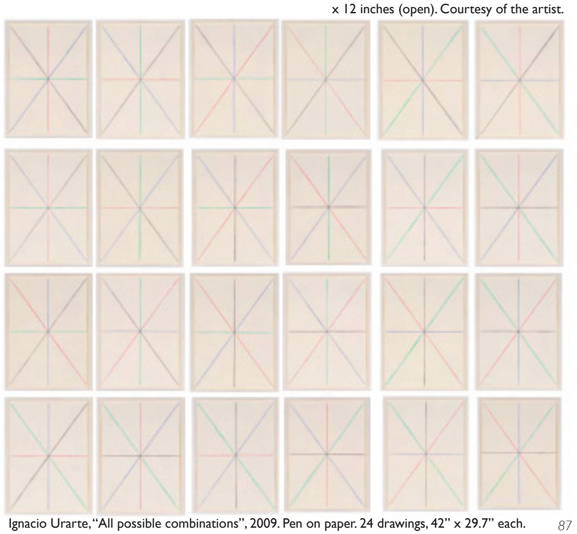
And beyond that, we're going to continue to look at a variety of disciplines. I'm working on a show with a very famous chef from Spain of drawings of food. We're looking at doing a show with Tomi Ungerer, the very well known European children's illustrator who has made a whole body of work- thousands of drawings- that are propaganda and erotic drawings. It will be the first time we are really devoting the gallery to an illustrator. We're looking at some other projects that may include an artist whose done some animation for a major film that's coming out, looking at the intersection between drawing and new media. It's going to be a varied and I hope prismatic way of looking at drawing.

Sounds like a wonderful lineup. Thank you so much for your time.

Not at all. It's my pleasure.



José Antonio Suárez Londoño, "Evan S. Connell Diary of a Rapist", 2000 Mixed media. 4 x 12 inches (open). Courtesy of the artist.



Ignacio Uriarte, "All possible combinations", 2009. Pen on paper. 24 drawings, 42" x 29.7" each.

NAYLAND BLAKE

Interviewed by BETTIE-SUE HERTZ

Nayland Blake photographed by Bettie-Sue Hertz.

"...What happened to the Sexual Revolution, and what happened to the artistic revolution that paralleled it in the '60s, and the '70s when there was a belief that people could - by transforming their bodily experience, by transforming the way they were with each other physically and sexually - transform their consciousness, and thus transform the society."

We're so excited about your show, FREE!LOVE!TOOL!BOX! we're mounting at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and it's been really amazing to hear people's responses when I tell them that you're going to presenting new work in the Bay Area. I'm learning that people remember you, and not only that they remember you, but they're incredibly curious about what you're up to. You really do have what they call, a long tail. You still have a presence here, even though you haven't lived in San Francisco for over 15 years.

So looking back, how would you describe your years in San Francisco? I understand you were here from 1984 to 1996. How did the region affect your development as an artist, as well as your practices, concerns and the relationship between your art and what was going on in the community? Also, can you talk about the current research that you're doing about earlier periods of gay and kink culture in the Bay Area?

I moved up to San Francisco in '84 right out of grad school. And I did that for a couple of reasons. When I finished up at Cal Arts everybody in my class was either staying in Los Angeles or moving to New York. And I felt like I already knew about New York, as that's where I'm from. And I don't drive so staying in Los Angeles was not an option! I had to find an American city that had a reasonable transportation system.

San Francisco was high on the list, but also it was and is the queer capital. Above and beyond that, there's a very special spirit there, in that it's an incredibly accepting place. I knew that getting out of grad school, the pressures of the New York art world were really going to be overwhelming for me and my work.

I felt like I needed some time to be able to understand what was really important to me and not be overwhelmed by other people's issues. So those were the two things that went into the initial decision, but there were a lot of other reasons why I ended up staying. One of them was that San Francisco was one of the last cities in the U.S. to retain a really vital artist-run art scene, and when I moved to the city the scene was mostly centered around these nonprofit art spaces. Then quite quickly after that there was an upsurge of people starting little galleries in a kind of entrepreneurial way. So not everybody was necessarily going the nonprofit route.

There was easy communication back and forth between those worlds; they were not adversarial. So there were lots of opportunities to show, and people who were my roommates were starting galleries, and it was very easy to make friends and be around that.

One of the things that was interesting though was that there was a pretty sharp division between the gay community and the art world. One of the quirky things about San Francisco is that it has all of these subcultures, but they don't necessarily communicate much with each other.

The same things that made the San Francisco Bay Area an important place for nonprofit art made it an important place for queer culture, which is that there was a lot of urban space that people weren't necessarily caring about. When I moved there it was a very forgiving place economically. It was easy to live with roommates and live very cheaply. There was real mutual support, there was a kind of freedom for people to reinvent themselves and an economy that allowed them to have a really marginal life and yet still survive, those were things that were incredibly important.

So this new show is a kind of looking back at how that experience fit into the larger arc of San Francisco as an urban environment, and also the U.S. since—this is perhaps a tangent, but not—the show is asking: What happened to the Sexual Revolution, and what happened to the artistic revolution that paralleled it? In the '60s and the '70s when there was a belief that people could—by transforming their bodily experience, by transforming the way they were with each other physically and sexually—transform their consciousness, and thus transform the society.

The performance art scene was also exploring bodies and people's physical activities in a parallel world to what was going on in the back rooms of leather bars and swinger parties. There was an acceptance of the idea that this one attempt to change the way you were physically and sexually could have a positive impact on freedoms in society in general. I've always had a foot in each of those worlds. My work is about trying to get those worlds to talk to each other again. So that's the free love part of FREE!LOVE!TOOL!BOX!

Do you want to talk about the Tool Box part too?

Well the Tool Box part is two-fold. It's the name of San Francisco's first leather bar, which was located in very close proximity to YBCA, it was on 4th and Harrison. Also, the toolbox are the activities, the things that I'm making and the things I'll be asking other people to do with me as ways—as tools—to think about this moment of free love. What can we learn from that moment of being in communion with each other, and what might that mean going forward; can we get back to that way of being together.

Can you talk a little bit more about these parallels, because I think that is central to the way we can best understand the motivation behind the project. What is an early example of this communion? I think of someone like Ron Athey as being somewhat later, but who are you thinking of from before the 1980s?

Earlier for me would be somebody like Jack Smith or the Cockettes, and the radical possibilities of playing dress-up and throwing a big party. When they think about drag a lot of people tend to think about it in terms of cross-dressing, but San Francisco was also the epicenter of genderfuck drag, in some ways the place where that was invented. My show is also about this aspect of queer cultural and behavioral history.

I think the moment we're in now is this moment where gender is being investigated and excavated anew by a host of performers and thinkers. What are the radical possibilities of a bar? What are the radical possibilities of a pageant? What are the radical possibilities of "show-and-tell"? How do we share and exchange our experiences with other people?

I thought we could talk about another aspect of your work, which connects to what you're saying, but on the artistic side. Your work has a spontaneous formal quality, and it also relies on autobiographical symbolic elements, such as recognized references like Brer Rabbit. Can you give an example of an artwork of yours that's been particularly important to you as a kind of watershed moment, representative of this bifocal interest between formal and conceptual concerns in terms of the materiality of things and over-laden symbolism?

A really important show for me was in 1999 and it had a piece called *Feeder Two* in it, and a videotape called *Gorge*. *Feeder Two* is a 7 foot by 7 foot by 10 foot gingerbread house. Making the gingerbread house was like, okay, here's this symbol, here's this thing that kids have in their head, from the story of Hansel and Gretel, and let's see what happens if we take this idea and make it literal. Here's a house made out of gingerbread that you can get inside of.

Gorge is a videotape where I'm being fed for an hour. I went on to stage *Gorge* as a performance—I've done it several times, most recently in 2010—where I'm seated in front of a selection of foods, and people from the audience feed me over the course of an hour and I'll eat whatever they give me. One of the things that happens with *Gorge* is that it becomes less about me eating, and more about how people in the audience decide to perform the feeding. It's a piece that connects back to Yoko Ono's 1964 performance *Cut Piece* where you become the forum for the audience's chain of association and their actions. In essence you're bottoming to them, but it becomes very clear that what one might think about that act shifts over the course of the hour that it's happening.

I guess I would call that a watershed moment because I realized that I don't have to build all these symbols into the work to be like, "Look, this represents me and what I'm thinking about." If I set up the right conditions, all of those ideas would be in play as people—if I could get people to a thoughtful enough state then all of that stuff would happen.

And that's where I think the work has gone subsequently. It's interesting to me that there are performative gestures that in the art world are called "actions" or "interventions", that are

Untitled (chandelier), 2012
10 utility lights with commercial plastic bags (blue, black, white), 3 "DUST" flags, 1 rubber mask, ribbon (green), paper chains, zip ties, stool, crushed red water bottle. Courtesy YBCA.

exactly the same thing as what's happening in the kink world without the hoity-toity language. Also, what the art world can really learn from the kink world is that there is no audience that isn't also an actor. This goes back to very early ideas in performance, such as the Living Theater and other attempts to radicalize the theatrical experience in the postwar era, practices that questioned what it means for someone to just sit there and absorb an experience.

What is interesting about the kink world is that in order to participate, I mean, in order to view, you pay with your participation. That is a powerful antidote to what I gets called "situational aesthetics," right? Which is, let's take a really mundane activity and wrap it in such a way that everybody can stand back from it and think they're having an aesthetic experience.

That's a very good example. Can you talk a little bit about how this perspective you have is going to be present in the exhibition? How are you going to integrate performance and participation, the "show-and-tell" idea, and even pedagogy into the work? Tell us a little about what you hope will happen and what you want to achieve through those kinds of activities?
Sure. I guess I'll go to the pedagogy point to start with. The place I start from is that I don't know all the answers. The events in the show are about asking people to come in. It's like, "Welcome into this space and let's discover together what is going to happen."

So my hope is that as I talk to people about the Tool Box, as I talk to people about the early years of the queer community in San Francisco, some of the folks who built that community including those involved in the leather scene are still around, so I'm asking them to come into the galleries to talk about that time. I'm asking everyone who comes to our programs to bring an object with them to either present and discuss in a "show and tell" format, or to donate to the exhibition where it will become a component of an artwork. Instead of having a kind of unbalanced authority of the artist, I'm creating a space where people can contribute something that they're excited about.

That's one of the reasons why I wanted to include my 2002 work, *Ruins of a Sensibility* in the show. It includes my record collection and a turntable, and it's available for the public to DJ, where you get to tell your story through my records. And it's about the fact that, I grew up in a period when your record collection in some ways represented you, it was like a badge of pride, but at the same time they're these mass produced things. It's interesting to me how we forge identities out of our collections. And I think it's not just enough to stick them on the wall and look at them. What happens when we activate them? What happens when I can hand the stuff that's important to me to you, and have you make something new with it?

When I use the term Queering culture, it's about adding a swerve into it. Adding the unexpected into it. Bending it, adding surprise. So that's why I'm inviting people into the space while I'm making the show instead of the typical big reveal, and all you can do as a viewer is stand there and look at what I, the artist, did. We've planned some events in early October and late November where your attendance will have an impact on what the show looks like, what's actually there in the space. When I come back to San Francisco from New York, where I live, midway through the exhibition and reconfigure the display of objects, it's because I believe that there is more than one option for how the works can be arranged, that it can be changed around, that we can look at it in a different way.

So there's definitely this interest in mutability in all aspects of what you're talking about, and certainly I think that it's a very queer way of thinking about the exhibition. We're going to find a lot of inversions and surprises through unexpected relations between the exhibition and the audience and objects and individuals, whether it's a sculpture or presentation or a video production studio. We're really excited about that. When I came in this afternoon you showed me an issue of Life magazine from 1964, and maybe that's the beginning, but it could also serve as an ending to our conversation as well because it's such a powerful object. You were telling me that the feature article on gay culture in it was the first time that homosexuality was presented in a mainstream publication. Not surprising that it featured the Tool Box.
I'm pairing it with the 1981 "Polysexuality" issue of *Semiotexte* magazine, which, for me, personally, was the first time that I saw sexuality exploded into so many different categories. It felt right to me. And the fact that it's an anthology, I mean, I think that's—I've never thought about it before, but yes, if I had to describe my sexuality, it's an anthology!

The sort of talismanic importance of that book and what it meant to me to read it is very similar to how important that issue of *Life* was to a generation of gay men who saw it, saw the Tool Box represented in it and got the idea, "Oh, I can go there. I can leave whatever town I'm in—"

It's like the article was saying, "San Francisco is a safe place for me to express who I really am."
And that's amazing, right? Because *Life* did go everywhere. Imagine being in a barbershop in Dubuque in 1964 and here was this thing. And it's not like the article is approving at all, it's actually talking about the problems of gay life, but it is—

It recognizes that it exists.
It is the first mass media depiction of leather men in pretty much anywhere I think.

Can you speak about the San Francisco and New York performance and queer culture scenes?
The thing about the show is that it's also trying to talk about the fact that both of these communities—fringe artistic communities and these less mainstream sexual communities—need access to cheap space in order to thrive. They involve a lifestyle exploration that needs to occur in a physical space, in particular kinds of physical space and the people who engage in it generally don't have a lot of capital. They're not financially rewarding pursuits. Right now New York is suffering from a really severe space shortage and there are people who are trying to work around that by creating migratory spaces where instead of having a location like an artist run nonprofit that has a specific home, they're moving around to different places. The same thing is happening in the kink scene, where instead of having a clubhouse or a particular dungeon, there are groups of people hosting events that move around to different places. People are using online resources to provide the connective tissue that a shared physical location used to provide. It's the same in the Bay Area, as it is in New York. The problem is that it becomes kind of self-selecting. If you don't have pre-existing connections to the scene it's hard to stumble into these locations. One of the things that's really powerful in thinking about the Tool Box, which was a sort of the generator for all this, is that once it was shown in a national magazine hundreds of people had a place that they could locate, had a place that they could go instead of just hoping that they would find out about the next party.

If you think back to the performance situation, it's places like Judson Church in New York or Kiki Gallery in San Francisco, artist-run nonprofits, that provide a place where you could stop in and still see something interesting; even if you didn't know the people who were doing something there. That's the power of fixed locations and that's the danger in them slipping away.

Is there anything else you want to add?
No, it's super fun to be working on the show and I was on the advisory board at YBCA when it was founded so it's totally thrilling to be doing this—it represents a real homecoming to me and I'm really excited about the show.

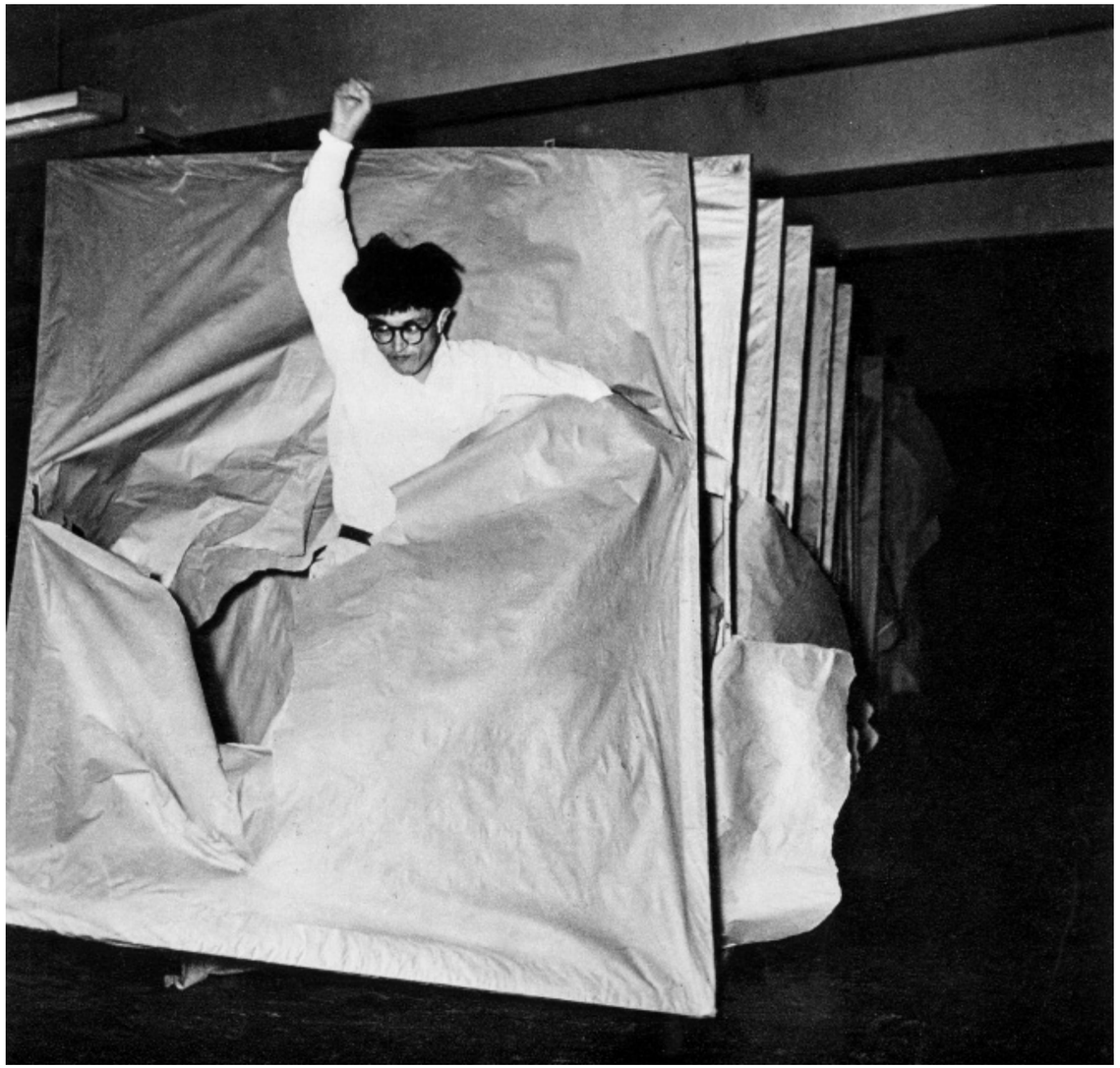
FREE!LOVE!TOOL!BOX! is organized by Betti-Sue Hertz, Director of Visual Arts, YBCA, and is on view at YBCA from Oct. 12, 2012-January 27, 2013. This interview took place at Nayland Blake's studio in New York on August 23, 2012.

Ruins of a Sensibility, 1972-2002 (with thanks to Lynne Tillman). Records, electrical equipment, plywood. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

Installation view, FREE!LOVE!TOOL!BOX!, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, October 12, 2012-January 27, 2013. Courtesy YBCA.

WHY GUTAI ?

By JOHN HELD, JR.



Saburo Murakami. "At One Moment Opening Six Holes" at "1st Gutai Art Exhibition," Tokyo, 1955. Photo courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

Why Gutai? Because it's probably the most interesting art movement you've never heard of. This is more often than not the fate of the avant-garde - to languish in obscurity until "re-discovered" decades after their first appearance.

Such was the fate of Dada, which fell into relative obscurity from the 1920s to the 1950s, before painter Robert Motherwell resuscitated the movement through his 1951 book, *The Dada Painters and Poets,* bringing the movement (and Duchamp) to the attention of a new generation. Dada's resurfacing spurred a host of "neo-dada" movements, among them Fluxus, which itself languished for want of wider cultural recognition for thirty years before becoming the subject of a major museum retrospective, which generated reviews and wider recognition throughout the artistic community.

Gutai (rhymes with why) was an association of seventeen original member artists from the Osaka area, one thousand miles south of Tokyo, formed in 1954 by Jiro Yoshihara, whose primary directive to the membership was, "Do something no one's ever done before." In the summer of 2012, the National Art Center in Tokyo exhibited "Gutai: Spirit of an Era," the first major retrospective examination of the movement in the nation's capitol. In 2013, almost sixty years after they formed, the group will have it's first American museum retrospective, "Gutai: Splendid Playground," at the Guggenheim Museum.

Last year, co-curator of the Guggenheim exhibit, Canadian professor Ming Tiampo, published the first English language narrative on the subject, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism*, in which the author not only details the group's activities over an eighteen year period (1954-1972) but finds the neglect of the group in the Modernist canon a biased oversight based on cultural mercantilism.[1]

Other books on the subject (see my annotated bibliography on SFAQ ONLINE) have opened previous unknown paths of investigation leading to the conclusion of an increasing number of post-war Japanese art historians that Gutai activity in the mid-1950s presaged a host of artistic activities in the decade following and their later works have still not received the rightful appreciation they deserve.

As the impact of these new discoveries on English language readers is just now being felt, I am finally able to answer many questions that have haunted me over many years. What questions? Why Gutai? Because in the early 1980s, as an active participant in the international Mail Art movement, I came into contact with a Japanese correspondent from Nishinomiya, Japan, who came to play an increasing important role in my life.

Shozo Shimomoto was one of the more active figures in Mail Art by the time we began corresponding. Following the 1972 demise of Gutai, of which he was a founding member, Shimamoto formed an art association, AU (Artists Union and/or Art Unidentified), composed of some thirty members, including former members of Gutai, Subaro Marakami and Yasuo Sumi. Following the precedent of Gutai, the new association began publishing a newsletter in 1977 bringing their activities to a wider audience.

When Texan Byron Black, who had resided at Western Front in Vancouver, Canada, a hotbed of Mail Art activity during the 1970s, moved to Osaka to teach English in 1981, he met and befriended Shimamoto, informing him of the Mail Art network, which the Japanese artist immediately began participating in.[2]

This lead to our first meeting in 1986, when Shimamoto visited Dallas, where I was then residing, to perform a celebratory action on the occasion of Marcel Duchamp's centenary. Two years later, I traveled to Shozo's hometown of Nishinomiya, a wealthy suburb northeast of Osaka, to join Mail Artists from four countries in a series of "Shadow Performances" commemorating the devastation of lives during the Hiroshima bombing. In 1993, I returned to Japan to participate in a series of performances with Shimamoto and Byron Black. Did I know about Shozo's involvement in Gutai? Yes. Did I understand the importance and implications of his participation? No.

Gutai was formed in 1954 by Jiro Yoshihara, who was born into a wealthy family of manufactures that produced one of Japan's most popular salad oil dressings. His family obligations precluded him from the art education he desired to receive in Paris, yet he was kept informed of advances in modern art by subscriptions to leading Western art journals and the building of an impressive art library that has been preserved and cataloged.[3]

Born in 1905, he was too young to participate in the first wave of Modernism, but although isolated in provincial Japan, he became acquainted with a local painter, Jiro Kamiyama, who had been in Paris from 1922 to 1924, and again from 1925 to 1927. It was he who first encouraged Yoshihara to pursue his own path in art, advising him that, "originality and personality are the most important things."[4]

Despite his having to attend a school of commerce in Kobe, Yoshihara joined a painting group and exhibited Modernist inspired works influenced by Cezanne. In 1934, he met one of the most celebrated Japanese painters in Paris, Leonard Foujita, a friend of the Surrealists. Seeking criticism, Yoshihara presented his paintings to the elder artist, who rebuked them for being derivative.

"As the story goes, after this experience a devastated Yoshihara vowed never to copy anyone. Although perhaps not always successful at defining a truly original voice in his own work, Yoshihara made this a central tenet of his artistic practice and passed it on as his most enduring legacy to the members of the Gutai group."[5]

Yoshihara's striving for originality, which became the overriding Gutai directive, went beyond the creation of works of significant contemporary art. He was also concerned with the transformation of the Japanese psyche from wartime regimentation to independence of thought, a rupture with the past leading to reentry with the world. He himself had sat out the war in retreat, excused from military service because of tuberculosis. Before the war, advanced Japanese artists, especially those following trends in Western Art, such as Surrealism, were imprisoned, much as the Nazi regime derided European Modernism with their "Degenerate Art" exhibition.

Yoshihara became especially excited about the possibilities of a new art, when in 1947, *Life* magazine published the famous article on Jackson Pollock, proposing the self fulfilling prophecy, " Is He the Most Famous Artist in America." Yoshihara saw parallels between Pollock's "action paining" with historic Japanese calligraphy, where strokes and splotches evoked the active collaboration of artist and material. He was nearly fifty at this time, painting in an abstract style, after a period of Surrealism.

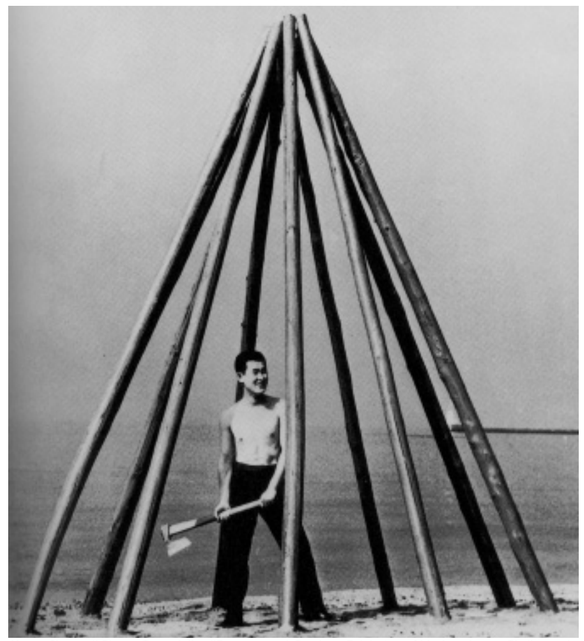
Shozo Shimamoto, who met Yoshihara in 1947 when he was nineteen years old, became an important link between Yoshihara and artists of a new generation. In retrospective reverie, Shimamoto encapsulates the shifting psyche between war and peace in defeated Japan.

"During the war, for us freedom did not exist. In the post-war period we were made free and at the beginning we were a little lost, but we understood the wonder of freedom above all else. Life was full of problems, but freedom is the key to happiness. To be able to express freedom through the world of art has been a great joy."[6]

Tsuruko Yamazaki, who was taking art lessons from Yoshihara, introduced her friend Shimamoto to her teacher.

"Though president of a fairly large company, Yoshihara found himself in need of a part-time job when the yen was frozen at the end of the war….She [Yamazaki] was a beautiful woman who liked to shave off her eyebrows and had a unique way of making up. She covered her nipples with plaster and wore a transparent shirt. She preferred colors that other artists rejected as being too frivolous. She was extremely faithful to the spirit of Gutai."[7]

After being introduced to Yoshihara, Shimamoto was the only artist to visit the future leader of Gutai on a regular basis. I quote him at length to give some indication of the manner in which Yoshihara imparted his beliefs to the younger generation, and the importance of the term "hattari," which allowed future Gutai artists to think outside the self-imposed box other Japanese artists placed themselves in. In English, we might translate it's meaning as *hubris*.



Kazuo Shiraga. " Please Come In" at "Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Burning Sun. 1955. Photo courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

[Left to Right] The Inokuma Genichiros, Matsumi Kanemitsu, Martha Jackson, Michel Tapié, Jiro Yoshihara, unidentified, unidentified, and Paul Jenkins. Opening of the "6th Gutai Art Exhibition at Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, September 1958. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth

"For some time after a woman artist in Kobe first introduced me to Jiro Yoshihara, I was the only one to regularly visit him and have him comment on my work. Seeing postwar Japanese eagerly following in the footsteps of American and Europeans in every aspect of life, Jiro Yoshihara and I promised each other never to join them."

"Jiro Yoshihara, who was a devoted practitioner of modern art from prewar times, did not lose confidence in it even under the American occupation, when Japan was in a state of confusion, economically and in many other ways. He was sure that producing works of modern art, more than anything else, was the best way to come up to the artistic level of the victor nations. I became a great admirer of Yoshihara, who inspired me with his pioneer spirit."

"Jiro Yoshihara, as my teacher, either said, 'that's new,' or 'that's no good' when commenting on my work. By saying 'new' he implied his sympathy with it based on his own experiences and beliefs. He said 'no good' without hesitation to anything that displayed even a hint of imitation. I have rarely been awarded any other words of appreciation for all my hard work."

"He hammered the 'spirit of hattari' into me. Hattari is an Osaka slang word that refers to a person who tries to appear more able or powerful than he actually is, or who does things by guesswork. This slang term was originally used in a negative way and the word itself lacks dignity, but Yoshihara favored it, seeing in it a good meaning. He taught me to acquire and make use of the spirit of hattari."

"It is very difficult now for us to find a new path and keep pace with other countries in the field of art. Hattari, though originally a word looked down on, is the only way that helps us to do it. The spirit is not only the greatest asset Yoshihara left me, but it also led the fine arts in Osaka away from the confusion of postwar times."[8]

Yoshihara was active within the art scene in the Kansai district, and began serving on the judging committee of the Ashiya City Exhibition in 1948, under the sponsorship of the Ashiya City Art Association and the City of Ashiya. Yoshihara was the judge in charge of the Western painting section. This annual exhibition was an important outlet for young area artists to show their work. It was also an important means for Yoshihara to survey the area's artistic talent. After Gutai was formed in 1954, the exhibition served as recruitment for Gutai artists. The exhibition continues to exist and is now administered by the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, one of the most important repositories of Gutai history.

Another vehicle of recruitment was the Contemporary Art Panel, more commonly referred to as Genbi. The association was the idea of the art correspondent for the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper, Kan Muramatsu, who was instrumental in introducing avant-garde trends to the Kansai area. Maramatsu selected leaders of regional art associations for monthly meetings and the organization of an annual exhibition.

The unusual thing about Genbi was the cross fertilization of various artistic disciplines within the association, including calligraphy, ceramics, photography, flower arrangement, as well as painting. But the group had limitations as well. Yoshihara found most members too conservative. However, the group's exhibitions attracted interesting young artists, and it was from here that future Gutai artists were first discovered.

The Gutai Art Association (Gutai Bijutsu Kyokai) was formed in 1954 with seventeen members. Six members stayed involved in Gutai until it disbanded upon the death of Yoshihara in 1972. Eight members left before one year. Their reasons for leaving varied but were often grounded in disagreements with Yoshihara.[9]

One year after it's formation, several key members were introduced to Gutai by Shozo Shimamoto after the dissolution of the *Zero-kai* group, which included Kazuo Shiraga, Saburo Murakami, Akira Kanayama and Tanaka Atsuko, all providing key moments in Gutai history. Another original member of the group was the son of Jiro Yoshihara, Michio Yoshihara, who was twenty-one years old at the time.

Yoshihara's early student Shozo Shimamoto was often called upon to diffuse tensions that arose within the group, due to Yoshihara's strong personality. Gutai was no social club, rather a tough-minded approach to conceptualizing and producing works of modern art under the stern tutelage of Jiro Yoshihara. "One of the secrets of this group," Shimamoto wrote,

"was its strict rule against imitation. My responsibility in the group, along with recruiting young and promising artists, was to persuade those who felt the policy too strict to remain with us. Yoshihara, as might be expected of a president of a large company, took a broad view, not caring about small successes or failures. However, the atmosphere of the group was too serious to let young people feel at ease, and, for example, go out drinking together…"

"He stubbornly opposed casual, frivolous ideas especially anything even vaguely literary. Most of the ideas we suggested, which have by now actually been realized by others, were discarded…At the same time he wanted us to free our minds from conventional frameworks. I advised and encouraged members in that direction, Yoshihara, in turn, showed no mercy in criticizing our creations…Jiro Yoshihara not only inspired young artists, but was also very strict about making them finish their works.[10]

Heavy-handed, as were other leaders of avant-garde art movements (Breton/Surrealism, Maciunas/Fluxus), Yoshihara had many attributes that contributed to the success of Gutai. He had knowledge of the international artworld and wanted to partake and excel in it. He was an outstanding exhibition organizer, taking full responsibility for the selection of work and securing innovative exhibition venues for the group, and he had the firm financial footing to make it work.

Although there is no official documentation on the exact starting point of Gutai, a diary recollection by one of the artists marks the beginning of Gutai to August 1954. Seventeen members made up the initial group, including Shozo Shimamoto and Tsuruko Yamazaki, who had been Yoshihara students since 1947. Yoshihara asked the members for suggestions to name the group, and he selected the name "Gutai, " meaning "concrete" or "embodiment," proposed by Shozo Shimamoto. "…I proposed to call our group 'Gutai'. We did not want so show our feeling indirectly or abstractly."[11]

Attempting to break with standard notions of painting, Yoshihara encouraged working with new materials.

"This necessitated experimenting with 'concrete' materials and techniques – not the materials of high art but rather the stuff of everyday life: Gutai artists used old newspapers, sheet metal, masking tape, synthetic fabrics, wood, inner tubing, light bulbs, plastic sheeting, water, mud, sand, light, smoke, and other unorthodox materials. Even when they used paint, their techniques were irreverent: they applied paint using their feet, automatic toy cars, or glass bottles that shattered burst of color onto the canvas."[12]

With his long-held habit of subscription to foreign art journals to keep abreast of current developments in the art world, it is little wonder that Yoshihara's first directive to the group was the production of a magazine announcing the group's existence. The first issue of *Gutai* was published in January 1955. A printing press was purchased from Yozo Ukita, the editor of *Kirin* magazine for children. Many of the Gutai artists first published in this journal.

Dated January 1, 1955, the first issue of *Gutai* was produced at the home of Shozo Shimamoto, credited as the editor, in Koshienguchi, Nishinomiya. A print run of 500 copies has been noted, although other sources list the number of copies at 300. Yoshihara was given the title of "compileder" (sic). Members worked on the production from printing to binding. Seventeen artists had their work reproduced in the issue, and they are credited with being the founding members of Gutai. Member's names were printed in English along with their works, which were selected, or "compiled," by Yoshihara.

In the English language text included in the issue, Yoshihara, lamented the "amateur techniques" employed in this first issue, which caused "not a skilful (sic) and beautiful printing." Despite the lack of professional production, the magazine gave the members "the chance to call oversea people's deep impression through their works."[13]

Encouraging feedback from foreign readers, Yoshihara explained their reasons for publishing.

"The most important thing to us is that the present art is the most free position for these who are living in this severe time, and they are deeply believing that the creation of the free position is utility for people's development. We earnestly wish to indicate the certification concretely that ou[r] spirits are free, and searching for fresh impression in every creation to the end. I should be much delighted to hear your thoughts and comments together with the photo of their works."[14]

After the publication of the first issue, several members of the group drifted away, buffeted by the strong opinions of Yoshihara. Fortunately, others arrived to take their place, including members of the *Zero-kai* art association. They, along with another newcomer, Yasuo Sumi, who was brought into Gutai by Shozo Shimamoto, participated in the first Gutai exhibition, "Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Burning Sun," cited as one of the pathbreaking exhibitions of the last century in the book, *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century,* by Bruce Altshuler.[15]

"In rethinking the venues for the exhibition of art, "Midsummer Sun" stands as an important predecessor of environmental site-specific works situated within a social setting, which took the display of art outside the "white cube" and centered it in the midst of people's lives."

While attending the judging of the local Ashiya City Exhibition in June, 1955, Yoshihara noticed that rejected entries were being escorted to the plaza outside the museum and quickly came up with an idea to exhibit among the pine trees nearby. Although organized by the Ashiya City Art Association, of the forty artists who exhibited works, more than half were members of Gutai. The July, 1955 exhibition attracted new members to Gutai, including Yozo Ukita, Fujiko Shiraga and Sadamasa Montonaga, who were to remain with the group through its transitional stages.[16]

A Gutai hallmark, and one of Yoshihara's greatest innovations, was the setting of art exhibitions in unusual places –public parks, war ravaged environments, the sky, the stage, which forced the artists to come up with new ways of thinking about the presentation of work under challenging conditions. Exposed to the elements, artworks presented in the "Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Burning Sun," had to adapt to their environment. The mediums employed had to be capable of withstanding unpredictable conditions (chance) during the duration of the exhibition (time), while competing with the vast scale of the venue (space). Timeless artistic concerns still being explored.

Yoshihara directive to challenge existing mediums of art and investigating the potential of unfamiliar ones in "Midsummer Sun," extended to challenging the artists as well. Fujiko Shiraga, relates her experiences when first confronting the pine trees of Ashiya.

"When I brought the finished work to the exhibition site, I was shocked and dumbfounded, feeling as if I had been hit on the head so hard that I almost fainted. How insignificant my work seemed. How obviously intentional it appeared to be. It radiated power that was neither limitless nor massive."[17]

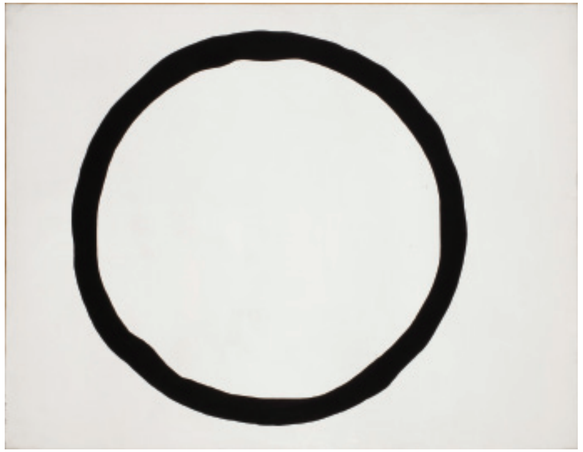
Despite her misapprehensions, her work, "White Plank," a plywood board with a gash configured in the center, was in keeping with Gutai, playing with the shifting shadows of the Midsummer Sun. Sadamasa Montonaga, selected a spot beside a river that ran through the park, hanging bags of colored water from the trees, which reflected upon their surroundings. Jiro Yoshihara's contribution to the show was, "Light Art," which guided evening visitors through the exhibition. His use of light influenced later works by other members, most notably Montonaga and AtsukoTanaka.

In rethinking the venues for the exhibition of art, "Midsummer Sun" stands as an important predecessor of environmental site-specific works situated within a social setting, which took the display of art outside the "white cube" and centered it in the midst of people's lives. Today's "art as social practice" ethos owes a debt to early Gutai interaction with the spectator.

Writing in the third issue of the *Gutai* journal, Shimamoto argued for greater involvement with the public, calling for "collective efforts" that "destroy the values established by the art elite." He goes on to say in his essay, "The Mambo and Painting," that

"Everyone has the potential of fine artistic inspiration…What I consider avant-garde is the involvement of ordinary people in the production of a work of art. I believe that painting can become modern exclusively through the collapse of privileged painters."[18]

This was put into practice in the Gutai Association's next outdoor exhibition, "The Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition of 1956." Jiro Yoshihara's work for the exhibition, "Please Draw Freely," was a "concrete" manifestation of Shimamoto's desire to engage and collaborate with the public. A 7' x 15' wooden board was erected and paint and markers provided for the public, especially children, to express themselves among the Ashiya pines.



Jiro Yoshihara, "Work", 1967. Oil on canvas. 90.9 x 115.5 cm / 35 3/4 x 45 1/2 in © Shinichiro Yoshihara
Courtesy Hauser & Wirth Photograph by Antonio Maniscalco

Jiro Yoshihara, "Work", 1965. Oil on canvas. 182 x 227 cm / 71 5/8 x 89 3/8 in © Shinichiro Yoshihara
Private Collection. Photograph Hidoto Nagatsuka.

In their search for originality and unfettered expression, the Gutai group often collaborated with children, whose artistic filters were unclogged. "Gutai artists did not think of children's art as outsider art but treated it with consideration that they gave their own work, writing about it seriously, publishing and exhibiting it, even profiling individual children."[19]

Other artworks in the exhibition openly encouraged public participation and collaborative creativity. Akira Kanayama's, "Footprints," lead the public through a tour of the exhibition by means of shoe prints painted on tarpaulin. Tsuruko Yamazaki's, "Red Cube," a large fabric structure lit at night creating a Balinese shadow puppet theater effect when viewed from the exterior, illuminated the shifting human interaction within. Shimamoto contributed, "Please Walk on Here," a ten-foot wooden frame supporting uneven steps that tumbled those following the title's instruction.

Other works dealt with light in keeping with the open availability of the twenty-four hour venue. Atsuko Tanaka presented a series of seven large- scale human figures draped in fabric, sequentially blinking lights within, prefiguring later celebrated creations. Sadamasa Montonaga's experiments with colored water continued with the stretching of long polyethylene tubes between trees.

Suburo Murakami used the sky in his, "Work (Sky)," a picture frame hanging from a tree through one could look upon a landscape, anticipating later artists such as Yoko Ono, Yves Klein and James Turrell, who created frames for viewers to meditate upon the nothing and everything of reality.[20]

"The Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition of 1956" also featured an enormous ten by four meter red vinyl sheet, which became the target of a Shozo Shimamoto home built cannon of ignited acetylene gas spraying various colored pigment through a steel pipe. This action, repeated many times over many decades by various devices (including thrown glass jars filled with colored pigments), has become a hallmark of Shimamoto's oeuvre and that of Gutai's. It perfectly illuminates Gutai credo in the banishment of both representation and abstraction in favor of works created by concrete means; a performative action bringing forth a visual conclusion outside considerations of beauty, craft and theory. In the end, the art is what it is, nothing more than the visual documentation of the artists momentary interaction with his chosen medium.

Aside from publishing their own magazine, Gutai was ever mindful of opportunities to publicize their activities through the world press. In 1956, Kanayama contacted *Life* magazine, which sent two photographers (Jean Launois and William Payne) on assignment to document Gutai activities. Yoshihara responded by cobbling together the, "One Day Only Outdoor Art Exhibition," from old and new works. In the days leading up to the event on April 9, 1956, Gutai artists performed and made works for the photographers at the Yoshihara Oil Mill factory in Nishinomiya. Several of these pieces would figure prominently in forthcoming Gutai stage presentations.

All stops were pulled out for the *Life* photographers in the deserted confines of a ruined oil refinery on the banks of the Mukogawa River near Ashiya that had been bombed by the American military during the war. The outdoor exhibition drew heavily from the two previous outdoor exhibitions, including Shiraga's, "Please Come In," in which he used an axe to slash at poles forming an apex with him inside the cone and after exhausting himself, inviting visitors inside the unsteady structure.

The one-day outdoor exhibition featured new works as well, most notably by Jiro Yoshihara himself, who floated in a rubber dinghy in a flooded water tank amidst a bobbing yellow cube by Murakami, rubber balls and wooden objects. The photograph of Yoshihara serenely seated in his boat, amidst a floating art installation in a bombed out water tank at a war torn oil refinery, is one of the most compelling images of Gutai environmental and installation concern.

Yoshihara dyed half a dozen chickens in primary colors and let them loose among the exhibition's works as the *Life* photographers clicked away. The fragility and ephemeral nature of the outdoor exhibition was brought home by the work of Yamazaki who tossed pink confetti into the air creating a sculpture that emphasized the fleeting nature of the artistic moment. All this went for naught. The photographs were never published. They have never surfaced.

Despite the disappointment of the unpublished *Life* magazine photographs (existing photographs of the event were taken by members of Gutai), members were encouraged by a story that appeared a year later in the *New York Times*. Appearing as it did in a significant publication in the perceived center of the art world, the article had far reaching consequences that have only recently been explored.

The article titled, "Japanese Innovators", appearing on December 8, 1957, was written by the *Times* cultural correspondent in Tokyo, Ray Falk. Having visited several Gutai exhibitions and conducting an interview with Yoshihara, the author came away with an understanding of Gutai motivation and an appreciation of their novel means of presentation.

"In Gutai (which means embodiment) the supreme desire is to create something new through novel means. These artists are not bound to brush and canvas. Anything and everything may be utilized…During the summer the Gutai artists literally use the outdoors. They exhibit in a spacious pine grove near Kobe. What few inhibitions they may have been unable to shed in the salon evaporate in the fresh air. They assimilate nature and try for new impressions from soil, woods, stones, sky and sun."[21]

The success of the outdoor exhibition encouraged Yoshihara to explore other avenues of presentation. Always fascinated with the theater, having participated in it during his earlier years, Yoshihara, organized, "Gutai Art Using the Stage," at the Sankei Hall in Osaka on May 29, 1957. In his essay, "Ten Years in the Gutai Group," Yoshihara wrote that, "After all the unimaginable things that happened in the outdoor exhibitions, it seemed very natural to start using the stage next."[22]

Falk went on to address the stage presentations in the *Times* article, noting their challenge to contemporary painting and sculpture.

"Still not satisfied, the Gutai-ists turned to the theater and gave action to their art. In some scenes they combine the finished work of the art galleries with the production of studios and thus give the audience a peek at the artist on the job."[23] (Tiampo, 87)

Reading "action to their art," and "the artist on the job," must have given pause to a young Allan Kaprow, who first heard about Gutai from this article (as recounted in a 1996 interview). Two years later, Kaprow presented his first happening, "18 Happenings in 6 Parts," at the Reuben Gallery in New York. Gutai artists and Kaprow were later to show separately at the Martha Jackson Gallery. Kaprow first wrote about them in a 1961 article in *Art News* situating happenings internationally.

"In addition, outside New York there is the Gutai group in Osaka; reported activity in San Francisco, Chicago, Cologne, Paris and Milan; and a history that goes back through Surrealism, Dada, Mime."[24]

Sadamasa Motonaga, "Work", 1965. Oil on canvas, 90.8 x 116.8 cm / 35 3/4 x 46 in © Etsuko Nakatsuji. Private Collection. Photograph by Genevieve Hanson. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth, NYC.

Whenever Kaprow was to place happenings in an international context, he mentioned Gutai, most notably in his important, *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*, published in 1968.

Following the group's experiments with light during the outdoor exhibitions, Gutai artists once again utilized light as an important element of their stage work. Shimamoto, Sumi, Montonaga and Michio Yoshihara also incorporated "Gutai music," produced by tape recorders that had only recently become available for home use. Sadamasa Montonaga, who had strung tubes of colored water on trees during the outdoor exhibitions, filled them with smoke for the stage presentation. Shiraga, who had chopped at wooden poles in the outdoors, toppled painted poles indoors, to present a "painting moving through time and space." The artist followed this action by a dance while costumed in a pointy nose and long flowing reinforced sleeves of red, causing him to become a living, moving 'painting" in time and space. Shiraga concluded his portion of "Gutai Art on the Stage," by having Gutai members rush the stage and shoot arrows into the backdrop.[25]

"I ardently look forward to debating whether it is the act of shooting an arrow, or the surface that it pierces that is art," the artist wrote in *Gutai* 7. In the same issue, Yoshihara wrote that, "Gutai Art is constantly seeking ways of creating new, unknown, and unexplored beauty…We are now presenting works in a format that uses the stage and incorporates the dimension of time. We are certain that these works, and the format in which they are presented, will be revolutionary for the entire world – East and West."[26]

After Shiraga's opening act, "Gutai Art on the Stage," was divided into two portions. The first "gave a peek at the artist on the job," creating paintings in time and space under the watchful eye of the public. Yasuo Sumi painted with an umbrella. In the second act, which dealt with light, Shozo Shimamoto hung light bulbs, extinguishing them with a bat. AtsukoTanaka presented several works, both of which have entered into legend. "Stage Clothes," had her doing a striptease of layers of clothing, constructed such that when peeling off gloves, they unfurled into dresses. What came next, "Electric Dress," has entered into performance lore. The artist had two associates appear in dresses composed of painted light bulbs and tubes blinking on and off, conjuring the spirit of Japan's new technological future. The "Electric Dress," reappeared during the conclusion of the evening, accompanied by concrete music, colored stage lighting and Montonaga's smoke machine, which cleared the audience from the theater.

"Gutai Art on the Stage" was followed by other Gutai theatrical performances over the years. A "2nd Gutai Art on the Stage Exhibition," followed in 1957. Gutai paired with the Morita Dance Company in a stage presentation of, "Fall Down," presented in 1962. In 1967, the group participated in the "Fourth Summer Festival," in Osaka. The culminating Gutai stage experience took place at the "Gutai Art Festival," during "Expo '70." Because of Yoshihara's interest in the stage, theatricality was an important component of all phases of Gutai activity, from action painting in the 1950's through the technological innovations of "Expo '70."

Despite provocative exhibitions in the outdoors and on stage, Gutai artists were also drawn to conventional indoor exhibition possibilities, where once again they were to provide a radical twist. "The First Gutai Exhibition," in October 1955, was made possible when an admirer of their outdoor exhibitions, Ikebana master Ohara Houn, offered them the opportunity to exhibit in Ohara Hall in the Minami-Aoyama district of Tokyo. Ohara Hall consisted of two floors of exhibition space and a third floor, which could accommodate the living and sleeping arrangements of the Gutai artists, enabling them to prepare their work on site. The group was to mount exhibitions at this venue every year until "The 8th Gutai Art Exhibition," in September 1959. After the Ohara Hall exhibitions, Gutai art exhibitions took place every year until the 21st exhibition in 1968.[27]

There were many factors contributing to Gutai's first indoor exhibition occurring in Tokyo rather than their own Kansai-area. In addition to the generous offer of Ohara Houn to provide a forum for them, Tokyo, like New York in the United States, was the focal point for national artistic practice. The majority of art magazines were published in Tokyo, and tended to cover art produced in the urban center. The exhibition also coincided with a number of major juried shows organized by modernist art organizations, offering the possibility of critical reception in the nation's art capital.

Atsuko Tanaka.“ Electric Dress.” 1956 (reconstructed 1986). Photo courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

In order to maximize critical response, the press was invited to the first Ohara Hall exhibition on the opening day of October 19, 1955, to witness the creation of works. This was the first time Gutai artists performed before the public, in what they called “actions.” Literally extending Pollock’s legacy of entering into the work, Kazuo Shiraga wallowed in a ton of clay for twenty minutes in his underwear emerging cut and bruised. “Challenging Mud,” was performed three times, becoming a hallmark of Gutai ‘performance.”[28]

On July 23, 2011, art historian Reiko Tomii, recreated “Challenging Mud,” with the express purpose of discovering details of the action, including the various mixtures of mud, plaster and concrete from which the artist prepared the work.

“Because he was actually making a painting, I would love to ask him what he was thinking when he was making it. I know that when Pollock did drip paintings, he worked on it for a while, then left it alone, and then he came back to look at it again before he decided what to do next. It was a painter’s process. Even though Shiraga’s performance was very short, 15 to 20 minutes, I wonder what he was thinking. Was he looking at the composition? I certainly did. Especially because I am not a particularly athletic type, I really had to think what the next move was. Obviously I was also conscious of being watched, I didn’t want to bore the audience by doing the same thing. So I was thinking things like, what was the next stroke, whether I should use a big brush or a small brush. I was very conscious of making a painting. So I became very curious what he was thinking. When we see him rolling around in the mud, it doesn’t seem he was very conscious of what he was creating; but if we look at the result, we see a composition.”[29]

There were a profusion of Gutai masterworks unveiled at “The First Gutai Exhibition.” In addition to Shiraga’s performance before the press, Suburo Murakamo performed, “Making Six Holes in One Moment.” After having spent the previous day stretching packing paper over three wooden supports, he startled the gathered media by crashing though them, losing consciousness at the end.

This well documented work is emblematic of Gutai, and perhaps for an era. For Murakami, it represented birth. Others viewed it as a literal example of the artist puncturing the picture plane. Murakami constructed a second paper “skin” of gold that covered the entrance to the exhibition hall. It was ripped apart by Jiro Yoshihara inaugurating of the exhibition.[30]

Another Gutai masterwork created for “The First Gutai Exhibition,” was Atsuko Tanaka’s, “Bell.” It was composed of a series of bells situated around the exhibition venue, connected by wires, and when set in motion by the public, resonated throughout the hall in random fashion. It startled even the Gutai artists, who first heard the work while it was being installed.

“When I heard about the bell work, I could not understand it clearly,” wrote Fujiko Shiraga. “At the exhibition site, when it sounded from the next room, I still could not understand it. I understood it clearly when I pressed the switch marked ‘Push as much as you like’ and the bells sounded throughout the room. I was impressed…Only those who press the switch receive it. That is how I felt. The sound of the bells someone else pressed is very noisy. If you press it yourself, you get just what you want. In other words, even though you did not make the work and are only a viewer, by pressing this switch, you are standing on the very edge of the act of creating…Consequently, the emotion that runs through your body together with the sound of the bells is entirely different from the appreciation of artworks until now.”[31] (Tanaka, p. 42.)

Shimamoto also wrote about the work in the fourth issue of *Gutai*.

“Atsuko Tanaka created a stir by… an invisible work, which was probably the first in the history of art, consisting of a spatial composition of the sound of bells which ring if you press the switch.”[32]

Tanaka herself referred to the work as a painting. For the artist, a painting did not have to be visible, rather the important consideration was that the work, “addresses the issue of the awareness apprehended by the viewer, while it requires one to direct one’s focus on the here and now linked to each individual body.” This was not to say that the artist rejected traditional oil paint on canvas. Her paintings were concerned with interconnections of various colored circles connected by lines in different configurations, resembling diagrams indicating networks. It is no small wonder that her May 2012 retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo was titled, “Atsuko Tanaka: the Art of Connecting.”[33]

Connecting was a mainstay of Gutai, and in the early stages of their existence, this was accomplished by the publication of *Gutai* magazine. In all, twelve issues were produced between January 1955 and October 1965 (Numbers 10 and 13 were never published. The last issue was number 14.). Most of the issues were published in the first few years. Three issues appeared in 1955, followed by two in 1956 and three in 1957. In later years, overseas exhibitions became the preferred means of public presentation.

Gutai was distributed by several means. One would assume that the cost of publication would be borne by Yoshihara, a wealthy industrialist, but this was not the case. Members were asked to contribute according to the space they occupied in a particular issue. When an issue was released, members would gather and claim their copies, which were more than likely passed domestically to friends. Issues were also sold at Gutai exhibitions and bookstores. Other numbers of the periodical were distributed to artists and critics around the world, who were perceived to share similar interests.[34]

After the group self published the first issue of *Gutai* (in which Yoshihara apologized for the poor printing quality), production was sourced to professional printers and a standard size (an almost square 25.4 cm. tall, 26.4 cm. wide) established for the remaining run of the magazine. Yoshihara supervised the production of most issues. A mailing list was established drawn from the foreign art periodicals Yoshihara subscribed to and Japanese artists residing in Europe and America.

One of the artists receiving early issues of the magazine was Jackson Pollock, who was a major influence on the group. Yoshihara wrote of him,

“These works emit the loud outcry of the material, of the very oil or enamel paints themselves…After Pollock many Pollock-imitators appeared, but Pollock’s splendor will never be extinguished. The talent of invention deserves respect.”[35]

In a letter dated February 6, 1956, accompanying multiple copies of issues 2 and 3 of *Gutai*, Shozo Shimamoto, who often served as secretary for the group, wrote:

Dear Mr. Jackson Pollock,

You would be su[r]prised at finding our modern art magazine “Gutai” in the envelope sent from Japan. Please [forgive] our audacity. Now we are anxious to know the opinion about our action toward art, and so if you would criticize of our paintings, it will helps us very much to improve our works. Therefore we entreat you to give suggestions and overmore to hand the extra magazines to the people who are interested in our action, though it is quite impudent asking.

Then we will be very happy to be able to repay your kindness even a little by sending some information or materials in Japan, which helps your work.

Hoping your early reply.
Sincerely yours,
S. Shimamoto[36]

There was no direct response from Pollock, but after his death B. H. Friedman, organizing the estate with the artist’s wife, found the issues in Pollock’s possessions and contacted the Gutai group asking for additional past issues of the magazine and a subscription to future issues. Friedman was also moved to send a biographical sketch on Pollock that was published in *Gutai* 6.

Also appearing in issue six, was the work of New York artist Ray Johnson, who had obtained earlier issues from Friedman. Johnson had attended Black Mountain College, was taught by Josef Albers, and befriended by Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg, and others at that hotbed of post-war American art. Rather then enter the marketplace, Johnson preferred sending his collages directly to friends, celebrities, and unknown correspondents through the post, examining and testing the concept of long distance delayed aesthetic communication. This had a profound impact on Gutai, who shared a similar concern, far removed from the perceived centers of art.

Communication between Johnson and Gutai was extensive. Johnson sent Yoshihara a letter with photographs of his work in November 1956. Four additional letters by Johnson to Yoshihara, written between April and October 1957, exist in the Gutai archives. The earliest letter dated April 2, thanks Yoshihara for his interest and for publishing his work in *Gutai* 6.[37] Johnson writes in that issue,

“Bob Friedman showed me your very interesting magazines recently and suggested I send you something of my work since you expressed interest in what younger artists are doing. Most of my work is collage which I call MOTICOS. I send out monthly newsletters about the work I am doing which takes the place of a formal exhibition. The works cannot be exhibited in the usual way because they constantly change, like the news in the paper or the images on a movie screen.”[38]

One result of contact with Ray Johnson, was Gutai’s use of New Year’s cards (nengajo) as Mail Art. Author Ming Tiampo examines this in some depth, arguing that,

“As performative objects, nengajo contributed and responded to three central theses of Gutai art: the integration of art and life, the incorporation of time and space into painting, and the articulation of new social spaces as exhibition spaces. There were two crucial moments for their conceptualization of nengajo: in 1956, when the group came into contact with Ray Johnson’s nascent mail art, and in 1962, when they established themselves as an international presence with the Gutai Pinacotheca.”[39]

Gutai 6 was primarily documentation of the “2nd Gutai Art Exhibition,” but with the inclusion of contributions by Friedman, Johnson, and a news column mentioning the interest of French critic Michal Tapié, it was becoming apparent that after two years of publication, the Gutai group’s efforts were beginning to attract the type of art world attention they initially craved.

This did not always result in a positive outcome, although it was not always apparent at first. Yves Klein was in Japan from 1952 to 1954, leaving before the first Gutai exhibition in Tokyo, but in all probability, hearing about it from his Japanese friend Shin’ichi Segi, one of the first to write about Gutai and friendly with Klein since 1953. Yet in his 1961, “Chelsea Hotel Manifesto,” Klein decried the international press comparing his work to Kazuo Shiraga.

The following year, Klein was approached by Henk Peeters of the Nul group to discuss participation in a group show at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Peeters wanted to present, "a new global culture." But Klein was having none of it, saying that by matching cultures, critics would, "accuse Western artists of being influenced by Japanese artists." Klein passed away in 1962, and after his death Peeters contacted French critic Michel Tapié to obtain the address of Yoshihara.[40]

If French artist Klein's view of Gutai was conflicted, their relationship with French art critic Michael Tapié was even more complex. Most historians of Gutai agree that the meeting of Gutai and Tapié ushered in a middle period, with previous events and actions taking a back seat to painting. Although Tapié became Gutai's leading international proponent, giving them unprecedented access to exhibition and print possibilities abroad, Gutai lost most of the radical edge it had been developing previous to their meeting with him.

When a nephew of a friend was scheduled to go to Paris in 1957, Yoshihara gave the young man copies of *Gutai* to pass out to those he thought would be interested. One of those receiving the magazine was Hisao Domoto, a Japanese painter, who had come to Paris and aligned himself with the Art Informel group lead by Michael Tapié. Tapie's concept of Art Informal, was that the post-war condition had brought about a new aesthetics based on an overabundance of new ideas. As early as 1951 he was collecting works that fit his philosophical approach to art, staging an exhibition, "Things Signified by the Informel," and in 1952 authoring the work, "Another Kind of Art (Un Art Autre)."[41]

Tapié introduced Art Informel to Japan a year earlier than his first introduction to Gutai, organizing the exhibition, "World Art Today Exhibition," in Tokyo, causing a commotion in the Japanese art world. When Yoshihara heard of the exhibition, he was more welcoming than shocked, sensing an affinity with the French critic and his artists, including George Mathieu, and San Francisco Bay Area artists Sam Francis and Claire Falkenstein, who had made Tapié's acquaintance in Paris.

In *Gutai* 6, the same issue that announced the death of Jackson Pollock in a letter from B. H. Friedman's and reproduced the works of Ray Johnson (their first support overseas), a report by Hisao Domoto appeared in a news column announcing Tapié's initial interest.

"We received a letter from Mr. Hisao Domoto in France with news on Michel Tapié, the key figure in Art Informel, which has been the talk of the art circles in Japan from the end of last year to this spring. Mr. Tapié expressed extraordinary interest in our magazine *Gutai* and says he would lie to include a number of works by members of the Gutai group in an art book he is planning to publish worldwide. He says he would like to meet Mr. Yoshihara and other Gutai members to discuss a variety of topics when he comes to Japan."[42]

Domoto was friendly with Yoshihara since 1947, and continued to serve as a go-between Tapié and Yoshihara. In September 1957, Tapié arrived in Tokyo, and went to Osaka to meet with Yoshihara. He writes in his article, "Praise for the Gutai Group,"

"I had been proposing a theory and came to Japan to see how the idea was being put into practice. What I found was that the attempts that were being made to develop the idea had already taken a finished form…Humbly, I asked that I might also be accepted into the group as a member."[43]

Yoshihara's response came in his essay, "Michael Tapié, Together with Us," in which he writes,

"[Tapié] provided a firm aesthetic foundation for Gutai art… There is nothing that pleases us more than his validation of our adventures, the quality that he found already imbued in our works and the first international recognition of our work through him."[44]

It was assumed from the beginning of their relationship that despite avowals of mutual admiration and respect, Tapié was the more credentialed and connected member of the partnership, exerting profound influence upon Yoshihara, the least experienced in the power dynamics of international art collaboration. In a letter to Yoshihara dated July 21, 1957, a month before Tapié's arrival in Japan, Domoto wrote to Yoshihara that Tapié, "Would hate the Dada elements of Gutai." Yoshihara responded by taking care to show Tapié only paintings that conformed to the French critics ideas of gestural abstraction within the Art Informel canon.[45]

Kazuo Shiraga was frank about Tapié's influence.

"We became more painting-orientated, to be sure. Tapié came and bought our works. To be bought, this is the strongest pull. We became conscious of selling our works. In order to sell we had to make paintings…Gutai before Tapié made many (non-painting) works, such as Shimamoto's work, which the viewer must feel with the back of his or her feet. After Tapié, they were gone. I don't know whether this was Tapié's fault, or ours…Tapié selected this work and that work, and bought them himself. They were very cheap, but until then none of us thought we could sell, so we were all stunned. We were mesmerized, but beyond that, it was a negative influence…Tapié was a huge influence. Besides, we were rather exhausted after an intense period of radical experiments. In 1955, 1956, and 1957, we were cranking up new things. At the moment when we grew rather tired, he came and said painting was better. And we all headed in that direction. Those who could not paint had a hard time. So it was not just money. Something different was also at work."[46]

With Tapié seemingly interested in only their painting, Yoshihara began referring to the earlier action works as "experiments," praising, "those who learn from the results of their experiments proceed to the next stage in which they attempt to solidify what they had achieved." The previous events and actions in the open air and on the stage and their effects on materials would inform their direction in painting, which became increasing influenced by Michel Tapié.

For a group that had garnered limited attention, even in their own homeland, Tapié must have appeared as a revelation. Even before his trip to meet Gutai, he had been planning a joint Gutai/Art Informel issue of *Gutai*, which was realized in the eighth issue published on September 29, 1957. In the beginning of October he curated the exhibition, "International Contemporary Art Exhibition – Informel: Genesis of an Other Art," first in Tokyo at the Bridgestone Museum of Art and than traveling to the Daimaru Department Store in Osaka. Shozo Shimamoto, Kazuo Shiraga, Jiro Yoshihara and Atsuko Tanaka were among the Gutai members that were shown.

The next year, an even larger exhibition was organized by Tapié, "International Art of a New Era: Informal and Gutai," held at the Takashimaya Department Store in Osaka, which placed Gutai works on canvas squarely in keeping with new directions in painting. Eighty-four artists were shown – twenty-seven from Japan, twenty-six from Europe and thirty-one from the United States. Hung among the Gutai artists were such recognized international artists as Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, Motherwell, Frankenthaler, Appel, Mathieu and Fontana.

One could only imagine the pleasure Yoshihara derived from being exhibited with Jackson Pollock, and the satisfaction Kanayama took in finding himself in the same room as Franz Kline. The exhibition traveled to Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Tokyo and Kyoko, indicating to the Japanese public that Gutai was on equal footing with Europe's Art Informel and America's Abstract Expressionists. Ironically, it was also the occasion of Gutai's last performance for the stage, ushered out by Tapié, who hosted the event at Asahi Hall in Osaka on April 4, 1958.[47]

Although Gutai had attracted the interest of the foreign press before Tapié's entrée into their lives, it increased exponentially under his tutelage. In September 1958, he arranged for an exhibition ("6th Gutai Art Exhibition") at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York. This led to a future solo show by Sadamasa Motonaga at the Martha Jackson Gallery in December 1961. The 1958 exhibition traveled throughout the United States after opening in New York, to venues at Bennington College, Vermont, the University Gallery at the University of Minnesota, the Oakland Municipal Art Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. During the run of the exhibitions, issues of *Gutai* were made available for purchase.

After the opening of the New York show, Yoshihara departed to France and Italy with Tapié, making invaluable contacts that served Gutai well for the next decade. Tapié arranged the exhibition, "New Art," at the Artists' Association Hall in Turin, Italy, where he had established a foothold for Art Informel. While there, he contracted with the publisher Fratelli Pozzo to produce the book, *Continuité et Avant-Garde au Japan*, appearing in 1961, and released the following year as, *Avant-Garde Art in Japan*, by Harry N. Abrams in New York. The handsome work featured many tipped in color plates of paintings credited to various members by name. This was accompanied by a section of black and white photographs "Activités Groupe Gutai," with no explanation and no individual accreditation.

Another Tapié sponsored exhibition took place in Turin, Italy, in June 1959 at the Arti Figuative Gallery, later referred to as the "7th Gutai Art Exhibition." In October, the work of Shiraga and Motonaga were shown in Lissone, Italy. In November, Tapié organized the exhibition, "Metamorphism," at the Stadler Gallery in Paris, with works exhibited by Shiraga and Jiro Yoshihara. In 1963, the Stadler Gallery presented the solo work of Kazuo Shiraga.[48]

This flurry of activity in the late 1950s and early 1960s lead to a succession of future opportunities, which did not necessitate Tapié's participation. With such manifestations as Fluxus, Judson Dance Theater, Nouveau Réalisme, Conceptualism, Pop Art, Minimalism, et al., beginning to emerge as the cutting edge in advanced art, lessening the focus on painting, Tapié's power declined in the art world during the course of the 1960s, with other sponsoring institutions in Europe and the United States appearing to promote Gutai.

In 1964, Jiro Yoshihara and Atsuko Tanaka were chosen for the Guggenheim International Award, their works shown at the Museum. In April 1965, the Museum of Modern Art in New York curated the exhibition "The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture," including works by Kanayama, Shimamoto, Shiraga, Tanaka, Montonaga, Tsuruko and Jiro Yoshihara. The exhibition opened at the San Francisco Museum of Art, continuing on to Urbana (Illinois), Omaha, Columbus (Ohio), Baltimore, Milwaukee and New York.

Somewhat condescendingly, William S. Lieberman, co-curator of, "The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture" exhibition, concludes in his catalog essay,

"If one may predict the future from the past, few can doubt that in the twentieth century, as so often before in her history, Japan will benefit by international contacts and stimuli from abroad, and from her native genius will produce an art distinctively her own."[49]

The issue of who was influencing whom at what time, continues to be an ongoing debate in postwar Japanese art history circles.

The growing confidence and impact of Gutai on the international art stage resulted in the establishment of the Gutai Pinacotheca, which served as the members meeting and exhibi-

Kazuo Shiraga. "Challenging Mud" at "1st Gutai Art Exhibition," Tokyo, 1955. Photo courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

Kazuo Shiraga. "Challenging Mud" at "1st Gutai Art Exhibition," Tokyo, 1955. Photo courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

tion space, and a venue for hosting a continuing stream of visiting artists from overseas. The term Pinacotheca, literally a Renaissance painting gallery, was suggested by Tapié, and opened in Osaka on August 25, 1962, in several connected 19th century warehouses owned by the Yoshihara family.

Author Ming Tiampo posits the opening of the Pinacotheca as an example of the decentralization of the art world, which was increasing in the sixties.

"With the establishment of the Pinacotheca, which Tapié called a 'manifesto-museum' (*musée manifeste*), the group made further strides in decentering the art world and establishing Osaka as one of the many emerging cultural centers, including Amsterdam, Dakar, Rio de Janeiro, Stockholm, Tokyo, and Vancouver, that were rising to cult prominence in the 1960s as a result of increased transnational movement and communication, as well as global decolonization."[50]

The Gutai Pinacotheca became a mandatory waystation for itinerant avant-gardist artists, critics and collectors in the 1960s. Included among the visitors were John Cage (who visited three times), Peggy Guggenheim (who bought several paintings), Yoko Ono, French critic and chief theoretician of Nouveau Realisme Pierre Restany, Lawrence Alloway, Jean Tinguely, Merce Cunningham, Sam Francis, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, MOMA curator William Lieberman, Isamu Noguchi, Clement Greenberg, Fluxus artist Geoff Hendricks, Billy Klüver, Williem de Kooning, and Abstract Expressionist Paul Jenkins, who became an artist-in-residence in 1964, trading works with several of the Gutai artists, and declaring that he and the Gutai artists, "were under each other's spell."[51]

The Pinacotheca was also the site of exhibitions by the membership. In the first year of the opening, exhibitions were held for Shozo Shimamoto (October), Kazuo Shiraga (November) and Toshio Yoshida (December). In 1963, one-person exhibitions were staged for Saburo Murakami (April), Shuji Makai (May), Tsuruko Yamazaki (July), Takesada Matutani (October-November) and Michio Yoshihara (December). In addition to solo exhibitions, "Recent Gutai Works," and works from the "Gutai Permanent Collection" were periodically shown. Most of the exhibitions were accompanied by exhibition catalogs, published in the manner of the *Gutai* magazines.[52]

The last issue of *Gutai*, number 14, published in October 1965, is a special issue devoted to the "Nul 1965 Exhibition," which included Gutai works at the Stedelijk Musuem, Amsterdam. The exhibition, which ran from April 15 through June 8, 1965, included works of the Nul group (Armando, Peeters, Schoonhoven), the Zero group (Mack, Piene, Uecker), Nouveau Realists (Arman, Klein), European conceptualists such as Pol Bury, Piero Manzoni and Hans Haacke, as well as Yoyoi Kusama and a contingent from Gutai, including Jiro and Michio Yoshihara, Kanayama, Motonaga, Murakami, Shimamoto, Tanaka and Yamasaki. By this time, well into their middle period, Gutai had become more widely known through international reportage and exhibitions.

Gutai 6 also featured a report on the "15th Gutai Art Exhibition," which was the first general membership exhibition at the Pinacotheca since the facility's opening three years previous. It came just one month after four Gutai members participated in the San Francisco Museum of Art exhibition, "The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture," in June 1965. The Ninth through fourteenth "Gutai Art Exhibitions," were held at the Takashimaya Department Store, Osaka, beginning in April 1960.

The "15th Gutai Art Exhibition," marked a turn in the magazine, the membership, and the momentum of the association. As to the magazine, which was such an important vehicle of expression and communication with the world when it was first published, had become, Soichi Hirai writes,

"…this number [6] is the thinnest issue of *Gutai* and the simplest, both in page layout and content. It marks a major shift in the importance assigned to *Gutai* a decade or so after the group was formed. Gutai Pinacoteca, which always exhibited Gutai had opened, members had opportunities to participate in non-Gutai group exhibitions or solo shows, and the coverage of the group in newspapers and magazines was increasing. *Gutai* had become only one of the numerous venues in which to present new work. Instead of serving as the absolute center of publicity for Gutai, it had become relativized, just one of many options.[53]

Yoshihara himself gives voice to the new directions in which the association was heading in his unattributed editorial in *Gutai* 14.

"…this is our first occasion to hold our regular exhibition at our own museum. This exhibition perhaps best complies with the purpose behind the establishment of the Gutai Pinacotheca…This form of exhibition, in which the artists within our group compete with one another's works at the art museum we established on our own, has around quite a heated atmosphere…One of the significant points of interests behind the "15th Gutai Art Exhibition" is that many of the newer members have begun to bloom through their interactions with the senior members, whose works have already been recognized…In addition, the new experimental works found in this exhibition have unquestionably helped create a more intense atmosphere than ever before…I am quite sure that the heated atmosphere conveyed from the works will allow viewers to vividly perceive the essential strength of the Gutai group, which is facing the challenge of the new chaotic state."[54]

With the Nul exhibition in Amsterdam just behind them, and their inclusion and international exposure in Allan Kaprow's, *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings*, the following year, the Gutai group was at a new stage where it did not need or feel beholding to Tapié and was ready to strike out in new directions. Thirty-four members of Gutai had joined during the period 1954-1959, with only fourteen lasting until 1965. From 1960 until they disbanded in 1972, twenty-five new members were added, twelve in 1965 alone. Almost all of these new members lasted until the group disbanded in 1972.[55]

Dr. Soichi Hirai comments on the way in which the new members were selected.

"The new members can be divided roughly into two groups. One group was made up of accomplished young artists who showed their work in the Ashiya City Exhibition and the Gutai Art Exhibition as non-members and were then recognized by Yoshihara…The other group consisted of people who had already established themselves as abstract artists in the Kansai art scene…During this period, Yoshihara recruited members regardless of their age or career in an effort to enliven the group."[56]

New Gutai members, younger and in tune with current art practice, began moving away from action painting to experimentation with new materials.

"The second generation of the Gutai Art Association, linked with the group's middle period beginning in 1960, evolved from the groups previous tendencies into a post-Informel style of painting. Shuji Mukai filled his paintings with unexplained and random symbols inspired by recurring questions about what constituted a work of art; Tsuyoshi Maekawa created dynamic wrinkles with dungaree fabric. Takesada Matsutani made unique textures with a newly marketed type of woodworking adhesive; and Yuko Nasaka covered walls with an accumulation of homogeneous works make of circular forms. These new members were almost ten years younger than the original ones, leading to a generational gap between them and Yoshihara."[57]

During the mid-1960s, a shift in abstract art was occurring, away from the rawness of Michel Tapié's Art Informel and the direct response of Abstract Expressionism, towards optical illu-

sion and geometric patterning, often generated by new industrial materials like motors and lighting composed of steel and plastic. Geometric works were meticulously created erasing traces of the artist's hand, in short, a "cool" approach to art making, rather then the tumultuous "hot" action oriented works of an earlier period.

Yoshihara encouraged this new approach as engagement with a new era in Japanese society. High economic growth, a reliance and believe in technological advancement marked the era. This was expressed not only by the new membership, but by older members like Shimamoto, Shiraga, Murakami, Montonaga, and Yoshihara himself, eager to keep pace with the energy of the younger membership. Dr. Hirai writes,

"As the darlings of the era, these artists represented the new face of Gutai not only in Gutai exhibitions, but in a wide range of exhibitions and other events held both in Japan and abroad…through this surge of new blood, Yoshihara's plan to recreate Gutai as an abstract group that addressed themes of the era proved successful. But at the same time, the sudden increase in new members led to a systematized approach to managing the group, a ranking system for its members and more complicated personal relationships."[58]

These issues were coming to a head, impacting upon he dissolution of the group, but not before the most ambitious project in Gutai's history had taken place. The "1970 World Exposition in Osaka," more commonly known as "Expo '70," was the first world exposition to be held in an Asian country, attracting 64,218,770 visitors during its run from March 15 through September 13 – more than half the population of Japan at the time. It was a turning point in the country's history, marking the emergence of Japan from a defeated nation to a global force in economics. The official theme of the exposition was, "Progress and Harmony of Mankind," with special emphasis on the technological advances that would enrich modern society.

Despite the organizer's proclamations of a brighter future, there were a number of antagonistic views in Japan concerning "Expo '70." The student uprisings of the late sixties had produced a radical edge among liberal leaning activists and artists, and this spilled over in opposition to the exposition. Haryu Ichiro, writes in his essay, "Expo '70 as the Ruins of Culture," that,

"Most of the scholars, artists, designers, and engineers that have participated in Expo '70 are in essence just like those agricultural-cooperative-led tourist groups. One day, their 'master' set up a festival called 'Expo '70' and the patient industrious worker-ants swarmed to the job, overcome by a sense of purpose to boost Japan's cultural prowess and condense the future into a single point…While spectators come expecting to satisfy prosperity, and they, who are the shrine maidens (*miko*) of the festival, end up merely satisfying their own individual desires under the public aims of the future city and the information revolution."[59]

Complicating the events surrounding Expo '70 were controversies surrounding the Vietnam War and the U. S. – Japan Security Treaty. Many critics saw the exposition as a hidden government agenda,

"…to distract the nation from the renewal of the U. S. – Japan Security Treaty' and to 'establish domination through technology and communication' while incorporating intellectual elites within the institution…To these artists and critics who allied with the New Left, Expo '70 symbolized the end of art in which art was co-opted by commercialism and technology and lost its autonomy. The success of the expo meant their defeat and the nullification of their struggle: their top concern, the U. S. – Japan Security Treaty, was automatically renewed. It was amid this mood of disillusionment and desperation that the writer Mishima Yukio resorted to his public death by ritual suicide…[60]

"Expo '70" was built on newly developed land in Suita City, a northern suburb of Osaka. As a leading regional businessman and cultural figure with an international reputation, Yoshihara was asked to participate in "Expo '70" by the organizers in a number of ways. Yoshihara was only too happy to comply with the request, as it conformed to his thoughts on modernity, technology and internationalism.

Gutai's participation at "Expo '70" included a collective sculpture display, "'Garden on Garden,'" part of the Expo Art Outdoor Exhibition, the "Gutai Group Exhibition" at the entrance of the Midori Pavilion, and the three-day multimedia stadium extravaganza, "Gutai Art Festival," at the Festival Plaza. Existing Gutai scholarship is mixed on the group's participation at "Expo '70," with some considering the works a mere rehashing of Gutai's past works, dismissing them in favor of Gutai's early performances, installations, and painting, while others viewed the festival experience as a useful culminating experience.

"For Gutai and particularly its leader Yoshihara Jiro, Expo '70 provided a large scale embodiment of the 'international common ground' that Gutai had been building itself since 1955 and it was a perfect occasion to showcase both historic and new works to stress its 'international contemporaneity.' Having built on their international standing since the 1950s, it was natural for Gutai to represent the Kansai region and take these important commissions at Expo '70. There was even a sense of pride in their participation as they had been at the forefront in presenting interactive and performance art to the general public and their work was not limited to fine art connoisseurs."[61]

"In essence, Gutai's participation in the expo was intended as the culmination of the group's work, which began with an effort to incorporate natural phenomenon as seen in Ashiya Park, continued with the practical use of performance art on stage, and concluded with an effort to deal with so-called 'environmental art,' a trend typified by the absence of any new genre and the inclusion of interactive elements that was popular in both the Western and Japanese art world at the time. Although Gutai had won international fame as a 'painting group' after meeting Michel Tapié in 1957, the presentation of these interactive expressions, which the group had explored in functional spaces throughout its career, at the expo reiterated its essentially diverse and experimental nature. In this way, the expo provided Gutai with a useful opportunity to retrace its history and comprehensively showcase its originality as an avant-garde group.[62]

The golden opportunity of being featured at a well attended world's exposition on Gutai's home turf concealed a number of factors that hastened the group's dissolution. In the midst of organizing their participation in "Expo '70," an urban renewal project caused the closure of the Gutai Pinacotheca, which had served as their headquarters since 1962. Several key early members of the group departed, including Shozo Shimamoto, Saburo Murakami, and Sadamasa Montonaga, due to a variety of factors, including financial.[63] Gutai's participation in "Expo '70" soured their standing within Japan's avant-garde, who regarded the group as politically naïve, and contributed to the group's neglect over following decades.

Nevertheless, Yoshihara persevered in his leadership of Gutai, establishing a temporary headquarters, the Mini-Pinacotheca, and began planning the construction of a new Pinacotheca to meet the group's needs. But Yoshihara's abrupt death from a subarachnoid (tissues of the brain) hemorrhage, while in phone conversation with the Dutch ambassador discussing the organization of a "Flower Festival" on January 23, 1972, halted these plans. He was taken to a hospital, but failing to make a recovery, passed away on February 4. He was 67 years old. On March 31, the remaining members met to discuss the future of Gutai and decided to disband the group. After 18 years of diverse experimental activity, the group came to an end.

Koichi Kawasaki, having served as Chief Curator at both the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art and the Ashiya City Museum, two museums with the comprehensive collections of Gutai, is in as good a position as any to comment on the aftermath and meaning of Gutai. Responding to the self-imposed question, "So what is Gutai?," he answers provocatively,

"Gutai is, in itself, a work of art by Jiro Yoshihara. Gutai is a work that continues to exist. Despite the distinct characteristics of the various artists in the group, Gutai is Gutai…Fifty years since its founding and its first recognition abroad, Gutai has gained great esteem in the West, having been exhibited with rising frequency over the past twenty years. The unflagging efforts of the group have defied Japanese criticism. Even today, Gutai's works inspire awe, and are acknowledged as unique art pieces, the likes of which have never been seen before."[64]

Our understanding of Gutai and the value of their experimental artworks following the dictum, "Do something no one's ever done before," is just begging to be felt. At the conclusion of an interview I conducted with Dr. Soichi Hirai, curator of, "Gutai: Spirit of an Age," he revealed that the archives of Jiro Yoshihara and the Gutai Pinacotheca are still unavailable to scholars. Our knowledge of Gutai is just beginning, a story unfolding, and yet to be fully revealed.

(Endnotes)

1 Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 3.
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4 Tiampo, 21.
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6 Achille Bonito Oliva, *Shozo Shimamoto: Samurai, Acrobata dello Sguardo 1950-2008* (Milano: Skira, 2008), 136.
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26 Kuma, 55.
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29 Jane DeBevoise, "Conversation with Reiko Tomii," September 6, 2011.http://www.aaa-a.org/2012/01/18/conversation-with-reiko-tomii/)
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36 Tiampo, *Under Each Other's Spell*, 14.
37 Kuma, 102.
38 Kuma, 47.
39 Tiampo, *Gutai*, 55.
40 Tiampo, *Gutai*, 128.

Kazuo Shiraga painting with his feet for Life magazine at the Nishinomiya factory of Jiro Yoshihara, 1956. Photo courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

41 Tiampo, *Gutai*, 91
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43 Hirai, 93.
44 Hirai, 93.
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46 Reiko Tomii and Fergus McCaffrey, *Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades* (New York: McCaffrey Fine Art, 2009), 64.
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49 Dorothy C. Miller and William S. Lieberman, *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966), 11.
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51 Tiampo, *Gutai*, 127.
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58 Hirai, 135.
59 Haryu Ichiro, "Expo '70 as the Ruins of Culture," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, Vol. 23, December 2011, 47.
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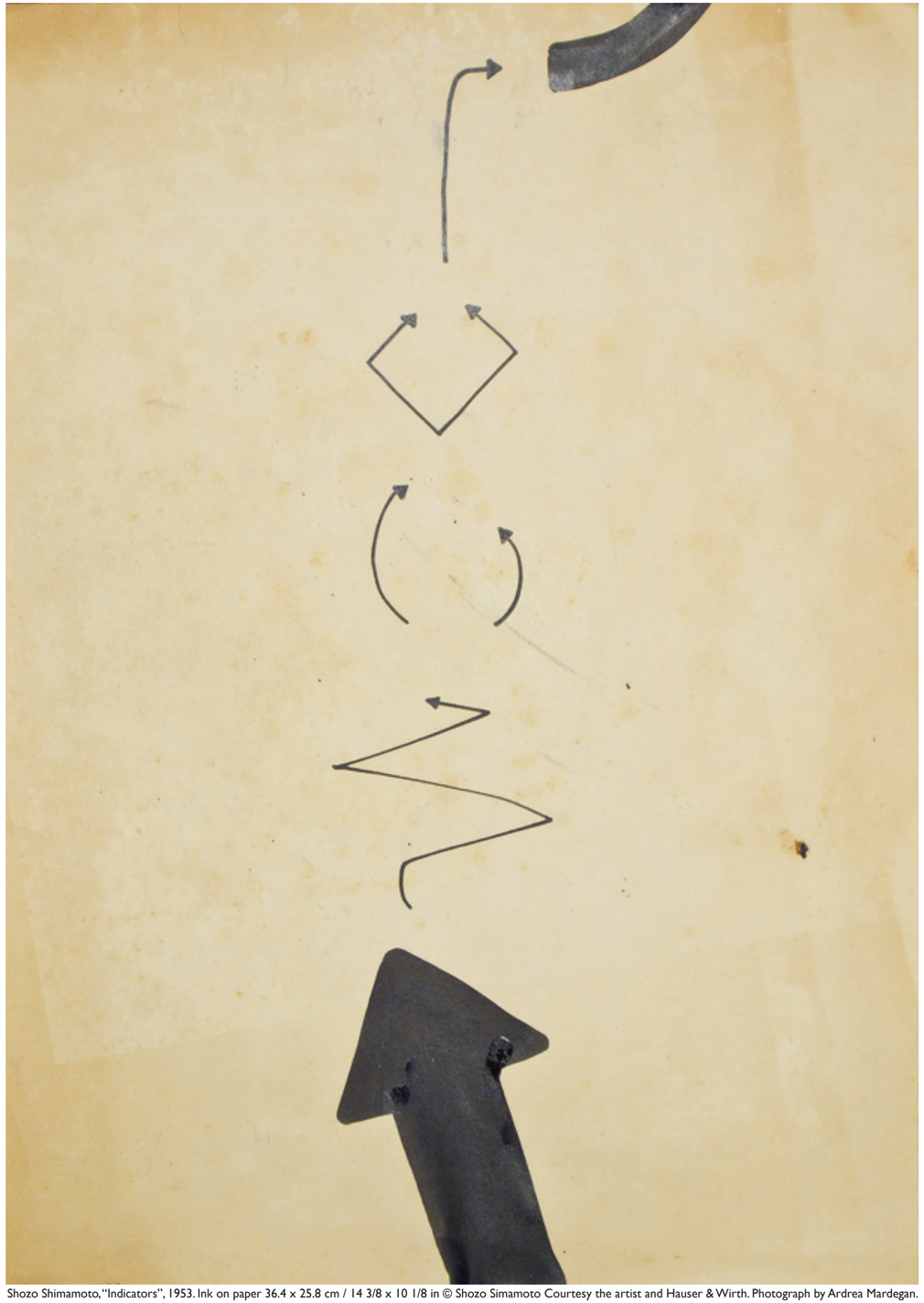
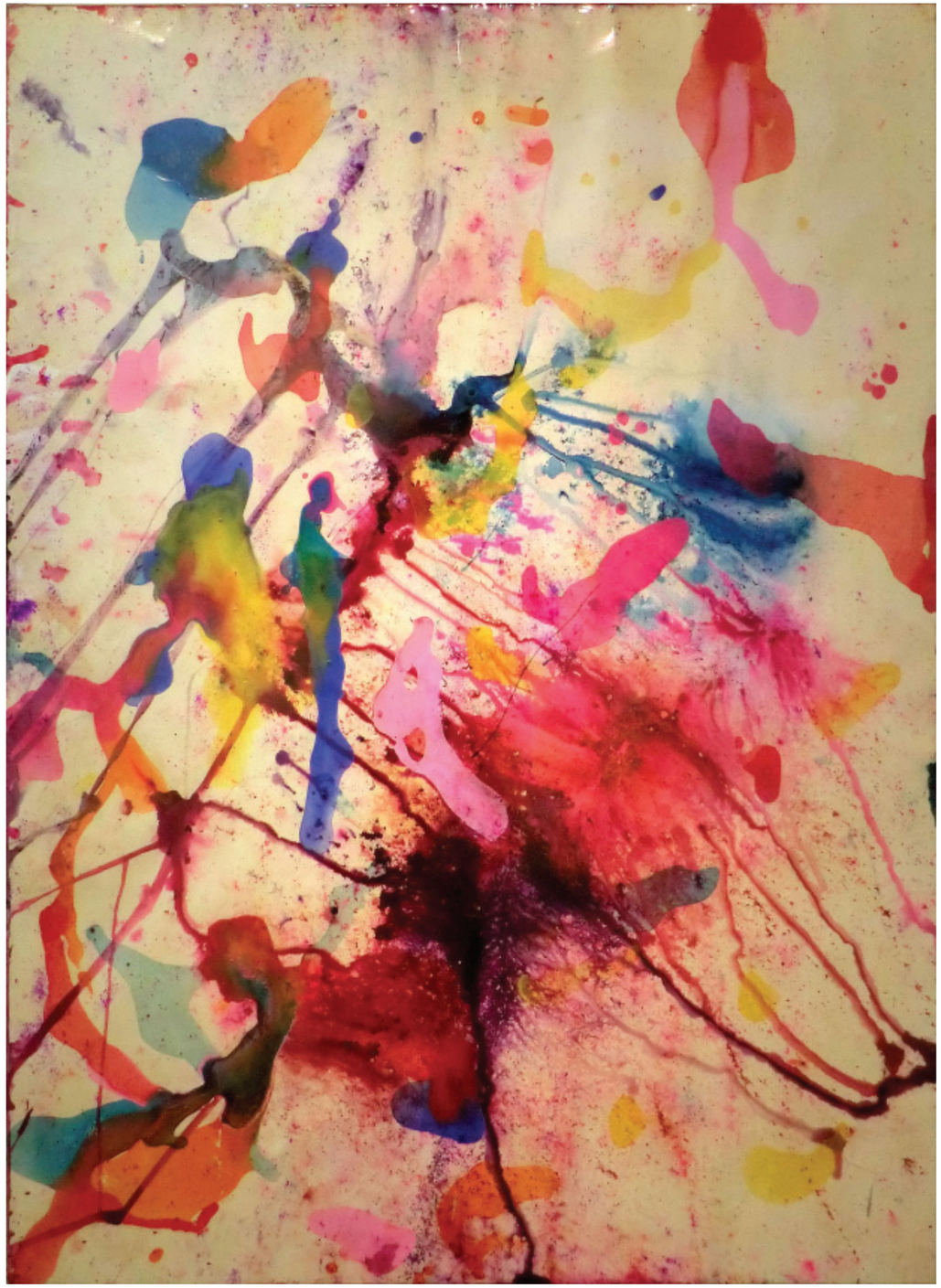
64 Kawasaki, (31).



Shozo Shimamoto, "Indicators", 1953. Ink on paper 36.4 x 25.8 cm / 14 3/8 x 10 1/8 in © Shozo Simamoto Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photograph by Ardrea Mardegan.

Shozo Shimamoto, "Bottle Crash", 1962. Glass and paint on canvas. 62 x 130 cm / 63 3/4 x 51 1/8 in © Shozo Shimamoto. Private Collection. Photograph by Andrea Mardegan.



Tsuruko Yamazaki, "Work", 1956 – 1957. Dye, thinner on paper mounted on board and wrapped in plastic. 109.5 x 79.5 cm / 43 1/8 x 31 1/4 in. © Tsuruko Yamazaki. Courtesy Tsuruko Yamazaki. Photograph by Keizo Kobashi.

Takesada Matsutani, "Work65-Daiwa", 1965. Polyvinyl acetate adhesive, paint on canvas. 183.4 x 183.5 cm / 72 1/4 x 72 1/4 in. © Takesada Matsutani Courtesy of Lads Gallery, Osaka. Photograph by Keizo Kobashi.

Gutai:
An Annotated Bibliography

Compiled by John Held, Jr.

Allen, Gwen**. Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Ar**t. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England, 2011. 368 pages.

An extensive "Compendium of Artists' Magazines from 1945 to 1989," lists the *Gutai* journal, and quotes from the first issue. "This pamphlet is made by seventeen modern artists who are living between Osaka and Kobe of Japan, to ask their works to the world." The cover of *Gutai,* Number 4, is reproduced in color. Elsewhere in the text, Gutai magazine is placed within a chronological and geographical context. "…even a cursory glance at the proliferation of artists' magazines published around the globe in the postwar period complicates the belief that publications transcend physical location; instead, we are prompted to consider how they register the specific national, regional and local circumstances of their production and distribution. The importance of magazines in fostering artistic dialog between countries and continents is evident beginning with artists' periodicals of the 1950s and early 1960s, such as *Gutai*, *Boa*, *Zero*, *Gorgona*, *Revue Nul= o*, *Integration*, *Spirale*, *Azimuth*, *Diagonal Cero*, *El Corno Emplumado*, and *dé-coll/age*, which were often self-consciously international in orientation; they sought to give artistic movements a higher profile on the world stage, while opening up local artistic communities to influences from abroad – goals that were evidenced by their frequently polyglot pages."

Altshuler, Bruce. **The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century.** University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California. 1998. 287 pages.

Tracing major exhibitions that changed the course of art in the twentieth century, the chapter, "To Challenge the Sun: Exhibitions of the Gutai Art Association, Ashiya, Osaka, Tokyo, 1955-1957," focuses on the group's forays into the public sphere in the environment, on-stage and in galleries. One year after it's formation, Gutai presented, "The Experimental Outdoor Modern Art Exhibition to Challenge the Burning Midsummer Sun," by twenty-three of it's members in July 1955. Later that year, "The First Gutai Exhibition," was presented in Tokyo. A press conference was called to celebrate the fabrication of works for the exhibition, including Murakami's, "Making Six Holes in One Moment," and Shiraga's, "Challenging Mud," which were exhibited shortly thereafter. Performative actions formed many of the seminal works presented during the, "One Day Outdoor Art Exhibition," staged expressly for *Life* magazine, which never published the resultant photographic documentation. Second outdoor and indoor exhibitions followed featuring such classic Gutai works as Shimamoto's firing paint from a small cannon and Tanaka's, "Electric Dress." Gutai's "Art on Stage," preceding Allan Kaprow's "18 Happenings in 6 Parts" by a year, allowed the public, as well as the press, to observe Gutai's working methodology. The chapter concludes with mention of the 1960 "International Sky Festival," which included contributions by international artists in a collaborative levitation of paintings by kite.

Bertozzi, Barbara. "Gutai: The Happening People." *Flash Art* (New York, New York), May/June 1991. Pages 94-101.

Follows Gutai chronology through their exhibitions, stressing innovative performative actions hailed in turn by Michel Tapié and Allan Kaprow. The author debunks the notion of Gutai arising from Dada, noting that "rather than take its inspiration from destructive criteria, (Gutai) would seem more propelled by a joyously creative impulse and an extraordinarily rapturous vitality." The cover of the magazine features a photograph of Shozo Shimamoto performing, "Networking on the Head," a special "Artist's Project for *Flash Art*, 1991."

Bonnefoy, Françoise and Sarah Clément, Isabelle Sauvage. **Gutai**. Galerie National du Jeu de Paume, Paris, France, 1999. 286 pages.

One of the major exhibition catalogs on Gutai, this alas, all in French. However, anyone can gain by perusing the excellent color reproductions. Essays by Antoni Tápies, Michael Lucken, Éric Mézil, Geroge Mathieu ("La Peinture et le Samurai"), Paul Jenkins ("Yoshihara et les Artistes Gutai"), Osaki Shinichiro, Ito Junji, and Véronique Béranger. A chronology from 1946-1999, prepared by Hirai Shoichi and Yamamoto Atsuo, running 81 pages, is an exceptional feature of the work. Alessandra Bellavita contributes a biographical section.

Burch, Charlton, Editor. "Gutai and the Avant-Garde in Japan." *Lightworks* (Birmingham, Michigan), Number 16, Winter 1983/1984.

The issue contains three articles on Gutai, including Shozo Shimamoto's first hand account, "The Beginnings of Gutai," Yoshio Shirakawa's "Gutai: Spirit Takes Form" and "On the Side of the Assassins," in which Shirakawa places Gutai within the context of other Japanese avant-garde movements (Mavo, Neo-Dada, Hi-Red Center). Especially revealing is Shimamoto's accounts of Jiro Yoshihara, who he recalls as, "a born misanthrope." An important contribution to the literature is Shimamoto's reflections on the "spirit of hattari," which Yoshihara instilled in him. "He hammered the 'spirit of hattari' into me. Hattari is an Osaka slang word that refers to a person who tries to appear more able or powerful than he actually is, or who does things by guesswork. This slang term was originally used in a negative way and the word itself lacks dignity, but Yoshihara favored it, seeing in it a good meaning. He taught me to acquire and make use of the spirit of hattari." Includes a two-page diagram of the Japanese avant-garde from 1918 through 1970. The issue presented an incisive and early English language introduction to the movement.

Caraotti, Elena and Debbie Bibo, Editors. **Sentieri Interrotti: Crisi della Rappresentazione e Iconoclastia nelle Arti dagli Anni Cinquanta alla Fine del Secolo (Vanished Paths: Crisis of Representation and Destruction in the Arts from the 1950s to the End of the Century)**. Charta, Milan, Italy. 2000. 370 pages.

"Taking stock of past experiences" and predicting the future drives this exhibition notable for featuring intriguing international avant-garde movements arising after mid-nineteenth century. Cobra, Gutai, Lettrism, Fluxus, Visual Poetry and Mail Art are among the movements given a stage to present their often hidden histories. Although the chapter on Gutai is at best rudimentary, stricken by a shaky translation and unreliable information (Atsuko Tanaka is mistakenly identified as male), the work is significant for it's reproduction of Ben Vautier's essay, "On the Subject of the Gutai," published in 1976, noting the deficiencies of Tapié's smothering embrace, and the debt owed Gutai by Yves Klein. "It is not, however, because they are not talked about in Europe as much as they deserve, nor because they are a long way from us geographically, that we can conclude that the movement has no influence on contemporary painting and European painting. This is not true. I recall, for example, that the first time I heard about the Gutai group was in 1957, during a conversation with Yves Klein, who had just returned from Osaka in Japan, where he had won a judo competition. Klein had thus seen Tanaka's white monochromes. And let us not forget that Pollock himself expressed an interest in the work of the Gutai. As regards their influence on happenings, I am not so sure, although John Cage's "Silence" concert only took place in 1954/55, and there is a certain link between New York and Osaka."

(Peeters, Henk)**. Nul Negentienhonderd Vijf en Zestig (Zero 1965)**. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. April 15 – June 8, 1965. (32 pages).

Organized by Henk Peters and the Zero Group, who were attempting to place their group in an international context, the exhibition drew together artists from disparate movements Zero, Nul, Gutai and T. As quoted by Ming Tiampo in **Gutai: Decentering Modernism**, Peteers is quoted as saying that, "I couldn't make a revolution by myself," and so other artists were invited to realize, "a new global culture," where "art is not nationalist." Gutai was assigned a separate gallery, where eight artists were shown (Yoshihara, Kanayama, Montonaga, Murakami, shimamoto, Tanaka, Yamasaki, Michio Yoshihara.) In addition to the groups Peeters invited, exhibited artists included Arman, Pol Bury, Lucio Fontana, Hans Haacke, Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, George Rickey and Yayoi Kusama. A group photo of nineteen of the exhibiting artists is included, as well as reproductions of works and installation documentation.

Di Lallo, Emanuela, Editor**. Gutai: Painting with Time and Space**. Silvana Editoriale, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Lugano, Switzerland. 2010. 263 pages.

Catalog for the Museo Catonale d'Arte, Lugano, exhibition, "Gutai: Painting with Time and Space," held from October 23, 2010 through February 20, 2011, describing itself as, "…enriched by academic contributions and many documentary images and writings for the time, [this catalog] is the most up-to-date publication now available on this Japanese artistic group." The work, along with the more recent publication of Ming Tiampo's sustained narrative, "Gutai: Decentering Modernism," (University of Chicago Press. 2011. 231 pages.), gives the interested English language reader (texts are in Italian and English) unprecedented access to previously inaccessible material. Tiampo contributes the essay, "Gutai Experiments on the World Stage," as well as providing concise and informative artist biographies and an expansive bibliography, which is highly recommended for the reader wanting to go beyond my more humble beginning. Other essays reflect on the outdoor exhibitions, the group's reception in Europe, Gutai's relationship to other avant-garde artists, and misunderstandings (…beside Tapié, Yves Klein's renunciation) impeding recognition of their accomplishments. The catalog also reproduces a significant number of paintings, invaluable documentary photography, and a comprehensive chronology compiled by Shoichi Hirai. Indispensible.

Elliott, David and Kazu Kaido, Editors. **Reconstructions: Avant-Garde Art in Japan, 1945-1965**. Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England. 1985. 96 pages.

The catalog to the exhibition provides an excellent social, political and cultural background to the situation of Japanese artists before, during and after World War II. "The title of the exhibition, **Reconstructions**, refers literally to the rebuilding of a shattered country as well as metaphorically to the reassessment of the cultural history of post-war Japan which is now beginning to take place." Painters influenced by Surrealism and Social Realism are examined along with Gutai. The movement is given a short introduction and artist biographies are provided for Jiro Yoshihara, Shozo Shimamoto, Kazuo Shiraga, Atsuko Tanaka, Akira Kanayama and Suburo Murakami.

Ferguson, Russell, Editor. **Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979**. Thames and Hudson, New York, and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California. 1998. 407 pages.

Catalog for the exhibition curated by MOCA, LA curator Paul Schimmel, presenting a showcase for "an international survey that brings together artists of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s whose work was undeniably altered by their association with performative actions." In his essay, "Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object," Chief Curator Schimmel cites Pollock, Cage, Fontana and Gutai member Shozo Shimamoto as exerting "a tremendous influence on postwar art to place a new emphasis on the role of the act in the creation of the object." His survey of Gutai ruminates upon Shiraga ("Kazuo Shiraga is the most complete and multifaceted embodiment of Gutai."), Akira Kanayama (who anticipated Jean Tinguely's mechanical drawing machines), Saburo Murakami, Shimamoto, and Atsuko Tanaka ("Clearly, this work ["Electric Dress"] anticipated 1970s feminist art and artists' use of their own bodies in dangerous situations."). Shinichiro Osaki contributes the essay, "Body and Place: Action in Postwar Art in Japan," walking us through the formation Gutai based on Jiro Yoshihara's transformation from abstract painting to, "a quite new, epoch-making idea which was not thought of before the war, must emerge in the art world as a mainstream, like Dada after the end of the First World War." Impregnated with social observations of postwar Japan and the artists' place within it, the essay ties the work of Gutai to later avant-garde-groups active in Japan, such as Hi Red Center and Neo-Dada. Osaki concludes with the observation that, "Postwar art in Japan has often been considered regional or imitative. However, it is obvious that it has developed around the concrete issues of body and place, resulting in an art form entirely different from contemporary art in Europe and America.

Fujino, Tadatoshi. **A New Perspective Gutai: Through the Eyes of Fujino, Tadatoshi**. Koumyakusya, Miyazaki City, Japan. 2011. Paper. 216 pages.

"This book presents the story of GUTAI, a group of artists who challenged then current concepts of beauty from a completely new viewpoint. But the book is somewhat different from the usual book on art. It is made up of photographs and short histories of GUTAI artists, pus my evaluation of the place of GUTAI in modern art…I joined GUTAI in 1965, and for the greater part of 40 years have been active in showing my work in their exhibits, contributing to discussions, and collecting members work. Now, I am writing the history of GUTAI as I have experienced it." The work is notable for the inclusion both historic photographs and more recent ones picturing Gutai artists at various reunions over the years. Nice section of written and current photographic portraits of Gutai members with reproductions of their work. Texts in Japanese and English.

Goldberg, Roselee. **Performance: Live Art Since 1960**. Harry N. Abrams, New York, New York. 1998. 240 pages.

The author is a pioneer art historian in the field of performance art, reminiscing in her introduction on the early years of the profession when, "My task in constructing the first history of a medium with no real name involved searching through odd journals, ephemera, and photo archives, looking for material that had been all but forgotten. It was overlooked because it often fit no category, and unexamined because this material could no long be seen, only described. I nevertheless ended up with an unexpected conclusion to my book. Not only did live art by artists represent the very spirit of its own times and reveal the ways in which artists from different disciplines interconnected, it also showed me how certain ideas in a painting or a sculpture, which as a traditional art historian I might have looked for in other paintings or sculptures, often originated is some sort of performed action." The author's first attempt at encapsulating performance art history, "Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present," Abrams, New York, 1979), excluded Gutai, and while the introduction to "Live Art Since 1960 contains only a rudimentary introduction of Gutai, it's importance lies in situating the group's artistic practice within, and influence upon, the history of an emerging field of artistic practice.

Gray, John**. Action Art: A Bibliography of Artists' Performance from Futurism to Fluxus and Beyond**. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut. 1993. 343 pages.

In a section entitled, "Action Art 1950s-1970s: Gutai, Happenings, Fluxus, Viennese Actionism, Destruction in Art, the Provos, Situationism and Beyond," we find sixty-seven entries on Gutai including books, exhibition catalogs, thesis, journal articles and special issues, exhibition and performance reviews. International in scope, the bibliography cites mainly English language texts but does include important foreign language material. A well- researched document by a former MoMA/NY librarian.

Gutai Members. **Gutai Pinacotheca**. Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, Japan. (August)1962. (12 pages).

I have been able to view a few Gutai publications firsthand, in addition to the *Gutai* magazine facsimile edition. The Pinacotheca publications seem to follow a similar pattern of thin (no more than twenty pages) pamphlets of a standard size (roughly 10" x 10"). This particular work, dated August 14, 1962, was issued in conjunction with the inauguration of the Gutai Pinacotheca on August 25, in the Nakanoshima district of Osaka, and bears the well known photograph of Gutai members in the courtyard of the Pinacotheca with Yoshihara front and center arms akimbo. There is a reproduction of a handwritten text by Tapié, titled, "Osaka Aout 1962," photographs of what is probably the *11th Gutai Exhibition* held April 17-22, 1962 at the Takashimaya Department store, Osaka, and a listing of twenty-one Gutai artists and twenty-two Western artists (titled "Collection"), including South African Christo Coetzee, Claire Falkenstein (a San Francisco Bay Area artist who taught at the Art Institute, residing for a while in Paris where she and fellow Bay Area artist Sam Francis met Tapié), Lucio Fontana, Sam Francis, Paul Jenkins, Georges Mathieu, Alfonso Ossoro and others. A Gutai chronology follows with thumbnail photographs of historic Gutai exhibitions.

Gutai Members. **Lucio Fontana/Giuseppe Capogrossi**. Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, Japan. (16 pages). (June)1964.

Catalog of the June 1 - 20, 1964, exhibition of the two Italian artists at the Gutai Pinacotheca. According to the introductory text of Jiro Yoshihara, this was the first time foreign artists were shown at the Pinacotheca. "It is the great pleasure for us that the exhibition of the paintings by the two distinguished artists for whom we have held the utmost respect and love is opened here by our hands. / By now we have introduced in Osaka the oeuvres by such artists inspiring our respect and sympathy as Mathieu, Sam Francis, Imai, Coetzee, Assetto, Garelli, etc. This two-man show as well is one of such serial activities as ours. / To our great pleasure, however, the fact that the show is opened this time in our own Pinacotheca means that one of the objects of the establishment of the Gutai Pinacotheca is for the first time realized by this show." Following Yoshihara's remarks, the Italian Ambassador writes a short congratulatory text. Fontana sends a telegraph message reading in part, "…I take the opportunity to say that your group has been frequently and important inspiration source for my work." Reproductions of the two artists works and biographical information are included, as well as a tipped-in print by Capogrossi.

Gutai Members. **Iuko Nasaka**. Gutai Piacotheca, Osaka, Japan. November 1964. (4 pages).

An example of a catalog produced for an exhibition of one of the Gutai members. Female artist Nasaka was one of the "new wave" Gutai members, joining in 1963 and remaining with the group until it disbanded in 1972. The slim publication reproduces a centerfold of the artist in front of her work with a short text and limited biographical chronology. On the back cover of the publication, twenty-one members of the "Gutai Group" are listed.

Hirai, Soichi, Editor. **GUTAI: The Spirit of an Era**. The National Art Center, Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan. 2012. 296 pages.

The 2012 exhibition catalog from the National Art Center, Tokyo, documenting the first Tokyo retrospective of Gutai works covering all it's periods. In his essay, "Gutai: A Utopia of the Modern Spirit," editor Shoichi discusses the reasons for the movements four decade omission from Tokyo artistic investigation. The author argues that while Tokyo dismissed Gutai, it was equally misunderstood in the West. Underlying all of these misgivings was Yoshihara's desire for the emergence of a new spirit after war torn Japan. "It seems that Yoshihara truly believed that pursuing new horizons in art was connected to the liberation of the spirit and would help people live a better life in turbulent times as well as contributing to the development of the human race as a whole…If Yoshihara believed that art would force Japan, after its military defeat, to become a modern nation of the sort that it was destined to be before the war, and a country that could engage in discourse on equal terms with the West based on a shared set of values, one might also say that Gutai offered him a practical means of achieving the goal of a 'Utopia of the modern spirit' that was thoroughly characteristic of someone who had been steeped in the liberalism of the '20s…" Other essays include Yukako Yamada's, "Approaching the Finale: The Osaka Expo," which traces the evolution of Gutai's parting gesture, and "From Ashiya to Amsterdam: Gutai's Exhibition Spaces," by Naoki Yoneda, which discusses various Gutai exhibitions both at home and abroad, but focuses on the architectural space of the Gutai Pinachotheca. The main text breaks the movement into early, middle and later periods, with extensive photo documentation of each. English translations are provided at the conclusion of the work, as is a "Gutai Chronology," and "Biographical Sketches of the Artists," as well as a complete listing of works in the exhibition.

Hirai, Soichi, Editor. **What is Gutai?** Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha, Hyogo, Japan. 2004.

Curator of the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Hirai Shoichi, contributes the texts to this wide-ranging yet detailed overview of Gutai history, which he divides into a beginning (1954-1957), middle (1957-1965) and ending (1965-1972) period. "It seems to me that from the outset there has been a tendency to avoid discussing Gutai as a unified entity. Or, to put it another way: The simple but fundamental question of what exactly Gutai was has been overshadowed by the group's image as 'international" and 'pioneering,' and has gone unanswered in the thirty years since the group's breakup." Was Gutai the *Gutai Manifesto*? Shoichi argues not, that it was written in response to a newspaper inquiry, and the true meaning of Gutai lies in Yoshihara's pithy exclamatory aphorisms "Don't copy others!" and "Do something no one else has done!" The strength of the work not only lies in the curator's familiarity with Gutai material, but the insight derived from it. Throughout the chronological examination of Gutai history (Yoshihara's background, The Genbi Art Panel, publication of *Gutai*, outdoor exhibition and *Life* magazine, *Gutai Works for the Stage*, meeting Tapié, the opening of the Pinocotheca, the Osaka Expo, the death of Yoshihara), we are treated to a multitude of informatively captioned photographic documentation. Excellent appendixes include a photographic documentary on Gutai venues past and present in Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo; a selected chronology; a guide to museums with collections of Gutai; biographical sketches of Gutai members, and a guide to primary sources. An invaluable and path breaking work in the literature of the field.

Hülsewig, Jutta and Yoshio Shirakawa, Stephen von Weiss. **Dada in Japan: Japanische Avantgarde: 1920-1970.** Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany. 1983. 145 pages.

A "Japan Avant-Gardes Map," compiled by Yoshio Shirakawa serves as the frontispiece for the German exhibition catalog, listing thirty-three Japanese Modern and Post-Modern groups active from 1950 to 1968. Essays and chronologies (on Mavo and Gutai) accompany a work laden with documentary photography, with over one-hundred photographs of Gutai activity alone. Twenty texts are presented, all of them in German. Groups warranting special mention include Mavo, Gutai, Neo-Dada and High Red Center. Suboru Murakami contributes the essay, "Gutai ist Gutai," Yoshio Shirakawa presents, "Gutais Anfänge," while Ben Vautier adds, "Warum diese Ausstellung?" Besides his map, Shirakawa also produces a helpful diagram listing various Japanese avant-garde groups, with concurrent world activity, and political, social and cultural events in Japan helping to shape the direction of the postwar Fine Arts in Japan.

Kaprow, Allan. **Assemblage, Environments & Happenings**. Harry N. Abrams, New York, New York. (1966). 341 pages.

Text and design by happenings innovator Allan Kaprow. An early examination of the field, Kaprow writes in the preface that, "It has been written in the midst of a young activity, with an interest that was both observant and highly biased. Being part of the activity, I was inclined to look at and judge an art-in-the-making as well as influence its course. Artists, like critics and historians, make the history they reflect, even with the best of intentions to remain objective. I thought, when I began writing, that I should try both to observe and to influence as much as possible." And indeed, Kaprow's placing of Gutai in the center of this newly examined form, had a profound effect in elevating Gutai to a new level of historic prominence within the field. "For the record," Kaprow states in his introduction to Gutai performance photographic documentation, "the dates accompanying these photographs seem to indicate the priority of the Japanese in the making of a Happening type performance. Even earlier in America, John Cage in 1952 organized an event at Black Mountain College combining paintings, dance, films, slides, recordings, radios, poetry, piano playing, and a lecture, with the audience in the middle of the activity. Since my own first efforts, in 1957, were done in Cage's composition class, where he described this event, I should mention it as an important catalyst…Of the Gutai's activities I knew nothing until Alfred Leslie mentioned them to me two years later, and it was not until late 1963 that I obtained the information presented here. This is a rare case of modern communications malfunctioning." Captions for the photographs of Gutai activities provided to Kaprow by Yoshihara.

Kawakami, Shigeki, Editor. **Do Something No One's Ever Done Before**. Kwansei Gakuin University, Nishinomiya, Japan. 2010. 32 pages.

While most of the texts in this exhibition catalog are in Japanese, there are two English language essays included. "Jiro Yoshihara, His Gutai Art Society, and Stanley William Hayter in Paris," by Tetsuya Higashiura, is short but informative, mentioning Yoshihara's relationship with Fujita before the creation of Gutai, his formation of the Association, and Gutai's influence on other artists, including master printmaker Stanley William Hayter. Takesada Matsutai contributes the essay, "Inheriting Jiro Yoshihara's Spirit," in which the now Paris based artist delves into the psyche of Yoshihara, quoting from his autobiography. "In 1928, I saw the extraordinary sunflowers by Vincent Van Gough on exhibition in Osaka. It is a vertical picture on about a size 30 canvas of three or four withered sunflower in a clay vase on a table. In the background I saw a horizontal line in dark ultramarine blue paint squeezed from the tube to lie in relief on the canvas. The sunflowers were partially outlined in vermillion. It was such a unique and powerful painting it made me tremble. I believe it was the Sunflowers by Van Gough and the Deserted House by Paul Cezanne (Matsukata Collection) that determined the course of my subsequent life." Although short, the essay contains other poignant observations by one of the younger members of Gutai.

Kuma, Chinatsu, Editor. ***Gutai*, Facsimilie Edition**. Geikashoin Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan. 2010. Twelve Volume Box Set with Supplement.

Impossible to obtain as a set, *Gutai Magazine* has been an invaluable yet unattainable resource for institutions and researchers alike. The regional museum around which Gutai members resided, the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History, stepped into this void to supervise the production of a twelve volume facsimile edition with accompanying booklet. The booklet is an invaluable aid for English language readers, as all the text published in Japanese in the original magazines are translated into English. In addition to these translations, Jiro Yoshihara's, "The Gutai Art Manifesto," is presented, as well as three essays Shoichi Hirai's, "The Gutai Art Association and the Gutai Bulletin," Mizuho Kato's, "A Bridge to the World: Gutai, 1956-1959," and Yuri Mitsuda's, "Gutai and *Gendai Bijutsu* in Japan – The Critique of Representational Art." Complete bibliographic information (editor, publisher, publication date, printer, price, etc.) is given from each issue, based on materials from the Jiro Yoshihara Archives.

Mats B, Editor, "Japanskt Kalejdoskop." *Kalejdoskiop* (Ahus, Sweden), No. 4 & 5, 1980. 79 pages.

Sometimes associated with the Fluxus group, Mats B. edited this early special issue on the Japanese avant-garde of the fifties, sixties and seventies, with special attention placed on Gutai, Mono-Ha, and individual artists, who remain unfamiliar to most Western observers. Toru Takahashi, contributes the essay, "Gutai och Jiro Yoshihara," in Swedish, as are all the included essays save Toshiaki Minemura's "Survey in English: The Japanese Kaleidoscope." Reproductions of works and actions by Saburo Murakami, Kazso Shiraga, Sadamasa Montonaga, Atsuko Tanaka, Michio and Jiro Yoshihara accompany the Gutai essay. The "Survey in English," places Gutai in regard to a debate on Surrealists versus Modernists (the Surrealists were literary and politically prone). "As for members of the Group Gutai, the most successful forerunners of the sixties' art who, in 1955, had already begun showing every unrestrained invention imaginable such as light tableau, action painting, water or foam sculpture, inflatables, kinetic construction, and those world-famous happenings above all, not only in their homeland (Kobe and Osaka) but also in Tokyo, they were essentially modernists. Inspired with the respect to materiality and inventiveness by the leader, Jiro Yshihara, who had been one of the most talented modernist painters since the 1930's, the group had considerable exchanges with French Informels, American Abstract Expressionists and Italian Spatialists – most members of the Gutai, especially Sadamasa Motonaga and Kazuo Shiraga were 'informal,' when they made paintings – but never with artists of surrealist lineage. Metaphysics always escaped the Gutai."

Merewether, Charles and Rika Iezumi Hiro. **Art Anti-Art Non-Art**. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California. Offset. 2007. 140 pages.

The catalog for the exhibition, *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art Experimentation in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950-1970*, held at the Getty Research Institute March 6-June 3, 2007. "The Getty Research Institute focuses on works by some of the most prominent of these groups: Experimental Workshop/Jikken Kobo, Gutai, Group Ongaku, Neo Dada, Tokyo Fluxus, Hi Red Center, Vivo, Provoke, and Bikoto." Drawn from the collections of Jean Brown, Allan Kaprow and David Tudor, among others, "The Research Institute's selection of signal materials from the period from 1950 to 1970 shows the art of Ja-

pan in transition. It seeks to convey a more coherent impression of these artists and to describe the interconnections of groups such as Gutai and Fluxus." Essays by Charles Merewether ("Disjunctive Modernity: The Practice of Artistic Experimentation in Postwar Japan") and Reiko Tomii, an oft cited mentor to contemporary Japanese art scholars ("Geijutsu on their Minds: Memorable Words on Anti-Art"), accompany a range of documentary textual and photographic materials, including Gutai from it's inception to *Expo '70*.

Munroe, Alexandra. **Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky**. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, New York. 1994. 416 pages.

Billing itself as, "the first book ever published in English on the development, identity, and expression of Japanese avant-garde art after 1945, as seen within the dramatic social and political context of postwar and contemporary culture in Japan," the exhibition catalog for the Guggenheim, SFMOMA and Yokohama Museum exhibition is a significant overview, which brought Gutai to a new level of popular awareness. Exhibition curator Alexandria Munroe contributes several essays to the text, including, "To Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun: The Gutai Group," a concise yet distinguished essay on Gutai history, broken into sections on "Yoshihara and Postwar Japanese Art," "The Formative Phase: Yoshihara's Atelier and the Zero Society," "Early Gutai," "Gutai Performance," "Gutai Painting," and "The Critical Legacy." Lamenting the lack of understanding about Gutai, Munroe claims that, "although Yoshihara strove for Gutai's international recognition, it did not achieve the status abroad of an independent art movement. Rather, its identity was absorbed by the established movements with which it became associated. One of the fallacies of this legacy is that Gutai's early experiments in more conceptual, minimalist, intermedia, and kinetic art forms were overlooked, and research into Gutai's affinities with or connections to Fluxus, Body Art, Arte Povera, or Earthworks has yet to be fully explored." Munroe joins with Ming Tiampo, author of **Gutai: Decentering Modernism**, in curating the 2013 Guggenheim exhibition, "Splendid Playground," which should do much to rectify the situation.

Museum of Modern Art, New York. **The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture**. Doubleday, Garden City, New York. 1966. 116 pages.

An introductory essay by co-curator William S. Lieberman (with Dorothy C. Miller) gives an overview of Japanese cultural history noting the rise of museums of modern art in Japan, and the number of artist associations developed for "moral support." The "Gutai Association" is among over twenty groups listed. "The exhibition is concerned only with Japanese art of international tendency…If one may predict the future from the past, few can doubt that in the twentieth century, as so often before in her history, Japan will benefit by international contacts and stimuli from abroad, and from her native genius will produce an art distinctively
her own." Although suffering from the hubris of Eurocentric Modernism, the exhibition, composed of forty-six Japanese artists, traveled to eight venues in the United States, offering an early survey of contemporary postwar Japanese painting and sculpture. Among the forty-six artists selected, those associated with Gutai were Jiro Yoshihara, Sadamasa Montonaga, Kazuo Shiraga, Atsuko Tanaka and Shuji Mukai. Each receives a small biographical sketch with a reproduction of their work.

Nishizawa, Midori. **A Visual Essay on Gutai at 32 East 69th Street.** Hauser & Wirth, New York, New York. 2012. Thirty pages.

Published on the occasion of the exhibition by the same title from September 12 through October 27, 2012 at Hauser & Wirth New York, the previous home of the Martha Jackson Gallery, site of the first Gutai exhibition in 1958 arranged by Michel Tapié. The catalog contains two essays, "Gutai at 32 East 69th Street," by curator Midori Nishizawa, and "Gutai: From the Past to the Future," by Koichi Kawasaki. Former Chief Curator at both the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art and Ashiya City Museum, sites of two major Gutai collections, Kawasaki answers the self-imposed question, "So what is Gutai?" in surprising fashion. "Gutai is, in itself, a work of art by Jiro Yoshihara. Gutai is a work that continues to exist. Despite the distinct characteristics of the various artists in the group, Gutai is Gutai…Fifty years since its founding and its first recognition abroad, Gutai has gained great esteem in the West, having been exhibited with rising frequency over the past twenty years. The unflagging efforts of the group have defied Japanese criticism. Even today, Gutai's works inspire awe, and are acknowledged as unique art pieces, the likes of which have never been seen before." Excellent color reproductions of paintings by Mukai, Shiraga, Shimamoto, Yoshihara, Motonaga and others accompany the text. A Gutai chronology prepared by Dr. Hirai Shoichi is included.

Oliva, Achille Bonito, Curator. **Shozo Shimamoto: Samurai, Acrobata dello Squardo, 1950-2008**. Skira, Milan, Italy. 2008. 143 pages.

An exhibition catalog for a major retrospective dedicated to Gutai artist Shozo Shimamoto at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Villa Croce, Genova, Italy, from November 2008 through March 2009. The exhibition is notable for it's curation by Achille Bonito Oliva, one of Italy's leading curators and critics. Unfortunately, his essay suffers from shoddy translation. The catalog also includes an essay by Shimamoto. "For the Banishment of the Paintbrush," which first appeared in *Gutai*, Number 6, 1957. "Then there are the objects used by the members of the Gutai group: watering cans, umbrellas, vibrators, abacuses, roller-skates, toys. Feet also or firearms, whatever." The textual portion of the work concludes with an interview with Shimamoto and a chronological biography. "During the war for us freedom did not exist. In the post-war period we were made free and at the beginning we were a little lost, but we understood the wonder of freedom above all else. Life was full of problems, but freedom is the key to happiness. To be able to express freedom through the world of art has been a great joy." Texts are accompanied by color reproductions of over sixty works from 1946 through 2008.

Roberts, James. "Painting as Performance." *Art in America*, May 1992, pages 113-118, 155.

A popular survey of Gutai activity, notable for the author's interest in the relationship between the Association's activities and those of radical calligraphers. "Yet there is another facet to the group's painted work that is of equal, if not greater importance [to the performative aspect]: its relationship with the Japanese calligraphic tradition and the conscious attempt by Gutai artists to link aspects of that practice with contemporary Western abstraction. This approach to art-making, arising from the particular circumstances and cultural milieu out of which the Gutai group emerged has never been adequately explored."

Shimamoto, Shozo. **AH.** Japan Art Press Center. Osaka, Japan. July 1981. 35 Pages.

Includes an essay, "My Own Interpretation of Art Under the Theme of 'AH'," with both black and white and color reproductions of works illustrating what the author describes as a refusal or denial of "the expression of authority as seen in works of art not only in Europe but also elsewhere in the world. What inspired me and encourage(d) me most in this effort was 'Gutai', whose spirit is embodied in the activities of 'mail art,' a form of expression campaigned for by the Artists Union today." Shimamoto's works from the late 1940s are reproduced.

Shimamoto, Shozo. **Gutai & AU**. (Artists Union, Nishinomiya, Japan, 1983). 67 pages.

A written and illustrated record of Shimamoto's activities in Gutai and AU (Artists Union, Art Unidentified). "We are devoted to a diametrically opposite attitude in life, carrying on dialogues with this attitude by means of mail art and by other means of communication. The present book relates to my own records of 'Gutai' and 'AU,' and to so many people I have become acquainted with during the course of my activities with the said groups, and at the same time, carries my own subjective presentation of art chronicle."

Shimamoto, Shozo. **Operations Manual**. Ryosuke Koen, Osaka, Japan. 1982. (82 pages).

Profiling members of AU, the work includes profile portraits, biographical information, and reproductions of works by several ex-Gutai members (Tadatoshi Fujino, Teruyuki Tsubouchi, Tsuruko Yamazaki, Yasuo Sumi, Saburo Murakami). An untitled ten point painting manifesto by Shimamoto is included (i.e."1. A picture should be painted without skill.") A history of AU, and how it relates to Gutai is included. "A. U. (Artists Union) was established by avant garde artists in 1975. We have 500 members at present, and we are engaged in many activities that involve the younger members. Some of them belonged to the Gutai. It took the initiative in art movement in about 1949, and created performed many novel works of art such as, action paintings, pop art, conceptual art, original performance, mail art, modern music, avant garde movies, etc.").

Shimamoto, Shozo. **Shozo Shimamoto Networking**. Art Space, Nishinomiya, Japan. 1990. 63 pages.

A visual record of the activities of Shozo Shimamoto spanning his years in Gutai through his involvement in Mail Art. Includes writings by Shimamoto from *Lightworks* (USA), "Beginnings of Gutai," and "Gutai," reprinted from a 1987 issue of *Lotta Poetica* (Italy). He writes in *Lotta Poetica*, "We often had meetings under the auspices of Jiro Yoshihara who had been influenced by Mondrian during the war. The aim to have the meetings was to make the works different from those of Mondrian's." A chronology of the artist's activities is also included.

Stiles, Kristine and Peter Selz. **Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings**. University of California Press, Berkeley, California. 1996.

In a section on Performance Art (not the Gestural Abstraction category containing the writings of Pollock, Twombly, Michel Tapié, et al.), Jiro Yoshihara's, "The Gutai Manifesto," is reprinted. In the introduction to the Performance Art section, Stiles asserts that, "After World War II, performance by artists emerged almost simultaneously in Japan, Europe, and the United States. The artists who began to use their bodies as the material of visual art repeatedly expressed their goal to bring art practice closer to life in order to increase the experiential immediacy of their work…One of the earliest manifestations of performance art after world War II occurred in Japan, where Jiro Yosahihara (Japan, 1904-72). A gestural, abstract painter and influential teacher, founded the Gutai group (Concrete Group) in 1954… Their use of the body as material, creation of events, emphasis on process over product, and introduction of natural materials and ordinary objects into the art context anticipated aspects of installation art, conceptual art, performance art, and *arte povera* and was aimed at reinvesting matter with spirit."

Stimson, Blake and Gregory Sholette, Editors. **Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945**. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2007.

The editors collect an array of experts in the still emerging field of art as collective social practice, focusing on collaborative approaches to art making, diverging from the image of the solidary genius. The editor's introduction states, "While there were plenty of group exhibitions, ersatz and real professional organizations, international conferences and journals, and other developments in the 1950s and 1960s that helped to make the likes of abstract expressionism, happenings, Fluxus, pop art, minimalism, conceptual art, and others over into art-historical categories, none of these brought the question of collective voice to the fore in the same way, non saw collectivization itself as a vital and primary artistic solution, none sought first and foremost to generate a voice that declared its group affiliation, its collectivization, as the measure of its autonomy." Thus stated, I would argue that Jiro Yoshihara (Gutai) and George Maciunas (Fluxus) probably thought otherwise. Among the essayists contributing texts, Reiko Tomii concentrates on the Japanese experience in, "After the Descent of the Everyday: Japanese Collectivism from Hi Red Center to The Play, 1960-1973." While the focus is mainly elsewhere, she opens with Gutai. "Where do we begin a study of 'collectivism after modernism' in Japan? One possible –and obvious- place is Gutai, arguably the best-known Japanese avant-garde collective in post-1945 world art…Yet Gutai's works remained primarily those of individuals within a collective environment, rather than those of a collective. In the decade that followed the foundation of Gutai, a new mode of collectivism – that is 'collaborative collectivism' – emerged, as anti-Art practitioners increasingly breached the walls of the exhibition hall and departed from the institutional site of art." This aptly states the situation with Shozo Shimamoto's post-Gutai founding of the artspace/collective AU in Nishinomiya, serving as a focal point for Japanese international Mail Art practice.

Tapié, Michel and Tore Haga. **Continuité et Avant-Garde au Japon (Avant-Garde Art in Japan)**. Edizioni d"Arte Fratelli Pozzo, Torino, Italy. 1961. (92 pages).

True first published in Italy before the English language edition, "Avant-Garde Art in Japan" (Abrams, New York, 1962). A deluxe showcase for Japanese painters, many associated with Gutai. Those not associated with Gutai include expats Kusama (New York), and Domoto (Paris). Gutai artists include Yoshihara, Kanayama, Murakami, Shiraga, Sumi, Tanaka, Tsubouchi, and Shimamoto. Two essays (in French), by Tapié and Haga, accompany numerous black and white reproductions and over thirty tipped in color reproductions. While Tapié is often taken to task for his attempts to push Gutai painting over performance, there is a notable section, "Activités Group Gutai," which photographically documents the group's outdoor and stage presentations, with brief indications of the physical activity required of the work.

Tapié, Michel and Tore Haga. **Avant-Garde Art in Japan**. Abrams, New York. 1962. Unpaged.

Essentially the same printing as the earlier Italian edition, with the exception of the essays of Tapié and Haga translated into English. Tapié opens his essay railing against false avant-gardes, both in Europe and Japan. He then attempts a rather awkward examination of the "Oriental" soul. "To begin with, the Oriental is far ahead of us in the practice of abstraction in general, both in his philosophy and in the 'reading' of his art." But to his credit, Tapié realizes his shortcomings and allows Japanese scholar Tore Haga to establish a "climate" for the following presentation of visual work in his essay, "The Japanese Point of View." Unfortunately, whether due to translation or abundance of adjectives, the text meanders into hyperbole. "And do not our artists - the destroyer-creators of the Gutai Group, Kudo, Onishi, men like Domoto or Imai - breathe the harsh and invigorating air of this world more freely and more deeply than anyone?" Over the top, and nothing to indicate the importance of Gutai influence on happenings, land art, mail art, cultural networking and other contemporary cultural activities. The excellent reproductions more than make up for it. The work includes "141 reproductions, including 34 hand-tipped, full-color plates."

Tatsunori, Sakaide. **Two and a Half Drops of Bitters: Extraordinary Tales of Murakami Saburo**. Seseragi Shuppan, Osaka, Japan. 2012. 322 pages.
The author, the owner of a Bar Metamorphose which sought to emulate Cabaret Voltaire in Nishinomiya, Japan, reminisces about the time he spent with a frequent guest, the Guati artist Saburo Murakami, well known for his "breakthrough" works. The episodic adventures of the artist are told to reveal his singular personality. The work is full of little gems like this one: "One day, I asked Murakami, 'People talk about Dada and Gutai and Abstract Expressionism, but aren't they just offshoots of Surrealism?' He turned his plump face up and, glaring at me, said, 'No, no, no! You're totally wrong. Gutai is Gutai, and Surrealism is Surrealism.'" There is also a section of remarks by various people given at Murakami's Memorial Exhibiton at the bar on January 5, 2006. A "Murakami Saburo Chronology" is also included, accompanied by photographs of the artist's life and works. In English and Japanese.

Tiampo, Ming. **Gutai: Decentering Modernism**. University of Chicago Press. 2011. 231 pages.

You've waded through my attempt to list sources of information on Gutai, and I appreciate your staying with me. Your patience has paid off. You've just struck the motherload. This is the first sustained English language narrative about Gutai, and one couldn't ask for better or more. It has opened up all sorts of doors for me, especially in broadening my knowledge of Gutai member Shozo Shimamoto, whom I considered a friend for so long, without truly understanding his past and significance. So, I thank Tiampo for this alone - deepening the appreciation of an old friend. Aside from personal gratitude, the field of postwar Japanese art, indeed of Modernism and Post-Modernism (if there is such a distinction), owes the author a debt for her unerring research and a radical shift she proposes for the Modernist canon. "Thus, in addition to being a history of Gutai," writes Tiampo, "this book is a methodological proposal that suggests a vocabulary for writing a transnational history of modernism…Indeed, it is a call to look beyond the narrow geographical subfields where we are comfortable and to follow the lines of flight that emerge from our objects of study." Under the author's auspices, Gutai history becomes not the study of an exotic avant-garde curiosity far from the "centers" of Paris and New York, but critiques the parochialism of modernist centers for their "cultural mercantilism," draining the natural resources of the periphery for their own purposes. The author argues that being geographically distanced from national and international centers gave Gutai the advantage of creating innovative strategies in long distance aesthetic communication. This accounts for the publishing of *Gutai* and after making contact with Ray Johnson in 1956, the use of mail art as a potent medium for cross-cultural communication. "Although the group had already begun using the post to disseminate the *Gutai* journals internationally, Johnson's mail art may have suggested the possibilities and effects of using the post to distribute original works of art." It was no only important for Gutai to produce original works, but to have them recognized as such upon a broad stage. Unfortunately, as the author makes clear, when recognition did come, it was grasped without regard to long term prospects, and their message became distorted. This work unscrambles the distortion, making absolutely clear just how profound and prescient Gutai was. Includes a selected bibliography, and the appendixes "Chronology of Gutai Exhibitions, Publications and Events," "Gutai Artists," and "Yoshihara Jiro's Magazine Collections."

Tiampo, Ming**. "Under Each Others Spell": Gutai and New York.** Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, New York. 2009. 39 pages.

Guest Curator Ming Tiampo draws heavily from Ab Ex painter Paul Jenkins collection of Gutai paintings and ephemera, gathered while in residence at the Gutai Pinacotheca in 1964, in forming this exhibition linking Gutai to the New York artworld. Tiampo writes that, "'*Under Each Others Spell': The Gutai and New York* tells the story of the Gutai group's changing relationship with the New York art world from the first audacious letter they sent half-way around the globe to catch the attention of an art world celebrity in 1956, to the groups critically disparaged first New York exhibition in 1958, to the magnetic pull that their legendary experiments and avant-garde space in Osaka exerted on New York artists in the 1960s." Shozo Shimamoto's February 6, 1956 letter to Jackson Pollock, seeking an opinion on *Gutai* magazine and the work described therein, is reproduced, as are letters sent to Jiro Yoshihara by Ray Johnson, whose "method of sending out and publicizing his work stimulated the Gutai members greatly." Also under discussion is the Fall 1958 Martha Jackson gallery exhibition of Gutai, and New York visitors, such as John Cage and Robert Rauschenberg, to the Gutai Pinacotheca in Osaka. Essays by Tiampo, Tetsuya Oshima ("'Dear Mr. Jackson Pollock': A Letter from Gutai), David Kaplan ("Tennessee Williams, Jackson Pollock and Gutai"), and a forward by Helen Harrison, director, Pollock-Krasner House and Study center provide the textual content. Yoshihara's, "Gutai Manifesto," is also included.

Tomii, Reiko, and McCaffrey, Fergus. **Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades**. McCaffrey Fine Art, New York, New York. 2009. Cloth. 94 pages.

Japanese Post-War Art sensei Reiko Tomii's, "first substantial writing on Gutai," focus on painter/performer Kazuo Shiraga, whose "Challenging Mud," she determines to be "…one of the most important works to emerge from pre-war Japan." An innovative and inquisitive art historian, Tomii recreated the event at MOMA New York on July 23, 2011. In her essay, "Shiriga Paints: Toward a Concrete Discussion," she delves into the artist's biography and concentrates on his painting done by foot: first by sliding, then hanging in a sling and later "squeeze" paintings, done while wearing skies. Fergus McCaffrey, Director of the exhibiting gallery, who attended Kyoto University, contributes, "Beyond Transmission Failures: Shiraga in a New Context," lamenting the lost *Life* photographs, Tapié's smothering embrace, and the ill-fated Martha Jackson exhibition, in which critic Dore Ashton rebuked Gutai for "their basic allegiance to easel painting." McCaffrey places Shiraga's painting in the context of "Post Abstract Expressionism," with color reproductions of paintings by Rauschenberg, Klein, Twombly, Bacon and De Kooning, suggesting contemporaries, who like Shiraga, came of age in the fifties. "Writings and Interviews, Selected and translated by Reiko Tomii," include five selections of Shiraga's thoughts from 1955 ("What I Think" published in *Gutai* 2) to 2007 ("On Buddhism"). An illustrated chronology of the artist's life and his placement in sixty-one public collections follows.

Ukita, Yozo, Editor. **AU**. Shozo Shimamoto, Nishinomiya, Japan. 1985. 133 pages.

Members of the artist collective AU (Artist's Union/Art Unidentified), directed by Shozo Shimamoto, are given one or two pages for the reproduction of their work and some biographical information. Includes an essay by Shozo Shimamoto, "Gutai. AU. Mail Art." He writes, "In 1976, I became a general of AU Secretariat. Tsuruko Yamazaki, Saburo Murakami, Yozo Ukita, Yasuo Sumi, and Ariyuki Tsubouchi from 'Gutai' joined us. As for forming a group. I cannot understand why Europeans and Americans do not form groups. Michael Tapié and European artists are not sure that a group would produce fine pieces of art. In AU, however, we believe that a group could show far superior pieces of work than those of individual artists…The fact that we sent the first edition of 'Gutai' all over the world in 1955 is the first movement of MAIL ART."

Warr, Tracey, Editor and Amelia Jones. **The Artist's Body**. Phaidon Press, London, England. 2000. 287 pages.

As part of a series on themes and movements, the book focuses on the incorporation of the artists' body into the work of art. "After the Second World War, during a period of relative prosperity in both Europe and America, artists such as John Cage, Marcel Duchamp, Allan Kaprow, Yves Klein, and in Japan, Kazuo Shiraga and the Gutai group, took advantage of developing non-gallery spaces and alternative ideologies to create process-based, multi-disciplinary work, often using performance – or 'action'- to express their ideas…In Japan Kazuo Shiraga 'painted' his canvases with his feet, literally placing his body in the work." Broken into various sections representing different approaches to using the body as a medium ("Gesturing Bodies," "Ritualistic and Transgressive Bodes," "Body Boundaries," "Performing Identity," "Absent bodies," "Extended and Prosthetic Bodies"), Gutai artists are placed in the "Painting Bodies," section. After introductory and survey texts by the two editors, the work is given over to documentary photography, which reproduces performative actions by Murakami ("At One Moment Opening Six Holes"), Shiraga ("Challenging Mud"), and Shimamoto ("Making a Painting by throwing bottles of Paint"). The book concludes with a reprinting of historic documentary artists' texts, including, "The Gutai Manifesto," by Jiro Yoshihara.

Watkins, Jonathan and Mizuho Kato, Editors. **Atsuko Tanaka: The Art of Connecting**. Cornerhouse Publications, Manchester, England. 2011. 222 pages.

The exhibition catalog for the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, February-May 2012 presentation, *Atsuko Tanaka: The Art of Connecting*. Yuko Hasegawa contributes the essay, "Network Paintings: Prophecies of the Present," the first of four essays in Japanese and English on the artists' work. "Unlike Western modernist art, which advocated the autonomy of art, Gutai advocated art that conveyed a strong connection with nature and lifestyle. During the initial stage of the Gutai movement – before its members regressed back to Western-style painting – Gutai artists created numerous performances and site specific installations. During this time, the group aimed to produce a new 'high art' that was, at the same time, 'everyday' art, and indeed succeeded in realizing this aim…Tanaka…used non-physical materials such as blinking lights and sound to enhance and accentuate the presence of these materials in her work. Of particular interest is the highly radical nature of the work produced by the artist between 1953 and 1957 in comparison to the other Gutai members and international avant-garde at the time., as well as the relationship between this body of work and her concepts and ideas." The work concludes with a detailed chronology and a bibliography of Japanese and foreign sources compiled by Mizuho Kato. The exhibition traveled to England and Spain.

Westgeest, Helen**. Zen in the Fifties: Interaction in Art Between East and West**. Waanders Publishers, Zwolle, The Netherlands. 1996. 262 pages.

The author quotes a Zen expert as remarking that, "Zen is doing, the becoming one with dynamism. The way of expression is not important." This seems to fit well with Gutai methodology, and indeed there is a chapter, "The inherent Zen of Japan," which features a section on Saburo Murakami, Atsuko Tanaka, Akira Kanayama and Kazuo Shiraga, all of whom came to Gutai through their participation in the earlier Zero Group. Shiraga wrote that, "Zero means "nothing: start with nothing, completely original, no artificial meaning. The only meaning is: being natural, by body." In the author's examination on the influence of Zen on Western art, it is not surprising that she ponders a question, rather than coming to a conclusion. "The question still has not been answered how Japanese or how Western the works of Zero and Gutai actually were in the fifties. Some curators in Japanese museums of modern art were asked that same question. Their answers varied from 'very Japanese' to 'very Western', with all the gradations in between. I found a possible explanation for the differing views in the studies I conducted in the West. The Western works often proved to combine developments in the history of painting (in the nineteenth century Japonisme played an important part), the West's new outlook on the world which was related to the outlook of the Far East, and new sources from Japan, such as Zen. The Western and the Japanese elements had become a homogeneous blend in the course of the fifties, in various works in the West. And a similar process had taken place in Japan…In the course of the twentieth century the artist's attitude changed, and consciously or subconsciously, he began to mix Western elements with his own cultural heritage, to form a homogeneous whole."

Yoshimoto, Midori, Ed. ""Expo '70 and Japanese Art: Dissonant Voices." *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, December 2011. Josai University, Saitama-ken, Japan. Paper. 248 pages.

Special issue of the periodical dealing with the controversies leading up to, events surrounding, and the aftermath of *Expo '70* on Japanese art. Gutai played an important role in this story, leading to a crescendo of their storied history. The fifteen plus contributors (including Reiko Tomii) examine various aspects of the World' Fair, all of which bring context to Gutai's participation in the event. Perhaps the most relevant comments on Gutai activity at Expo '70 come from the editor's introduction. "It goes without saying that here was a wide spectrum in artists' attitudes toward taking part in Expo '70: Some were optimistic and positive while others became critical as the projects developed. The Osaka-based members of the Gutai Art Association were perhaps situated toward the top of this spectrum, devoting themselves almost wholeheartedly to orchestrating multivalent projects…Most of the existing Gutai scholarship considers these works a mere rehashing of Gutai's past works, dismissing them in favor of Gutai's early performances, installations, and paintings. According to the art historian Ming Tiampo, whose book on Gutai was recently published, 'Gutai did not see Expo '70 as a nationalist stage, but rather as an opportunity to engage with interlocutors from around the world.' For Gutai and particularly its leader Yoshihara Jiro, 'Expo '70 provided a large-scale embodiment of the 'international common ground' that Gutai had been building for itself' since 1955 and it was a perfect occasion to showcase both historic and new works to stress its 'international contemporaneity.' Having built on their international standing since the 1950s, it was natural for Gutai to represent the Kansai region and take these important commissions at Expo '70. There was even a sense of pride in their participation as they had been at the forefront in presenting interactive and performance art to the general public and their work was not limited to fine art connoisseurs."

HUMAN RESOURCES

With KATHLEEN & ERIC KIM

Interviewed by HAILEY LOMAN

"I think, right now in both Los Angeles and the Bay Area, it's a fertile time for alternative spaces and conceptualism, cross-pollination and cross-disciplinary ways of working in music and the arts."
-Kathleen Kim

Sarah Rara, "Air Quality". Single channel video with sound by Luke Fischbeck, 2012. Duration: 14 min 16 seconds. Courtesy of Human Resources.

Ian James & Matt Siegle, "Untitled", 2012. Matt Siegle performs Lenny Bruce stand-up while Ian James performs New Age synthesizer loops. Materials: Tables, mugs, keyboards, effects pedals, microphone, papers, 16' x 10' inkjet print, coffeemaker on mirror pedestal, etc. Courtesy of Human Resources.

How did Human Resources come about?

Eric Kim: Francois Ghebaly told us about a space next door to him in Chinatown that was becoming available. It was a time when a lot of gallerists were leaving Chinatown and the rents were decreasing. The intent was to create a space where we could program things that we were doing ourselves, or things we liked by others. We would seek out performance, music, or art practices of some type that didn't really have an obvious place to be seen in Los Angeles.

Kathleen Kim: At the time Human Resources started we hoped to elevate the status of other experimental art mediums we appreciated and believed should be exhibited in galleries but were not often being represented. That, I think, was part of our starting premise. In actuality, we were among many simultaneously erupting alternative art spaces. Now, we have a robust community of alternative art spaces in Los Angeles, each with their own personalities, in which one can gain something unique and intangible from each. We feel fortunate to be one among those many now.

Can you speak about both of your backgrounds in the arts before running the space?

EK: I've never had any kind of serious art practice. I've played music for quite some time, and have a degree in philosophy. Professionally, I work in informatics for health care systems. So in at least an indirect way, I've always had an involvement with social issues. For some reason I've also always had some relationship with the art community as well, which probably explains my participation in Human Resources. In 1999 I met Kate Hers, an artist currently working in Berlin, and assisted her with her work in Detroit. I probably was drawn towards conceptual things because of this introduction.

KK: I think our childhood education (K-12) at Cranbrook greatly influenced our connection to the arts. The arts were a mandatory part of our curriculum. Visits to the Cranbrook Art Academy were frequent and regular. And I started playing music at the age of five and have continued it ever since. Post-high school, I did not pursue any formal art education though I continued formal music study with folks like Yusef Lateef and Jim Nadel. I have an active music practice and play and compose in several experimental music projects. My BA is in philosophy and I am a full-time law professor. My teaching, research and scholarship are in the areas of immigrants' rights and human trafficking, which stems from my work as a civil rights lawyer before entering academia when I launched a nonprofit legal services project that represented human trafficking victims in civil litigation. My career obviously is very important to me, but one of the most remarkably unexpected things about moving to LA was the exciting and welcoming experimental music and arts community here.

Can you talk to me about Chinatown's community and the impact it has on the gallery?

EK: If you're in the market for a low-rent gallery space, Chinatown is the place because the golden age of Chinatown is over. We were able to get our space for much cheaper than we would have been able to just a couple years before. That's one logistical reason. I think the other thing with having the space in Chinatown is the tendency towards art for artists and much less so for the collector. So you tend to be able to do a lot more experimentation, a lot more artist-centered projects. Because our rent is relatively low and there is the absence of a commercial driver, we are able to do things that would never really fly in other areas or other gallery districts because we don't have to compete commercially.

KK: And one of our goals was just to have a space for us and our friends and whatever that extended community of artists, musicians and appreciators might be. We also wanted our location to be convenient for our audience and the artists that we exhibited, so it didn't make any sense for us to be in Culver City.

EK: This is where we all live and hang out.

The gallery is well adapted for showing performance and video work, was this the original intention for the space?

KK: Human Resources was founded by a team of creative individuals who seek to broaden engagement with contemporary and conceptual art with an emphasis on performative and underexposed modes of expression.

EK: I think it's important to realize that Human Resources is a team of individuals, it's not a space. We happen to have a space, that's pretty nice, but we may not have it next year. We don't know, and so we hope that Human Resources can exist wherever our space is or wherever we exist. In fact we're working on something in New York right now in collaboration with a David Zwirner space that Dawn Kasper is working in, which will be called A Temporary Space.

You mention that Human Resources will have other incarnations, not necessarily tied to this space. Can you elaborate on this and how taking Human Resources out of LA could affect your audience?

EK: Well, we would like to think we can exist without a physical space to perpetually occupy, but we haven't yet had a lot of experience doing so outside of LA. Currently, three of our directors are or will soon be operating outside of Los Angeles. Catherine Taft is moving to the Whitney in NYC, Dawn Kasper, since finishing the [Whitney] Biennial, has moved to

Spencer Douglass & Gustavo Herrera, "The Axis of Walker, Installation view. July 2012. Courtesy of Human Resources.

Spencer Douglass & Gustavo Herrera. Bloody Pulpit, Installation view. July 2012. Courtesy of Human Resources.

RISD, and Chiara Giovando is on a curatorial residency in Denmark. These moves all partly service either actual or potential extensions into other locations, or present the chance to bring artists from other areas into Los Angeles, such as Mandla Reuter, who will be in Chiara's November show. In the end, I think participating across local boundaries will mostly add to Human Resources's ability to be dynamic for the local audience.

What is your curatorial process?

KK: It usually begins with a relationship, with those who feel some kind of connection to what we do at Human Resources. So mostly, we receive proposals from artists in our extended community, who know us and have an appreciation of the mix of work we present. And we may also solicit a proposal from someone in our community whose work we find particularly interesting. Then the Human Resources group gets together and discusses the proposal. We tend to gravitate toward multi-dimensional proposals that have an installation component as well as ways in which performance can take place within the object-based aspects of the proposed exhibition.

Does the gallery show emerging artists adn what are your thoughts on taking a chance with younger, more unknown artists.

EK: We are really interested in emerging artists. We maintain a fairly strong relationship with a lot of local art schools. We do the normal things like attend open studios and do studio visits with the artist. I'm working with a recent USC grad on a project right now. I think in terms of USC, UCLA, Cal Arts, we tend to keep a fairly dynamic relationship with them. One of our directors, Catherine Taft, a curator and Art Forum writer, just curated the Cal Arts MFA graduate thesis show. We have a relationship with them, we like them, we like to keep up on what they're doing, and we are open to receiving proposals from them. That being said, it doesn't really matter where a really good concept comes from, whether it's from somebody who is more mid-career or emerging, but we like to try to be open-minded with all of those communities.

Can you tell me about some upcoming projects for Human Resources?

KK: One of our new directors, Chiara Giovando, is curating the next exhibition. It's tentatively titled *"Series Show"*, a group show with four artists who each have a relationship with the concept of "series" or "seriality." It is scheduled to open in November and will feature Fiona Connor (New Zealand), Mandla Reuter (Germany), Erika Vogt (U.S./L.A.) and MPA (U.S./New York). And we have regular performance programming showcasing experimental music and other one day events such as an upcoming experimental opera by artist Kathleen Johnson and composer Greg Lenczycki.

EK: We have an upcoming narrative short film premiere about a character named William Walker. It was made by Spencer Douglass and Gustavo Herrera who are doing a multi-channel video program along with an installation where they will be covering every wall of the gallery space in drapery. It has some loose connection to William Walker, who led a sort of independent conquest of Mexican and Central American territories in the 1800s.

Since some of the Human Resources' members are now doing projects in NYC, how has the spaces' relationship with New York changed?

EK: We don't have much of a relationship to New York, except through Dawn Kasper and now Catherine Taft who is moving there. Hopefully something will develop. We have had some exposure in NYC only through one group show we were in at Participant Inc. and via Dawn at the [Whitney] Biennial and a really amazing show she organized at a David Zwirner project space. Otherwise I don't know a lot about the New York world but there seem to be a lot of great things going on at places like the Kitchen and Real Fine Art.

Can you touch on West coast art as a whole and the gallery's relationship with the Bay Area.

KK: I think that much of what we present is or has been influenced by west coast contemporary art. I think right now in both Los Angeles and the Bay Area, it's a fertile time for alternative spaces and conceptualism, cross-pollination and cross-disciplinary ways of working in music and the arts. Human Resources is actively taking up a role in advancing that dialogue and taking it to wider audiences. For example, last year, we had a piece in the New York Collective show representing Human Resources with references to California — the piece featured a video with LA Fog playing and other Human Resources members performing accompanied by a love letter.

EK: I think Los Angeles is in a good place for experimentation right now. Doing things that may be considered hit-or-miss in the larger art world and even in the commercial LA art world, is maybe how we fit in, being able to just be a space for uniquely Californian stuff to happen.

KK: When we started Human Resources, we hoped to activate our space with performance and other non-static forms; perhaps in a way, that vision was influenced by our community in Los Angeles. For example, at this year's Whitney Biennial, I felt a stark contrast between the installations by LA-based artists versus the rest of the museum environment. Dawn Kasper's nomadic studio was dynamic and ever changing and Wu Tsang's green room was constantly active and utilized. The meaningful activity in those spaces made them more comfortable, intimate and unique from the traditional museum landscape — maybe that's what we are striving for at Human Resources.

TOM MARIONI

ART ETIQUETTE & FUNNY STUFF

TOM MARIONI, "Drawing a Line as Far as I Can Reach", 1972. Courtesy Tom Marioni.

Isn't it kind of off base for abstract and conceptual artists to think that realists don't think in abstract terms when they are analyzing the depiction of nature? Didn't Pollock say, "I am nature?"

-Ruby Glover

Jackson Pollock did say, "I am nature." He meant that he acted like a force of nature; he did not mean that he made pictures of nature. He acted (as John Cage used to say) by "imitating nature in her manner of operation." I do that too. My drawing *Tree, Drawing a Line as Far as I Can Reach*," 1972, for example, is the way a tree grows not the way a tree looks. And conceptual artists like me are not abstract artists. They are real social realists.

Don't you think it is ironic that classes, galleries and museums often are very rigid in their rules about how art gets taught and seen yet creativity doesn't really have any rules?

-Mark Denham, chef, Santa Cruz

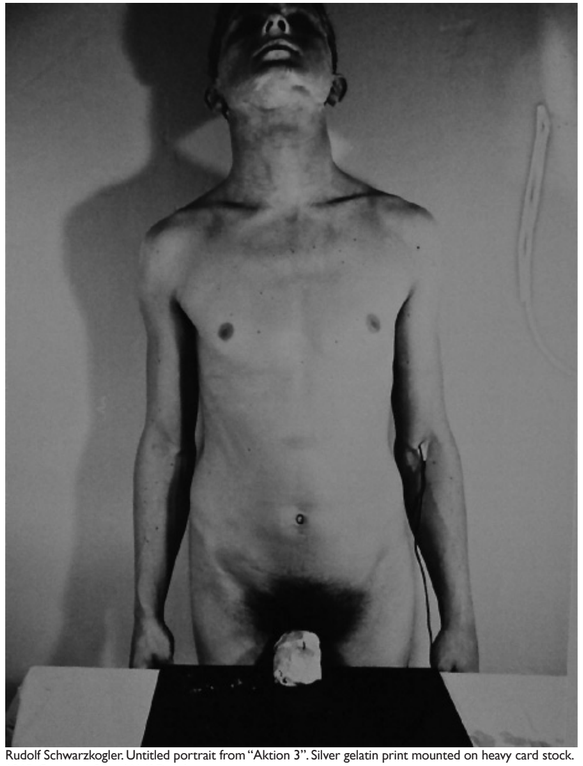
It's true that you cannot teach creativity, but you can teach craft. I think they should teach students to copy from a master, at first, and then use their own personal experiences to come up with an original style. No one has had the exact same experiences in life that others have had. This way the students will be original artists and can invent a new look or way of making art. Leonardo da Vinci's lessons for teaching art: "1. Learn perspective. 2. Study proportions of objects. 3. Copy from a master. 4. Copy from nature to confirm the first three rules." The best rule for creativity is to invent a new way of seeing.

Robert Filliou famously said, "Art is what makes life more interesting than art." This is almost a Zen koan. Could you help us make sense of this? And should artists have a defining visual trait like Dali's mustache?

-Joseph del Pesco, Kadist Art Foundation

Yes. Like Warhol's wigs, Joseph Beuys's hat and vest, Louise Nevelson's long false eyelashes, Wayne Thiebaud's bow ties, John Cage's Amish clothes and Brice Marden's white painter's jacket, these traits help to define who they are: visual people.

In answer to your first question: I think Filliou means the making of art is more interesting than the art object. He might have said that the walk of a beautiful woman is more interesting than all the art in the world. How about, "Art is a lie that revels the truth," –Picasso?



Rudolf Schwarzkogler. Untitled portrait from "Aktion 3". Silver gelatin print mounted on heavy card stock. 1965. Courtesy Steve Wolf Fine Arts.

What Austrian artist cut off his penis as a work of art?

-Otto Muehl

Rudolf Schwarzkogler was a conceptual photographer and all his performances from the 1960s were staged for the camera with an actor. He committed suicide in 1969, but not by cutting off his penis as Robert Hughes reported in *Time* magazine.

A Multiple-Choice Quiz:

a. Who said, "When you look at Pop Art, it always looks the same"?
--Clement Greenberg, Peter Selz, Andy Warhol, Willem de Kooning

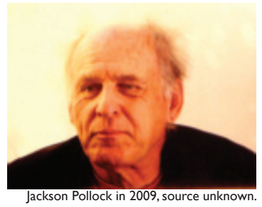
b. Who said, "I recognize art by the price tag"?
Martin Muller, Arnold Glimcher, John Berggruen, Leo Castelli

Is painting dead?

-Robert Johnson

Alexander Rodchenko in 1926 painted three monochrome paintings and declared painting dead. Andy Warhol said painting was dead in 1968 and floated helium silver pillows out the window of an art gallery. Marcel Duchamp quit making art after his large glass painting was "finally unfinished." He didn't quit art as we know it. He quit painting. Painting comes back every other decade when the economy is good and art is more about money than philosophy. I have declared that someday I will retire from art and take up painting.

"Art is a lie that revels the truth,"
–Picasso



Jackson Pollock in 2009, source unknown.

Joseph Beuys "Felt Suit".

What do you do when your friends start stealing your art ideas but are so introverted that they don't understand the hints you are giving them to stop?

-Michael Nissim

If your friend is stealing from you, they might not even know they did it. They might think they thought it up on their own. All you can do about it is be subtle and let them know you did it first, but their way of doing your idea is ok. In the late 1960s, Robert Morris was making sculptures out of felt material and almost no one in the U.S. at that time knew about Joseph Beuys's sculpture with felt. Later when the American art world discovered Beuys, Robert Morris's reputation was damaged and he never recovered. If the artist you are stealing from is rich and famous and the public likes that work, maybe the artist won't care and some of the public won't know that you are not original.

If you had to choose between artistic acclaim in this life and no continuation of it after death, or recognition in this life but belated acknowledgement and celebrity, which would it be?

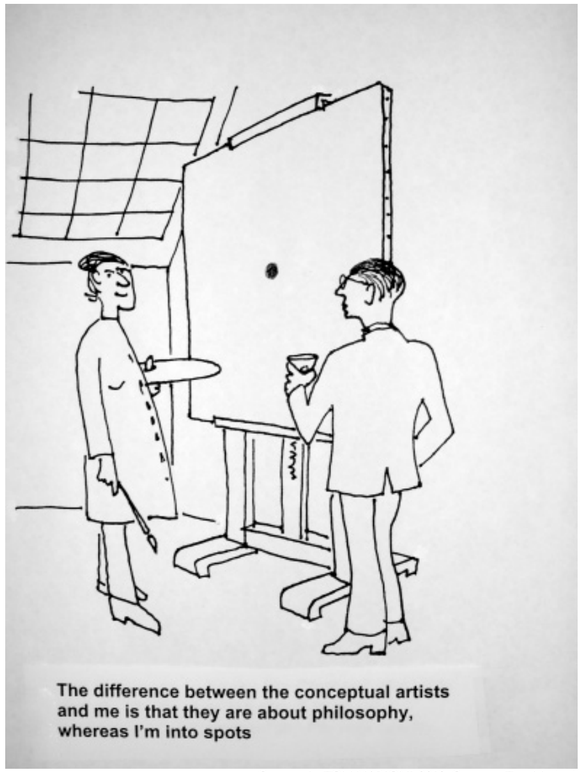
-Eichi Matsuhashi

Since I have heirs I would like them to get some financial gain from my work. But if I didn't have heirs I wouldn't care since I wouldn't know about it because there is no afterlife. On the other hand, it would be nice if my philosophy "The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art" would go on after I'm dead and have my spirit live on.

To Submit Questions for issue 12 - see page 118

(Answers to quiz: a. Peter Selz, b. John Berggruen. The photo of Jackson Pollock in 2009 is actually Edward Stanton.)

Robert Morris, "Untitled" 1967. Felt. Two 1/2 inch felts Each 144 x 72 inches overall approximately 95 x 140 inches. Installation view from 'Grisaille' Luxembourg and Dayan Gallery, 2012.



Cartoon by TOM MARIONI, 2012. Courtesy Tom Marioni.

ON POINT 2.0

By MARK VAN PROYEN

Avril Lavigne, 2012.

In November of 1989, I was invited to write a regular column for ARTWEEK magazine, a long running west-coast visual arts publication, fondly remembered by some old timers who would rather read writing than blogging. My mandate was clear: I was to raise and address general issues in the art world as I saw fit, which was just fine by me as I had become bored with writing standard 500 word exhibition reviews. Because the column needed a name, I chose *On Point*, relishing the double entendre of evoking the first member of an advancing army to encounter otherwise hidden trouble while at the same time signifying a focus on the most relevant aspect of any topic. Running at about 1600 words each, *On Point* started off as a once-a-month dispatch from the front, and was gradually scaled back to once every three-months that added-up to about 60 installments published over a period of almost 20 years. It came to an end when ARTWEEK went out of business in 2009, but now, newly refurbished, *On Point 2.0* starts again in SFAQ. We will see how it goes.

The Robert Mapplethorpe-Andreas Serrano controversy was already underway when I inaugurated the column, so one of my first orders of business was to check up on the momentarily dormant controversy pertaining to federal government funding of the arts. I did so repeatedly during the ensuing four years, and in so doing became one of the earliest commentators on what would later be called "The Culture Wars." Many of the early *On Points* focused on the way that government support for the arts had become suddenly politicized after decades of non-controversial bi-partisan support. As I went deeper into the topic, I despaired about how easy it was for institutional arts administrators to throw support for individual artists' grants under the political bus so that, at least in their own self-serving fantasies, they could live to fight another day. The fact that no such fight ever took place is now too obvious a point to belabor here, but the larger significance of the moment is still worth remembering. Clearly, something big had happened and for that reason, the normal operating procedures in the art world would undergo a change in its rules. The waning order of "advanced" alternative space art and professional advancement opportunities being influence-peddled by elite peer review committees was clearly on the defensive, while a new art world implicitly modeled on the pseudo-populist operations of the entertainment industry was on the ascendant.

This portended a change in institutional programming priorities that moved in the direction of "community outreach," which of course, was only institutional marketing called by a more subtly perfumed name. If the only source of funds left were those which ticket-buying audiences would be willing to pay, then constituency-building was the new name of a game that was once called radical experimentation at some point after it was called high culture. Art for sophistication's sake had been discredited as an elitist game played by Pecksniffian hypocrites, so curators became impresarios, and institutions became tourist magnets. Following from this, artists became "the talent" and then, the mere content providers amid an emerging scheme of institutional self-promotion that upheld the capture of the elusive "youth demographic" as its gold standard of success. The article of faith was that younger automatically meant hipper, which in turn meant that artistic creativity automatically had something to do with impulse control problems pretending to be spontaneity. Naturally, this chain of reason brought the alignment of "younger" and "hipper" into question, especially insofar as youth culture became something that could be packaged and sold back to itself for a price that post-punk youngsters didn't seem to mind paying. And then, a few years later, the situation slowly reverted to something that vaguely resembled what it once was, only with corporate sponsored foundations taking the place of the older government funding entities. Whatever strings attached to this brave new world of arts programming will most likely never see the light of day.

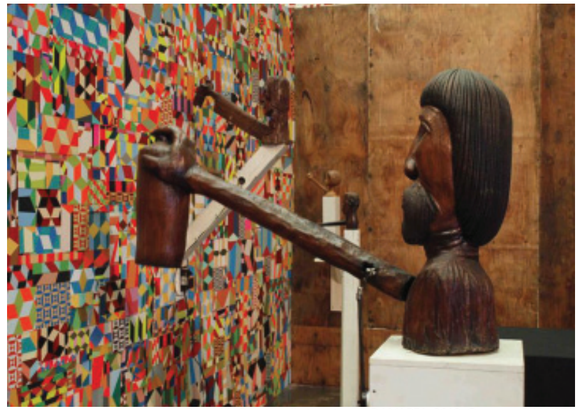
While I was grappling with the broad policy implications of post-cold war art-as-entertainment, artists were already crafting their own reactions to the situation, and it is to my enduring shame that I didn't spill more ink during those years on those responses, my only excuse being that I was too focused on parsing the way that a change in the rules of patronage portended a change in the game of art. One of those watershed moments was enshrined in Paul Schimmel's exhibition of sixteen LA artists titled *Helter Skelter,* which was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles during the spring of 1992. It postulated an emerging "low brow" esthetic that was thought to be responsive to various modes of chic sub-cultural affinity groups, establishing a style that a few years later would be called Pop Surrealism when many of the same artists were once again brought together in an exhibition of that name at the Aldrich Museum in Connecticut. The meteoric rise of the so-called Young British Artists reminded us that the Pop Surrealist esthetic was an international one, but in all cases, the key point was a focus on an art that spoke to the experience of an expanded audience demographic that had little previous experience with art.

It is also worth noting that the Bay Area had its own unique contribution to the nineties' pandemic of low brow Pop Surrealism, that being a street art-inspired style that later came to be called the Mission School. There is no reason to get into the debate as to whether or not there ever was a Mission School, or whether the Mission School was really a school in any art historical sense of the word. The term is no less specific or no more euphemistic than are "School of Paris," or "New York School," and neither of those broached any real controversy. Judging from the Barry McGee retrospective currently on view at the Berkeley Art Museum/ Pacific Film Archive, the school did have its anointed leader. The exhibition was organized by Lawrence Rinder and Dena Beard, and is on view until December 9.

Through the later 1990s, McGee's work grew to national and then international prominence, with the watershed moment represented by his prominent inclusion in the 2001 Venice Biennial. But before that time (roughly 1989-1993, during an economic downturn very similar to our own), it had an underground identity in the burgeoning San Francisco street art scene, as McGee worked under the *nome de aerosol* of Twist. That scene tended to operate in and around San Francisco's Mission District, and in those early days, street art was seen as a communal anti-gentrification project, a way of marking a kind of sub-cultural territory that would sustain low rents and the cultural communities that depended upon them. Thus, in McGee's early work, we see a familiar cast of down-and-out characters that reflect the typical denizens of those communities, a cartoon-inspired chorus line of bowser-faced depressives

"What I am getting at here is a gloomy point about the irony of a street art practice starting from an anti-gentrification premise of communal self-identification, only to then be subtly transformed into an instrument of said gentrification, one that eventually turned the Mission district into the cool-hunter's haven that it is today."

Barry McGee, exterior of BAM/ PFA, 2012. Courtesy BAM/PFA.



Barry McGee, installation view at BAM/ PFA, 2012. Courtesy BAM/PFA.

that seem extracted from Damon Runyon's line-ups of usual suspects and down-and-out boulevardiers.

It is also worth mentioning that at that time the success stories of some New York street artists such as Keith Haring, Jean Michel Basquiat and Kenny Scharf were already widely known in the art world, so the transposition from street artist to gallery artist was already a clear, well-worn path, another reason why I didn't pay much attention to the burgeoning Mission School phenomena during those early years. In McGee's case, that path was first made clear when he was asked to paint murals on the construction fence surrounding the building site of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, proclaiming an official recognition of local graffiti practice that would also serve to ward off the discordant intrusions of other taggers. Another fact worth recognizing here is the earlier controversy about the initial building of the YBCA; you know, the one where several residence hotels were torn down to build the center, that very same controversy that was concerned about the dire fate of the indigent inhabitants of those hotels. What I am getting at here is a gloomy point about the irony of a street art practice starting from an anti-gentrification premise of communal self-identification, only to then be subtly transformed into an instrument of said gentrification, one that eventually turned the Mission district into the cool-hunter's haven that it is today. To be fair, it is also worth pointing out that, when the dot.com cybergentry did arrive in the Mission circa 1997, they turned out to not be the Jeff Koons-buying stock option-holding automatons who were the worst fears of the neighborhood's proto-hipsters; in fact, many of the new arrivistes took special pains to adopt many of the contours of the hipster culture that was already ensconced there, and in that particular bargain became some of the earliest collectors of McGee's work, as well as that of his associates.

As they say, the rest is history, and that history is dutifully recounted in the exhibition at Berkeley. Painted on the north facing exterior of the museum is the word *Snitch* spelled out in tall red characters, most likely functioning as McGee's self-deprecating proclamation about the deep moral meaning of trading street cred for art cred. In a recently posted interview with Matt Gonzalez, McGee admitted that he "lost his street cred about 15 years ago," marking 1997 as a before-and-after point that provides a useful pathway to understanding the whole Berkeley Museum presentation. It is also worth noting that 1997 seems like a useful date to mark the moment when street cred lost its street cred, perhaps for good. Since the beginning of the 20th century, artists have embraced the street as a zone where the mediation of history and experience favors the latter while pretending to escape from the former. But, despite the many laudable "occupations" that have taken place during the past 18 months, that embrace has been replayed so many times that it now operates within its own easily enshrined history of "street self-consciousness."

At the Berkeley exhibition, most of the key moments of McGee's career are memorialized in sprawling clusters representing specific installation and/or exhibitions that took place at specific times. It is heartening to see that a small part of the exhibition is given over to some of the artists that McGee has collaborated with over the years. One of the show's most affecting moments was a doll-house sized room situated on the lower floor, containing a small memorial exhibition of works by McGee's late wife Margaret Kilgallen, who died far too young in 2001. Upstairs, there are several display cases containing works and ephemera by other artists who are long-time participants in McGee's circle, including Alicia McCarthy, Ruby Neri, Chris Lux, George Lochman, George Crampton-Glassanos, Josh Lascuno and Clare Rojas. Chris Johanson, where for art thou?

After about 1997, McGee's work did change. While some earlier works such as the 1995 backdrop that he painted for a performance of the *Onsite Dance Company*, looking as if they had been scavenged and repurposed from a state of discard. Other works such as the bulging *Untitled* work from 2004 seem stunningly fresh. Of course, this is a relative observation, because the entirety of the exhibition is really a kind of installation of installations, developed while McGee was an artist-in-residence at the museum for the entire month of August. Here, we see stacks of materials such as surfboards in varying states of organization, and we are frequently reminded of the fact that, in 1993, McGee spent several months in Brazil. There he was able to partake of the Brazilian penchant for making performative, do-it-yourself modes of visual culture (called *Gambianeirra*), infusing his own work with the tropes of amalgamation, accretion, profusion and juxtaposition.

There are some seriously wrong notes in the exhibition, which take the form of animatronic mannequins and carved wood sculpture gesticulating with spay cans in their hands. At best, one can say that these works remind the viewer of another exhibition that took place at the Berkeley Art Museum in 1985, a massive presentation of the work of Jonathan Borofsky that included a dancing clown and a series of his famous "Hammering Men" works. Like his fellow surfer Borofsky, McGee is an artist who emphasizes a prolific drawing practice, expanding upon it in the direction of a sprawling excess of dream images and altar egos. Other precedents are also invoked, ranging from Claes Oldenberg's 1961 *Store* to Wally Hedrick's late-1960s *Fix it Shop*. But now the times have changed, and the messy way that the exhibition is packaged starts to look less transgressive than one might hope, and a bit too much like the production design for an Avril Lavigne music video.

The place where McGee's work finds its redemption is in his commitment to drawing, which is both compelling and distinctive. With admirable sleit-of-hand, he can go from making crisp emblems to elegantly spatialized contours, fulfilling the difficult trick of modernist drawing that recalls Beckman and Picasso. The upper gallery contains a collection of some of my favorite of McGee's drawings, those being a very recent suite of *Untitled* frontal faces done in a modeled black-and-white, each looking like a cross between a Hollywood alien and a Mexican wrestler, and each inviting the slow contemplation that most of the earlier and more performative works resist.

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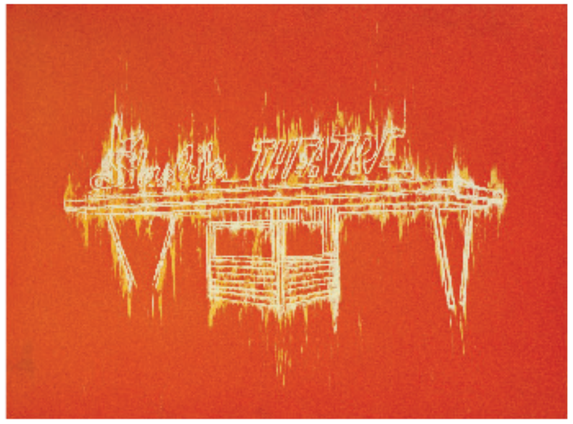

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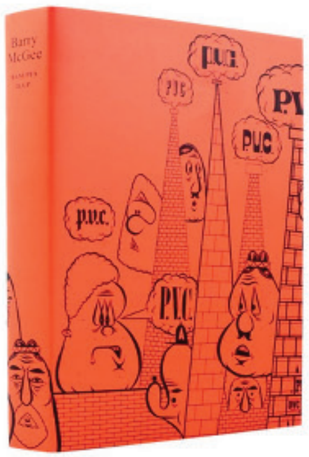

Barry McGee, 2012

New Catalogue published on the occasion of the first major survey of Barry McGee's work at the Berkeley Art Museum. Edited by Lawrence Rinder, Dena Beard. Text by Alex Baker, Natasha Boas, Germano Celant, Jeffrey Deitch. D.A.P./University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.
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1204 Geneva, Switzerland
www.c-e-c.ch
+41 22 310 51 70

ZURICH

Hauser & Wirth
Limmatstrasse 270
8005 Zurich
www.hauserwirth.com
+41 44 446 8050

Fotomuseum Winterthur
Grüzenstrasse 44 + 45
CH-8400 Winterthur, Zurich
www.fotomuseum.ch
+41 52 234 10 34

COPENHAGEN

KUNSTHALLEN NIKOLAJ
Nikolaj Plads 10
DK - 1067 Copenhagen, Denmark
www.kunsthallennikolaj.dk
+45 3318 1780

PARIS

Galerie Lelong
13, rue de Téhéran
75008 Paris, France
www.galerie-lelong.com
+33 1 45 63 13 19

Galerie Alain Gutharc
7 rue Saint-Claude
75003 Paris, France
www.alaingutharc.com
+33 1 47 00 32 10

gb agency
18, rue des 4 fils
75003 Paris, France
www.gbagency.fr
+33 1 44 78 00 60

TOKYO

Taka Ishii Gallery
1-3-2 5F Kiyosumi Koto-ku
Tokyo #135-0024, Japan
www.takaishiigallery.com
+81 3 5646 6050

Yamamoto Gendai
3-1-15-3F, Shirokane, Minato-ku
Tokyo 108-0072 Japan
www.yamamotogendai.org
+81 3-6383-0626

BEIJING

ShanghART Gallery
No. 261 Cao Chang Di
100015 Beijing, China
www.shanghartgallery.com
+86-10 6432 3202

Magician Space
798 East R.d, 798 Art Zone, No.2
Jiuxianqiao R.d, Chaoyang Dst,
Beijing 100105
www.magician-space.com
+86 10 5840 5117

AUSTRALIA

Nellie Castan Gallery
Level 1, 12 River Street
SOUTH YARRA VIC 3141, Australia
www.nelliecastangallery.com
+613 9804 7366

ART FAIRS:

-Aqua Miami 2012
-Miami Project 2012
-Pulse Miami 2012
-Red Dot Art Fair 2012
-Art Dubai 2013
-London Art Fair 2013
-The Armory Show 2013
-VOLTA 2013
-ZONA MACO 2013
-India Art Fair 2013
-Art Platform LA 2013
-LA Contemporary 2013

ART ETIQUETTE & FUNNY STUFF

Want to submit a question about the art world, a complaint, general concerns, funny stuff, grievances or problems for Mr. Marioni's column in issue 12?

by Tom Marioni

Deadline: December 15, 2012 - submit to info@sfaqonline.com

Foot in Mouth 1, 2010. 11x14 inches. Oil on canvas. Collection of Richard Prince.

BROADBAND NICHOLAS WEBER

NOVEMBER 2, 2012 THROUGH JANUARY 5, 2013
OPENING RECEPTION FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2012, 6-9PM
ARTIST TALK SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2012, 1:30PM

Broadband is a series of paintings derived from still images Weber selects from internet porn videos.
A limited edition monograph of *Broadband* with an essay by John McWhinnie, and as featured at the Fulton Ryder booth at the NY Art Book Fair, is available at resipsagallery.com and at printedmatter.org. 500 numbered copies; $35.

RES IPSA

455 17TH STREET, 3RD FLOOR, OAKLAND HOURS: SAT. 1-4PM AND BY APPT **RESIPSAGALLERY.COM** 415-939-1509

Catalogue available by request: mitchelljohnson5@gmail.com
Exhibition schedule: www.mitchelljohnson.com

New Paintings by JOHN WAGUESPACK in the 2nd St Gallery
Opening Reception, Friday, Nov 16th 2012 5pm - Late
On Display Through Jan 26th 2013

Photography by TRACI GRIFFIN in the Zappa Room Gallery
Opening Reception, Wednesday, Nov 28th 2012 5pm - Late
On Display Through Jan 26th 2013

111 MINNA GALLERY

111 Minna St. SF, CA 94105 | www.111minnagallery.com | 415.974.1719

Madrone Art Bar is pleased to announce:

DAN DION

Johnny Cash (The Fillmore, San Francisco) 1994 ©Dan Dion
John Lee Hooker (The Boom Boom Room, San Francisco) 1998 ©Dan Dion
James Brown (Maritime Hall, San Francisco) 1996 ©Dan Dion

November // December // January

November 23 (Black Friday), 2012—January 31, 2013

Reception with the artist: **Black Friday, November 23rd // 6pm to 9pm**
With entertainment by punk rock piano legend **DJ Lebowitz**
We will open at 1pm to help you find the perfect gift for the music lover in your life.
$5 Mimosa's, Bloody Mary's, Irish Coffee from 1pm—4pm

Divisadero Art Walk and Dan's Birthday Celebration

Reception with the Artist: **Thursday, December 13th // 6pm to 9pm**
Featuring the urban folk music of **Brian Keeney**

MADRONE Art Bar

madroneartbar.com

HUNG LIU

Happy and Gay
November 15, 2012 – January 12, 2013
Reception: Thursday, November 15, 5:30 – 7:30

RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY
77 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94108
www.renabranstengallery.com

Hung Liu: Offerings
Mills College Art Museum
January 23 – March 17, 2013

Summoning Ghosts: The Art of Hung Liu
Oakland Museum of California
March 16 – June 30, 2013

Questions from the Sky: New Work by Hung Liu
San Jose Museum of Art
June 6 – September 8, 2013

Happy and Gay: Boy and Kite • 2012 • oil on canvas • 60 x 110 inches

October 10 - November 10, 2012
Ala Ebtekar
Nayland Blake

Thursday, October 11, 2012
Poetry reading relating to Ala's exhibition
Cocktails at 4:30, Poetry at 5:00,
Opening Reception for the artists from 5:30 to 7:30

November 14 - December 22, 2012
Carolee Schneemann
Gay Outlaw

Thursday, November 15, 2012
Opening Reception for the artists from 5:30 to 7:30

Wednesday, November 14, 2012 - 7:30pm
Carolee Schneemann Lecture
San Francisco Art Institute Lecture Hall
Free and open to the public

Gallery Paule Anglim

14 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94108 Tel: 415.433.2710 Fax: 415.433.1501 www.gallerypauleanglim.com

HELENA PRODUCCIONES and VISIBLE

present

FESTIVAL DE PERFORMANCE DE CALI IN SAN FRANCISCO

"PRESENTE PRESENTE PRESENTE"

Open call for performative acts and spontaneous gestures

visual commentaries on social urgencies

Submit your one-page proposal by the 24th of November to kadistsf@gmail.com

Ten entries will be chosen for live presentation at Kadist Art Foundation Juried by Helena Producciones

Wednesday November 28th at 6pm
3295 20th Street @ Folsom, San Francisco

The winners will present their performance during
Here, There and Elsewhere
at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Sunday December 2nd

for more information:
www.visibleproject.org | www.helenaproducciones.org | www.kadist.org | www.sfmoma.org