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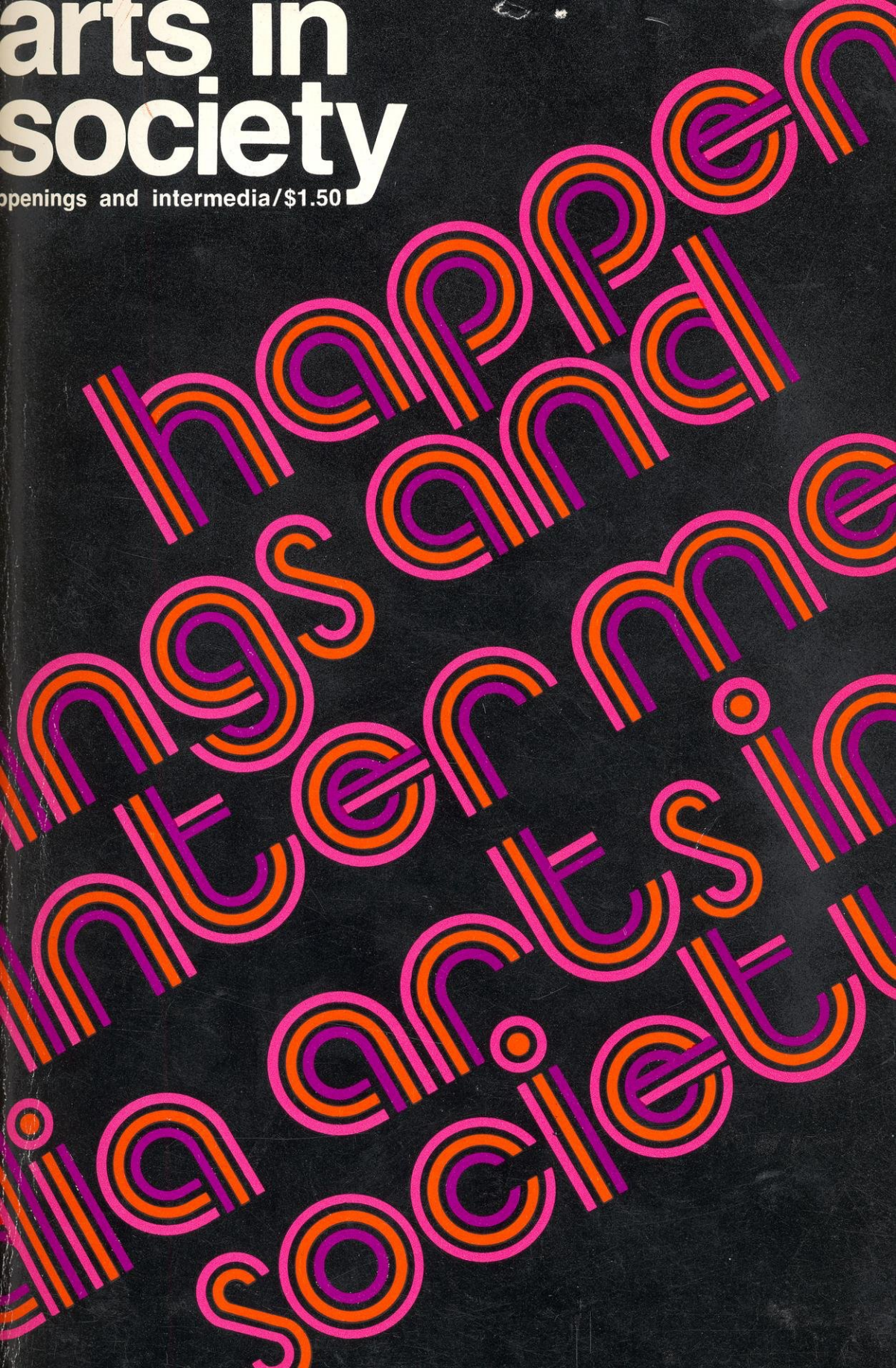


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ARTS IN SOCIETY

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This issue was designed by
Beate Guntner

ARTS IN SOCIETY is dedicated to the augmenting of the arts in society and to the advancement of education in the arts. These publications are to be of interest, therefore, both to professionals and the lay public. ARTS IN SOCIETY exists to discuss, interpret, and illustrate the various functions of the arts in contemporary civilization. Its purpose is to present the insights of experience, research and theory in support of educational and organizational efforts to enhance the position of the arts in America. In general, four areas are dealt with:
the teaching and learning of the arts; aesthetics and philosophy; social analysis; and significant examples of creative expression in a media which may be served by the printing process.

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The editors will welcome articles on any subjects which fall within the areas of interest of this journal. Readers both in the United States and abroad are invited to submit manuscripts for consideration for publication. Articles may be written in the contributor's native language. A modest honorarium will be paid for papers accepted for publication.

Manuscripts should be sent to Edward L. Kamarck, Editor, **ARTS IN SOCIETY,** The University of Wisconsin, Extension Building, 432 North Lake Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706. Books for review should be directed to the same address.

Poetry should be sent to Morgan Gibson, Poetry Editor, **ARTS IN SOCIETY,** 310 Garland Hall, the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201.

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Ben Vautier - 1 - Oubliez Ben.
- 2 - Quand et comment allez-vous savoir que vous l'avez oublié?

29/5/67

(He is a creator of Happenings in France.)

Wolf Vostell is a creator of Happenings in Cologne, Germany, and author of *Decollage No. 4* and co-author of *Happenings, Fluxus, Pop Art,* and *Nouveau Realisme.*

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Peter Yates generously advised on selection of writers for this issue on Happenings and Intermedia. He is a poet and music critic who recently published *An Amateur at the Keyboard* and *Twentieth Century Music.* He is the author of the Typographic Happenings in this issue.

happenings

intermedia is a better name than happenings

Intermedia is a Better Name than Happenings: What We Had in Mind in Putting Together This Issue.

"It is only an illusion that there is a Happening movement or ever was. The same can be said, I think, of Concrete Poetry. Both merely represent Intermedia, which in turn reflect the new technical and social possibilities within society."

Dick Higgins

The Happenings issue published by TDR* in the Winter of 1965 was one of its more memorable numbers. It was definitive (albeit within a large and somewhat arbitrary frame), provocative, and vastly influential. References to the issue have appeared with increasing frequency in the critical writing and discussion of the past two years, and it is perhaps safe to surmise that many of our current conceptions have been shaped and colored by TDR's editorial interpretations, emphases — and biases.

One of TDR's biases was reflected in its presentation of Happenings as a form of or an extension of theatre (as a prime example, Michael Kirby's introductory article carried the title, "The New Theatre"). In view of TDR's mission as a theatre journal, this was perhaps an understandable bias, but unfortunately it has shed more confusion than light.

The fact is that most Happenings have an exceedingly narrow theatrical dimension — I am using "theatrical" in its usual accepted sense, that of describing an action conceived for the physical and aesthetic conditions of a theatre: essentially **large** in scope, intensity, and evocation. To assert that Happenings presume to be theatrical is to do many "Happeners" a grave injustice, for in this context they appear to be incredibly naive. It is interesting to note that few theatre people of my acquaintance — even the non-traditionalists — take kindly to Happenings. James Rosenberg, one of our writers in this issue of ARTS IN SOCIETY, echoes many of the usual dismays of the long-committed theatrician at the seeming amateurism, pretentiousness, and shallowness of the Happenings movement (justifiable pejoratives in some instances regardless of prejudgment!), but unlike many of his colleagues Professor Rosenberg has the fortitude and imagination to move beyond his initial repugnance to discern possibilities of richness and vitality.

It is pertinent that almost all well-known "Happeners" are musicians and painters — a few are dancers and film-makers. None, or virtually none, are theatricians. Their aesthetic motivation has been extra-theatrical: to explore the expressive possibilities of various modes of perception in the time-space relationship (admittedly here is a **kinship** to theatre), and as they have moved into other media beside their own, at times boldly intermingling them, their frame of reference, values, and interests have usually remained tied to their original creative impulse. Thus painter "Happeners" have been chiefly interested in extending their artistic vision as painters — similarly musicians, and similarly dancers. Whatever theatrical values their efforts may have churned up have been largely gratuitous, although it must be acknowledged that some of the more expansive theorists of Happenings — for example, John Cage — have not been at all loathe to don an histrionic mantle and play the oracle of reform and renovation in theatre.

But whether "Happeners" are musicians or painters, the results of their experimentations do not properly belong in any of the conventional art categories — in neither music nor painting, and certainly not in theatre. They should instead be viewed as representing something totally new, and as Gilbert Chase points out in his "In Between the Arts" in this issue of ARTS IN SOCIETY, they call for wholly new standards of critical judgment.

TDR is also partly responsible for the persistent use of the epithet "Happenings," although the guest editor of the definitive issue starts out by abjuring it. "It has been a fad word," writes Michael Kirby, " . . . nobody seems to like the word except the public." But then after listing many of the other words that have

proliferated to describe the phenomenon (he does not include "intermedia") he concludes by saying, "Because nothing better has been coined to replace it, I will use the term 'Happening.'" And in his retrospective piece in that issue editor Schechner reiterates the commitment: "I use the word to mean all the things compiled in this issue of TDR."

One limitation of "Happening" as a word is that while its use seems to imply a special mystique, one is hard put to identify any valid commonalities in the movement **beyond an interest in breaking down the boundaries between the arts.** As will be noted in the articles in this issue of ARTS IN SOCIETY, so-called "Happeners" represent a wide diversity of viewpoints, motives and credos — as well they might, when one considers the infinite variety of possibilities that exist for combining two or more arts. It is true that Happenings have been strongly linked with the Surrealist and Dadaist tradition, but, as was evidenced by the Avant-Garde issue of ARTS IN SOCIETY, **most** contemporary experimentation in the arts contains discernible overtones of that tradition.

Perhaps the most damning indictment of "Happening" as a word lies in the fact that it now popularly evokes associations uniquely appropriate to the high-jinks of the dubiously honest fringe of the movement, the terrible wild men graphically described by the celebrated LIFE article. It may well be that the LIFE scare piece and others like it have permanently spoiled the word for use in any other context.

"Intermedia," on the other hand, not only precisely describes the valid genius of the movement, but it also has sufficient breadth to permit it to embrace both past manifestations and future possibilities. It is undoubtedly true that we are still in the very primitive stage of experimentation in arts-mixing. As effort and interest grow it would be useful to adopt an epithet that is inherently more accurate as a tool of criticism.

TDR in its Happenings issue presented us with an exciting **tableau vivant** of arts revolutionists — polemical, vainglorious, attitudinizing, and wildly romantic. Their passion, vitality, and commitment both impressed and bedevilled. We could certainly tell they were on the march, but because they seemed to be marching in different directions we found it difficult to understand why they were marching or to what end. This was not the fault of the TDR editors. Revolutions are not neat, nor rational, nor clearcut in their objectives. Few revolutionists are capable of devising intelligible manifestoes, probably because they are not themselves fully aware of why they are impelled to do the things they do.

It was eminently to the credit of TDR to have discerned the outlines of this rising upheaval in the arts, which is threatening to alter traditional audience-artist relationships, expectations, and modes of perception and expression.

As the intermedia movement continues apace, both in this country and abroad, some of the objectives and potentialities will grow clearer, some viewpoints will be cast aside and new ones will be developed; much will remain murky for a long time. It is the purpose of this issue of ARTS IN SOCIETY to attempt to illustrate some of the present day thinking of various theorists and critics in America, France, Germany, Japan, and Czechoslovakia and Eastern Europe.

Edward L. Kamarck

*TDR formerly stood for *Tulane Drama Review,* but when it moved to New York University during the summer of 1967 the new name became *The Drama Review.*

THE ANGLE OF INCIDENCE IS EQUAL TO
THE ANGLE/REFLECTION
LAW I KNEW EVERY
AS
MIGHTY AS POURING
THING HOW EVERY
AS RAN CREATED AS NOT AS
ONLY FORTH
THINK HOW EVERY

UNUTTERABLE NOT I VIVIDNESS EVERY RAN SAW EVERY

LAW AS YEARNING
BUT AS RAN EVERY
BUT EVERY FORTH ONLY RAN EVERY
MIGHTY EVERY
LANGUAGE, ITS KITCHEN EVERY
ABOVE
MUSIC ABOVE PECULIARITY
TYPIFIES, HEAVENS EVERY
ABOVE ROSE CONSCIOUS ABOVE NUMERICAL ABOVE
OF FROM
TYPIFIES, HEAVENS EVERY

UNVEILING NUMERICAL ITS VISION;
EVERY ROSE SPPRINGS EVERY

(QUOTED FROM STANZAS FOR IRIS LEZAK:
JACKSON MAC LOW,
MAY 1960, AN ANTHOLOGY)

A WESTERN, A MYSTERY ARE NOT EXCITING. THEY
ARE LIKE ASPIRIN, A SEDATIVE. WE TAKE THEM
TO FORGET.
TAKE HEED OF MIRACLES, DO NOT SEEK THEM.

NO FEELING FOR EVENTS. TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY EVENTS ARE NOT IMPORTANT. YOU MUST
EXCITING. EVENTS HAVE LOST THEIR INTEREST FOR PEOPLE. YOU READ THEM MORE LIKE A SOOTHING SYRUP. AND IF YOU LISTEN
OVER THE RADIO YOU DON'T GET VERY EXCITED. THE THING HAS GOT TO THIS PLACE, THAT EVENTS ARE SO WONDERFUL THAT THEY
ARE NOT EXCITING. NOW YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT THE BUSINESS OF AN ARTIST IS TO BE EXCITING. IF THE THING HAS ITS
PROPER VITALITY, THE RESULT MUST BE EXCITING. FOR OUR PURPOSES, FOR OUR CONTEMPORARY PURPOSES, EVENTS HAVE
NO IMPORTANCE. THEY MAY MAKE A GREAT MANY PEOPLE UNHAPPY, THEY MAY CAUSE CONVULSIONS IN HISTORY, BUT FROM
THE STANDPOINT OF EXCITEMENT, THE KIND OF EXCITEMENT THE NINETEENTH CENTURY GOT OUT OF EVENTS DOESN'T EXIST. (HOW
WRITING IS WRITTEN, GERTRUDE STEIN)

Allan Kaprow as "The Neutron Kid in Gas" Peter Moore

Allan Kaprow = **nostalgia** + **legend** + **pipe dr**

severe moral conscienc

April, 1963

THOUGHTS ON

allan kaprow

'S WORK

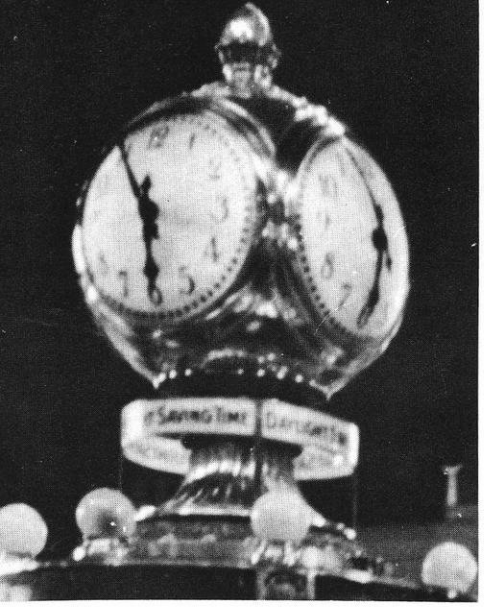

HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF LEGENDARY KAPROWS BY DICK HIGGINS
PROMINENT EMINENT PROMISING MAGNIFICENT MAGNANIMOUS IMMINENT June 2nd, 1960
first published in **Non-Performance Pieces** New York, 1963: copyright 1963 by Richard C. Higgins

Most people who have seen or read about Happenings are aware that Allan Kaprow coined the term and was among the very first to do work in this vein. Many have read his history of the Happening, of the way it evolved through many artists' collages becoming increasingly inclusive of unusual materials, until a new word was needed, "assemblage." This trend did not stop there, but continued, until assemblages led to "environments," which completely surrounded the spectator, the point at which environments began. Then, ultimately, when these began to include live performers, still another word was needed, of which the most commonly used is "Happening," though there are others. All this has been well-documented in many languages and countries.

But the interest in Allan Kaprow's work does not lie in its historical novelty, of course, and I would like to try to explain its powerful impact and imagery. I will therefore try to avoid a historical approach, and try to describe what actually characterizes Allan Kaprow's work.

One of the first striking characteristics is a technical one: Kaprow's attitude towards the audience, which, in turn, gives a characteristic flavor to his work. In such early works as *A Spring Happening,*[1] performed in late March, 1961, there continued to be a separation in his work between audience and the performer. The audience was, in fact, invited to watch a ritual embodying spring. They were separate spectators until the last moment when the audience, which had been confined within a small area inside something like a freight car, and who had been jammed tight as sardines, looking out through slats at the activities taking place outside, almost deafened by thundering barrels, was suddenly driven out. The freight car cage construction flew apart and a man operating a power lawn mower pushed right into the audience, where the freight car-like structure had been, so that the audience was compelled to get out of the way (and out of construction) as quickly as possible. The real impact of driving this audience out was that here for the first time in one of his pieces Kaprow began to insist on total audience participation. Now, there is a very big distinction between Kaprow's sort of audience participation and the more superficial one of going through the audience and giving everybody mirrors or asking them to do one or another rather simple-minded thing. Since *A Spring Happening* Kaprow has in almost all pieces which he has done asked the audience to participate together giving his work the aspect of a ritual. The purpose for this is not any sort of neo-religiosity. That is, in fact, as far from the spirit of Kaprow's work as one could get. Instead the spirit has more to do with generating a sense of community and co-participation naturally. Kaprow uses thoroughly modern and evocative materials which make image rituals and only evoke ancient rituals to the extent that the images are sometimes mythic or archetypal. Usually his images go beyond this into a quite aggressive lyricism which is both satisfying and carthartic to the audience.

For example, there is the work, composed in 1965, entitled *Calling.*[2] Performances took place on two successive days. A mailing was sent out which invited anyone who would be interested in participating to meet with Kaprow and discuss what was to be done. I would like to discuss what took place on the second day for a moment. Transportation was arranged for the participants to George Segal's farm in New Jersey. A small number of participants volunteered to be hung upside down from the branches of trees in slings which Kaprow had constructed. Others of the participants sat

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underneath the people hanging from the trees. Still others, described in the text as the marauders, came through the woods from some distance away calling out the names of the people who were hanging from the trees. The people under the trees called back. The marauders approached the hanging and sitting people slowly. On their arrival, they savagely cut away and ripped off all the clothes of the hanging people until they were naked and the performance drew to a close. There was no actual violence towards the audience, though the potential was poetically evoked, since those who were hanging from the trees knew precisely what sort of ritual would be enacted and had volunteered to participate in this capacity, while the watchers, below, were not touched. Nor were the marauders in fact really unaware where the people were hanging from the trees although they came towards them very, very slowly and with seeming confusion. Those hanging under the trees were not merely witnesses but co-marauders since they answered the calling. As a result, any violence or cruelty involved in this situation was implied rather than overt, and there was a sense of participation which developed a strange sense of community in the "crime." There is a certain amount of rape in our personalities is what seemed to be the message.

A second characteristic of Kaprow's work is his strong sense of community, coupled with virtually no sense of political action or protest, though one can, of course, draw parallels from such a Happening as *Calling* to, for example, American Vietnam policy. I do not believe that is what Kaprow intended however, since the result was infinitely more poetic than violent. If it were to be taken as a political ritual, it would be utterly an ineffective one. However, this sense of community which Kaprow builds up is very indicative of his concern for social relationships. A passing analogy might be suggested to the social and political attitudes of, for example, John Cage or Buckminster Fuller, both of whom are deeply concerned with changes in the world that seem necessary, yet neither is sympathetic to political protest in an overt way, since it seems to them to be a negative approach.

A third characteristic of many of the best of Kaprow's Happenings is that for him, as opposed to many other so-called audience participation artists, there is no difficulty in handling extremely large groups of people, just as for a minister of a church handling a large congregation presents not only no difficulty but in fact enriches the situation. For example, in the summer of 1966, Kaprow performed a short Happening for children in Central Park in New York City. Within a fenced enclosure there was a large number of poles with polyethylene and tarpaper on the sides and at the foot of a hill. Many, perhaps four hundred children, were stationed at the top of the hill with enormous numbers of old tires. On a signal, a blast from many fish horns, the children raced the tires downhill, knocking down the poles, piled the tires and tarpaper into several mountains and wrapped up the mountains with the polyethylene. On this they played "King of the Mountain." It was a sort of playground event but the effect was the same kind of implied violence — very poetic — as in *Calling*. Very few Happenings artists can handle so many participants so successfully as Kaprow did in this case.

However, as a final example of Kaprow's own peculiar sort of poetry, I would like to cite a sort of chamber Happening which he wrote for two friends, Olga and Billy Klüver. It is called *Raining*[3] and here is the text of the scenario with Kaprow's notes.

◀ Kaprow's "The Calling"
Peter Moore

Raining
(Scheduled for performance in the spring, for any number of persons and the weather. Times and places need not be coordinated, and are left up to the participants. The action of the rain may be watched if desired.) (For Olga and Billy Klüver, January 1965)

Black highway painted black
Rain washes away

Paper men made in bare orchard branches
Rain washes away

Little gray boats painted along a gutter
Rain washes away

Naked bodies painted gray
Rain washes away

Bare trees painted red
Rain washes away

* * *

Black highway painted black:

A lonely stretch of highway should be selected, and a time when it is only sporadically traveled, such as 3 a.m. Black watercolor in large buckets is splashed and brushed onto as long a piece of road as possible. When it next rains, the painters may choose to return to sit at the edge of the black strip.

Paper men made in a bare orchard:

Construction or papier-maché images should be made in the bare branches just before they bloom in early spring. When it next rains, the slow collapse of these paper men into dripping sogginess may be watched by the builders.

Sheets of writing spread over a field:

An elderly woman might sit by herself and watch her old love letters wash away; a painter might spread out his worst drawings and laugh in the drizzle. These papers should be personal, in any case.

Little gray boats painted along a gutter:

Children (or adults) should paint images of a boat in a gutter; when it rains, they may watch them dissolve and disappear down the sewers.

Naked bodies painted gray:

When it rains, adults or children may paint themselves on each other's naked bodies on a city rooftop, at the beach, or at a country place.

Bare trees painted red:

Here again, an April orchard is best, just before the leaves emerge. A gasoline-powered spray gun using red watercolor, is most efficient for covering large areas of branches, but if preferred, brushes may be used. When it rains, the dripping color will probably stain the ground around the trees.

(JANUARY 1965)

In this piece we see the use of rather small resources together with typical Kaprow poetry. This piece as well as any other helps to define Kaprow's individual imagery.
Other stock images in addition to the rain and paint which Kaprow used in this particular piece, and which appear in many of his works are:
Large shrouded structures. These first appear along with **tires** in his *Environment* which he constructed in '60 for the Martha Jackson Gallery, appear again

◀ Kaprow's "The Courtyard"
Peter Moore

in such works as his Summer of '62 piece performed at Springs, Long Island, the **Courtyard** performed in the autumn of 1962 at the Old Mills Hotel in New York, in his regeneration piece performed at George Segal's farm in the Spring of 1963.

Tires appear in many subsequent pieces also. The **covering of people** with polyethylene or aluminum foil is a second stock image.

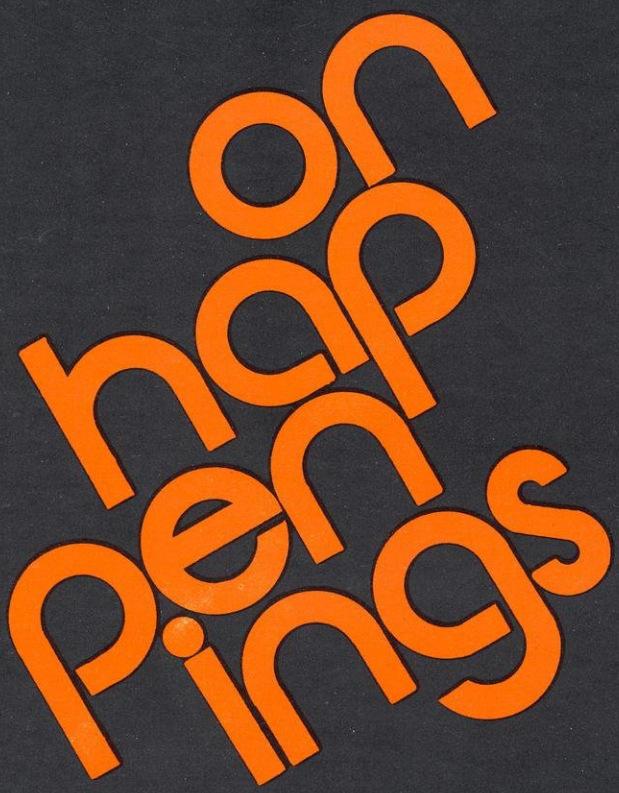
The **undressing of people** is a third, and a fourth, the **painting of people,** ideally naked, has been almost standard with him since 1958, when he wrote his *The Demiurge.*[4]

A fifth which usually seems ironic is the **super market,** which seems nearly an obsession. The Happening aspect of a super market where a housewife or someone else will go buy, collect, and take away, he has developed in many works such as a piece which he did, for example, in 1963 at the Bon Marché at Paris and in many other works since then. Many of his articles and manifestos emphasize the super market. The first four of these images, I suggest, appeal to him because of their aspect of concealment, and the supermarket for the kind of simple modernism that it implies, and for the attitude of daily living of supplying a household. Ultimately all of Kaprow's images wind up as something of this sort, with a private meaning for each individual spectator.

In conclusion, I would therefore like to emphasize again the romanticism, almost pipe dream quality of Kaprow's lyricism. If the Happening as we find it in the works of Allan Kaprow is to be of interest, it is not for its form but for its poetry and Kaprow stands out in the final analysis less as a technical innovator than as a day dreamer, whose dreams are allowed to be realized in a more poetic and direct fashion than would be possible if he were simply to confine himself to the traditional media of expression, such as painting or collage. The Happening makes it possible for him to enact his daydreams in a concrete and live context. Since the content justifies the form, and the form becomes necessary in order to realize his own sort of poetry, the form is justified.

FOOTNOTES

1. *A Spring Happening* is printed in *Happenings,* edited by Michael Kirby (E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1965)
2. *Calling* has been published in English by Something Else Press, 238 W. 22 St., New York, N.Y. 10010 in a deluxe, object-book format in an edition of 25 signed, wooden copies.
3. *Raining* is included in *Some Recent Happenings,* by Allan Kaprow, published 1966 by Something Else Press, Inc., New York. $0.60.
4. *The Demiurge,* the first Happening to be called by the name, first was published in *The Anthologist,* Volume XXX, Number 4 (1959) by Rutgers University. The scenario only is printed in *Happenings,* edited by Michael Kirby (see above), where it is erroneously identified as the scenario for *18 Happenings in 6 Parts.* The short untitled essay written to accompany *The Demiurge,* is included in *Untitled Essay and other pieces,* by Allan Kaprow, published 1967 by Something Else Press, Inc., New York ($0.80).



ON HAPPENINGS[1]

By Allan Kaprow

Happenings are today's only underground avant-garde. Regularly, since 1958, the end of the Happenings has been announced — always by those who have never come near one — and just as regularly since then, Happenings have been spreading around the globe like some chronic virus, cunningly avoiding the familiar places and occurring where they are least expected. "Where Not To Be Seen: At a Happening," advised Esquire Magazine several years ago, in its annual two-page scoreboard on what's in and out of culture. Exactly! One goes to the Museum of Modern Art to be seen. The Happenings are the one art activity that can escape the inevitable death-by-publicity to which all other art is condemned, because, designed for a brief life, they can never be over-exposed; they are dead, quite literally, every time they happen. At first unconsciously, then deliberately, they played the game of planned obsolescence, just before the mass media began to force the condition down the throats of the standard arts (which can little afford the challenge). For the latter, the great question has become "How long can it last?"; for the Happenings it always was "How to keep on going?" Thus "underground" took on a different meaning. Where once the artist's enemy was the smug bourgeois, now he was the hippie journalist.

In 1961 I wrote in an article, "To the extent that a Happening is not a commodity but a brief event, from the standpoint of any publicity it may receive, **it may become a state of mind.** Who will have

been there at that event? It may become like the sea-monsters of the past or the flying saucers of yesterday. I shouldn't really care, for as the new myth grows on its own, without reference to anything in particular, the artist may achieve a beautiful privacy, famed for something purely imaginary, while free to explore something nobody will notice." The Happener, jealous of his freedom, deflects public attention away from what he actually does, to a myth about it instead. The Happening? It was somewhere, some time ago; and besides, nobody does those things anymore. . .

There are presently more than forty men and women "doing" some kind of Happening. They live in Japan, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Argentina, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Austria, Iceland, — as well as in the United States. Probably ten of these are first rate talents. Moreover, at least a dozen volumes on or related to the subject are currently available: Wolf Vostell's *Decollage No. 4,* Köln, 1963, published by the author; *An Anthology,* edited and published by Jackson MacLow and La Monte Young, N.Y., 1963; George Brecht's *Water Yam,* Fluxus Publications, N.Y., 1963; *Fluxus 1,* an anthology edited by George Maciunas, also Fluxus Publications, N.Y., 1964; Richard Higgins' *Postface and Jefferson's Birthday,* Something Else Press, N.Y., 1964; Michael Kirby's *Happenings,* E. P. Dutton, N.Y., 1964; Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit,* Wunternaum Press, L.I., N.Y., 1964; Jurgen Becker's and Wolf Vostell's *Happenings, Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Realisme,* Rowohlt Verlag, Hamburg, 1965; Galerie Parnass (in Wuppertal) *24 Stunden,* Verlag Hansen & Hansen, Itzehoe Vosskate, 1965; Al Hansen's *Primer of Happenings and Time Space Art;* and *Four Suits,* works by Philip Corner, Alison Knowles, Ben Patterson and Tomas Schmit, both released by the Something Else Press; and the Winter, 1965 issue of the *Tulane Drama Review,* a special Happenings issue edited by Michael Kirby, Tulane University, New Orleans. Jean-Jacques Lebel has published his book in Paris, and my book, *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings,* Harry N. Abrams, Inc., N.Y., came out in 1966. Besides this growing literature there is an increasing bibliography of articles of a serious nature. These publications — and the forty-odd Happeners — are extending the myth of an art which is nearly unknown and, for all practical purposes, unknowable.

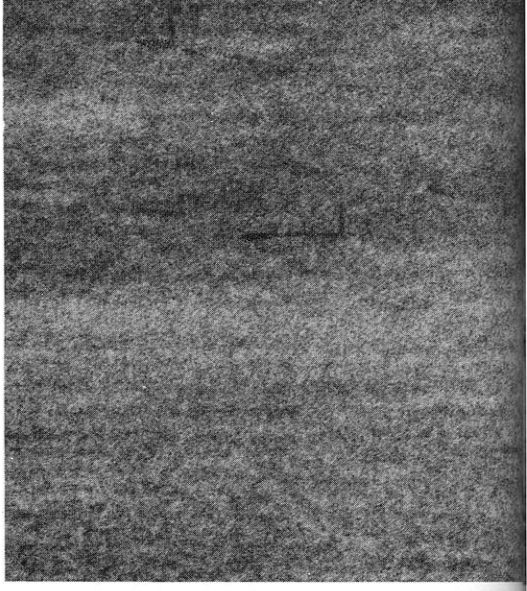
Hence, it is quite in the spirit of things to introduce into this myth certain principles of action,[2] which would have the advantage of helping to maintain the present good health of the Happenings, while — and I say this with a grin but without irony — discouraging direct evalutation of their effectivness. Instead, they would be measured by the stories that multiply, by the printed scenarios and occasional photographs of works that shall have passed on forever — and which altogether would evoke more of an aura of something breathing just beyond one's immediate grasp, than a documentary record to be judged. In effect, this is calculated rumor, the purpose of which is to stimulate as much fantasy as possible, so long as it leads primarily away from the artist and his affairs. On this plane, the whole process tends to become analogous to art. And on this plane, so do the rules of the game.

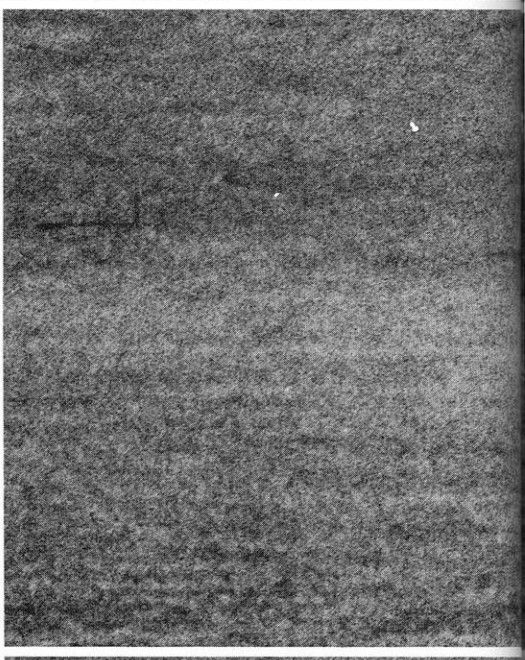
1. The line between the Happening and daily life should be kept as fluid and perhaps indistinct as possible. The reciprocation between the man-made and the ready-made will be at its maximum power this way. Two cars collide on a highway. Violet liquid pours out of the broken radiator of one of them, and in the back seat of the other there is a huge load of dead chickens. The cops check into the incident, plausible answers are given,

tow truck drivers remove the wrecks, costs are paid, the drivers go home to dinner.

2. Themes, materials, actions and the associations they evoke, are to be gotten from anywhere except from the arts, their derivatives and their milieu. By eliminating the arts, and anything that even remotely reminds one of them, as well as by steering clear of art galleries, theaters, concert halls and other forms of cultural emporia (such as night clubs and coffee shops), the chance is that a separate art will develop. And this is the goal. Happenings are not a composite or "total" art, as Wagnerian opera wished to be; nor are they even a synthesis of the arts. Unlike most of the standard arts, their source is non-art, and the quasi-art that results always contains something of this uncertain identity. A U.S. Marines' manual on jungle fighting tactics, a tour of a laboratory where polyethylene kidneys are made, a traffic-jam on the Long Island Expressway, are more useful than Beethoven, Racine or Michelangelo.

3. The Happening should be dispersed over several, widely-spaced, sometimes moving and changing, locales. A single performance space tends to be static and limiting (like painting only in the center of a canvas). It also is the convention of stage theater, preventing the use of a thousand possibilities which, for example, the movies take pictures of, but do not allow an audience to actually experience. One can experiment by gradually widening the distances between the events in a Happening. First, at a number of points along a heavily trafficked avenue; then in several rooms and floors of an apartment house where some of the activities are out of touch with each other; then on more than one street; then in different but proximate cities; finally, all around the globe. Some of this may take place en route from one area to another, using public transportation and the mails.





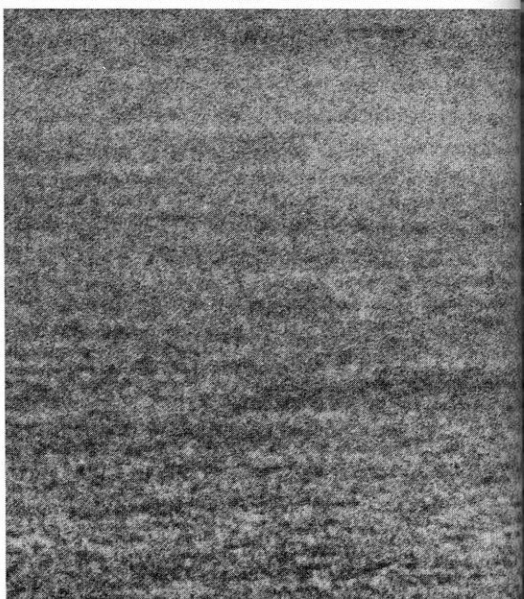


Photo by Mike Murray

This will increase the tension between the parts, and will also permit them to exist more on their own without intensive coordination.

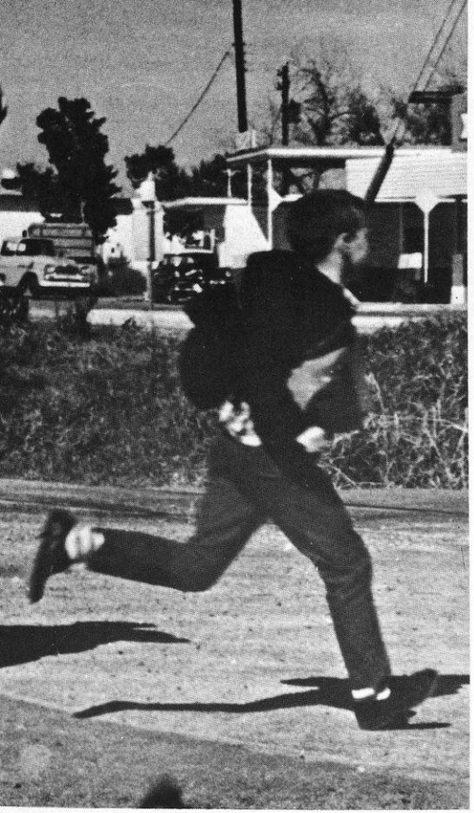
4. Time, closely bound up with things and spaces, should be variable and independent of the convention of continuity. Whatever is to happen should do so in its natural time, in contrast to the practice in music of arbitrary slowing down or accelerating occurrences in keeping with a structural scheme or expressive purpose. Consider the time it takes to buy a fishing pole in a busy department store just before Christmas, or the time it takes to lay the footings for a building. If the same people are engaged in both, then one action will have to wait for the other to be completed. If different people perform them, then the events may overlap. The point is that all occurences have their own time; these may or may not concur according to the fairly normative needs of the situation. They may concur, for instance, if people, coming from different areas, must meet in time to take a train somewhere.

5. The composition of all materials, actions, images, and their times and spaces, should be undertaken in as artless, and, again, practical, a way as possible. This does not refer to formlessness, for that is literally impossible; it means the avoidance of form theories associated particularly with the arts, and which have to do with the idea of arrangement per se, such as serial technique, dynamic symmetry, sonnet form, etc. If I and others have linked a Happening to a collage of events, then Times Square can also be seen that way. Just as some collages are arranged to look like classical paintings, others remind one of Times Square. It depends on where the emphasis lies. A Happening perhaps alludes more to the form of games and sports, than the forms of art, and in this connection, it is useful to observe how children invent the games they play. Their composition is often strict, but their substance is unencumbered by esthetics. Children's play is also social, the contribution of more than one child's idea. Thus, a Happening can be composed by several persons, to include, as well, the participation of the weather, animals and insects.

6. Happenings should be unrehearsed, and performed by non-professionals, once only. A crowd is to eat its way through a roomful of food; a house is burned down; love letters are strewn over a field and beaten to a pulp by a future rain; twenty rented cars are driven away in different directions until they run out of gas . . . Not only is it often impossible and impractical to rehearse and repeat situations such as these, it is unnecessary. Unlike the repertory arts, the Happenings' freedom is bound up precisely with their use of realms of action that cannot be fixed. Furthermore, since no skill is required to enact the events of a Happening, there is nothing for a professional athlete or actor to demonstrate (and no one to applaud either); thus there is even less reason to rehearse and repeat because there is nothing to improve. All that may be left is the value to oneself.

7. It follows that there should not be (and usually cannot be) an audience or audiences to watch a Happening. By willingly participating in a work, that is, by knowing the scenario and one's particular duties beforehand, a person becomes a real and necessary part of the work. It cannot exist without him, as it cannot exist without the rain or the rush-hour subway, if they are called for. Although the participant is unable to do everything and be in all places at once, he knows the overall pattern, if not the details. And like the agent in an international spy ring, he knows, too, that what he does devotedly will echo and give character

Photo by Burton Wilson



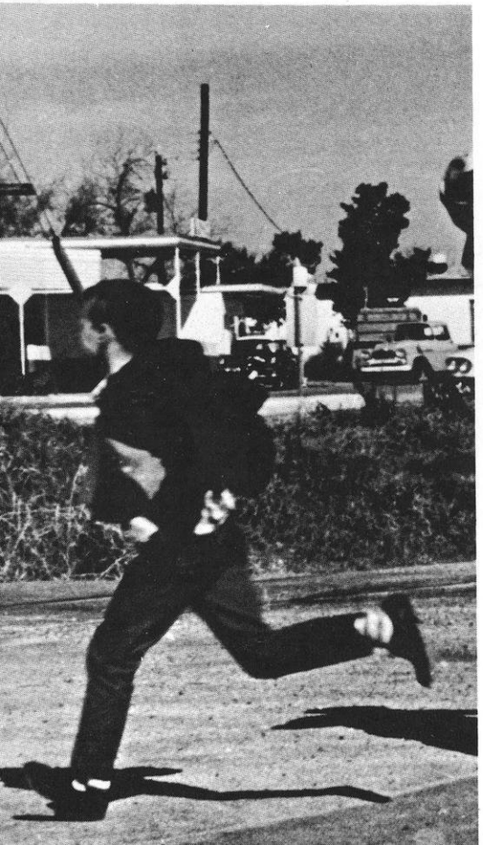


Photo by Bur

to what others do elsewhere. A Happening with only an emphatic response on the part of a seated audience, is not a Happening at all; it is simply stage theater.

The fine arts traditionally demand for their appreciation a physically passive observer, working with his mind to get at what his senses register. But the Happenings are an active art, requiring that creation and realization, artwork and appreciator, artwork and life, be inseparable. Like action painting, from which they have derived inspiration, they will probably appeal to those who find the contemplative life by itself inadequate.

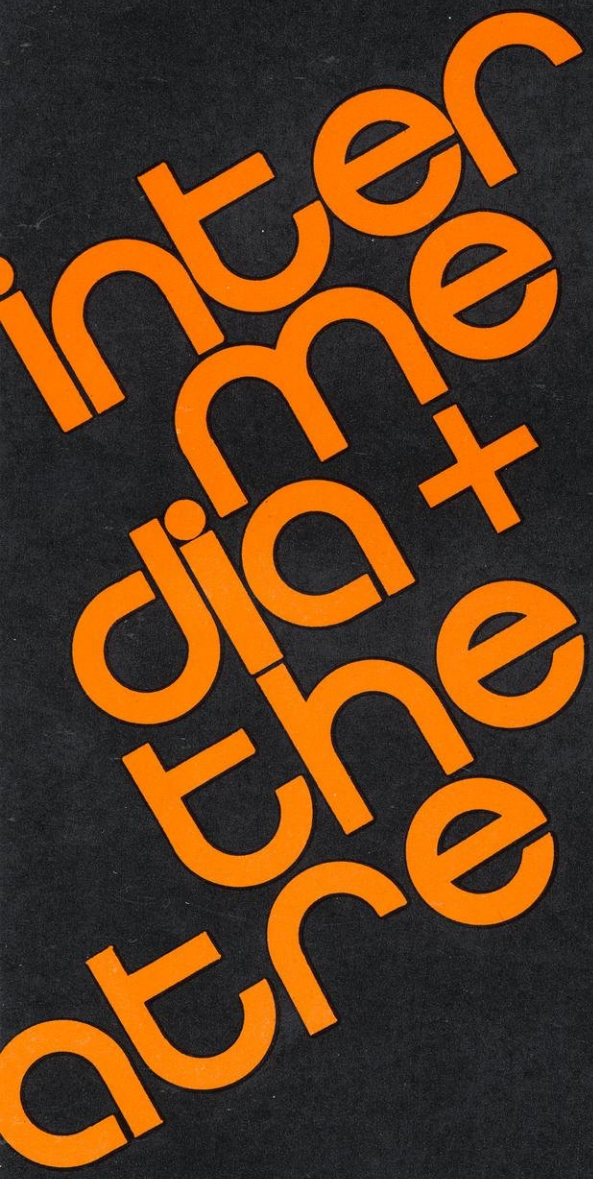
But the importance given to purposive action in the Happenings also suggests affinities with practices marginal to the fine arts, such as parades, carnivals, games, expeditions, guided tours, orgies, religious ceremonies, and secular rituals. As examples among the latter group, there are the elaborate operations of the Mafia, civil rights demonstrations, national election campaigns, Thursday nights at the shopping centers of America, the hot-rod, dragster, and motorcycle scene, and not least, the whole fantastic explosion of the advertising and communications industry. Each of these plays with the materials of the tangible world, and the results are unconscious rituals acted out from day to day. Happenings, freed of the restrictions of the conventional art materials, have discovered the world at their fingertips, and the conscious results are quasi-rituals, never to be repeated. Unlike the "cooler" styles of Pop, Op, Ob and Kinetics, in which imagination is filtered through a specialized medium and a privileged showplace, the Happenings do not merely allude to what is going on in our bedrooms, in the drugstores and at the airports; they are right there. How poignant, that, as far as the arts are concerned, this life above ground is underground!

[1]This is an edited version of an article which was published in the March 1966 issue of ARTFORUM (Vol. IV, Number 7). It appears by permission of the editor of ARTFORUM.

[2]Summarized from my book, cited above.

A Note on the Illustrations:
Allan Kaprow states that the illustrations should stress one of the main points of the article: the importance of the non-art world for the substance and form of the Happenings. He states that such illustrations underscore the fact that photos of Happenings (when they exist, which is rarely) are inadequate records because they tend "to pictorialize" a moment out of many moments, while photos of daily events are not so much pictures but reminders of what we know (or could know) through active experience. The photographs illustrating the Kaprow article were taken by students in Russell Lee's photography classes at the University of Texas.

Photo by Richard Frederick ▶



INTERMEDIA AND THEATRE

by Paul Epstein

The word **"Intermedia"** was a particularly happy invention. It is broad enough to include Happenings, Events, Activities, and Environments, as well as an endless variety of as yet nameless forms, many of which remain much closer to the traditional artistic disciplines. "Intermedia" suggests what has really been going on in recent art: a crossing of boundaries, not only between the arts and between art and life but between creative artist and performer, performer and audience, painter and composer, musician and actor, exhibit and concert, Commercial Art and High Art. And within the work of art all the linear perspectival functions — beginning-middle-end, foreground-middleground-background, exposition-development-transition-extension — have been replaced by open form. Art is process, and there can be no **a priori** assumptions about form or medium or syntactic structure.

The revolutionary stage of Intermedia is virtually over. The primary objective, removing **a priori** definitions and restrictions and making all material and techniques permissible, has been accomplished. It is no longer possible to use mere innovation in either technique or content in order to startle. The danger at this point lies in adopting the newly acquired techniques to the total exclusion of the old, in substituting new definitions and restrictions for the ones that have been discarded. The purpose of this paper will be to discuss briefly one area where such an exclusion exists.

The virtual absence in Intermedia of scripted theatre is the natural result of the fact that those who first developed the concepts of Intermedia were primarily painters and musicians, that language as communication had been seriously

devaluated, and that theatre has been least able of all the arts to discard its literary orientation. The text is the end, and the actor is the principal means to that end. Even such recent plays as *Viet Rock* that take a more relaxed view of the text are still thoroughly actor-oriented. In fact much of the most vital work in theatre today, from the Open Theatre to the Polish Theatre Lab, seems to take a position diametrically opposed to that of Intermedia in tending to reduce scenic elements in favor of greater responsibility for the actor. But the goal is the same: to liberate performance from the domination of the text as literature.

The question of Intermedia in relation to scripted theatre must be posed from two directions. First, what values are gained by using scripted materials in Intermedia. Second, what is the relevance of Intermedia techniques to the production of existing plays?

The inclusion of theatrical techniques in Intermedia would first of all provide a broader spectrum of performance modes, from tasks (non-matrixed performance) to the various types of improvisation to the performing of scripted material, analogous to the spectrum of modes by which a visual image may be presented or represented. A construction by Mary Bauermeister includes real stones, painted stones, a photograph of a group of stones from another work, and even a drawing of the artist's hand attaching a stone. And that does not begin to exhaust the possibilities. Similarly a performance work can examine an image, action, or relationship by a succession of different processes. These can occur simultaneously or sequentially, changing either by sudden transformation or gradual transition.

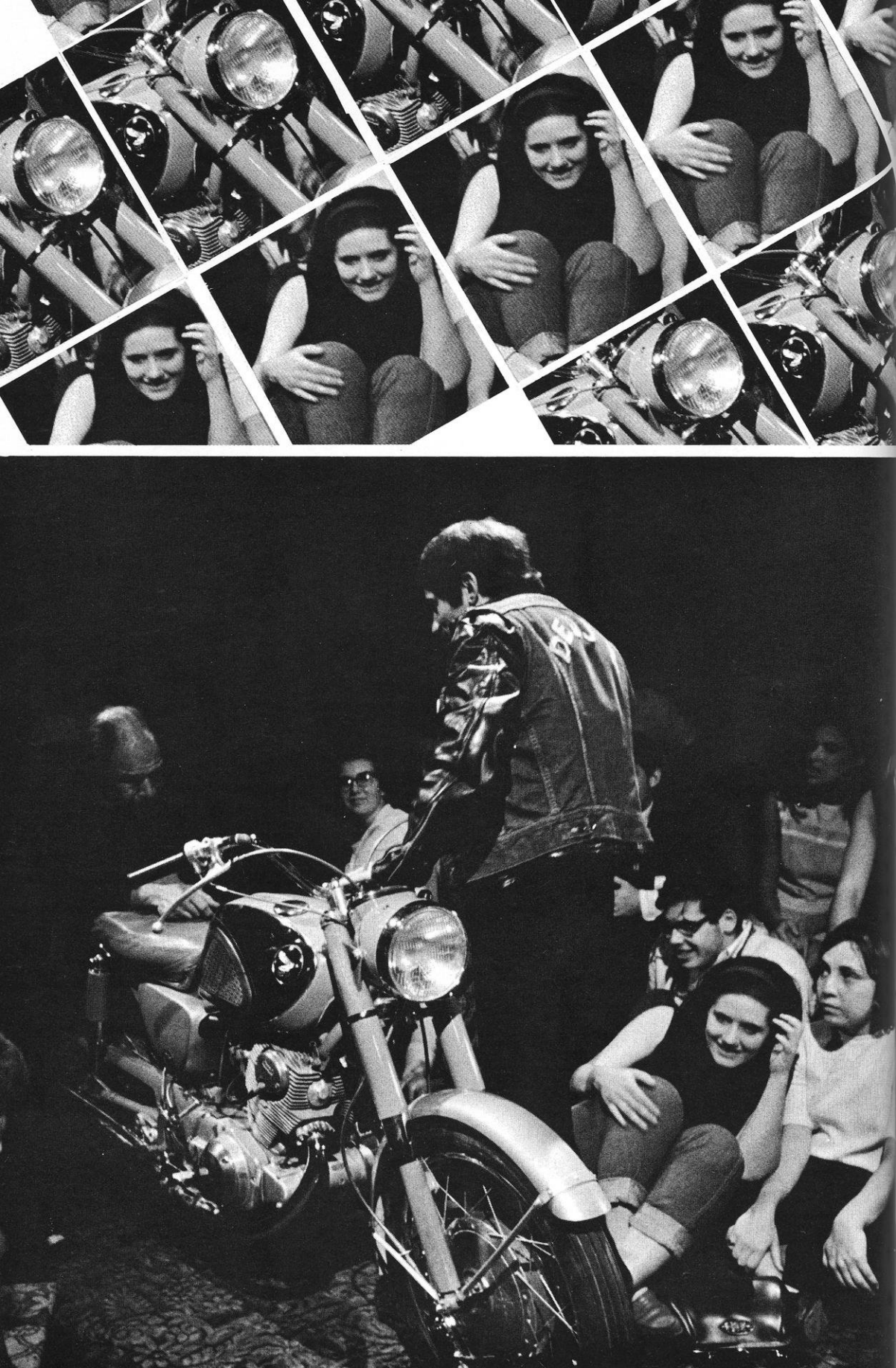
Scripted material would also, I believe, make possible an expansion in scope. Franklin Adams refers to the "painter's idea scale" as a characteristic of Happenings. That is,

. . . each individual painting has represented a much smaller fragment of the artist's 'world view' than has been represented for the playwright by each individual play. This has tended to give happenings . . . a certain concentrated, even compulsive character — a tendency to dwell longer and more repetitively on one small fragment of an idea than playwrights have ever been willing to do.

The crossover of the painter's concept of scale into a performance medium has been highly productive, but it has largely limited the content of Happenings and Intermedia to simple, concrete images — in spite of the complexity and subtlety with which these images may be organized. Scripted material would enable the artist to deal efficiently and economically with a far broader range of content.

John Cage has suggested the treatment of existing scripts "as material rather than as art".[2] It is interesting to note that although collage has long been a common technique among artists, and has even been applied in a few instances by composers, there have been — to my knowledge — no attempts at theatre collage. It seems likely that a wealth of relationships would become available through the juxtaposition and fragmentation of older plays.

The New Orleans Group, in a production of Ionesco's *Victims of Duty*[3], has attempted to apply environmental staging and Intermedia techniques to a scripted play. *Victims of Duty* has on the surface a conventional cyclic form, the deceptive nature of which is hinted at by Ionesco's designation of the play as a pseudo-drama. The "plot" and "characters" — together with the form — are the ironic frame for an intricate network of images



and relationships that are simultaneous rather than sequential, cumulative rather than causal.

It is Marshall McLuhan's contention that the Theatre of the Absurd attempts "to do a job demanded by the new environment with the tools of the old."[4] In other words it talks about simultaneity and fragmentation within a sequential and ordered structure. But this is only true if "the play" is equated with the printed text. If — and this was a key assumption behind the production of *Victims of Duty* — the text is merely a road map containing at the same time more routes and less detail than necessary, then the play can only assume a shape in production. "The play" **is** "the production." And until there is a production there can be no question of a conflict between form and content.

A number of techniques were used in the production of *Victims of Duty*. It is not possible here to discuss more than a few of them or to document their relevance to this particular play.

Instead of a theatrical setting built within a recognizable architectural structure, *Victims of Duty* employed a total transformation of the space into a single environment with no separate areas for actors and spectators. The audience could sit, stand, or lie anywhere on the carpeted platforms and staircases that filled the room. No chairs were provided beyond those that would at some time be needed by the actors; at such times it became the task of the actor, in character, to persuade the spectator to relinquish his seat. When audience members occupied an important playing area (there were several "anchor points" where certain scenes had to be played; otherwise the blocking was flexible) the actor had to find a way of using them or avoiding them.

When the audience entered from the lobby — where there was an exhibit including taped sound, a film loop, slides, and collages of photographic and other material — the actors were seated around a table having dinner. They conversed in normal tones and out of character. The audience was free to listen, to join the conversation, to talk to each other, or to return to the exhibit, the sound of which continued to spill into the theatre. Gradually the actors not appearing in the opening scene of the play left, the improvisatory conversation began to resemble more and more the opening of the play, and finally — after at least a page of text had actually been covered — all improvisation ceased.

The use of space, the exhibit, and the opening improvisation attempted to blur the dividing lines between the play's reality and life, but not the distinctions between them. It was not a matter of substituting one set of illusions for another by making the play simulate reality, but of establishing a continuum. Instead of a clear break between real and theatrical time-space there is a transition. The audience is funneled through the exhibit into the improvisation and eventually into the play. Their experience becomes gradually more structured, as does the actors' experience. Then, too, the transition effects a communion between actors and audience — a faintly ritualistic preparation for what is to come — that stresses the social nature of the theatrical event. In the improvisation the actors do not pretend to be characters pretending to be real people. They are themselves — actors who are about to perform. They discuss their own lives, the audience, their roles, previous performances. Their reactions to questions and comments from the audience are their own reactions, and there is a real risk of a spectator getting the best lines. But there is a risk for the audience too.

Victims of Duty: Nicholas (Bronislav Radakovic) stalks the detecive (Arthur Wagner)

The security of spatial and psychological separation has been removed.

In the single, central focus of traditional theatre, including the arena stage as well as the proscenium, there is something essentially didactic. The audience is **shown** the enactment of a situation. They may be left to formulate their own evaluation of what has occurred on stage, but they have all seen the same thing. In *Victims of Duty* the focus moved freely from central to multiple to local. Four loudspeakers and three projection surfaces carried varying densities of sound and visual images that operated in support of or, more often, in counterpoint to the live actors. One scene ran simultaneously live and on film, with differences in setting, costume, and characterization serving to project a double image implicit in the text. At times, when the detail of the dialogue or action was non-essential, several actors would play locally to small groups of spectators.

Besides making possible a high degree of density and compression, multiple focus and local focus force the spectator to make choices. He must select a route through the performance just as the directors selected a route through the text. (The anxiety caused by not having seen "everything" is more intense here than in Happenings; but this is a matter of conditioning.) He cannot empathize with the characters — who in any event undergo frequent and sudden transformations — because empathy requires the esthetic distance and fixed point of view of central focus. Instead he must submit to a complex sensory experience that can be evaluated only afterwards. During the event the "meaning" of the play is felt, not understood.

Technical limitations made it impossible to achieve local focus with sound and projected images. The sound and projections at times attained an equal intensity with the actors, but while the actors often carried the full burden of a scene the technical apparatus never did. And the technicians went only a small way towards becoming active **performers.**

While most boundaries have already been crossed and hitherto unused materials and procedures explored, the real implication of the Intermedia revolution — that the full life-art spectrum and the entire range of artistic concepts and techniques are legitimate material — has yet to be accepted and applied. Recent work has naturally enough concentrated on the "life" end of the spectrum as regards both processes (chance, improvisation, non-matrixed performance) and materials (found objects, found sound). But should the use of non-matrixed performance preclude the use — in the same work — of the full range of matrixed performance? Should the use of improvisation preclude the simultaneous use of scripted material?

Victims of Duty took only the first step towards an environmental theatre, a genuine synthesis of theatre and Intermedia. Many productions of many different kinds of plays will have to be done before the full extent of the possibilities is visible.

1. From an unpublished paper, "The New Art of Intermedia."
2. Michael Kirby and Richard Schechner, "An Interview with John Cage," *Tulane Drama Review,* Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 51.
3. The New Orleans Group consists of Franklin Adams, Richard Schechner, and myself. *Victims of Duty* was given in New Orleans from April 21 to May 6, 1967.
4. *The Medium Is the Massage.* Bantam Books, New York, 1967, p. 95.

PORTRAIT OF THE
ARTIST AS A YOUNG.
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SPACE PLACE PORTRAIT

HAPPENINGS
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Maxfield liked to be an electronic
composer because there was no sepa
ration between the composer and the
performance. POSTFACE, Dick Higgins

ONE SHOULD TRY ALWAYS TO RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT IS
HAPPENING IN THE EVENT AND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ONESELF DURING THE
EVENT. WHEN YOU ADMIT THIS DISTANCE YOU CAN FORGET YOURSELF: A SAFE
DRIVER, A PERCEPTIVE, QUICK ATHLETE. WHEN YOU ARE FEARFUL YOU CANNOT
ADMIT IT AND TRY TO HIDE THE DIFFERENCE WITH LIQUOR, SEDATIVES, DRUGS,
STIMULANTS. A SAFE DRIVER DOES NOT SAY OF HIMSELF, I AM A SAFE DRIVER.
A PERCEPTIVE, QUICK ATHLETE DOESN'T SAY, I AM PERCEPTIVE, QUICK.

ALVIN
LUCIER'S
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OTHER WATCHERS AND LISTENERS: HOW DO THEY DO IT? OTHERS: T
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Ann
Halprin:
The person
who is the per
former is working
with his body as an
instrument, he's making
sounds, and he's doing eve
rything as if he were an obj
ect; he's full of the most fan
tastic psychological phenomena, b
ut he's completely cutting these off
and blocking them. . . . the danger
and the actor are their own instruments.
They can find out why they are different f
rom chairs or flutes or tape recorders. . . .
. To tell you the truth I was scared to death abo
ut this whole thing . . . . (Yvonne Rainer Intervie
ws Ann Halprin in TDR)

AMONG MANY OBSERVERS OF A CRIME NOT
ONE STEPS FORWARD TO PREVENT IT, IT IS NOT
A CRIME. IF MANY STEP FORWARD, IT IS A
POLITICAL ACT. IF ONE MAN STEPS FORWARD

WHEN
THERE IS NO
BARRIER, ONE WOULD
EXPECT DETERRANCE.
OF HAPPENINGS, EVENTS, IN
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ARY CONFORMITY, THE IMAGE-INDULGING THE IMAGE-SERVING
THE IMAGE-SATISFYING LIBERAL CONFORMITY, THE CONSERVATIVE CON
RADICAL CONFORMITY. THE IMAGE-PROCLA

JOHN CAGE: THOUGH I DON'T
ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN POLITICS I DO AS AN ARTIST
HAVE SOME AWARENESS OF ART'S POLITICAL C
ONTENT, AND IT DOESN'T INCLUDE POL
ICEMEN. (TULANE DRAMA REVIEW,
WINTER 1965) HAPPENINGS DO
N'T DO IT BETTER BECAUSE THEY HAVE
THIS THING WE'VE SPOKEN OF AS CARELES
SNESS IN THEM.

Typographic Happenings by Peter Yates.

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE MILLENNIUM or "HAPPENINGS" REVISITED

by James L. Rosenberg

The war between tradition and revolt in the arts has a long and honorable history, dating back at least to Euripides and Aristophanes and probably, if the truth were known, to drawings by rival artists on the walls of Iberian caves. On the contemporary scene, one of the most visible and audible groups in the revolutionary camp is made up of those people who are doing what are popularly known as "Happenings." (Appropriately enough, no word has been invented to describe the people who **create** "Happenings" — happeners? occurrence-inventers? makers of moments?) Indeed, in the minds of the general public — or that small segment of it which pays any attention to the arts — a "Happening" is the Now thing in the field of the performing arts, conjuring up rather wild visions of flashing colored lights, deafening electronic music, and bizarre sets and costumes, with perhaps just a dash of nudity and perversion to add spice to the brew — a combination, in short, of a Marx Brothers slapstick sequence, a Beaux Arts ball played out of sync, and an LSD orgy done in living color. Not that there is not a certain amount of truth in this concept (dependent, ironically, on widespread publicity given the "Happenings" movement in such bastions of the bourgeois establishment as *Time, Life* and *Look* magazines!). There is a considerable amount of grotesquerie and sheer slapstick in many "Happenings," an element of humor (most of it, to be sure, quite unintentional), and, while I have no way of knowing whether or not some

of the people involved are on LSD or other mind-stretchers, I can only assume, after reading some of their scripts and theoretical musings, they've been eating something other than Wheaties. (One "Happening" script runs as follows, in its entirety: "The performers, usually two, find something to braid, hair, yarn, etc., and do so." Another, by the same author — if that is the word I am groping for — goes like this: "Exit in a new suit." And this is followed by a solemn footnote: "Premiered June 27th, 1964 at Fluxus Concert, Carnegie Recital Hall, New York. This variation was written for the New York City performance when the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children forbade the performance of Child Art Piece in its original form." The aforementioned and proscribed Child Art Piece is a more complex work: "The performer is a single child, two or three years old. One or both parents may be present to assist him with a pail of water or a banana, etc. When the child leaves the stage the performance is over." This, according to a footnote, was "premiered" at the Fluxus Festival, Staatliche Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf on February 3rd, 1963." (Where, no doubt, it created a sensation.)

However, while it is almost fatally easy to laugh off the whole phenomenon of "Happenings" as a sort of adolescent sound and fury, signifying self-indulgence and half-baked pretentiousness (a mixture, let's say, of Kahlil Gibran and Andy Warhol), and while, God knows, the "Happenings" people themselves often do nothing to help those of us who would like to credit them with seriousness of purpose and a modicum of intellectual responsibility, the fact remains that we are quite wrong, I believe, to dismiss the movement as sheer silliness and charlatanism — as, by and large, my colleagues in the theatre have been content to do. (It is significant that the persons mainly active in the movement to date have been painters, sculptors, choreographers and musicians; but then it may also be tangentially significant that the theatre continues to lag about fifty years behind its sister arts, its main stock in trade still being the materials and techniques which bored audiences of my parents' generation.)

No, "Happenings" are happening; they are here; they exist — like war in Viet Nam, civil unrest in our cities, electricity in the air, volcanic action beneath the earth; and the most meaningful response, in all cases, is not just to dismiss the phenomenon but to try to understand it and to see what use can be made of the monstrous energies which it releases. "Happenings," too, are like wars and riots in that, being man-made, they clearly have come into existence in answer to some deeply-felt human needs, and it seems to me that one of the most fruitful ways of approaching "Happenings" is by way of identifying those needs. What are they? What is their source? Can they be modified or changed or enriched?

Before such questions can be approached, however, it is necesary to have a pretty clear idea of just what "Happenings" are, and I find, in the course of conversations with my friends and extensive reading in the field (a surprisingly large "Happenings" bibliography has grown up in the last two or three years), that there are enough *pseudodoxica epidemica* in this area to delight even a Sir Thomas Browne. (For those interested in further exploration, I can recommend the books on the subject by Michael Kirby, Allan Kaprow, and Al Hansen, the special "Happenings" issue of the *Tulane Drama Review,* Winter, 1965, and the spate of pamphlets, scripts, and manifestoes put out by the Something Else Press, 160 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y., which has

become the house organ of the movement, just as Kirby has unofficially become its Martin Esslin or, depending on how you look at things, its Eric Bentley.)

The problem, to begin with, is, as nearly always, a semantic one. Nearly every artist connected with the movement has disavowed the term "Happenings" (this includes Allen Kaprow, the man who seems to have invented the term in 1959 with his performance entitled "18 Happenings in 6 Parts"). In the same way, of course, nearly all the "Absurdist" playwrights disavow the name, and for much the same reason, for both terms are loaded with inappropriate and misleading connotations. Most people, for example, seem to assume that one of the essential features of a "Happening" — it's in the very etymology of the word — is spontaneity, improvisation, chance. The fact of the matter is that nearly all "Happenings" are rather carefully scripted (many with an almost hysterical pedantry as to precise timing and movements), and many, if not all, are well rehearsed. (One artist, writing in Kirby's anthology, complained that he had had only 44 hours of rehearsal time and wished for twice as much. He might be surprised to know how many plays reach the professional stage with less rehearsal time than that.) The reputation for sheer spontaneity which "Happenings" enjoy is, then, like the more famous parallel case of the *commedia dell' arte,* largely unearned, both types of performances being improvisational only in the way **all** live theatre is, whether it be a Broadway play, a ballet, or a piano recital — for whenever the live performer comes on to the stage, Chance enters with him. (This, incidentally, is a point which many of the New York acting teachers and Method gurus do not seem to fully realize — that, in the performing arts, there is no choice between improvised and controlled material; there is only a choice of the **degree** of improvisation one is willing to tolerate. But there is more improvisation in most Broadway plays than audiences ever realize, and there is less of it in acting-class "improvisations" than the actors themselves usually realize.)

This whole question of the role of spontaneity in the arts is a large one, and some day soon a cultural historian will come up with a book on the subject, I am sure, chronicling our century's fascination with the techniques of improvisation, not only in theatre, but in painting (action painting), sculpture (certain types of kinetic sculpture), music (jazz), etc. It represents a profound faith in the purity and superiority of the free, unmediated impulse as opposed to the plotted and calculated strategy; it is on the side of "the heart" as opposed to "the head," of freedom, ecstasy and chaos as opposed to rules, order, formalism, dogmatism. Nietzsche called the two polarities Apollonian and Dionysian; to Matthew Arnold, they were Culture and Anarchy. And our modern fascination with this Dionysian and anarchical end of the scale suggests that we may be quite wrong in referring to the Romantic Period in the past tense, that, indeed, we may, like the people in the Middle Ages, be still in the midst of it without knowing it. Wordsworth felt certain that "one impulse from a vernal wood" could teach him more of life than "all the sages" could. Keats begged to be released from the tyranny of the "dull brain" which "perplexes and retards." None of the "Happenings" people — or their spiritual cousins, the flower-children and love-in hippies — could find anything to object to in these sentiments, I am sure, although they might like to see them couched in less literary terms. (It is peculiarly charming, I think, that the hippies — thanks to the recent issue of a commemorative stamp by the Postal Department — have just "discovered"

Thoreau as a new patron saint. Perhaps they have been too close to the forest to see Walden Pond all the time.)

All this, of course, constitutes much too large a subject for my present purposes and can be dealt with here only as a digression. My main concern at this time is merely to place "Happenings" in the mainstream of the great Romantic tradition in literature and the arts, a tradition of remarkable strength and continuity, embracing as it does Rousseau and his Noble Savage, Wordsworth and his holy infants trailing clouds of glory, Dostoevsky and his sacred idiots, Gauguin and his syphilitic Tahiti (shades of Rousseau!), Artaud and his cry for a pre-verbal theatre of ecstasy and ritual. It is an attractive tradition, indeed, with its emphasis on innocence and purity and freshness and its suspicion of logic and man-made institutions, but it is one doomed to repeated sad failures — for there is, unfortunately, no such thing as a neo-primitive, any more than there is such a thing as a neo-virgin.

And this leads me to the second major misconception concerning "Happenings" — this one propagated not so much in the minds of the public as in the writings and theories of the "Happening" people themselves — and this is the notion that "Happenings" represent some extraordinarily novel breakthrough in the arts. As I have already indicated, "Happenings" are blazing a well-worn trail. I am reminded of an anecdote of the late Alexander King, who told of encountering an Old Alpine peasant, who had lived in total isolation for many years and who, he informed King mysteriously, had made a great invention which he wanted King to market for him in the outside world. Leading King to his hidden workshop and unveiling the machine with a flourish, he revealed a standard typewriter. It seems to me that every day, in the lofts and art galleries of Greenwich Village, the typewriter is being re-invented over and over. One need only leaf through such books as Hans Richter's *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* or Igor Stravinsky's *Conversations* to come across accounts of strange little plays and performances that were being done in the 1915-1920 period in such diverse places as Zürich and Basel and Paris and which, if printed in pamphlet form today by the Something Else Press, would pass for recent "Happening" scripts. It is true that some of the more academic types connected with the movement — most notably, Michael Kirby, in his essay in the *TDR* and in his excellent introduction to his book — are well aware of their historical indebtedness, but many of the creators of "Happenings" write and act as though they had never heard of Tristan Tzara and Dada or Marinetti and Futurism, and, what's more, could not care less. In any case, it is certain they have never heard of Santayana, who warned us that those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.

The greatest weakness of the whole "Happenings" movement, however, lies not in the popular misconceptions which surround it or in its own false claims, but in a fatal and fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the performing arts.

To begin with, let me say that I am proceeding on the assumption that a "Happening" is an act of theatre — i.e., a public mimetic action performed in a playing space before an audience and involving decor, lights, music, and human actors. The creators of "Happenings" have consistently bucked this in an effort to disentangle themselves from what they regard (not without justification) as the worn-out rhetoric of traditional theatre, arguing that their productions are without plot or character in the old-fashioned

sense of the word and that their performers are not "actors" but simply people performing tasks — such as emptying buckets of water, painting walls, climbing ladders, etc.

Now, there is very little to quarrel about in the abandonment of 19th Century concepts of linear plot and psychological character. Playwrights such as Brecht and Beckett and Ionesco and Pinter had been moving in this direction long before the "Happenings" people came on the scene. The main distinction would seem to be that "Happenings," for the most part, eschew dialogue and the spoken word (the old dark Artaudian suspicion of intellect and language), but a play like *Marat/Sade,* stripped of many of its debates and soliloquies, resembles nothing so much as an unusually complex and richly-textured "Happening." Even a play like *The Homecoming,* though its structure seems to be that of conventional drama, is a lot closer to the world of "Happenings" than it is to the world of Ibsen — which is why, I suspect, most of the critics were so baffled and irritated by it.

The crux of the matter lies, I believe, in the attempt to deny that the people in a "Happening" are **actors,** with all that that implies in terms of performance. One maker of a "Happening," writing in Kirby's book, tells of hiring some out-of-work actors, then firing them after a couple of rehearsals because they kept wanting to "act." I think I know what he means — he wants to stay away from a stilted grammar of gesture and elocution which was becoming outmoded in Sir Henry Irving's day and which still dominates much of our theatre practice (and in this most good directors today would agree with him) — but I think nevertheless he is dangerously wrong in his attitude. Underlying this attitude is a long-standing and deeply destructive quarrel between the so-called "creative" arts and the interpretive or performing arts — between poets, playwrights and composers on one side and actors, dancers, singers on the other. It may very well be true that a "primary" creator — a playwright or a composer who creates a new entity out of the void — rates higher on an absolute scale of creativity than the actor or instrumentalist who merely interprets his work. But this surely does not mean that the performing artist can be lightly dismissed. Acting, singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument — these are forms of art; at best, they can be very great arts, with an affective power which we disregard at our imminent peril. And I think it is axiomatic that in any performance situation the quality of the performance itself is at least as important as the innate qualities of the work being performed. *Hamlet,* for example, is a masterpiece of art in its own right, but it is also one of those kinds of arts designed to be interpreted by performers. Watching Mr. Wopsle play Hamlet and watching the role being interpreted by an Olivier or a Gielgud is most emphatically not the same thing; it is not, curiously enough, even the same play. Listening to Vladimir Horowitz play the "Emperor" Concerto is one thing; listening to an untalented amateur mangle it is another. And yet both pianists may be playing the same notes. Or, to bring the analogy a little closer to home, watching the man next door climb a flight of stairs is not apt to prove exciting; watching Marcel Marceau do it is to get a little insight into the poetry of the human condition.

There are all sorts of curious ramifications to this problem, which have bedevilled theatre and actors since the days of Thespis. It is a common assumption, since acting traditionally has involved the imitation of otherwise ordinary actions, that probably — with a minimal amount of practice and "nerve" — anybody can act. Few people would dream of picking

up a violin and volunteering to perform a concerto, but almost anybody can be (and has been) persuaded to act in the local community theatre, even though he may be (and usually is) totally devoid of talent, training or experience. Amateur artists are consistently — and often quite unfairly — denigrated by the "old pros," but the fact remains that one of the distinctions between the professional and the amateur in any of the arts is that the professional has invested a great deal of time and effort toward the acquisition of the basic skills and disciplines of his art, while the amateur — out of laziness and carelessness — trusts to luck, inspiration, and the good will of his audience. (The only place I can think of where one can rely on this sort of good will is at a high school play, where the audience is composed of friends and relatives of the actors. And even there it is not a completely safe bet.) One of the most difficult subtleties of the actor's art for most people to grasp is that the greatest skill of the actor is not in the representation of vast and complicated emotions, but in the performance of the simplest acts — sitting, standing, walking, talking — in such a way as to reward the close attention of an audience. And it is precisely this cardinal point which the "Happenings" people refuse to acknowledge. No action — no matter how beautiful or powerful its metaphorical aura — will repay the attention of an audience if it is simply performed the way all of us perform most actions in life — i. e., gracelessly, dully, without skill or flair. And the unhappy result is that nearly all "Happenings," whatever else may be said about them, are amateur theatricals, differing very little in essential quality from the dress-up pretending of the Alcott sisters in the old barn. Without standards, there can be no excellence. In a game where anybody can play, it is not only impossible to distinguish between the various players — it is ultimately impossible to **care** about them one way or the other. Mediocrity is mediocrity, no matter how it is dressed up in lights and colors and sounds, and — in a sort of Gresham's Law of the arts — mediocrity can lead only to indifference which in turn leads to the death of the organism.

However, I would not wish to close a discussion of "Happenings" on this note, leaving the impression that I regard them as merely silly and useless. Granted, much that goes on within the movement borders on the idiotic; this has always been true of every experimental movement in the field of arts. Granted, many of the people doing "Happenings" appear to be untalented charlatans. As I said a moment ago, in a game where anybody can play and no artistic credentials are required, the standards of performance are bound to be highly suspicious. I would even go further and say that the one constant factor among the makers of "Happenings" would seem to be an almost total lack of any sort of artistic talent whatever. (And yet the movement has attracted, at one time or another, the active participation of such people as Claes Oldenburg, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, and Robert Rauschenberg — none of whom could be dismissed by any serious critic as merely untalented charlatans.)

To say that no "Happening" yet presented threatens to displace *Hamlet* or *Oedipus Rex* is surely not to discredit the whole movement. I can't think of a single German Expressionist play worthy of revival today, yet the modern theatre would be far different, and far poorer, had that movement never come into being. And, while many "Happenings" are vapid or worse, some of the better ones are undeniably powerful metaphors. One of these is Allen Kaprow's "Calling," described in the *TDR* "Happenings" issue. In this

one, "performed" in a rural area of New Jersey, five people went out and hung themselves upside down in sailcloth "slings" suspended from branches of trees. Three others — designated as "searchers" — then headed out to locate them. The rest of the "Happening" went as follows, in Kaprow's own words:

When the three "searchers" reached the edge of the woods, they called out the names of the five people — the three men and two women — who, somewhere out of their sight, were hanging inverted among the trees. When a hanging person's name was called, he and the three or four participants who were sitting or squatting silently nearby answered, "Here." By following the sounds, the trio located each hanging person and quickly cut and ripped away all his or her clothing before moving on to find the next group. The calling and responses continued until the last hanging person was found and stripped of clothing. Again the woods were silent.

The people in the first group, when they became aware of the final departure of the three searchers, began to call out the names of the four people who hung at the other locations. The others began to call, too. For perhaps ten minutes the names of the five hanging people were the material for a random vocal symphony sounding from various locations and with various volumes and qualities. Finally the pauses in the calling grew longer, and the voices stopped. The five people who had been stripped of their clothing still hung in their uncomfortable positions. After a moment, a sound was heard among the trees indicating that someone had begun to leave. The hanging people swung down, and everyone moved slowly and quietly out of the woods.

Even though I must confess I can't help chuckling as I think of those poor wretches swinging down from the trees, collecting their ripped clothing, and making their way back to the highway to hitch-hike into New York in time for dinner (what impels performers in "Happenings," anyway? sheer exhibitionism, passionate devotion to art?) — still I find the metaphorical picture of the hanging and violated figures calling to each other like strange birds through the silent trees a haunting and, indeed, an unforgettable one.

Also, one of the reasons why I cited Kaprow's "Calling" at some length is that, apart from its being one of the more artistically respectable of "Happenings," it is also a prime example of two of the more important aspects of the whole movement.

One of them is the way in which, not only in "Happenings" but in the more experimental wings of the traditional theatre, the very nature of the audience is being radically re-thought. Obviously, in a piece such as "Calling," there is no audience in any traditional sense; the performers are, in effect, their own audience. This may be one of the directions in which theatre is moving, although I am personally still sufficiently under the influence of received notions of theatre to find it a rather suicidal and ingrown notion. Nor am I much impressed by the attempt, in some "Happenings," to mix up the roles of audience and performers by inviting, or forcing, the audience members to participate in the action. To say that this cuts across the most basic grain of human psychology is to understate the matter, and, as one who has had some personal experience in situations of this kind, I can testify that, far from enriching the artistic experience for anybody, they invariably produce only a sort of Robert Benchley-ish tragi-comedy of confusion and embarrassment, whose final result is to turn everybody completely off. There is still much to be said

for that most durable of cultural warhorses — aesthetic distance. Nor is there any historical evidence that the "great" audiences in the golden ages of theatre participated in this manner — that, for example, Athenian citizens ran down into the orchestra and spontaneously joined in an Aeschylean ode with the members of the chorus. The notion, to put it as kindly as possible, is a naive one.

On the other hand, it is clear that serious critics and theorists today are mainly concerned with examining the nature of the American audience and finding it sadly lacking. In fact, I would say that the critics of our time have at last succeeded in isolating the never-ending illness of the theatre and finding that it exists, contrary to previous opinions, on the "house" side of the footlights. There is much work to be done here, and a great deal that "Happenings" can suggest to us as areas of inquiry, although a direct assault on the nervous systems of the audience would not appear to be the most fruitful answer possible. Still, it is a possible beginning — and, again, one in which many of the Absurdist playwrights anticipated "Happenings" by a number of years.

Perhaps the most important feature of a "Happening" like "Calling," however, is the fact that it — like nearly all "Happenings" — makes no attempt to tell a story through action, in what has always been assumed to be the true and classic mode of theatre. Rather it is a poem to be presented. It is a metaphor made flesh. And I believe this shift in attitude toward the kind of material proper — or even possible — to theatre is a historic one. It liberates us from the narrow, centuries-old tyranny of plot — the chronological story arranged in a pattern of causality — and character as understood through psychological explanations, and returns the theatre to what it very likely was at its source — an arena for public enactment of metaphors and symbols, of rituals and actions which communicate far more indirectly but also far more richly than our traditional novels and plays. And it makes of the poet once again what he originally was, in Aristotle's phrase, a "maker of metaphors" — whether he calls himself a playwright, an inventor of "Happenings," a choreographer, a composer, or maybe a combination of all of these. (And, at the same time, it might be added as a parenthetical aside to most of the current crop of "Happenings" people, it does not — or should not — liberate the poet from the ancient rigors of artistic discipline and human responsibility.)

It is clear, I think, that this is the direction in which all artistically serious theatre is moving today, by one avenue or another — away from the realm of narrative into the realm of poetry, from technique to insight, from narrow specialization to "intermedia mix." (Wagner, a century ago, was the first to enunciate this concept, in his theory of the *gesamtkunstwerk.)* It exemplifies the work of nearly all the more interesting playwrights of our time, from Duerrenmatt to John Arden, from Pinter to Mrozek; it is to be seen in the productions of the more exciting directors — Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook, Roger Planchon; above all, it has become the hallmark of nearly all the more important film makers of our day — Bergman, Fellini, Antonioni, Kurosawa, Godard, Truffaut, Resnais, Buñuel, etc. It may even be that it represents a thrust toward cinema, rather than the stage, as the mimetic art form of the 20th Century, but that is another country and another essay.

Suffice it to say that there is a very real and exciting ferment in the world of the performing arts, in answer to deeply-felt and largely unformulated needs for a

deeper and richer quality of experience in the theatre, and that "Happenings" are right at the heart of things. Much of what they do may be silly, and many of the people involved may be charlatans and put-on artists, but the more serious among them are trying hard to answer important questions, and for this reason alone it is more than high time that the contemporary Victorians in the American theatre listen to what they are saying.

Who knows? It may be that the day will come when we regard "Happenings" scripts much as today we regard Tudor Interludes and Elizabethan prose narratives — in other words, as fragmentary and rather primitive precursors of a great and important art form of the future.

Stranger things have happened.

by Alison Knowles

#2a—

Variation #1 of Proposition

(October, 1964)

Make a soup.

Premiered November 9th, 1964 at

Cafe au Go Go in New York

The angle is determined in each incidence by the angle at which the paper enters the machine

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sequentially.
If sequentially,
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to more than a
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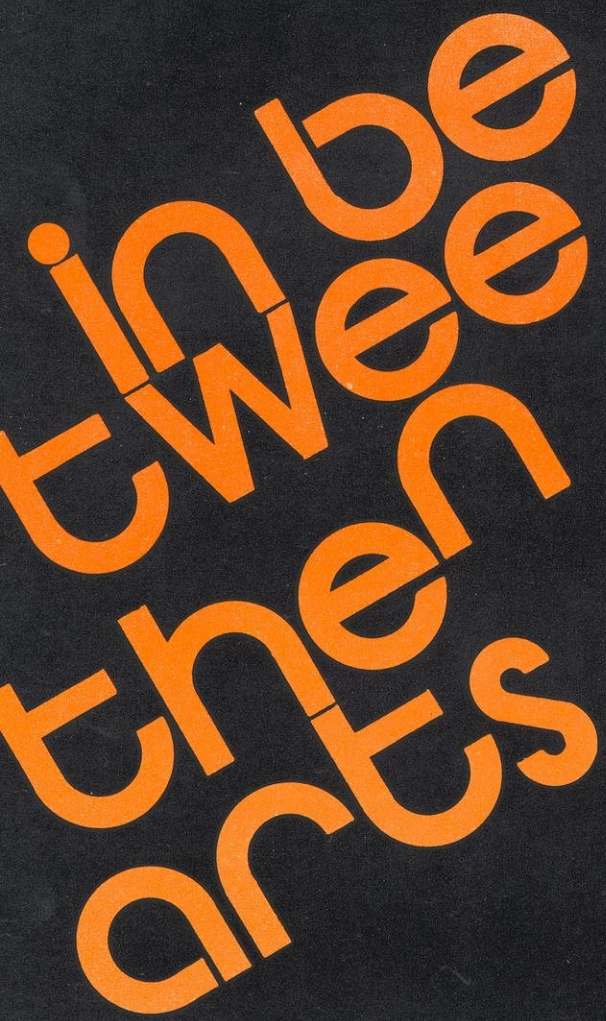


IN BETWEEN THE ARTS

by Gilbert Chase

We approach a time when the total Human situation must be considered as a work of art.
Marshall McLuhan

The age of the form is over.
Dick Higgins

The problem of the Anti-art is not to do things that are "different" from or "opposite" to the usual "art" . . . But: simply to do things that can't be judged in art-categories any more! ! !
Tomas Schmit

Each one of us has been asked "to write short evaluative statements which will cut through descriptions to get down to the basic ideation: to clearly state what you are for, against, and so on." This is good: no verbalistic evasions, no academic cant, no aesthetic theorizing. We are asked to commit ourselves, to go on record pro or contra, to assume the role of "le critique engagè," on the model of Jean Paul Sartre. I am all for this positive-negative stance — but only when it concerns moral issues, under which I include politics, civic action, international relations, war, legal justice, and so on. If you ask me whether I am for or against the foreign policy of the Johnson administration, I will answer clearly and unequivocally, "I am against it." But if you ask whether I am for or against Happenings, or Intermedia in general, I would reply: "The question is silly and therefore I will not answer it in those terms."

Am I for or against the exploration of outer space, the widespread use of computers, the ubiquity of television? To say "yes" or "no" is to be equally fatuous. No expression of personal opinion will have the slightest effect on these developments. Once set in motion they are forces to which no one can set a *terminus ad quem.* It is the same, I believe, with movements whereby man expresses his reaction to his environment, his destiny, his human and social situation — call it art, or anti-art, or intermedia, or simply "something else" (to borrow a convenient term from Dick Higgins of The Something Else Press). Even when such movements appear to come to an end — as in the case of Dada, proclaimed "dead" over forty years ago — they may simply undergo a metamorphosis, merge with the changing shape of time, and emerge in the transfigurations of another age. This is what happened with Dada.

It is true that in his Foreword to *The Four Suits* (New York, 1965), a book of Intermedia, Dick Higgins said, "This is not, after all, Dada." Granted, since Dada is alleged to have died around 1924 we might call it Dada Redivivus, or Neo-Dada; but all this is quibbling about names. I am more impressed by a question that Higgins asks in his Something Else Newsletter (Vol. 1, No. 1, February, 1966): "Is it possible to speak of the use of Intermedia as a huge and inclusive movement of which Dada, Futurism and Surrealism are early phases preceding the huge groundswell that is taking place now?" I believe it is not only possible, but reasonable and useful, to think in such terms. After all, the main issue, as I see it, is to develop a critical apparatus for dealing with "Happenings and Intermedium Experiments in the Arts." Obviously, the traditional frames of reference won't do. One may agree or disagree with Dick Higgins' dictum that "The age of the form is over," but I believe that this is a historical fact. The *fixed* form is obsolete. This is the age of the *opera aperta,* of "open form." The creators of the intermedium, as Tomas Schmit says, want "simply to do things that **can't** be judged in art-categories **any more! ! !**" We critics who have been brought up on art-categories are clearly incompetent in this field and must disqualify ourselves from critical judgment unless we retrain ourselves and learn to accept the fact that the arts can always be "something else" rather than that to which we are accustomed. Since most critics need the *appui* of history — and of a tradition if they can find one — it seems to me that a good way to begin is by immersing one's self in the history of Dada (which I have just been doing), and to a lesser extent in that of Futurism and Surrealism. Speaking for myself, I must say that I think Dada holds the key for an understanding of the new movements, although the latter are, as Dick Higgins affirms, much vaster, and more inclusive. This huge, immensely open situation — as though the whole universe were simply a vast *opera aperta* — is clearly implied in McLuhan's dictum that, "We approach a time when the total human situation must be considered as a work of art."

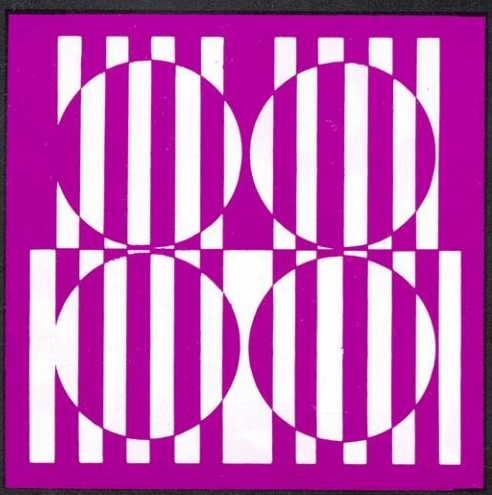
If McLuhan is right — and I believe this **is** the essential meaning of Intermedia — then it follows that we can no longer accept as valid not only the distinctions between categories of art, but also the dividing line between the "arts" (for want of a better term!) and other aspects of the human condition. As stated by Higgins: "The social context and symbols in this kind of work are very often considered by the artist to be part of the subject matter . . . and so the critic of these pieces is to be a moral critic. Because they are moral pieces. As well as social. As well as political." Hence, "The art critic who faces this

sort of work must then also become a social critic." This dictum I accept as valid. One may take it or leave it, but if one wants to come to grips with intermedia — and I think this is the largest challenge facing the critic today — one must do so on grounds that are relevant and premises that are applicable. Thus far there is little indication of a developing body of informed, open-minded and perceptive criticism in this area. My own position is exploratory, tentative, and potentially receptive, since thus far my opportunities for actually experiencing Happenings and other types of Intermedia have been, alas, extremely limited. I am acquainted with some of the published works of Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Benjamin Patterson, Philip Corner, Tomas Schmit, George Brecht, Guiseppe Chiari, David Reck, and a few others who are doing Intermedia. I hope there will be increasing opportunities to hear and see these works, and a regular forum for serious criticism of specific pieces. Perhaps this issue of **ARTS IN SOCIETY** is a step in the right direction.

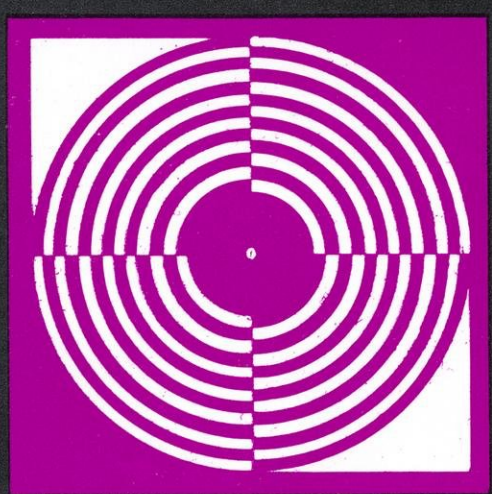
what and how i believe

BY ANN HALPRIN

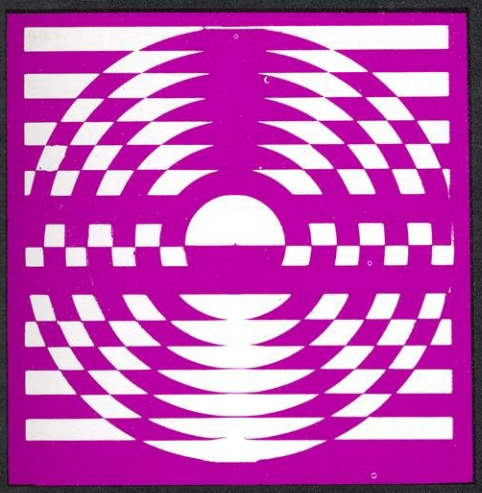
I am interested in a theater whe
everything is experienced as if
for the first time, a theater
of risk, spontaneity, exposure –
and intensity.



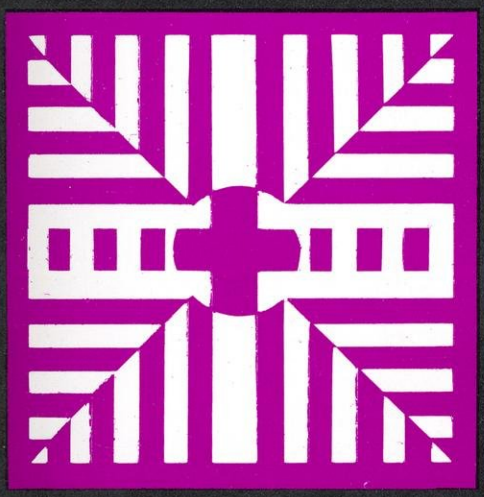
I want a partnership of
the audience and the performe



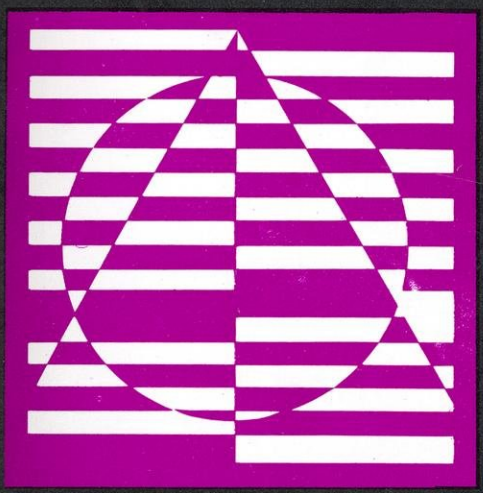
I have stripped away all ties wi
conventional dance forms: the
lives of the individual performe
the training, rehearsals,
and the performances form
a process in itself the experien



I have gone back to the ritualistic beginnings of art as a sharpened expression of life.



I wish to extend every kind of perception.

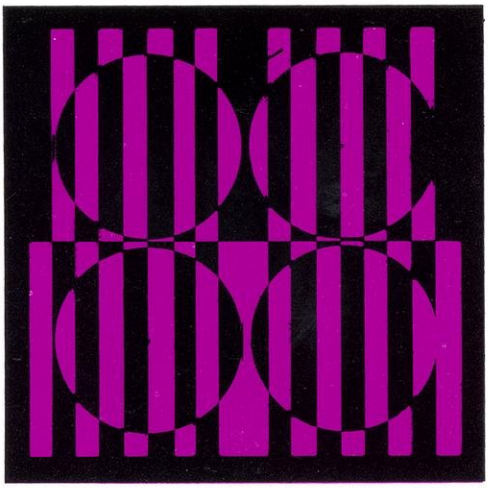


I want to participate in events of supreme authenticity, to involve people with their environment so that life is lived whole.

From a review of Alfred Frankenstein:
The final episode of the piece wherein, to the sound of silence, feathers drop from the ceiling to the floor of the stage, is worth the price of admission in itself. Each one of those feathers has a personality all its own. This, I suspect, we should not see if our sensibilities had not been sharpened by watching the rest of the "Five-Legged Stool."

I went to the Cathedral in San Marco Square in Venice and saw a Mass for the first time. Costumes of rich brocade, lace, tall hats, jeweled, and long gowns sitting in formalized rows, in the center the priest, flanked by assistants and a lacey boy swinging incense. Sounds from high above and hidden voices chanting. Drab crowds of people kneeling, heads bowed, genuflecting, lips moving silently. Military-looking men with large staffs clearing pathways in the crowd and soon the long-robed priest and his followers marching from the big altar to a smaller one. Everyone seemed to know what to do. As I'm writing this I'm feeling blanked out, nothing comes into focus, too many images are flooding my mind, and I want to stop writing and go sit in the sun.
I think I will. I'm scratching my head.

The only light was a kerosene lantern which the performers began to pass to one another on a three-tiered scaffold. A girl jumped out of her seat, snatched the lantern and smashed it to pieces. The whole auditorium was thrown into complete darkness; the girl ran up the aisle. When the lights came on again, she was gone. The performers were frozen; Daria had blood streaming down her leg. The audience thought it was all part of the performance.



Allen Ginsberg was chanting his poetry on a platform at one end of the Fillmore Auditorium. Members of the Dancers' Workshop were all around the audience on balconies painting one another's bodies in intricate, fluorescent patterns. Allen finished chanting and The Graceful Dead began to play. The dancers climbed down from the balconies on ladders and in pairs, one on the shoulder of another, walked into the center of the space. They spread out holding poles with plastic sheets between them, and the rock and roll audience danced among, under and around the plastic, which by now was covered with film projections. It was impossible to separate the rock dancers from the painted pole carriers from the film images.

3 scores for performers: "Parades and Changes"

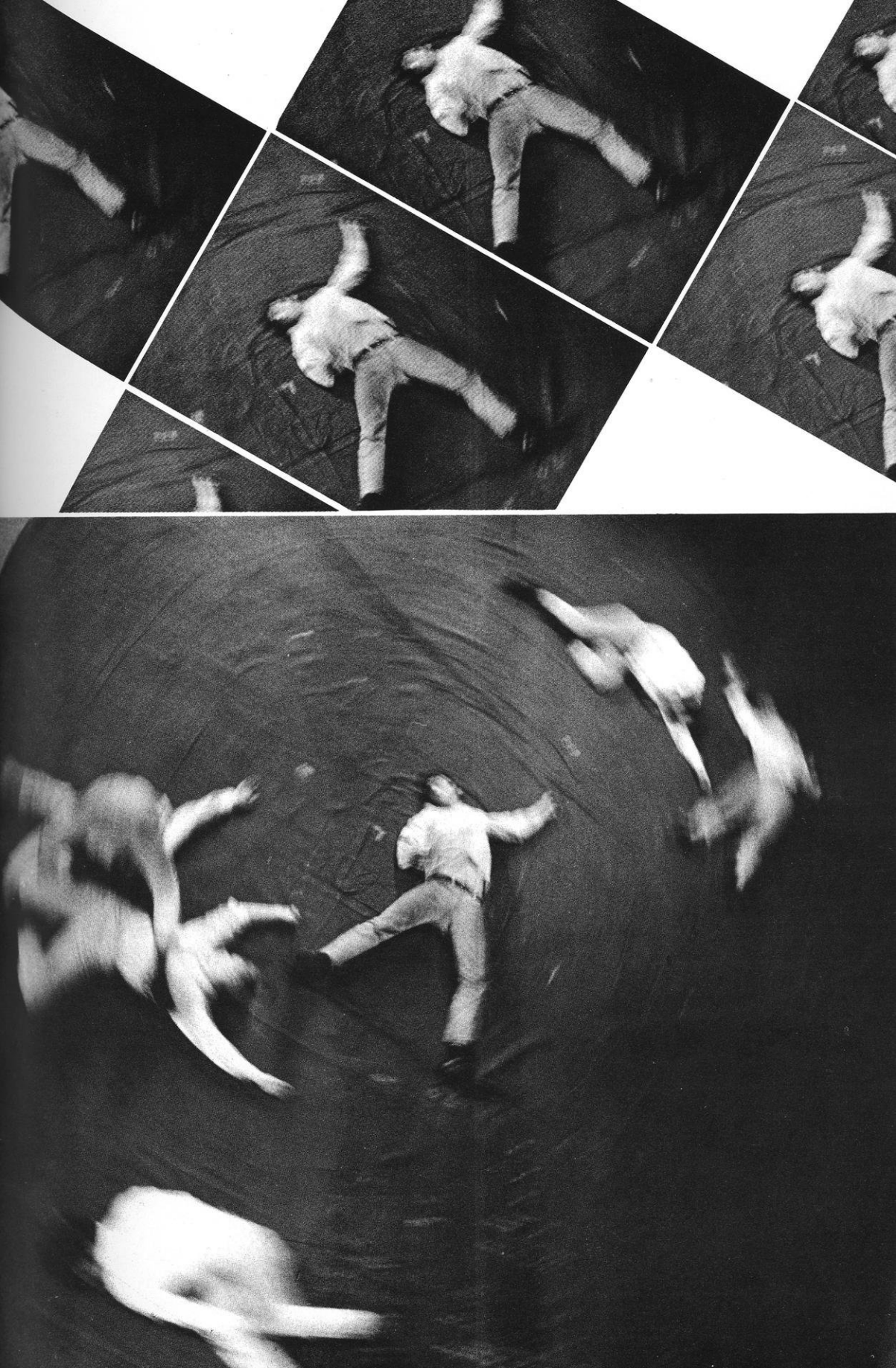
Embrace (dictionary definition):
A close encircling with arms and pressure to the bosom, esp. in the intimacies of love.

i. To clasp in the arms, as with affection; to hug, to cleave to, to cherish; love.
ii. To take in hand; to take to heart; to receive readily, to welcome; to accept.
iii. To include as parts of a whole.

Go as far as you can (and can get away with). Maintain this focus and relax it only when your action is interfered with.

Paper dance:
Make ten single sounds on the paper, crumble the paper for sixty counts, then tear continuously listening to your sound. When you have had enough, collect as large a bundle of paper as you can carry and exit.

Dress and undress:
Focus on the audience and begin slowly and steadily to take off your clothes. When you are naked notice your breathing, then put on your clothes. Focus on someone in the group and repeat the action. Repeat a third time.



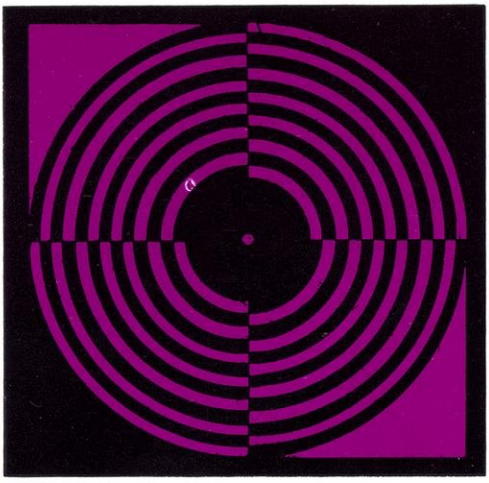
Part of a score for "Esposizione":
Carry your litter from the plaza, through the audience to the balconies, over the cargo net, onto the ramp, into the pit. Use only whatever movements you need in order to accomplish this task.
Get help when you need it.

A large group of us marched down Market Street in San Francisco carrying blank placards. Someone was interviewing the bystanders and taping their comments. Each person had decided what the march was all about, and everyone had a different interpretation.

At the Atheneum Museum we had two performances going on at the same time. I had been in the Fountain room watching "The Bath" and decided to see what was happening in the Medieval room where the costume parade was going on. The night before we had planned the event in a way that defined a pathway with flashlights and separated the dancers from the audience. What happened instead is that when I came into the room the first thing I noticed was people adorning themselves in scraps of materials and everyone in the room had joined the parade.

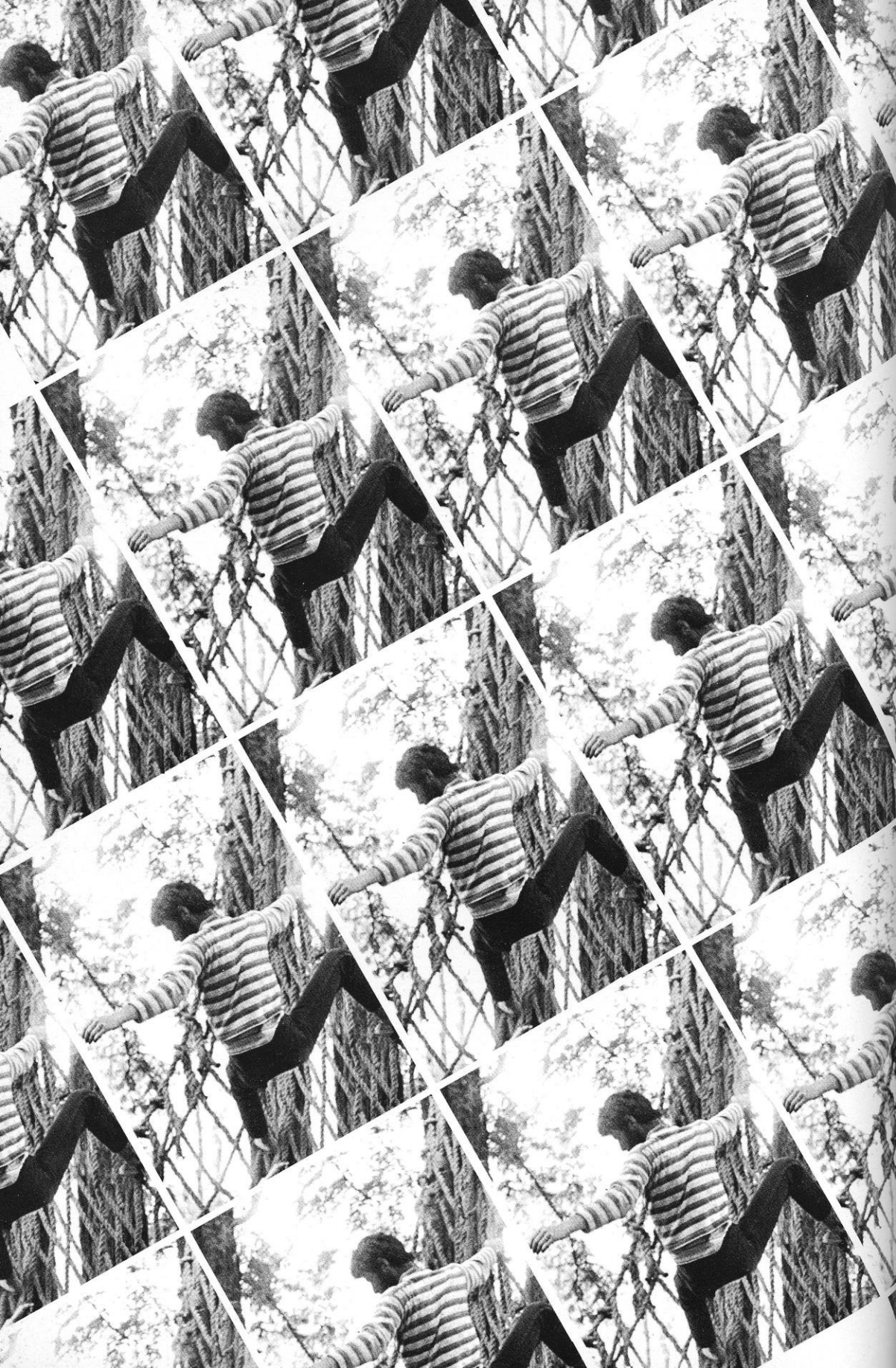
In Rome during the performance of "Five-Legged Stool" I placed bottles on the stage, and then handed them up to a hand coming from the ceiling. The audience was hostile, someone yelled out that it was all Christopher Columbus' fault, and eventually a man threw something at me. My movements became angry and intense, and I picked up a bottle and threatened to throw it at him. The audience became quiet and afterwards cheered.

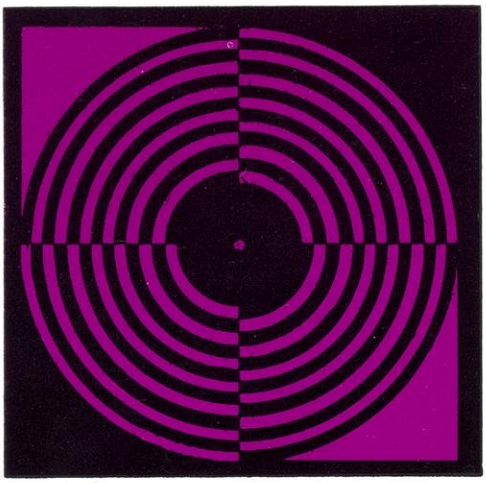

UNDERGROUND
CONST. CO.



The Wadsworth Museum in Connecticut has a court with a large fountain in the center. It was this room and this fountain which precipitated the idea of "The Bath" as a production for a program there. Preparation for this performance began during a training session on a hot day in July, 1966, on my outdoor dance deck at the foot of Mount Tamalpais. The first directions given to the group were simply to give one another a bath. Bowls of water, soap, and towels were the props. The next time we worked the directions were for each person to give himself a bath. For ten sessions new directions were given, developing from the first. By this time we had moved the rehearsals indoors and the dancers had begun to find recurring themes which were most meaningful to them. The bath-taking was becoming continuously more personal in its individual statements, with more ramifications evolving from the original, direct bath-taking. In September a production was given at our Studio in San Francisco in which the form of the production was a recapitulation of the process of its development. It started with a very simple group taking a bath and giving a bath, went on to individual statements, and ended with a communal third section using candle light and becoming more ritualistic. The production was dropped for several months, and we returned to it after the material had become integrated in our systems and a part of our familiar world. In returning to it we all came with ideas, and we kept adding more and more. At the Wadsworth Museum the group had one afternoon to become attuned with the environment which was to be their theater. Within that time, with extreme concentration, they created a spontaneous theater piece.

Morris put his head in a bowl of water and kept it there until he began to drown. His body responded with a violent series





of contractions. Then he lifted his face ceremoniously from the water and with red eyes searched each member in the audience. Afterwards someone said, "I was watching that boy with his head in the water. How did he breathe?"

Daria was lying still along the edge of the fountain. Daria was lying still in the water in the fountain. Daria was lying still on the feet of a statue in the fountain. Later Daria gave a bath to the statue in the fountain. A girl from the audience came into the fountain and pressed her body against the statue.

Morris had seven bowls in the water. As he walked in the water, the bowls hit and made music that filled the room.

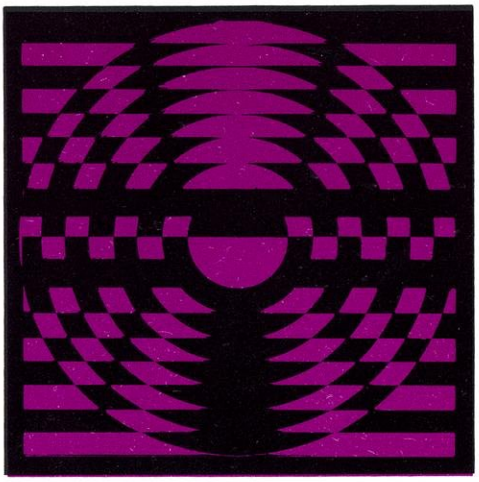
Jim took a bath with a bowl of bolts and nails.

Nancy balanced a bowl of water on her head and dipped a wash rag into it and continued to balance the bowl and bathe at the same time.

Michael gave Daria a bath and washed her face and hair, her arms, breasts, back, belly, her thighs, her feet. She bathed him at the same time.

Everybody bathed and washed one another and beat one another with branches of bay leaves.

Michael emptied his bowl of water from a balcony overhead into the fountain. Everybody got a little wet.



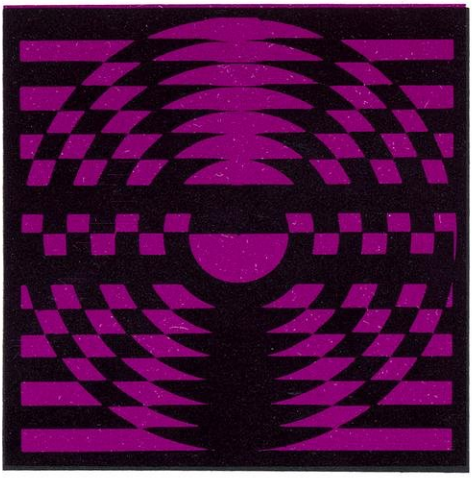
Our group went to a wild beach in Mendocino County which had piles of drift wood. I put a pole in the sand and asked everyone to make a structure either by himself or with others using only the materials on hand. Within a few hours an archetypal village had emerged. There was a place for music and drama, a public meeting house, a series of individual dwellings on a cliff, a tower, a bulkhead bracing the surf, a chief's palace, and a sacred grounds.

Dear Ann Halprin!
Last night I saw in the TV your dance with the paper and I wish to express the **deep** impression it did on me.

I am a Swedish farmer living rather isolated on a (illegible) farm with my family. (But unfortunately the rest of the family had gone to bed at the time of your program). Perhaps may I also mention that I am a member of the Society of Friends.

You started the program saying that a good deal of the "action" should happened inside the onlooker. Perhaps this (rather impulsive??) words should be **more** emphasized??? The dance impressed me very deeply indeed. At first I was very sceptical (even if I am interested in classic dance) because lot of modern art seems to me to be much too much egocentric and without all-human (illegible). A lack of humility.

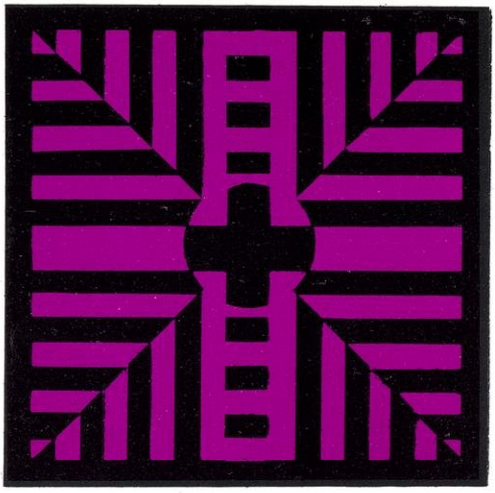
But so the dance became slower and the taking off the clothes started. The rolling out of the paper, the light-setting took in a certain degree away the growing feeling of striptease. Very soon I (illegible) in a human drama. I saw the naked Human Animal slowly and afraid and shy and clean just like one of my own newborn cattle or lambs approaching, going near and near, somethink unknown. I saw the innocent Being of Ours touching a



new subject, Was it newspapers, or cultur (sic) itself? I don't care. In the dance you and I touched together the always unknown Life itself.

The mystical experience of God or the Inner Light which is the rest of the Quakers' silent meetings for worship is not **directly** touched at in the fragment of the Holy Life which you and the dancers hold up in you hands but it was so much of deep (illegible) and humbleness that I felt cleansed and washed and shakened (sic).

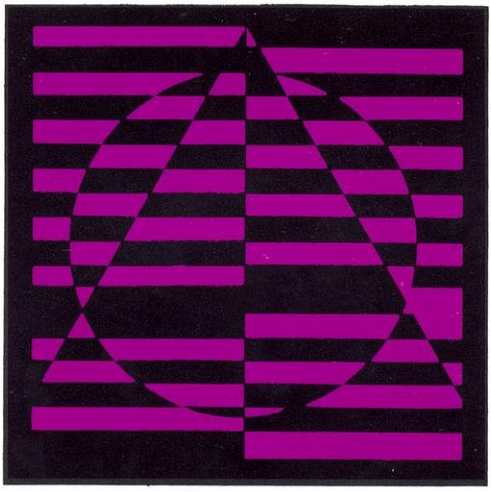
With warm greetings and thanks to you and all dancers in your troop of seekers, yours,
Sven Kyberg
Sourtbacken
Rimbo



Patric Hickey turned all the lights off during the paper dance and nothing could be seen. It made me nervous until I noticed the sounds of the tearing paper.

Morton Subotnick makes electronic music which stretches sound beyond familiar expectations. Human bodies have not been able to extend movement possibilities. I have tried climbing forty foot cargo nets, scaffolds, slanting the floor surfaces, swinging from ropes, springing from elasticized ropes, using film projections, blinding lights, distorting movement images. In a theater in outer space we could float free.

Patric Hickey used a movie projection for light and moved it all around. A fish swam over a dancer's body, a blimp exploded on a wall and motorcycles got stuck in the mud while a brass band of performers marched through the theater.



We went to Union Square to experience a theater of everyday objects, things, and people. My young daughter had just been saved by a Navajo Indian who once was deaf and dumb. His faith in Jesus had restored his speech. Now she was sitting next to a very old and very black man. They were both looking straight ahead. Without changing she asked him what he was thinking. For a long time he did not answer. Then he said, "I'll tell you later." The 3:00 o'clock chimes sounded. It was time to stand and face the sun.

Thirty of us spent an entire day together in "Silence." We did whatever we chose in the morning. Some people exercised, some wrestled, other did spontaneous dances, some people sun-bathed, others sat quietly and listened or looked. I took a massage. We all ate together silently and after lunch we put costumes on, linked hands and took a silent walk into the hills and to a creek. We all did what we wanted at the creek and then when it felt right we left and came back to the deck. We bathed each other and everyone was very noisy with the water and their squeals. After that it became quiet again and people dried off in the sun, looking and listening. Eventually, one by one or in small groups everyone put their costumes back on and drifted off. I guess they went home.

The ONCE GROUP Pieces*

by Robert Ashley

I

Group pieces are collections of things. We want people to remember the things, but not to be affected by how the collection was presented.

We have not found this easy to do.

The physical time and the physical space of the presentation transform themselves into a quasi-melodrama almost before you notice, and this melodrama is supposed to hold the key to the meaning of the occasion.

These are the main difficulties.

We don't believe in momentum, and we don't believe in catharsis. We don't believe in the idea that a particular event should change people's lives.

II

Most theater (and dance and music) seems in some vague way to try to lead people to an important moment (or two) after which, if they have been paying attention, they will never be the same.

This idea seems vicious.

It contains the notion that the famous others achieve and are promptly rewarded. Which is a lie.

It is built upon the notion that

inevitabilities, if they are benevolent, should be accepted.
Which is another lie.

And it tacitly endorses the ideal of complete control, which used to be a dream that artists shared with philosophers and kings, but which is now an everyday reality — for kings.

We should have stopped dreaming that dream long ago.

III

The alternatives to plotting the lives of one's audience so that everything will work out are not easy to imagine, much less describe.

We have tried to decide what we are not going to do, and why.

Remember that the moment that is supposed to change them irrevocably must do so by erasing something that came before. That experience will rob them of some part of themselves.

And while it is the privilege of individuals to desire this for themselves, the author should not desire it for others, even if it is for their own good. If he does, he should go into Medicine, where hopefully there is an ethic to govern this impulse.

IV

We have tried to junk the notion of great, communicable ideas.

There seem to be only two:

How to get elected

What to do during the day, if you have money and (so) don't have to work.

V

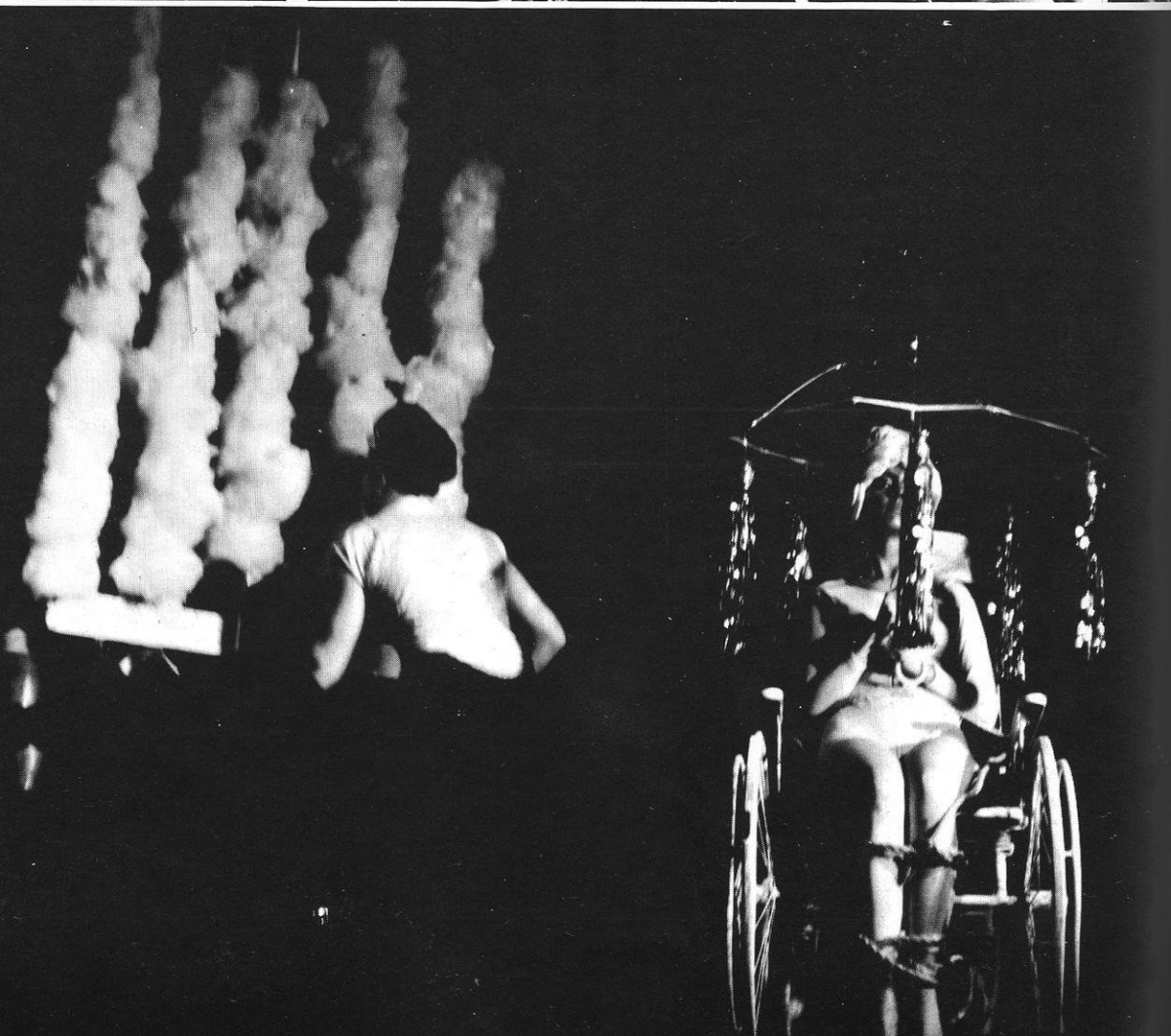
The way we make pieces is hard on us (in spite of what you might think while seeing one). There are so many of us and so many ideas about what would be interesting or right to do, we haven't a model that we would all subscribe to. We have done perhaps thirty different theater pieces in public, and some of these have been done more than once and in different ways. We have done pieces on the street and at the beach and in theaters and in big rooms that were nothing more. We have done pieces that we considered absurd to attempt, pieces that various ones of us were a little embarrassed to be a part of. We have done things in public that we thought the public would be angry at or embarrassed by. We have done things that we thought were sure to please. We have done things that the majority of us were enthusiastic about and things that the majority were less than enthusiastic about.

VI

We are always in a state of compromise, because there is no ideal that we can agree on. If somebody suggests that we do a piece in a gravel pit, we have no reason to say that we would prefer to perform in a theater. And the converse is equally true. We do try to make a particular performance fit the location given to it, but this is the least definable of all decisions. We have never been able to decide, once and for all, whether, if people are to be in a theater, they should sit down or walk on the seats.

VII

Our pieces are collections of images, things we remember and live with that are important to us and that we wish to



repeat. We don't mind repeating them in public. In fact, they seem to be enriched when they have been made public. But the repetition is only theatrically different for the public and then only when the public repetition has physical dimensions different from the dimensions of our private lives. The images that occur in our pieces are images of the same experiences that as a group we are more or less continually preoccupied with.

VIII

The structure of the collection is always a simple matter of expediency:

How to get from this thing to that thing in a given situation and still keep the various images intact and not distorted by the circumstances.

IX

We are in a long tunnel. It isolates us from other's ideas. Once in a while we go out. We are usually disappointed, or at best briefly pleased. We leave during the first intermission. The strangeness is very depressing. Like finding a still rubber band in the kitchen drawer of an empty house.

X

We get to our performances as democratically as we can. We drink while we talk, and we talk ourselves into doing things. We have developed among us a few basic laws: If you say that you will do something, you are believed; you are allowed to talk about what you intend to do until your intentions are clear to you; when it has been accomplished, what you did is measured against what you said you would do; all things said are ultimately public. We don't keep secrets or say things that can't be repeated.

XI

We try not to make distinctions between public and private events.

*The history of the ONCE GROUP is described at some length by Gordon Mumma in Vol. 4, number 2 of **ARTS IN SOCIETY.**

◀ ONCE Group performance of "The Jelloman" by Mary Ashley

happenings in Japan

Roger Reynolds, who is now in Japan on a fellowship from the Institute of Current World Affairs, surveys the aesthetic, social, and psychological dimensions of Happenings from the particular perspective of his Japanese experience.

HAPPENINGS IN JAPAN AND ELSEWHERE

by Roger Reynolds

The experience of dislocation is becoming rarer now. Voracious mass media and modern technology have sated us. It by no means follows that startling events (Sputnik, the Kennedy assassination) or combinations of them cannot occur, but, nonetheless **the unlikely** has become a somewhat flaccid notion. The proliferation of intensifying adjectives, intended to refurbish common events, attests to this.

Recent developments in technical manipulation of media and environments — the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper" record; electronically automated teen-age night clubs like the "Cheetah" chain; computerized light sculpture, which has also been used by advertising agencies in enormous programmed signboards; and massive entertainment facilities like Disneyland and the Gyrotron at Expo '67 make the frequently amateur-theatrical nature of Happenings seem mild.

The needs which gave rise to Happenings are real and current, though, and the reaction against "professionalism" and civic-centeredness in the traditional arts justified.

Happenings seem to me to rely on one or more of three fundamental schemes, though they are certainly not thought of as such: **special focus, associative**

development, and **juxtaposition.** The first involves the illumination of one element through enlarged scale, proliferation, repetition, and so on. Associative development implies a semi-improvisatory, open-ended series, from a simple beginning through more or less closely related stages. In juxtaposition, normally remote objects or processes, especially archetypes or myths, are brought together for combined though not necessarily integrated presentation.

Only after fragmentation and dissociation have become commonplace can the idea of juxtaposition become natural. The same is true, to a lesser degree for unusual focus and remote associations. We are now accustomed to rapid response to our changing needs, and, as well, to rapid adaptation to pressures impressed by the needs of others. In the art world, the Futurists and Dadaists systematically punctured inflated traditions and habits. In *The Art of Assemblage,* William Seitz notes that Dada substituted, for the first time in Western thought, a non-rational frame for a rationalized hierarchy of values. More broadly, it became clear during this century that our capacity for producing change and affecting substitution was fast exceeding our ability to adapt. After Nuremberg and Hiroshima, we can have few illusions about man's power of bureaucratically and mechanistically disrupting the most basic of human continuities: the individual life.

Emerging into the industrial age by an even more precipitous ascent than the Western nations, Japan must contend, as well, with radical linguistic and social disparities. War and the following occupation further intensified the magnitude and rate of change. Zen Buddhism has been fundamental in shaping Japan and it has always permitted, even honored, non-rational ways. The superimposition of scientific values and highly "logical" thought patterns on Japanese society resulted in still another disruptive schism. It is not surprising that the Japanese artist should have been enmeshed in the perception of discontinuity. Nor is it surprising that, faced with remote alternatives, he frequently chooses an imitative way — unwilling to turn back to traditions which seem displaced or irrelevant and unable to achieve the demanding act of genius: reconciliation between fundamentally disparate elements. What is remarkable and encouraging is that there is so much significant effort by the younger Japanese artists.

The Japanese propensity for group associations can be inferred from the statistics below. In 1955, at least four years before Allan Kaprow's *Eighteen Happenings in Six Parts* christened the genre in October 1959, a group of artists centered around Jiro Yoshihara in Osaka were presenting programs of events which can certainly be seen as anticipating Kaprow in vigor and imagination, though not entirely in intent. Beginning in 1955, the "Gutai Group" ("concrete group") gave presentations in and around theaters in Toyko and Osaka. In 1959, the "Neo-Dada Organizers" first displayed their constructions and paintings at the Yomiuri Independent Show, and from the "organizers" several years later came the "High-Red-Center Group" (title derives from the literal meanings of the principal members' names: painters **Taka**matsu, **Aka**segawa, and **Naka**nishi). "The Experimental Workshop" (1951), under the spiritual leadership of Shuzo Takiguchi included composers Ichiyanagi, Mayuzumi, Takemitsu, and Yuasa, as well as poet-critic Akiyama, and artists Yamaguchi and Fukushima; while the "Group Ongaku" ("music group") made up of composers Ichiyanagi, Shiomi, and Tone, and artist Kosugi began its "dada music" in 1961. More recently there has been occasional activity by individuals such as Kuniharu Akiyama, Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, and painter Ay-O, as well as

spectacles by Kato's "Zero Dimension Group" from Nagoya.
A few outlines will suggest the normal run of Japanese-style Happenings:

On every intersection of any size in Tokyo, a small building with a conspicuous red light is situated. Last Spring, members of Tokyo's "Dating Group" rushed to positions in front of one of these police boxes and proceeded to eat several chickens, still bloodily alive. There are apparently no statutes covering this situation. *(juxtaposition)*

In 1960, painter Shusaku Arakawa invited a large number of persons to be seated in a balcony which could only be reached by means of a ladder. The "audience," visitors to an art festival at Nippon University, suddenly found itself in complete darkness. Arakawa removed the stepladder and quietly laid down on the floor below. When nothing whatever happened for more than an hour, the audience became restless and finally, in boredom and irritation, jumped down to the floor. Finding Arakawa, they began to interrogate him. He was unresponsive. Further irritated, the crowd began to prod and finally kick him. Through it all, he remained mute, without visible reaction. *(associative development)*

On a stage before a Tokyo audience in 1957 lay a flat plastic mass measuring approximately 10 feet by 20. Slowly it began to expand as gas was pumped in unobtrusively. Swaying and shifting, it revealed a Pollock-like pattern as its dimensions grew. When it had reached the size of a small bus, it was cut into and slowly withered. *(special focus)*

In December of 1966, the Painter Ay-O returned from New York and organized with Akiyama and Yamaguchi, a bus excursion along a sightseeing route well-populated with temples and shrines. At one point by the windy docks lining the Pacific, balloons were released and rolls of toilet paper thrown into the air, unwinding across the paths of the running participants. Elsewhere a television set was abused by missiles and axes after which it was to be buried. The winter ground proved too hard, and the set was thrown into Tokyo Bay instead. Questions from Robert Filliou's "Ample Food for Stupid Thought" were read and answered. At sunset, the group split in two and walked in opposite directions about the outer path of a large temple. When two persons met, they shook hands (shaking hands has a peculiar flavor for the Japanese whose customary greeting is the bow).

A large portion of the Japanese activity which might come under the heading of **Happenings** (I will use this term to cover the variety of efforts described above) has a flavor of personal, and sometimes social, protest. As Art critic Yoshiaki Tono has pointed out, some of the early groups such as the "Neo-Dada Organizers" were more social than artistic in nature. They participated in demonstrations against ratification of the Japanese-American Security Treaty with as much or more relish than they sponsored "esthetic" events. "The art activity of the group," writes Tono, "was thus somewhat compromised by the social heat of its members . . . it was like a bomb, bursting with great force, but lacking the force to sustain itself." Experiments with Happening-like events on the part of the "Gutai Group" and later with the "High-Red-Center Group" grew naturally out of changes in their materials and techniques as artists. This is one explanation for the relatively short span of interest on the part of most individuals. Once passing personal needs were satisfied, there was apparently not sufficient pressure from social or political factors to support a continuation. Of the groups mentioned earlier, only the "Zero Dimension" and "Dating" groups are still in operation. There is, as a result, no roster of Japanese Happeners, but a large number of painters,

sculptors, and musicians who have a history of sporadic involvement.

It is interesting, and perhaps not so incidental, that those Japanese who live abroad have achieved the reputation of being particularly unrestrained. This may be due to the individuals themselves (though the most notorious Oriental, Nam June Paik, is Korean) or it may simply reflect the power of the inhibitory forces, social and habitual, which operate in Japan. Spirited the people certainly are, whether at a sporting event, a sake party, or a protest demonstration, but they are rarely wild or vulgar. There is considerably less opportunity for individual action as an outlet, and more for group demonstration.

Japanese society is well equipped with the tools of repression. Not only the traditionally inviolable family, school, and business loyalties — factors which result in the still high rate of arranged marriages and the absence of job-mobility — but the language itself acts constantly against individual dignity and unsanctioned enterprise. Such a seemingly straightforward comment as "I am pleased with my new work," is unthinkably brash in the Japanese language. There are, in addition to normal verbs, two other sets, one of which serves to humble one beneath the person to whom he is speaking, and another which honors the person to whom one is speaking so that he is placed effectively on a higher level. Social pressure is such that during the fifties the highest ranking cause of death in the fifteen to thirty age group was suicide. If one can change his circumstances, replace old loyalties or surroundings with new, he can find release from otherwise intolerable personal situations, if not, "alternatives" become more drastic.

These factors may illuminate an important way in which Japanese Happenings are distinct from the American variety. Anonymous participation in group art efforts is not such a compelling ideal here, where, after all, group involvements and endeavors from the inescapable school uniforms to mass vacations (in which all members of a corporation join) are an inevitable aspect of daily life. Here I am, of course, separating individual products from formal group alliances which abound. A satisfactory sense of outlet or release comes naturally in the form of individual action, even exhibitionism. Strictly impressed standards of personal decorum may be more easily violated under the banner of "art." The audience has not, as a result, been eliminated in Japan. It is essential. Although very little is generally asked of the spectator, he is, conversely, never abused.

The short-term commitment of most Japanese Happeners seems to indicate that this activity serves a primarily personal function (psychological rather than artistic). The relationship between Happenings and political protest mentioned above is no more than a coincidental result of strong individual feelings. Politically, events in Japan would seem to demand protest now more than before, yet it has abated. The society is reflected by the materials used, as one would expect: the slashing of large paper screens (modeled after the invitingly fragile paper *shoji* or sliding doors), and the inflation of or encasing by enormous sacks and balloons (everything one buys in Tokyo is enclosed in plastic bags, from a table with chairs to already plastic wrapped ears of corn). The preoccupation with junk and debris which followed the Second World War, however, has passed completely now, and there is not a trace of the self-consciously homely lower East-side décor which is the favored atmosphere for many American works. While individualism and antiseptically neat suburbia in America lead to the need for "participation" and chaotic settings, Japan's crowded, tightly group-structured society naturally leads elsewhere.

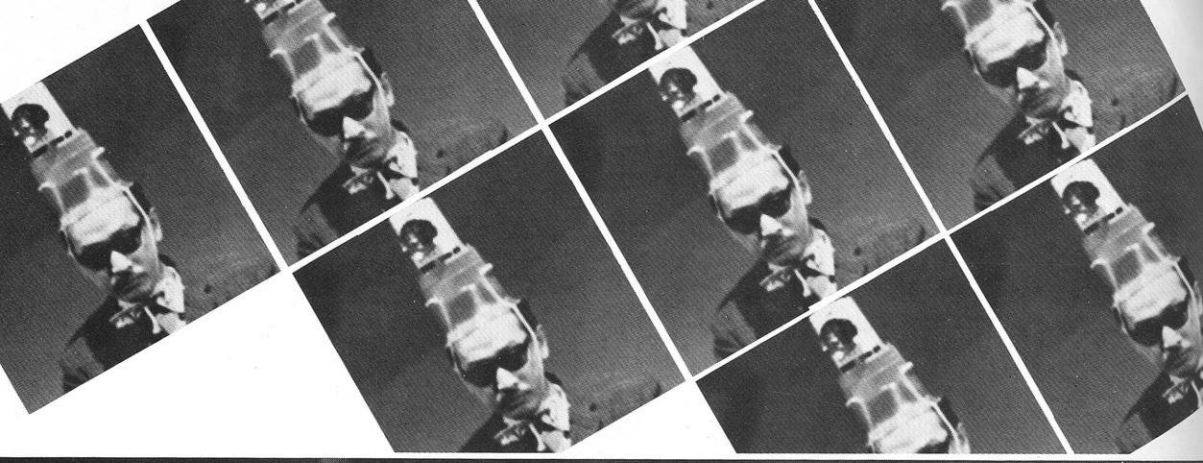
Contemplation and esthetic awareness are deeply ingrained features of Japan's ancient, deflected, but uninterrupted history. Zen Buddhism attempted to make a virtue, a joy, out of deprivation. Things are rapidly changing, but not so radically as to have displaced these elements. A gardener, for example, is expected to work little more than half the time he is on duty in order, I was told, to leave ample time for consideration of the correct moves. In short, it is scarcely a new idea to the Japanese that one could or should attempt to find beauty and meaning in ordinary objects or life.

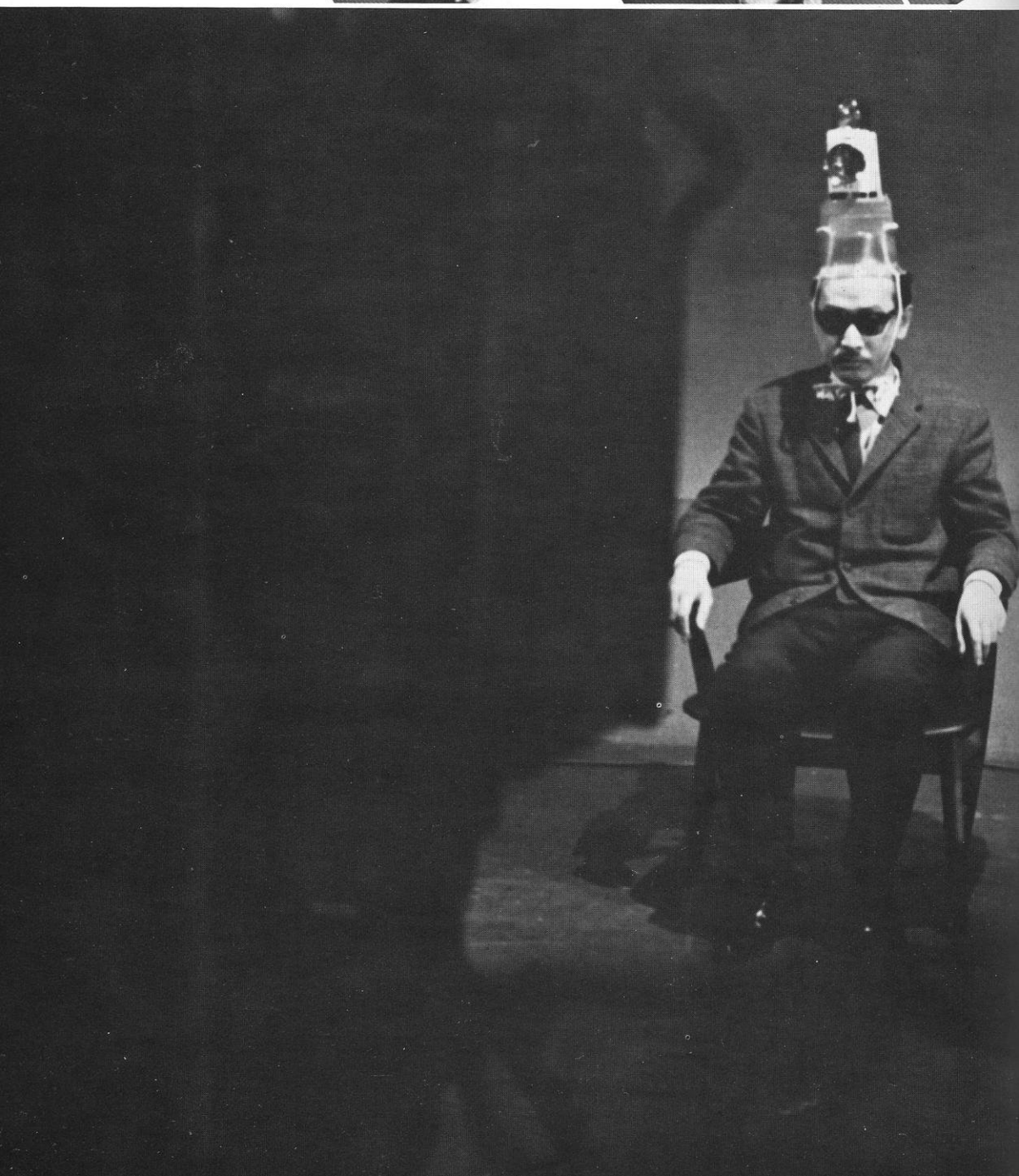
It should be noted, in passing, that violence and vulgarity do not dominate Japanese Happenings (no matter what *Life Magazine* may write nor how many times the explainers invoke the name of Artaud). It is true that the culture's admittedly un-Western attitudes about sensuality and nudity might make it easier for a Japanese Happener to do things which **seem** "emancipated" to the American or European bystander. Such things cause no excitement here. If Dada's method was shock its lasting force has depended on the imaginative artistic force of adherents like Arp and Duchamp. From our vantage point it is clear that outrage resided less in their acts than in the attitudes of their public. Similarly, Happenings do not need to rely on shock, which is, in any event, more difficult to achieve now. They have more effective means.

There are still small-scale events each season in the larger Japanese cities, usually put on by college students for private gatherings, but most of the appropriate energy is now directed either at individual work by artists who are increasingly successful internationally, or towards feeding the burgeoning interest in "off-Ginza" theater. Farce and theater-of-the-absurd — native and imported plays — have become increasingly popular with the younger people in Tokyo, not, apparently, because the approach is newer than that of Happenings (It isn't.), but because controlled, skillful activity is more appealing, more satisfying to them. Their matter-of-fact attitude toward Happenings was echoed nicely by Jiro Yoshihara, mentor of the Gutai Group, which inaugurated Japanese efforts. When I asked him why the group was no longer doing Happenings, he replied simply, "We've already done them."
Amidst the protest and exhibitionistic events have been spaced some of a significantly different order, not Happenings in the classical New York sense but certainly important. They are the products of Kuniharu Akiyama, Toshi Ichiyanagi, and Toru Takemitsu. Relying less on focus and unexpected juxtapositions, they are more concerned with what I have called associative development. Special focus can be deliberately banal, settling on something like one of the Gutai Group's balloons which gradually grew to thirty feet in length extending out over the audience and emitted jets of smoke from orifices along its length; or it can, in combination with associative development, produce a more subtle and haunting result. Symbolism, after all, can do no more than remind us of something we already know.

Ichiyanagi's "Experimental Music" was included on a program of Happenings in the Fall of 1966 at the Sogetsu Art Center in Toyko. Four persons were seated in straight chairs. Contact microphones were fixed to the surrounding floor. "As slowly as possible" the performers leaned sideways in their chairs. At the end of a time period which they privately judged to be four minutes, they were to have reached a point of imbalance such that they crashed to the floor. At this instant began a second four-minute period during which each performer was directed to struggle violently but silently with his chair. When the second estimated four minutes was

◀ Kuniharu Akiyama affixing rope during a TV Happening.





up, each individual froze in whatever position he found himself. Then, when all four were ready, they resumed sitting on their chairs, as before, leaning gradually to one side. The curtain slowly descended, falling completely before balance was lost again. Throughout, the sounds of this mute, stoic, four-way struggle were electronically amplified and broadcast in the hall. *(special focus and associative development)*

"Blue Aurora for Toshi Ichiyanagi" was prepared by Takemitsu for presentation at the University of Hawaii's East-West Festival in 1964. Consisting of three simply but artfully made collages and a fourth card containing directions, it is a suggestive, multi-layered play on water, the color blue, directions, directionlessness, and space. When John Cage did it in Tokyo, he wore blue socks, blue gloves, and a blue net mask. Having asked some people to shine flashlights equipped with blue filters around the auditorium during his performance, he proceeded to move slowly about in accord with the instructions, periodically whispering the word "space." Water poured from one glass into another, apparently empty, became instantly blue. A large piece of blue silk material was allowed to run hissing between his hands or across the surface of a table. In the end, all lights were extinguished while the word "and" in enormous block letters was revealed, illuminated by black light. When normal lights returned, Cage sat quietly in a chair, without mask, smoking a cigarette.
(associative development)

In "Blue Aurora," the performer is invited to display a high degree of virtuosity. Starting with a tangible and yet indefinite stimulus, he must put specific fragments (words, colors, directions) into a context of his own making. The "score" decrees nothing, but provides a climate. Seeing that the author has done his work thoroughly, without relying on in-group associations though perhaps including them, one may be moved to exert his own capacities.

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Though Happenings rarely require or admit anything in the way of a plot, they do generally have a theme or point. But frequently, a verbal, written, or photographic report makes a stronger and more evocative point than the Happening itself is able to. Descriptions, of course, instinctively avoid all that distracts. Even the interfering or disagreeable elements take on an amusing tone so long as one has not actually had to endure them.

Most people are embarrassed or annoyed by unskilled activity, unless they have some personal stake in it (like a father and son talent show). The same is true of cluttered environments and time dimensions which prove too large for the available events. Consciousness of time (and hence boredom) arises from effort at achieving continuity. If there is not sufficient motivation for the observer, he loses interest and passes into a state of daydream or bald discomfort. Unless attentive, he is unlikely to receive detailed or meaningful impressions from new experience.

For the most part, activity results in satisfaction to the degree that it involves the successful use of skills. These do not need to be "professional" skills. Even the most rudimentary instances of human gregariousness include rhythmic handclapping, swaying, and chanting. These too are tasks, but geared to the common denominator. Personal satisfaction comes from doing something in a way that ranks well on one's own scale of values. It is a serious miscalculation to expect that people will be moved, altered, or enlightened by observing inept

◀ Katsuhiro Yamaguchi with rotating distress signal.

performance or from taking part in activity which does not challenge their personal capabilities effectively (taxing enough to require real effort, not so taxing as to assure defeat). It is unfortunate that the dull, cluttered, or rambling reality of many Happenings inhibits rather than releases, obscures the aims rather than enunciates them.

More contemporary than the traditional techniques of extension and embellishment, the juxtaposition of normally disjunct elements has become increasingly important as a key to new awareness in science and in art. Grey Walter in *The Living Brain* has given the following picture from the perspective of a neurophysiologist:

. . . a man may learn by experience to associate two series of events between which any connection seemed at first wildly improbable. For such associations to be possible, provision must be made for every signal entering the nervous system to be relayed to every part, not merely to the specialized receiving zone. Thus from the knot of an event is generated a web of speculation; when two series of events are perceived together they form the warp and woof of a shimmering fabric into which is woven the pattern of probability that the two events are significantly related. The repetition in time of this pattern permits the construction of a hypothesis of correlation; the idea that one series of events implies the other.

In a compact passage this evidently sensitive scientist points up the importance of the **continuity** of events *(series)* and the exercise of **attentiveness** on the part of both maker and observer-participant (provision must be made. . ., repetition in time. . .) if one is to achieve a meld of two extraordinary associates. Traditional concepts of continuity are far too restrictive now, but the improbable, by definition, can only be anticipated when

◀ Scene from final 9 minutes of a TV Happening.

carefully prepared. This does not mean that it is necessary to resort to established formulas — of period comedies and sonatas or theater-of-the-absurd and psychedelic rock. A limitless variety of events might qualify, but pattern and effort would seem to be basic.

Psychologist Sarnoff Mednick of the University of Michigan developed a test for creativity several years ago based on the ability to make associations between things which might not appear related at first thought. To achieve generality, he used common word-pairs in the following way. Rat, blue, and cottage might appear on the first line of a test, wheel, electric, and high on the next, and so forth. The test subject is asked to locate a word which combines naturally, as a pair, with each one of the series of three. In the first instance above, that word is cheese, and the second either chair or wire. Something further, and of considerable significance, came out of the RAT (remote associates test). The possible existence of a **need** for novelty (a need in the sense of a "drive state" analogous to more obvious ones such as hunger, sex, etc.) was investigated. Results showed that subjects who scored high appeared to have a drive towards novelty (or away from redundancy), while low scores appeared to have a positive aversion for novelty.

If this is finally established, it will refine our understanding of the difficulties which already seem inherent in the Happener's expectation of and desire for participation. In short, those who **need** it, don't need it. On the other hand, those who might be thought of as profiting from involvement in novel or "liberating" circumstances have a physiological drive away from them. Continuing in a vaguely psychological tone, the "responsibility" which American Happeners call for on the part of participants requires willingness to accept it. The willingness, in turn, involves some level of motivation. A stronger drive towards novelty results in a firmer commitment to "responsibility." This circularity leaves the Happening, as most frequently espoused, a closed activity: suited to those who recognize the desirability of it but hardly reaching out to others. New bands of devotees are formed, like madrigal groups, enjoyable, but registering no wide impact on society (as rock and roll, for example, has).

At roughly the same time Happenings began to attract attention, several other phenomena arose in the fields of advertising (Madison Avenue's "Brainstorming") and industrial research. In his book *Synectics,* (1961), and later through consultation and training services, W. J. J. Gordon has shown that non-rational processes can be useful to industry. He devised techniques for stimulating problem solving and the generation of new ideas through cooperative group explorations. There are two basic operations in synectics; "making-the-strange-familiar," and "making-the-familiar-strange." The second process employs three analogical mechanisms, *personal analogy* (imagining one's feeling if one were the object under discussion — a faucet or fog); *direct analogy* (likening disparate things by means of an associate — typewriter and pipe organ); and *symbolic analogy* (characterizing the implications of a key element by the briefest possible phrase — "dependable intermittency" for "ratchet"). At the extended group sessions which he oversees, Gordon encourages "fantasy" and the interaction of the techniques described. He discourages hasty attempts at judgment and the labeling of anything as "irrelevant."

Allan Kaprow, the foremost apologist for Happenings, warns against the dangers of thinking of "composition" in Happenings as self-sufficient form, or as an organizing activity in which materials

are taken for granted as means toward larger ends. Composition, he writes, should be "understood as an operation **dependent upon the materials** (including people and nature) and phenomenally indistinct from them" (stress supplied). While there is little disagreement about the usefulness of freedom, there are differences concerning the nature of the skeletal support. Structure may, of course, be remote from that which has been considered adequate in the past. A frame may be anything from Takemitsu's collage to Gordon's analogical techniques, and beyond, but it is yet to be demonstrated that Happenings can successfully involve people without something of the sort.

In the case of synectics, motivation is powerful: money. The goal is clear as well, narrowing the field of play. In Happenings the frame is often too vaguely defined, too carelessly realized. A frequently expressed goal, the "unstructured" manner of daily life, is curious in view of the depressingly thoroughgoing structure it actually has: winter and summer; daylight and darkness; baby, travel, TV schedules; approved times for eating, sleeping, working, visiting, relaxing; the limits of the law, of decorum, of property rights, linguistic fluency, budgetary means; family, class, business, religious, national, racial allegiance, and so forth. The structure of restraints which limits us at each moment is, after all, what the "hippies" are denying.

There is a revealing confusion of terms surrounding Happenings. "Radical juxtaposition" is misleading, requiring the substitution of "outlandish" or "startling" for radical which actually means "of, or proceeding from, the root." Also unfortunate is the implication that it is **what** is put together — not **how** the combination is presented and **how** received — which is the crux of things. (Marshall McLuhan's "medium is the message" motto is as misleading as most other striking aphorisms. "The medium" undoubtedly influences the manner in which material is prepared for presentation, and the mood of our receptivity, probably far more than we have been able to admit; but, excepting the initial exposure to a new medium, the residue of subject matter makes the lasting impact. Information remains when the sense of the experience has faded.)

Another common word used in describing Happenings is "collage." This technique as used by artists, and more recently film-makers, is powerful. Not only the relationships between events, as presented in the work project (fragmentary, overlapped, atypically oriented), but the normal, "real" contexts of the collaged elements are evoked, giving rise to other chains of connection and allusion. With Happenings, this process can become pretentious and self-defeating. One cannot remove a slice of life from its normal context and still have life. One can actually go about his business or he can pretend to. If one is pretending, he may well have the kind of revelations which arise from self-consciousness, but there should be no illusions about the artificiality of the process. The artist who hasn't the courage to paste a real letter or eagle to his work and paints it instead looks too cautious, but the analogy cannot be transferred to Happenings. Imitation is, in any case, the palest form of learning.

There is every reason to applaud the experimental investigation (artistic or scientific) of analogical and non-rational processes. This is an exciting and doubtless a fecund terrain. It would be good to see more inventive exploration and to hear less about the "separation between art and life."
"Life" is, for the most part, not much less artificial than "art," and, in this age of credibility gaps, who can still feel duped or misled by the trivially obvious "rules" or "boundaries" of the art game?

VOSTELL ON

george

BY WOLF VOSTELL

george brecht is an intermedia human being.
his "events," theatre pieces, and ideology spring from a multi mixed media nature. his work is characterized by an intellectual asceticism, which evokes in the viewer or hearer a tranquil but complex spiritual happening and experience.
ignoring the fictive consequences brecht says that things are as they are and yet he indicates what he is for.
his "events" are put together without climaxes but this is precisely why a continuum is created.
transitory impressions blend with a sense of continual waiting for something that never happens. this abiding suspense becomes the content through the transcendence and purity of the constituent elements.
in the presentation one accepts the reality of the things within brecht's idea-realm whether they are in conformance with one another or in opposition.
window chair lamp tables letters color water ice plate spoon vehicle.
his representations involve the daily actions made by millions of human beings like standing sitting walking starting reflecting arranging.
the material achieves a sense of aesthetic distance through the simplicity of the presentation; the presentation being characterized by throbbing stillness impelling one into a trance, and evoking a sense of the cosmic interstices.
the realm of silence as oracle of the profundity of every simple detail in the world.
banality is the crux of the brechtian vision of the world and the things in it.
boredom makes existence seem questionable, yet brecht and his work question boredom itself.
boredom as artistic expression.

brecht

TWO EXERCISES

consider an object. Call all that is not the object the "other."

Exercise:
Add to the object, from the "other," another object,
to form a new object and a new "other."

Repeat until there is no more "other."

Exercise:
Take a portion of the object and add it to the "other,"
to form a new object and a new "other."

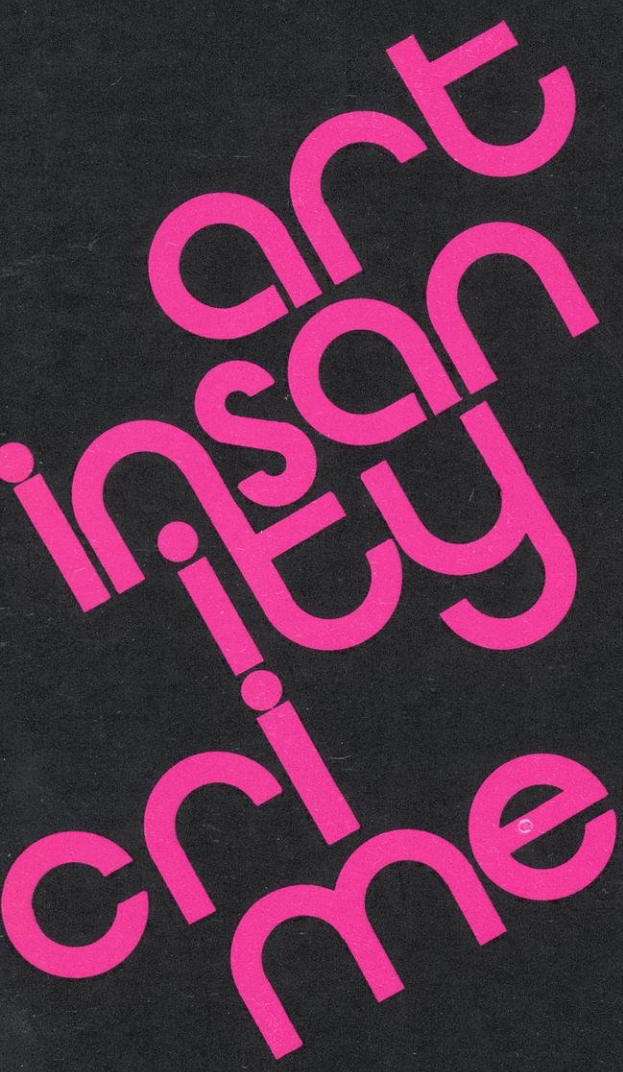
Repeat until there is no more object.

george brecht, fall, 1961

brecht's compositions extend experience by showing the possibility of highlighting through the reordering of ordinary situations. through brecht's new way of linking reality in order to reveal new insights into spiritual meanings, the participant becomes neutrally and constructively oriented.
the unaffected embracing of the elements, fire, water, air, and earth, constantly reminds the observer of the complex strategy required in a conscious probing of one's world for the purpose of discerning the veiled dimensions. brecht himself gives us an exemplary model in THE BOOK OF THE TUMBLER ON FIRE in which hitherto unexplored objects and situations are made articulate. in MOTOR VEHICLE SUNDOWN all the simultaneously occuring events become the apotheosis of present day absurd combinations and ideas – a repertory of our EXISTENCE – NOW.
Translated from the German by Monika Jensen.

ART, INSANITY AND CRIME

by Jindřich Chalupecký



More and more often today public indignation is being aroused by avant-garde manifestations, and in many cases these have been jeopardized and even banned by police intervention. It is enough to announce them and a wave of displeasure is aroused, an implicit threat. In July of this year, Jean-Jacques Lebel intended to hold an avant-garde festival at Saint-Tropez; two months before its opening, *Le Figaro* carried an article which was an appeal to the local police: "La police locale participera en connaisseuse à cette belle manifestation. Si l'on n'arrête pas les organisateurs pour attentat à la pudeur ou outrage aux moeurs, ils seront poursuivis pour vagabondage." And the article went on to depict the orgies which were anticipated.

It would be easy to dismiss such indignation with ridicule or condescension. But in reality a serious moral and legal problem is involved here. To what extent are we dealing with deliberate conscious creation, to what extent with mere immorality, and to what extent with asocial or anti-social behavior? The question concerns the avant-garde movement all over the world, in Czechoslovakia as well, which has a long series of quite original avant-garde manifestations.

From 1949 to 1957, Vladimír Boudník held a number of provocative art demonstrations on the streets of Prague; in 1962 and 1963, Milan Knízák began his public art demonstrations here, and since 1964 has been carrying out demonstrations with his friends which in essence are group plays in which both invited guests and

passers-by take part; more and more he has been seeking to transcend the entire distinction between "art" and "life." Noteworthy is the fact that these manifestations have been carried out spontaneously, without information about parallel developments in other countries. In Bratislava, the regional capital of Slovakia, Stanislav Filko and Alex Mlynárcik sent out invitations in April 1965 to attend a "happsoc," the one subject of which was "Reality Bratislava," and went on at the end of the year to create a similar demonstration, "The Seven Days of Creation," which Filko later supplemented with a "Third Happsoc — the Altar of Contemporaneity." In 1966, Mlynárcik began his "permanent manifestations," in which he put togther three-dimensional objects, inviting on-lookers to draw on them; these palimpsests he later exhibited in 1966 and 1967 in Paris at the Cazenava Gallery. In the autumn of 1966 he went on to stage a "Second Permanent Manifestation" in a Bratislava pissoir.

At first almost unnoticed, with the passage of time these manifestations have become a subject of greater and greater interest to the press and police, as has been the case all over the world, and I have several times taken it upon myself to speak out in their defense. The present article deals with the last-mentioned "Manifestation" of Mlynárcik.

In autumn 1966, Alex Mlynárcik, a Bratislava artist, decided to fit out a pissoir in the center of the city for a three-day period. He set up seven large rectangular mirrors at an angle in the gutter of the urinal, and fixed slogans on them which proclaimed these mirrors to be dedicated to St. Anthony, Hieronymus Bosch, Gabriel Chevallier, Godot, Michelangelo, Pistoletto, Stanislav Milko and $CO/NH_2/_2$ (muriatic acid); on the opposite side he arranged tablets and pencils in the expectation that users might write or draw; over the entrance he placed a large banner announcing his "Second Permanent Manifestation," to be held October 1 to 3, 1966, from 6:20 a.m. to 9:10 p.m. He distributed and sent out invitations, especially to participants in the Congress of the International Association of Art Critics, which was then being held in Bratislava.

Those who visited the pissoir were placed in an unexpected position. Some smiled distractedly. Some no doubt asked themselves what it could all mean. Some found an outlet in moral indignation. Among these, as chance had it, was the editor of the Bratislava daily *Prace,* and on October 18, that paper carried a long editorial on the subject. "Should not the psychological condition of these people be investigated? . . . Is this a matter of incipient schizophrenia? . . . Should we punish such people? . . . Is some sexual deviation involved? . . . This phenomenon . . . is imported exclusively, it would seem, from the West. . . Originality which borders on bad taste and vulgarity. . . A qualified artist should have enough sense. . ."

In spite of all these reproaches and warnings, no one put Mlynárcik in an asylum or in prison, or even excluded him from the artists' union. But the question remains: If this is not schizophrenia, or perversion, or an act of criminal intent, what, actually, is it? The question is all the more urgent in that various "manifestations" and "provocations" of this kind have been going on all over the world for several decades now. One of the first, if not in fact absolutely the first, such "provocateur" was the Czech writer Jaroslav Hasek, the author of "The Good Soldier Schweik," in his fabled appearances in Prague before World War I. From then on there is an almost unbroken tradition, going through Italian and Russian Futurism, through Dada and Surrealism, and culminating in the extremely varied

phenomena known collectively today as "happenings" or "events."

The creators of these manifestations are all artists. But can we speak of art? The word art implies a skill, and the fact that someone has placed a couple of mirrors in a pissoir certainly takes no special skill. Is it then a kind of scientific experiment? But such experiments derive from no theory and confirm none. Is it mere hooliganism? But those who risk such actions are consciously staking their social position; evidently there is something at issue involving mind or heart which is worth the risk.
What can it be?
My contention is that these are the manifestations of artists, and as manifestations certainly very spontaneous ones, called up by some urgent inner necessity. They have certain traits of an esthetic bent: In Mlynárcik's case the use of mirrors undoubtedly suggests an esthetic element, as well as the whole "staging," which exploits the banality of the place and milieu. But quite lacking, or at least pushed into the background, is the essential characteristic of art, its artificiality. In art we always create an artificial object, a picture, a drama, a musical composition. In this artificial object the author embodies his feelings and experiences and develops them in some new way: He makes the object a locus of his alter ego, creates in it for himself and for others an occasion for fictive existence. Art is then a kind of complement of real life, its compensation, the realization of the unrealizable, the fulfilment of the unfulfilable.

But just this disquiets the modern artist. Is not this fictive character of art an escape from life? Does it not give man a false consolation, take him away from the fulfilment of his life, from real fulfilment? Does art not give man an alibi against life?

Thus there arises the necessity to break down, to destroy, the boundary of art, which means to break down, to destroy the boundary of the art object: to take from it its very artificiality, which sets it apart from real life, to carry out an act of artistic creation in the very midst of living reality — any sort of reality. . This was at the bottom of the experiments of the Futurists, the Dadaists and the Surrealists, and this continues in many avant-garde trends today. But what will become of man if the experience of art is no longer a refuge from life, but must be found in the middle of life? What will man do if he is forced, even in the midst of such a banal act and place as those Mlynárcik chose for his manifestation, to face mirrors, and then draw and write in the bargain?

As early as 1917 Duchamp contributed to the New York Exhibition of Independent Pissoir Bowls (the exact English title is still a question), and in 1920, at the Dadaist Exhibition by Arp, Baargeld and Ernst in Cologne, the entrance was through a pissoir. Man Ray has himself photographed with an assemblage in which a toilet seat frames the inscription, "Marteau."
What of this?

We are used to the fact that the artistic work takes the reader or spectator far beyond the realities of life. Once Baudelaire's *Flowers of Evil* brought on a court action; today it is only embarrassing for the censors to cut something out of the repeated scenes of intercourse in Bergman's *Silence*. Less than twenty years ago when the author of the present article reprinted a story from Sartre's *The Wall* in his magazine, he was called "a sink of miasma" in a popular brochure by an influential writer; today the whole book has appeared in Czechoslovakia and no one has taken it into his head to become indignant. It has become clear that this is not pornography, but experience which is

recorded and which acts to move us rather than to shock us only.

Art must dare all and must move especially into places which are forbidden it, into darkness, filth, crime, despair, humiliation. Tragedy is its special realm.

. . . so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
Of deaths put on by cunning and
forc'd cause;

so recites Horatio, and we look on with calm. But what if that phantasmic world stepped down from the stage into the auditorium?

It is a great problem which modern art presents. Just as the writings of Baudelaire and Flaubert once appeared in the registers of the courts, so today the caption, "happening," appears on the ledgers — for the time being of the police only, for the most part — in Czechoslovakia as abroad. Art has determined to take upon itself its entire social function and at the same time has become something dangerous. No longer now in its fictive quality only, but in the reality of direct action it intercedes in life. But if the boundary of art and life is disappearing, how then shall we distinguish between the aesthetic on one hand and the irrational and immoral on the other, and in their final consequences between the tragic on one side and insane and criminal on the other?

And yet the boundary is a very precise one. Not only can it be defined in the abstract, but in every case it can be verified concretely.

First of all, art is figurative behavior. What is said, shown or done is never intended to be taken literally. Each thing and each action still mean what they customarily do for us, but many other things besides. One could say that their lights spread out, that they acquire distant connections, that the whole universe is reborn in them.

Of course, the world of dreams and the world of insanity are equally figurative. Often art and dreams do trade places, and even the esthetic and the psychopathic. But the significance of art rests just in the fact that the artist uses figurative means consciously. The American psychoanalyst Ernst Kris has compared the artist to a sailor who ventures from the *terra firma* of reason onto the sea of insanity and dream, who chooses adventures in another element in the hope that he will surmount them, and with the risk that he will drown in them. Art is controlled madness, which is in fact not madness at all.

Crime too is controlled, completely conscious. But it is never figurative. It has nothing in common with insanity. It is carried out in a world which is fated to remain literal: in that is the tragic poverty of crime. Art inhabits a fairer world: a world which is purposeless and profitless.

And here is another similarity and another distinction. Art, like crime and like insanity, demands freedom for itself — absolute freedom. But the freedom of crime, like the freedom of insanity, ends in formlessness, vanity and extinction. The dialectic of freedom and necessity is thus broken: or neither for the criminal nor for the insane is there either freedom or law: they are left with mere inevitability.

Opposed to them, art makes law its freedom and freedom its law. And if its boundaries are broken, it is not so that they should dissolve into mere boundlessness. It is no longer enough for it to manufacture art objects; it seeks something more. In its attempt, confused, uncertain

and obscure, to be sure, it seeks a new foundation for giving form to life itself. This is not whimsy, hooliganism, or madness. It is consciousness and rigor.

If this is the true state of the matter, then there is no difficulty in classifying such a phenomenon as the Bratislava "permanent manifestation" of Mlynárcik. It is quite evident that here real behavior has changed into figurative behavior. The misinterpretation which the editor of *Prace* suggested, seeking to find some sort of rational explanation, is signficant: he supposed that he was confronted with some sort of apparatus for homosexual voyeurs. But none of this was meant literally. The "permanent manifestations" of course did confront people with a situation completely new, unaccustomed, even unpleasant, but they did so to force them to a new reaction to the world, to a new gesture of self-consciousness, to "a faithful interpretation of man's existence encircled by objective reality," as Mlynárcik himself put it so well. Mlynárcik no doubt acted rather thoughtlessly, but, for all that, more effectively.

Prague
June, 1967

Translated by William E. Harkins

art no art

BY BEN VAUTIER

1 · Forget Ben.
2 · When and how shall you know you have forgotten him?
29/5/1967

Intermedia is Art and Art is Ego.

Since you ask me to evaluate Vostell, let me say that his work like that of Rembrandt, Picasso, or Mr. Smith is the creation of an egotist.

Yet John Cage, out of his interest in Zen and Duchamp, would seek to depersonalize art.

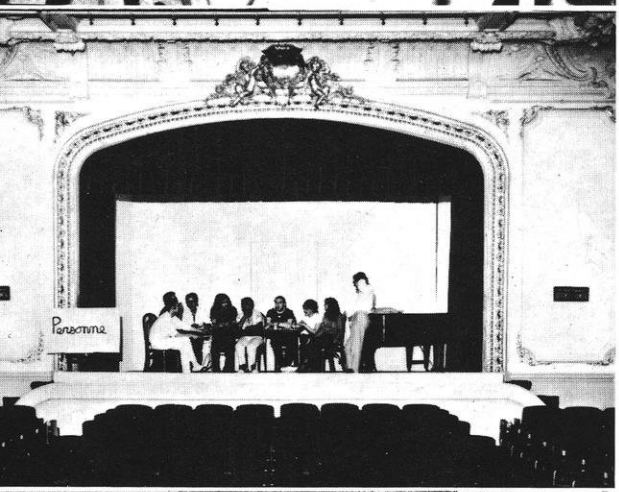
I shall focus on: Truth as Art.

Since anything can be art the development through research of new products (and new forms) has broadened possibilities.

If all is art, it must be possible to replace the word "all" by just any other word without altering the meaning of the sentence. It is as if art were bursting and multiplying into millions of different definitions, of which not one would be more nor less than another. Here are some:

Happening: (Ben in the water)
Happening: (a photo of Ben in the water)
Happening: (you turn the page)

Anything is Art
Love is Art
No one is Art
You are Art
I am Art
Nothing is Art
Life is Art
Death is Art
All is Art
The new is Art
The old is Art
Pretension is Art
Truth is Art
My ass is Art



Truth is Art: It is the revelation in the work of the artist's motive for creating; that is to say, a realization and communication of his true state before the act of creation. It is the answer which the artist gives to the question: "Why do I create?" I conceive, for example, the realization of **ART IS TRUTH** by a play in which the author frankly gives reasons for which he writes plays, not the superficial reasons but the profound reasons, that is to say, "for glory." **TRUTH IS ART** changes art because it rejects useless and false justifications, such as art for art's sake, harmony, beauty, etc. An example of truth is art is my admission that it saddens me to have to write yet another article for glory's sake, in fact, to become famous.

Non Art: Exemplified by the attitude of Marcel Duchamp and several others who, reacting against the "ready made," cannot return to the aestheticism and hedonism of the object, but always to the urgency of the search for the **new** in order to satisfy their pretension and ego, have thought it would be novel to declare that artistic creation no longer interests them. In reality they are very much interested in it, and especially in order to establish their Ego in the domain of **NON ART** (again a question of style).

Art is Ego: This is a less hypocritical attitude than non art. It is an acknowledgement that pretension is the basic energizing element of every act of creation, and that art fully and to the very end asserts this pretension. It is even carried to the degree that on occasion an artist refuses to associate pretension with an actual work (the pretension suffices unto itself). I will cite as an example my play "Look at Me, That's Enough." It is also exemplified by any artist who declares himself to be his own work of art and produces nothing.

Art is Anything: There are also those who

while admitting that **ALL IS ART** do not reject their status as artists but adopt a fatalistic attitude toward the work of art. They will choose just any form — for example, a circle — and decide to create only circles, for that or anything else essentially amounts to the same thing. As I see it, this constitutes the premise of Olivier Mosset and of certain minimal artists.

Life is Art: This is the broadened definition advanced by Cage and his disciples, but initially their premise must be judged false, because in the final realization one cannot separate the motivation of the artist from the work which aspires to the condition of **Life.** If **life** is **ART,** the artist's pretension in wishing to show his product is art also. And if this pretension does not exist in the communicated work, it is not life which is shown us by the artist but uniquely the reflection of his artistic ambition. I will even say that pretension, aggressiveness, and ambition are, in relation to the work, much more alive. Thus when I play a musical score by Cage or consider the Drip Music of George Brecht, or a creation of Vostell's, I am unable to prevent myself from thinking about them as works of art and not as life. In fact, art is not life unless the life that is represented be truth.

Death is Art: It is to this conclusion that Ion Guiyot arrived after ten years of aesthetic reflection — ten years during which he systematically disregarded all art forms. "Not one," he wrote, "can attain its goal." Ion Guiyot was found dead July 10, 1949 at Chimara in Albania. The evening before he had written the following sentence: "Death is art, provided one dies."

Art is Useless: When Henry Glynt picketed the Museum of Modern Art with a sign which proclaimed "Demolish Serious Art" he was motivated by a desire to take a political position against bourgeois art. On the other hand, when I picketed the Maeght Foundation with the message that **Art is Useless,** it was based on the following line of thought: **If all is art, and if art must always be new, and since the notion of opposing art is new, then my opposition is a work of art. Hence my picketing is art.**

Conclusion:
If Cage says: **"Life is Art,"** if Duchamp says, **"Artistic Competition No Longer Interests Me,"** if Flynt says, **"One Must Fight Against Art,"** if I say, **"Art is Truth,"** — all these declarations and viewpoints must be considered in the light of the fact that creators (egotists like all artists) seek for the new but play the old game of art: **to be different from others.** But to find the new in the present scene where all is art, these creators bring back into play the rules of the game. It is as though the game of art accepted all possibilities including that of allowing the players to try to stop the game. This is the case with **Truth Is Art, Pretension Is Art, Non Art, Anonymous Art,** and **Art Is Pastiche.**

But is the suicide of art possible?
We must remember that there are also those who do not produce art. They include my wine merchant who sells bottle racks, the grocer who recently married off his daughter, the real estate agent on the fourth floor who died yesterday, and the translator of this article — ROBERT E. NAJEM — who this noon ate baked ham, green beans, and a jello salad.

Translated from the French by Robert E. Najem.

DADA AND SURREALISM IN THE UNITED STATES: A LITERARY INSTANCE.

by Robert I. Edenbaum

Nathanael West's critics have often suggested connections of one sort or another with the surrealist movement, usually with surrealist painters. Angel Flores likened *Miss Lonelyhearts* to the work of Chirico and Dali; Richard B. Gehman wrote that West delighted in showing his friends his collection of Max Ernst reproductions, and referred to the novelist's contacts with dada and surrealism in Paris in 1925 and 1926; Isaac Rosenfeld agreed that the comparison "is a fairly accurate classification." West himself denied the connection with some heat, but Gehman suggests that if West is not actually surrealist he at least shares with them some of their matter and method, "their destructive derision, their preoccupation with decay, degeneracy, and disintegration" and their use of "enormous incongruities."[1] It would be overstating the case to claim that West was either a dada or a surrealist, but it would be accurate to say that he shared their attitude towards the world, their thematic material and, to some extent, their method. West "had something of Europe in him," V. S. Pritchett once wrote, and the statement is true in ways unparalleled in modern American literature. West was probably more influenced by dada and surrealism than any other writer in the twenties and thirties; the Europe in his novels accounts for much of the uniqueness of his work — and perhaps for much of the confusion which marked his reception in this country.

Dada and surrealism, which merit and

receive an immense amount of space in any history of French literature of the twenties, are all but absent from American literary histories of the decade. Frederick J. Hoffman's *The Twenties,* a fairly exhaustive study, devotes only seven of its nearly four hundred pages to the two movements, and those to their history in France. The only Americans who are usually mentioned in this connection are Malcolm Cowley and Matthew Josephson, who appear as observers or sympathizers rather than participants, and Samuel Putnam, who, in his own term, was the "reporter" of the European advance guard. How little dada and surrealism affected American writing in the twenties, despite all the experimentation of the decade, is clear from an article by Putnam, entitled "If Dada Comes to America," which appeared in the magazine *Contempo* in July, 1932.[2] Putnam pointed out that "dada, the dead" and surrealism had belatedly reached America in 1932 by way of the surrealist painters and his own anthology of dada and surrealist writing, *The European Caravan.*

None of West's novels was published in the twenties, though there is evidence this his first, *The Dream Life of Balso Snell,* published in 1931, was well under way as much as seven years earlier. But West had gone to Paris in 1924 and had spent more than two years there, roughly the ages of 22 to 24. And though it is tempting to dismiss *Balso Snell* as a bad joke or a childish, later-to-be-regretted prank, it is worth noting that in 1931, at the time of publication, West was 29 years old and at work on *Miss Lonelyhearts,* which is clearly neither a joke nor a prank. In an interview with A. J. Liebling in June, 1931,[3] West said that *Balso Snell* was "written as a protest against writing books." But in the next breath, when Liebling asked what he had done after completing the book, West answered that he had of course started another, "of quite a different make, wholesome, clean, holy, slightly mystic and inane."

The apparent contradiction has the true dada ring and entails the whole of the dada attitude towards art. More important at the moment is that West did not embarrassedly deprecate *Balso Snell,* that he had carried something of dada and surrealism from the Paris of the twenties to the post-depression New York of the early thirties.

There were significant differences between *les jeunes* (as Putnam calls them) of Europe and the young of America, differences that account for the failure of dada and surrealism to take hold among Americans in Paris and in America. At the same time that the young Americans were enlisting in the American Ambulance Service or the Norton-Harjes — Malcolm Cowley, in *Exile's Return,* lists Dos Passos, Hemingway, Cummings, Slater Brown, Harry Crosby, John Howard Lawson, Louis Bromfield, Robert Hillyer, Dashiell Hammett, among others — dada was taking shape in Zurich in the hands of Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Richard Huelsenbeck, Hans Arp, Marcel Janco, Francis Picabia. Ball, at whose café, the Cabaret Voltaire, dada was founded, was himself a pacifist who had left his native Germany in protest against the war — and, presumably, like many of the other adherents of dada from the belligerent countries, to escape military conscription. The Americans were rushing to join a war their country had not yet entered; the Europeans — at least those with whom we are concerned — were going to a neutral country to beat the draft. After the war, both the Americans and the Europeans were concerned with the effect of the war, but the result for the Americans was their war books; the result for the Europeans was dada.

Attempts at explanation of the difference between the European and the American reaction to the war are common, if not

always satisfactory. Putnam, in his forward to *The European Caravan,* suggests that Europe, unlike America, had experienced a "revolt of the sons" that went much further than a flight into pseudo-exile; in Europe, as part of the *Nachkrieg,* the young had turned upon their elders "with a bitter and despairing reproach." However, "In America this conflict of generations is practically non-existent; and it is, as a result, extremely difficult for Americans as a whole to comprehend the preoccupations of young Europe. We catch vague echoes, at times, of the French Surrealists and, vaguer still, of the Italian Novecentisti, etc.; but it all seems far-off and unreal, and comes to us, often, with a distant tinkle of the ridiculous."[4] And he points out that the books the "exiles" wrote when they came home showed little reflection of Europe or of their experiences there. Frederick J. Hoffman, in *The Twenties,* refers to Waldo Frank's view that Americans simply did not need the "explosions of ridicule" of dada, whereas dada "might have been an appropriate expression of relief in 'over-mature Europe.'" In Frank's words, "A healthy reaction to our world must of course be the contrary of dada: it must be ordered and serious and thorough." Hoffman himself, in apparent agreement with Frank, calls dada "a joke, an all-inclusive hoax."[5] I suspect Europe would find a serious comment on America in Frank's statement, and in Hoffman's.

Henry May, in *The End of American Innocence,* argues convincingly that the effects of the war on the "breakup of values" in America have been overemphasized and oversimplified, and that the change was well under way before the war even started in Europe. He points out that there had already been an outbreak of "irrationality" in art, literature, philosophy, and religion, partly under the influence of Freud and Bergson, in the period from 1912 to 1917. Certainly the same holds for Europe, but the immediate roots of dada are obviously in the social chaos of the war itself. The comparatively gentle disillusionment of the Americans, whose country barely felt the effects of the war, is in sharp contrast to the vituperation and intentional obfuscation of the manifestos of Tristan Tzara and the other dadas. It is interesting to compare Hoffman's view of the Americans with Tzara's polemics. Hoffman writes that "The 1920s were marked by a dis-respect for tradition and an eager wish to try out any new suggestions regarding the nature of man — his personal beliefs, convictions, or way to salvation."[6] Or, later: " . . . the prevailing impression is that of the very young, frightened and puzzled and defeated at the start, but determined to formulate a code that both justifies and utilizes that defeat."[7] Hoffman calls this "the pathos of the adolescent," and says elsewhere that the positive aspects of the rebellion of the Americans in the decade "may perhaps be suggested in the phrase 'useful innocence.'[8] To all of which may be compared the following excerpts from Tzara:

Let each man cry: there is a great destructive, negative work to be accomplished. To sweep clean, to clean out. The cleanliness of the individual affirms itself after the state of madness, of complete, aggressive madness of a world left in the hands of bandits, who rend themselves and destroy the ages.

Every product of disgust susceptible of becoming a negation of the family is dada; fistic protest with one's whole being in destructive action: DADA; familiarity with all the means rejected up to the present by the modest sex of convenient compromise and politeness . . .[9]

Dada, Tzara continues, is the abolition of all "social hierarchies and equations," abolition of memory, of archeology, of prophets, of the future. In a later manifesto, the "Lecture on Dada" of 1922, he wrote:

The beginnings of Dada were not the beginnings of an art, but of a disgust. Disgust with the magnificence of philosophers who for 3000 years have been explaining everything to us (what for?), disgust with the pretensions of these artists-God's-representatives-on-earth, disgust with passion and with real pathological wickedness where it was not worth the bother; disgust with a false form of domination and restriction en masse . . . disgust with all the catalogued categories, with the false prophets who are nothing but a front for the interests of money, pride disease . . . disgust with the divorce of good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly . . . Disgust with the Jesuitical dialectic which can explain everything and fill people's minds with oblique and obtuse ideas . . . From all these disgusts . . . [Dada] draws no conclusion, no pride, no benefit . . . What interests a Dada is his own mode of life. But here we approach the great secret. Dada is a state of mind.[10]

In Tzara's manifestoes appear all the key terms of dada polemic, many of which were to be continued in surrealism: the affirmation of the essential innocence of the individual, innocence which can, nevertheless, use "all the means rejected up to the present," including, as we shall see, scatology, obscenity, blasphemy, and all forms of irrationality. If Hoffman's (possibly sentimental) view is at all accurate, most of the Americans were far removed from the world-weariness of the dadas and surrealists — and Nathanael West.

In his autobiography *Paris Was Our Mistress* (1947), long after the fact, Samuel Putnam wrote: "It too long has been the custom to attempt to laugh off the early after-war excesses of Tzara and his followers . . . as being no more than a huge joke, an aesthetic hoax, what the French would call a **blague;** for the truth is that what was happening was nothing other, nothing less, than the phenomenon of the finest minds of a young generation rising up and crying out a loud and resounding *'Merde!'* to all of human civilization that had gone before."[11]

Hemingway and most of the other American writers, including Gertrude Stein, continued to hold to a great faith in literature. The writings of the dadas clearly indicate that they did not. Other writers worked under the general assumption of social-political-economic-psychological chaos. In addition to that attributable to the war, chaos was implicit in the view of the individual psyche propagated by Freud's new version of original sin, which denied the ego a corresponding version of Divine Grace, and in the discontinuity implicit in Einstein's theory of relativity. One artistic reaction was to escape from chaos by superimposing order upon chaos, by turning subjective, if not subconscious, disorder into the external objectivity of the work of art. Joyce sought an order in seventeen hours of apparently random sense impression and no less random incident. Yeats constructed his own scaffold of metaphors for poetry and for existence in his highly involved system of phases of the moon and inter-revolving cones of the gyre. In Hemingway's novels, the lives of the characters are not only balanced between life and death by a slender margin of art — the art of the bullfighter, for example — but become works of art in themselves, must do so if they are to survive, if played according to the rules of their individual construct. Putnam's anthology of the literature of the period includes a range of attempts to escape "the breakup of the personality": a new literature of sports and the body; the "Humanism of Action," in which energy becomes mystical; the Christian escape centering around Jacques Maritain; the aesthetic escape "in which art becomes a game . . . the intellect against the chaos of the visible world" (Valéry); a back-to-lyricism, "the treating of a bad case of *sensibilite* with —

sensibilite" (Gide); finally, a social escape towards Russian collectivism.[12] But Tzara and the dadas rejected all these versions of escape. Their method, too, was an escape from chaos, but it was through the exploitation of disorder rather than through the search for order — though ultimately that was the result for them as well. They advertised themselves as the negation of art and literature rather than as a new way out, a new art and literature.

Dada's major emphasis fell on the basic disorder of life itself and on the meaninglessness of the traditional view of art and literature as prophetic and oracular, hence sacrosanct. Hoffman says that the young Americans went to Paris "prepared not only to follow the older masters but to seek out new masters in contemporary French literature. It was often not so much the art of the French but their attitude towards it that impressed the American visitors. They admired, for one thing, the preoccupation of the French artist with the life of art, the search for *le mot juste* . . ."[13] But there is an irony here in that the Americans were attracted to Paris, at least in part, because they wanted to emulate Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Flaubert, while their European counterparts had turned upon just these idols. The Americans may have been fascinated by 19th century French "life for art's sake," but the French now insisted on the complete interaction of life and art: instead of *le mot juste,* the *hasard* of the dadas and surrealists. The dada attitude towards tradition and the art of the past resulted in the movement developing from brash, undifferentiated rebellion to sharp, parodistic mystification. Their work was intended to arouse the antagonism of the public, and dada eventually died as much because the public began to accept abuse as for any other reason; to that extent, dada failed because it succeeded.

Dada theory denied the existence of dada art, but the art existed nevertheless, and it produced work of importance for the history of twentieth century plastic art. Dada art can be divided into two categories, which often overlap. On the one hand, there are the manifestations of dada as they appeared in the minor arts, such as typography, magazine illustrations, ready-mades (for example, Marcel Duchamp's urinal signed "R. Mutt" and named "Fountain") and their special version of anti-art composition which borrows heavily from collage and is used satirically. In this category may be included the machine drawings of Francis Picabia, collages by George Grosz, ready-mades by Duchamp, photo-montages by Man Ray, and cover designs and illustrations which appeared in various dada periodicals. On the other hand, there are formal works which, for the most part, shared in and influenced the development of twentieth century art and remained outside the sphere of dada polemics. Included in this group is the work of Hans Arp and Kurt Schwitters, the film studies of Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling, occasional works by Marcel Janco, and the proto-surrealist paintings and collages of Max Ernst.[14]

It is necessary to underline this distinction in order to refute the view that dada was a joke and a hoax, and to clarify what amounts to a basic division within dada itself. For dada literature belongs more to the first category than to the second. The art of men like Arp and Schwitters remained aloof, for the most part, from dada polemics, though their work, too, is occasionally satirical; their work, though emboldened by dada's radical views, has a logic and inevitability of its own. To the extent that dada art was anti-rational and anti-traditional, satiric and obscure, it was in complete agreement with dada theory; but to the extent that the dada artists — particularly in the plastic arts — pursued their own formal paths, no

matter how radical these might have been, they remained within the artistic traditions of the society which dada attempted to destroy.

We have here a partial answer to the accusation that dada was defeatist and, perhaps, to the questions that inevitably arise in response to dada anti-art theory: why did dada artists paint and why did Tzara bother to write manifestoes? why did the dadas write books against writing books? in short, why is there a dada art? Part of the answer is that contradictions are part of dada absurdity, but there is a more serious answer implicit above — in the fact that the dadas were often artists in spite of their theory. As a non-dada contemporary put it: " . . . whatever may be the contempt of this generation for art, it was a generation of artists, and the energy which was in those artists found a translation in the form of negation, an outlet in the form of negation, an outlet in the form of silence being out of the question."[15]

The literature of dada, then, belongs to the first category sketched out above rather than to the second, more serious one. Although it can be argued that even the literature, despite its own theory, was no more defeatist than the art, its purely polemical character, rather than "despair," made the production of really important work impossible. (Albert Camus comments, in *The Rebel,* on the novel: "Even if the novel describes only nostalgia, despair, frustration, it still creates a form of salvation. To talk of despair is to conquer it. Despairing literature is a contradiction in terms.")[16] Dada's destructive tendencies were coupled with a deep-seated desire for renewal. In Germany, Richard Huelsenbeck sought to smash the foundations of the existing society and to replace it with a new order based on a dada version of revolutionary communism; during the short-lived insurrection in Germany after World War I, he was even made minister of art. Tristan Tzara felt that the old order had to be swept away in order to bring about a better and freer world. But both men posed the irrational against the logical, opposed reason with the instinctive and primitive, flung disorder in the face of order, mystification in the face of clarity. Art — or anti-art — was a weapon in the fight, and dada writers promoted an art that was closely linked to dada propaganda and which shared in the provocative and scandalous nature of dada demonstrations. The result is that their work is more genuinely anti-art, or non-art, than dada painting or collage: they write nonsense — for example, their noise poems — or manifestoes. Dada artists could use the dada conception of the randomness of the world — their use of accident, *hasard,* for example — to their own ends; the writers could only talk about it. Following in dada's footsteps, surrealism later used randomness as part of its theory, and it produced serious literature as well. Dada literature produced mainly polemics.

Putnam, in 1932, suggested that post-crash America could learn much about "revolutionary technique" from dada: "When the yankee laugh has died," he wrote, "there does remain something to be said as to the working value of a precedent revolution of consciousness."[17] If it cannot be said that Nathanael West himself was a dada or a surrealist, it can be demonstrated that the men who worked under those banners at least had a part in his "revolution in consciousness." Hoffman's analysis of the spirit of the young Americans is clearly related to European literary and artistic nihilism, but in respect to that side of modern literature with which I am concerned, the American is a pale reflection of the European. The American response to West's books is identical to the American response to dada and surrealism, then and now. And West

is often accused of cynicism, never of innocence: to apply Waldo Frank's criteria, his was not "a healthy reaction to our world;" West held no brief, in *Balso Snell,* with the "ordered and serious and thorough," though he soon moved away from his first book into the intensely serious, and ordered, and thorough, worlds of *Miss Lonelyhearts* and *The Day of the Locust.*

Balso Snell,[18] West's protest against writing books, is his contribution to the literature of anti-art. "Art is a sublime excrement," the guide in the Trojan Horse quotes George Moore as saying. Balso discovers during his journey through the horse that it is "inhabited solely by writers in search of an audience." The book is little more than a series of parodies and literary clichés, more often than not merely facetious, but at its heart is the dada aim of trying to rouse the belligerence of the audience, to engage its passions through enraging it. Thus, the dadas entered into their scandals, and West, through the medium of John Raskolnikov Gilson, envisions a performance of a play he has written; after flattering the audience on its uniqueness, congratulating them on their taste, the entire cast will step to the stage front and shout, implausibly, "It would be more profitable for the farmer to raise rats for the granary than for the bourgeois to nourish the artist, who must always be occupied with undermining institutions. In case the audience should misunderstand and align itself on the side of the artist, the ceiling of the theatre will be made to open and cover the occupants with tons of loose excrement. After the deluge, if they so desire, the patrons of my art can gather in the customary charming groups and discuss the play" (30-31). *Balso Snell* attempts to laugh at everything, including the reader of the book. West's attempt at anti-audience, anti-art was simply ignored as an unfunny joke; his use of clichés and parody in the manner of dada found its way into his later work as well.

Much of the specific method of dada is as characteristic of West as of the dadas themselves. Like them, he was capable of using every weapon that offended, everything that exasperated society, including obscenity, scatology, and sacrilege; in short, Tzara's "familiarity with all the means rejected up to the present." West's humor and that of the dadas is characterized by the blurring of distinctions between man, animal, and machine, and by an insistence on the coexistence of the ugly with the beautiful. In both West and the dadas there appears what at times seems to be an obsession with insanity, hysteria, disease, disfigurement — with all forms of mental aberration and physical disequilibrium. In both cases, these concerns can be attributed to what the dadas and surrealists called *humor noire,* in the use of which the common denominator is a grotesquerie closely linked to, if not identical with, blasphemy. That is, the dadas — and West — take the given (for example, the accepted view of human beauty, which would include, as minimal requirements, two arms, two legs, and so on) and deny the validity of that conception (by showing the human body with the most grotesque distortions). Thus, Max Ernst, in writing of his own version of black humor, says wryly that, in our epoch, "a beautiful act consists in losing one's two arms in combat with his fellow men."[19] The quality of comment is apparent, and apparent too are the reasons the dadas found it impossible to talk about art and beauty.

Anna Balakian writes that physical deformity "is one of the main characteristics of Dadaist expression: whether in writing, drawing or collages, distorted and dismembered bodies are everywhere evident."[20] She refers, for example, to Apollinaire's *Le Poete*

Assassine, a book much praised by the dadas, in which the disequilibrium of deformity is called divine ("infirme divinisé"); the poet, like Lemuel Pitkin in West's third novel, *A Cool Million,* loses a leg, an arm, an eye, and an ear. And, of course, the recurrent appearance of deformity in the novels is one of the main reasons critics have given for their distaste for West: the beautiful hunchback of *Balso Snell,* the girl born without a nose in *Miss Lonelyhearts.*

A more obvious, and perhaps less offensive, form of blasphemy took place at the dadas' famous public demonstrations, or scandals, for example, at an exhibition which was entered through a public lavatory. In one corner of the room a young girl in a white communion dress recited obscene poetry. The blasphemy is aimed at religion, as it often is in dada, but perhaps even more, it is aimed at the idea of the innocence of youth. Just so, in *Balso Snell,* in addition to the parody of Christian vocabulary and hagiology (for example, the history of Saint Puce, a martyred flea) there appears a twelve-year-old's Dostoyevskian diary of his murder of an idiot, a diary which is actually intended as an instrument of seduction.

Both the dadas and the surrealists, under the influence of Freud, Myers, Janet, and the whole of psychological literature, emphasized the excretory functions and sexual and psychological aberration. It is this aspect of both movements that, perhaps, aroused most public and critical ire. For example, Albert Gleizes, a contemporary of the dadas, wrote angrily, " . . . very soon we become aware of the dominants, the *Leitmotiv* which recur in their artistic and literary works. And then the pathological case becomes brutally evident. Their minds are forever haunted by a sexual delirium and a scatological frenzy. Their morbid fantasy runs riot around the genital apparatus of either sex . . . They have discovered the anus and the by-products of intestinal activity . . . They confuse excrement with the products of the mind."[21] Putnam describes *Cholera* (1923), by the surrealist Joseph Delteil, as "the epic of children discovering those excretory, reproductive and other mysteries that unite them to their larger playmate, the world."[22] Salvador Dali, in particular, emphasized coprophilia and coprophagy in his paintings and poetry; the three great images, he said, were excrement, blood and putrefaction. In one scene of the experimental film *Le Chien Andalou* (1929), for example, excrement oozes from a piano. As for mental aberration, the section called "The Possessions" in Breton and Eluard's *The Immaculate Conception* consists of a series of "simulations" of a variety of mental diseases: dementia praecox, acute mania, general paralysis, *et al.* I will forbear cataloguing the excrement and body-excrescences in *Balso Snell* except to point out that the entire book takes place in the bowels of the Trojan Horse, after Balso enters through the anus. In the same book, Gilson's Crime Journal, "The Making of a Fiend," is supposedly being written in an insane asylum and investigates Gilson's mental state in the manner of Dostoyevsky. And West's second novel, *Miss Lonelyhearts,* he himself called a "classical" study of psychological aberration.

In a sense, the characteristics of dada and surrealism outlined thus far are part of the basic conception of black humor, in part developed by Jacques Vaché, who died early in the history of dada. Vaché embodied several of the major elements of the movement and typified Cocteau's *"humoriste desespere."* His actions were eccentric and disconcerting, and he was perhaps the earliest exponent of the idea of the inseparability of life and art. Vaché worked as a stevedore during the day and, impeccably dressed, spent all his evenings in the bistros of Marseilles.

(Putnam writes that though the dadas and surrealists would have none of Baudelaire, there was an important link between him and them in "a certain monocled-Anglican *dandysme* which both alike affected."[23] West, during his Paris years, was noted for dressing impeccably in Brooks Brothers clothing, including gloves and a tightly-furled black umbrella.) Vaché's philosophy of life, a "dynamic disguised as a simpleton's jest" (Putnam), was based on a definition of humor as "a sense of the theatric and joyless futility of everything, when one is enlightened."[24] Further, Vaché spoke of humor as containing a large measure of something he called *"formidable ubique"* (a word formed from Jarry's character Ubu), which Emile Bouvier defines as "an element of stupid surprise that is comical and, at the same time, disconcerting by reason of its destructive potentialities" — a definition which certainly fits *Balso Snell.* In 1918 Vaché committed suicide from an overdose of opium, which he knew very well how to use, at the same time giving two friends excessive doses. Hence, by the time André Breton published Vaché's *Lettres de Guerre* in 1919, Vaché had become something of a hero for his life and for his death. "Art is a stupidity . . . Art ought to be something funny and a trifle boring," he wrote in one of his war letters;[25] that, too, became part of the dada attitude towards art, and conceivably it is behind West's description of *Miss Lonelyhearts* as "slightly inane."

From Vaché's theory of humor stems the conception of *humor noire* and, to some extent, their version of collage, both of which methods relate to techniques in West's novels. Max Ernst, for example, gives the word "phallustrade" as an instance of "verbal collage" and of black humor. "Phallustrade" is "an alchemic product, composed of . . . the autostrade, the ballustrade and a certain quantity of phallus . . . Hazard [French *hasard*] is the **master of humor** and consequently, in an epoch which is far from rosy (the epoch in which we live) . . . the master of the humor-that-isn't-rosy, the **black humor.** A phallustrade is a typical product of black humor. A sagging relief, taken from the lung of a 47-year-old smoker, is another. It has been said that the predominant note in my collages of the dada period is this humor" (original emphasis). And, "the quantity of black humor contained in each authentic collage is found there in the inverse proportion of the possibilities for happiness (objective and subjective)."[26] Ernst defines collage itself as the bringing together of two distant realities on "an apparently antipathetic plane," a definition which he calls a "paraphrase and generalization" of the famous line in Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror,* referred to again and again in dada documents, "Beautiful as the chance meeting upon a dissecting table of a sewing-machine with an umbrella."

Dali's theory of "critical paranoia" is closely related to, if not identical with, Max Ernst's explication of black humor and collage. Dali defines the paranoiac, or multiple, image as follows:

. . . a representation of an object [so] that it is also, without the slightest physical or anatomical change, the representation of another entirely different object, the second representation being equally devoid of any deformity or abnormality betraying arrangement. Such a double image is obtained in virtue of the violence of the paranoiac thought which has cunningly and skillfully used the requisite quantity of pretexts, coincidences, etc., and so taken advantage of them as to exhibit the second image, which then replaces the dominant idea. The double image (an example of which is the image of a horse which is at the same time the image of a woman) may be extended . . . to make a third image appear . . .[27]

A technique similar to Dali's, if not elaborately

and pretensiously verbalized, appears in the distortions and double perspectives of Picasso, in Duchamp's "machines" (for example, the giant glass "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Own Bachelors, Even"), in Max Ernst's blurring of human with animal characteristics.

In the dada and surrealist attempt to deal with their vision of chaos, perhaps the major factor was Ernst's theory of collage and Dali's of critical paranoia: the linking of disconnected elements of the world-chaos — of animals with man, of outer life with inner, of death with life — through their often incredible imagery. As one surrealist, Jean Brun, states the case, "The capital fact of the entire history of the mind lies perhaps in this discovery of [i.e., by] surrealism: the word *'comme'* is a verb which does not signify *'tel que.'* " Anna Balakian comments that this "is a principle to be remembered in reading almost any poem of Breton, Eluard, and most of the other surrealists; it is the trademark of authenticity."[28] West's imagery, probably the most striking characteristic of his prose, shares this characteristic of "identity" in the constituents of his similes. It produces the consistency of pattern that, for example, turns his image of Hollywood in *The Day of the Locust* into a world of horror in which everything and everyone is really something else, and in which the world and Hollywood's celluloid world become interchangeable and, finally, identical. It is the same technique that turns all his characters into grotesques. "Like" is the key word in the great majority of West's images and — to accept Brun's overstatement — it functions as the verb "is." It is to a great extent the key element of West's fine comic hand.

Consider, for example, the total effect of the following images from *Miss Lonelyhearts* visualized as surrealist canvases: *He walked into the shadow of a lamp-post that lay on the path like a spear. It pierced him like a spear (70). . . . a newspaper struggled in the air like a kite with a broken spine (71). A blood-shot eye appeared, glowing like a ruby in an antique ring (71). She had left the couch for a red chair that was swollen with padding and tense with live springs (81).* (A metaphor rather than a simile here.) *She was wearing a tight, shiny dress that was like glass-covered steel . . . (94) . . . Goldsmith . . . smiled, bunching his fat cheeks like twin rolls of smooth pink toilet paper (97).*

(a letter): *Like a pink tent, he set it over the desert* [picking up an earlier image]. *Against the dark mahogany desk top, the cheap paper took on rich flesh tones. He thought of Mrs. Doyle as a tent, hair-covered and veined, and of himself as a skeleton in a water-closet, the skull and cross-bones on a scholar's bookplate. When he made the skeleton enter the flesh tent, it flowered at every joint (98-99). . . . her massive hams were like two enormous grindstones (101).*

"Violent images are used to illustrate commonplace events," West said of *Miss Lonelyhearts.* The images are usually similes with "like," intentionally, I think, to emphasize their violence and grotesqueness. They are all insistently visual, hence insistently obvious. West was clearly no more concerned with the subtleties of metaphor than the dadas or surrealists; when he omits "like," as in the image of the couch "swollen with padding and tense with live springs," there is no literal analogy in the real world: "swollen" and "tense" touch on human attributes, yet the image as a whole suggests some monstrous animal. (Compare, for example, Max Ernst's painting "The Elephant of Celebes" — an immense rotund "animal" that suggests a boiler with a huge pipe for a trunk and the head of a bull, a head which might be the torso of a woman as well.)

Any one of West's images could be turned into a surrealist painting, in particular such extended images as that which transforms Mrs. Doyle's letter into a tent and a vagina. It is not surprising that the later surrealists, such as Phillipe Soupault, who wrote the introduction for the French edition of *Miss Lonelyhearts,* were delighted to discover West.

It is important to note that West's "surreal" technique holds not only for *Balso Snell* and *Miss Lonelyhearts,* but for *The Day of the Locust* as well. The masquerade world of Hollywood is concretely established in that book through the same kind of simile: the moon of Los Angeles looks "like an enormous bone button"; flowers are "wrinkled like crepe"; a game-cock has "a triangular head, like a snake's."

The humor in West's imagery is almost always pejorative — and "black." Hams like grindstones is not a particularly original image; cheeks like rolls of toilet paper is obvious, if funny. West's best images are perhaps those which do not use objects for comparison. For example, of an old man acting offended: "The old man drew himself up like a little girl making a muscle"; of Miss Lonelyhearts after the act of love: " . . .he crawled out of bed like an exhausted swimmer leaving the surf"; of attempted seduction: "He kneaded her body like a sculptor grown angry with his clay"; Shrike on Mrs. Shrike: "Sleeping with her is like sleeping with a knife in one's groin." These similes are not far removed from dada and surrealist *humor noire* and function as a literary analogy to the grotesquerie of dada and surrealist painting and collage.

For my own purposes I have been intentionally blurring the distinctions between dada and surrealism; it is necessary to point up some of their differences. Putnam sees them as "direct ideological opposites": Dada is the cold, lucid, blinding light of reason engaged in slaying reason; whereas Super-realism could only come after "Dada was dead, after reason had failed to slay reason . . . Dada . . . is the essential preliminary stage."[30] Dada tried to eliminate the personality; surrealist art is, in a sense, nothing but personality projected, uncontrolled, from the subconscious. Dada, like surrealism, insisted on spontaneity in art to the point of rejecting erasure, but the art was not, in the first place, uncontrolled, and "automatic" as in surrealism. Never did dada reach the complete disorientation of the *"surrealisme absolu"* of Breton and Soupault's "Les Champs Magnetique" or the "dictionary in disorder" of Cocteau's "Le Potomak." It might seem that dada "sonorist" poetry — noise poems — is an exception, but it had absolutely no relation to language, and the poems were explicitly experiments in sound; that is, the poems were thoroughly controlled, though not in meaning. As a final distinction, Anna Balakian states that dada was non-creative, surrealism creative, and, to the extent that she is referring to dada literature, she is correct. Thus, it should be clear that West's themes — or concerns, if you will — stem from both dada and surrealism, while the similarities in method are mainly related to surrealism, literary and plastic.

Those critics who have taken a dim view of Nathanael West and his novels since the thirties have argued that most of West's characters are physical or psychological cripples who can only relate to one another sadistically or masochistically; that his novels all end in escape from the ego — two through violent death, one through incipient insanity, and the fourth through orgasm; that West goes out of his way to be sacrilegious, scatological, and obscene; and that he betrays his own sickness in his concern with hysteria, insanity, violence, and suicide.[31] But the evidence marshalled here — and more that there is no room for — suggests that

West was sharing a literary-artistic tradition rather than merely inflicting his personal aberrations upon his audience.

Albert Camus, in *The Rebel,* speaks of surrealism as one of the many attempts in the last hundred years and more to achieve order: in the world of madness, suicide and destruction of Sade, Dostoyevsky and the romantics " . . . by a process of inversion, it is the desperate appeal for order that rings through this insane universe."[32] Most of the parallels between West and the dadas and surrealists are part of the same pattern, one based on the dichotomy of anarchy and order and the attempt to cope with or laugh off the problem. West, like the surrealists, conceived of the world as one of "objective particulars, the universe . . . as bric-a-brac,"[33] and, like them, found himself compelled to create an order. The particular literary and plastic forms that surrealism and dada took were often bizarre and shocking, but the method was after all a literary and artistic technique, even if the writers and artists insisted that it was also a way of life. The bizarre and shocking aspects of West's work are not an isolated phenomenon but are related to that technique to a degree unique in modern American literature.

Reference Notes:

1) Richard B. Gehman, introduction to *The Day of the Locust,* New Directions ed., p. x.
2) "If Dada Comes to America," *Contempo,* II:5 (25 July 1932), pp. 1, 3, 5. In 1932 and 1933 West was on the staff of this little magazine.
3) "Shed a Tear for Mr. West," *N.Y. World-Telegram,* 24 June 1931, p. 11.
4) *The European Caravan,* ed. Samuel Putnam and others, New York, 1931, p. v.
5) Frederick J. Hoffman, *The Twenties,* New York, 1955, all quotations p. 209.
6) Hoffman, p. 14.
7) Hoffman, p. 381.
8) Hoffman, p. 388.
9) "dada manifesto 1918," in *European Caravan,* p. 96.
10) "Lecture on Dada," in Robert Motherwell, ed., *The Dada Painters and Poets,* New York, 1951, p. 250.
11) Samuel Putnam, *Paris Was Our Mistress,* New York, 1947, p. 163.
12) *European Caravan,* p. 30.
13) Hoffman, p. 33.
14) I am indebted to Prof. Joel Isaacson, Department of Art History, University of Michigan, for many of these details.
15) Marcel Arland, "Concerning a New *Mal du Siecle,*" in *European Caravan,* pp. 147-9.
16) Albert Camus, *The Rebel,* trans. Anthony Bower, New York, 1960, p. 263.
17) *Contempo,* 25 July 1932, p. 5.
18) *The Collected Works of Nathanael West,* New York, 1957. Page references are indicated parenthetically.
19) Max Ernst, *Beyond Painting,* New York, 1948, p. 16.
20) Anna Balakian, *The Literary Origins of Surrealism,* New York, 1947, p. 135.
21) Albert Gleizes, "The Dada Case" (1920), in Motherwell, pp. 298-303.
22) *European Caravan,* p. 137.
23) *Paris Was Our Mistress,* pp. 163-4.
24) in *European Caravan,* pp. 86-88.
25) *European Caravan,* p. 89.
26) *Beyond Painting,* pp. 16, 17, 19.
27) from *Le Surrealisme au Service de la Revolution,* No. 1, quoted in Max Ernst, *Beyond Painting,* pp. 23-24.
28) quoted in Balakian, *Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute,* New York, 1959, p. 120.
29) in *The Collected Works.* Page references are indicated parenthetically.
30) "If Dada Comes to America," p. 5.
31) See, e.g., W. H. Auden, "West's Disease," *The Griffin* (May, 1957), pp. 4-11.
32) *The Rebel,* p. 100.
33) *European Caravan,* p. 24.

Jim Dine: The name "Happening" was a great crowd-pleaser . . . It is ridiculous. It was Kaprow's word, and it does not refer to me. . . . I do not feel that there was enough of a perspective between art and life in them. I felt they were too closely allied with me. . . . I stopped doing Happenings because I felt anyone could do any thing and be liked. It was becoming so chic.
(HAPPENINGS, A Dutton Paperback)

On the lines below please write out good resolutions for the future. Fold, close, lick and seal.

On the lines below please write out evil resolutions for the future. Sign, fold, lick and spit.

Bolt Beranek and Newman: ACTIVITIES
What concerns the experts as well as the public is not simply the present generation of aircraft nor the additional noise that will be generated by increased traffic, but also the production of stretched-out models of present planes and the development of jumbo jets and supersonic transports.

TRANSPORTS

NOISE

ENOUGH

SONATA APPASSIONATA

☐ Are you a citizen?
☐ Have you the vote?
☐ Do you believe what you are told?
☐ Are you too smart to believe

☐ Do you believe in overturning the govt?

☐ BANG!

Do not ask.
X or leave blank.

she was reading poetry concrete.

SPELL: KERRY
her name

When Cary came for her piano lesson she asked, Where is Sweethearts? I gave her the book and she read it correctly page after page, not knowing it was a grid. She was all innocence and sweet art. She did not know

:the whole step of this process:
— at every stage within it
. . . wait on it . . . meditate on it . . .

or altered slightly; just as its activities may be invented or commonplace. A Happening, unlike a stage play, may occur at a supermarket, driving along a highway, under a pile of rags, and in a

for public
for work
for self

(FOUR SUITS, Something Else Press)

If I were to tell my readers that one of the above is a part of the instructions for the performing of a sacred Aztec rite and the other the instruction for a musical Event or Happening, the readers would be no more confused than if I were to print alongside each instruction the accompanying diagram.

Let it now be clearly understood: THE MEDIUM IS NOT THE MESSAGE

FUGUES
by Lawrence Margolis
10515 Encino Avenue
Granada Hills, California 91344

THEY GO FARTHER ADVertisement

Or should I exhibit as a sculpture a musical machine playing alternately dances by Josef Haydn, fantasies by W. A. Mozart, and a battle piece with flourishes of trumpets and drumrolls by L. v Beethoven (this last, though often written of, does not in fact exist), would not the sculptural box and apparatus (Panharminicon) be, by present-day standards of judgement and taste, a work of art?

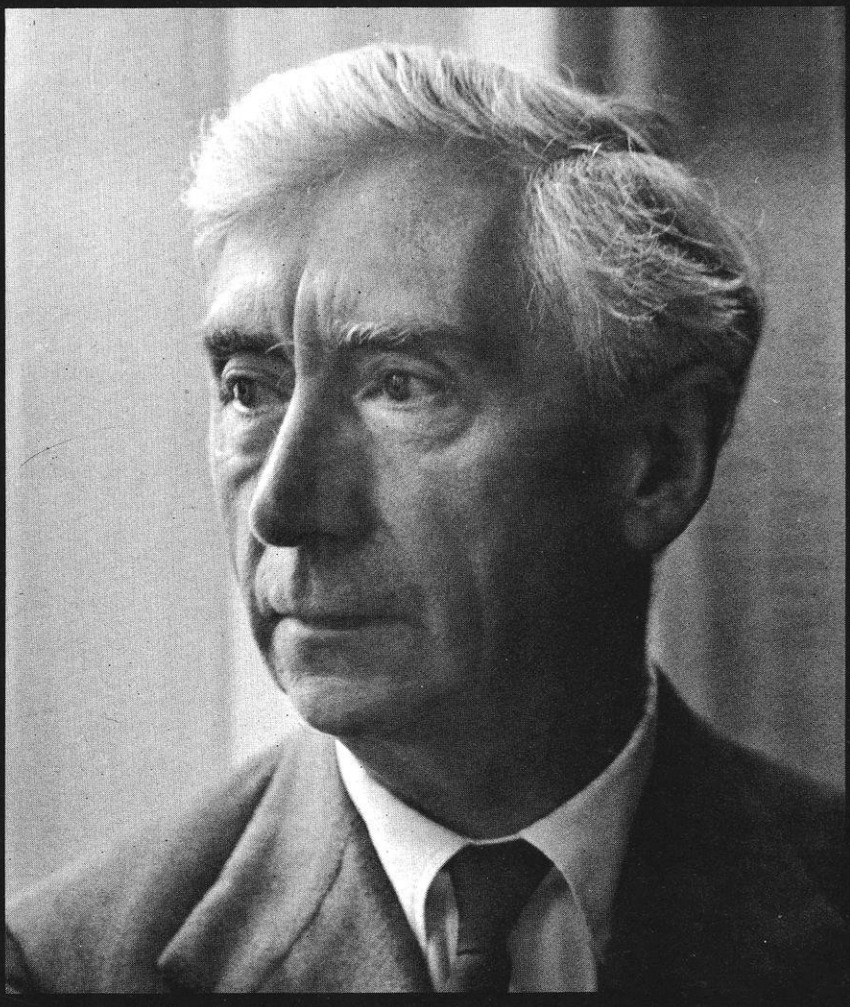
Exhibit as moving sculptures
the NICKELODEON
the JUKE BOX

Everyone can experience this consciousness through love for a while. The Zen priest also aims at a kind of calmness or calm ecstasy, but an external extended one, without crescendo, climax, catharsis, — the causes for delusion, illusion, error and deception and self-deception. Therefore they say that love is as bad as hatred. (ESSAY, Nam June Paik, An Anthology)

sir herbert read

". . . if we persist in our restless desire to know everything about the universe and ourselves, then we must not be afraid of what the artist brings back from his voyage of discovery."

Sir Herbert Read



In a note to the editor, Sir Herbert Read said of the ensuing article:

"I have read it with great interest and find it excellent as a statement of my position. Any comment would be merely a statement of agreement and gratitude for such a clear and perceptive interpretation of my views on the subject."

THE "UNPOLITICAL" PHILOSOPHY OF SIR HERBERT READ

by William O. Reichert

Political science as it is ordinarily defined rarely takes notice in any direct fashion of aesthetics. Apparently beauty and art in the opinion of most political scientists have little to do with the concepts of power and interest groups and are thus largely irrelevant. But nature, as its careful observers know, is not haphazard and it is thus impossible for any facet of human experience to be truly superfluous; ultimately there is bound to be a very real connection between politics and art. The truthfulness of this statement is amply demonstrated in the writings of Sir Herbert Read, who has been recently proclaimed "the most distinguished living English art critic, expositor, and historian."[1] This study will describe and analyze Read's political thought in an attempt to make clear the relevance of aesthetics to the study of politics.

In his philosophical development, Herbert Read acknowledges a wide assortment of influences. As a student he discovered the writings of Nietzsche, learning an iconoclasm that helped him to destroy the "ancestral gods" which had hitherto prevented his mind from expanding to the natural limits of its vitality.

On the positive side he also learned from Nietzsche a universality of mind which has kept him from ever embracing any particular political prejudice too completely. As a result, Read displays a catholicism of outlook in his writing that is extremely rare in this age of political passion. Following service in World War I, Read, disillusioned and dismayed by the brutality and senselessness of what he had experienced, drifted somewhat aimlessly for a time until he found in the writing of Julian Benda hope that the intellectual might indeed play a meaningful role in the development of social ideas. The subsequent sources of Read's philosophical eclecticism are too numerous to list completely but among the more important ones we might single out are the writings of Proudhon and Kropotkin, Kierkegaard, Cassirer and Langer, Tolstoy, William Morris, Eric Gill and Edward Carpenter. It would be a mistake, however, to identify Read too emphatically with any certain philosophical movement, for at basis all of his thought stems from the timeless evolutionary view developed by Plato. Without claiming any special distinction as a classical scholar, Read nevertheless displays in his writings a firm knowledge of the major classics of politics, his insight into Plato's thought being particularly deep.

One need not penetrate very far into Read's writings to discover that his sentiments are clearly on the side of socialism as opposed to capitalism. Capitalism, as Read views it, is the source of much of the confusion which plagues modern society in the realm of social values. For capitalism, concerned above all else with the idea of pecuniary success, encourages the individual to subordinate his higher social and spiritual interests to the lower material interest of accumulating private property. Much of the moral chaos of contemporary society stems directly from the capitalistic era we are just now emerging from. But while Read would be known as a socialist, he adamantly insists upon defining socialism in his own terms. And here we discover that Read views socialism not so much as an economic theory as a social theory having to do with every aspect of man's creative nature including his aesthetic experience. Shortly after World War I, Read tells us, he became aware that the inability of most socialists to understand

the role that art and the artist must play in any well-ordered society created a barrier which prevented him from ever accepting unqualified membership in their ranks. Read wanted to discuss Picasso, Cezanne, and Delacroix along with political theorists such as Proudhon, Sorel, and Marx. But "no one saw the connection," and he was forced to go off on his own in search of more compatible intellectual companions. It is highly important to note that those with whom Read has most in common are social commentators whose philosophies cut freely across conventional systems and categories of thought.

Although Read's initial efforts to express himself socially were through the medium of poetry, it is in his numerous writings in literary and art criticism that his political philosophy is most clearly illumined. More than any other person in contemporary life, Read has comprehended the importance of the artist to the development and refinement of social knowledge, and it is in his conception of the function of art and the artist that the profundity of his philosophic knowledge is most evident.[2] It is interesting to note in this connection that as Read's aesthetic sensibilities became more and more refined he was progressively attracted to adopt the political viewpoint of anarchism. Anarchism, as Read conceives it, is not so much a political movement as it is a philosophical school of thought. But before we can understand Read's politics we must first understand his aesthetic theory.

The function of the artist, according to Read, has social and political implications which are scarcely understood by more than a few individuals today. This is not to say that the purpose of the artist is didactic. On the contrary, the notion that the primary task of the artist is to express the accepted values and standards of his culture is wholly erroneous.[3] This, Read points out, is the main flaw in Tolstoy's theory of art. The purpose of art is not to define or propagate moral values, as Tolstoy intimates it is, for art can never be made subordinate to moral values. Moral values, according to Read, are invariably intended to promote and propagate the select ideals and interests of a particular culture. The individual who remains conscious of his political and ideological attachments, therefore, inevitably selects moral values to place at the center of his propagandistic efforts which will be acceptable to the adherents of his particular social group. And, once he has done this, he has lost all claim to objectivity. One may argue, as the spokesmen of the Soviet state do, that their artists are serving the interests of the brotherhood of man when they inject into their art moral values selected from socialistic culture and are hence engaged in a legitimate activity. But this does not prove that the artist's primary purpose is or should be didactic, but merely suggests that the artist in such an instance is being used for political purposes. In the long run a society which chooses to squander its artistic talent in this way, according to Read, is bound to suffer ill consequences so far as its aesthetic development is concerned.

This does not mean, Read argues, that the artist must remain blind to the injustices and moral chaos of the society in which he lives. In a very real sense, in fact, the function of the artist is revolutionary. The necessity to be revolutionary does not stem, however, from the social and political experiences or disposition of the artist himself. A "true artist" will resist the urge to interpret social conditions in terms of economic or political interests. So far as art itself is concerned, the main force of his protest will be directed against the traditions and prejudices which prevent his generation from appreciating new forms and currents of art as they first appear in society. "Art, in its full and free subjective action,"

according to Read, "is the one essentially revolutionary force with which man is endowed. Art is revolution. . . ."[4] In this respect the artist faces a gigantic challenge, for the standard of artistic taste which predominates in modern society came into existence with the rise of the bourgeoisie to social and political power at the very beginning of the period and has had almost no serious competition ever since. Armed with wealth and a reservoir of ever increasing social power, the new middle-class expressed its class consciousness by putting the stamp of its value system upon every phase of art. The artist, in turn, forced by economic necessity to paint or write for his living, was compelled to project his patron more and more toward the center of his artistic efforts, with the result that the main current of European art from the Renaissance on has been bourgeois in orientation. Art became a plaything in the hands of the moneyed classes and was employed to make the pecuniary and social interests of those classes popular. "Academies were formed to perpetuate these same values in the practice of future artists, and the eventual result was an academic tradition strictly graded to the prevailing economic order, imitative and not originative in its ideals."[5] It is against this tradition that the modern artist must revolt before he can begin to fill his proper role within society.

Although the artist does not and cannot directly use his art for the purpose of expressing social values, he nevertheless is of tremendous importance in the evolution of social ideals. Far too few people realize, according to Read, the importance of aesthetics to the development of social knowledge. The primary function of the artist, in Read's view of things, is to broaden the horizon of mankind's social vision and to extend the scope of its moral knowledge. But the artist does not consciously set out to do this as a missionary sets out to convert the heathen to "the true faith." To the contrary he must concern himself primarily with the task of discovering truth and creating beauty, paying little or no attention to the practical effects of his activity. In fact, to ask the artist to affect a change in the moral level of society through the medium of art is to ask more of him than he can ever give. To maintain that art can actually change men's social attitudes in any direct way, whether for good or bad, is a gross exaggeration. "With all my heart I wish I could believe that art is capable of establishing the brotherhood of man," Read writes. Yet to do so would be to hold that art has the power to transform human consciousness into human feeling, and this is clearly not possible. Art does not and cannot affect any direct change in the heart of man by bringing him to see the reasonableness of religious precepts expressed as moral axioms. No fundamental revolution in the moral sphere is apt to take place as the result of "intellectual propaganda addressed to minds already corrupted beyond redemption." Art works in exactly the opposite fashion. The function of the artist, that is to say, is to give definite expression to human emotions and feelings. "It begins with states of feeling, usually obscure states of feeling, and it gives them concrete reality — it materializes them."[6] This procedure, obviously, is something very different from the one followed by the artist who attempts to preach to his audience by means of his art.

Art, in Read's opinion, is not a rational or conscious process; it is an evolutionary process. The artist, therefore, does not primarily deal with ideas which are hemmed in by rigid confines of the everyday world the average individual has been trained to accept as normal. Art, as Read conceives it, "is an organic phenomenon, a biological process," having its origin in the indefinable "life-force" which we find everywhere in nature.

"I am prepared to admit", he writes, "that human life has a qualitative distinction, a certain spirituality or higher consciousness, which transcends but does not separate it from the rest of animal creation."[7] The function of the artist is to acquaint mankind with the content of this "higher consciousness."

The human mind, then, as Read conceives it, does not function exclusively, or even primarily, on a rational level. Greatly indebted to the psychology of Jung, Read maintains that human thought, rather than proceeding solely on the level of consciousness as is popularly assumed, takes place on two distinct but related planes. On the one hand society derives its moral knowledge from rational norms which are clearly outlined in its cultural heritage. The values which a people hand down from generation to generation are rooted in this level of thought. The individual is a product of the cultural canons of his social group; without these values he would have no moral existence. But human consciousness in and by itself is incapable of sustaining life in any viable fashion. In its purely rational aspect, in fact, the mind becomes something of a *cul de sac,* for the ego has a tendency to become compulsive about its duties and responsibilities. Left to itself, the rational faculty develops systems of doctrine and dogma which are essentially stagnant in character. Nothing creative is apt to be produced by reason alone. It is the second level of human existence, the unconscious, that is responsible for man's creativity.[9] Wherever we desire to obtain new insights into social reality, to push back the limits of human intelligence, to formulate our social ideals in fresh and more meaningful language, Read argues, there we enter into the realm of the unconscious.

In Read's opinion it is the artist who is most capable of giving us crucial insight into the realm of the unconscious. His job is not to express himself as an individual, or to portray the world precisely as it is, but to extend the horizons of man's social consciousness so that new forms of social reality can take shape. "The artist must create new images, images of a new world, a world possible in this era of scientific transformation."[10] Greatly impressed with the philosophical truths he had gleaned from Plato's writings, Read emphatically points out that a sudden or complete grasp of reality is a human impossibility. The dialectical process can never acquaint us with the whole of truth or suddenly transform human intelligence to new levels of perfectibility. The best we can hope for is a gradual extension of the range of human consciousness. The dialectical process is interminable and we must not suppose that mankind will ever possess anything resembling perfect truth. Nevertheless, the artist, if he is to remain true to his function, must continuously strive to crystallize images of reality out of the unknown. "The Great Chain of Being," Read writes in *Icon and Idea,* "what is it but a chain of images" by which human intelligence unceasingly pulls itself toward a more adequate conception of what our social world is and might be![11]

If the conservative is right, all truth lies in the past and we need only consult the "concrete" prejudices and traditions of our ancestors to embrace it in its entirety. Read, wholly unwilling to accept the world view of the conservative, maintains that truth lies not in the past but in the future. And it is the artist who serves as a link between the present, with its imperfect conception of truth, and the future, in which truth will be more nearly intelligible than it is now. The artist serves the cause of truth by refining the intuitions he gleans by consulting his own individual unconscious. He gives expression to his own feelings, that is to say, thus acquainting us with

the fantasy and imagery which originate in the innermost recess of his human being. Many persons will argue against this that the artist in doing this is merely giving vent to his own ego, or that his imagination is only capable of producing images which concern his own interests. Against this Read argues, again following Jung, that the human unconscious is not concerned with the personal interests of the particular individual in question. There are many levels of the unconscious, and the deeper we descend into it the more impersonal it becomes. If we descend deeply enough we reach a point at which the unconscious becomes basically collective in nature.[12] Thus we are led to the conclusion that man is not primarily motivated by selfish desires for pleasure or power but that he has a real capacity for social cooperation. Man, in fact, has a basic tendency to formulate his hopes and aspirations for a better life in cooperation with his fellow men. The artist, in giving expression to the images he finds in his own unconscious, is not merely expressing himself, but is giving expression to social aspirations which have universal validity.[13]

Art, Read holds, following the lead of the late Simone Weil, does not so much deal with truths capable of statement in the language of science as it does with "unstated intuitions" which are almost impossible to formulate in terms of ordinary discourse.[14] The primary function of art is to lead the human mind from one plateau of understanding to another.

The ground it has to traverse is unchartered territory.[15] How can we give precise statement to ideas which have just barely risen to the surface of human consciousness or are still in the process of doing so? In answer to this Read argues that social ideas as we first become conscious of them appear as vague symbols. In the philosophy of Susan Langer, Read finds firm support for his contention that the basis of all symbolism is the feeling of the artist, feeling which he himself does not fully understand. The artist does not embrace truth completely and finally but merely feels the rough outline of its form. Human feelings, according to Read, have very definite forms or patterns.[16] The basis of their form is found in nature. The artist, in expressing the feeling he finds in his unconscious, is not expressing an individual feeling so much as one which has interest and significance for all mankind. What he tries to do in his artistic endeavors is to symbolize his feelings about life in a way that is unique. Art, therefore, "is a process of crystallization." Ideas do not present themselves directly to our senses but are forged out of the imagery and fantasy of the human unconscious. In refining ideas through the medium of his art, the artist is engaged in the dialectical process and the product of his effort is a new synthesis of truth which serves to advance mankind one more step toward the grasp of reality. As soon as the import of the symbol becomes generally understood, that is to say "rational," its significance begins to fade and soon becomes indistinct again. But this is no great tragedy for the advancement of knowledge does not depend upon the permanency of ideas but upon their constant refinement. Hence, Read holds, mankind is faced by a paradox. On the one hand we must make ideas vital by giving them concrete form. "It is only in so far as an ideal becomes concrete that it becomes comprehensible to the reason and subject to rational criticism." On the other hand, it is imperative that no idea be considered sacred, for permanency is fatal to the intellectual and spiritual vigor of society.

There is a very striking similarity in the philosophic approach of Read and that of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the great architect

of anarchist social theory. Read maintains, as Proudhon did before him, that the primary quality of human intelligence is continuous change. Everywhere in nature growth and change are normal, whereas stability and permanency are abberations from the norm. The evolution of human and animal life as it takes place in the physical world gives us a clue as to what is normal in the social realm. Dialectics, as it is defined by Read, is simply a logical explanation of the dynamics of human change and growth. As Plato pointed out in *The Republic,* it is the highest stage of knowledge, the apex of human intelligence. Without a fundamental appreciation of the importance of dialectics to the development of social knowledge, no man can call himself a philosopher.

Like all radicals who have remained true to the timeless, philosophical principles enunciated by Plato, Read holds that the first duty of a philosopher, whether he be a poet, an artist, or a social scientist, is to break with the social heritage of the past so that a new conception of social reality might take form. In Europe and America the art and literature of bourgeois society stand as serious obstacles to the development of new forms of religious and philosophical thought. Taking issue with the prophets of modern conservatism, Read believes that the "stagnant waters" of the past "support no life." No improvement in the moral level of society can be expected so long as the basically conservative principle of social quiescence prevails among us. Mankind does not make social progress by sitting still; "life depends on the agitation set up by a few eccentric individuals."[17] This means, according to Read, that one of the primary qualities we must cultivate in our philosophers is an attitude of rebelliousness. Read does not mean by this that rebelliousness for its own sake should be encouraged, or that bad temper stemming from a poor personal disposition should be allowed to masquerade as virtue or knowledge. What he means is that our philosphers should possess such highly refined moral natures that they can be expected to engage in spontaneous revolt against social injustice whenever they witness it. Like Proudhon, Read has no illusion that any isolated act of rebellion or revolution is likely to be successful in the long run or to change significantly the general moral condition of humanity. What we must encourage in our philosophers is a "general spirit of revolt" aimed not at any specific government or social class but at "the totality of an absurd civilization — against its ethos, its morality, its economy, and its political structure."[18]

Art, for Read, is not so much a diversion as "an expression of our deepest instincts and emotions." Art reflects the spiritual and moral vitality of any given people. When we evaluate a culture or civilization centuries after its decline, we find that the only thing about it that can withstand the ravages of time is its art. Time erodes the glory of its statesmen and soldiers, the power of its armies and navies, and the hustle and bustle of its market places. "Historically speaking, we cannot distinguish a civilization except by its art."[19] All that remains after its material aspects have rotted away are the vestiges of its attempts to express truth through form and style.

In a very real sense, Read maintains, the art of a particular civilization reflects the collective unconscious of its people. The artist who attempts to express his feelings and emotions gives vent to forces which have their roots in the general ethos of the culture of which he is a part. The significance of his efforts always extends beyond his own personal system of values. "Art is always socially relevant," according to Read, "or it is not art." What he seems to mean by this

is that the primary function of art is to "vitalize" society by aiding it in its task of discovering social truth and reality. "It is through art that man gains an understanding of higher human values." The artist, consequently, becomes much more than a mere decorator, for his job is to continuously breathe purpose and direction into the meaning of life. The artist's task is to aid in the creation of a new culture and it is in this respect that art has significance for society. As Read puts it: "The work of art is only ratified in the organic ritual of life and it is only in so far as the artist succeeds not only in constructing these platonic models of reality, but also in modifying the communal environment, that he acquires the full stature of the humanist."[20] Mankind ascends on the wings of philosophy. And since the "old myths cannot be reanimated, nor can new myths be created by taking thought," it becomes the responsibility of the artist to create a new social perspective for mankind.

Here many political scientists will charge Read with the same aristocratic bias that is often said to color the work of Plato. But by no stretch of the imagination can this accusation be substantiated. According to his own admission, the basic dogma to which Read clings before any other is that "the instinct for good design is an innate possession of every unspoilt human being."[21] In Read's opinion, every man, to the extent that his character has not been corrupted by the institutions of society, is naturally an artist. The rude peasant or savage, although he may be abysmally ignorant so far as science and technology are concerned, possesses the "surest instinct for the fundamentally right plastic forms." The division of labor which characterizes modern industrial life obscures the natural artistic taste and ability of the individual, thereby throwing the responsibility for the development of art forms on a special group of men. But Read does not admit that the artist should enjoy any special status or privileges as a reward for developing his talents. To be gifted, he argues, is itself a privilege. Moreover, the professional artist of today, although essential to the development of moral ideas under the present organization of social life, is actually an anachronism. In a correctly proportioned society there would be no need for the professional, for every man would be involved in the creative process and it would not be necessary to have a special class of men set aside for this purpose.[22]

One of the great truths Read derives from his reading in the literature of anarchism is that man, for all his imperfections, is a creative genius. Art grows out of man's creative powers. Unfortunately, society as it is now constituted largely stifles this creativity. Hence the main task of the social reformer is to discover the natural laws according to which mankind can realize its creative potential. At the present time the most serious deficiency to be found in the organization of society is man's relationship to society itself. Everywhere in modern life man stands naked and alone, feeling little real social attachment to his fellow men. Man must somehow learn to live in social harmony with his fellow men or suffer the consequences of even greater social disintegration. In order to bring this about, Read, following the logic of anarchism, argues that social reform cannot be a piecemeal affair but must go right to the root of the problem. ". . . It is the whole man that is sick, and we cannot make him well by repressing this or that aspect of his daily existence." It would be a gross mistake to suppose, however, that the main function of art is therapeutic in any narrow sense of the term. Art may well be necessary to the health of society. But the artist is neither a witch doctor nor a physician in attendance. He is, rather, an ordinary human individual subject to all the foibles and frailties that have characterized man since he first achieved

consciousness. Yet beneath the brittle surface of the ego lies a substratum of creativity that has as yet hardly been tapped. The anarchist is one who is dedicated to the liberation of man's creative powers.

Like all true anarchists, Read is unwilling to draw up a precise blueprint of a better society. For one of the fundamental beliefs of anarchism is the idea of evolution. Anarchists believe that a healthy society is one which is constantly evolving toward new and better social forms. Man's creative powers, according to Read, have from time to time through history been allowed to lie dormant. And at no time since the emergence of the State has man's total creative potential been utilized. Nevertheless mankind can be visualized as relentlessly progressing toward the realization of its natural perfection. Man has a certain amount of control over his own destiny and is thus constrained to do what he can to bring about a better world. But his contribution is not apt to be primarily political. The best we can do in regard to developing the outline of a meaningful scheme of organization is to focus our attention on certain fundamental principles which are essential to a dynamic society. And here we find, according to Read, that aesthetic factors play a decisive role in the advancement of social progress. Read's words in this regard deserve to be quoted in full.

The point of view which I put forward as against the whole grammatical and logical tradition of education, is the Platonic doctrine which finds in the practice of art those regulative principles in virtue of which the integration of personality can be achieved. Art is a natural discipline. Its rules are the proportions and rhythms inherent in our universe; and the instinctive observations of these rules, which come about in the creative industry of the arts, brings the individual without effort into sympathetic harmony with his environment. That is what is meant by the integration of the personality — the acquiring of those elements of grace and skill which make the individual apt in self-expression, honest in communication and sympathetic in the reciprocal relationship upon which society is based.[23]

As these lines make clear, Read views art as the cement which binds the individuals who make up society together. Through art we can discover the natural logic of life, the rules by which we are made social.

In *The Innocent Eye,* the first of his autobiographical writings, Read asserts that the aesthetic experience is not peripheral to the real meaning of life but is actually "related to the very structure of the universe."[24] Art is balance, form, grace, rhythm, proportion, and these qualities are universally present wherever beauty is to be found. The individual whose senses have been stirred by a thing of beauty has in some degree been brought into contact with the organic growth which is life, and for a fleeting moment he has been permitted to peer into the vital forces of the universe.[25] Read adheres to the Platonic view that the individual person possesses an instinctive ability to distinguish between beauty and ugliness. And hence he has a natural ability to discern the good from the bad. Unfortunately, however, the mass organization of society, and particularly modern industrial society, has maimed the individual's natural feel for beauty. No longer is he close to nature, the source of all creativity. This is why modern man appears to many observers to be completely corrupt. Having been robbed of his natural sensitivity for beauty and truth, modern man appears to be evil to the core. But in Read's opinion it is not man who is at fault but the techniques and institutions which have come to stand between the individual and nature.

Read's attraction to the idea of anarchism results from his realization that anarchism is the one contemporary socio-political philosophy which recognizes the importance of art to the social evolution of mankind. One of Read's most cherished intellectual forebears is Peter Kropotkin, the "anarchist prince," who wrote: "*Art* is in our ideal synonymous with creation. . . ."[26] This idea opened up for Read a completely new dimension of human knowledge and led him to reject all conventional concepts of social and political action. Kropotkin in turn was indebted to Ruskin and Morris for this idea, for it was they who argued that the individual who matures in surroundings of beauty will not develop the psychosis and neurosis that blight the life of the citizen of today's industrial society. We must not suppose this to mean that all we need do is spend more public funds for the construction and acquisition of objects of art. Anarchism rejects the bourgeois view that art is the plaything of the few. And it likewise refuses to give sanction to the viewpoint of state socialism which holds that art is the creation of the State. Like all anarchists, Read argues that art is a product of the people. It cannot be imposed from the top down.

It grows out of the soil, out of the people, out of their daily life and work. It is a spontaneous expression of their joy in life, of their joy in work, and if this joy does not exist, the culture will not exist.[27]

We must recognize in this regard, according to Read, that art, like life itself, has a communal basis. We do not live as separate and isolated personalities, according to Read, "but as members of communities with common needs and activities, and we are under the necessity of creating, as we intermingle with our fellows, a plan of action."[28] Anarchism's plan of action is the rejection of hierarchy, force and formal organization as possible means of achieving social unity. For only a free people responding spontaneously to the artistic forms and rhythms to be found in nature can hope to develop a vital culture. This is why anarchism rejects the idea of the State. No matter how good the intentions of any given set of political rulers or politicians may be, political organization invariably leads to the employment of force and the ultimate repression of the spontaneous and natural inclinations of the people. For the essential characteristic of creativity is freedom; a meaningful art can only arise where people are completely free to respond to one another and the symbolism which arises from the collective unconscious.[29] In a society in which the traditional distinction between the artist and ordinary men was abandoned, the creative powers of the people would have an opportunity to reveal themselves. The alienated individual of today's industrial society has become what he is because the mass organization he has been accustomed to has caused his creative powers to atrophy. In an anarchist society in which authority and force no longer exist, the individual could be expected to rely upon his own ability to discover the moral order of the universe. Hence the fundamental principle of anarchism is political and economic decentralization. In this simple truth there lies much for today's political scientist to ponder.

1) Francis Berry, "Herbert Read", in *Writers and Their Work,* No. 45 (1953), p. 7.
2) In the United States, Randolph Bourne's social and political ideas reflect a striking similarity to Read's. Unfortunately, Bourne died before he had a chance to make himself completely clear.

3) Read has been accused of being inconsistent on this point. See Harry Kemp, Laura Riding and others, *The Left Heresy in Literature and Life* (London, 1939), p. 104.
4) Herbert Read, *To Hell with Culture* (London, 1963), p. 91.
5) Herbert Read, *The Grass Roots of Art* (London, 1955), p. 146. In another place Read points out that the most conservative of all artistic traditions is classicism. "Classicism," he writes, "is the intellectual counterpart of political tyranny." The primary purpose of the classical artist is to "give individual expression, the beauty of form, to a body of common sentiments and thoughts which he shares with his audience, thoughts and views which have for his generation the validity of universal truths . . . The particular danger of this argument is due to its false dialecticism. A certain type of society is regarded as a 'synthesis,' a natural order of balance of forces, a state of equilibrium; and any deviation from that standard is regarded as abnormal, degenerate or revolutionary." *The Philosophy of Modern Art* (New York, 1960) pp. 112-114.
6) *The Grass Roots of Art,* p. 89. See also, *The Meaning of Art* (Baltimore, 1959), p. 195.
7) *The Philosophy of Modern Art,* p. 66.
8) For a very knowledgeable restatement of this idea, see Dorothea Blom, *Encounters with Art* (Pendle Hill, 1963), p. 13.
9) For a penetrating discussion of this point, see Erich Neumann, *Art and the Creative Unconscious* (New York, 1959).
10) Herbert Read, *Icon and Idea* (Cambridge, 1955), p. 135.
11) *Ibid.*
12) *Ibid.,* p. 119.
13) In this regard, Read writes: "Self-expression, like self-seeking, is an illusion, It is the action of an individual who pits himself against the community, who says I am bigger, or better, or stronger than other men, and will therefore enslave them, make them serve my individual purposes. A democracy would be right to resent the presence of such individuals in its midst, for democracy starts with the proposition that all men are equal . . . .

Society expects something more than self-expression from its artists, and in the case of great artists it gets something more. It gets something which might be called life-expression. But the 'life' to be expressed, the life which **is** expressed in great art, is precisely the life of the community, the organic group consciousness. It is the artist's business to make the group aware of its unity, its community. He can do this because he, more than other men, has access to the common unconscious, to the collective instincts which underlie the brittle surface of convention and normality." *The Politics of the Unpolitical* (London, 1943) p. 155.
14) Herbert Read, *A Letter to a Young Painter* (London, 1962) p. 51.
15) Read's acceptance of modern art stems from his belief that the artist is primarily concerned with giving us new insight into the unknown. Thus he writes: "Modern art, in spite of its strangeness and obscurity, has been inspired by a rational desire to chart the unchartered. If in such an attempt it has produced symbols that are unfamiliar, that was only to be expected, for the depths it has been exploring are mysterious depths, full of strange fish. Some of these might perhaps have been left at the bottom of the sea — they are monsters that evolution has discarded. But if we persist in our restless desire to know everything about the universe and ourselves, then we must not be afraid of what the artist brings back from his voyage of discovery." *To Hell With Culture,* p. 143.

16) Herbert Read, *The Tenth Muse* (New York, 1957), p. 243.
17) Herbert Read, *Anarchy and Order: Essays in Politics* (London, 1954), p. 84.
18) *Ibid.*, p. 26.
19) *The Politics of the Unpolitical*, p. 147.
20) *Ibid.*, p. 91.
21) *Ibid.*, p. 133.
22) In this regard Read writes: "We must not identify culture with its representative poets and artists, who appear at the stage of consolidation, of summation. Before a Homer or a Dante can appear there has to be a long period of gestation, a slow conquest of reality and the precipitation of many linguistic and plastic images in the consciousness of a people. . . .
Artists are essential to civilization, but do not create it . . . the artist stands like the trunk of a tree, gathering and passing on what comes to him from the earth, from roots which are deep in the collective unconscious." *The Form of Things Unknown*, pp. 195-99.
23) The Grass Roots of Art, p. 31.
24) (New York, 1947), p. 256.
25) *To Hell With Culture*, p. 176.
26) *The Conquest of Bread* (New York, 1906), p. 139.
27) *The Politics of the Unpolitical*, pp. 138-9.
28) *Icon and Idea*, p. 128.
29) The philosophical grounds for this conclusion are sound. As Susanne K. Langer points out: "The entire qualification we must have for understanding art is responsiveness. That is primarily a natural gift, related to creative talent yet not the same thing; like talent, where it exists in any measure it may be heightened by experience or reduced by adverse agencies. Since it is intuitive, it cannot be taught; but the free exercise of artistic intuition often depends on clearing the mind of intellectual prejudices and false conceptions that inhibit people's natural responsiveness." *Feeling and Form* (New York, 1953), p. 396.

editorial note

Albert Bermel's one-act play, "The Workout," clearly falls outside the focus of this issue. By no stretch of the imagination should it be construed to be a "Happening." It is included because it perhaps helps to illuminate our discussion of the nature of theatricality (and also because it is an impressively wrought piece by a talented young playwright). Since a number of definitions of Happenings would view them in a theatrical context, the editors felt it would be valuable to remind the reader of the methodologies and disciplines that have long characterized the playwright's art. While boldly experimental in technique, "The Workout" stays within recognizable boundaries.

In one important sense can the play be said to share a kinship with Happenings: it, too, seeks to expand artistic expression in our time.

Two of Mr. Bermel's full-length plays "one Leg Over the Wrong Wall," and "Herod Who Is," have been produced professionally in London. His translations of classic and contemporary French drama have been widely produced and published; his version of Cocteau's "The Infernal Machine" was performed by the Phoenix Theatre in New York in 1958.

by
Albert Bermel

Comedy in one act
LES, a flab
MARGE, a girl

Doc Finney's in Midtown Manhattan, a gymnasium under fluorescent lighting. The floor may be wooden but the wood is covered by wine-red, wall-to-wall carpeting. Bars and chromium-plated weights are arranged by sizes on racks built into the rear wall. A desk and two chairs are set in front. A man in a business suit comes through the doorway. He touches the carpet, appreciating its texture and thickness. He picks up one of the weights, is surprised to see how light it is, smiles, and raises it playfully above his head. He picks up another weight of the same size in his other hand, raises it too, and marches around the gymnasium with both weights high, laughing. He puts the weights back and tries two heavier ones. With difficulty he gets them up above his head and begins to march around the room again, but is forced to stop and lower them. After a rest and three deep breaths he tries to raise the weights again, but cannot. He takes a deeper breath and tries again, raises the weights, but has to put them down again immediately. He takes off his jacket, hangs it on the rack, removes his cuff links and rolls up his shirt sleeves.

With a tremendous jerk he raises the weights again and carries them back to the rack, running-staggering the last few paces, and letting them fall almost out of control. He stands panting for a few seconds, then collects his jacket and puts it on again. He straightens his tie, wipes his forehead and palms with a handkerchief from his breast pocket.

Man
Beautiful carpet. Beautiful weights. *(Raps a weight with his knuckle.)* Pre-war chrome. *(A girl comes through the door. She is wearing a white blouse, monogrammed with a curly D.F., white socks and sneakers.)*

Man
My friend Raymond says once you can raise weights you can do anything, go anywhere. Moving up, he says, is taking on one weight after another, getting stronger all the time, until you hoist the largest ones. I don't agree with that. Seems to me it's better to know which weights to lift and which weights to leave alone.

Girl
I'm Marge.

Man
I'm Les.

Marge
This your first time at Doc Finney's?

Les
Well, I've seen your ads and your commercials. And the girl in your showroom on 57th Street. A knockout, that one. So is the showroom.

Marge
But this is your first actual visit?

Les
My friend Raymond invited me. He's a member. He said I could be his guest.

Marge
Every member is allowed one free guest a week.

Les
He said we could meet for a workout, instead of wasting our lunch hour eating.

Marge
More and more people are making good use of their lunch hours.

Les
My friend Raymond will be here soon.

Marge
We can start without waiting for him.

Les
Just the two of us?

Marge
We'll give you the limber-up for neophytes.

Les
Just so I don't wake up in the morning with a charlie horse.

Marge
Did they show you the locker rooms?

Les
That's where I'm supposed to meet Raymond.

Marge
You'll see him.

Les
Thanks.

Marge
Do you have any sneakers?

Les
Not with me. Thanks, anyway. I like the feel of the red carpet. Gives pleasure to the feet.

Marge
It should, at fifteen-fifty a yard. Mohair and vicuna, a special blend made up for Doc Finney. But it's not for feet. It's for sneakers. That'll be three dollars even.

Les
I thought the workout came for free.

Marge
Plus you have to wear the T-shirt and shorts in the hall of worship. Doc Finney's regulations. Six-seventy-five altogether. Pay now, please.

Les
Couldn't I just take off my jacket and tie?

Marge
Doc Finney says T-shirts and shorts. For the sake of the other members of the congregation. Six-seventy-five. *(She hands him the gym wear, takes his wallet from his hand, and counts out seven dollars.)* I owe you a quarter.

Les
Keep it.

Marge
What d'you think I am, a waitress? I owe you a quarter, I said. Okay. Strip down.

Les
Here?

Marge
Here and now. Don't throw those blushes at me. I've seen it all.

Les
Don't you have a cubicle or a screen?

Marge
This is not a men's wear store. Come on, now.

Les
As long as you're not embarrassed . . . *(She laughs.)* Could you turn away a little?

Marge
Why? *(He gives in. Bent almost double, he fumbles off his trousers and undershorts and tries to draw the shorts up under his long-tailed shirt.)*
Do you need a hand?

Les
No; no thanks.

Marge
Hurry up with the T-shirt.

Les
I'm trying to. *He gets the T-shirt stuck*

across his head and shoulders. She pulls it down for him. He jumps.)

Thanks.

Marge
We'll get rid of these clothes and then we're ready. *(She bundles up the clothes and throws them into the cupboard.)* First, we'll fill out your progress card.

Les
Progress in what?

Marge
Your development.

Les
How can I progress if I'm not coming back?

Marge
We'll talk about that after the measurements. *(She leads him to the desk.)*

Les
You're going to measure me? *(He moves away.)*

Marge
Are you frightened?

Les
Who, me?

Marge
(Reading from the card.) How often did you speak to the Lord in the last year?

Les
You need an exact answer? *(She nods.)* None.

Marge
I could have guessed that from looking at you.

Les
Does it really show?

Marge
Straighten your back. That's **better.** You

rose three inches nearer to Heaven when you did that. Have you **ever** spoken to the Lord?

Les
Once or twice. You know the kind of thing. I said, "Oh, God, get me out of this." Funny thing — He usually did. But I don't know if I was really talking to Him or who the heck it was.

Marge
Did you go down on your knees?

Les
I have a varicose vein.

Marge
(Writing.) No knees. How many time a week do you read your Bible?

Les
For enjoyment or for real?

Marge
Either way.

Les
I don't have a Bible.

Marge
(getting him a Bible from the closet)
Take care of that. Show a little reverence for it. Kiss it.

Les
(kissing) Thanks.

Marge
Nine-ninety-five, please.

Les
Jesus, I can buy me a Bible for less than ten bucks.

Marge
Not with this binding. We have this edition made up for us. Resists scuffing. Take it into the shower. Use it for a doorstop. Chop wood on it. The Doc Finney revised version. *(He has taken out his wallet. She removes a ten-dollar bill.)* I owe you thirty cents. So, what do you do on Sundays?

Les
Sleep.

Marge
You never meditate?

Les
I got nothing much to meditate about.

Marge
You will by the time I get finished with you. Here's a text for you to meditate next Sunday. "Did you swear at anybody? Did you insult anybody? Did you shout at anybody?" That's King's, Book Two, verse twenty-two. You meditate that. You memorize it.

Les
Did I shout at somebody? Did I bawl out somebody? Doesn't sound like the Bible to me, what I've heard of the Bible.

Marge
I told you: it's Doc Finney's revised version. *(She finds the place in his copy and turns the corner down. He is muttering the verses to himself.)* Don't meditate yet. That's for Sunday. I'm going to give you a text for now.

Les
Great. *(She goes to the rack, with him following, takes two small weights, lifts them above her head and proceeds to straighten and bend her knees as she chants.)*

Marge
Raise me up, O Lord, Cast me down, O God. Raise me up, O Lord. Cast me down, O God. Get it?

Les
You have beautiful leg muscles.

Marge
Your turn. Face the altar. *(She turns him toward the weight rack.)*

Les
(Descending.) Cast me down, O —

Marge
Not yet. Wait till you start to come up. Now: Raise **me**

Les
- Up, O Lord. Cast me down, O God. Raise me up, O God. Cast me down, O Lord. Up, O Lord. Down, O God. Oh, God, I don't think I can get up again. Raise me, O Lord, for Christ's sake. *(Straining.)* I made it.

Marge
With God's help.

Les
And I guess Doc Finney's. Shall I try one more? I'm getting the swing nicely now.

Marge
No.

Les
I can.

Marge
And cats can bark.

Les
I'm stronger than I look.

Marge
That I believe.

Les
What comes next?

Marge
We'll take five while you recover. *(She leads him back to the desk.)* Before you know where you are, you'll be in a state of

grace. But first let's find out more about you. *(They sit down.)*

Les
Next, you plan to ask me what church I don't go to.

Marge
Before I ask you some more, I want to tell you a few facts about Doc Finney's. This is the small hall for novices. Dedication One-A. The larger hall for advanced courses is one flight up: Two-A, Three-A and Sacraments. It's equipped with every sideline you can think of.

Les
Pews?

Marge
Twelve pews in oiled oak, imported from Britain.

Les
Kneeling mats?

Marge
Jute kneeling mats from India, with foam rubber lining.

Les
Where does the foam rubber come from?

Marge
Keep the questions sacred.

Les
Um — Candles?

Marge
Every size and color of candle. Made in Hong Kong to Doc Finney's long-burning specifications.

Les
Candlesticks?

Marge
Gigantic candlesticks in pink gold. Most of them are bigger and heavier than you. What else can you think of?

Les
I've run out of ideas.

Marge
Doc Finney hasn't. We have a nave and chapel designed in plastic mahogany by a famous Swedish guy you probably never heard of. Take it apart, it fits into your briefcase. You feel like praying, it assembles in fifteen seconds flat. We have West German stained-glass windows from West Germany — real ancient style, and strictly for Old Testament movie fans. Adam and Eve in the raw, Susannah in the kidney-shaped Esther Williams lake, Sodom, Gomorrah, crucifixions galore. You name it. We have sculptures in marbleite sculpted just the way the Italian sculptors used to sculpt.

Les
If they *look* the same . . .

Marge
We have every piece of equipment needed to — in Doc Finney's well-known words — to maximize your faith. Ask your parson. Ask your priest. Ask your rabbi. Ask your mullah. Notice I don't ask your religion. We're inter-denominational here. Doesn't make a speck of difference which God you believe in. You walk into Doc Finney's with your head low, but when you walk out you stand right, look right, breathe right and stay right.

Les
My friend Raymond has picked up some of that jargon. He was saying . . .

Marge
After each workout you sing the hymn for the day with your instructor, who has a Ph.D. in physical theology. Then you dive into a mud bath and an alcohol rinse. You sit in the Caribbean sunlight

room under twelve 500-watt units. When the gong goes you wash away your sweat and sin in the Mediterranean stall showers. Cobalt-tinted glass. Then you dress in the largest locker rooms in the world. Every one has a built-in bar with push-button scotch at your own ready-mixed proof. Our locker-room nurses are lay preachers. You choose your favorite brand of after-shave lotion and talcum powder **or** your favorite blessing. We have a list of one thousand selected blessings, all the way from "Make me simple" to "Make me smart." What are you staring at my knees for? Haven't you ever seen a pair of woman's knees?

Les
Oh, sure. Several times. I was just thinking: kneeling has done your knees a lot of good.

Marge
You should see what it's done to my morale. So, your name is Les. Is that short for Lester?

Les
No, Leslie.

Marge
Leslie? That's a girl's name.

Les
These days any man's name is a girl's name. Tracy and Brett and Lindsay and Hilton and Tammy and Dale. And the men have women's names like Connie and Claire and Sal and Shirley and Joyce. I used to know an awful lot about names and sex. Phineas means serpent's mouth. I had a buddy called Phineas. Every time he opened his jaws we used to say, "Stow it, Snaky" and he'd get mad and . . .

Marge
Have you finished? It's your lunch hour you're wasting. Now, your given name

is Leslie. Leslie — a man? Crazy. What's your surname?

Les
If I tell you, you'll look up my address in the phone directory and keep sending me brochures.

Marge
Who needs the phone directory? Give me your address next.

Les
My big mouth. . .

Marge
I must have a name for the progress report. Or how will we know who is progressing?

Les
Is it all right if I give you a false name?

Marge
We'll come back to your name and address. How old are you?

Les
Thirty-one.

Marge
Thirty-**one?**

Les
Thirty-five.

Marge
That's nearer. Are there any physical or mental defects in your family?

Les
Only pigeon toes.

Marge
Some of our top athletes and scholars used to have pigeon toes. Not now. Doc Finney took care of that.

Les
I wouldn't say I was much of an athlete. Or a scholar.

Marge
(Standing.) Nor would I. Get up. We have real work to do on you.

Les
(Standing.) What kind of work?

Marge
Stripping away all that flabbiness. Firming you up. You're a flab.

Les
Where?

Marge
Up and down. All over. Most people are flabs when they start. Some development you have. Look at that midsection. Look at that chest. Look at that pot. Look at those crummy triceps. Flab, flab, flab. I wouldn't even take your measurements. They'd be unreliable. You're too shaky. We'll have to put a pair of shoulders on you. We'll have to fill you with humbleness and pride.

Les
At the same time?

Marge
We'll have to give you lungs to shout God's praises with, and arms to pray with. We'll have to straighten out your back. You're all droopy and stoopy. A man should get up to his height so he can look God in the eye and say, "Hello, God. I'm Les." Sit down.

Les
I was trying to get up to my height, but it's too high for me. . .

Marge
(Writing.) Are you married?

Les
Yes.

Marge
You are?

Les
Why are you so surprised?

Marge
I'm surprised a woman puts up with a development like yours.

Les
She never notices it. We have concealed lighting in the bedroom.

Marge
Was that your idea?

Les
No, hers.

Marge
That figures.

Les
She never complains to me.

Marge
I'll bet. I'll bet she's cried herself to sleep more times than you know. You see, it isn't just God. It's your wife too. Wouldn't you like your wife to respect you?

Les
It doesn't much matter either way. We have three children.

Marge
Don't you want to be admired by other people?

Les
What sort of other people?

Marge
Women.

Les
That's something else.

Marge
When a woman passes you in the street or sees you standing on the beach or digging into a file cabinet in your office, she should be able to say: "That's a man."

Les
What else could she say?

Marge
She wouldn't say a thing. She wouldn't even see you. If you want to be seen you have to make the most of what God has given you.

Les
It sounds hopeless. I'm too far gone to catch up with the human race. Look what a handicap I have: no church, no faith, no meditation. Just pigeon toes and flab.

Marge
That's defeatism. And, as Doc Finney says, defeatism is unhealthy, ungodly and un-American. The day will come — you have work to do, but it'll come — when you walk out of here with maximum faith. Like all the others.

Les
What if I'm different from all the others? With minimum faith?

Marge
Come over here, wiseacre. You've had your rest. *(She takes him to the rack.)* We'll see if we can save you. Let's start the second part of your workout. I want you to stretch your arms. *(She stands like a cross, to show him. He imitates her. She puts a weight into each hand.)* Take up your burdens. Now repeat the second text, ten times: "Teach me to live upright in thy sight."

Les
Teach me to —

Marge
Hold it. Your arms are sagging. Chest out, chin back, arms like rods. Upright. Okay, again.

Les
Teach me to live upright in thy sight. Teach **me** to live upright in thy sight. Teach me to **live** — I feel like I'm dying. *(Rushing.)* Teach-me-to-live-upright-in-thy-sight. Wow. *(Drops his arms.)* That's my limit.

Marge
You see how far you have to go? You barely made four out of ten. Burdens down. Back on to the altar neatly. Take five breaths to relax. In, out. In, out. In, out. Now sit down again. *(he sits on the floor)* I want to ask you some personal questions. Have you ever had trouble with your conscience?

Les
Yes.

Marge
I knew it.

Les
Especially before and after meals. I tell myself: Les, you ought to —

Marge
I'm talking about your conscience, your heart.

Les
I get pains there too. Let's face it, I'm thirty-nine — thirty-five.

Marge
Have you ever felt afraid?

Les
All the time. I get lonely, mostly when I'm alone. I ask myself what it's all about.

Marge
I'll tell you why. A spirit in your condition is sick. It's liable to trap every suspicion and evil that floats past a healthy spirit. And as you get older that sickness will become a disease. Ingrown. You think you're unhappy now, when you get an attack of conscience that lasts for two minutes. Wait till it lasts for an

hour, a week, a year. Wait till the time comes when you're never free of that conscience. Are you listening to me?

Les
(Looking about.) Yes. I was wondering if my friend Raymond has arrived.

Marge
Your friend Raymond must be in the upper hall of worship. How advanced is he? Has he got as far as Ritual Release?

Les
Who knows? He's a 24-carat kook. Did he have to go through the conscience bit?

Marge
Ask him yourself. Find out how much good it did him.

Les
It sure took a time. He's been coming here for two years.

Marge
He must be working out thoroughly. What kind of a course does he have?

Les
What kinds are there?

Marge
I'm glad you asked me that question. There are three courses: A-plus, B-extra and C-major. You can't go wrong on any of them. In Doc Finney's words, they're all package deals and every package is gift-wrapped.

Les
I can't afford them.

Marge
You don't have to. For you there's a special offer —

Les
Don't tell me. I have no money with me. I don't want any packages or offers.

I want to see my friend Raymond and grab my clothes and get out of here.

Marge
Sit down. I'm not sure if the special offer is still in force. Maybe we can make an exception and extend it just for you. I'm going out to have a word with Doc Finney. *She goes out and locks the door behind her. LES goes swiftly to the closet, takes out his clothes, starts to put them on, decides that will take him too long, throws them over his arm and makes for the door. Before he reaches it, MARGE returns.)*

Marge
Put those clothes back. It's all set up. You're lucky. Today is the last day. You made it just in time. Very sneaky. These are the terms of the special offer. . .

Les
It sounds good to me. Wrap it up and hold it for me. I'll let you have a check in a few days.

Marge
I didn't make myself clear. This offer expires today . . . ends, finishes, concludes, terminates.

Les
(Helpfully.) Dies.

Marge
You don't think this one over. In a few days it'll be a few days too late. I'm not about to pressure you into anything. Doc Finney doesn't go for pressure. Well?

Les
You're not with it, are you?

Marge
What do you mean?

Les
I mean, you don't have much of a pitch.

Marge
Who are you to criticize? If you weren't a customer — a convert — I'd tell you . . .

Les
I'm no customer, Marge. I happen to be — and listen to me with both ears, Marge, because you fell into a lot of bloopers today — I happen to be New York Sales Manager for a mattress firm. **The** mattress. Marge, you wouldn't last two days on my sales force.

Marge
Are you stacking God up against mattresses?

Les
Oh, I don't say they're exactly the same kind of merchandise. But Marge, have you got a lot to learn. That hard sell. Billy Sunday. Look, the nineteen-thirties are down the drain. Marge, I'm going to show you how you can put some box spring into your selling, so that your prospects really bounce. This is what I tell the boys: Don't be satisfied to push mattresses; make believe they're trampolines. Whing, whang. The same goes for you.

Marge
Mockery! You're making fun of God.

Les
You can't make fun of something you don't understand. I'll be frank with you, Marge. I don't understand mattresses. Not one bit. What is a mattress? Steel, wood, fabric? Maybe. But it's also comfort. That's something I understand. So that's what I sell. A benefit. A specific. And that's what you should sell. God's comfort. You started handing me that phony-baloney about being a flab and not kneeling and does my wife cry in bed. Meadow dressing. I was leading you on. I was playing the wide-eyed mark. Nifty, hey? Now, Marge, once I thought you'd hit your stride when you said

did I want to be appealing to women. But you rolled away from that. You talked about consciences and heartaches. Negative selling. Quackery. All the time you should have been zeroing in on me with benefits you kept unloading fears. Another five minutes, you'd've had me in the middle of Danton's Inferno. Is that a way to part a man and his money? Forget it. Forget about after-shave and talcum and the rest of the perfume grind. That's all for pansies, and never mind what the ads tell you. Besides, I'm asking myself, "How much is that smelly hullaballoo adding to my ticket?" And quoting this bird Doc Finney. That's the corniest angle of all. There isn't any Doc Finney, is there?

Marge
He's not exactly a doctor. . .

Les
Who gives a hoot what kind of a stiff he is? I'm dealing with you. Every time you tell me Doc Finney says this or that you sabotage your authority.

Marge
I've only been here three weeks.

Les
How many sales you made?

Marge
One.

Les
An old guy?

Marge
Yes.

Les
See? Hard selling only makes it with the old folks. Even some of them have wised up. The insurance boys have hammered it into the ground. Too bad, Marge. As a saleslady you're no go. *(He stands back and watches her. She puts down her head*

and weeps.) Cut that out. Crying is the worst approach of all. What good can it do? It can only make the prospect nervous. And nervous is what you don't want him to be. He has to be: one, confident; two, excited.

Marge
How do you make him confident?

Les
I'm coming to that. Now. You're on a commission deal, right? And one commission in three weeks is rough, right?

Marge
I owe money.

Les
Sure you do. You need every sale you can pull. You got to round up those commissions. So your mind has to be nimble, dancing on twinkle toes. You have to build up a Vision. Not just God: something bigger.

Marge
How?

Les
By personalizing every interview. For you that's easy.

Marge
Why?

Les
You have a powerful come-on. I'm talking about your looks. You're a pretty girl, a very pretty girl. And you're built. You realize that?

Marge
Some people tell me I'm all right. . .

Les
Just so you're aware of it. Marge, your looks are why you were hired. Selling, let's face it, is another word for seduction. Rape, even. For instance, you show me how to pray. Put my hands together. *(She does.)* Not like a dummy. Slowly, lovingly. Like a woman. *(She tries again.)* Better. Much better. That gives me goose pimples. And every last goose pimple is selling for you. Now you say, "Les, you have natural faith."

Marge
Les, you have natural faith.

Les
Let's see more passion. More sincerity.

Marge
Les, **you** have natural **faith.**

Les
Now you're convincing me. I'm getting confident. But before I get over-confident and figure what do I need courses for if I already have faith, you say: "But in three weeks you can be a saint."

Marge
In three weeks you can be a saint.

Les
Swell. Don't give me that woolly hocus-pocus about maximums. Lay the benefits on the line. Me — a saint — in just three weeks. John, Matthew, Mark, Lucas, Francis of Sicily, Shakespeare, Albert Schweitzer, Jesus. Me. I think and my mind whirls. But maybe I come from Missouri. I stop whirling long enough to say: "But I'm thirty-five." Then you come right back with: "Thirty-five is the most amazing age of all. At thirty-five, men have conquered mountains. They've been heavyweight champions of the world. They've sold articles to the magazines. They've walked clean across the United States in **galoshes."** You follow what I'm aiming at? I'm talking specifics.

Marge
Suppose you ask me what mountains men have conquered at thirty-five?

Les
You come back quick as a bullet with the names of a few good mountains.

Marge
I don't know any.

Les
Marge, you got to do your homework. You have to be ready to substantiate. Mount Sinai, you say. And if they ask you what swimming records, you flash out, "The quarter mile freestyle," and you add, "One minute, seventeen and a half seconds." Is anybody going to contradict you?

Marge
You might, if you're an expert.

Les
You're the expert. Besides, you've just come up close to me again. You're brushing my shoulder and reminding me that in two weeks I'll double my virtue.

Marge
(Cooing.) In two weeks you'll double your virtue.

Les
Specifics again. Not I'll increase it. I'll double it. You're giving me the Vision. Now. You take me by the hand. *(Giving her his hand.)* You act a little flirty. It's all part of the game. That's what you're here for. And you make the most of your assets. *(Takes her in his arms and kisses her.)* Very fine. Assets all the way. You lead me over to the altar — here — and you show me the way to heaven. *(They pick up a weight.)* You bend forward with me — with me, not away from me — so we're touching. Just a little of the business. Enough but not too much. And you put your tiny little hand over mine and we take up our burdens and start rising together. Up, up, up. You're not as tall as me, so you let your hand slide down to my elbow. A scrap of mischief, that's all. Does nobody any harm and

makes me feel real good. More goose pimples; more benefits. I relax one second, and I say, "Can I ask you a question?" You say, "Yes."

Marge
Yes.

Les
And I say, "What're you doing tonight?" And you say, "I'm staying home."

Marge
I'm staying home.

Les
And I say, "How's about coming to church?" And you say, "You said you were going to ask me one question, not two."

Marge
One question, not two.

Les
But you don't want to disappoint me. You break in with, "Maybe we can deal with the second question later."

Marge
(Excited.) Second question later.

Les
Ha! We're coming up toward the excitement bit.
So far you've achieved plenty. I've started the workout. You've got me confident. We've talked about a date and you haven't dismissed it, only postponed it. Now you're going to **prove** to me that I was born to die holy. You say, "Try the ritual ten times."

Marge
Yes. I mean, try the ritual ten times.

Les
(Lifting.) One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Forget about the text for the time being. That confuses me. Then I say, "Shall I try another five?" and you say — putting an awful lot of astonishment into your voice — "Do you think you can?"

Marge
Do you **think** you **can?**

Les
That's it. Flatter me out of my goddam wits. *(Panting.)* Before, I couldn't get up to God four times. Now: ten, fifteen, any number. I'm swelling with pride. And humbleness. Both. I'm almost sold. The commission is in the bag for you. *(Lifting again with increasing difficulty.)* Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen. What a man. What a saint. Encourage me. Encourage the hell out of me. *(She kisses him again.)* Tremendous. Sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty. I did it. I hit twenty. *(Puts down the weight.)* So here I am, breathing hard, but half-holy. Bursting with sainthood. You're admiring me with every damn feature in your pretty face. I stand up very straight. You've given me the Vision. I'm sold. I'M SOLD!

Marge
(After a pause, slowly.) But if you're a salesman wouldn't you be too skeptical to — Les, is something wrong?

Les
I — no. Got a little dizzy. I guess all that holiness must have been too . . . I'm sold . . . I . . . *(He collapses. She drags him to the wall and props him against it. He blinks a few times.)*

Merge
Sit there, Les. Don't move, darling, You hear me?

Les
All that . . . holiness. . .

Marge

Don't move, Les. You did great. You know what, Les? I'd say you're in a state of grace. You bounced right into it. Whing, whang. Somehow, Les, somehow you made it the quick way. Where's your wallet? *(Taking it from his jacket.)* You're qualified to go right into the advanced course, C-major. Oh, too bad. Only fifty dollars here. Let's call it a deposit. Fifty down and forty-nine fifties to come. Okay, Les, let's go get you a receipt. *(She hurries to her desk. He tries to rise, flops to the floor.)* What a demonstration. You sold yourself. . . .

Curtain

The End


poe
poetry

Chad Walsh is the author of four books of poetry, the editor of an anthology TODAY'S POETS (Scribner, 1964), the winner of the first $1000 award of the Council of Wisconsin Writers (1965), and the chairman of the Beloit College English Department.

Clear and Fear

To the end, black and bare, summoned at last
And listed in a book, digited,
Told to relax and wait there, where he watched
One by one, faces to face, the deadly.

A slumber sealing his eyes slipped and slid
Crazily redeeming lack to the black.
Pray for day, lady of the bright ones,
Now in the night, clear and fear, guttering.

Peter Wild is the author of THE GOOD FOX (published by "the goodly co.") and THE AFTERNOON IN DISMAY (The Art Association of Cincinnati).

Poem

I

he had an arm twelve feet long
  sometimes he would hear them
      calling him over the hill of the sea,
chorus of hair
    body of warm wind. . .

he would feel his chest
  when the palms moved
      like shadows of spiders and leaves
moving over beds of rocks
    the center of noon
        tasteless on his tongue.

the cold sea foam covered his toes:

II

he had a red eye
  and the indolent hump of a mule
      at the back of his head;
he saw the seabirds
    rising white on the land wind.

at times fishhooks caught fire
  on his brow, and he saw bananas
      and smiling women floating
below him among the rocks;
    he spat

and the sea bristled white along the reefs.
  he heard the train pulling over the mountains
      he smelled the forest floor and hot pine boughs;
    he looked at his shoes:

he saw the seabirds
      rising on the land wind.

Frances Colvin is a California poet and an editor of ANTE.

Lancelost

Though I write your name a thousand times,
You will not rise.
In a forest of paper leaves, rustling, autumnal, yellow —
Unicorned with a pencil, virginal,
Look with a stranger's eyes
A thousand times.
Merlin is dead. The castle
Is ruined. No longer anything rhymes.

Where is she I love and fear
Whose casket lies empty in Lyonesse?
— Though I write your name a thousand times,
Never appear;
For yet in the withering forest between us,
A magic remains.
But I have heard of Avalon,
An islanded, fat-lapping town,
Where Arthur leads a curtsey life
Geraniumed with a kitchen wife.

Louis Phillips is a New York poet, film-maker, and intern-instructor at the New York State Maritime College.

The Act of Seeing is a Moral Choice

The grace of seeing,
Sight under pressure,
The leisure
Of the eye roving

Or being fixed, turned
Upon itself, its pupil
Still,
Motionless, burned

By saturation/ by tone:
Petals leap to yellow;
Below
The greenery stone

White shadows nuzzle
The eye, while visceral
Motions fill
The brain. **Hazel,**

Nutmeg brown, earth mold
Above/below us,
& what is
Love but how we hold

Each other in memory's
Eye: a startled glance
As bees dance,
Relief as our eyes

Behold the naked flesh.
Let aesthetics unravel
As my nerves travel
Over your form. I wish

That sight were forever/
My eye darts through
You, beyond you,
Follows you. Let me savor

The act of the eye seeing,
Nerves brought to focus
Within us:
Cells glide under being

Momentarily freed, undone,
Then fixed. We know
We are possessed now
In more ways than one.

Norma McLain Stoop, of Greenwich, Connecticut, has published poems in French and English in many literary magazines.

The Spark

Saying good-bye to the cave cold now and damp without bodies,
We blinked for a moment. Horizon held pictures not painted on walls.
Here was other flesh than ours: not shadow remembered from legend,
But flaring nostrils that breathed air that we had invaded.
Breathed it first. And hooves struck sparks as they thundered on stone
Over the naked plains.

What spark could our horned soles strike on stone we dislodged slowly
So that seed could make of this country wind-driven fire spreading
To heels of stampeding bison that stormed to an alien stone
On hooves whose small sparks died in a holocaust of grain
Forcing them over horizon, with nostrils flaring forever
On wall of deserted cave?

Herbert Woodward Martin is a poet, actor,
and instructor at Aquinas College.

After The Monumental Death of a Summer
(Some poetic-photographs)

There goes a man dark as testament, walking remembrance
Where the wind comes in tides
Spilling tree-leaves towards a winter
And forcing each action to slow measured patience.

See here, a father with his young daughter upon his shoulders
Holding on to his receding hairline, and perhaps, while
Pulling out the last few measures of his youth
We watch him shuffle uncomfortably.

The water is swift . . . The sun turns slow
There stands a dark eyed girl the way I go.
We scuffle to get together
We struggle to forget
We are fitted against the roadway's edge
Our frailty is the net.

In company and alone we take each other's hand
We fill the others with leaves
We shall speak this winter full of stone
While winter himself steps around our ceremony.

Edith Rylander, formerly from California,
now lives and writes poetry in Minnesota,
where her husband is on the faculty
of St. Cloud State College.

Trees

That year, in everything we did there were trees.
The light we woke to, mornings when loons chattered
Over the lake, came filtered through basswood leaves
Moving in wind. There were slivers under our nails.

With fall we cut wood, stacked wood, split wood, burned wood,
Learned wood by heft in the hand and the smell of smoke
And the color of flame. Turning, half asleep,
I could tell by the deeper roar when the backlog took hold.
We made love with the incense of birch or slippery elm bite
Caught in our hair, scenting each pore of our skin.

All useless knowledge. That wood's not ours to sell
If we wanted to sell it. No one buys learned articles
On heating with wood, its practice and aesthetic.

It's like that other skill. Suppose I could dance
On my back as eloquently as Cleopatra?
My husband had trust enough to marry me virgin,
Will never be rich, and could not love me more.

White basswood is good for a quick fire, and light in the hand.
I have that much of the world in my bone-marrow;
I have that joy of knowing and being known.

Bass Fishing
Poems for John: 218

My husband goes for bass this summer morning.
I watch from our house on the hill as his boat slides out
Through mist-tipped reeds into the opening water.
He goes fishing while I stay home with the children.
Through my body I have given him immortality;
Now he fishes for pleasure while I keep house.

(Though I have livelier game than bass, my voyager,
Am bait myself to tempt an amorous rodsman.
I would devour you so into my darkness
You would pray to drown where two are — briefly — one.)

Now he casts. His lure drifts in the shallows.
His face, which is not thinking of anything,
Only feeling the drift of the boat and the rod's tension,
Is a face he will never give to any woman.
To anything human. Not even to a mirror.
Pure self, unconscious and stubborn as a bone,
Its cool geometry virgin to all but death.

John N. Miller has published poems in many little magazines and teaches at Denison University.

The Ape Man

After awhile it's cold sport, wrestling
Stuffed crocodiles. The monkeys, their disdainful
Mouthings, the greenhouse props through which they swing —
None of them's worth the effort. Even Jane,

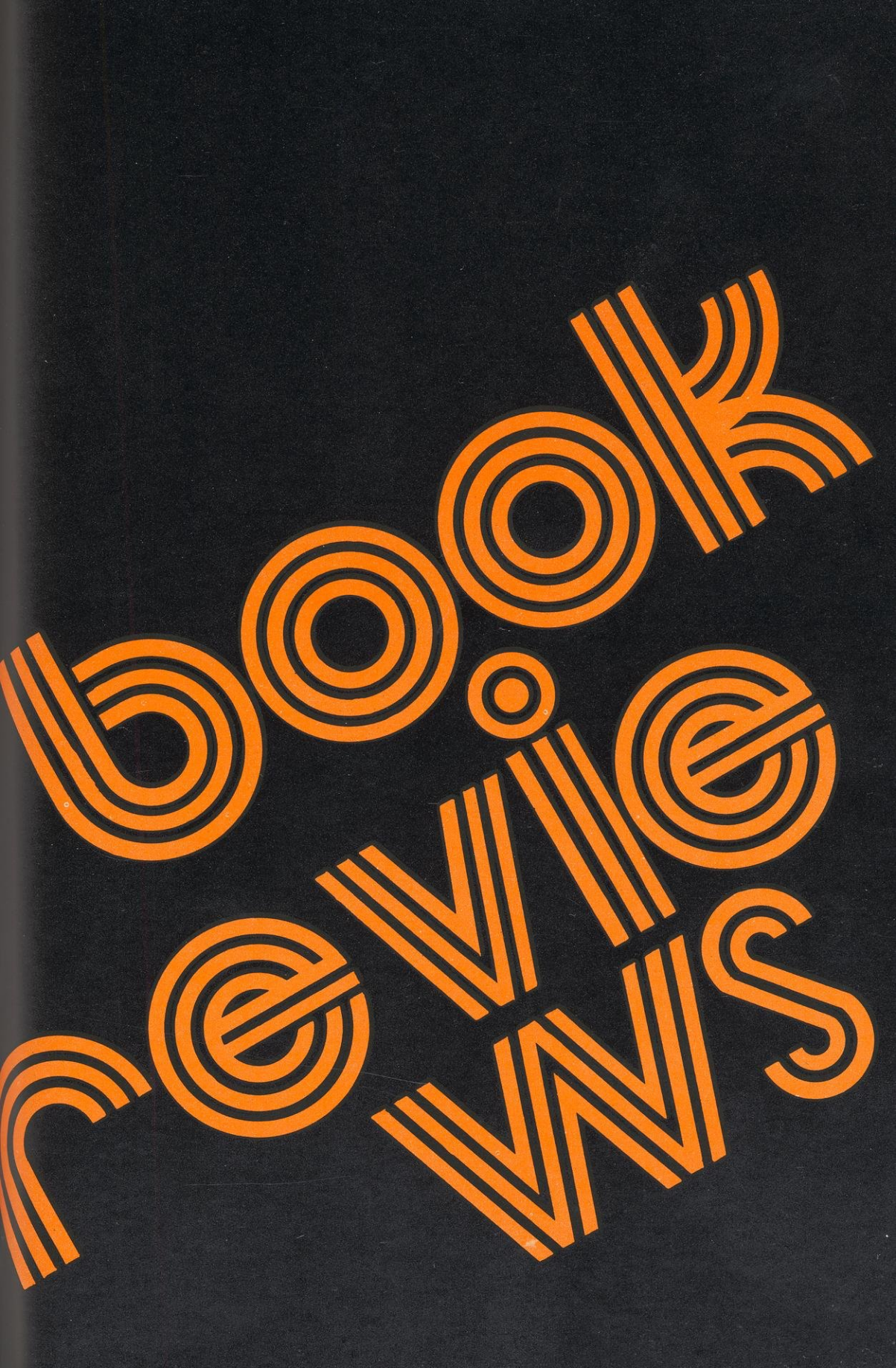
Draped in her phony buckskin miniskirt,
Turns a cold cheek to me. "It's for the kids,"
She says, "so don't go ape now," as she flirts
Through tree-tops, in her wet suit, or on beds

Of lushly painted green. The cameras pan;
Their scene shifts, goes montage, is rebegun
And shows me through their film: a strong-voiced man
Crying the jungle's freedom, the warm sun

Bright on my molded body. It was this
I strained for, ripping off my Western clothes,
Leaping toward contact, toward the native bliss
Of self gone fleshly. Now, though, it's a pose

Hard to keep up; times change; the set
Is wearing out. The kids still spend their last
Dime for adventure and screech at my pet
Chimpanzees, but the real new heroes cast

Themselves more smartly. I can hear them laughing
Outside my ring of cameras and my cardboard
Jungle—unhindered, wild-haired, cool and raffish,
Swinging electrically with their guitars.


book
reviews

dada

DADA RECAPTURED

By Edouard Roditi

Guillermo de Torre, *Historia de las Literaturas de Vanguardia,* Madrid, Ediciones Guardarrama, 1965. 946 pp. 600 pesetas ($10.00)

Michel Sanouillet, *Picabia,* Paris, Editions du Temps, (L' Oeil du Temps) Paris 1964. 175pp. 10 Francs $(2.00)

Histories of modern art generally neglect to analyze in sufficient detail the close relationships which may exist between a movement in the visual arts and its counterpart in literature, or between a given painting and a poem by one of the artist's close friends who may have inspired it. The same criticism applies moreover, in general, to histories of modern literature or, for that matter, of any one of the arts of our age. Even Lotte H. Eisner, in her otherwise exemplary history of the German Expressionist silent movie, often neglects to point out that some classics of this art borrowed a few of their ideas from such painters as Ludwig Meidner who, in turn, had sought inspiration from such epoch-making poems as the *Weltende* of Jacob van Hoddis, one of the prime sources of the whole notion of Menscheitsdämmerung (Twilight of Mankind) in German Expressionist art, literature and even music between 1912 and 1925.

Guillermo de Torre's monumental *Historia de las Literaturas de Vanguardia* is an exception to this rule, in that its author proves to be gifted with a far greater awareness of the evolution of related movements in the visual arts than most

other historians of contemporary literature. Modern art, from Picasso and Juan Gris to Miro and Dali and even Tapiès, has indeed produced so many remarkable Spanish painters or sculptors that one can glean useful information and insights from any book, such as this, which discusses some of the characteristic features of the general cultural background which helped to form their tastes and beliefs before they graduated from the relative provincialism of twentieth-century Spain into the wider world of the School of Paris.

As a historian of the literary vanguard, Guillermo de Torre begins with the immediate antecedents of Italian Futurism, of French Cubism and ends with Robbe-Grillet and the latest trends in the contemporary French novel. As writer and critic, he was for many years closely associated with almost every new Spanish literary and artistic movement in turn, but especially with Picabia and the relatively unknown Spanish Dadaists in Barcelona around 1917, when Picabia stopped in that city on his return to Paris from New York. The Barcelona Dadaists were thus in much closer sympathy with those of New York, (whose ambassador Picabia seemed to be after associating in New York with Alfred Stieglitz, Marcel Duchamp and Arthur Craven) than with those of Zurich whom Picabia had not yet met. Guillermo de Torre's chapters on Dadaism and Surrealism prove therefore to be the most informative sections of his book. Though confusing in many respects, like most other chronicles of Dadaism which seem to contain so much vague gossip or contradictory information, Guillermo de Torre's analysis of Dadaism can act as a corrective even to Hans Richter's *Dada and Anti-art,* since we are still far from having a truly objective and reliable history of dada as a whole, in spite of the laudable efforts of a number of specialists in this very controversial field.

Most other histories of Dadaism neglect, for instance, to stress the importance, among the early Spanish and French Dadaists, of the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro, who has left us some fine Dadaist poems both in French and in Spanish and who subsequently influenced many of Spain's and Latin America's most outstanding younger poets, including perhaps Garcia Lorca. Nor have I seen the Portuguese poet Sa-Carneiro mentioned in a Dadaist context anywhere except by Guillermo de Torre; yet Sa-Carneiro, a close friend of the great poet Fernando Pessoa, wrote some fine Dada poems in Portuguese, shortly before committing suicide, and is remembered today in Portugal as one of his country's most significant modern poets.

Unlike other former Dadaists, Guillermo de Torre now makes no abusive claims concerning the lasting values of Dada and even rebukes Richard Hülsenbeck for asserting paradoxically in 1949 that the principles of Dada are still valid, in spite of the fact that he had appeared to agree with the other Dadaists in the movement's heyday between 1914 and 1922, "that no Dada masterpiece should exist more than five minutes." Like a latter-day neodadaist Happening, Dada art was thus intended to be expendable and ephemeral. When it survives, it is generally of historical or exemplary interest rather than of real aesthetic value.

Like all "international" movements in art or literature, Dadaism imposes moreover on its historians an almost impossible task: to write about it at all conclusively and objectively, whether as art-historian or as historian of literature and ideas, one would need to be able to consult and read books and periodicals, posters and leaflets, many of them extremely rare, which were published between 1915 and 1925 in Russian, German, Hungarian, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and perhaps a few other languages. The painter Henryk Berlewi, for instance, once showed me in Paris a issue of a Yiddish periodical of which a

small group of Russian-Jewish Dadaists and Constructivists published a few issues in Berlin around 1922; this publication is particularly interesting because it offers us perhaps the only known examples of *calligrammes* and other DADA or Constructivist typographical eccentricities in Hebrew script. But even Guillermo de Torre fails to refer to this almost mythical periodical in his otherwise very Catholic history of the European avant-garde.

He proves, however, to be refreshingly objective when he now stresses the importance of Italian Futurism and of Marinetti's example, as a publicist and a promoter of art-world scandals, on the evolution of all later advance-guard movements which have similarly relied on nihilist or anarchist tactics to attract attention or to convince. Because Marinetti subsequently declared himself a believer in Mussolini's Fascism, such references to his importance in the history of advance-guard art and literature remained for many years taboo. But now we may soon be sophisticated enough to tolerate similar references to the paradoxical relationship between even Nazism or Stalinism and Dada or Surrealism: after all, Hitler's extermination-camps proved in many respects to be of almost the same nature as some of the imaginary establishments that the Marquis de Sade described in his writings which Dadaists and Surrealists have taught us to tolerate and accept as veritable classics. When he praises Hitler and Franco, Dali is thus more consistent than André Breton or Tristan Tzara.

In art and literature, the advance-guard of the first quarter of our century, like the legendary sorcerer's apprentice, indeed prepared the way for political developments that were destined to put an end to all advance-guard activity in literature and the arts, when political extremists profited from the intellectual and moral confusion that the advance-guard had created, often quite unwittingly, by failing to distinguish clearly between political and artistic revolution and by using politically revolutionary tactics all too frequently in its artistic manifestations and scandals. We know, for instance, that the Paris police at one time seriously believed that the French Surrealists planned to blow up Notre Dame and a few other venerable monuments in a sudden outburst of anarchistic frenzy.

Guillermo de Torre's history of vanguard literary movements again and again suggests, to a perceptive reader, valuable insights into the political and social ambiguities of literature and art when these rely, as now, so much more on being novel and newsworthy than on being profound or timeless. As one reads, a few decades later, of the antics of Futurists and Dadaists, one cannot help feeling that they remained, in a way, true to the scandalous tradition of the Nineteenth-century Dandy, but also that they set out to shock a much more open society, relying on mass-media to achieve the kind of reputation that Baudelaire or Oscar Wilde sought in a more limited or aristocratic social context. One is often surprised, in this respect, to note how many early Dadaists still flaunted a monocle!

Be that all as it may, Guillermo de Torre deserves the serious attention of American historians of the modernist movement. As a source of information on the intellectual background of its major Spanish luminaries and of Picabia, a Paris-born Cuban, he is often very revealing, in fact far less addicted to the kind of sweeping statement that I find so exasperating in Michel Sanouillet's *Picabia,* where we are told all too frequently that Picabia published in some otherwise almost inaccessible periodical an "important" article, without being offered any quotations from it or even being allowed to know what he was writing about and why it must be considered important. Yet Michel Sanouillet's chronological and bibliographical sections, at the end of

his book, are valuable contributions to the history of Dada. They tend in fact to suggest that we now need this kind of scholarly hack-work much more than any "critical" appreciation of DADA or of several other modern movements whose permanent value, as a contribution to the evolution of taste or sensibility in our age, is still to a great extent somewhat controversial, a matter of subjective conviction rather than of objective observation. As in *Hudibras* for politics, one can still fight for or against DADA, or for or against various interpretations of it, "as for punk."

CONNECTING WITH MODERNISM

by Irving Kreutz

Louis Kampf, *On Modernism: The Prospects for Literature and Freedom.*
The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967. $10.00

While the subtitle of Mr. Kampf's excellent book does suggest prophetic longings on his part, the author tells us in the preface that predictions are not his chief concern, but that the main question he will pose in his book is: "What elements in the past made possible the present diversity of artistic styles and the corresponding diversity of the roles played by artists and intellectuals?" Predictably enough, it is this investigation of the past which occupies the major share of the book, beginning with the philosopher Hume's struggle with Cartesian doubt, through an analysis of figures as various as Gibbon, Bernini, Diderot, and Wordsworth, to the just passed past of men like Mathew Arnold, Freud, and Proust. The author's concern is always with those men — artists, philosophers, political theorists — whose struggle with their art, their philosophy, or their theory, has reflected their recognition, conscious or unconscious, of the possible impossibility of a theory of knowledge which might provide a basis for their art or thought. Since that "wonderful year" 1848, Mr. Kampf suggests, epistemology has been a kind of green light at the edge of a precipice, luring over the edge into the chaos of "modernism" below all who are seriously concerned about the human condition.

Such a book as this, in which the author's sympathy for the modern man-as-artist

seems almost literally to warm its pages, cannot be dealt with justly in a short space. To attempt to do so would be insulting. But before turning briefly to a side of the book that has particular relevance to the discussions of "intermedia" in this issue of **Arts in Society,** let me say only that *On Modernism* deserves to be read carefully by all who care about the future of the arts, and especially by those who are of the gloomy opinion that the arts have no future to speak of. The rather negative, if not niggling, criticism that follows may be thought of as a kind of footnote to an unwritten review.

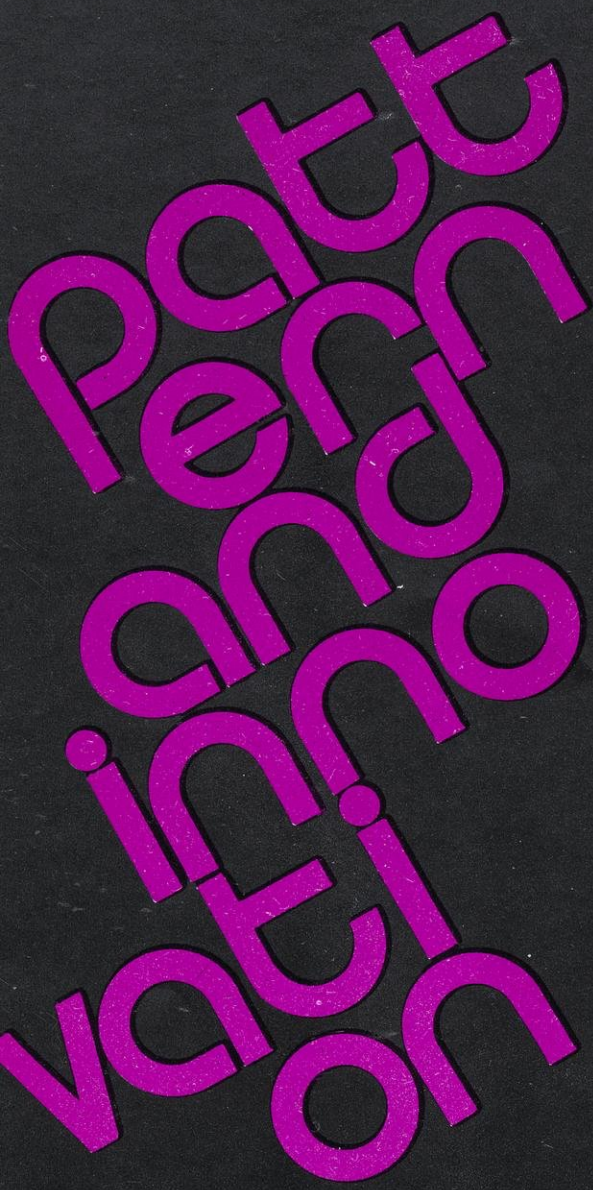
I am rather surprised that the author did not choose, perhaps as an epigraph for his book, to echo somewhere in it that gently insistent exhortation that dominates E. M. Forster's *Howards End:* "Only connect!" For it is, this problem of "connecting," the central theme of *On Modernism.* It is introduced early in the book, cleverly enough, by a discussion of Jack Gelber's play, *The Connection,* as it was produced (and seen then by the author) in the fifties by the now expatriated Living Theatre. Mr. Kampf uses the play, which he admires, as an example of "modernism" at its best, as opposed in his opinion to the average Happening, whose sole objective, he feels, is "the estheticizing of social and personal destructiveness." But in his eyes *The Connection,* while seeming to offer in its turn "no way out of its suffocating self-destructiveness," should be finally judged as a successful work of art which "turns its apparent destructiveness to a subtle, and personally profound social use."

My own feeling is that Mr. Kampf, in trying to connect with *The Connection,* has granted to the play an anti-theatrical element — or theatrical radicalness — which it does not really have; and which, no matter how "nasty" (Mr. Kampf's word) it may be, a Happening **does** have. I base this opinion primarily on the simple fact that you pay (or paid) for your ticket to get in to see *The Connection;* an usher seats you in B-3; you see the first act; you go out for a smoke and an orange drink at intermission; when you see others drifting back into the auditorium you join them; you are back in B-3. It doesn't really matter, so far as the theatrical "illusion" is concerned, that one of the actors may have followed you into the men's room to beg for money for food — or money for a fix. It doesn't matter whether or not he really needed the food — or the fix. This — the whole thing — is a performance, possibly serious or possibly a put-down. On that score I really can't see that it is much different from *Hamlet, Charley's Aunt,* or an evening at the Grand Guignol. When Mr. Kampf saw the play, he had apparently been told that the actors weren't actors, that they were junkies — or both. I had not been given this information, and I assumed them to be merely remarkably good actors. The information that Mr. Kampf had (that I did not have) turned the play for him into something quite different from what I saw. *"The Connection,"* he says, "strikes at our assumptions about the nature of reality." For him, under those circumstances, it did. For me, since I regarded the play as still just a "play", it struck at my assumptions about the nature of reality no more and no less than *Le Misanthrope, Uncle Vanya,* or — for that matter — the trio in the third act of *Der Rosenkavalier.* It was still the world in which exist, to our sorrow, the pushers and the pushed. Mr. Kampf's belief that the presence of real junkies on the stage gave a kind of illuminating dimension to what he saw on that stage is, I am convinced, a shaky one. Would our "assumptions about the nature of reality" be changed — incontrovertibly changed — if on consecutive nights in a production of *Titus Andronicus* a young woman was really raped just off-stage and then presented to the audience with her hands

really cut off at the wrists? The horror we would feel on such an occasion would be a different kind of horror, certainly, and a horror that would render the play meaningless as a work of art, would it not? The answer is a qualified one — yes, but only if we knew that her hands had actually been hacked off.

Such an absurd example is unfair to Mr. Kampf, but it does seem to me that in the face of this production of *The Connection* (which was above anything else a consummately sly one) he exhibits a kind of naivete that makes his judgement of it perhaps not entirely trustworthy. "And so it stands," he concludes, "as our paradigm, because each of the works of modernism, rather than doing the job of reconciliation, courts conflict, and attempts to challenge not our values but the very foundation of those values." This statement, so sympathetic to *The Connection,* might lead one to think that Mr. Kampf would look with approval on a good many other manifestations of "modernism." But his denouncement, for instance, of most modern music, both aleatory and serial, is vehement, and he is, as I suggested, merciless in his criticism of Happenings. I agree with him, finally, about these pretentious charades, but not for the same reasons. He finds Happenings valueless because they are "personally destructive." I find them valueless because they are, in essence, theatrical events which refuse to acknowledge the tradition to which they belong. As a result of this denial of their lineage, they also deny any demand of themselves that they be comprehensible, that they make "connections." Thus, they are stimulating in exactly the same way that a really bloody automobile accident is stimulating. Horror, fear, and pity are certainly engendered, but any aesthetic act on the part of the observer of either the accident or the Happening is impossible. In other words, is there truly any advantage in so organizing a production of *King Lear* that the audience will smell Lear's dirty feet?

notes and discussions



A miscellany of information and commentary about adult education in the arts
Freda H. Goldman
Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults

Two recent events are subjects of this issue of "Pattern and Innovation." Both are university efforts to respond relevantly to the challenge from the growing concern for the arts within American communities. The first is a Wisconsin conference on arts in small communities; and the second, the Music Educators National Conference symposium on arts in the emerging society. Both activities look at the state of arts programs and try to come to terms with the changing contemporary world. The Wisconsin program deals with the impact of modern conditions on the rural community, and the music educator's symposium is deeply concerned with the impact of technology on music and on our lives. They are both challenged by the new meanings of work and leisure, the growing influence of urbanization and automation, and the effect of these changing forces on the life of the arts.

Both events should be of interest to adult educators who are trying to probe the new relation of the arts to the community and to understand the implications of this condition for education of adults.

University Of Wisconsin Project

The Conference on Arts in the Small Community was an outgrowth of a project on this theme financed by a grant from the Arts and Humanities Foundation. The project is a three year testing and demonstration program to develop methods and resources especially suited for advancing the arts in small towns. The conference was called at the conclusion of the first year of the project; terms of the grant required that a national meeting be held at this point for the purpose of "reporting."

Representatives of universities and arts councils around the country were invited along with local persons working on the project. Citizens from the towns where the experimental project is being conducted told where they had been, artistically speaking, when the project was launched, and where they are now after one year. Each reporter felt that marked progress had been made. Each community now had its community council working, with help from the university, to focus the attention of their neighbors on the subject of art.

General Strategy

From the combined comments of the reporters a listener could construct a strategy for working with small communities, a recipe for beginning to do something about the deprivation characteristic of rural areas in today's centralizing and urban world. The approach may be said to follow these steps:

1. Make outside help available. The state university (as here) is an ideal agency, but others with resources could provide assistance, too. In this project, the outside aid spurred a tiny minority of interested people to organize; it provided them with **risk** money; it offered specialists and technical assistance.

2. Discover an internal artistic impulse and help to solidify the resolve within the community to make it flourish there. In the test communities, people with a crusading spirit were encouraged to continue the activities the university could help initiate.

3. Blend these inside and outside sources of energy and institutionalize the process. The aim is to translate into permanent arrangement the activities begun in the exploratory project. Councils were set up in the Wisconsin towns for this purpose; they searched out indigenous resources and instituted developmental projects.

As implied in the above formulation, a few simple notions underlie the design of the Arts in the Small Communities project. First, it is assumed that the dramatic trend toward urbanization in the country has left the small communities with a need to make special efforts to retain vitality. Second, local arts enthusiasts and specialists from university extension can together develop indigenous interests and skills, at the same time that they seek to enrich artistic activities by bringing art productions into the community from the outside. Finally, the goal is quite simple — to have, at the end of the project's three-year period, a much greater percentage of the total population exposed to and involved in arts activities.

Participants

The five communities listed below were selected for the exploratory project. They vary in size, composition, and tradition, and in the level of artistic sophistication; immediate goals in each case reflect these differences.

Portage (population 7822 in south central Wisconsin), is a productive agricultural area in a recreational region, an area that is very important historically. The main

focus in this town has been on the development of a historical drama, with other aspects of culture introduced as they seem relevant.

Spring Green (population 1146 in south western Wisconsin) is near the home of Frank Lloyd Wright, and is a natural center for a large rural area. The main focus at Spring Green is to become an arts center for a wide area and offer a summer-long arts festival.

Waupun (population 6,000 in south central east Wisconsin, the site of the State prison) is a market town for a large area. The main focus here is to relate segments of the community through cultural events and to set up some kind of organization to nurture local arts.

Rhinelander (population 8790, in north east Wisconsin) is the North Woods center for recreation and a large paper mill is located there. The main focus here is to develop the area as a cultural center for the North Woods country, to offer a summer festival of community theater as well as instruction in drama, music, art, and creative writing.

Adam's-Friendship (population 1800, in central Wisconsin) is economically depressed. Very little has been developed here culturally. The main focus in this town therefore is to get something started.

Activities

Several kinds of activities are being undertaken in the towns: 1) Surveys to identify the activities already underway, and to evaluate the cultural resources; 2) Presentations of specially prepared performances of plays, music and films, as well as art exhibits brought into the communities by associated agencies; 3) Identification and development of talents native to the community; 4) Organization of arts councils incorporating as many elements of the community as possible to help establish a permanent place for arts in the local setting.

Problems

Since it is likely that they are common problems it is worth recording here some of the difficulties mentioned. Community people spoke of encountering, in the institutions, conflicting interests among local organizations; obstruction came from a general conservatism and conformity among the leaders, and of a kind of censorship expressed through religious disapproval. Among the population, they found a lack of awareness of the need to be involved in artistic activities, and the need literally to "pull people in." Few places had proper facilities such as a theater. Finally, an elusive but perplexing problem was the general coldness to artists, an attitude that drives them away from the small community where they are so much needed, even when they want to stay there.

Meaning and Outcome

According to the director of the project, its meaning lies in two factors. One is the focus on the small community. This is probably the only project with this specific orientation, although there is obviously a need to do something for the small community. Most small communities are artistically depleted. The few inhabitants with aesthetic interests have few opportunities to express them, and the others seldom encounter any kind of arts experience. The project's meaning lies in its effort to focus on both needs and to explore ways of reversing the depletion process.

A second factor that the sponsors feel gives meaning to the project is the focus on people. The project assumes that it is the people in the community who are important; the goal is to try to involve not merely the elite, but the whole public.

The project will continue for two more years

along the lines laid down in the first year. Everyone will continue to strive to weave the arts of the community into the fabric of the community. It is expected that progress will be slow. "One can't jump into a Renaissance," the artists will tell you. An infinite number of small steps are necessary.

II

Tanglewood Symposium

At the Tanglewood Symposium, this summer, another kind of exploration was conducted into modern day imperatives for education and the arts. Music educators undertook a re-examination of their roles in the context of the contemporary society. Like other professionals, they responded to a common need, in the face of a rapidly changing culture, to find new guidelines for relating their work to modern American life.

The symposium was held at Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The aim was to trace a bold but flexible "model," a utopian view — of what musicians and educators may expect in the future. Symposium members explored the potentials of music activities in our culture; they identified new dimensions in the cultural climate and new needs in the society; they advanced new ideas; and they suggested new approaches to music education and musical activities.

The symposium was sponsored by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), a 54,000-member organization within the National Education Association. The members of MENC are men and women engaged in music teaching or other music education work at all institutional levels, from pre-school through college and university.

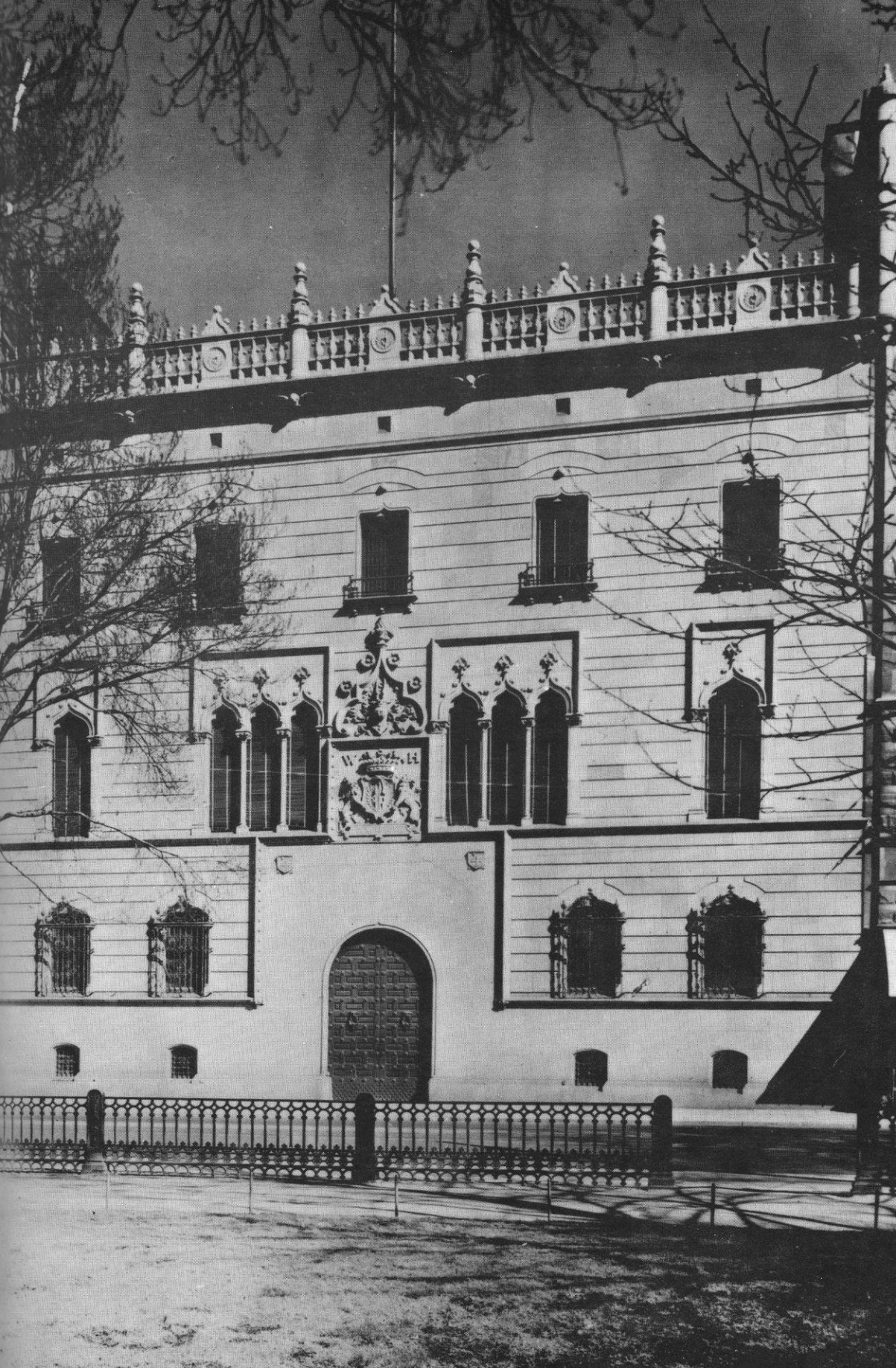
Assembled for the 10-day symposium at Tanglewood were selected MENC members along with scientists, labor leaders, philosophers, musicians, sociologists, educators, and representatives of government, corporations, foundations, communications, and other agencies concerned with the many facets of music. The issues they were asked to confront had been identified in advance by nearly 800 musicians and educators deliberating in six conferences held regionally throughout the country over the three prior months. The speakers were outstanding musicians — Milton Katime (Seattle Symphony Orchestra), Stan Kenton (Stan Kenton Orchestra), Gunther Schuller (composer), Sarah Caldwell (Opera Company of Boston); philosophers — Max Lerner (Brandeis), F. S. C. Northrop (Yale), Harry S. Brady (U. of Illinois); and social scientists — Ralph Tyler, David MacAllister, Abraham H. Maslow.

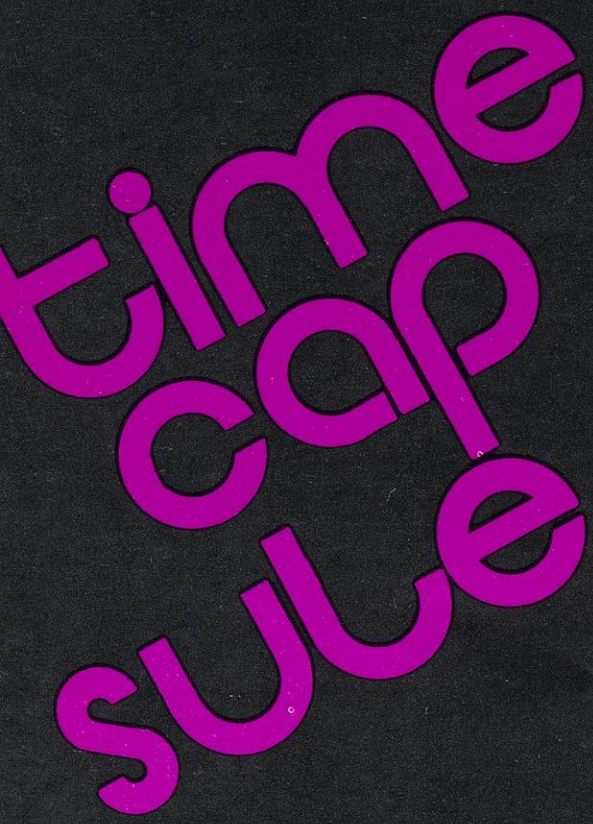
Specialists with these diverse backgrounds and viewpoints were invited because the challenges now facing the music profession arise from many sources. Among the broad issues considered were the following:
What is the desirable ideology for a post-industrial society? to what extent is it a continuity of a break from understood sets of goals and values that went with the familiar work-oriented economy or local-oriented family life? What are the desirable directions for us to move, as a maturing nation that seems more concerned now than it once was with the arts as a form of personal and group awareness? What should be the ends or purposes of education in such a society, and what are the means for attaining these ends? What are the values, the functions and roles of music and other arts in such a society? What contributions are the arts making and can they make to serve the needs of people and the society?

In short, the Tanglewood Symposium sought to reappraise basic assumptions and beliefs about music and music education. Alert to the greater concern for music activities in our culture, it set itself to find new dimensions in educators' roles and to explore possible ways by which music educators may be more effective in these roles.

Work sessions conducted by five task forces supplemented speeches and general discussion. They were concerned respectively with 1) A philosophy of the arts for an emerging age; 2) music of our time; 3) the impact and potentials of technology; 4) economic and community support; and 5) the nature and nurture of creativity. Reports on the deliberations and findings of the work sessions will be published and will be available to the public. Reports of conclusions and recommendations of the whole symposium will go to fifty state music associations, arts councils, and other organizations throughout the nation for their consideration and action. The effort to discover relevant guidelines for music educators in today's world thus continues.

The symposium was convened by the Music Educators National Conference in cooperation with the School of Fine and Applied Arts of Boston University, the Theodore Pressner Foundation, and the Berkshire Music Center. MENC aims to advance music education, to provide leadership in professional growth for the music educator, to be a national voice for music education, a clearing-house for school music activities, and interests, and to correlate music education in the United States and other parts of the world. MENC is located at 1201 Sixth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.





SWEDEN'S NINETEENTH CENTURY TIME CAPSULE

by Edouard Roditi

Facing Stockholm's small Berzelius Park and Bern's Restaurant, one of the world's most unusual art collections occupies a sombre but opulent mansion, no. 4 of Hammgatan, between a bank building and a fashionable sidewalk café. Known as the Hallwyl Museum, it was founded by an egocentric Swedish timber heiress who had married an impoverished Swiss nobleman whose family name it now bears. She may have heard someone say that Stockholm is "the Venice of the North"; in any case, she chose to build this mansion as her private home in a nineteenth century Scandinavian version of late Venetian gothic. After living there for many years in great state, she left it to the Swedish Crown, on her death, with all its contents, as a private foundation which was at first very richly endowed.

But Swedish taxes have systematically nibbled this endowment away, so that the Hallwyl Museum now finds its very existence threatened, unless new funds for its upkeep and administration can be obtained from other sources. The powerful Swedish Socialist Party wants, however, to veto any bounty from public funds, arguing that the preservation of such a monument of obsolete plutocratic extravagance is of no real historical or artistic interest in present day Sweden or to future generations.

This doctrinaire and partisan opinion cannot possibly be founded on real

knowledge of the Hallwyl Museum's contents. True, its art collections present us, at a first glance, only curious insights into the tastes and the way of life of the very wealthy of fifty or more years ago, or into the ethics of the experts and dealers on whose dubious advice they relied. Its collection of Dutch paintings, for instance, includes a quite remarkably unconvincing Rembrandt and three small works attributed to Franz Hals, only one of which is of a quality that might suggest its having been painted by such a major master. The rest of this lavish sampling of Dutch paintings that crowds the walls of several large rooms, from the paneled dadoe to the ceiling, proves to offer only a few good examples of the work of minor masters, such as Brekelenkam or Palamedes and a great number of works that utterly lack distinction. Apart from this wealth of mediocre Dutch paintings, the Hallwyl Museum can boast only of a few fine German Renaissance works and, on the walls of the bedrooms, of a great number of rather drab family portraits and nineteenth century Swedish genre paintings and landscapes. Three interesting works of a modern Swedish master, Nils von Dardel (1888-1943), constitute a notable exception to this rule of expensive pictorial mediocrity: A Fauvist oil portrait of Countess Hallwyl's grandson, Rolf de Maré, famous as an emulator of Serge de Diaghilev because he once promoted the somewhat Dadaistic Swedish ballets, and two fantastic watercolors. But Nils von Dardel happened to be the close friend of Rolf de Maré and his associate in most of his artistic ventures.

The Hallwyl Museum's collections of old porcelain, of medieval and Renaissance weapons and of old Swedish silver were selected somewhat more felicitously. They are displayed, however, in such crowded cases that one is overwhelmed by their sheer quantity rather than impressed by the quality of individual pieces. Besides, the collection's choices of old far eastern porcelain, whether Chinese or Japanese, reveal how unsophisticated our Western dealers, collectors and experts could still be in this field some fifty years ago. Exquisite and very rare pieces of early Meissen and other European porcelains thus find themselves in the company of somewhat flashy late samples of far eastern "export" wares.

The Hallwyl collections are indeed an admirable example of plutocratic late nineteenth century artistic acquisitiveness. Were one to weed out all the fakes, the "upgraded" and falsely attributed minor works and the sheer junk, one might finally boil the Museum's contents down to enough paintings and objects of real quality to display on the walls or in the cases of three or four medium sized rooms in another Stockholm museum. This would, of course, eliminate the heavy expense of maintaining and administering the whole Hammgatan mansion.

But such a selective action would contradict the explicitly formulated intentions of the late Countess Hallwyl as stated in the act whereby she donated her house, her collections and a considerable fund for their administration and maintenance to the Swedish Crown and, by implication, to the state. Nor were these intentions merely eccentric. There was a method, in fact a real scientific purpose, in her apparent madness, though anyone browsing at random through the sixty or more volumes of the Hallwyl Museum's lavishly printed, illustrated and bound catalogue might well think that they have been compiled by a maniac. Everything contained in the house is listed

there, carefully described in detail, together with its origin, and even reproduced in the separate volumes of plates, all the way from the doubtful Rembrandt and the rarest pieces of antique porcelain and silver down to the late donator's own hairpins, cosmetics, underwear, bedroom slippers and safety pins. In a passage in the upstairs living quarters, one can open a door and discover a closet where umbrellas and canes were kept. They are still there, but properly mounted for display, behind a sheet of glass that has been inserted just beyond the door of the closet. In the bedroom of the Countess, the top drawer of her dressing table can be opened. Here again, beneath a sheet of glass, one will find an assortment of cosmetics of fifty years ago, including a popular branded ointment for corns that is no longer available on the market. Beneath each desk, a relatively undistinguished waste paper basket is displayed in a glass case. In the kitchen, one can admire an old frigidaire of about 1925 and, behind glass, a very complete collection of rather inexpensive kitchen utensils used thirty or more years ago. In the garage, her vintage car still stands, together with all the obsolete equipment that her chauffeur once used.

The Hallwyl Museum was indeed intended to be a kind of gigantic time capsule, a modern counterpart, perhaps, of Tutankhamon's tomb. Nowhere else in the world can one now study as fully, and with such a wealth and variety of detail, the artifact ecology of the very rich of fifty or more years ago. But the Swedish Socialist Party proves to be both shortsighted and doctrinaire in believing that such a home is now a social anachronism, of no interest in a more democtraic society.
If one examines with greater care the humbler objects preserved in the private apartments, kitchens and other service quarters of the Hallwyl Museum, one soon realizes that they are not typically plutocratic.
Mrs. Porter and her daughter may have appeared, to a popular song writer, to be rich enough to wash their feet in soda water, but Countess Hallwyl, in spite of her wealth, never had her eggs fried in a skillet made of solid gold and still treated her corns with the same salve as more ordinary people of her day. Innumberable socialist workers, who happened to be her contemporaries, used the same corn salve and safety pins as the Countess, but neglected to endow a museum with a sample of them which posterity might now study. Because she was so wealthy, she was able to accumulate in her home a greater number and variety of such ordinary household objects which are now preserved there and can perhaps be found and studied nowhere else, since the homes of less wealthy and privileged persons, who could also purchase and own such things, have long ago been "dispersed" as auctioneers so tactfully say.

Only one collection is lacking, in the Hallwyl Museum: a comprehensive choice

of the foods of fifty or more years ago. I once knew a confectioner who collected antique pastries and candy, which he displayed in a glass case in his store. He was particularly proud of an eighteenth century model of a wedding cake, which had adorned for over a hundred years, beneath a glass globe, the store window of a rival firm. But our foods, in general, are even more perishable than we who consume them, though an Italian anthropologist, from a careful analysis of fossilized human turds discovered on a neolithic site, has already been able to detect what kinds of peas and other seeds were the staples of a caveman's diet several thousand years ago.

The Hallwyl Museum preserves in its archives, however, the carefully selected menus of all the parties that the Countess gave, together with the lists of her guests. In the bookcases of another room of archives, the student of economic history will also find the account books of her family's timber firm.

Countess Hallwyl was well aware of the rarity and the importance of all such finds. As a collector, she had acquired a philosophy of history, if not yet a more refined taste. She had noted, for instance, that there were a number of objects, among her early Chinese bronzes, that had obviously been useful two thousand years ago, but that no expert could now identify. How unfortunate that they had never been properly described and catalogued by a contemporary who had known their use! Again, she had gone to great expense to restore her husband's family's medieval castle in Switzerland. Its former moat had been filled up with the refuse of centuries. In excavating it, countless rare objects, of no instrinsic artistic interest but of considerable value to the social historian, had been found and not always identified: ancient buttons, pieces of

The main staircase.▲
Hallwyl Museum, Stockholm.
The smaller drawing room viewed from the south-west corner.▼

armor, broken crockery and glassware, kitchen utensils, what have you, all the cast off junk of several centuries.

From such activities, the Countess had learned that the least valuable objects which formed part of the surroundings of her own home might one day interest or puzzle students of history. She may also have resigned herself to a secret awareness of the dubious quality of many of the more expensive works of art that had been foisted upon her by the dealers and experts she trusted. Be that all as it may, she has explicitly stated, in her formal act of donation of the Hallwyl Museum and in other writings, why her home must now remain intact, why her collections must never be sorted out and dispersed. As the years go by, more and more historians will realize that she was right: her vintage car is already rarer and of greater interest than her Rembrandt. On the ceiling of her main drawing room, a latin motto proclaims her faith, both in "gracious living" and in halting the flow of time: "Pulchra domus docto quasi musica fixa videtur." To the wise man, her beautiful home is now like a piece of music that has been frozen stiff, in fact, a fly in the amber of timelessness.

Stockholm is proud to be able to display another such time capsule, a cultural monument now visited each week by thousands of school children and tourists: the salvaged wreck of the royal battle-ship Wasa, sunk on its maiden voyage in 1628, some three hundred yards from where the top-heavy monster had just been launched. When it was at last salvaged a few years ago from the waters of the harbor of Stockholm, it was found to contain almost everything that had once equipped it, including much that could now be found nowhere else, even unspoiled ship's biscuits and rum. As a monument of naval history, it remains unique; but much that was found in the wreck was not peculiar to the naval life of the early seventeenth century and reveals to us unknown aspects of its civilian life too. If cans of Campbell's Soup or Maxwell House Coffee are now legitimate subjects or elements for a masterpiece of Pop art or of the art of assemblage, the odds and ends of daily life three and a half centuries ago are much more rare and deserve more attention as "side dishes" of the great art of their age.

Unlike other time capsules of its kind, such as Stockholm's Thill Gallery and the late Prince Eugen's villa, where only the donator's art collections are preserved in the essential surroundings of what was once a private home, the Hallwyl Museum preserves everything that contributed to the daily life of the Countess, democratically leaving to posterity to decide whether her corn salves are of greater beauty than her porcelains. In this respect, though once only an exceptionally opulent mansion, the Hallwyl Museum, like the salvaged wreck of the Wasa, can still remind us of much that has been forgotten about the daily life of quite ordinary people of its age.


brief
notes

BRIEF NOTES

London's West End Theater

Costs of theatre production in London's West End Theater have escalated to such a point that, even though there is a great demand for them, there are few new productions available. Backers find that they can invest their money more profitably elsewhere.

To alleviate the problem of raising money for new theater productions two of London's principal managements have suggested to Lord Goodman, head of the Arts Council, that a theater finance corporation be set up which would advance risk capital to managements. This corporation would be similar to the National Film Finance corporation which has advanced 25,000,000 pounds sterling in the production of films and has set some of the younger producers on their feet.

Los Angeles — Inner City Repertory Company

Nearly $1,000,000 in federal funds have been made available to the Los Angeles Inner City Repertory Company which opened last fall. The National Council of the Arts provided a $165,000 endowment and Washington has contributed $75,000 for research and evaluation of this attempt to bring drama into the part of the city most identified with social change and unrest.

Federal funds will be used partly by ICRC and partly for providing transportation to the theater for 35,000 pupils during the school year. The theater is housed in

the old Boulevard theater, a former movie palace, which stands in an area that is predominantly Negro, Mexican-American, Oriental and American Indian in population. ICRC attempts to give minority group people a chance to find careers in the performing arts. It gives daily free performances to school-children and plays three nights every week to adult audiences for a modest fee.

"Paint-Out"

In response to the large number of requests for individual evaluations of artistic talent, the Art Students League of New York conducted a "Paint-Out" on the Central Park Mall.

An artist-instructor from the League was on hand to judge paintings and other works of art brought to the mall for an evaluation of talent. Easels and an artist's model were provided for those interested in evaluation, but without a work of their own. Scholarships for study at the League, the world's largest independent art school, were awarded to those displaying suitable talents.

Aesthetic Research Center

The Aesthetic Research Center in Venice, California is a non-profit organization "designed to act as a liaison between the professional artist of all disciplines and industry. Its purpose is to realize the concept of the artists' imagination in an industrial context and to work for increased interaction between artists and those trained in the scientific tradition."

Membership in A.R.C. is open to professionals in all fields of technology and the creative arts. Existing and projected programs involve industrial and studio tours, professional and public lectures and events, mutual consultation between artists and industry and many others.

American Film Institute Becomes a Reality

A total of $5.2 million has been made available to the new American Film Institute for the first three years of its operation. The National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, and the Motion Picture Association have provided $1.3 million each to the Institute which has been formed as a private nonprofit corporation. The rest will come from private, corporate and foundation sources. The Institute will concern itself with the establishment of film archives; support of film production by newcomers who need equipment, etc.; professional training of filmakers through an advanced study center; education in film aesthetic and history; and promotion of research and publication about film art.

"Live Art"

Per Inge Lind, Swedish avant-garde playwright and director of a small Stockholm theater has developed the technique of "live art." He has persuaded thirteen people and a dog to pose on plinths or in frames as "live portraits" and "live sculpture" at the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm.

Dance Notation

The Dance Notation Bureau advertises itself as "a Center for Movement Research and Analysis to provide unique services to the performing artist, choreographer, teacher, student, historian and research scientist."
Their announcement states, "with its research and Educational programs the Bureau has established a scientific basis for study of the art and science of movement." The Bureau offers training programs for careers in teaching, professional notation, and research in the physical and

behavioral sciences through the use of Effort-Shape analysis. It also offers courses in notation, dance and related subjects. The courses are designed "to bring about a better understanding of movement and greater awareness of movement possibilities." The address of the Dance Notation Bureau is: Dance Notation Bureau, Inc., Center for Movement Research and Analysis, East 12th Street, New York City 10003.

USCO

Gerd Stern, spokesman of a tribe of "McLuhan," Intermedia-oriented poets, artists, engineers and filmmakers living in Garnerville, New York describes their activities as follows:

"We have here in Garnerville, 35 miles north of NYC, a 100 year old church where we live and work. It is incorporated as the FREE CHURCH OF THE TABERNACLE. Our tabernacle, an audio-visual environment for contemplation, meditation, centering, fragmenting, process experience, is open to the public every Sunday from noon to six. As has always been the case in traditional societies the work can remain anonymous. We are all one, beating the tribal drum of our new electronic environment. In a world of simultaneous operations, you don't have to be first to be on top." The following are quotes concerning Usco performance:

"The Usco group, in particular, shifts effortlessly from multichannel audio hookups to woven rugs, from 'proving out' Marshall McLuhan's theories on media to projecting Hindu philosophies."

* * *

". . . Instantaneously I was overwhelmed by a quick series of visual and aural images . . . details from Hieronymous Bosch and Peter Breughel paintings flashed on the slide screens, repeating themselves, six, eight, a dozen times."

* * *

". . . The whole thing rather wonderfully abstracts the racy experience of the freeway and the superhighway . . . over everything is a technological perfection, a gloss and clarity of statement, which are all too rare in that sort of thing and are extremely refreshing to find."

* * *

". . . It has no audience, only participants. It is an exhausting melange of lights and colors and music and movement and it seems absolutely eternal . . ."

* * *

". . . Its light-up paintings, frenetic machines and high decibel noises add up to a kind of programmed pandemonium that seems accurately to reflect the urban U.S. Milieu."

Guidancecounsellingnavigationand contro

"Poets have been objectifying Hell for many years now.... [In the Bumpus Hell], no one ever seems to know the way out. They seldom even remember how they came to be there. But they're caught up in a metaphysic, a symbolic representation of evil....

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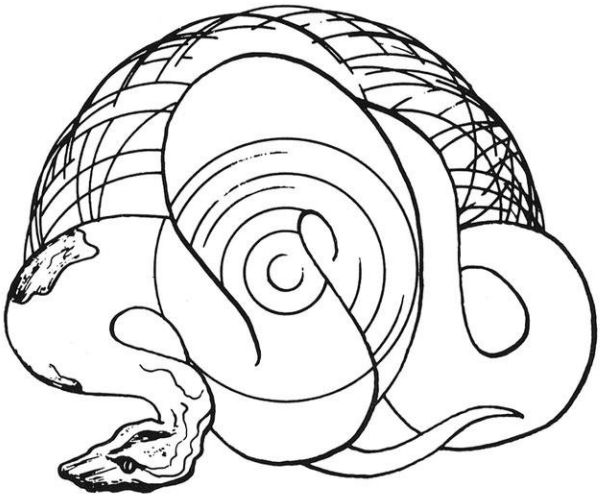

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JERRY BUMPUS

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