



"Simulacra: Jean Baudrillard." 1987, by MANUAL (Hill/Bloom)

**BOLTON'S PRODUCTION OF THE IMAGE/HEINECKEN'S NEO-PHYSIOGNOMY/FREELAND'S SCENES FROM A SIMULATED SEDUCTION/SPACE INFORMATION & BEAUTY/READING MANUAL/ON THE ROAD WITH JOEL STERNFELD/VIEW FROM THE CENTER/PICTURES ON WORDS/THE MALE TRAJECTORY/OPPRESSION IN THE USSR**



## CONTENTS

## COVER

"Simulacra: Jean Baudrillard," 1987, by MANUAL (Hill/Bloom)

## FEATURES

**The Production of the Image**, by Richard Bolton. The "hidden agenda" of advertising revealed in the form of an ad. **4**

**Robert Heinecken's "Neo-Physiognomy"**, by James R. Hugin. A Case Study in Determining an Appropriate Newswoman (for CBS). **5**

**Scenes from a Simulated Seduction**, by Cynthia Freeland. Professor Freeland critiques the "real" Jean Baudrillard on his visit to the University of Houston. **7**

**Master Exhibit of Information and Beauty**, by April Rapier. IN SPACE: A Photographic Journey—A show that's more than art. **9**

**Curating in a Crisis: PHOTO-TECHNOLOGY**, by James Bell. The joy and problems of curating electronic media. **12**

**New Light: The Holographic Image**, by Jeff DeBevec. **12**

## EXHIBITIONS

**Reading MANUAL**, by Margo Reece. An explanation of the deconstructive strategies of photography. **10**

**The Real, The Represented: "Pictures on Words,"** by Jill A. Kyle. How many pictures can you find on the eye of a word? **14**

**On the Road with Joel Sternfeld**, by Bill Frazier. Where does Sternfeld fit in the "pantheon of Great Observers of the American Scene?" **15**

**A Noticeable Trend**, by Lew Thomas. Is *The Manipulated Environment* "hyper but bored?" **16**

**View from The Center**, by Jill A. Kyle. Allegiance to tradition marks Annual Members' Exhibition. **17**

**Photographing the Male Trajectory**, by Lew Thomas. R. Lynn Foster's "work-in-progress" incites viewer reaction. **22**

**Photographs of C. Leigh Farmer & Charlotte Land**, by Mac Scarborough. Animals and nature put into human context. **23**

**Life's Familiar Ceremonies**, by Patsy Cravens. The "Britishness" of Martin Parr's documentary photographs. **23**

**Diverse Teachers Produce Unique Show of Student Work**, by April Rapier. Team teachers Brown and Wingham inspire student work. **24**

**Photographs of Oppression in the USSR**, by April Rapier. Janice Rubin's photojournalism of conscience. **25**

## DEPARTMENTS

**MESSAGES** "Mediascape 80's Style" **3**

**NEWS** **26**

**LETTERS** **26**

**NOTES** **26**

**CALENDAR** Various events **27**

## STAFF

**Co-Editors:** Lew Thomas & Cynthia Freeland

**Design:** Jim Tiebout

**Contributing Editors:** Julie Lee, Christine Luncford, Helen Manning and Galia Nitzan

**Writers:** James Bell, Jeff DeBevec, Patsy Cravens, Bill Frazier, Cynthia Freeland, James R. Hugin, Jill A. Kyle, April Rapier, Margo Reece, Mac Scarborough, Lew Thomas

**Production:** Jim Tiebout

**Advertising Sales:** Patricia M. Holleman

**SPOT** is a publication of the Houston Center for Photography, a non-profit organization that serves the photographic community as a resource for educational exchange through exhibitions, publications, lectures, workshops, and fellowships. SPOT is supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Cultural Arts Council of Houston, The Brown Foundation, and the Anchorage Foundation.

**For details about membership:** contact the HCP at 1441 West Alabama, Houston TX 77006. Telephone (713)529-4755.

**Subscriptions** to SPOT are \$12 per year in the United States. The magazine is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December.

**Copyright 1987.** All rights reserved. No portion of SPOT may be reproduced without the permission of the Houston Center for Photography.

## PROGRESS LIGHTING: THE COMPLETE CHOICE FOR TRACK LIGHTING

Track lighting by PROGRESS can facilitate most any lighting task: provide general illumination, accent areas, contribute to ambience. From MR-16 to PAR, from 30 watts up to 500 watts, from 5.5 volts up to standard 120 volts, from tungsten halogen to incandescent and fluorescents—PROGRESS track systems offer a full range of light sources in a wide variety of forms and finishes.

Distributed in Houston by Robinson Electric Supply Co., (713) 654-1000.

**PROGRESS®**

## VOLUME V

## NUMBER 2

## HOUSTON CAMERA EXCHANGE

**USED EQUIPMENT**  
CAMERAS • LENSES • LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

**RENT • BUY • SELL • TRADE**

**621-6901**  
OPEN 10 - 6 MON - SAT  
4014 RICHMOND AV NEAR WESLAYAN

Quality Doesn't Have  
To Cost More.  
**Here's Proof.**

**37¢**  
**PER PROOF**  
49 HOUR TURNAROUND • 120 OR 35 MM • 1000' AT

Whether it's proofs, prints or special  
projects — count on sharp, competitive  
service every time.

Two convenient locations, now under  
new ownership.

Come celebrate and see the difference.

• Custom Enlargements  
• Colortime Specialist  
• Ektachrome Turnaround  
• Black & White  
• Slides

**HOUSTON PHOTOLAB**

5250 Gifford, Bldg. 3, Suite D, Houston, Texas 77061 (713) 666-0282  
353 Greenleaf Road, Houston, Texas 77060 (713) 816-2136

**WHEN YOU PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS, TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN SPOT**



## MESSAGES

"Indifference is the sign of the times."

Willie Nelson

The appearance of Jean Baudrillard at the University of Houston to discuss "the fast track of mediascape 80's style" aroused so much interest in the city's intellectual community that one could look upon it as a minor spectacle in its own right. He spoke in the Phillip Johnson-designed School of Architecture Building on the campus of the University of Houston ("It's funny", he commented, on seeing where he was to speak). In a packed auditorium where the audience was standing-room only, even Mrs. Dominique De Menil had to scramble for floor space.

A short, unpretentious man with thick neck and strong shoulders, Baudrillard seemed cast from the mold of the working-class rather than from the ranks of the elite French thinkers whose theories have come to dominate the affairs of American culture and thought.

Regardless of where he was speaking, in luncheon conversation, the colloquium, or the lecture itself, the tone of his voice was the same: soft, calm, interested, underscoring the power of his presence. He answered all questions in an unpatronizing good-natured manner aimed at full comprehension. At the colloquium he incessantly fashioned cigarettes from tiny papers and lit up as he intently listened and responded. Nor was there any trace of arrogance in his attitude—unless it was projected by frustrated listeners who could not follow the acute trail of language forming the spiral of his thought processes. In asides, the master of the code confessed to preferences for handwriting or the typewriter over computer-based word processing; for the *imaginaire* of classical films over the induced hyperreality of Sci-Fi blockbuster movies. He seemed uninterested in discussing the values of art, as if it too had succumbed to the "liquidation of meaning" in the "designer" culture of the postmodern 80's. As Cynthia Freeland comments in her article in this issue, "Despite his influence on work by many current artists and critics, he remains a cool observer of contradictions in the art 'scene': 'Modern art wishes to be negative, critical, innovative and a perpetual surpassing, as well as immediately (or almost) assimilated, accepted, integrated, consumed'."

On the heels of Baudrillard came another distinguished visitor, Octavio Paz, poet, philosopher, and diplomat extraordinaire, to open the exhibition, *Hispanic Art in the United States*, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He spoke in Spanish to another full, but linguistically divided gathering, in the Brown Auditorium in the museum. Upstairs in a large gallery, video monitors and speakers transmitted a simultaneous English translation and single camera coverage of Paz at the podium to those people seated in folding chairs who *only* spoke English. This seating arrangement produced one of those unforeseen lessons in how it feels to be positioned outside the presence of honor—how it feels, if only momentarily, to lack language—to be the Other.

Despite claims made in a recent issue of *Art in America* that Texas art is only "nominally political," and that "neither abstract thinking nor abstract art are Texas pastimes," this issue of SPOT is dominated by a burgeoning Houston interest in "the code."

Not long ago Charles Schorre, one of Houston's most incisive and hard-working artists, exhibited at Meredith Long and Company photo-collages (and paintings) which formalized the confusion between paint and photography (tangible markings combined with analogical snaps), in what Samuel Beckett would call a creative mess:

*What I am saying does not mean that there will henceforth be no form in art. It only means that there will be new form, and that this form will be of such a type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say that the chaos is something else. The form and the chaos remain separate. The latter is not reduced to the former. That is why the form itself becomes a preoccupation, because it exists as a problem separate from the material it accommodates. To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now.*

Schorre exults in mixing signifiers from dissimilar mediums in order to bridge the chaos between personal expression and the distance of the abstract—in the kind of messy freedom that is threatening to the purist's sense of "truth to materials."

Frank Gehry spoke from an equivalent position in his lecture at the Brown Auditorium of the MFA, Houston (sponsored by the Contemporary Arts Museum in conjunction with an exhibition of Gehry's architectural models and drawings). His talk demonstrated how a career in architecture could be advanced by applying contradictory ideas processed from other art forms, in particular, Pop art sculpture.

Where Gehry's architectural collages of building materials echo the commotion between high and low forms of culture, Schorre's photo-collages "appropriate" from his own strayed projects which he returns to work-in-progress in the present.

At Moody Gallery this spring, *MANUAL* (Ed Hill & Suzanne Bloom) displayed a new line of computer generated color photographs. The show emphasized the problem of seeing with language. By reducing an assortment of "coded" metonymous images via captions meant to open up the reading of the work, they diminish the complexity of representation in their program to motivate new meaning. And yet, Baudrillard's critical vision might reveal paradoxes lurking beneath the surface of such post-modern critiques of representation. In perceiving this work aimed at "false consciousness" we the viewers, who stand in unwittingly for the consuming public, regard the issues as the responsibility of the Other. We figure ourselves out of the "mediascape" under criticism by our superiority as witnesses—by being present at the gallery. Neither the aesthetics of "deconstruction" nor the mirroring of the processes of transmission can alter the underlying paradox of capitalist space, where everything (especially art) is motivated by the "consumption of the code and the reproduction of the system." Their need to make sense out of the moral dilemmas of violence and sexism appears arbitrary. As images that critique seduction, they are themselves evidence of misrecognition and the reversal of what they appear to be.

The "mid-career" retrospective of New York photographer Joel Sternfeld at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, would seem at opposite ends of the photo spectrum from *MANUAL*. Where *MANUAL* subverts the system by revealing it as a world of codes (advertising, mass media, film), Sternfeld's best images give us entry into a world of spectacle, where "even alienation is turned into an image for the alienated to consume" (of a runaway elephant collapsed on a country road, of dozens of dying beached whales bloodying the waters, or of a fireman purchasing a pumpkin at the scene of a blazing house fire). Sternfeld functions here (as the viewer also does) as an eager spectator experiencing reality at the same secure distance as in scenes from a motion picture. Ironically through becoming spectators we experience the loss of the real, and its replacement in processed imagery, even more than we do while contemplating *MANUAL*'s deconstructive signifiers. Baudrillard speaks of this spectator's attitude of passivity in front of the world as a subversive "irresponsibility", or a strategy of non-response. It undermines the System, in a sort of ironic reversal of the active strategy of deconstruction adopted by artists such as *MANUAL* (or this writer).

Low Thomas



500 N. Shepherd  
880-2505

821 Walker  
229-9799

5353 W. Alabama  
960-9904

**SOUTHWESTERN  
CAMERA**

1936 — 1986  
50 YEARS OF SERVICE

**SHOP WITH  
THE  
PROFESSIONALS**

**If it's not  
set in type,  
is it worth reading?**

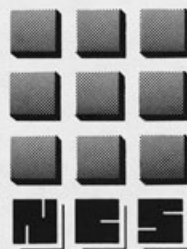
Extreme? Perhaps. But setting information in type makes business communication more readable, more credible, more interesting, and more memorable than typewriter-style information. Typesetting also cuts printing costs because it uses less paper.

From the simplest invitation to the most difficult forms and price sheets, Wordseller helps you communicate.

**WORDSELLER:**  
typography/communications

1925 Southwest Freeway Houston, Texas 77098 713-529-1925

**NETWORK  
CONTROL  
SERVICES**



5100 Westheimer, Suite 250  
Houston, Texas 77056  
713/968-6506

**Our experience  
indicates that your  
company pays for  
telecom mistakes.**

NCS will recover money your company has already spent.

Your company can contract our auditing service at no additional expense.

**We Service Your Company's**

- Needs Through:
- AUDIT/DISCOVERY
- CONSULTATION
- MAINTENANCE EXPERTISE
- EQUIPMENT/NETWORK DATABASE MANAGEMENT

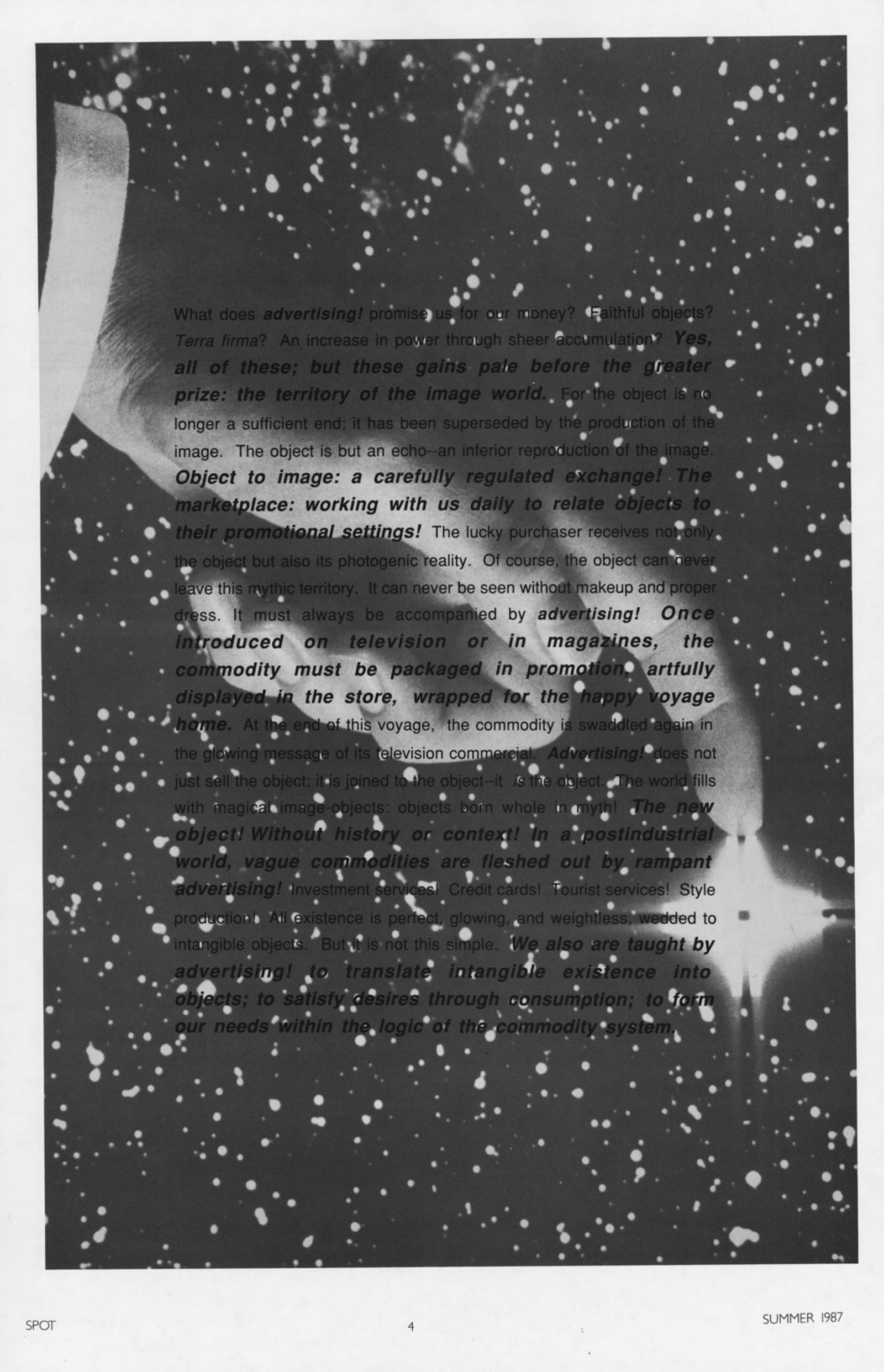
**NCS HAS THE SOLUTION**



**ROBINSON  
ELECTRIC  
SUPPLY  
CO., INC.**

Wholesale Distributors of Lighting Fixtures,  
Electrical Supplies & Equipment

2212 Crawford Street  
Houston, Texas 77002  
713/654-1000



What does *advertising!* promise us for our money? Faithful objects? *Terra firma?* An increase in power through sheer accumulation? ***Yes, all of these; but these gains pale before the greater prize: the territory of the image world.*** For the object is no longer a sufficient end; it has been superseded by the production of the image. The object is but an echo--an inferior reproduction of the image. ***Object to image: a carefully regulated exchange! The marketplace: working with us daily to relate objects to their promotional settings!*** The lucky purchaser receives not only the object but also its photogenic reality. Of course, the object can never leave this mythic territory. It can never be seen without makeup and proper dress. It must always be accompanied by *advertising!* ***Once introduced on television or in magazines, the commodity must be packaged in promotion, artfully displayed in the store, wrapped for the happy voyage home.*** At the end of this voyage, the commodity is swaddled again in the glowing message of its television commercial. *Advertising!* does not just sell the object; it is joined to the object--it *is* the object. The world fills with magical image-objects: objects born whole in myth! ***The new object! Without history or context! In a postindustrial world, vague commodities are fleshed out by rampant advertising!*** Investment services! Credit cards! Tourist services! Style production! All existence is perfect, glowing, and weightless, wedded to intangible objects. But it is not this simple. ***We also are taught by advertising! to translate intangible existence into objects; to satisfy desires through consumption; to form our needs within the logic of the commodity system.***



# ROBERT HEINECKEN'S "NEO- PHYSIOGNOMY"

1984—A Case Study in Determining an Appropriate Newswoman (A CBS Docudrama in Words and Pictures) by Robert Heinecken (1986). 16 pages, soft-bound, full color, \$20.00, printed by Singer Printing, Petaluma, California.



Robert Heinecken, "Connie Chung/Bill Kurtis" "Connie Chung/Steve Baskerville"

By James R. Hugunin

The wordiness of the title to Robert Heinecken's latest artist book carries over into the main body of his text. In his lengthy narration (set in the Orwellian year of 1984) Heinecken ironically imagines himself an independent consultant for "Big Brother," that is, called in by Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) to solve the problem of finding the best male/female news team combination to counter the declining ratings experienced by CBS' *Morning News*: "One of the top executives had seen my art work, recognized my intense observational skills in relation to television and trusted the keen logic of my mind." His fantasized services were inspired by an actual event behind which there was yet another "truth": the "promotion" of Diane Sawyer to CBS' popular Sunday evening program *60 Minutes*. ("The truth was," writes Heinecken, "that she threatened to quit if they wouldn't move her out of the morning slot.") The network executives decided to retain Bill Kurtis on the *Morning News* and now had to find the perfect female replacement for Sawyer. In addition, competition from cable channels was increasing, siphoning off the network's audience. "This fact, combined with the Reagan administration's tendency to stress levity," writes Heinecken, "caused the other two national networks (NBC and ABC) to lean toward a

lighter tone and a less serious thesis for their morning programs. Given the circumstantial mood of the country and the cable channel competition their decision affirmed "network logic." It is within the context of these factual events that Heinecken's story evolves. Drawing upon, he writes, his "previous investigation into subliminal advertising and behavior modification," Heinecken decides to analyze accidental image superimpositions: "I discovered that when a video frame is stopped at that exact moment when the studio cameras are switching from one person to another, a striking superimposed image of the two is formed." It is from this tongue-in-cheek analysis of the visual "interstices" generated during broadcast news programming (as a "post-visualization" of photographic imagery which characterizes much of Los Angeles artist Robert Heinecken's oeuvre) that the artist will advise CBS as to which combination of newscasters' images (Bill Kurtis "supered" with various female counterparts) will subliminally affect viewer response, increasing the ratings of CBS' *Morning News*. Interestingly, the flip-side of Heinecken's "supered" imagery had already been attempted by Francis Galton (a 19th Century English statistician and founder of eugenics) in his purely optical constructions ("pictorial statistics" Galton called them) of the criminal type, photographic impressions of an abstract

and empirically non-existent face (Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39, pp.18-19). Galton claimed analogies between "blended memories" and his photographic composites. In his *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (1833), Galton writes: "The ideal faces obtained by the method of composite portraiture appear to have a great deal in common with . . . so-called abstract ideas (quoted by Sekula, p.51)." One of Galton's composites was, relates Sekula, a "combination of portraits of twelve officers and eleven enlisted men of the Royal Engineers. This was offered as a 'clue to the direction in which the stock of the English race might most easily be improved'" (p.50). Another composite—akin to Heinecken's superimpositions in that the source images were already-existing, found imagery—was Galton's copying of portraits off Greek and Roman coins and medallions and their composite-printing, seeking in the final, blurry result "the vanished physiognomy of a higher race" (p.50). Sekula, in his fascinating essay, also cites the fact that Lewis Hine had made a number of crude composite prints of girl millworkers in 1913; presumably, to trace the effects of factory conditions on their young bodies (p.53). Heinecken's compositing, a century after Galton's, begins with an analysis of other successful male/female news teams such as

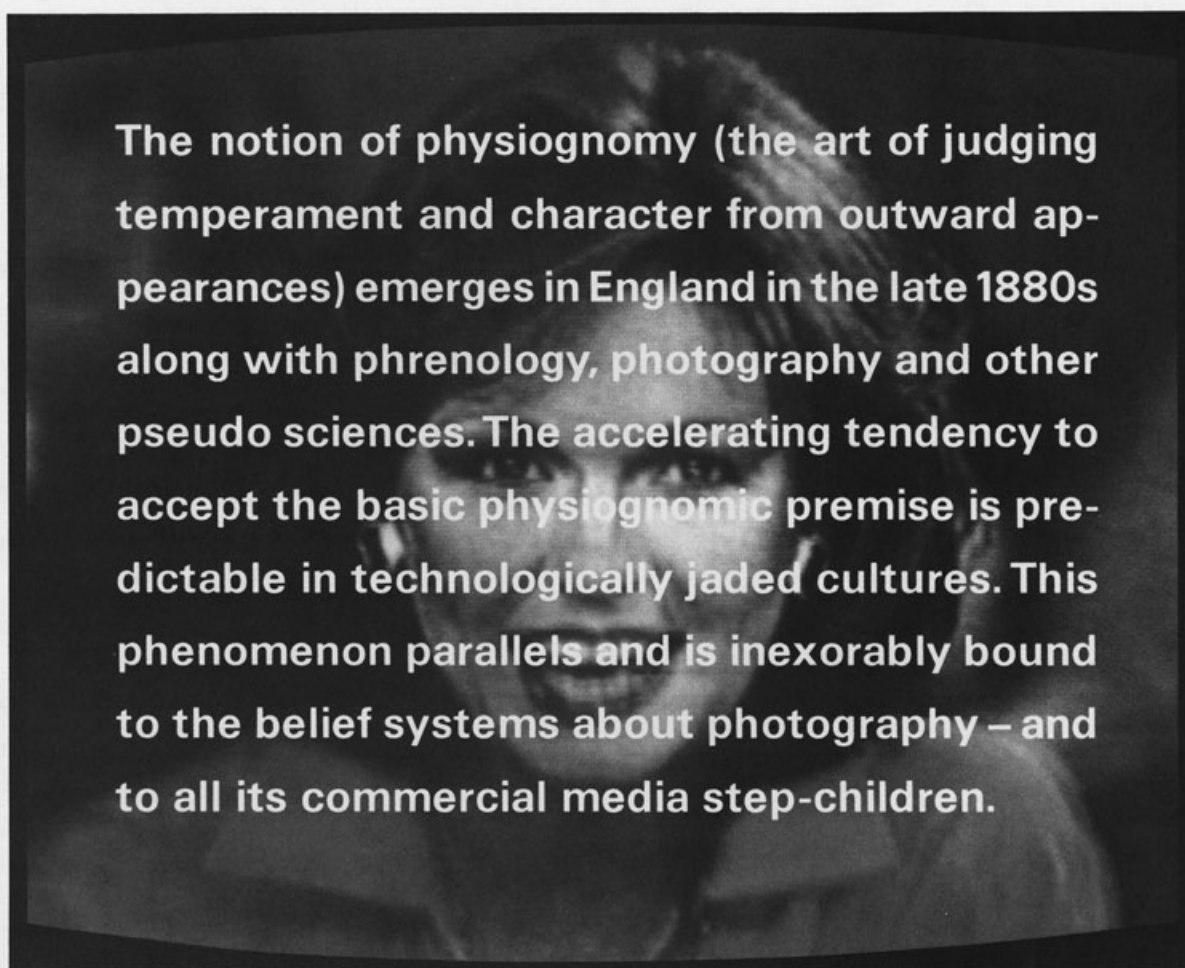
Bryant Gumble/Jane Pauley of NBC and David Hartman/Joan Lunden of ABC. Sets of vertical columns of three images each define each "test." Reproduced on each end of the vertical column is a shot of each newscaster alone, the middle image being the composite print superimposing the male and female faces onto each other. The result is often humorous, or malevolent, but always androgynous. Here Heinecken, like Galton before him, elevates the indexical photographic composite to the level of the symbolic. But unlike Galton, Heinecken willfully caricatures inductive reason in his tongue-in-cheek accretion of contingent instances. This slickly printed book has the "feel" of a corporate annual report. It presents a "poker face" toward the reader, a physiognomy liable to fool a reader (not conversant with Heinecken's protracted "guerilla war" against the conventions of mass-mediated imagery) into taking this story literally. The immediate precursors for the material in this book can be found in Heinecken's Cibachrome photographs of President Reagan's 1981 Inaugural Address, his Archimboldo-inspired superimposition portrait of John Szarkowski, his room installation *Waking Up in News America*, and the piece titled *TV Network Newswomen Corresponding: Barbara Walters/Faith Daniels*. (Another American artist, Nancy Burson, has also explored the fusion of physiognomies, not by

optical superimposition, but via computer-generations; Galtonian in its configuration. Burson's imagery is attacked by Sekula for its "fetishistic belief in cybernetic truth" and its "smug scientism" (p.62). Heineken, as we shall see, acknowledges the historical context of his superimpositions at the end of his book, his use of this "pseudo science": being an *ironic* resurrection of biosocial typology.

Exchanging the "natural" body of the female nude (which he has cut up and re-assembled, much to the dismay of feminists, in a variety of formal ploys throughout his work in the 1960's and early 1970's) for the cultural construct of gender/sexuality, Heineken now moves his esthetic production into a "postmodern" confrontation with how our culture shapes meaning, reproduces itself, confirms its values, into what Fredric Jameson terms our "political unconscious." Throughout his recent work the dystopian visions of George Orwell's 1984 and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* seem near at hand. Like these novels, Heineken offers no solution; he only tugs provocatively at the seams holding together our cultural fabric, offering a deconstruction of our master narratives. In his *Case Study*, . . . Heineken offers his own counter-narrative (rooted in 19th Century biopositivism) that appropriates "network logic" (rooted in ratings, profit, and ideology) and turns both that pseudo science and network logic back upon themselves.

The typographical vehicle for this narration is sans serif text set in a small point size and reversed out white against a solid black background: it must compete on the same page with a myriad of full color reproductions of the various TV newscasters photographed off the TV. This CBS Docudrama in Words and Pictures is aptly titled; it is part document (factual data, both visual and verbal) and part dramatization (fantasized aspects of the narration and the superimposition photographs which androgynously fuse the physiognomy of newsmen with newswomen). Just as the "supered" photographs unite man and woman (a metonymy which can be read as metaphor for an ideal sexual union that genetically transforms the partners into a gender mixing *Gestalt*), so does Heineken's textual fabulation combine historical information ("In 1983 Christine Craft, a 38 year old TV anchorwoman in the mid-west, was fired for reasons, as it turned out, of age and cosmetic appearance.") with personal fantasy ("... I swallowed hard and slowly said, 'I believe that you are looking for an aggregate stone rather than an igneous one!'). Heineken's geological trope is apt. He has been digging through the strata of mass-mediated imagery long before the term "post-modern" was in wide usage. His earlier works, those lusty superimpositions of female form, were more concerned with the "igneous" ("heat" induced) fusion of form and content (e.g. *Five Figures in Vertical Hold #7*, 1969). More recently, a tendency apparent only as a secondary concern in his earlier work has now become predominant: an interest in formal aggregates, conjunctions of particulars adding up to a whole. The Occident's paradigmatic aggregate is the grid, a "rational" form of analysis and arrangement (in contradistinction, the Orient's paradigmatic aggregate is the organic clustering of the florets in flowers, like the lotus). Such "rationalism" underlies the format of *A Case Study*, . . . and other recent instances of Heineken's forays into media deconstruction.

Structured on the grid format, Heineken's book on one level becomes a playful metacommentary about the interaction between the denotative attributes of words and pictures and their connotative manipulation. At a more politicized



Robert Heineken: *A Case Study in Determining an Appropriate TV Newswoman* (A CBS Docudrama in Words and Pictures)

level, the book wittily points to how "the image has become the final form of commodity reification" (Guy Debord). Both levels intrigue Heineken and impel his story toward its scripto-visual coda, an aggregate overlaying (text and image never fuse here) a video image of newswoman Phyllis George with an explanatory text which implicates our "integrated specular regime" (Victor Burgin) with the tenets of physiognomy and formalism:

*The notion of physiognomy (the art of judging temperament and character from outward appearances) emerges in England in the late 1880's along with phrenology, photography and other pseudo sciences. The accelerating tendency to accept the basic physiognomic premise is predictable in technologically jaded cultures. This phenomenon parallels and is inexorably bound to the belief systems about photography—and to all its commercial media step-children.*

The "pseudo sciences" of physiognomy—the study of characterological significance of forehead, eyes, chin, nose, ears, etc.—and phrenology—the mapping of correspondences between skull and mental faculties of the brain—permitted one to read personality (content) from outward appearance (form). This confirms the way modern advertisers want everyone to think, i.e., appearance defines content: my designer jeans signify who I really am. Apropos here is Guy Debord's comments in *The Society of the Spectacle* that "the spectacle is affirmation of appearance and affirmation of all human life, namely social life, as mere appearance." As such, physiognomy may be understood as impure variant of another pseudo science: "the pure science of form" (Marius De Zayas), in which "content is to be dissolved so completely into form that the work of art or literature cannot be reduced in whole or part to anything not itself. . . ." (Clement Greenberg) or, as Marshall McLuhan succinctly updated such formalism within the context of media studies: "the

medium is the message."

It is the construction of these pseudo sciences—where the human and qualitative dimensions of the real have been reduced to formal, quantitative relations between things—that is laid bare by Heineken's mock Galtonian analysis of the televised images of television newsanchors. His ironic commentary about the goal of his methodology—"My pictures would tap the deeper subliminal visual levels and make the unseen, seen;"—is ambivalent. It can be read (within the context of his textual fabulation) as reinforcing the ideological ploys of his corporate employers, or (within the context of his "guerilla" esthetics) as a Marxian (specifically Lukacsian) thrust beneath the surface of mere appearance, flushing out (with his characteristic wit and formal predilections) the reified paradigm of knowledge ("network logic") rooted in technological control and corporate profits.

Georg Lukacs, in his *History and Class Consciousness*, emphasizes the tension between the formal structures of "rationalization" (as practiced photographically in the 19th Century by Francis Galton and Alphonse Bertillon, and theoretically discussed by Max Weber) and the actual "content" of social life on which they are opposed, interpreting this tension in terms of what he calls "reification." But this tendency toward "rationalization" is not, as Weber saw it, inexorable. The increasing rationality of the parts of the social aggregate is tied, Lukacs claims, to the invincible "irrationality of the total process," to economic crisis and violent resistance from below. At a symbolic level, in a practice of "neo-physiognomy" (Sekula), it is here that Heineken inserts his "guerilla" esthetics.

James Huginin, publisher and editor of U-TURN, teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.



photo by Robert Heineken



SCENES FROM A  
SIMULATED  
SEDUCTION

Jean Baudrillard, Professor of Sociology at the University of Paris, spent several days in Houston in early April. His visit was co-sponsored by the Colleges of Social Sciences and Humanities and Fine Arts of the University of Houston and the Georges Pompidou Foundation. What follows is a report on and critical reaction to the views articulated by this important spokesman and critic of postmodernism.

By Cynthia Freeland

Radical thinkers often sloganize. They twist or toy with words in attempts to evoke new visions (Nietzsche: "Facts are precisely what there is not, only interpretations"<sup>1</sup>) or to challenge our commitments to language itself (Wittgenstein: "My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands them eventually recognizes them as nonsensical<sup>2</sup>."

Jean Baudrillard is a radical thinker whose books are stuffed with potential slogans. Who can resist such attention-grabbing phrases as "Ours is a culture of premature ejaculation"<sup>3</sup>? His style seduces with its glossy surface of slogans. But like any seducer, Baudrillard prompts suspicion. He may even court it. After describing his own writing as a "discourse of seduction" he admits "It's a perverse discourse, insofar as it's hard to criticize."<sup>4</sup> His writing also eludes exegesis. Since he seeks to express the postmodern loss of meaning and Being, he cannot take for granted any straightforward, referential use of language. His books have been called "a mirrored reflection of the sign-systems they seek to describe. . . . Everywhere . . . are traces of . . . disintegration, decadence, exhaustion, and brilliance<sup>5</sup>."

In its playfulness, Baudrillard's aphoristic and allusive style recalls Nietzsche's—unsurprisingly, since he did his early scholarly work on Nietzsche. "I haven't written anything on him since," he says, "but he is in my unconscious<sup>6</sup>." Nietzsche must lurk in his unconscious as Father provoking the son's rebellion, for Baudrillard really writes as an anti-Nietzsche—or better, an anti-Zarathustra. Nietzsche's prophet was the great yea-sayer who embraced life, the Eternal Recurrence, the creation of meaning, and the transvaluation of values in the Overman. His sole lament was that he had arrived too soon, before his time, that men were not yet ready for his message. Baudrillard is the great nay-sayer, self-professed "melancholy nihilist"<sup>7</sup> who writes as if he has come too late, after his time. Indeed after everything: "Today especially, the real is no more than a stockpile of dead matter, dead bodies and dead language<sup>8</sup>."

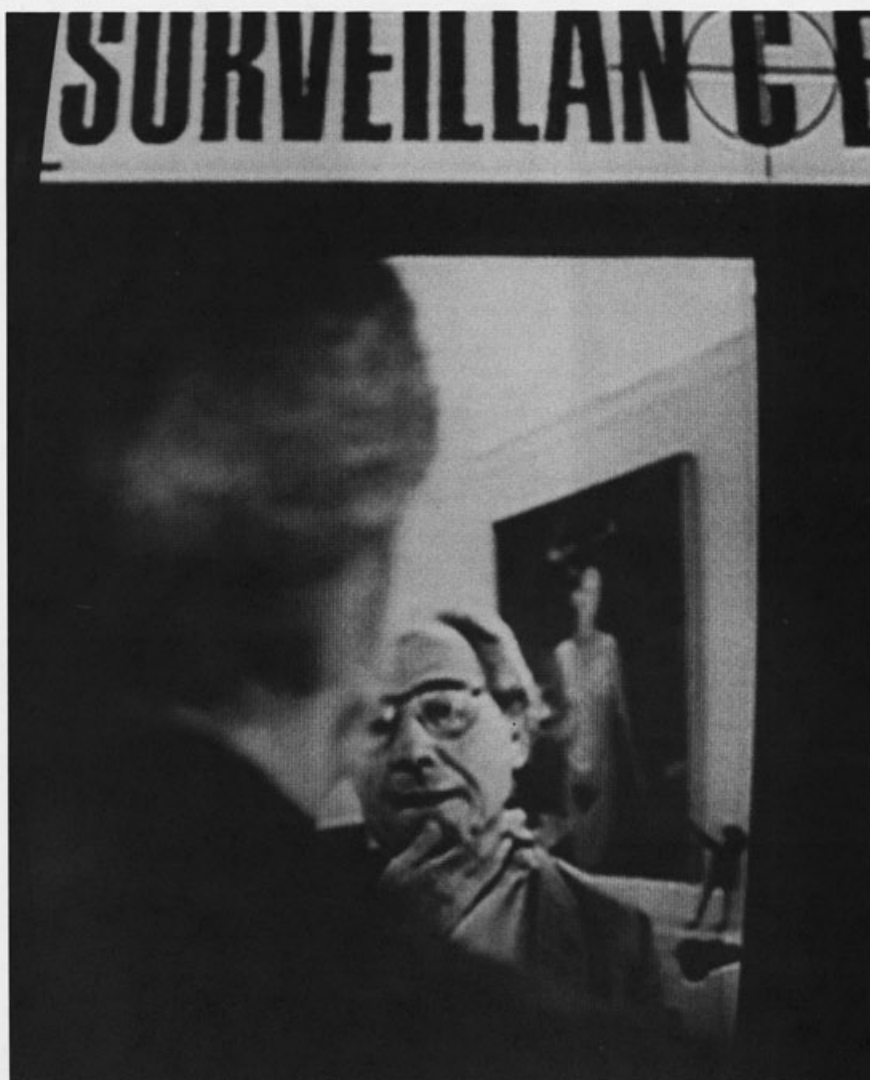
Though he has been said to have a "tragic sense" which "derives directly from his reflections on our imprisonment in the processed world of abstract power<sup>9</sup>," Baudrillard wishes to be neither tragic hero nor activist social critic. He walks a tightrope between romantic despair over loss of meaning and preachy revolutionary moralizing. Often he appears to pose as pure cynic ("Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the 'real' country, all of America, which is Disneyland . . . <sup>10</sup>."). He has focused his critical eye on vagaries of the contemporary art market, on Warhol and Rauschenberg, on "design" in everything from skyscrapers to refrigerators. And despite his influence on work by many current artists and critics, he remains a cool observer of contradictions in the art "scene": "Modern art wishes to be negative, critical, innovative and a perpetual surpassing, as well as immediately (or almost) assimilated, accepted, integrated, consumed<sup>11</sup>."

As a theorist, he says, his goal is to make "theory disappear"; in this, he adds,

*There has to be some pleasure at stake, of course, which is neither the pleasure of prophecy nor, I think, of annihilation (destruction for destruction's sake). A perverse pleasure, in short.<sup>12</sup>*

Insofar as he adopts a more "positive" theoretical aim, it is to accelerate processes of the loss of meaning:

*The only strategy is a catastrophic one and not at all dialectical. Things must be pushed to their limit, where quite naturally they reverse themselves and collapse.<sup>13</sup>*



Donna Rydlund/Lew Thomas. Listening to Baudrillard, 1987

During his visit to Houston Baudrillard spoke, in a public lecture at the University of Houston, about postmodern strategies of the masses in response to media manipulation. He now sees these masses (described earlier in his *In the Shadow of the Silent Majority*) as occupying a strategic position he calls "active indifference." His lecture set out this current historical situation in some detail. Baudrillard also participated in a colloquium with faculty and responded to questions on a wide range of topics from his writings. He sampled Houston's cultural offerings, from downtown skyscrapers to the Ship Channel, and from the Orange Show to the new Menil Museum, with evident attentive curiosity. Expecting to find that his intellectual balancing-act had produced a sort of grim tension in the acrobat, I was surprised by the man himself. In person he seems almost more gleeful than gloomy, and he responds to questions about his (often difficult) ideas with patience and yes, seductive wit.

## SIMULATION

In an open forum at the University of Houston, Baudrillard answered questions from the audience and a panel of five faculty members. What follows is a selection from the discussion.<sup>14</sup>

*What is simulation?*

The loss of the object into all its multiplications, so that it no longer exists; this means that the model is always here before the event. Simulation brings an end to the opposition between truth and falsehood. Why has simulation become our mode of reality?

It's not a question of cause and effect; the actual world is a simulation of the trans-historical one—and we must try to analyze the actual one. From the beginning, the history of the world is a simulation.

Can you clarify what you mean by the "hyperreal"?

It is what is more real than reality—it has more potentiality. It's what replaces reality and puts a neutral, indifferent order in its place. Something that establishes itself through excess. For example, fashion is the hyperreal which brings to an end the opposition between beautiful and ugly; fashion is what's more beautiful than beauty.

*Why did you write (in "What are You Doing after the Orgy?") that women watching a male stripper are more obscene than men watching female strippers?*

There's a seduction that happens in front of the perfect body, and the male look regards the female body as perfect. I'm trying to say that the male look didn't carry the hypothesis of castration. But if the female body is perfect (not castrated), then the male body has something in excess, and needs to be, not seduced but "reduced"; or castrated. The female gaze shows an obsession with castration, and this is obscene. But perhaps I'm wrong—it's what I've observed.

*You criticize the notions of progress and history. How do you see processes of change, or what comes after us?*

There are two "tracks" of life: history and fatality. History is the chronological order of events, which ends in death. On the other track, events occur and reoccur; it's a spiral, not a line. The terms of opposition might change—masculine/feminine, or production/seduction, but at the end one realizes that it's always the same opposition. Life is living this dual track. Sometimes the two tracks cross, and it's either tragic or sublime.

*You've criticized the University as a place where teachers and students exchange simulacra of learning. Yet you teach at a University; how do you see your role? I simulate teaching! Simulation doesn't mean "dissimulation" but re-enacting—a game with nothing at stake. In the 60's, the strategic place of knowledge was no longer there.*

The object of knowledge disappeared, and there was a psychodrama of learning. Then there was a period of grieving. Even that's over now; it's unbearable now. My position is desperate. But it's better than that of someone who's not aware—their position is morose and ambiguous. We can't anticipate, but we can hope, that there's something beyond this knowledge—but not something within the institution. It's hard to hold this critical position today, unless we try a new strategy of inertia.

*How would you describe your own discourse; and how should we hear it?*

Well, I don't provide an instruction manual! It's not a logical or dialectical discourse, but a fiction. It could be read as a science fiction novel. It's not a representative discourse. It started as a critical discourse; it searches for the coincidence between the discourse and the object.

*Is it a parody of the world?*

No, it's ironic/critical. The discourse is itself an object among other objects. It imitates. If it's discussing seduction, it's seductive; if it's about simulation, it's a simulation—but not as a lie, as a simulation. It tries to replicate the nature of ordinary objects. There's no stable position; it's off balance. At best it could be a discourse that moves between the traditional Western philosophical critical discourse and an ironic discourse. It's moving toward non-reference. It's not a tool, it's closer to narration, but it should not be taken as a pure aesthetic object and read for the pleasure of it.

*Can you say more about your view of seduction?*

It's broader than the sexual/erotic. It's a primitive strategy of power and magic. Seduction doesn't attempt to change the world. It takes things away from their origin and identity. In Western culture we have always produced the world; in

almost every other culture, the world has to be seduced. Seduction is opposed to oppositions between masculine/feminine, or presence/absence. It can be confused with simulation, but they're different. Seduction brings in a world of antagonisms, of dualities that are not opposites.

*What's your view of the relation between non-Western cultures and the realm of simulacra?*

It's all tied together. Simulation implies deterrence, which has the goal of putting everything into neutral. This provokes another degree of violence, and the process repeats itself. It's like AIDS, where there are degrees of illness. Alienation was very important, but the subject/other opposition has been cut across by indifference. Now they're in a network of contiguity. The subject who was alienated had a role to play. Its own identity before the Other. Now the subject is desperate. There's no more Other, negativity, dialectic. No more "System," "Capital," "Enemy." No more danger of alienation, but of transparency. *Is there a possible strategy in such a world?* There are two possible strategies. One way is to go the same direction but accelerate: in hope of a final catastrophe. This is the ironic strategy of the subject—irony, not subversion—catching the system in its own trap. The other strategy is resistance, acting out the passivity of objects. The two strategies converge, they play on hyperreality. They look negative in relation to "revolution," but they are working silently without need of our being conscious of them.

#### STRATEGIES

In his public lecture Baudrillard again described strategies of response to the encroaching, insidiously dominating power of the media. He contrasted an "optimistic" approach, which sees media as obeying the dialectic of production, to a "pessimistic" approach, which sees media occupying a position of power with no chance for a real response or exchange. Formerly, he explained, he had adopted the pessimistic view, and after that he had shifted to a strategy of subversion. Now, however, he discerns in the masses a new strategy of resistance—"active indifference."

This new view sees the silence of the masses not as alienated passivity but as an "ironic original strategy." In the past, philosophers condemned the alienation of the masses. But this only showed the arrogance of the philosophers, who presumed to speak for the masses and to know what they "really wanted"—to be subjects, with the free exercise of choice and will. Baudrillard now views the masses as "snobbish." What they seek is not to be subjects but to become objects—to be "irresponsible."

The aim of becoming objects is a paradoxical, clever strategy. All along, the media have treated the masses as objects, coercing them to want what they were seen, by the monitoring media, to want. This is a crucial characteristic of the media—to act as the masses' mode of subjectivity. Through the media, the masses are kept aware of "who they are" and of "what they prefer"—among TV shows or light beers, among colas, cars, candidates, or coolers. In this "voyeurism of the social," the social keeps "checking up on itself": "taking its own temperature." There is a resulting glut of information which informs no one—because "no one accepts a statistical evaluation of himself." As Baudrillard remarks, "The wonder of statistics is not in their objectivity but in their involuntary humor."

By letting statistics speak for them, without believing in them at all, the masses play a vast collective ironic game. People allow their subjectivity to be displaced onto other shoulders; they play at becoming objects. "Individuals parody the

media's treatment of them on screen, by becoming an impenetrable surface. They eclipse themselves in reversal and parody." The result is a "joyful expulsion of civic virtues" and "the extinction of power, will and meaning, surrounded by the halo of television."

Active indifference, the strategy of inertia, is thus an unconscious strategy against stupor. Like any unconscious impulse, this desire of the masses is to rebel against the "Father"—i.e., the "System." The System's formal strategy is to incalculable meaning and control it; the masses' strategy neutralizes the meaning of the media. But, emphasizes Baudrillard, he is not advocating this strategy, merely describing it, as the current historical and unconscious response to the actual situation we are in. He is asking, "Is it the media who seduce the masses, or the masses who seduce the media, transforming them into the show-biz of everyday life?"

#### SURRENDER?

Is Baudrillard's view science-fiction or fact? He calls it the former. How are we to respond to this strange seducer—this magician who disappears before our eyes? Shall we succumb to the enchantment of disappearing, "eclipsing" ourselves?

Baudrillard's "perverse discourse" is hard to criticize on its own terms. He has made those terms consistently, frankly, even brutally nihilistic. His pronouncements about the demise of reality undercut the Marxists (who still "believe in" power and production) and the psychoanalysts (who still "believe in" sexuality and desire)—but with a deliberate provocativeness—as in the swaggering tone of an older child informing a younger that there really is no Easter bunny.<sup>15</sup> He portrays fellow French intellectuals Foucault or Deleuze and Guattari as faint-hearted in their radicalism. As a negator of both being and meaning, he needn't (and can't consistently) deign to debate, but only to bait. It's as if he's playing at some game of "more-radical-than-thou" one-upmanship.

Other contemporary French intellectuals who have challenged conceptions of masculinity and femininity (such as Lacan or Irigaray) seem not to have had much impact on Baudrillard. At any rate, he utters essentialist-sounding claims about the nature of "woman" ("Woman is the object which plays out all the liquidities of desire<sup>16</sup>"); while simultaneously making a rear-guard retreat by remarking "It is of little import whether or not that corresponds to real women<sup>17</sup>." Baudrillard lets us feel it is passé and unsophisticated to worry about such mundane issues as equal pay or day care. Seduction, he promises, will overcome opposites; but what concretely is meant by saying that it nevertheless "preserves antagonisms"? And what will life be like when ongoing spirals return us to the same old opposition in some new form?

Baudrillard's (interesting) critique of Freud's castration-based theory of voyeurism rests on his own lyricism about the "perfect female body" (he writes of "the sumptuous indifference of the prostitute's body<sup>18</sup>"). He says men envy the neutral power achieved by the female stripper who has made herself pure body indifferent to being looked at<sup>19</sup>. But isn't it possible that this is precisely the envy of the male theorist? As a man and a thinker he would like to shed the skin of subjectivity and try out the body position. But he has the option of moving in and out of that object position (in fantasy) at will—i.e. he has a privilege not partaken in by women, who have historically found themselves objectified willy-nilly without choice or acquiescence. (And if the prostitute does have some power-as-object it is only reac-

tive power to the john-as-subject.<sup>20</sup>

As a universal strategy, the masses' self-eclipse into object-hood is also problematic. In his book on the silent majority Baudrillard cautioned against the intellectual's temptation to see this kind of inertia in positive terms as a revolution: "The denial of meaning has no meaning."<sup>21</sup> But as described in his lecture this strategy sounded an affirmative note: it was "active," a "resistance," a "victory." Has Baudrillard mellowed, or is this optimism illusory? I think it's the latter. He did, after all, refer to this strategy as "irresponsible." No goal of subjects making moral choices; instead, an amoral implosion of meaning which clears the ground on which subsequent spirals of duality can be erected. But what forces dictate these spirals and recurrent antagonisms? (Why spirals anyway, and not, say, loop-de-loops? Why are these the sorts of questions Baudrillard dismisses?)

At the bottom of Baudrillard's discourse there is nothing. It is, recall, a narration—a fiction with no referent. He criticizes Foucault for failing to see, in his subtle analysis of the diffuse operations of power, that power is itself a construction ("Power... fabricates the real<sup>22</sup>"). Baudrillard sees power relations as oppositions, hence as conceived within the realm of simulacra. His seductive magic conjures up some "beyond" to oppositions, and to the linear, pedestrian processes of power and oppression. In this "beyond," "dominators and dominated exist no more than victims and executioners<sup>23</sup>." Only in this "beyond" will reversible processes of the production of power cease (or be overcome). This suggests that it is somehow a sad illusion to undertake heroic activism in relation to current cases of oppression—that oppression itself is a mere simulation. Try telling this to some victims of our (simulated) reality.

Think for instance of the young women recently kidnapped, chained, tortured, brutalized, beaten, starved, raped, and eventually murdered by a Philadelphia madman. Their story became transparently present to us; the initial gruesome outline of facts took on a horrific hallucinatory fullness—a hyperreality. The truth was trampled in the lurid sequence of stories: photos of the survivors, graphic (retroactive) tales of neighbors smelling burned flesh, the murderer's father spitefully commenting he would gladly "pull the plug" on his own son. TV pictures of cops lugging out huge sections of basement pipe (to which victims were chained) or drainage traps (to sift for chopped-up body parts). On screen the story is no more nor less real to us than the horror flick on the next channel, or the final cannibalism episode of "Hill Street Blues," or the soon-to-be-released mini-series.

But somehow "inside" all this hyperreality, in some land beyond the screen, there were real people with real suffering bodies. They were quadruply oppressed: they were women, they were black, they were poor, they were mentally retarded. They occupied the intersection of diverse complex scenarios of victimization. They were caught up in ongoing social constructions of real power (what Foucault calls "bio-power"<sup>24</sup>), reflected in their life circumstances, their physical neighborhood, their institutional incarceration. If Foucault's account of how bio-power was at work in each of these complex changing schemas, or a Marxist or feminist analysis, affords even some understanding of the actual processes of domination at work here, then should we slide so readily from our "illusion" of reality into Baudrillard's "beyond"? Can we, in good conscience, slip into the easy sophisticated embrace of inertia?

Or does Baudrillard's subtle strategy of indifference leave room for activism tempered by an ironic consciousness? Seduction, after all, straddles and subverts what we now see as oppositions.

From Zarathustra:

*What do you think, you Higher Men? Am I a prophet? A dreamer? A drunkard? An interpreter of dreams? A midnight bell?*

*A drop of dew? An odour and scent of eternity? Do you not hear it? Do you not smell it? My world has just become perfect, midnight is also noonday.*

*Pain is also joy, a curse is also a blessing, the night is also a sun—begone, or you will learn: a wise man is also a fool.<sup>25</sup>*

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, sect. 481, trans. Walter Kaufmann.

2. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1974), p. 74, sect. 6.54.

3. Jean Baudrillard, *Forget Foucault*, trans. Nicole Dufresne (New York: Semiotext(e), 1987), p. 24.

4. At the faculty colloquium, University of Houston, April 6, 1987.

5. Arthur Kroker and David Cook, *The Postmodern Scene, Excremental Culture and Hyper-Aesthetics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 170.

6. In conversation.

7. See "On Nihilism" (1981), quoted in part and discussed by Paul Foss in "Despero Ergo Sum", in Andre Frankovits, Ed., *Seduced and Abandoned: The Baudrillard Scene* (Glebe, Australia: Stonemoss Services, 1984), pp. 9-16.

8. *Forget Foucault*, p. 46.

9. Kroker and Cook, p. 171.

10. Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra", trans. Paul Foss and Paul Patton, in Brian Wallis, Ed., *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: New Museum, 1984), p. 262.

11. Baudrillard, "Gesture and Signature: Semiurgy in Contemporary Art," in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1981), p. 110.

12. From "Forget Baudrillard," an interview with Sylvère Lotringer, published with *Forget Foucault*, trans. Phil Beitchmann, Lee Hildreth, and Mark Pollizotti, p. 128.

13. Quoted from Baudrillard's *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (Paris, 1976) by Karlis Racevskis, in Michel Foucault and the Subversion of Intellect (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 154.

14. What appears here is based on my edited notes, and I alone am responsible for any errors or misrepresentations. Baudrillard spoke mostly in French, which was translated by Bernard Brunon.

15. He speaks, for instance, of Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish* with cloying admiration as "a magisterial but obsolete theory" (*Forget Foucault*, p. 16.)

16. "Forget Baudrillard," p. 95.

17. "Forget Baudrillard," p. 95.

18. "What Are You Doing after the Orgy?", *Artforum* 22, no. 2 (October 1983), p. 44.

19. "What Are You Doing after the Orgy?", p. 44.

20. It is not unheard-of for feminists to argue that the prostitute does have a sort of power; consider, for example, some of the discussions in (and about) Lizzie Borden's recent film *Working Girls*.

21. Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), pp. 40-41.

22. *Forget Foucault*, p. 44.

23. *Forget Foucault*, p. 44.

24. For a brief and clear exposition, see Michel Foucault: *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 126-142.

25. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 331.

Cynthia Freeland is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston. Her article "Accomplices of Desire" appeared in the December 1986 issue of SPOT.



MASTER EXHIBIT OF  
INFORMATION AND  
BEAUTY

Presented by HCP for NASA/Johnson Space Center, IN SPACE: A Photographic Journey, May 12-June 17, 1987 at Transco Tower, Houston, Texas, and to travel.

By April Rapier

"This is not a show about art. This is serious." -Dave Crossley

Definitions of art notwithstanding, science, technology, and exploration in equal measure have resulted in an overwhelmingly beautiful and profound exhibition, curated by Muffy McLanahan and Dave Crossley. Space exploration exists for the whole of humanity; without photography, we would never (certainly not in our lifetime) see what is presented in these images. The primary function of both the concept of space travel and the exhibition of images made in space is to show us where we're headed, as little as we know about it, as inevitably as living and dying. Crossley relates an anecdote: as a scriptwriter for the Burke Baker Planetarium years ago, he was asked to write about the fact that earth, in a few million years or so, would be devoured by the sun as it becomes a red giant. He thought, "Now wait a minute. Nobody told me about this." Millions of years in the future, yes, but even so—it makes space exploration, the money involved and the risks, what we as humans have to do. "It's all about being a visionary and discoverer," he says.

A year and a half went into the culling of this vast and dramatic show. Thousands and thousands of images were viewed, and some are being seen in the show for the first time. The groundwork, both political and financial, was laid by McLanahan, as were the plans for an attendant dinner and gala, complete with the original Apollo astronauts. McLanahan and Crossley began the project by researching, via books and magazines, every possible avenue that would turn up photographs made of and in space. This led to individuals and agencies, such as the Jet Propulsion Laboratories, NASA/Johnson Space Center, Earth Satellite Corp. (Landsat), and the Lunar and Planetary Institute. Any projects funded by the government yield negatives that are in the public domain, meaning that citizens have full access to view and order them. Private agencies, however, were a different matter. The logistics at first seemed overwhelming, but generosity was the order of the day—HCP paid no usage or printing fees whatsoever. The Lunar and Planetary Institute in Clear Lake is an abundant data bank and image resource. Once the images were selected, however, it became necessary to find the negatives. They turned to Barry Schroder of TGS Technology, Inc., a photo-interpreter with this corporation; not only did he locate the negatives, but he wrote the majority of the fascinating captions that accompany the exhibition.

The name David Malin surfaced again and again in conjunction with telescopic photography, and his interest in the project and congenial solicitousness led to the decision to rely on him heavily for this category of images. (The Royal Observatory in Edinburgh, Scotland, and the Anglo-Australia Telescope rest atop the same mountain in Australia, the former being a wide-angle telescope, the latter a telephoto.) Malin



David Malin (Anglo Australian Telescope Board). The Helix Nebula

was brought in to speak, and his lectures were magnificent, truly a highlight of the event. The topics ranged from the technical aspects of space photography to the heavens themselves (the term "wispy nebulosity," which may or may not have origins in scientific terminology, was used on more than one occasion, calling up brilliant visions heretofore unexamined in this writer's artistic vocabulary), and were a perfect balance of the theoretical and the technological. He declined to divulge his astrological sign, however.

The exhibition itself, 173 pieces, which is set to travel around the country, defies referencing in standard terminology; the fact of the photographs makes them utterly unique. That they are so rare, albeit plentiful, lends an unreal air to their viewing. The lofty and elegant lobby of the Transco Tower is the perfect setting, for they are huge not only in dimension, but in their ability to stimulate imagination. As McLanahan put it, "It doesn't take a great deal of preparation to understand the pictures—people can easily relate to their beauty." It provides one with the joyous opportunity of a startling communal experience; little effort is made to contain spontaneous gasps and comments of pleasure and awe. The composition of our planet—scale, elements, terrain both populated and desolate—is translated to texture, color, pattern and skewed perspective, imaging and enhancement so technologically advanced that it at once reduces and elevates our experience. Photography is once again rendered mysterious and unfathomable, its advanced usage here so different from one's ordinary understanding of the medium. Often, the images remind one of photomicrography, reinforcing the fragility of our endangered planet. (Although Malin agrees that the planet is in dire shape, he feels strongly that it is resilient, and will survive, a most encouraging point of view.) Other images seem familiar, recalling the view from an airplane at 35,000 feet, super-and sub-structures dominating the recurrent and easily identifiable grid-work. Vast unpopulated spaces remind one that nature prevails, and humans, although uncomfortably concentrated, are merely a minority in comparison.

The various techniques of scan-

ning afford astonishing clarity, resolution, and color (although color is a relative term here, other systems of reference being used for identification and determination). The more monochromatic the hues, the more subtle or subliminal the notions contained therein; some of the black and white images (of Venus and Mars, notably) are indistinguishable from landscapes made on earth (a delightful connection, returning one to photography's origins within a traceable frame of reference). Traditional portraiture is brought to mind in images such as one of Walt Cunningham, looking extremely exhausted and introspective on the last leg of his flight in 1968. Another amazing aspect is the naming of things in space—descriptive and fanciful, the Horsehead Nebula, for one, conjuring up especially magical images. The most popular and often-requested images from the exhibition, the Landsat earthshots, are, ironically, unavailable to the public.

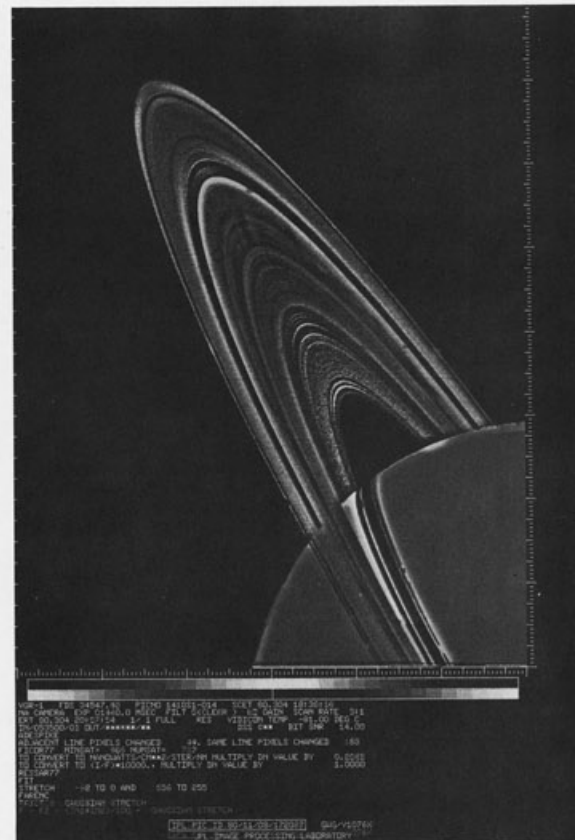
The elemental dissection via these images of our planet is quite powerful; photographs of space are another experience altogether. An immediate shift in emotional perspective is brought about by the inclusion of a portion of any space vehicle in the photograph. The vastness of as yet uncharted space becomes all the more alarming and intriguing when a human is placed in its context. The facts and figures, part of the exhibit available to the willing reader, inform on one level, but the vision of space penetrates to a new and highly charged emotional plane of consciousness. Distances charted on Mars, for example, become delightfully real when compared to the mileage between New York and San Francisco. Saturn's rings and moons look as artificial as they do actual, their myth having far stronger credence. Many of Malin's telescopic photographs show the various planets and formations in revolutionary new ways, never before seen or envisioned. So many of the predictions that were once the realm of science fiction are being proven true; when asked whether he felt as though life existed elsewhere in the universe, Malin responded without hesitation in the affirmative. These modern day cartographers use real film and cameras; their results are as seemingly implausible, on the surface of things and to the layman, as the

proposition once was that the world was round.

There are other aspects to the exhibition as well, such as displays of cameras used in space, a transparency viewing light box, a three-screen audio/video produced by NASA, and an "antique" contraption juxtaposing the planets as they were thought to exist, in relation to

one another, in the late 1960's. One can thoroughly enjoy this masterpiece of information and beauty on many levels; as enlightenment, it is unequalled.

Recently elected President of HCP's Board, April Rapier writes for several art publications, in addition to doing her work as a photographer.



Photograph of the rings of Saturn from Voyager 1, showing subtle color variations and previously unknown structural features.

# COMPUTER GENERATED PHOTOS

## READING MANUAL

The exhibition of computer generated color photographs by MANUAL (Ed Hill/Suzanne Bloom) was exhibited at Moody Gallery, Houston, Texas, February 21—March 27, 1987.

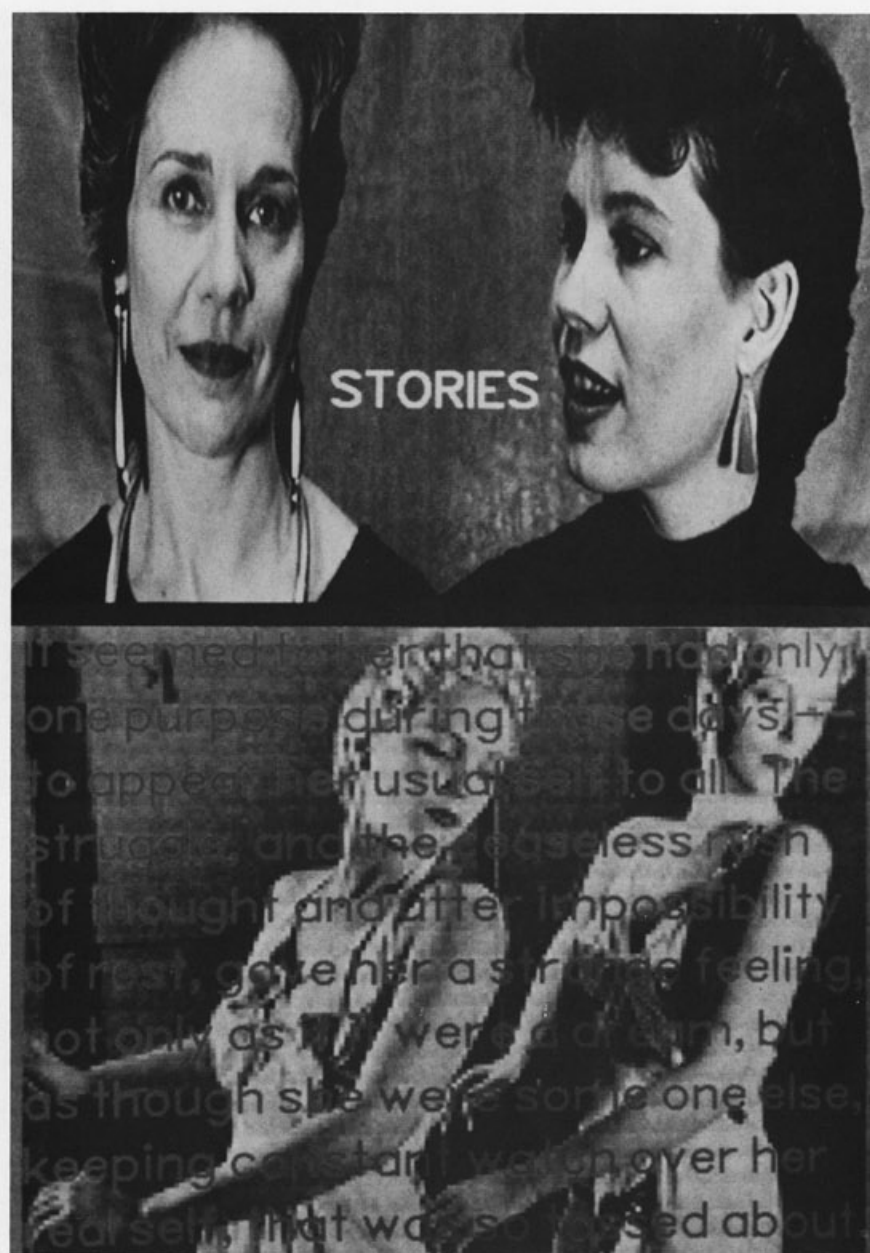
By Margo Reese

*This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact print the legend.*  
—Scott, the editor of the *Shinbone Star* from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*

In the West today where we are surrounded by a vast array of visible and readable productions, "legenda" (stories for the edification of our faith) proliferate in representation as fact. Narrative models drawn up by mass entertainment, advertising, and political representations imprint our behavior so that we may acquire the kind of character which makes us want to act as we must act to ensure the status quo. The fables of advertising and information "give to be seen what must be believed."<sup>1</sup> We are obliged then to believe what we see (what we are shown). Simulacra thrive on our enlightened, positivist belief that the real is visible and that what is visible is real. To an unprecedented degree our perception of the "real" is mediated today by culture, by our cultural artifacts, language, representation, and products. The ideology of a society is imprinted in its production and consumption of material objects and in those forms used to communicate its ideology (language, representation). Hegemony operates as much through cultural subjection as it does through economic exploitation. Culture is a source for social control and the status of representation within it is not neutral.

MANUAL's (Bloom/Hill's) investigation into cultural signs is not limited to the mechanics of signification (the signifier and the signified) but intends through deconstruction to question our assumed unequivocal ("natural") relationship to language (representation) and to expose the processes at work within images. The work, a series of computer generated color photographs employing collage/montage techniques to layer imagery and language, provides a model through which the viewer may reappropriate the complexities of experience from the over-simplifications of conditioning. These short, pithy statements work textually to problematize representation and reading in order to center the viewer on the main topic of concern, "the reading of images" (not just their images but all images high and low). Combining the pictorial and the literary in one work undermines distinctions between visual and non-visual codes of communication. In approaching the images as visual and verbal texts the viewer finds that the visual and the non-visual interpenetrate each other in a variety of ways (when we read, visual images may be called to mind; when we look at an image we may "make sense of it" with words). The combining of the pictorial and literary is a strategy to engage the viewer on more than one level.

MANUAL states that they "do not create fixed meanings"; preferring that viewers create their own meanings. The possibility is present for the viewer to play (if you will) at constructing for him/herself the meaning(s) of the work as it occurs, through the conjunction of words and images. Left in an undefined state the spectator can "read" the text according to what it tells him/her about his/her own situation. Through questioning, a variety of meanings (even contradictory ones) may be called up that may all be verifiable and valid on different levels in the work. The image is posited as a complex utterance meant to be read as an interruption of the inarticulate (produced to be seen) narratives of our social discourse, in which both objects and words have been hollowed out to hold our dreams and desires in suspended anticipation. The work is a site of contestations, situated as it is at an



MANUAL (Hill/Bloom), *Stories*, 1987

intersection of languages, of the self, of art and of society. Interpretations proliferate. The audience is seen as not simple.

Images are around us in mixed and varied ways. MANUAL appropriates imagery and representational technology from the culture at large in order to critique representation from within. Culture's codes of transmission—the pixels of the computer screen, the scan lines of the television set, half-tone dots, and the less apparent grain structure of the photograph—are the determining conditions for the perception of the image. Technology surrounds us with its presence which is in turn represented in the work. The use of appropriated imagery (both high and popular forms) and collage/montage methods functions as a counter practice to the reigning ideology (mythology) of still photography, which couches aesthetic mystification in moments of photographic truth, notions of autonomous creativity and the resultant fine print. Appropriational tactics ensure that the criticality of the work will reflect on discourses both inside and outside the art world. Representation is used against itself, to deconstruct, to undermine its authority, to articulate its unreality.

In *Faith* our trust in representation is being called into question. "Faith," the image of the word, appears like a mirage in the photograph in front of us. The word levitates, wavering slightly, a fugitive likely to disappear. We read the word. Faith, which once resided in the unseen, has now been conjured

up, a hallucinatory sign of its own presence in the image. The word is composed concretely of large, black, opaque letters against a scarf-like background of shimmering magenta-colored silk. As in "now you see it, now you don't," the satirical backdrop acts as a veil to both reveal and conceal from our view the body of a tank. This time though the person pulling the strings has let down halfway through the act. The veil of pleasure has been dropped to reveal what is behind the illusion. The tank sits quietly, unconcerned, "an instrument of ballistics"; its position secure in our capacity for forgetting.<sup>2</sup> Faith, that fertile ground for uncritical belief in representation relies on widespread acceptance of the objectivity of the image, its transparency, its innocence, its innocuousness. We are the faithful, ready to believe, full of faith, in the declarations and the promises, who, held in the sway of the image, have acquiesced to its power, its authority, its credibility. Seeing is believing; faith materialized in representation posits a secular religion. Relieved of doubt, we are also relieved of responsibility. Does blind faith lead to blind submission? Does the image denote the terms of our surrender? Or does deconstruction in alerting us to the fact that images do things—deceive, operate for real interests etc.—reveal the smoking gun and in doing so allow us to withdraw our belief from the myth of representation, leaving it disarmed?

One subcultural strategy for interference with the deployment of representational myth is demon-

strated through a redeployment of representation in *Lore/Lure*. The original commodity image (a product advertisement from the 40's) by counter appropriation measures—such as reproducing the image out of context, cropping it to the point where we hardly see the product and enlarging it twice—has been remanipulated to the extent that the net effect is one of disturbance and doubt as to the original intentions of the image. The enticement of the advertising message can be seen in the euphoric expression of the attractive, cheerful woman leaning over her new washer. Replication of the image, close cropping, and subsequent enlargement point to the fact this is an image of an image and what is being sold is more than a product, it's a way of life. The cheerful, optimistic view of life presented here is shot through with the false promises (for the poor, minorities, and middle class in times of recession, expanding population, shrinking resources) of the mass advertisement media. This advertisement is history but we're still living with the myths propagated by such imagery. Plug into the lore/lure of the American dream machine (no less an item of manufacture than a new appliance). Depicted here is the classic home of the "good life" of conspicuous consumption, labor saving devices, over production, and planned obsolescence. Overlaying the cropped advertisement is a schematic line drawing of the perfect tract house with all the tasteful accoutrements; one chimney, one gable, proper pitch to the roof, etc. The house exists to repel life's little





MANUAL (Hill/Bloom), Orientation, 1987

irritations and to reaffirm the basic inequities of industrial capitalism and its class relationships in the concepts of private property, the accumulation of capital and the specialization of sexual roles. The commodity-sign speaks "to all in order to better return each one to his place".<sup>3</sup> In a society organized for profit, representation serves the forces of capital. In the circularity of this system the words which frame the image have become interchangeable and we are not sure which is the lure and which is the lure.

The closed circle of commodity and sign are linked together in a cultural sphere of domination where images function as ideological tools of cultural persuasion. Signs play an all-powerful role today as an instrument of manipulation used to create needs, sell goods, mold minds and discipline bodies. Just how susceptible to the pressures of conformity the individual has become through representation's persuasive powers is addressed in ORIENTATION. The work is divided into three sections. The left section shows the top of a vanity abstracted into pixel segments (but still recognizable) over which is a brief narrative about watching Mom apply makeup and fearing you will never measure up to the model (in this case Mom). The right section is a line drawing of a woman's face oriented on the page in such a way as to appear flat, as if we could peel her up from the page like a decal. The center image depicts a roomful of young, attractive women seated at tables all looking in one direction (off camera) and all powdering their noses in the same way (the image is a reproduction of a photograph picturing a makeup class from the 40's/50's era). The image is a model of contagion—the implication being that everyone (of the type depicted) is powdering their nose in this way. Post World War II is the period in which the main agencies for social regimentation became the "other directed agencies" of the peer group, schooling, the corporate bureaucracy and finally the mass media.<sup>4</sup> Reality is now instituted by what the other is assumed to believe and be doing. The image acts as a social referent made factual by its visibility, which in turn multiplies its modes of behavior in social life by virtue of its model, which in turn reproduces what is being instituted in the image as reality and so on. Socialization today is achieved through mob enthusiasm for cultural reinforcement in the quotation and recitation of images.<sup>5</sup>

In DOGMA, ideology is implicated in a clandestine system of domination and subjection where images perform as operatives of cultural enforcement. A series of six ambiguous image fragments are brought together in an unsavory mixture (with fascistic/sadistic overtones) that never quite coalesce. In one image a tough, leathery mask hovers ominously in an undefined space (a void) coded only by the pixels of the computer screen. In another a woman is depicted floating nude in the spectator space of simulation, a sight for all eyes to feast on. In yet another image silver-

ware has been thoughtfully laid out. In still another the looming shadow of a man falls across our path and angles dramatically back into the image. In the last image a man obscures his face from the camera with his hand which is further obscured by a line drawing of a military jet fighter. The specter of representation haunts us authoritatively, it propagandizes (spoon-feeds), sets up boundaries (limits thought), objectifies (masters), commodifies (makes productive) and regulates from afar where its affiliations can remain obscure, cloaked in mystery.

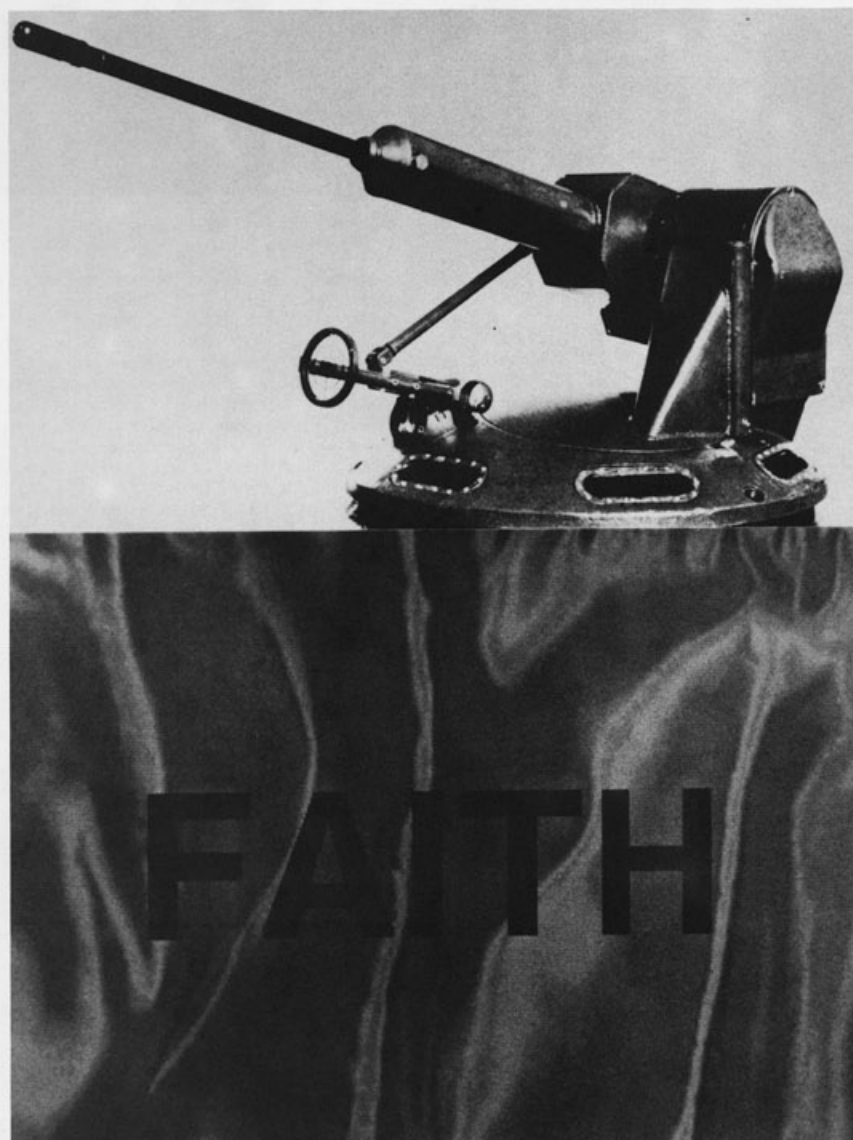
The voice of subjection is everywhere and nowhere, narrating incessantly. In *Why Don't You Call* the question is imperative, the tone accusatory. The voice is the law. We are compelled to search for a telephone. In *But Wait There's More* the voice is urging. We are only too familiar with the sales pitch. As Marshall Blonsky states in the introduction to his book *On Signs* "You will find little in America today that isn't a substance manifesting someone, or apparatus, or code intending you."<sup>6</sup> The image acts as a projectile. We are the receptors. The world is a network of signs in which we are all implicated; in consuming the code we reproduce the system.

MANUAL's work seeks to expose our cultural agenda as a corpus of myths with its flaws and affiliations, its clichés and complicities, and in doing so shake us from our unquestioning reception of representation and its messages, which traverse and position us. Signs manufacture reality out of simulacra, change sight into belief, fold legend into fact, but we are not entirely powerless over these acts of mythical speech. In alerting us to the voices of subjection, MANUAL attempts with their art to subvert the one-way process of culture and ideology that Baudrillard has called "speech without response."<sup>7</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Michael De Certeau, "The Jabbering of Social Life," Marshall Blonsky, ed., *On Signs* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p.152.
2. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p.238.
3. Hal Foster, "Readings in Cultural Resistance," *Recodings* (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1985), p.170.
4. Christopher Brookeman, *American Culture and Society Since the 1930's* (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), p.108.
5. Michael De Certeau, op.cit., p.152.
6. Marshall Blonsky, "Introduction," *On Signs* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p.L.
7. Jean Baudrillard, notes from a lecture given at the University of Houston in April, 1987.

Margo Reece is a photographer and print-maker teaching at the Art Institute of Houston.



MANUAL (Hill/Bloom), Faith, 1987

# CURATING IN CRISIS

The exhibitions (May 15—June 28). PhotoTechnology and New Light: The Holographic Image, were organized by HCP: May 15—June 28.

Just outside the long shadow of Transco Tower and the spectacular exhibition there, IN SPACE: A Photographic Journey (sponsored by HCP), the Houston Center for Photography is also presenting an exhibit, PHOTO-TECHNOLOGY which, should someone care to make the comparison, would rate as one of the more unusual in the organization's history. A list of observations to support this position might read as follows...

The show is unique in that:

(1) Actual costs of producing the entire exhibit remained less than what HCP used to spend on opening invitations alone.

(2) The Center's conference room has been totally dedicated to use as gallery space—as opposed to a workroom where those brave enough to exhibit their work in progress often see it buried under bulk mail or hidden behind projection screens.

(3) A conscious effort was made to eliminate any image that was considered "straight"; that is one that did not enter or involve some electronic medium.

(4) The exhibition, through the efforts of Jeff DeBevec, takes a serious look at holography as a photographic art form.

(5) A corporate tech-rep (Alan Measom from Global Services Inc.) was invited to demonstrate a product (Canon's Video Still Camera) which represents the leading technology on which the exhibition was based.

**PHOTO-TECHNOLOGY:** An exhibition by artists working with high technology, videodigital/computer-generated, manipulated, or transmitted images. An exhibition curated on the basis of process rather than aesthetic content.

With the budget constraints placed on this exhibition by the board members of HCP it became a challenge and a pleasure to curate. The challenge was obvious, almost a dare, and the pleasure came in the form of the educational experience of finding, with one exception, artists in Houston who could more than adequately meet the requirements.

Dean Chachere is a student, new age disc jockey, and art party organizer who happens to produce very interesting video portraits of his friends. Dean uses video as a tool and does not pretend to address any theoretical or intellectual issue through his work. His transformations of Polaroid images through soft focus video and Cibachrome prints is outstanding.

I first saw Andy Mann and his "Video Matrix" at Lawndale Annex on a cold night when eight people showed up to see a video presentation there. Andy committed his art, eight video monitors, a VCR and camera to HCP for the duration of the exhibition, did his own installation and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to show his work to a broader audience. Andy's videos are designed for playback on four monitors which are electronically switched to reverse and invert the image. When viewed they combine to produce a constantly changing single image which is hypnotically kaleidoscopic and which stopped people in their tracks on opening night.

The collaborative team of Donna Rydland/Lew Thomas utilize video to facilitate expression of a number of concerns dealing with objectification, appropriation, and the relationship between viewer and viewed subject. Lew Thomas has incorporated video into several bodies of work but the new work is more personal, perhaps less accessible than his movie still series with its image/caption readability. The images here have more depth and require more of the viewer than a mere glance.

MANUAL (Ed Hill and Suzanne



Ron Scott, Watch with Golf Ball (WATBAL), 1987

Bloom) have for years done amazing work in the area of computer-manipulated images. They combine appropriated images and text with line illustration on a high resolution graphics system. The image is photographed from a flat screen scan monitor using filters to re-create the color image on negative film. It is interesting to note the similarities in the earlier work of MANUAL and Lew Thomas and their present common interest in the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard who visited Houston recently.

Charles Schorre is Texas Artist of the Year, painter, photographer, philosopher, mentor, and of all things, video montage artist. Charles' two pieces, one of which was featured on the cover of the Spring issue of SPOT, are delightful surprises from someone considered to be a "more conventional artist." Schorre's collaged, painted-on, and re-photographed screens make up the most eloquent of video pieces.

Ron Scott's work was fundamental to the success of the exhibition. Ron is a well known and popular commercial photographer. Among his colleagues he has become an authority on computer-generated images. His work has been featured on the cover of *Photo District News*. Ron shares the same enthusiasm for his work as the most dedicated non-commercial "artist." Although the images were created for clients, they reflect Ron's interest in and understanding of the fact that he is working as an artist in a new medium (even down to his fascination with the computer language titles for each piece).

Michael Brodsky sent work to HCP in response to an invitation published in AFTERIMAGE—an invitation which (after reading his bio and artistic track record) must have seemed written for him. Brodsky has spent years experimenting with electronic, digitized images and their transmission. It is no surprise that upon continued examination they remain among the strongest images in the exhibit. Michael combines fragmented media images ranging from the nightly news to game shows to simulate in a single image the constant assault of electronic media. The meaning of Brodsky's work is reinforced by his use of the very media he draws his raw materials from, as he manipulates the images with a computer and transmits them via modem to have them electronically printed.

In addition to the visual artists mentioned, performance artists Guillermo Pulido and Edie Scott contributed to opening night with their work titled "Two Part Inventions in B Flat." This event was a first for HCP (unless you count last year's performance by Primordial

Soup at the Parking Lot Party). Edie and Guillermo incorporated live action, video, lawn mowers, film, Polaroids, water hoses, and burning clothing with an audience observing from inside, to make some statement on the issues of photo-technology. Only the patient and dedicated members of that audience who return to HCP to view the edited tape and completed installation will gain the full statement intended by Pulido and Scott.

Last to be mentioned here, but perhaps the most important aspect of opening night, was the appearance of Alan Measom who demonstrated Canon's Video Still Camera System. Canon has produced a 35mm style camera which internally digitizes up to fifty images and stores them on a two inch diameter magnetic disk. When played back, these images are instantly displayed on a monitor and can be reproduced on an ink jet printer or transmitted to a remote receiver. The camera was placed in the hands of interested photographers during the opening, and images from the printer were used to begin building an installation exhibit.

The PhotoTechnology exhibit at HCP stands, as the invitation reads, as an exploration of the electronic imaging environment. As the systems and tools within this environment become more common and more powerful, more artists will run them through their experimental paces. Today's capabilities are already amazing most and frightening many. It is important to realize that through media and/or adversisting we are subject to the most sophisticated product of this technology while the technology itself remains virtually invisible. Equally important then is the artists' willingness to enter, explore, and challenge this technology.

Past Secretary of HCP's Executive Board, James Bell is a photographer and independent curator currently living in Houston.



Video artist Andy Mann photographed opening night with Canon's Video Still Camera.

# NEW LIGHT: THE HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE

By Jeff DeBevec

Holograms are made by illuminating a subject with laser light. Image focusing lenses are not used. The reflected light waves are incident on a photosensitive glass plate which records an interference pattern. (AGFA and Kodak manufacture the glass plates and film.) The interference pattern, processed with pyrogallol acid, contains the visual information and will play it back when lit with an appropriate light source. Since the hologram will record detail on the order of a wavelength of light (632.8 nanometers for helium-neon laser light), the exposure must be made on an optical table to insulate the entire set-up from external vibration.

Holography was theorized in 1947 by physicist Dennis Gabor as a high-resolution scientific imaging tool. The technique was fleshed out in the 1960's with the development of the laser, and through the work of scientists in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

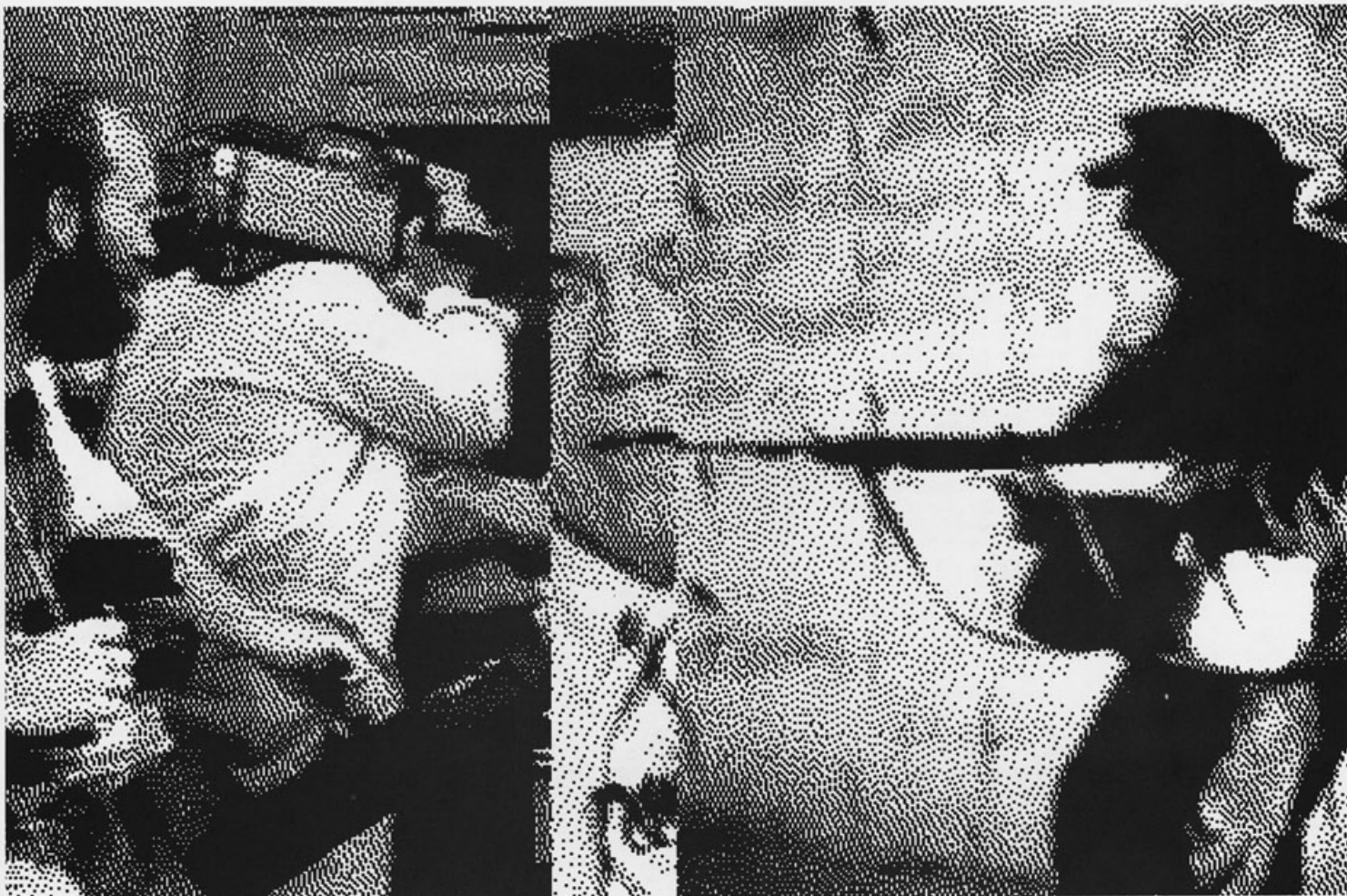
Applications for holography have developed slowly. Since the late 1960's, it has been used as a tool in science, engineering and medicine. Current uses include bar code readers which use a form of holography technology; and the holographic security imprint, now seen on credit cards, is a recent development that is expected to be incorporated as protection of currencies against counterfeiting.

Holography's area of widest appeal has been as a display medium. *National Geographic* has featured embossed mylar reproductions of holographic masters on two of their magazine covers, employing its massive publicity power to showcase this new imagery to the world. Manufacturers are now testing the marketing appeal of holograms, which can be seen on a variety of products. Readability and brightness of mass-produced holograms are current hurdles.

As an artform, holography is in its infancy. There are only a handful of master holographers (less than 100 worldwide) and only a fraction of those will explore the medium as art. Traditional galleries have been wary of exhibiting holography because of the special lighting requirements and a general uncertainty about its "validity" as art. (I'm sure there are historic parallels with with photography in its early days.)

The HCP show was curated to illustrate variety. It includes the works of prominent holographers





Michael Brodsky, Media Probes: Between a Rock and a Hard Place, 1986

who have figured in the development of the medium from the outset. Margaret Benyon, well-known for her pulsed laser pieces, is considered to be the first artist to use holography in her work (1971). Steve Smith and Tom Cvetkovitch worked together during the 1970's to develop many of the technical procedures used today by holographers. Melissa Crenshaw is a master of color processing techniques. Ed Wesly is respected as an educator and a champion of small system beginning holography. Frank Davis and Robin Song are Houston holographers who, in association with the Anthony Foundation, have developed a facility to teach holography.

Houston photographer Jeff DeBevec curated the exhibit, New Light: The Holographic Image, for HCP.



Margaret Benyon: Cat's Cradle (pulsed reflection hologram), 1983



Photo by Jeff DeBevec: New Light: The Holographic Image

# THE REAL, THE RE- PRESENTED LEW THOMAS: PICTURES ON WORDS

Lew Thomas' photographs were exhibited at the Allen Street Gallery, Dallas, Texas, February 27—April 5, 1987.

By Jill A. Kyle

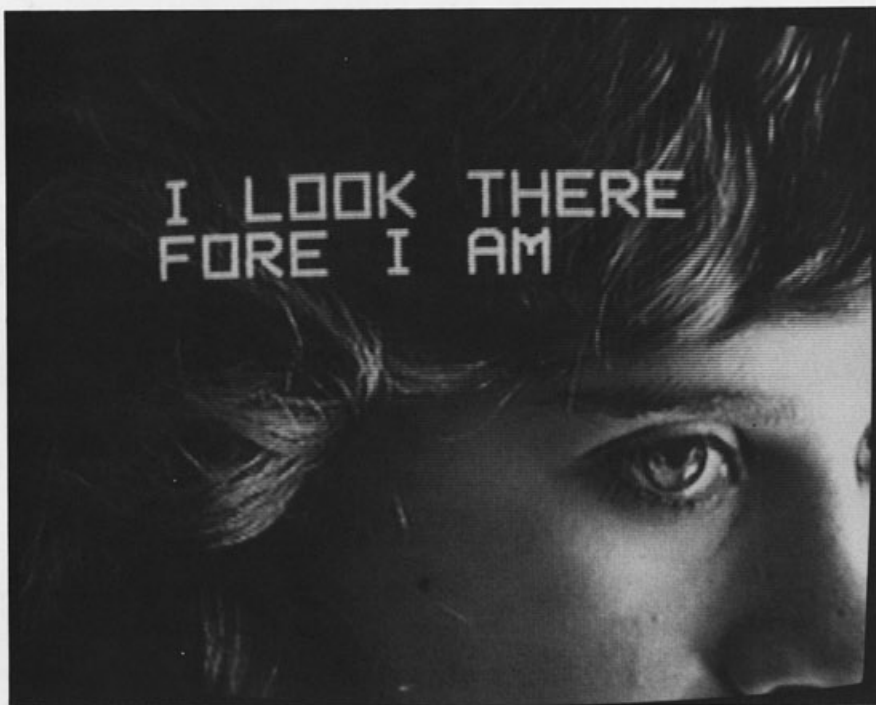
Lew Thomas' recent exhibit in Dallas, *Pictures on Words*, was a survey of his photographic work over the past 15 years. It makes clear the fact that he has always seen his art as both bound to its historical moment and as an instrument for communicating more than just an aesthetic message. Photography, which has come to mediate, to fully represent in fact, the empirical world for most postmodern cultures, is the privileged medium for an artist like Thomas. He uses it as a tool or scope for expanding philosophical investigations of larger contexts in which he sees artistic texts embedded.

During the 70's, photography in Thomas' genre was essentially an elaborate formalism conceived within tight, dry, ideological frameworks. Movement and multiple perspectives in "Throwing—Nikommat," 1973, and "Jumping-with-Nikommat," 1973, are related to Cubist experiences of visual and tactile effects produced by objects extending into space. And "Sink," 1972, an austere enactment of real-time, real-space, has affinities to Minimalist thinking in the sequential repetition of an everyday item, the absence of self and the apparent chastisement of too-ready, complacent enjoyment.

By 1976 Thomas' perspective was fully structuralist. His concerns centered on the applicability of linguistic models to visual art and other forms of cultural expression. Theorizing on the meaning of an artwork in relation to broader contexts of social signification, and, of course, doing so through photography, it was Thomas in his most restrictive, highly intellectualized phase. He edited two books—*Photography and Language*, 1976, the catalogue for an exhibit of the same name which Thomas curated (along with Carl Loeffler and John Lamkin), and *Structuralism and Photography*, 1979—both containing essays and photographic work as representations of trends in contemporary photography and in the critical theory pertaining to it. "Bibliography #3," 1977, an important piece from the period, was an outgrowth of the bibliography that appeared in *Photography and Language*. A black and white photo silkscreen of the original booklet but in an altered version, "Bibliography" is an example of Thomas' insistence on the use of photographic imagery to convey information about cultural and artistic ideas. Acting as self-critic in the work, Thomas drew lines through some of the 1976 entries, the ones with ideologies no longer in tune with his own. The gesture of defacement by lines, which modifies relationships and context present in an earlier reference, to create new ones in a separate object, is most certainly an allusion to that wily chess player who did a similar thing when he drafted so irreverently over the Mona Lisa's famous visage.

What Thomas is invoking is not only Duchamp's defiance of a "cultural" acceptance that drains art of its force for change, nor just the older artist's insistence on art's function of discourse, but the timeliness of that conceptual inheritance. Thomas' theory on this score has never wavered, but by the mid-80's, his methodology indicates a fissure in his previous adherence to the flattening structuralist insistence of *langue over parole* (i.e., the maintained transcendence of rules at the expense of imagination). In the 1985 VCR film still series, Thomas finally retreats from the idea that once you have gotten the message you no longer need the art. Where before the vagaries of individual interpretation were obstructions, they are now invited.

Basically, what Thomas does in this series, in terms of intellectual content, is to deconstruct by



Lew Thomas, from the VCR Series: Looking at TV

emphasizing the contingency of photographic meaning. He copies black and white film stills onto video tapes, manipulates with color balance and a character generator in the monitor, then recopies them into still color photographs (a few are emblazoned with neon words like a theatre marquee). "Whose Gaze/Whose Law," 1985, presents a scene from *High Noon* with Grace Kelly and Gary Cooper. Beyond being recognizable characters from a popular old film, they appear as icons, cultural objects with their own acquired aura. The image and the phrase, bits of fragmented, mediated expression set up a reverberation of meanings that tantalize the viewer, coaxing a reaction, but ensuring that no single interpretation can be devised. It must amuse Thomas that while he wholly transfers the task of assigning meaning to the viewer, at the same time he dismantles all notions of photographic transparency, neutrality, or truth.

Not all of the VCR still photographs are of films. The most intense image, "Television Eyes," 1986, is a close range, frontal view of Thomas' teen-aged daughter, Kesa, watching TV. The outline of a monitor screen is barely visible behind her. Literally, of course, the self (Kesa) and her reflected image, the object we imagine to be on the screen but cannot see, are separate. But by spatial-temporal interpenetration in the photograph, they are fused, and the distinction between subject and object is eliminated. By removing the electronic medium from its customary contexts and function, Thomas both deconstructs and demystifies television, converting it into a vehicle for discourse.

Important in the criticality informing Thomas' most recent work is a perception that, in Paul de Man's words, "unmediated expression is a philosophical impossibility." Lately, perhaps in recognition of art's direct appeal to the body and the senses, Thomas has taken full advantage of video techniques in image processing to create complex visual structures that occasionally overshadow any layered text of meanings. One example of this is "Cemetery of Signs," 1986, a color photograph of two video images transformed into brightly-hued abstract sequences: at the top is a butcher block, crowned with five knife handles, and below is the image of Gauguin's *The Yellow Christ*. Because of the strong colors, the title words appearing over the body of Christ were illegibly

registered, so that Thomas had to reinforce the indistinct letters by hand-painting over them. Thomas' marks reinforce the simulated artifice of interpenetrating, lighted planes, and materialize not as signs of presence so much as casts of absence—mediations of the artist, of the subject, of the real.

The theme for a series of black and white halftone prints, textuality, is represented by an unidentified woman who reappears in a variety of beckoning postures, as the singular subject in each print. Thomas, still channeling a contemporary consciousness through his work, merges the human figure with the message more closely than before. In this series, forms are more open, gestures more expansive, and the content of the imagery, including oppositions of absence and presence, natural and artificial, is more inclusive. "Desire," 1987, and "She Says," 1987, are two prints in which Thomas resorts to an assortment of manipulations to objectify the image and to enforce the idea of simulated presence. In both there are combinations of mechanically produced trace in the form of abstract dots on the woman's body, also inked out backgrounds and strips of masking tape bearing phrases. But the pose of authorship is not completely dispensed, not through the mechanical means of making the image (from black and white halftone negatives), nor through license in surface fracturing before the print was copied. In these pictures, Thomas' usual detached stance that is resistant to personal subjectivity gives ground. The woman's body language has referents too well understood—even the words are incidental text to the message.

"L.H.O.O.Q.(Look)," 1987, is the best example of Thomas thinking about making an object that has adequate status as an artwork and as a statement within the history of ideas. The pivotal principle in this tripartite scheme of images is decentering. Whether in literature or visual arts, the idea is the same: to allow for an arbitrary, free-play of signifiers—of words, images, whatever—that have no ontological anchors and thus have nothing to do with the Cartesian metaphysics of presence. In two panels of "L.H.O.O.Q.," the woman's face is so severely cropped that it becomes an image with no center. An image dedicated to slippage, displacement, rupture, it is visual testimony of Derridean erasure. In the left panel, a stylized hand, like some

archetypal barrier covers part of a book. It is as if the abstract hand is equal to a pronounced criticism of the center, its related classical sense of representation, and the major violations of it in "L.H.O.O.Q." In the triptych, the parts, more important than the whole, literally fight their enclosure in two of the panels, and thereby assert that the work itself, besides being a repository of elements, has more meaning as a system of functions. Thomas has made an abstract statement with images that consist of pure extrapolation. In another art form, John Ashbery does the same thing with words—from *Self-Portrait In A Convex Mirror*:

*How many people came and stayed a certain time.*

*Uttered light or dark speech that became a part of you*

*Like light behind windblown fog and sand,*

*Filtered and influenced by it, until no part*

*Remains that is surely you.*



## ON THE ROAD WITH JOEL STERNFELD

Joel Sternfeld: *American Prospects*, a major exhibition curated by Anne W. Tucker, was shown at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, April 5—June 7, 1987. The exhibition will travel to the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Baltimore Museum of Art.

By Bill Frazier

Joel Sternfeld first received national recognition for his daytime flash color photographs which were taken in the 1970's of crowded streets. They presented the paradox of psychic isolation within the urban environment. Since 1978 he has worked with large format 8" by 10" equipment to make images of various subjects, such as portraiture, urban clichés, or formalist landscapes. This work of the past nine years is the subject of an exhibition and catalog entitled *American Prospects*, which has been organized by Anne Tucker and presented at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Identification with the landscape is something to which we, as Americans, are particularly susceptible. In his essay for the catalog, *New York Times* Photography Critic Andy Grundberg argues forcefully that Joel Sternfeld's *American Prospects* should be considered within the American landscape tradition. In the United States, photography has played a significant role in shaping that tradition and the ideas which we have of our territory. Nineteenth century explorer photographers such as Timothy O'Sullivan and William Henry Jackson made images which recorded the terrain and ultimately created an inventory of what existed west of the Missouri River. These vast, distinctly American efforts in landscape photography must also be seen in the context of the first American school of landscape painting. The artists of the Hudson River School, some of whom accompanied the same exploratory expeditions that employed O'Sullivan and Jackson, were active from about 1825-1870. They imposed their Romantic vision upon the beautiful and at times terrifying natural forces found on the North American Continent. Citing this tradition from the nineteenth century, and adding twentieth century parallels from Kerouac and Robert Frank, Grundberg tries to establish Sternfeld's place in the pantheon of Great Observers of the American Scene.

A second essay in the catalog by Anne Tucker, the Curator of Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, has aptly located Sternfeld in the company of more contemporary photographic practitioners, who in the 1970's pictured the environment in a dispassionate manner, eschewing the specific in favor of the general. These artists, Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz and others are frequently referred to as New Topographic photographers, after an exhibit by that title which included their work. It is they who, according to Tucker, set the tone of objective distance in much of contemporary landscape photography. While Sternfeld maintains the objective distance she states that he is less detached and has chosen to work in color rather than black and white. Sternfeld came to age as an artist in the 1970's when color received its first significant exposure in museums and publishing houses. It is probable that his choice of color materials seemed a bold step within that environment.

While working within the rather conservative confines of color photographic formalism, Sternfeld has produced a document which, though it is certainly less coolly detached than say, work by Robert Adams or William Eggleston, fails to

make any significant new contribution to either of the genres of landscape photography or color photographic formalism. At his best, he presents curiosities of nature or juxtapositions within our culture which underscore the absurd in contemporary life. But such images comprise only a small part of his work.

Some of Sternfeld's best work seems closely aligned with the notions of the sublime. This concept which originated in the late eighteenth century writings of Edmund Burke was popular in the nineteenth century and informed many artists' approaches to depicting nature. Briefly defined, the sublime in nature is that which confronts human mortality with awesome natural forces, which command reverence and respect by virtue of their sheer power. We can see the sublime in images of the aftermath of a flash flood in Rancho Mirage, California, in which the ground, rent by a flood, has swallowed an automobile and threatens a house which sits precariously on the raw edge of a huge crevasse. In another image, the serenity of an ocean view is slowly disturbed by the gradual realization that a pod of whales have beached themselves and died. In recording such events, Sternfeld acknowledges our very limited role in the natural order.

His strengths as a color formalist may be seen in a few images in the show. A photograph of a basketball backboard set before a panoramic backdrop of a vast mountain range is among the most beautiful works in the exhibition. The colors of his materials, and his sensitivity to them may be seen at their best in this lovely, quietly ironic work.

When the artist turns his attention to social landscape, however, the beauty of his photographs gets in his way. The Sunday afternoon following the opening of the exhibition, he spoke of a genuine concern for societal problems and pointed to images of a kid in a field in Maine, a red industrial barn in Pennsylvania, and people in a tent outside of Houston, as photographic statements in support of worthy causes. But if social commentary is his purpose his methods are working against his intentions. His photographs are richly beautiful and the formal qualities of his images are very strong. It would appear however that the large format camera has its limitations here. These big negatives are rich in their detail and color but the 8 x 10 esthetic has trapped him. He has been seduced by the beauty of his work at the expense of more pressing concerns. Sternfeld states that the three aforementioned images are about the plight of the family farm, the crisis in the steel industry, and unemployment—but when viewing the work, such pressing concerns are not conveyed. Likewise, the photograph of the Manville Corporation World Headquarters in Colorado, which is currently under the siege of litigation related to its manufacture of asbestos, is hardly a biting critical indictment of their corporate policies. On the contrary, it looks like a publicity piece for an Annual Report to the Stockholders.

While making photographs of the American scene, Joel Sternfeld has attempted to embrace the diversity of our culture and our terrain. The dictates of his approach however, preclude his making a coherent document. Sternfeld merely shows us how parts of America look. It is rare for him to introduce subtexts in his work which allude to meaning.

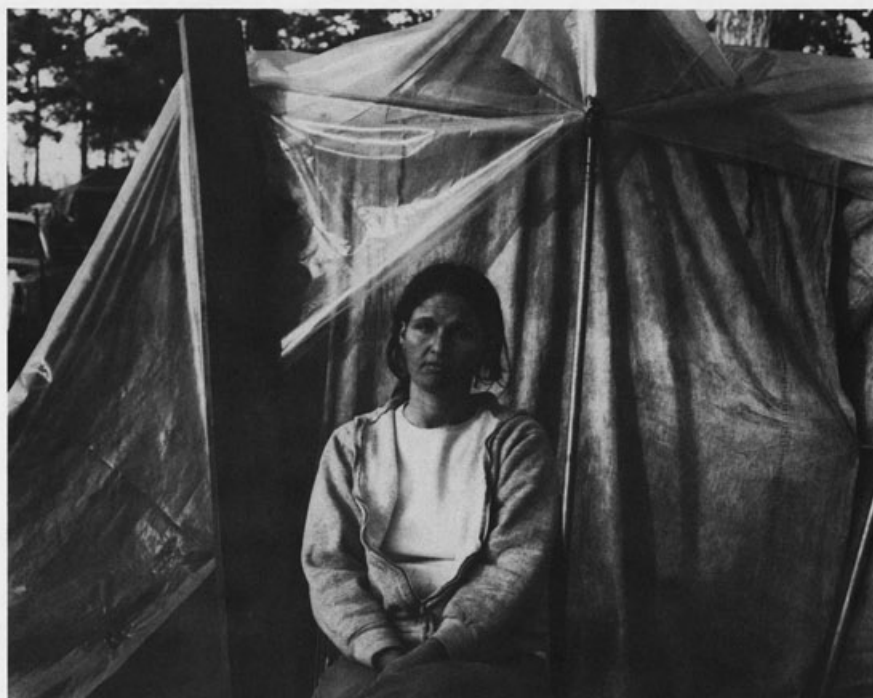
Bill Frazier is a Houston artist who recently received a M-AAA/NEA Fellowship Award in Photography. His work will be included in an HCP exhibition this July.



Joel Sternfeld, Canyon County, California, June 1983 (Courtesy Pace MacGill, N.Y.)



Joel Sternfeld, Rice Park Homes, Pendleton, Oregon, June 1980 (Courtesy Pace MacGill, N.Y.)



Joel Sternfeld, Tent City, January 1983 (Courtesy Pace MacGill, N.Y.)



Arthur Tress, *The Trojan Cow*



John Timothy Close, *Environment/AntiEnvironment, #35, 1984*



Linda Adele Goodine, *Wisteria*

## EXHIBITIONS

### A NOTICEABLE TREND

The *Manipulated Environment*, curated by Debra Rueb and Dallas Hardcastle, was shown at HCP from January 30–March 15. The exhibition featured the work of ten photographers: David Arnold, San Francisco, CA; Laurie Brown, Santa Cruz CA; John Timothy Close, Virginia Beach, VA; Vanita Esphahanian, Houston, TX; Linda Adele Goodine, Tallahassee, Florida; Lewis Koch, Madison, WI; Cay Lang, Emeryville, CA; Neil Maurer, San Antonio, TX; Warren Neidich, New York; Arthur Tress, New York.

By Lew Thomas

Rueb and Hardcastle explain in their curatorial statement for the exhibition *The Manipulated Environment* that the work was culled from slides and proposals reviewed monthly by HCP's Exhibitions Committee. Among the proposals received from across the country, the committee detected a "noticeable trend of individual photographers who alter existing objects, rooms, or space of an environment for the sole purpose of photographing the event."

In effect, the committee is telling us that they have gone outside their personal photographic beliefs in order to organize this exhibit. If this is the case, then the committee had to agree that the trend is substantial, and that the members selected to curate the project were capable of dealing fairly with the concept. In other words, as a learning process, the Center gained as much as it gave—rather than support photography that they readily understood, they had to operate within a constructed framework of unfamiliar material.

The strategies found in the work of *The Manipulated Environment* are not new: they were used in the early seventies by photographers on both coasts. Works by two of these photographers, "Revenge of the Goldfish," 1981, a fabricated symbolic photograph of a fantasy environment by Sandy Skoglund, New York, and the witty, "staged images" of Robert Cumming, then living in Los Angeles, were borrowed from the Texas Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, respectively, to reference earlier practices that have also been tagged "fabricated to be photographed."

What are the ideas in *The Manipulated Environment* or in "fabricated" photography? The object of traditional photography is the "real" as seen in pictures that are continuous with our ordinary view of the world. This myth of the photograph is based on Roland Barthes' concept of the "codeless message" as analyzed in the "Rhetoric of the Image." The strategy underlying fabricated images plays with the transparent "codeless" power of photography by manipulating content rather than chemistry or the optics of the medium.

The "incitement effect" of the pictures is enhanced through a series of devices applied manually to the subject matter: stitching, drawing, painting, lighting, building, and collecting. The layered images retain transparent references to the original sources of the subject matter, creating a double meaning. We witness contradictions characteristic of classical forms of alienation: painted food, staged erotic rituals of love and violence, setups of wilting cut flowers, painted constructivist sites, perspectival ambiguities, vandalized room interiors, surrealistic assemblages, archaeological parodies of hidden secrets, Rorschach collages, and the cathode ray tube.

Most of the work is color saturated, well crafted, sometimes inspired, reaching for metaphorical or iconic solutions to the glut of accelerating information that marks our depersonalized environment. The nostalgic impulse to restore uniqueness to the world motivates the work of these photographers. There is irony in this impulse—applying a medium that shares a major responsibility for the creation of today's robotic productionist life seems bound to failure in our technologically imploded world.

Despite the assortment of decorative and retinal effects which are employed to lure the viewer into a state of fascination, the show was strangely conservative—"hyper but bored."

In Laurie Brown's pictures, the altered, hand-painted "food" and "landscapes" rival the enhanced offerings of TV and magazine adver-

tising. In a style that resembles the setups of commercial photography (except for an occasional shift in focus at the borders of the print), a parody of Marshall McLuhan's hot and cool mediums is extended, not only to the day-glo colors of the junk food industry but also to studio photography, and its fetishism for high resolution, "hot" imagery. In Cay Lang's poetic images of "Cut Flowers," decadence is disguised as "metaphors for the human condition," its sentimentality traceable to the floral business itself.

For Warren Neidich the photograph is neither code nor message, as evidenced in his neo-Raphaelite quest for the "beautiful." Classical objects of art, such as the nude or a pot of flowers, are washed in artificial colors associated with the glowing aura of television as well as the inner light of the cathode ray tube.

Neil Maurer's high key images that problematize scale, space and the fixed perspective of the camera display a clinical fascination with the games of optical perspective. In another set of photographs by Arthur Tress, what might once have been a clinical nightmare, a deserted hospital in Queens, has been transformed into a Disneylandlike studio where "broken and rusting medical equipment" has been spray painted and reassembled for the surgical eye of the camera. As a result, the "frightening iron lung becomes a smiling green cow—a nightmare wrapped in a joke."

John Timothy Close, in a series "Environments/AntiEnvironments," explores the "vulnerability" of construction sites by subjecting them to a variety of aesthetic vandalisms reminiscent of John Divola's "Vandalism." Close turns the spaces into weekend industrial game rooms. In David Arnold's "imaginary environments," *Situations*, more than mere perception is manipulated by the application of verbal texts and other objects of cultural detritus that compose his black and white photographs of "fictional" ruins—a wry postmodern spinoff on the classical pictures of Walker Evans. Lewis Koch, on the other hand, simply photographs garages that already have the look of fabrication. These photographs of his aleatory quest for the garage's "hidden secrets" were originally exhibited and documented in Koch's own garage. Both sets of photos were shown at HCP, amounting to new images that were more conceptual than fabricated. Koch's work abstracted the criteria of the show by presenting what was the "look" of fabrication along with his attempt to manipulate the gallery system.

Vanita Esphahanian combines "appropriated" images and objects in Rorschachlike collages that project psychological and conceptual analogies fragmenting the spatial and temporal structures of the source material. More psychologically provocative material came in the curious work made by Linda Adele Goodine. Staged rituals of love and violence were photographed in large scale Ciba prints which functioned as a kind of symbolic language of the unconscious, where the stereotypes of nature and sexuality are played out for the specular gaze of the camera. In "Wisteria," a woman is posed limp with a thick wisteria vine looped around her neck. The tableau presents the stereotype of woman and nature bound to one another in what is either a lynching or a suicide. (Woman and nature "suicided"? In this staged stereotype, is she telling us that this symbol itself is dead or is she yearning for punishment?)

This show with its staging, altering, manipulating—where the women photograph the personal (love and desire) and the domestic (cut flowers or painted food), and the men take on the construction sites, the abandoned hospital, vacant rooms,





Lewis Kofei, *Garage Interiors*

or interiors illuminated by the glow of television—does not seem to advance us, with a few exceptions, beyond what we already perceive—regardless of the seductive handling of the subject matter and the hyper-documentary photography.

In the curatorial statement for *The Manipulated Environment* is the message that HCP is responsive to the needs of photographers who are seeking exhibition space—a demand that exceeds the available space and time slots of any given exhibition schedule. The rationale of their review process, worthy as it sounds, may not be the only means

for contextualizing diverse forms of photography. What about work that cannot be integrated into “current trends”? What then? Break down the overdetermined choices of arbitrary aesthetic standards. Open up the context to accommodate concepts or issues while giving artists the freedom to choose their own work, so long as it fits the rubric of the show. We must watch critically to see whether HCP will continue to find the appropriate means to deal with problems surrounding the prized exhibition space, as they did in *The Manipulated Environment*.



David Arnold, *OK, I could See It*

## HCP MEMBERS' EXHIBITION

### VIEW FROM THE CENTER

HCP's Sixth Annual Members' Exhibition, March 20–May 3; portfolios by Geoffrey Brune, Roel Castillo, Paula Fridkin, Robb Kendrick, Paul Vincent Kuntz, Brad Michael Moore, Stanley Moore, Pam Pitt, Bambi Striewski, Debby White and David Whitson; Works-In-Progress, James Bell and Mike Corona and Members' Wall.

By Jill A. Kyle

A non-profit organization with around 600 members, HCP has, since 1982, exhibited work by nationally and internationally-known photographers. Furthermore, once a year for the past six years, at prime time in the season, it has presented a Members' Exhibition. Alerted by newsletter about time, date and place for the presenting of portfolios, all HCP members are invited to come and vote on photography for the Exhibition, whether they have brought any of their own or not. The 10 members whose works receive the highest number of votes (due to a tie there were 11 this year) can display pieces from their portfolio in the main exhibition area of HCP. Photography by Geoffrey Brune, Roel Castillo, Paula Fridkin, Robb Kendrick, Paul Vincent Kuntz, Brad Michael Moore, Stanley Moore, Pam Pitt, Bambi Striewski, Debby White and David Whitson constitutes the Sixth Annual Members' Exhibition.

A majority of the Members represented in the show this year hew the line of allegiance to traditional, historical standards of the media: terms like pictorial, straight, documentary, apply to their work. There are some hybrid pieces that have been doctored by collage, photomontage, added color, multiple printing and so on, but with the exception of Roel Castillo, the manipulations constitute imagery intended to engage the viewer in fantasy, not in issues. And, at a time

when art has become increasingly bound up with various critical discourses, it may be a relief for some to view a compendium of photography by artists more concerned with formal issues than with the elaboration of an idea to be illustrated. But for those who enjoy a challenge, it is there in Castillo's work. More than in the other examples shown, it reflects an awareness of complexities in technical, functional, and political philosophies that characterizes the thrust of contemporary photography.

Castillo is one in a growing pack of visual artists who use their medium to stimulate a critical alertness to advertising devices that prey on consumptive drives in today's post-modern culture. The juxtaposed synthetic imagery, some video-specific and with text, demonstrates how males and females, disassociated from the resident meanings associated with their gender roles, can be converted into commodities no different from inanimate objects.

The women in the piece, *Calgon Take Me Away*, (which includes an advertisement for Calgon bath oil), are nothing more than stereotypical images within an artificial ambience of product suasion. In another, *For a Good Reason*, soldiers in combat are hacked out of context as emblems of bravery, and re-coded as undifferentiated icons of sexuality, a transformation graphically underscored by an adjoining textbook illustration on sexual excitation. Some of the works are humorous, but none imply that Castillo is anything less than deadly earnest about interpreting how easily consumer drives can be manipulated by advertising schemes that alter social structures.

Other portfolios in the exhibit, revealing little dissatisfaction with contemporary life or information about prevalent attitudes in the artist's generation, do exhibit some artistic ambition as well as a you-are-there perspective in several instances. Romantic is probably the best word to describe Paula Fridkin's vaporous female forms, because it suggests that her sensibility, rooted in a concern for light as it touches objects and surfaces, is the picture's ultimate subject.

Placid, decorative, with threads of silver glitter on the surface, Fridkin's images stand against the wall like relief stelae, the figures within them dematerialized into mirages. Like Fridkin, Debby White's pictures do little to invite interpretation, at least not at first. Her figure subjects are black and white children. Carefully posed and centered in well-appointed interiors, several of the little girls are dressed in lace and wide sashes; the children are occupants of an odd, bounded world with no reference to any larger world beyond. Too staged to relate to any actual corner of experience, which would call for some immediacy and a little causal disarray, there is something vaguely out-of-kilter beneath the surface of White's vignettes. Expressions on the face of a few children hint at an almost Damian intrusion into the world of otherwise precocious pre-adolescents.

The strongest representations of personal photography are the sepia-toned landscapes in Bambi Striewski's *Super-Surrealist Series*. She creates a subtle counter-poise with her wide angle lens and low viewpoint: trees, bushes and fences project toward the viewer in convex arrangements, but the lateral spread of a circular, though shallow, space invites the eye into the image's interior. Strangely compelling, the pictures are surrealistic to the extent that they contain some suggestion of mystery beyond the external reality depicted. Not entirely commonplace scenes, there is a planned, ironic aspect to the conjunction of images and their distortions. They seem called upon by Striewski's

knowingness of how a particular configuration will link the work to her own personality and emotions. Another group of landscape photographs is Stanley Moore's *Torrid Zone* series. His use of infra-red black and white film creates pictorial effects, such as the ethereal dissipation of contour, which may be personal, but primarily the pictures are an investigatory experiment in the registration of invisible infra-red radiation. The most interesting thing about them is a question that they raise: how should one compare abstraction in the registration of reality between plain black and white film and infra-red black and white film? Since infra-red eliminates atmospheric haze, makes skies appear black, trees and grass white, there tends to be more abstraction; or, is there less abstraction, since the film registers another reality, heat intensity as well as tone value.

Pictures by Geoffrey Brune and Pam Pitt need to be carefully looked at, simply so as to tell what is going on in them. Both resort to photomontage and tinting in built-up, bizarre arrangements. Pitt's are randomly constructed, Brune's orderly and with a strong sense of design (Brune teaches first year and fifth year design at U.H. School of Architecture). In the work of both, attention is drawn to the subject in concert with how it is organized and presented to the viewer. Especially with Brune, whose “ideal” sites—accretions of funereal monuments with architectural embellishments—surmount assorted photographs, temple sites and text in registers below, the aspects of display and coordination among images are more relevant to the composition than to the content. In page 72, from *The Book of Ritual*, an arrangement of stacked tombs is accompanied by a caption that humorously implies there is room at the top: “I had thought that this kind of living, this kind of view, was out of my reach. But the new lease-purchase plan here made it all possible. It's terrific.” Pitt's shopping malls, sprinkled with pastings of people, tombstones (Stonehenge appears a couple of times), primitive carvings, and other things, are occasionally dramatized by strange geometric planes of reflected light, or maybe they are mirrors; it is hard to tell.

Both Brad Michael Moore, in his kaleidoscopic *Multiplexes*, and David Whitson, in his Taos series, are involved in a type of topographical documentation. Whitson's pictorial color photography is characterized by an objective structure and close attention to detail and surface appearances. The interest which Moore generates, through his scenes of wilderness environments, comes from transformations wrought upon visual material by flopping identical negatives. His best example is the grotesque monster that materializes in *Touching Sequoia Heads*.

Working within the concept that documentation is inherent in the nature of the photographic process, Robb Kendrick and Paul Vincent Kuntz record human beings in real-life situations, but their approaches are very different. Kuntz' quasi-documentary scenes of life in a sector of Houston's Third Ward black community have a non-candid, narrative element that brings into question where the truth of the people depicted ends, and the photographer's fictionalizing of what they represent begins. Kuntz' subjects seem less caught up in real activities than in playing parts for the camera: in one instance, *Victoria and Priscilla*, the subjects descend to strictly anecdotal roles. In contrast, Kendrick's incisive observation projects through into powerful documentary images that provide a non-subjective description in pictures of Ku Klux Klan events. The intensity of human interaction and

experience in these pictures implies that when Kendrick shot the scenes, he was acting as a photographer making an aggressive incursion into another world, driven by more than merely quotidian curiosity.

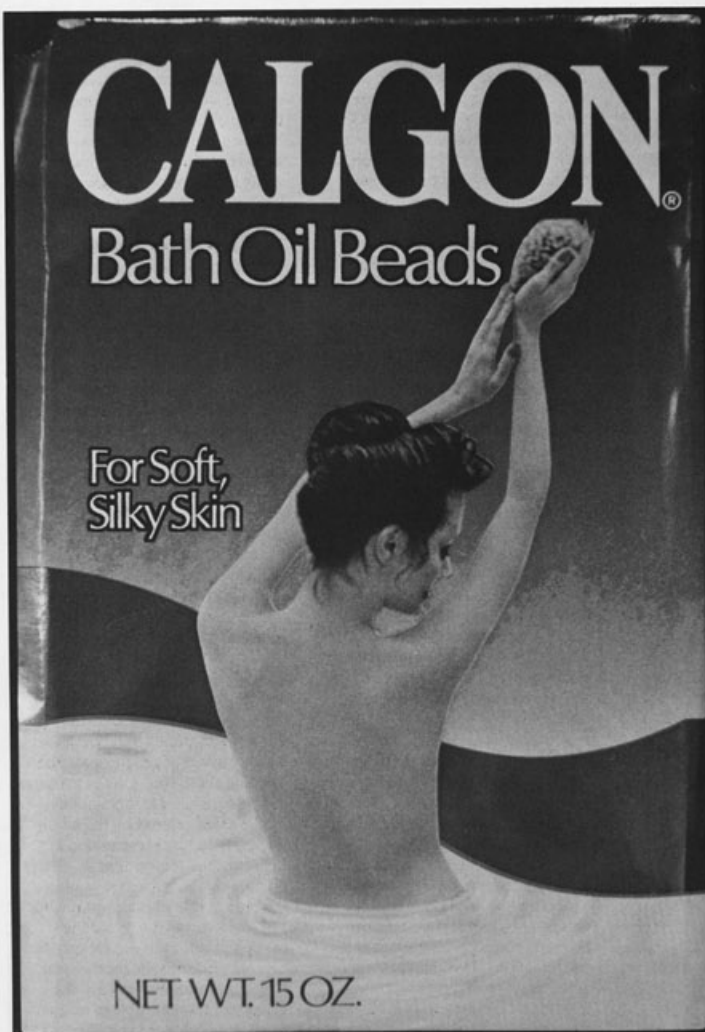
Concurrent with the Sixth Annual Members' Exhibition at HCP, two other areas in the Center display Members' work, as separate exhibits: “Works-In-Progress,” which encourages experimental modes in photographic expression, present the photo installations of James Bell and Mike Corona; and the “Members' Wall,” where all members are encouraged to hang or put in place whatever they like. In either of these exhibits, no votes are needed, only initiative. Here is a good example of how a non-profit organization like the HCP can afford to be both democratic and responsive to its members' ideas in ways that a profit organization cannot. In fact, between March 20–May 3, some of the most thought-provoking work on display at the Center was never even up for votes.

Flags, barricades, lights, colored markers, the ubiquitous “signals” at construction sites in Houston, are the elements of James Bell's “site-specific” sculpture. The total art form of his project also includes color photographs that document various works in progress at urban building sites; and, it is the presence of these pictures that broadens implications offered by the whole package. Technical command in Bell's images is sure, and as documenting shots, they reinforce the crucial role of photography for the exposing—actually for the making in this case—of various conceptual art forms. In another way, Bell's photographs increase the validity of his assemblage as an artwork. Put together, the color images establish logical relationships. Not sequential, but working as if they were, they imply that the consideration of any one given image gives incomplete evidence for the interpretation of the whole.

Like Bell, works by Mike Corona can be fitted into place historically; however, their reference to artistic tradition is more explicit. Running along a line from Russian Constructivism through Lazlo Moholy-Nagy and Ray Metzger, Corona's black and white prints combine influences from all three. Flattening spatial relations between foreground and background objects, an unexpected tension occurs where key lines run into each other, destroying perspective clues and confusing identity of forms. By creating ambiguities that eliminate any indication of space or scale for static mass, his works are like exercises in the formation of abstract patterns on a two dimensional surface.

On the “Members' Wall” two pieces stand out. Charles Schorre's *Pages from Books Unpublished* is a work charged with a kind of optical sensitivity based on textures of aesthetic relations. It looks as though Schorre composed it acting as a true *bricoleur*. Claude Lévi-Strauss' term for the fix-it man who takes pieces of this and that and *will* materializes a new and free-standing structure. In this case, an artwork. What makes it most evocative though, is the hint that those abstract elements, along with the small color print, are actually visual metaphors deduced from signs and situations meaningful in terms of human experience. Kathy Reiser's installation, *One Day In The Mind of Raoul Wallenberg*, is an extremely delicate combination of a public statement with a private view. The gravity, poise and mystery expressed through Reiser's collaged images and text makes the viewer ask questions about a real-life event, and do so as movingly as a reflex from some injury that comes unexpectedly.

Jill Kyle is a frequent contributor to SPOT.



Rael Castillo, Take Me Away



## HCP MEMBERS' EXHIBITION

The exhibition is a collection of works by HCP members, showcasing a variety of styles and techniques. The artists have created a series of pieces that explore themes of identity, nature, and human experience. The works are displayed in a large, open space, allowing visitors to view the art from multiple angles and perspectives. The exhibition is a testament to the creativity and talent of the HCP community, and it is a must-see for anyone interested in contemporary art.

The exhibition features a range of media, including painting, sculpture, and photography. The artists have used a variety of materials and techniques to create their works, and the result is a diverse and compelling collection. The exhibition is a celebration of the HCP members' artistic achievements, and it is a chance for the public to appreciate the work of these talented individuals.

The exhibition is open to the public, and it is a great opportunity for anyone who is interested in art to see and experience these works. The exhibition is a chance to learn more about the HCP members and their art, and it is a chance to see some of the best contemporary art in the region. The exhibition is a must-see for anyone who is interested in art, and it is a chance to see the work of some of the most talented artists in the HCP community.



Pam Pitt, The Park





"I had thought that this kind of living,  
this kind of view, was out of my reach.  
But the new lease-purchase plan here  
made it all possible. It's terrific!"



72

pages from the Book of Ritual

Book of Ritual 1982

Geoffrey Brune. Pages from the Book of Ritual



Debby White, Stowell Series #3

**HCP MEMBERS' EXHIBITION**



Bambi Striewski, Untitled, 1987

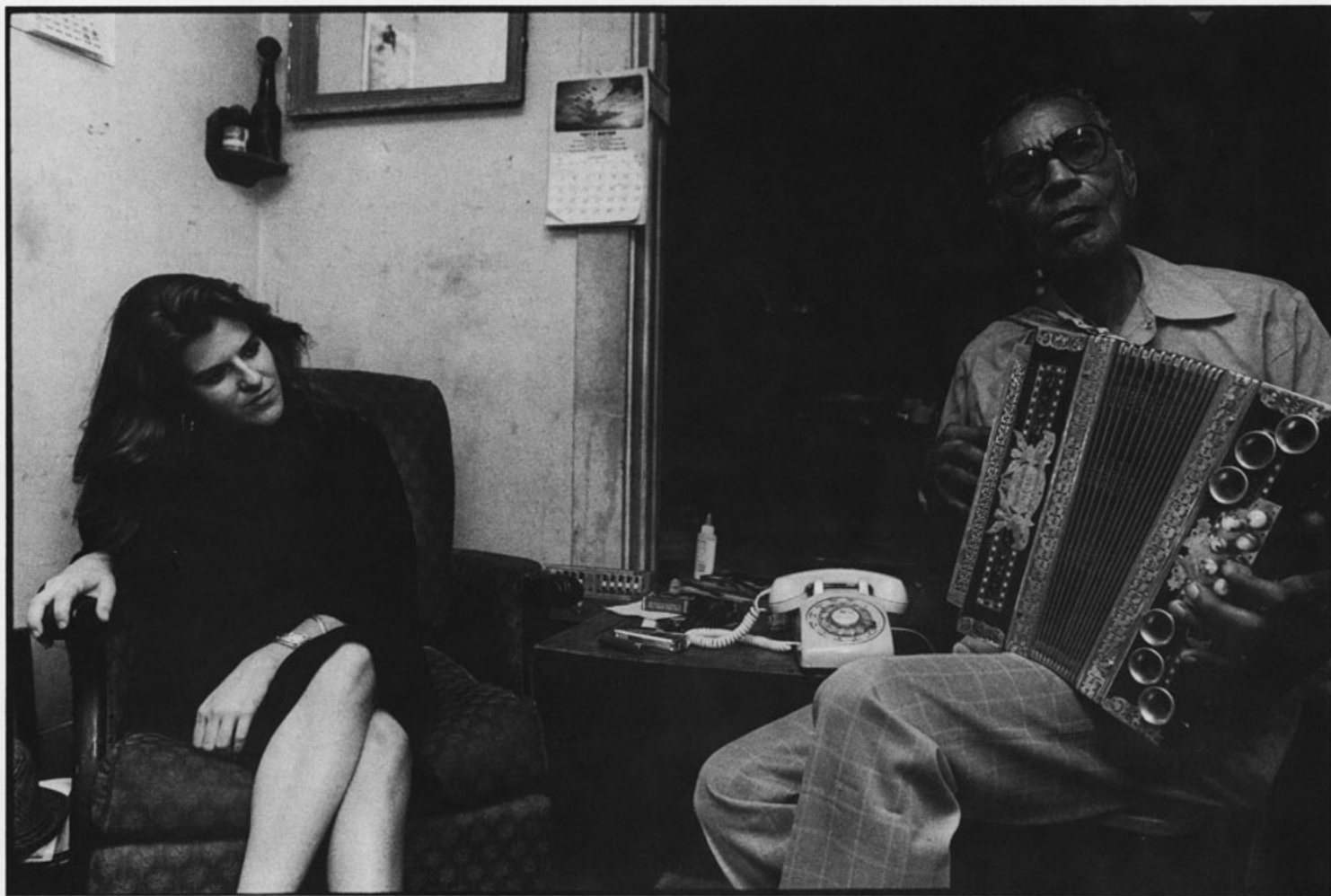


David E. Whitson, Turquoise Pot, 1985



Rob Kendrick, KKK Series





Paul Vincent Kuntz *A Visitor and Vincent*, 1986



Brad Michael Moore, *River Island*, 1980



Stanley Moore, from the series: *In the Torrid Zone #17*, 1987



Paula Fridkin, *Untitled*, 1987



R. Lynn Foster, from the series: The Hunt

## PHOTOGRAPHING THE MALE TRAJECTORY

Photographs by R. Lynn Foster were shown at HCP January 30—March 15, 1987.

By Lew Thomas

Since September 1986, HCP members have been invited to submit proposals for presenting "work-in-progress" in HCP's conference room. Though this program was advertised in the Center's newsletters, it was not until January '87 that R. Lynn Foster came forth to test its latent possibilities.

The ground rules are simple—show the work in such a way as to provoke questions and discussion.

Formal decisions about matts, frames, archival quality prints rest with the photographer alone.

For Foster, the purpose of the exhibit was the search for new relationships among groups of work which he had been exploring for the last couple of years—to look for similarities or contradictions in subject matter and presentation. How to use the space was his business—he was free to seek advice and assistance from whomever he thought could be useful.

Foster's venture into the space of "work-in-progress"—a space of multiple decisions and calculated risks, a psychological as well as a physical space—resulted in one of the more controversial exhibits shown at HCP. He responded to the role of self-curating his own work in an open and critical frame of mind. Rather than plan a show to seduce the viewer, he sacrificed the unity of a formal installation by presenting photographs of various sizes, some taken as single images, some as sequences, a few photos taped and referenced to drawings on brown paper, even in a few instances photographs collaged with fetishlike wood sculptures carved or found by the photographer.

Foster, who is a large man, went about the organizing of his show with an alarming intensity. Given all the recent obsessions with photography and postmodern issues of culture, the "code," and the end of representation, his intensely personal and autobiographical approach to photography appeared abrasive in its display of a trajectory through male cultural rites toward a visual climax.

The photographer and hunter are revealed as one in a series of pas-

sionate photographs ritualizing the sacrificial sport of killing animals. Here is depicted the pleasure and release of an unbounded urge to return to a mythical state of the primordial Father, before the construction of Culture. One triptych displays the process of killing an antelope: slitting its throat, pumping the legs to drain its blood, and, finally, cutting off the testicles. In the castration image we see the antelope displayed, legs spread, before the attentive efforts and gazes of four male viewers. A boy stands in the background watching with nervous interest. That the photographs express the conditions of anxiety related to the fantasies of violence and sexuality creates a strangely moving narrative of man's frustration and lack, not the least of which resides in the psyche of the photographer himself. These are the most affecting images done by Foster.

In another series based on the "nude," the photographs begin to show the stress of art, taken as they are in what appears to be one of those "workshops" for the education and liberation of vision. His sensitive rendition of the textures of bodies covered with mud in a non-threatening landscape with a horse and a dog (the dog's large head, returning the gaze of the photographer, is a comic example of the photographer caught in the act of a visual crime) replicates stereotypes. This is so in spite of the fact that in some of the images there is an equality of sexual representation objectifying both female and male in the display and distribution of their genitalia.

The most problematic of the series has to do with photographs of

prostitutes in the border towns of Mexico. Predictably voyeurized as "the other," the women (including some impostors) are pathetically posed as seductive objects without any desire of their own. Here in the whorehouses of Mexico the stereotyped woman's body is identified with sexuality and economics—flesh and currency, the marketplace and the brokerage house—the exchange system. The signifier of the whore's body circulates without emotion or personal identity, without names or subjectivity, in short, without language. These images raised the greatest amount of protest by women viewers who were justifiably angry about the doubling of the male construct, the *mise en scène*—first as a stage for positioning the body as a lure, and then as a photograph, disguised as a transparent document of the "real." Yet, these clumsy attempts to aestheticize "the other" ironically express the hopelessness of bridging differences between male and female, the inequality of expectations, the male with his need, the woman with her victim's aura. Is the whorehouse the unconscious model of mass media? Is it the classical underground agency of broadcast and satellite communications—given that they too convert sexuality into an exchange system of signs, "the psyche penetrated by capital"? If these photographs of "the other" in the land of "the other" had been presented more consciously as clichés—turned into still-lives or tableaux, enlarged to a confrontational scale, and relieved of their artistic self-consciousness, then Foster, who is one of those rare photographers with something to say, would have said it.



## PHOTOGRAPHS OF C. LEIGH FARMER & CHARLOTTE LAND

By Mac Scarborough

Photographs by C. Leigh Farmer were exhibited at Ouisie's Table through March 28th. The images produce an anthropomorphic vision of human reality by putting animals into a human context. The French novelist Honoré de Balzac used the term *la comédie humaine* to describe his own novels dealing with the foibles of human existence and the term works well with the contents of Farmer's imagery. The cats, dogs, and raccoons found in the photographs are actors mimicking humanity.

In some of the images the animals interact with humans. In these images the animal retains some of his own identity. "Commuter" features a train of commuters on their way to or from work. In the midst of these disinterested humans sits a Great Dane. The Great Dane is seated looking over the heads of his fellow commuters. In "Cruising the Seawall" a dog is peering out of the window of a moving car. There is only the barest sliver of a human face visible to let the viewer know that the dog is not in control of the car. The two dogs are in different circumstances and yet there are similarities. Both dogs are paying attention to their surroundings and displaying curiosity and enjoyment. Unfortunately the humans do not seem to be doing either.

In other images there is no human interaction taking place. In these images the anthropomorphic qualities are more apparent. "Sunday Morning After Saturday Night" depicts a hangover after a hard night's partying. "Bon Appetit, Mon Ami," features two raccoons sharing a bowl of food. There is a strong sense of amicability and social grace between the two diners. A feeling of curiosity and anticipation is apparent as a young raccoon leans into the lens in "Are You My Mother?". The animals in their serio-comic poses show both good and bad aspects of human behavior.

Also on display were four examples from Farmer's Freedom Series. This powerful series utilizes juxtapositioning of black and white images of raccoons in cages against color images of raccoons roaming free. The contrast between the natural environment of trees and water and the artificial and imposed environment of small dark cages provokes sympathetic response and anger at forced confinement.

The work of Charlotte Land "...and the snow melts" was displayed at Butera's on Montrose. The images were made in the spring of 1985 in the high country of Colorado and Wyoming. The imagery has the documentary quality found in the work of the western expansionist photographers of the 19th century and the heroic sense of scale that can be found in the landscapes of Ansel Adams. The content of Land's imagery varies from the drifts of snow before the melt to the torrents pouring off the faces of the mountains, etching the landscape as they run. Charlotte Land explains in her statement:

*The effects of the snow melt were pervasive throughout the landscape. It was not just evident in the water everywhere and in every form. The land was transformed. Land's imagery deals with the yearly changes in the landscape caused by the melting of the snow.*

The images have a beauty that is inherent in nature but also a sublime quality. There can be a menace in the moving water. As the snow melts and the trickles begin to flow as streams, the water cuts into the surface. The water carves through the landscape changing it each year

as the cycle repeats.

The grandeur of the images relies on two factors, the heroic scale of the landscape and the power of the water to change the landscape. The scale of the landscape encompasses sections of mountain and sky. The images have little evidence of human presence to reduce the scale. The lack of finite scale allows the viewer to remember personal travels through mountainous regions and the sheer mass of the mountainsides. The power of water adds to the grandeur of the imagery in that water is an incalculable element. Man has little control over the flow of water. The water in the images falls and crashes through the landscape. Water has pleasant connotations; it is pleasing to watch and the sound of falling water is soothing to the psyche. Water can also have unpleasant connotations. If there has been too much snow or the snow melts too fast, the water can lead to destructive flooding. Land has captured a yearly vigil, will there be enough water for the land to thrive or will the water gather with destructive force?

Mac Scarborough is a photographer currently studying design at the University of Houston.

## LIFE'S FAMILIAR CEREMONIES

The documentary photographs of Martin Parr were shown at the Benteler-Morgan Galleries, Houston, Texas, March 19—May 1, 1987.

By Patsy Cravens

The first thing to strike you when you enter Benteler-Morgan Galleries and see the photographs of Martin Parr is the very "Britishness" of them. The ruddy faces, the tweed caps and plus-fours; the fields of heather; the four old ladies packed side by side in an almost empty church wearing their Queen Mother hats and sensible shoes; the odd couple seen on a sidewalk, one a dairy cow peering in an open doorway, the other a plump lady peeking into a window, both rear end to the camera, all seem so wonderfully rural England. They are so evocative. You know immediately where they were taken and you sense that they are the work of someone with an intimate knowledge and love of that place.

These are appealing images, executed with a gentle sense of irony and a keen, humorous eye. Martin Parr, native of Surrey, England, seems to enjoy his profession. He calls himself a social documentary photographer and does most of his work in series of images to which he has given such delectable names as "The Last Resort" and "The Chimney Pot Show." He has published several books.

Documentary photography of course is about the documentation of an event or place. But some rare individuals such as Cartier-Bresson or Dorothea Lange have been able to go beyond the mere recording of information and grace their work with some other special qualities. This work will have an added aesthetic beauty or will elicit from us an unexpected "ah-ha" or will give us new recognition of some universal human truth. This is difficult to do but it lifts the imagery to another place.

Martin Parr brings to his best work a whimsy that strikes a humorous chord in his viewers as he makes his wry commentary on life's familiar ceremonies. A horse makes a dropping on the sidewalk at the feet of two men who are busily occupied in talk and gesticulation... if this isn't social commentary, what is? A tweedy man in a very proper hunt-



C. Leigh Farmer, Commuters



Charlotte Land, ... and the snow melts.



Martin Parr, Westport Horse Fair, Country Mayo

ing outfit (one wonders if his labels read "Commissioned by Her Royal Highness") gazes with dreamy hauteur upward as his dog, in a proper hunting-spaniel suit, sits at his feet gazing into the opposite direction in imitation of his master. A lady in bat-wing glasses, rhinestone brooch, and sweep-brimmed hat casts her eyes dramatically down toward the coffee cup into which she is formally spooning sugar while above her, in a mural of the Last Supper, Christ

sits, eyes cast down at a very different type of dinner table.

There are two particularly delightful images from the "Abandoned Morris Minor" series. The first shows two chickens huddled happily behind the windshield of a discarded car, making the car look like a cozy home indeed. The other shows a moist and verdant streamside, a flock of ducks wagging blissfully by in the water while a Morris Minor peeps out from the grasses at

water's edge. You fully expect a laughing couple to pop from the back seat at any moment.

The "Bad Weather" series consists largely of flash pictures of snow and rain. They are not the most interesting. At its worst Parr's show is only fair; at its best, it is delightful.

Patsy Cravens' photographs have been exhibited recently at the Laguna Gloria Museum, Austin, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

## DIVERSE TEACHERS PRODUCE UNIQUE SHOW OF STUDENT PHOTOS

Student Photographs 1986-87, Rice University Media Center, April 21–October 1, 1987.

By April Rapier

The informally buried and modestly titled exhibition at the Media Center is the result of an advanced photography course co-taught by Peter Brown and Geoff Winningham. The show would indicate that this course was a success; a strong case could be made in favor of two somewhat divergent artists acting as counterpoint to each other's style, allowing a unique student vision,

one that might not have emerged at all, to triumph. Not all the participants are photography majors, an unremarkable fact until the quality of the work is considered. An enormous amount of effort, creativity, and craft are evident, underlying a firm commitment to concept and inspiration.

Jill Goodman creates systems of reference from non-sequiturs, using the elements of a whole to allude to an ephemeral reality. One sees still lives of ordinary and sometimes unrecognizable objects, lit and shot against crumpled seamless paper. Color and shape are less important to these monochromatic color photographs than the connections that illusion transfigures.

Dena Edward's diaristic black and white images are an exorcism of sorrow and joy, their vague duality of intention a summary of the paralyzing malaise of introspection that cuts too close. A woman is

seen at her dressing table, and she is wearing a dress cut low in the back. Present is the threat of seduction, imagination the dominant resource. Her other images are more concrete and less intriguing, the contradictions all too apparent.

Frank Isaac's portrait of a psychic is both fascinating and frustrating. One feels left out of the story: the snippet of text attached is a poignant but ineffectual disclaimer. The only clues that refer to occupation—candle and orb—are clichés. The man looks like an ex-jock, wearing reptile cowboy boots; his gaze is blank, but this draws the viewer into the details of the picture, themselves puzzling. I feel certain that the series gathers strength from the context of its other images, excluded here.

Mark Neel photographs gorgeous and unlikely color vignettes from the bayou, an ongoing project. (Many of the artists represented

here are involved in this sort of documentary serialization, which may be responsible for the maturity and clarity of the work.) Osama Jume'an has printed portraits with different color filtration and density, and cut and repositioned them slightly out of register. That the close-ups almost match creates a kaleidoscope of peripheral shifts, repetition and intensity its strong point.

The strongest evidence of homage and influence is seen in the work of Any Hablutzel and Fran McHenry. (Mr. Winningham is being paid tribute here.) Hablutzel's black and white picture of a skyscraper in the background, Oz-like in stature and dimension, and the shabby dirt street and run-down buildings that lead to it is a masterful and carefully sought study.

Roberto Cofresi's soft and blurry color images of animals defines visually the way one feels about a treasured pet. Relationships between animals and humans are an aspect of the moment, but the animals steal the show. (Cofresi's one page text of definitions, matted and framed, that accompanies the pictures, makes little sense in the scheme of things, and provokes a healthy measure of disinterest, the visual underlying messages being far more interesting.) In a sequence of events, one bird sits atop another; elsewhere, another bird lies on its back, performing sleep tricks. The images seem to have been made from an insider's vantage point, cage bars intruding into the intimacy. Color plays a discreet role, highlighting the wonder of nature.

Charles Krusekopf's study of rural life demonstrates an act of faith and giving, so warm and engaging is the relationship between subjects, and subject and photographer. Marc Butler operates in a similar vein, documenting the family farm, but from a more objective stance. Butler's images are illustrative of an idea, in that they are a purposeful reduction; as a result, they fail to ring bells of recognition or understanding the way Krusekopf's empathetic submersion does.

The most impressive work is that of John Dyes, who operates from a traditional position, relying on technical perfection and relentless observation to create found studies from the beach. They have the look of sand-cast hieroglyphics, the icons of deterioration frozen and permanent. The subject matter (dead birds, fossil-like tracks, sand and remnants) is utterly transformed, its expressive power due to a fusion of technical and emotional expertise and intentionality.

The exhibition, mounted through the summer and into the fall, is in a comfortable and welcoming venue, and deserves to be seen again and again.

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF OPPRESSION IN THE USSR

Survival of the Spirit: Jewish Lives In The Soviet Union. Photographs by Janice Rubin. Text by Nomi Morris. Galveston Arts Center, June 6–July 12, 1987, and to travel.

By April Rapier

12,000 Jews, citizens of the USSR, have applied for exit visas and have been denied. Another 380,000 have expressed a desire to emigrate. The word "refusenik" is at first a bit disorienting to the uninformed—it could mean one who declines to participate in a society imposed upon individual choice, or one who has created an alternate society. The people that Janice Rubin and Nomi Morris sought out during an extended journey of discovery through the Soviet Union actively participate to extend their lives—their Jewishness—into the open. The refuseniks are those who have applied for permits to leave, only to have them declined. They do so at great risk, and suffer degradation and fear in exchange for the illicit right to worship as they choose. The agenda that controls their release, one fears, has little to do with religion; it is all too obvious, as Morris states, that "their fates are tied to superpower relations, their lives used as a pawn in arms control negotiations." Between 1971 and 1980, 260,000 Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union; doubtless, there are others who have assimilated or denied their Jewishness. Those who continue trying to leave will endure great losses—of country, possessions, and loved ones they leave behind—if they are successful in their attempts. For those who have taken the step toward emigration, the alternative—staying behind—offers far worse consequences.

The finely crafted photographs and text join forces to create an intelligent, moving, deeply disturbing, and utterly beautiful exhibition. The various statements and letters of appeal reach international levels slowly, as they trickle out with handfuls of brave visitors willing to smuggle them, spreading words of awful truth. The text and captions vignette lives, proclaim accomplishments, and bring one to a grinding halt at the face of appalling humiliation and fear endured by once-luminous and dignified humans. Life outside the safety of home is a duality of deceit and subterfuge, as those robbed of their rights seek to reclaim something in return: children are taught at home to be proud of their Jewish heritage yet hiding their identities from neighbors and classmates who taunt and beat them. Morris is a precise writer, at once true to the spirit of the quotes, and astutely weaving an emotional undercurrent that informs the pictures and the reader. Out of the intense relationship that developed between the two travellers, and the concern demonstrated for others encountered, evolved a collaborative story of enormous and enduring power and importance.

The exhibition's establishing shot (one uses that term, for Rubin is highly regarded for her photojournalistic work here and abroad) is of Mikhail Gorbachev, whose portrait is being raised high above a square for a celebration. This enormous portrait dwarfs those who hold it aloft: the red banners that hang alongside the photograph and its colorful background highlight the square's beauty and decrepitude. It is one of many ominous and forboding moments, the irony of symbolism used to its fullest. Images of the interior of a synagogue, warm light suggesting safety or an inferno, lure the viewer into a false sense of



photo by Jill Goodman



photo by John Dyes



security, for it is clear that danger lurks all around. The worshippers seem oblivious for the time being; in great numbers, they swell and wait, individuals indistinguishable. A wider angle shot of this interior reinforces a sense of old-world elegance, which surfaces in spite of incredible hardships and primitive conditions. Grace is ever present. A remarkable image made from overhead, of men dancing with arms linked, their faces bathed in a wash of light and hands reaching toward them and their spontaneous but short-lived joy, is structured to emotionally penetrate the threat to both the participants and the observers notwithstanding. Outside the synagogue, the crowd is overwhelming, yet no panic avails, nor is there a sense of claustrophobia. Questions start to accelerate to the surface of consciousness, triggered by subtle clues: was this structure always a temple, and just how dangerous is it to worship?

Having been adequately prepared, an abrupt segue now transpires: Rubin begins an intense examination of the individuals, their lives and details, in portraits. Some faces are hopeful, others resigned; most display an incredible mixture of emotions, a great gift to Rubin and Morris. It is clear that they are truly welcome and trusted, and the intrusiveness one might expect in such close and frightened quarters is non-existent. The portrait of Netasha Ratner, alone in her kitchen, shows her in a reflective state, having just returned from visiting her imprisoned husband in Siberia. She looks away from the camera, lost in private thoughts. Compact neatness presides over fear, sorrow, loneliness, uncertainty. Space, at a premium, is referred to repeatedly as overcrowding and its immediate solution, the imposition of order. One sees as subtext a 1950's style to much of the content of the rooms, including aspects of clothing and design. Another image of Mrs. Ratner removes her momentarily from pain: now fully a participant, she holds her exuberant baby, who is clearly unaffected, in ways that show, by the events and losses that dominate their family. These joyful moments echo endless reserves of human strength and determination.

The portrait of Igor Gurvitch, a former physicist who now does menial labor, places him under a painting done by children in his illegal Hebrew school. A dark sweater and couch offset his face and hands, and he is remarkably serene, a slight smile reassuring the viewer. This is one of many moments spent with strangers one will likely never meet, but will certainly never forget. One is called to action, even an action as small as understanding. Mr. Gurvitch's sons are seen in the next image, playing on a climbing gym built in an impossibly small room. Maps and pictures adorn the wall behind, and the boys are energetic and playful—normal activity and exuberance, again, in spite of absurd impositions and sanctions. One gradually redefines normalcy in this context.

Another portrait shows a man surrounded by the elements of his surroundings—typewriter and such—a gentle hand resting on his cat. An indescribable look fills his face, and emotions merge so that they no longer operate individually, but en masse. He is reserved, the poignance strongest in the emotional connection to his pet. Families are traced through their various groupings: an image of two sisters, holding hands across a table, would indicate that one woman is more forthcoming—she grasps with both hands, and extends farther toward her sister and nearer to the camera. The sister on the left would seem to have secrets. Yet in a subsequent image, she holds her husband protectively, as they and their son confront the camera directly and

comfortably. Elements in the background—in this case, an Ernst-like painting—issue faint warnings, again referring to the symbolism and foreshadowing of art and accoutrements. These elements are hard to overlook, yet remain a quiet presence. That many of the portraits are shot tight in alludes to close quarters, and a stifling lack of privacy.

Some families look more untouched than others. A portrait of Nellie and Yuri Shepizman, the latter dying of cancer at the time, speaks of sorrow and resignation, the pictures hanging overhead a bitter reminder of family elsewhere and unknowable. The patterns, mementos, photographs and the like that cover walls and tables and curtains serve, in one sense, as reminder to maintain constant vigil, guard up at all times. Spatial serenity is at a premium, although religious activities prevail.

Children play a critical role; perhaps the most moving images are those showing them as both future and reason to remain present. One image shows a boy studying at his desk, concentration unwavering. The contents of his desk seem mature far beyond his years. Another, of a young man at a piano, completely absorbed, tells a story of overcoming impossible odds to pursue one's art; he is a celebrated pianist, one whose future as a performer is unsure at best. In another portrait of him and his family, he demonstrates a similar focus elsewhere. His mother's expression of passivity means not to disturb or change anything at all costs. The father is rather more expansive; his young daughter holds his hands as if to ground or contain him, conforming to the mother's demeanor.

Only two portraits seem to be permeated by more hopelessness than hope: in one, a couple is separated by a few feet, but the distance is enormous. Their thoughts are black, their expressions echoing despair. Another, of a woman once imprisoned and tortured, shows a side that is numb and desperate, resignation wavering in favor of a continued struggle. Desire for independence, in her case, forces a redefinition of reality.

Many of the images define the fitting in of worship and tradition that must be endured in order to carry on. The subtleties with which Rubin imparts information, such as a table set for a celebratory feast, but planted in the middle of a room that doesn't normally contain such a table or festivities, bring to light greater truths. Need and fear of loss are dealt with in a similar manner, undercurrents speaking clearly. Rage is by necessity quiet, greatest effectiveness dictating. Rubin and Morris understood what they heard and saw, and provide the perfect translation.



Janice Rubin, Boris Friedman Family, Leningrad



Janice Rubin, Misha Friedman: Young Pianist, Leningrad, 1986

## HCP's CHANGE OF OFFICERS

In May the Houston Center for Photography held its annual election of the Executive Board which resulted in a new slate of officers: April Rapier, President; David Crossley and Richard Duncan, Vice Presidents; Dallas Hardcastle, Secretary; Daphne Scarborough, Membership Secretary; Richard Duncan, Treasurer; Cathy Reiser, Parliamentarian; Geoffrey Brune, Exhibitions Chair; Patsy Cravens, Education Chair; George Krause, Charles Schorre, Geoff Winningham, Members at Large.

Congratulations to those assuming their newly elected positions, and special thanks to those leaving the board who served so outstandingly throughout a crucial period of changes (in directorship, fundraising, etc.) during difficult economic times.

President Herman Detering gave unselfishly, devoting his time and resources to the balanced direction of the Center's business. The result was a series of successes, including HCP's participation in Foto Fest, 1986; support from Continental Airlines; the annual auction; and changes in the by-laws. Among his often-invisible but important impacts on the overall "feel" of the Center were his efforts in providing last-minute services for the *New Texas Photography* Parking Lot Party, lunches, dinners and playing host for a number of visiting artists such as Peter D'Agostino and John Gutmann. President Detering's generous efforts have made a lingering intangible contribution to the cultural and intellectual atmosphere of the Center.

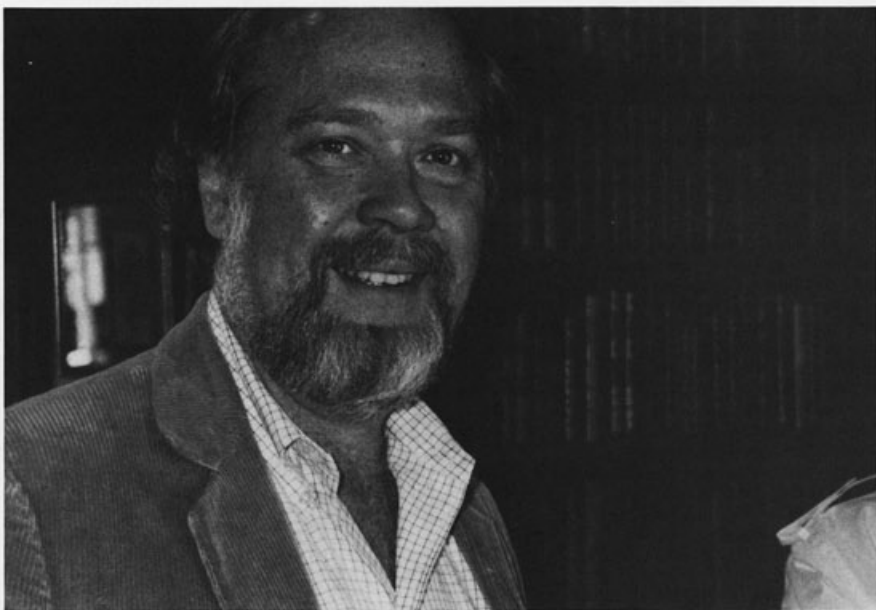
In the HCP-sponsored exhibit currently on display at the Transco Tower, IN SPACE: *A Photographic Journey*, former Vice President, Muffy McLanahan, and Publications Chair, Dave Crossley, after more than a year of intense efforts, brought together photographs from the vast archives of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration/Johnson Space Center and the Anglo-Australian Telescope Board.

Displayed on various levels in the Transco Tower lobbies, this "first of its kind photography show" presents "some of the largest space photographs ever shown, including two 12-foot murals, and several measuring 40 inches by 40 inches." Apart from its spectacular "out-of-this-world" significance as a major exhibition of photographs taken both in space and from earth, it served as a model fundraiser, benefitting not only HCP but the sponsoring organization, NASA/JSC, the City of Houston and its culturally enthusiastic public.

Past Treasurer Gerald Moorhead, who was the architect/designer of the renovated building that is presently HCP, also provided drawings and a model to work from in the successful installation and design of the Space exhibit.

Outgoing Secretary James Bell added a new dimension to the ritual of the opening by organising the "Parking Lot Party" for *The New Texas Photography* exhibition. He successfully chaired the 1986 Photo Auction, in addition to curating the low budget but electronic-intensive PHOTO-TECHNOLOGY show.

The other Vice-President, Wendy Watriss, though constantly engaged in an array of activities that include her art (as a photojournalist working in different parts of the world), lectures, commitment to human rights activities for the Live Oak Fund, and work as Foto Fest "talent scout,"



José Kuri, Herman Detering

served as conscience and voice of reason for the Center. She clarified some of the more controversial issues of the Center's Exhibition and Publications program, without losing critical detachment or her unique sense of humor and boundless joy—no matter how grim discussions can occasionally become in organizations that have responsibility to membership, public and the artists. L.T.

## Subject: Caponigro Plays the Piano

Dateline: March 27, Austin, Texas.

Carol Cohen Burton and Amon Burton gave a party for Paul Caponigro, who had come to Austin to judge the Texas Photographic Society's *Annual Members Only Juried Exhibition*, and to give a workshop. Unbeknownst to the populus at large, however, he had also come to play the piano.

I began writing things down soon upon arrival, the kind of nervous note-taking prompted by a new crowd, a luminous presence with a mythical reputation, and hunger pangs. I realized soon after that what was really motivating the scribbles were Caponigro's off the cuff remarks, responses spoken to no one in particular, as if he'd done one too many of these workshops and dinners, answered one too many adoring fan's obvious but well-meaning question. When we were first introduced, he was imperiously swilling sweet coffee and smoking thin cigars, and it seemed that he was being nice to the guests only by force of sheer will. When I remarked that he seemed distant, perhaps the self-saving mechanism of being in demand, he answered, very slowly, "No, I like people. I really do." As it turns out, ironically, he is quite sincere.

He was facing four months on the road—one month his reward of master piano classes in Italy—and was tired of the rigors of life away from home. What he seemed to miss least was the often-onerous part of picture-making. He takes regular vacations away from photography, a practice which seems to me eminently sensible, yet which caused one "esteemed" photo-historian to eliminate him from a recent tome. His piano technique, in contrast, suffers for days should he take "two weeks off." This line of questioning led him to say that he "lives his life in spurts," a reference to the disorientation of fame.

After a magnificent dinner *al fresco*,

and much good conversation among an enthusiastic and supportive photo-crowd, he sat down at the piano, groused about its condition (it sounded fine to the rest of us, Carol having had it tuned that week), and, with fat fingers and handsome profile, played with the kind of romantic virtuosity which inspires unchaste thoughts. The audience trickled in slowly; between compositions, he dished out one-liners with veteran aplomb, no self-consciousness present. When asked where music stood in relation to photography, he answered, "in the back of my mind, and the front of my heart." His favorite composers are "all of them, if they write well."

His workshop was referred to by all in glowing terms. We discussed teaching, and its effect on personal work, and he was reticent to acknowledge interference other than logistical. I wanted to hear more about his color work, which has received woefully little exposure compared to the classic black and white; his evasive answers weren't intentional, but they were telling. Perhaps the most interesting revelation of all was made much later, when he said, out of the blue, that he was "concentrating on floating free." A.R.

## LETTERS

Professor Arthur Danto agreed to publish this reaction to Cynthia Freeland's recent article "Accomplices of Desire" as an open letter to SPOT's readers.

March 29, 1987

Dear Cynthia,

Thanks for giving me a glimpse of the tabloid on photography, which I thought pretty impressive. I also enjoyed your article, though I was not in the least persuaded by it. There used to be arguments about ethical theories, roughly to the effect that if they entailed that certain acts were permissible, that alone entailed that they had to be wrong. I tend to think a parallel argument must apply in aesthetics: any argument that entails that Rembrandt's image of Saskia as Bathsheba, or Rubens' portrait of Hélène Fourment are pornographic, has to be wrong. I tend by and large to think that the whole concept of objectification is the wrong way to think about pornography, and that if there is something wrong with pornography, that cannot be the trouble. Or, if you wish, if the theory of objectification commits us to saying that those portraits of wives, and perhaps Stubbs' portrait of the horse, are examples of pornogra-

phy, then that is somehow a *reductio* of the objectification theory. When I was an art student in Paris, and we drew from the model, the received wisdom was that we were to see her as an object rather than as a woman, and I think that closely corresponded to the experience in life drawing. No one got aroused. I suppose the models turned back into women when they began to get dressed. Anyway, turning women into objects is the very antithesis of treating them pornographically. I think philosophers have as yet no clear idea of how to deal with sexuality. Or sex. Somehow, I would speculate, if anyone is treated as an object in pornography it is the viewer. The French pornographer Resif de la Bretonne accompanied a characteristic piece of such writing (and a theory of pornography has to include words as well as images) with the imperative "Ebranle-toi" viz. Masturbate! The objection was that such texts incite to sexual violence when not to what used to be called self-abuse, and so should be banned. But that suggests the reader/viewer has so little control over his sexual feelings that it is a danger to place the texts or pictures in his hands.

Anyway, it was a bold and an entertaining piece. How nice of you to think of me.

My best,

Arthur Danto

Danto is Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University and art critic for The Nation.

Professor Freeland replies:

I think Professor Danto's response misses the point of my article. I identified the Rembrandt, Rubens (etc.) portraits as "Hegelian," not "Kantian," objectifications. They *didn't* treat the woman as object, but objectified a male desire, the desire (in "Romantic Love") for an individual woman as subject. They were "pornographic" as instituted expressions of male desire in patriarchal culture. (They might also conspire to inform and elicit desires in female viewers, desires of becoming valuable by being beloved Muses of some Great Male Artist.)

I wanted to say it is somehow "better" if a woman fully participates in her own objectification. I now see problems here, for presumably *Playboy* models freely pose (and get a sense of power from it). This takes us into complex issues about what counts as true "consent." I also wanted to say that photographs can reveal, more

directly than paintings, the nature of a woman's contribution to her own objectification. But maybe the O'Keefe/Stieglitz collaboration is a loaded example of this: maybe I "read in" the artfulness of her participation just because I already knew she was independently a major artist in her own right.

If Danto is right that philosophers have no clear idea of how to deal with sexuality, then I think it's time we got started!

Cynthia Freeland

## NOTES

## TEXAS PHOTOGRAPHERS CAPTURE TEN AWARDS IN SIX-STATE FELLOWSHIP COMPETITION

Texas photographers have won 10 of the 15 \$3,500 grants in a fellowship competition involving a six-state region served by Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA).

Winners were announced recently by M-AAA Visual Arts Director Edeen Martin. The competition is co-sponsored by M-AAA and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Martin said the annual competition drew 316 entries—nearly half of them from the Lone Star State. Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma were also represented.

Texas winners are: Cindy Sims, Arlington; Bill Kennedy and David Wharton, Austin; Debora Hunter, Dallas; Bill Frazier, Bambi Lynn Striewski, Wendy Watriss and Robert Ziebell, Houston; Phillip Rick Dingus, Lubbock; and Steven Goff, Odessa.

Their works, ranging from documentary essays to constructions and photo/drawings, have been represented in numerous exhibits across the country, as well as in private collections.

Also selected for awards were Missouri photographers John W. Gutowski, Kansas City; Rosalind Kimball Moulton, Columbia; and Bruce West, Springfield; James M. Butkus, Omaha, Nebraska, and Carla C. Cain, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Serving as jurors were nationally-recognized photographers Mark Klett, Tempe, Arizona; Anne Noggle, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Rosamond Purcell, Boston, Massachusetts; and Thomas Southall, curator of photography at the Spencer Museum of Art in Lawrence, Kansas.

Southall said the winners "reflect the great diversity of concerns explored by photographers in this region."

Purcell, who described the grant recipients as consistently strong, said she was pleased by the emotional approach—both in portraits and manipulated studio work—evidenced by many of the entries.

"Regretfully, much excellent work had to be eliminated," said Klett.

M-AAA has awarded grants to a total of 95 artists since it initiated the country's first regional fellowship program in 1983. In addition to photographers, past recipients have included those working in the fields of sculpture, crafts, painting, printmaking, drawing and artists' books.

A private, non-profit regional arts organization, M-AAA programs are supported through funding from state, federal and private sources.



CALENDAR

SUMMER 1987 1987

EXHIBITIONS

JUNE  
**Benteler-Morgan Galleries, through June 30** Photographs by Paula Fridkin and other gallery artists. Mon-Fri 9-5, and by appointment. 522-8228.  
**Butera's on Alabama, through July 10** "Woman with Red & Words:" photographs by Carol Gerhardt. 2946 S. Shepherd. Mon-Fri 7-10, Sat-Sun 8-10.  
**Butera's on Montrose, through July 31** "Photographs from Texas:" by Joe Dominick 4621 Montrose. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat-Sun 8-10.  
**Diverse Works, through July 11** "Found:" works by Texas artists who work with found materials. 214 Travis. Tue-Fri 10-5, Sat 12-4. 223-8346.  
**Glassell School of Art, through June 28** "Houston Hispanic Artists: 4 Houston Artists:" includes work by photographers Roel Castillo and Ben DeSoto.. Mon-Thur 9am-10pm. Fri-Sun 9-5, 529-7659  
**Houston Center for Photography, through June 28** "Phototechnology:" and "New Light: The Holographic Image:" Wed-Fri 11-5, Sat-Sun 12-5. 529-4755.  
**Lawndale, through June 20** "Sculpture: The Spectrum." 5600 Hillman. Tue-Sat 12-6. 921-4155.  
**Transtower, through June 17** "IN SPACE: A Photographic Journey:" 2800 Post Oak Blvd.. (Curated by the Houston Center for Photography) Mon-Fri 8-6, Sat 8-1. 439-4401.

JULY  
**Art League of Houston, July 9 through August 1,** "Juried Membership Show:" (juror is Bill Graham). 1953 Montrose Blvd.. Tue-Fri 10-5:30, Sat 10-4. 523-9530.  
**Benteler-Morgan Galleries, through August 31** Photographs by gallery artists. Mon-Fri 9-5, and by appointment. 522-8228.  
**Butera's on Alabama, through July 10** "Woman with Red & Words:" photographs by Carol Gerhardt. 2946 S. Shepherd. Mon-Fri 7-10, Sat-Sun 8-10.  
**Butera's on Alabama, July 13 through Sept 13** "Photographs by Maud and Sara Lipscomb." 2946 S. Shepherd. Mon-Fri 7-10, Sat-Sun 8-10.  
**Butera's on Montrose, through July 31** "Photographs from Texas:" by Joe Dominick 4621 Montrose. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat-Sun 8-10.

**Diverse Works, through July 11** "Found:" works by Texas artists who work with found materials. 214 Travis. Tue-Fri 10-5, Sat 12-4. 223-8346.  
**Houston Center for Photography, July 3 through August 3** "1986 HCP Fellowship Winners' Exhibition: Photographs by Roel Castillo, Bill Frazier, Frank Isaac, and David Portz." also, "The Family/Extensions:" Wed-Fri 11-5, Sat-Sun 12-5. 529-4755.

AUGUST  
**Art League of Houston, through August 1,** "Juried Membership Show:" (juror is Bill Graham). 1953 Montrose Blvd.. Tue-Fri 10-5:30, Sat 10-4. 523-9530.  
**Art League of Houston, August 6 through 31,** "Class Act '87:" exhibition for teachers and students of the Art League. 1953 Montrose Blvd.. Tue-Fri 10-5:30, Sat 10-4. 523-9530.  
**Benteler-Morgan Galleries, through August 31** Photographs by gallery artists. Mon-Fri 9-5, and by appointment. 522-8228.  
**Butera's on Alabama, through Sept 13** "Photographs by Maud and Sara Lipscomb." 2946 S. Shepherd. Mon-Fri 7-10, Sat-Sun 8-10.  
**Butera's on Montrose, August 3 through October 31** "David Whitson: Photographs:" 4621 Montrose. Mon-Fri 7-10, Sat-Sun 8-10.  
**Houston Center for Photography, through August 3** "1986 HCP Fellowship Winners' Exhibition: Photographs by Roel Castillo, Bill Frazier, Frank Isaac, and David Portz." also, "The Family/Extensions:" Wed-Fri 11-5, Sat-Sun 12-5. 529-4755.

EXHIBITIONS ELSEWHERE IN TEXAS

JUNE  
**Abilene: West Texas Photographic Gallery, through June 30,** "WTPS All Member Show:" 1140 1/2 N. 2nd St., Tue-Fri 11-2. (915)677-7241.  
**Austin: Laguna Gloria Art Museum, June 26 through August 23,** "On The Line: The New Color Photojournalism:" 3809 W. 35th St. Tue-Sat 10-5, Thur 10-9, Sun 1-5. (512)458-8191.  
**Dallas: Allen Street Gallery, through June 28** "New Faces: Pamela DeMaris, Paula Goldman, Susan Kirchman, Jeanette May, Bill Wright." 4101 Commerce St., Wed-Fri 12-5, Sat-Sun 1-5. (214)821-8260.  
**Dallas: Afterimage, through July 3** "Michael Johnson." 2800 Routh Street. The Quad, #250. Mon-Sat 10-5:30 (214)871-9140.

**Dallas: Barry Whistler Gallery, through July 8** "Life as We Know It." Recent photographs by Nic Nicosia, exhibited in conjunction with a soundtrack by Dave Hickey and Mike Wafer. 2909-A Canton St., (214)939-0242.  
**Waco: The Art Center, through June 28** "Luther Smith: High School Rodeo Series." 1300 College Dr.

JULY  
**Abilene: West Texas Photographic Gallery, through July 31,** "Reagan Bradshaw: Photographs:" 1140 1/2 N. 2nd St., Tue-Fri 11-2. (915)677-7241.  
**Austin: Laguna Gloria Art Museum, through August 23** "On The Line: The New Color Photojournalism:" 3809 W. 35th St. Tue-Sat 10-5, Thur 10-9, Sun 1-5. (512)458-8191.  
**Dallas: Afterimage, through July 3** "Michael Johnson." 2800 Routh Street. The Quad, #250. Mon-Sat 10-5:30 (214)871-9140.  
**Dallas: Afterimage, July 7 through Sept 5,** "Walter W. Nelson." 2800 Routh Street. The Quad #250. Mon-Sat 10-5:30 (214)871-9140.  
**Dallas: Allen Street Gallery, July 12 through August 30** "Members' Exhibition:" 4101 Commerce St., Wed-Fri 12-5, Sat-Sun 1-5. (214)821-8260.  
**Dallas: Barry Whistler Gallery, through July 8** "Life as We Know It." Recent photographs by Nic Nicosia, exhibited in conjunction with a soundtrack by Dave Hickey and Mike Wafer. 2909-A Canton St., (214)939-0242.  
**Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, through Sept. 6** "Certain Places: The Photographs of William Clift." 3501 Camp Bowie Blvd. Tue-Sat 10-5, Sun 1-5:30. (817)738-1933.

AUGUST  
**Abilene: West Texas Photographic Gallery, through August 31,** "Five Dyess Photographers:" 1140 1/2 2nd St., Tue-Fri 11-2. (915)677-7241.  
**Austin: Laguna Gloria Art Museum, through August 23,** "On The Line: The New Color Photojournalism:" 3809 W. 35th St. Tue-Sat 10-5, Thur 10-9, Sun 1-5. (512)458-8191.  
**Dallas: Afterimage, through Sept 5,** "Walter W. Nelson." 2800 Routh Street. The Quad #250. Mon-Sat 10-5:30 (214)871-9140.  
**Dallas: Allen Street Gallery, through August 30** "Members' Exhibition:" 4101 Commerce St., Wed-Fri 12-5, Sat-Sun 1-5. (214)821-8260.  
**Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, through Sept. 6** "Certain Places: The Photographs of William Clift." 3501 Camp Bowie Blvd. Tue-Sat 10-5, Sun 1-5:30. (817)738-1933.

WORKSHOPS

**Holography** the Anthony Foundation. 3202 Argonne, is offering a cyclical series of holography classes at very reasonable prices. For more information, contact Frank Davis. 526-0006.  
**Ozark Color Workshop June 22-26** taught by Houston photographer Jay Forrest, this workshop will concentrate on photographic seeing and learning to get the most out of color transparency films for projection and printing. A Jobo processor will be used to process the film daily. \$375 (not including meals) 496-2905.

**Fundamentals of Black and White Photography, July/ Aug** Houston Center for Photography. 1441 W. Alabama. Instructor Jay Forrest has designed six sessions for beginning photographers interested in how to operate a camera, how a light meter works, what film to use, how the photographic process works, how to develop film and make a proof sheet, and basic printing. Tues. evenings. 7-9:30, July 14 through August 18. First three sessions at HCP, last three sessions in a nearby darkroom/ studio. \$100 HCP members, \$120 nonmembers. 529-4755.

WORKSHOPS ELSEWHERE IN TEXAS

**San Antonio: San Antonio Art Institute, June 13-Aug 8 (Section A), June 15-Aug 3 (Section B)** "Beginning Photography:" (non-darkroom intro) instructor is D. Clarke Evans. \$100. (512)824-7224.  
**San Antonio: San Antonio Art Institute, June 12-July 31** Introduction to Black and White Photography:" (darkroom intro) instructor is D. Clarke Evans. \$100/\$15 lab fee. (512)824-7224.

LECTURES/EVENTS ELSEWHERE IN TEXAS

**Dallas: Allen Street Gallery, July 15-Aug 15** "Show and Sell:" weekends only at the gallery, sale of members' photographs. 4101 Commerce St., Fri 7-10 (pm), Sat 12-5, Sun 1-5. (214)821-8260.  
**Dallas: Allen Street Gallery, June 13** "Five Star Event:" includes morning tour 8:30-11:30 studios/ collections/darkrooms of Suzanne O'Brien, Skeet McAuley, Philip Lamb, Ron Evans, The Color Place. 12:30-3:30, tours cont'd.: David H. Gibson Company, Lynn Lennon and Eric Johnson, Brad Michael Moore, Dr. and Mrs. Doyle Carson, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Page. 7-9pm is a gala celebration. Price for the entire day: \$25. Call (214)821-8260.

GODARD FILMS AT RICE MEDIA CENTER

Rice University Media Center will screen a series of major films by the controversial French director, Jean Luc-Godard:  
*A Woman is a Woman* June 6 7:30 & 9:15  
*Vivre Sa Vie* June 13 7:30 & 9:15  
*Contempt* June 20 7:30 & 9:20  
*A Married Woman* June 27 7:30 & 9:15  
*Band of Outsiders* July 4 7:30 & 9:15  
*Two or Three Things...* July 11 7:30 & 9:15  
*Every Man for Himself* July 18 7:30 & 9:15  
*Hail Mary* July 25 7:30 & 9:30  
"A Salute to the Soviet Republics" is scheduled on Thursday nights, with films re-run on Sunday nights, as follows:

*Revolt of the Daughters-in-Law* June 18 & 21 7:30  
*Trial on the Road* June 25 & 28 7:30  
*Legend of Suram Fortress* July 2 & 5 7:30  
*Come and See* July 9 & 12 7:30  
*Blue Mountains* July 16 & 19 7:30  
*Descendent of the Snow Leopard* July 23 & 26 7:30

"HAPPENINGS"

Especially for the eclectic. Antiques, jewelry, art and many unusual one of a kind items.  
Booth 528 - Antique World Meyerland Plaza  
or call 524-1507 for showroom appointment



David Malin © Royal Observatory, Edinburgh

## THE HOUSTON CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

thanks everyone who participated in the production of

# IN SPACE

## A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY.

Curated by David Crossley and Muffy McLanahan  
Transco Tower/Houston, Texas

Made possible by

THE BOEING COMPANY

Transco Energy Company      Continental Airlines  
NASA/Johnson Space Center      Gerald D. Hines Interests

### THE EXHIBITION

W.J. (Jack) Bowen, CEO, Transco Energy Company  
Louis A. Parker, NASA/JSC  
John Holland, NASA/JSC  
Barry B. Schroder, TGS Technology, Incorporated  
Mike Gentry, NASA/JSC  
Max Miller, Earth Satellite Corp.  
David B. Waller, Jr., Graphic Designer  
Gerald Moorhead, Architect  
Mary Ann Hager, Lunar and Planetary Institute  
David Malin, Anglo-Australian Telescope Board  
Gail Bonish, Imax Systems Corp.  
Mimi Crossley, Author  
Alexander K. McLanahan, Kidder Peabody and Co. Inc.

Sally Sprout, Assistant Curator, Transco Gallery  
Priscilla Strain, Curator, Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution  
Dr. Carolyn Sumners, Curator of Physics and Astronomy, Museum of Natural Science and Burke Baker Planetarium  
Jurrie Van Der Woude, Jet Propulsion Laboratory  
Lew Thomas, Executive Director, HCP  
Christine Lunceford, Administrative Director, HCP  
Beth Schlanger, Publicity  
All the scientists, engineers, astronomers, photographers, and computer wizards who made it all happen

### GALA DINNER

**Honoree**  
Senator John Glenn, Astronaut

### Honorary Committee

Dr. Joseph P. Allen  
Captain Alan L. Bean, USN  
Captain Eugene A. Cernan  
Walter Cunningham  
Dr. Maxime A. Faget  
Dr. Robert Gilruth  
Dr. Hans Mark  
Rear Admiral Alan Shepard, USN  
Retired  
Donald K. Slayton

### Gala Dinner Committee

Muffy McLanahan, Project Coordinator  
Carol Groppe, Chairman  
Wendy Watriss, Co-Chairman  
Priscilla Slocum, Cuisine  
Kenzie Hannah, Decorations  
Anne Bohnn, Invitations

David B. Waller, Jr., Graphic Design  
Beth Schlanger, Publicity  
Annette Gordon, Reservations  
Ann Brinkerhoff, Special Arrangements  
Clare Glassell, Star Registry  
Eliza L. Randall, Table Decorations  
Lo Cunningham  
Dave Crossley  
Nancy Dukler  
Helen Manning  
Daphne Scarbrough  
Ron Scott  
Alice Thomas

### Sponsors

Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Avery  
Dr. & Mrs. Jules Bohnn  
Mr. and Mrs. Alfred C. Glassell, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Groppe

Mr. William Hill  
The Inverness Corporation  
Kidder Peabody and Co. Inc.  
Lockheed Engineering & Management Services Co.  
Mr. & Mrs. Alexander K. McLanahan  
Mrs. Eliza L. Randall  
Mr. & Mrs. Lee D. Schlanger  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert H. Sheridan  
Mr. & Mrs. Wallace S. Wilson

### Special Thanks

Mr. & Mrs. E. Rudge Allen  
Crossley & Pogue Photography  
Ann Feltus  
Houston Museum of Natural Science and Burke Baker Planetarium  
NPL, Inc.  
Mr. & Mrs. Alvin M. Owsley, Jr.

Support for the Houston Center for Photography includes grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and the Cultural Arts Council of Houston.