DIANE ARBUS: THE FASCINATION PERSISTS, BY HILL & BLOOM/NEW WORK IN GAY REPRESENTATION

DENNIS HOPPER: ICON OR ICONOCLAST? BY MARGO REECE/KURT KREN FILMS/JAPANESE VIDEOS

EXHIBITIONS/HCP MEMBERS SHOW/BOOKS: WINOGRAND/ART IN ARCHITECTURE AND ADVERTISING
Editor's note: Jean Caulin, who assumes the position of Executive Director at HCP on September 1, 1988, was invited to write a special guest edition of Messages for this issue of SPOT—CF.

We are pleased to announce that the Houston Center for Photography now has a Macintosh computer graphics equipment that will provide both a working facility for artists and dealers publishing capabilities for the Center's publications, HCP gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas for this project. This new program is the brainchild of HCP President Dave Crookes, who will serve as its administrator for the Anchorage Foundation and the HCP. The basic computer tools now at the center were provided by the Anchorage Foundation of Texas, whose chair is Anne Licht, a member of the HCP Advisory Board.

The Center now has a Macintosh II computer with a color video monitor, a Microtek 400-dot-per-inch scanner for both graphics and text, an Apple Laserwriter II NT printer, state-of-the-art graphics software, and a high-resolution publishing package called Quark Xpress. Additional information on the computer equipment and the artists' support program will be found in forthcoming issues of the monthly HCP members newsletter. Beginning this fall, the Center will offer workshops on the use of the Macintosh II equipment. At the time SPOT goes to press, we are considering "An Introduction to the Macintosh System," "An Introduction to Computer Graphics," and "Photographic Image Manipulation" as likely workshop topics.

HCP will also sponsor workshops offered by Macinterfaces, a new Houston firm that is the first Apple System dealer in the nation. Staffed by eleven technical wizards, Macinterfaces is committed to working with HCP and the artists' community in pushing this equipment to its limits.

As a kick-off for this new program, HCP will be exhibiting Digital Photography from October 14—November 13. This traveling exhibition will present a variety of provocative photomontage work using new computer-related material, by eleven artists from throughout the United States. Digital Photography was curated for San Francisco Cameronby Marsha Gilleit and Jim Powers, and is accompanied by an exhibition catalogue. This survey of electronically recorded and processed imagery will include inkjet and laser prints, photographs, video sculptures, an interactive artist's book, and an interactive computer/video installation. The primary intention of this exhibition is to present significant contemporary art that is produced with affordable electronic equipment and utilizes innovative new forms of presentation and distribution. Artists included in the exhibition are Paul Boggs, Michael Butskey, Christopher Burnett, Carol Fonz, George LaGrue, MANUAL (Suzanne Bloom/Ed Hill), Esther Parada, Sheila Pinklet, Alan Ruth, and Rolf Taussch. The creation of Digital Photography was supported in part by a Special Exhibits Grant through the Museum Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and the Mariner Foundation.

A committee of the board met during the summer to discuss renovation plans to accommodate the new computer equipment. The committee members are: Geoff Brown, Dave Crookes, Dallas Hardcastle, Gerald Macht, Arthur Stewart, and Clare Wither. Renovations to the HCP facilities will take place after the successful completion of a small capital campaign to raise needed funds. The renovations will provide additional office space, a secure work area for the Macintosh computer, and a second, smaller gallery facility that will feature work by emerging and regional photographers.

Volunteers and student interns are needed to help administer the growing programs and services of the Houston Center for Photography. If interested, please contact me or Chris Lunsford at (713) 529-4755.

Jean Caulin

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

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"A sensitivity to light that is truly impressive." Ravenna Newby

Available in October from RICE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Funded in part by a grant from the Cultural Arts Council of Houston.
Almost everything we call "higher culture" is based on the spiritualiza-
tion and moralization of cruelty.

Friedrich Nietzsche

We have then a body of unique photographic works whose auto-locus center is meaningful in the artist herself; but then the singular creative subjectivity of Diane Arbus.


The fact of suicide apparently fixes the life-death and the art in an
ussuative way. Much the same thing occurred—when Nietzsche stepped
into clinical depression shortly after the new year in 1889. We
are drawn, then, to the life history as though it were an annotated map
of a labyrinthine mysticism.

Biography in a realm also open to entrepreneurial excess. We have in
mind Patricia Barnowsky's Diane Ar-
bus: A Biography, published in 1984 and written, we judge with one
eye for the Silhouette Romance market. Ar-
bus daughter, Doon, refused repro-
duction rights to Barnowsky with the
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substance. For the definitive critique of
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mand Catherine Loed's review in Es-
quire, 1983, where she describes the
book as "bizarre gone berserk."1


The book of even otherwise thorough and responsible criticism.

Diane Arbus: A Biography of the (Original) Self as a seriously
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that Arbus "fixes" her subjects, a commonplace by the dozen of her celebrity status. Yes, the photographs continue to dazzle. Fascination, in fact, is what happens between us and her photographs. They provide the pervasive and eerie pleasure principle of inverted desire, etc. Young Man With Hair Curlers," or "Young Woman With Wig"—conversation pleasures because stereotypes are a serious matter. As Sander Gilman points out, "Stereotypes arise when self-identification is threatened." 8 So there is a certain anxiety in finding the "normal" and "abnormal" consumed: and yet, there is discomforting fascination in that moment of recognition: if you're not aware, this dangerous metamorphosis has already happened before. Privatization of our "collected" selves and our social selves is under threat by these photographs. Are we really willing to relinquish hold of our stereotypes today? To scan the turn of Arbus's photographs is to witness a tangle of stereotypes, a willful tearing of a web of 1950s' fascination persists.

These images brought back a gray and silver, world function as defined pointing to reasons understood; they stand along the borderline of what, even reducing us to attend to its prosaic silence. If we trace our fascination far enough, we will find the photographs are markers of madness. This said, these disclaimers must immediately follow: we do not mean that (1) the people in the photographs were mad, (2) Arbus was herself mad, or (3) the photographs are pathological in that they show those who look at them mad. Any of these notions would be far more sensational than what we are actually proposing.

For a long time, it appeared as if the work of the images, and the social beyond reason and reason, to a social anything else than the "normal"

As for the compound joint that is presumed between madness and stereotypes of Otherness, we have already referred to Sander Gilman.

Of all the models of pathology, one of the most powerful is mental illness. For the most eminently frightening possibility is loss of a control on the self, and loss of control is associated with loss of language and thought perhaps even more than with physical illness. Often associated with violence including rage or illness in part a projection: for within everyone's mind there exists a plot of aggression not essentially different from that of the initial moment of individualization, an infantile madness that are control more or less success. 18

What Gilman means by the term of "loss of language and thought" is the ability to speak and be heard in the dismantling tongue or voice. Even more interesting is the reference to the "initial moment of individualization." This critical moment is placed, occurs, at a point between a few weeks and a few months. In other words, the crucial transition from a state where the world holds the child and the bare structures of identity emerge, there is experienced a crisis of anxiety, an increase "madness" that in turn is read into memory. One of the important suggestions we are trying to establish in this crude outline is that the "history" of a pathological mode of being exists within the individual psychic memory as well as within the "unconscious." The authority of Arbus's photopic functions as a here to this memory. The stereotypic signs that are so carefully constructed to hold it at bay are met head-on by the detailedness that have become her hallmark. Gilman also makes it clear that stereotypic "associations are double-bodied." In the most marvelous, paradox as they are able to metamorphose into their opposite in a form of value inversion which explains the mutability, for example, of fascination and fear, of how everyday gestures can appear transformed into indices of dementia. This latter effect—"a psychic savior in the worlds of the quotidian world—is cumulable with Arbus although individual photographs imply a pathological dismembering of rational structures quite accurately. See "A Flower Girl at a Wedding, Conn." and "A Young Man and His Girlfriend at Hot Dogs in the Park, N.Y.C.", in citing madness we are not identifying the net within the shell of Arbus' photographs. As we hope we have made clear the essence of their meaning is another game entirely. If we suspend for a moment our self-imposed monolith on allusion to Arbus' intentions, then we would conclude that she believed each of her subjects typically the freaks contained their own existential meaning as centered truths, and therefore, that her best photographs were able to symbolize these same truths. This is not our position. In effect we find that the photographs in our context with them function as allegorical signs they point ELSE-WHERE, to a space—perhaps—beyond, with behavior to (Thoreau, W. Southwell (New York: Aperture, 1984), 8-13.


11 Ed Hall and Suzanne Ribon are, respectively, Professor and Associate Professor of Art at the University of Houston. They are regular contributors to Artforum magazine, and artists who collaborate under the name MANUL.
Kurt Kren was present at a film retrospective of his work at HCP on May 12th, 1986. He has recently been honored by a retrospective in Vienna, and he was the subject of a FIDS documentary produced by JOTTFI, Munich.

A sculpture on the early sixteenth-century carved organ left at St. Stefani's Cathedral in Vienna illustrates the new emphasis on individual subjectivity in Renaissance art. The critic, organ left rests on a stone figure who peers out of a window, holding a square in his hand. The figure bears the likeness of its maker, the master carver Anton Pfliser. As we see them meet, we realize we are being inspected.

Instead of concentrating on what we see, we become conscious of the act of looking. In a similar fashion, Viennese-born Kurt Kren's films make us aware of the act of using and, especially, of the process of perception.

Kren's film Windowshower, garage, etc., 1962 opens with a shot of old people staring in our direction out of second story windows set in pastel walls. We are being observed. We see faces, eggs, newspapers, glass, and living birds scattered on the ground—we move away from them as though we are walking. There is a street in front of us—we see legs walking and arms swinging, as though we are observing these actions out of doors. The screen becomes black in staccato rhythm a tiny crescent moon points up, down. Images alternate to split-second time. The old people are back, still staring at us. They tilt right, left, right, left. The rapid angular movements and circular motion of these elements build up to darkness descends—on window. Fin.

Windowshower, original perceptions experienced on a walk through the city in a dreamlike fashion, is but an Ant Pilgrim replicated stone. As does Kren's shape and threat images in our way, reshaping us through our experience of those images. In images such as this, we remember that the artist returns seen we might look for the first time. No wonder formal innovations in the 60's involved repeated reordering of windows, forcing us to look at and sort through the seemingly inconsequential people and things we often encounter in our everyday landscapes.

In Apartment, five unaccompanied shots of light form in a black screen. Five images appear, then ten images, including fence, pathways, and trees. Images connect with adjacent image patches, forming larger image grids. Five of the images disappear, revealing a countertop of darkness and light. Two small children walk in a lower level image, then disappear. Lane images join fence images, parasite images and texts images, under changing seasonal conditions. Even when the screen is full of images, the black and frame that frames each image hinders our view of the entire scene. When we realize that these images make up one landscape, we become aware of the multiplicity of circumstances involved in perception. We realize we can never literally "know" these natural scenes, which we can partially see—see the "aesthetic" or sanctuary Kren enjoyed during a country vacation when he made this film. As we become aware of the multiplicity of what is perceived, we become aware that we must actively look if we are to see.

Kren, who was present at the HCP screening, said that "he is a visual person. He notes, "You see and you don't." His approach does not stem from the fact that a film form is an abstract base from which to grasp experience with immediate experience. Initial openness is important to Kren in the making of his films as well as in the viewing of them, and to a certain extent the imagination and interpretation of his work to the viewer. Since it is the experience and perception of that which is being explored, every reaction which takes the images presented into full account in a "correct" reading. Because repeated viewings of the same film involve new experiences of the same images, each viewing of a particular film should yield a new reading.

Kren notes the enormous amount of energy needed to make his films. It also takes enormous energy to look at his work, since we are unaccustomed to experience our own looking. His three- to six-minute works demand the same sensitivity as a Godardian feature film. Godard's film of 1960's with directorial influence with images and written words that related to artistic films, political views, and literature, involving aesthetic in a picture of the 'Children of Marx and Coca Cola'. His Magazine Poetique 1966, for example, both unites and conflicts a social meaning to the politics of the left and an emergent pop image intent on building capital from our record sales. The viewer is placed in a political and economic conflict or the image cannot be made. Such a viewer becomes conscious of the act of looking itself. Kren films look at us and our ability to look, probing us to look again on our own.

The recently translated first volume of French philosopher Giles Deleuze's Deleuze's text on film, Cinema 1, offers a way to view Kren's concentration on looking. In Cinema 1, films are defined as cinematic. Cinematic life is a collection of images which are not independent visual experiences of perception. Such images have a "perceptual perspective" when seen in the context of the surrounding shots. These shots are not shots which develop a picture of characters in an environment, as Howard Hawks does for example in Rio Bravo (1959), where a conflict results when a short film battles against and his friends in order to keep him in jail. Perception images are shots which break away from film without a direction—images which present a wrong track. It is from this camera the picture was consistent and recorded images which are not those a particular element of film. "Perception images" are related to each other by Kren's films which presents a subject with a camera perspective. Deleuze summarizes: "...The perception image finds its status as an indirect subjective, from the moment that it reflects its content in a consciousness which has become autonomous."

In viewing a film which seems to perceive again and again, Kren's viewers become aware that a contest of unexplored surroundings in individual shots. In his films, these cells call attention to their perceptual perspective. It is not the identity of a landscape which is developed in Apartment, for example, but a somewhat mechanized psychological process in Godard's "Children of Marx and Coca Cola". His Magazine Poetique 1966, for example, both unites and conflicts a social meaning to the politics of the left and an emergent pop image intent on building capital from our record sales. The viewer is placed in a political and economic conflict or the image cannot be made. Such a viewer becomes conscious of the act of looking itself. Kren films look at us and our ability to look, probing us to look again on our own.

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Kren has lived in Houston since 1963. His first completed film, footshot out 1965, was made here in 1965. It depicts a battle, set against the sky, among city skyscrapers. It opens with a seemingly innocuous shot of a hand reaching into an open coffee tube; thus, the battle of the buildings evolves as a metaphor of the description of a conflict of the world's commodities. Shot of television's buildings, a series of barrenness surrounding them, are followed by shots of a cityscape. A view of the city is enhanced at contrasting angles. Opposition among these editions is enhanced at HCP by the tiny sound of spaghetti western music played on a small record. (Delaney has not yet negated the idea of the city, but the city's aggressiveness shows in theMinute). Constructions of Kren is a city where corporate institutions battle like pandas in high noon. These startling images seem to represent corporate power and battles that heated up in the Houston of the 1960s before Kren's arrival here, and which continue to characterize the U.S. business scene of the 1980s. Kren notes that footage shotout is difficult to make because he lacked his usual reservoir of energy; also, the film was completed on a four-day timetable. And, unlike Anton Pilgrim, Kren does not have a modern field to support his creative endeavors. A film purist, he refuses to put his work on video, noting the joy he feels in seeing light stretch to a screen in a dark room. Kren works now as a security guard in Houston's Museum of Fine Arts. Having resided in the U.S. during the Reagan years, he recognizes that he came here at the wrong time: positions and financial support for experimental film-makers are scarce. After a day of paid-selling, Kren simply lacks the energy to make films.

Footnotes
3. John Inglis, who is an area from the Bakstian Fathers, is a philosopher currently working on a critical study of Giles Deleuze's film theory.

By John Inglis

Kurt Kren, Windowshower, garage, etc., 1962

Kurt Kren, footshot out, 1965

Still by Deborah Gazza
DENNIS HOPPER: ICON OR ICONOCLAST?

By Margo Reece

Three films directed by Dennis Hopper—Easy Rider, The Last Movie, and Sugar Hill—came under Mylar (a silvery plastic) and were exhibited at MoMA in May, from June 6 through June 18, 1990.

In movies about Dodge City, men, they always got big teeth. You needed a good set of teeth to survive in the Wild West, where they couldn't afford to get knocked out by a fist, much less a bullet.

‘—Dennis Hopper

It seems fitting that Dennis Hopper, in his capacity as the president of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, presents us with an exhibit of the movies from, countless worlds, and from television's in-victority, where they sandown inevitably led to a shoo- down. Like Dodge City, Hopper has come to reside in America's collective unconscious. Dodge City is a picture in our hearts and minds, where we recreate it from the movies, from countless worlds, and from television's in-victority. As Hopper has said, "It's a film about people who are not trustworthy, and who are willing to sacrifice their lives for what they believe in."

Hopper's films, Easy Rider, The Last Movie, and Sugar Hill, are a visual representation of the American West, a place where one can experience the thrill of freedom and the danger of the unknown. These films are not just about the physical aspects of the West, but also about the psychological and emotional experience of being a part of this landscape.

For Hopper, the West is not just a place, but a state of mind. It is a place where the individual can find freedom and escape from the constraints of society. Hopper's films capture this spirit, and they continue to resonate with audiences today.

There is also a sense of nostalgia in Hopper's films, as he explores the past and the present, the old and the new. This sense of timelessness is what makes his work so enduring, and it is a testament to his skill as a filmmaker.

In conclusion, Dennis Hopper's films are a testament to the enduring power of the American West. They capture the spirit of freedom and adventure that is so central to the American experience, and they continue to inspire and entertain audiences around the world.
sequentially, movies made against the genre are invariably political. Hopper's films are made against the genre, by treating the hollywood background as familiar then by constructing the films through significant deviation through most failed to read the significance of his devices. Hopper intends no less than a deconstruction of American cinema, a critique in connection with Hollywood's complicity in cultural and economic imperialism. For Hopper's audience, the American Western genre is given a function and purpose: to reveal the essential artefact of its genres and its political and social affiliations. Only a film that is marginalized to the genre can break the code, and Hopper's interest all along was in breaking the codes.

Taking the Western as the representative Hollywood film, Hopper attemps a rigorous examination, not only of the form and content of the Western, but of its social function as well. 13 The Western provides the perfect vehicle for Hopper's double preoccupations with Western imperialism—richer over power and representation. For Hopper, the Western landscape is a metaphor for the American mind: a vast, idealized, garden of the world's artistic styics, or a spectacular raw landscape, which represents the nation's growth and exploration.

West survives as an image in the American mind: a pastoral idyll, garden of the world's artistic styics, or a spectacular raw landscape, which represents the nation's growth and exploration. West survives as an image in the American mind: a pastoral idyll, garden of the world's artistic styics, or a spectacular raw landscape, which represents the nation's growth and exploration.

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frent to be understood. Every film must stand on its own in the circuit of exchange—commerce subordinates art. The film must make money. Films that are too difficult (like those with complex narrative constructs) remain arcane or unsold, as Hopper was to find out after The Last Movie when Hollywood (hoping to utilize the popular implications of the film) only allowed a limited release of the film, withdrew it, and shelved it. Instead of following Easy Rider with another simple straight-forward narrative, which is what the industry expected, Hopper chose to make a complex, multi-faceted, open-ended movie about movies.

The Last Movie’s movie-within-a-movie format allowed Hopper to thematize the structure of the narrative. The filmmakers are aware of a social and political experience passed over by ideological forms and pre-eminently, the movies. The transparency of representation had only hinted at in Easy Rider; in his treatment of the landscape previously discussed comes to a close in The Last Movie. The Last Movie’s first phase is a fundamentally representational exposure of the making of ‘kills the kid’ reveals the artifice of filmmaking as a commodity manufactured by techniciens. In the narratively straight-forward second phase we see what is actually happening. Hopper makes a film primarily about what happens to Kansas (Hopper), a writer/stuntman living for the movies. He decides to stay on in Peru after filming the film “Perú, la vida de un niño” (‘Perú, Life of a Child’) in hopes of striking it rich. This part of the film presents a standard fare of sexual, social, and death; but it is also concerned with the effects of film practice, both on those involved—the actors, the filmmakers, and on those who are innocently come into contact with movie makers (symbolized by the natives). Finally, in the film’s last phase, Hopper expands his concerns beyond the Zierna, his acceptance of the waterman film genre and allegories about the native in contemporary society to begin to explore filmmaking itself.

By interrelating different levels of reality and by breaking the down, The Last Movie begins reporting on itself. In the end, the fictional substance of the film is allowed to whitewash itself out of existence through an interestingly multi-faceted strands and documentary fragments: in The Last Movie, Kansas is shot and staggers off to die, in infinite variations. He is the writer, the priest, the man, and thumbs his nose at the cinema but before he is finally killed; the narrative erodes, and the film gradually through more outcomes. This tension between fragmentation is symbol of the frustration of never being able to say things as you had imagined them, of being able to find the perfect form within the confines of the medium’s and industry’s codes.

Hopper had to find a way to balance the sacred trust of never altering to the unreality of the image: Universal wanted me to change the ending, but I said: ‘No, I just wanted to show the character I played dying,’ they said. ‘We don’t care if you come, see the Voces del Pleno,” film festival, kill this guy, have a camera fall on him, run him over with a horse, re-clip it and kill him!’ I refused and they said what else they could do, and they were going to do it instead. We filmed it for two weeks in L.A., two weeks in New York and three days in San Francisco.

After the filming he received for The Last Movie from the Hollywood establishment the critics, and a and a vicious and vindictive press 30, it’s not surprising that Hopper returned to cinematographically sanctioned material. Colors and black-and-white, thematically conventional and conventionally linear. The gap between conception (ideas) and completion (what is actually possible) within Hollywood’s codes can be discerned in a 1960 interview with Hopper, in which he pondered what he had to do next.

‘I’m interested in being period things. I want to do things like that...’ ‘Gee, that’s my forte...’ ‘I’d like to do a dapper picture. It’s not a popular period, everything’s going around saying ‘We don’t do that anymore...’ ‘They don’t want to see that as a device to show the underside of Los Angeles.’ Hollywood, 1960. It’s all over, from wealthy people to poor people... Show the street gangs, the valley gangs, the hobo gangs... Show the producers, the rock stars, the movie stars, that whole area. Use a surfer as the key...’ ‘If I talk to rich people, they don’t just hang up they don’t want to be associated with a drug picture. But in fact of fact, it’s a perfect time to do it. The time is the time to do it. The country’s most artless. They’re putting out that they’re not going to make a movie about it.’

The film Hopper talks about making sounds infinitely more interesting than the one that got made.

FOOTNOTES
2. James Monaco, How to Read a Film (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 424. Dario Boitoti’s famous phrase is listed in the index as the definition of celebrities.
3. A. Hoberman, Dennis Hopper’s The Last Movie, Motion Picture, October 1970, p. 9.
7. Seth Caplin, p. 61.
8. Seth Caplin, p. 66.

From Out of the Blue (1980). Directed by Dennis Hopper. (Film Still Archives, Museum of Modern Art, New York.)
MONOLOGUE/  
DIALOGUE

By Carole Termanlan

From July 8—August 7, 1988, San Francisco Eagle: Gay Bar in Time of Transition. Photographs by Doug Iacchus; were on exhibit at JCP, Iacchus’s work was included in another exhibition this summer, Monologue/Diologue, organized by Lynne Brenner for the Randolph Street Gallery in Chicago, from June 25—July 23. SPOT, called Chicago writer Carole Termanlan to address the broader context of gay and lesbian representation created by the Chicago show. Also included in Monologue/Diologue were photographs by Joan Didion, Brooklyn, Arizona, Sunul Gupta (London). C.K. Yip, and Peirce Armand Bichat (Metropolitan, New Mexico).

The title of this exhibition, Monologue/Diologue, represents a binary opposition. The term "Monologue" refers to the cultural formation of patriarchy, in other words, to the singular, dominant discourse white male heterosexuals. The term "Diologue" refers to those outside of it, often situated in metaphor as the voice of "The Other" and often non-heterosexuals, who can only be known in relationship to the dominant. These four photographers from the Chicago show submit their ideology by placing the "Other" in the center

Sunul Gupta’s "Precarious Family Relationships" (1987-89) are a series of twelve photographs that look at the cultural identity within the homossexual community, each triptych consists of a color print, a poem written by Steven Dodd, and a strip from a black and white photograph. The color photo prints each gay or lesbian couple典型案例 played by models in a different public, or private setting. The poems establish some aspect of the relationship between them, for instance, "Seeing you, seeing me, it all becomes so clear." These compositions are then placed next to sections from photographs taken at a demonstration in London on April 30, 1988. This project was in opposition to a clause in a Local Government Bill that would prohibit the "promotion and teaching of homosexuality as a preferred family relationship." Gupta was present at a panel discussion, also entitled Monologue/Diologue, at Randolph Street Gallery on the evening of June 25th. During his panel, he told the audience that the clause was passed into law on May 20th. He also explained that this legislation was in response to a school book that had allegedly been shown to two gay and lesbian children. To date, the implications of this legislation remain unclear, but a clear response has been mobilized. Gupta’s "Precarious Family Relations" is a commentary on the idea of a family, and the potential for family in the context of homosexuality.

For those who are "normally" absent within dominant culture.

Doug Iacchus keeps this aspect rolling, as he speaks in his documentary project, "San Francisco Eagle: Gay Bar in Time of Transition" (1986-88). His exhibit begins, appropriately enough, with a location shot of the Eagle bar in San Francisco. From here, Iacchus moves us inside and outside and then all around the Eagle. In other words, Iacchus constructs a gay social history using photographs from Sunday afternoon beers before the bar, as well as the streets of the neighborhood between June 1986 and August 1987 as his frame of reference. He also includes gay publications, autobiographical commentaries, and analogous information from other sources. As Iacchus states in the text.

potential void in a social history where lack of record is the rule." In this respect, Iacchus’s work is similar to Gupta’s; both photographers are attempting to preserve a homossexual presence through representation. However, Iacchus’s project, with two exceptions is a woman in leather at the Eagle, and a quote in a book mentioning the word "lesbian," concentrates on gay male sexuality. Iacchus’s project contains a variety of interesting issues, rather than a specific piece of legislation which conveys its own hidden, interpreted components. Iacchus situates himself in the area South of Market in San Francisco. Here, seven bars have permanently closed since 1982. Iacchus identifies several reasons for these closings, namely: gentrification; AIDS and the political reactions to it; and a general decline in clientele, related to AIDS, politics, and aging. Due to these circumstances, the Eagle has become, according to Iacchus, "a microcosm of the pre-AIDS Polans so-called ‘rolling pot’ of bitters, leather men, boy bodybuilders, and drag queens. Since Iacchus represents this diversity in his work, his exhibit photographs are finely crafted portraits that present these men communicating on Sunday afternoon. Iacchus’s project also extracts the layers of meaning that inform our reading.

For starters, Iacchus discusses his own sexuality and the fact that looking at these men is an act of looking. In other words, he renders his own position non-assimilable, which contributes to his own politics. This self-referential, doubling-back exercise is a demonstration of a photograph of a handbill for a photo exhibit that reads "Sosdomsmoc/ the true confessions of a non-gay man, no secret of the fact that he used to enjoy leather bars himself. Moreover, as viewers we are reminded of the fact that we are witnessing a photo exhibition.

Next Iacchus presents an excerpt from John D’Emilio’s book, Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities (1983), introducing the notion that gay bars perform a public and collective function. Iacchus then fast-forwards to an older image of the Eagle, as well as a photograph of men standing on a platform, holding up vintage gay porn images for auction. These additions lend a sense of history to the photographs on display.

In the next slide Iacchus examines the theocratic threat of the post-9/11 era from a variety of perspectives. For example, one quote discusses a correspondence between the revelation of public spaces and the subsequent distribution of gay erotic imagery. Surviving fragments of various publications are presented, hung low on the wall, as "sacred texts." These include, for instance, a mail-order photocatalogue that suggests photographs show men sharing coins, cigarettes, and then undertaking one another. Other photographs (Beautiful, Ltd.) contains a letter from the editor that announces "The U.S. Customs is requesting permission to open mail." This was a response trigger by numerous requests to photographic studios for frontal male nudity. Another photographic project shows two book pages. On the right is a man described as a sex slave, on the left, a text that reads like a leather manifesto: I quote.

In leather with its sensual touch and smell, they have found a symbol which helps their escape from the over-simplified present into a past of dreams, desire and power...and dreaming, ... and dreaming.

Quoting this suggests that the erotic fantasy of leather is about empowerment and a confrontation of cultural norms of gay masculinity. It also speaks visually against oppression. By anthologizing these various texts and images, Iacchus’s photographs bring various narratives together under a single caption, on the opposite wall I introduce a critical commentary. It depicts a handful showing two men hugging below them is a dollar sign. This suggests that the fact that erotic photographs are often produced for money, Iacchus makes sure we do not forget this other narrative.

Another wall includes photographs that represent various activities and scenes. For instance, we see the notice board for the Eagle’s bar group and messages about a sub-district group and a sketch class. One photograph shows an "anti-blow job" logo from the group, emphasizing the idea of an AIDS protest for life saving drugs and treatment. At the same time we see photographs of men at the

Kaucyila Brooke Ltd., 1987 (detail, original color)

Kaucyila Brooke’s photographs examine the lesbian alternative. She elaborates in her statement: "If women are the "other" then lesbians, without a legitimizing sexual connection to the male, are completely outside patriarchal structure." Brooke explores the application of this theory in her collection of images entitled Women’s Salon series. Here, a lesbian couple plays by model and sits in the magical landscape of Monument Valley. As we follow these women through a sequence of images, we see the dual composition, dialog balloons, and narration; we witness conflicts between the dominant patriarchal backdrop and their desire to escape this scenario. This is obvious if one of them, dressed in a cottage outfit, looks at the landscape and says, "I am free floating without associations." As viewers, we are confronted by the positional relationship between her atter and her statement. While she claims to be outside the rules of dominant culture, her outfit reflects the codes around her. Nonetheless, her perception of herself as autonomous leaves her feeling alienated from this environment. As a result, her partner offers an alternative, "You can’t talk your way out of an entire culture. You are it and it is you. We are surrounded by the language. She then illustrates her statement by shaking her shoe and saying, "This darn shit. It gets into everything." In turn, we realize that escaping from sand in a desert is a fantasy that accompanies Monument Valley. At the same time, however, these lesbians are not taken over by this desert. In the last frame, we see them looking through the lens of a pair of glasses, implying, perhaps, an escape

which accompanies this ambitious exhibit. "I bought a washer—for a longer—han for this work." This project, writes Iacchus, "is an attempt to preserve one of many threatened gay public spaces from representational and historical exclusion—to fill one
Eagle. These portray the diverse range of patterns, once again, but their presence also speaks out against the threat of AIDS. These men are active and not afraid to be affectuated with one another.

The remaining images, on the final wall, continue to reflect diversity. Below them is a large collage of black and white photographs taken from Marcel Proust, June 1966. We see a group of men in suits and ties, posing for the camera, their hands clasped together. The photograph is intended to invoke a sense of camaraderie and strength, but also to remind us of the societal pressures and expectations placed on men in society.

AN INTERPRETATION OF ANARCHY, MYTH AND EXTREMITY

By Anne Roberts

The Seventh Annual Members’ Exhibition held at the Houston Center for Photography from April 8–May 15, 1986. Photographers with whom the members included were Geoffrey Brown, David Chaffin, Craigmore Orman, Ben DeSoto, Jan Emswor, Connie Lenz, and Charlie Price. Further details are provided in the notes.

We wanted to be whole, a map without borders.

Janet Pritchard’s Aneurysm (1987) is a grid-like assemblage of 16 photographs taken through the window of a moving car. Collectively they signify a metaphorical passage through time and space, suggesting, perhaps, one’s self-reflective thoughts. The text which accompanies them furnishes biographies between the first and third persons, offering a self-consciousness without resolution. Formally they refer to the “equivalent” school of photography, offering fuzzy, out-of-focus views of trees and sky, sometimes of the road. One of them includes the streetwise message: Others offer us a hand on the steering wheel or a glimpse of a face. It is frustrating to view them in the context of this exhibition—they seem rather self-indulgent when compared to the socially conscious work around them. However, they also represent a continuing process, with which could later come into an awareness of others.

FOOTNOTES

1. One of the texts (after) includes mentions of a man who had photographed the Socialist Realist, leaflet scene in the 70’s. But the photographs were not identified, perhaps because “ABIS had made them an unwelcome reminder; a liability.”

2. Stewart’s statement of “shifting cadences of myth, time, truth, perceived and unforeseen, and the past’s presence.”

3. The artists successfully walk a fine line here between the psychological and the camp, and in their photos exhibited this week, doesn’t see the “spiritual” alluded to in this statement.

4. From the artist’s statement.

5. As much as I would have been interested in seeing those two series near each other, they would have shown better how the two are connected (the viewer can return to view, but enough for the moment).

6. The Houston Center for Photography Fellowship is a new Houston Center to continue work. The fellowship is open to any photographer, regardless of age or gender, who is interested in photography and who is willing to explore new ideas and techniques within the medium.

Anne H. Roby is a photographer, former editor and curatorial, and a publisher of publication staff. She was editor-in-chief at the Houston Center for Photography, Fall 1988.

She wanted to be whole, a map without borders.
SUMMER DROUGHT

By Joan Seeman Robinson

Works by HCP’s 1987 Fellowship Winners, Jill Goodman, Elizabeth M. Grant, and Carol Vuchetics, were exhibited at HCP from July 8-August 7, 1988.

Is it misogynistic to feel more akin to the stuff in still life photographs than to the subjects in social documentary work? If content were the criterion, then tattoo nightmares and handicapped citizens would easily edge out slabs of clay and kitchen cutlery. Why, then does the exhibition of HCP’s three 1987 Fellowship winners seem largely banal, or at best muted, although two of the winners were toward society’s rim to focus on the eccentric and the disabled in their own hangouts and homes?

Neither Elizabeth Grant’s nor Carol Vuchetics’s works are sensationalistic or exploitative. Grant’s tattoo parlor tribe is eager to be photographed, peeling back garments to present what she calls their “living art.” Vuchetics claims no intention to titillate or to beautify the aged and the disabled whom she photographs (and whom she has known and worked closely with for years). Nevertheless, only the occasional image in each series reveals more than a hint at the grandeur of the material at hand.

Grant states that she is documenting the people, aesthetics and environments of Houston’s tattoo parlors at night. Aside from the dubious aesthetic properties of the stock images which are transferred by “artists” to the clients’ skins, even the results are questionable in these terms—except to the subjects themselves. Unloading is the essential condition of this “art.” Tattoo creating an illusory costuming of the body. Nakedness, full or partial, we see in “lightened” zones or script, fringes and figures are inscribed on the flesh. Ultimately the tattoo proclaims both the subliminal as well as the conformist aspects of the beholder’s mentality. Grant’s images need editing and were too densely hung for the space available. The most effective examples had a claustrophobic cropping of physical space and closeups of bodies, creating ambiguities about what we see and where it is. In the interlocking of arms and needles and ornaments, the blank camera contact with the tattooed skin, the branded torsos with the brass ring snapped through them. The identity of these people lie not in their faces but in their roles as inhabitants of a common, cliche-depicted subculture.

Vuchetics is essentially a portraitist of the invisible citizens. Like recent photo-etchers of the terminally ill, the abused, the retarded and the mentally disoriented, she could be susceptible to charges of voyeurism and manipulation—another form of disenfranchisement of the already helplessly marginalized. But her work is restrained. Occasionally she overstates their social insignificance—as women’s heads in a hidden behind those of the two white dogs another is offered by a cloud of smoke from her cigarette; three more are distanced by the intervening stretch of the carpet on which the camera seems grounded.

Some works stand out: the clouding of a man’s head in a woman’s lap, and the tense dignity of an elderly woman in a floral frock, her wary gray hair combed back over the top of a tweed-decked sofa against the severe lines of horizontal Venetian blinds. The still life photographs of Jill Goodman make the most subtle demands on the viewer, as well as the most sensuous overtures. Let them be the most deliberated, the most confined, and seemingly the most austere of the winning entries in the exhibition.

In a series of studies resembling sepia-toned prints, Goodman mounts a monochromatic slab of what looks like brown clay against paper backed with waxy, naturally wrinkled, parchment-like or worn. Stacks or stapled into the kneaded slabs are bananas, faucets, plywood books, butter, crinkled tinfoil, or left more clay balls. In other arrangements, parboiled pasta is tugged or frazzled into clouds of loose tangles. Boiled eggs are precisely peeled, plastic forks are broken and stacked; egg shives and a red waxen candle hyphenate a set of setting like brown eggs and a cup of tomato juice.

Goodman’s works are compendia of the senses: sight, smell, touch, taste, and equilibrium and balance. They move the viewer sensually aware of oneself and of the power of the photographs through its very substantive clarity to convince one of ineffables, of tangibles as abstractions presented for contemplation. What did the crop of this year’s entrants to the HCP Fellowship competition look like? If this show seems unifying, slightly disappointing, what were the choices: Bee Flukinger, Caroline Huber, and Geoff Wintersing had to work from? If this was the best of the current crop then it is a very young generation. Only one entrant seems to have advanced toward a concise vision, sensibility and definitive style.

Joan Seeman Robinson is a Scholar in Residence at the Menil Collection.
Geoffrey Platt, Whitney Auden (1940)

*This collection was designed to help the students at Carleton College understand the American culture. The authors, who are native to the United States, have written their portraits to give the students a glimpse of American life.*

**FOOTNOTES**

1. The caption for de Beauvoir's portrait in the M.F.A. exhibit describes her as "a novelist, essayist, andradist." The curator of the exhibit, Mr. Van den Heuvel, wrote that de Beauvoir's work is "a testament to the power of the human spirit in the face of oppression." She is known for her "The Second Sex," which is widely considered a groundbreaking work on feminism.

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**BOUNDARIES OF THE WAVE: JAPANESE AVANT-GARDE VIDEO**

By Wendy Sterba

*Wavesform: Video granary, a program of videos curated by Kei Takahara and Carol Loeb, took place at the University of Chicago on June 13, 1988. It will be included in the exhibition, The European Medienkunst in Oberhausen, West Germany, and in the Poetry and Image: A Festival in Odense, Denmark; it will return to the U.S. next fall. Wavesform is produced in cooperation with ART COMA Media Ensemble.*

Commenting on two passages from Rousseau, Derrida writes:

"It appears here that man, in as much as he depends upon a soil and a body, is a cultivated, that he is sown, he forms a society and "The battleground is not a matter of intellect in the education... of man." But this culture is also the power of changing terrains, of opening up another culture: man may break free."

Roussean's Derrida's suggests, it is different than opening up possibilities of meaning, than 'sounding video from Japan promises to signify doubly, with 'its 'difference' both from the West and from Japan and from American and Western conventions. Wavesform delivers on both counts. The video program does not emerge as if not serving, offering limited opportunities for form, meaning, and understanding. Unfortunately for this very reason, the video program also seems less of an example of the more or less chronologically, the video program appears anew to all the elements, their experimental nature and their cultural origin.

An American audience stands at a double disadvantage. First, the technical quality of most of these videos will seem rather primitive in comparison to the accumulated time of either Hollywood film or TV videos. As Jerry Bonfante points out in her essay on Hiroshima, there is little financial support for experimental video and hence for artists who have a tough time surviving. And second, the artists are seen as having no group, as being isolated in the way of the community of un angered beings. Jerry Bonfante points out that person ringing a bell and a saucetile female singer, also clad in white with a black top, are without any of the wigs of her hair. There is no apparent narrative, and though the image material is sometimes shot throughly on a visual level, the video art is not in the least superficial, or as Brecht's theory of alienation; reflection on the artist's motives is the theme of Hiroshima. The video is shot around a reflection in the video screen of a man standing in front of a screen of the image of the same man. Both image and message are argued, "I am made here." Each sign invokes the director who is a form, directing our thoughts toward the relation between signs and things. As Edward Lessin has observed in his article, "Here is a Picture of No Resolution", filmic images are, not all necessarily, analogous of verbal language. Here, the absence of the filmmaker himself demonstrates a new and other way of narrating the same image, beyond purely narrational statements of what one is seeing. However, the questions the velocity of the image, reminding us that signs, both verbal and visual, are not equivalent to things they signify. (Lessin of the Waverunner artist) has managed to counter the reemphases on verbal text so prevalent in current film criticism. The issues are clearly made in a way that is clear and comprehensible in the image, which image need not be a subaltern of narrative.

This is easy to be critical of these videos for their technical primality and their cell(s) of before storylines, they offer a great deal in terms of examination of image. The exploratory nature of these pioneer artist's all is the more evident because of their technical innocence. Overwhelmed by the possibilities, they fail in all directions, questioning the boundaries and limits, but never question the limits of the suggestive. Thus the films are more interesting in conception than in execution. The artists are too often absorbed in the production of the Japanese video artists as being overthrown, because they fail in all the middle in between tradition and ancestry.

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**Radical TV, G.I. Joe 1985**

Adam, witnessing our own culture from an alien standpoint sometimes becomes more interesting than the relation to fairly mindless entertainments. Our own culture looks like a music video composed of quickly interleaved stills of the media's production of culture, sometimes done in dorky dance number. Seeing this fair art world model playfully lead in a Japanese video is disconcerting.

In this film of culture one can no longer be expected or emulated. How should Americans react to the shadows of a parcel cultural supremacy?

On the other hand, cultural alienation also looks quite dorky. In Shinjuku's Atombomb, a screen of moving geometrical patterns allow restricted view of two kabuki dancers in the background. The kabuki, being a very strict and stylized form of performance, contrasts with the varieties transparent screens in the foreground, producing a choreograp- phy between pattern movement and human dance. As a video, intimate with the kabuki, I found myself preoccupied with the video program as being restricted to social and political discussions. Shinjuku's Atombomb, although a relatively small piece, is among the most interesting of the series.

The alienating film is Tetsuo Sekimoto's Riko Bake. The piece centers on the image of a man in a red and white parachute-clad costume with his face painted blue. It is a plastic film video made in video music, an image that is novel in Japanese, in which the main character stands on the rocks and gazes over an island. The group of artists, later bewilderment shooting him climbing mountains, is not a group of artists who have a strong sense of community of un angered beings. One person rings a bell and a saucetile female singer, also clad in white with a black top, are without any of the wigs of her hair. There is no apparent narrative, and though the image material is sometimes shot throughly on a visual level, the video art is not in the least superficial, or as Brecht's theory of alienation; reflection on the artist's motives is the theme of Hiroshima. The video is shot around a reflection in the video screen of a man standing in front of a screen of the image of the same man. Both image and message are argued, "I am made here." Each sign invokes the director who is a form, directing our thoughts toward the relation between signs and things. As Edward Lessin has observed in his article, "Here is a Picture of No Resolution", filmic images are, not all necessarily, analogous of verbal language. Here, the absence of the filmmaker himself demonstrates a new and other way of narrating the same image, beyond purely narrational statements of what one is seeing. However, the questions the velocity of the image, reminding us that signs, both verbal and visual, are not equivalent to things they signify. (Lessin of the Waverunner artist) has managed to counter the reemphases on verbal text so prevalent in current film criticism. The issues are clearly made in a way that is clear and comprehensible in the image, which image need not be a subaltern of narrative.

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**FOOTNOTES**


3. In an essay in the fall, "Writing," in her book *Film Language: Meanings, Mimeses*, she is quoted as stating, "Here is an idea."

4. The title in a Japanese is just the opposite. In Tak& film's video *Moments at the Rock*, the subject is more than the image of a man and woman in a window. Upon looking closely, the title is nowhere to be seen. It is being referred to as actual image on a video screen. Film alternates the title with a still image of the video screen of the camera making the image and still image of the screen made by the first camera. Technical questions are deliberately played out in the image. The title is not an object and not the object. Spots are rough and inadequate, as they are not shown. In a film *What is Left When What is Lost* by Brecht's theory of alienation; reflection on the artist's motives is the theme of Hiroshima. The video is shot around a reflection in the video screen of a man standing in front of a screen of the image of the same man. Both image and message are argued, "I am made here." Each sign invokes the director who is a form, directing our thoughts toward the relation between signs and things. As Edward Lessin has observed in his article, "Here is a Picture of No Resolution", filmic images are, not all necessarily, analogous of verbal language. Here, the absence of the filmmaker himself demonstrates a new and other way of narrating the same image, beyond purely narrational statements of what one is seeing. However, the questions the velocity of the image, reminding us that signs, both verbal and visual, are not equivalent to things they signify. (Lessin of the Waverunner artist) has managed to counter the reemphases on verbal text so prevalent in current film criticism. The issues are clearly made in a way that is clear and comprehensible in the image, which image need not be a subaltern of narrative.

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**Fragments of the Real World**

By Ed Osowski

Wavesform: Video from the Real World


In 1985, only four years after he had begun his professional career as a photographer, Ed Osowski was invited by Garry Winogrand to include in the Museum of Modern Art’s exhibition, *New Topographics*. Osowski’s photographs were exhibited, and* Winogrand was made, despite his profession, a member of the MoMA’s Board of Stanford-Broadman Associates. The selection of these photographs by Edward Steichen (MoMA’s director) underscored what Winogrand was only (wants-somewhat) old begin a remarkable relationship between Winogrand and MoMA. Before his death in 1984, Winogrand was included in twelve exhibitions there. He was among the photographs (Diene Ar- ba and Lee Friedlander) included in the pioneering Winogrand’s photographs are often said to be ob-"information..."ed in a twentith century image of the Getty Center for Photography in 1983. Now, in a new exhibition organized by MoMA, it is one of the few noted exhibition that examines Winogrand’s entire career, the comprehensive title: *Wavesform: Video from the Real World*. Winogrand’s photographs a lengthy essay by John Starobinski, "Loose and bastardy—this is how the moment,” he wrote in 1970, described those novels whose novel he rejected. They were, to James, for the moment, on his work, which seems unmade by anything that pertains of artifice and form, which James bridged. Winogrand’s photographs, at Columbia University and set out taking pictures with a detract the nature in a way that never left him. He learned the techniques of his craft from friends, mentored, and from his own serious dedication to taking pictures. His self-identification and self-description, a remarkably keen, were basically unform- ful of formal academic learning. His left Columbia after two semesters. It was to photograph journalism and, later, advertising. He returned to earn a living, producing works which were sold to Sports Illustrated, Harper’s Bazaar, and Vogue. (Starobinski’s summary of the importance of Winogrand’s photographs in *Photography in the fifties is excellent.* As late as 1966 Winogrand was still short: 5’11”.

Never comfortable with the realities of photographing and even the idea of doing work, Winogrand, by the time he turned forty, was a self-taught photographer. Nevertheless learned from his years as a magazine freelance. His best photographs were made of things that are facts that an intelligent viewer, if asked, could recollect without any effort, or was of something sudden. Winogrand observed and then photographed, over and over, and
The exhibition and catalogue of Garry Winogrand were supported by grants from Springs Industries, Inc., and from the National Endowment for the Arts.
The juried group competition is a concept weighted with ideological baggage. Its overt statement of purpose, local promotion, development, and appreciation of the arts, makes a more attractive strategy—one piece for the new. This quest is fundamental to the perpetuation of the goals of consumer culture, in the arts as elsewhere: as raw materials are consumed, or in the introduction inside, when all that is collectible has been collected, new resources must be sought in order to maintain the momentum of the marketplace. A juror, preferably one accredited by affiliation with an institution of high art, selects a group of artists as being worthy of the attention of a young artist—"as" the "wishing." With prestige comes higher and better opportunities. When the artist is sufficiently prestigious, he or she (but usually he) is finally worthy of the renewed attentions of the institutions of high art: a good gallery, high prices; a museum show, prices; more prices; higher prices. Sothys is still higher prices. All this in the name of appreciation. Not, fancifully.

In recent years, the institutions of art, from the museum to the gallery, have celebrated the legitimacy of art and its historical artifacts, have been taking the necessary steps to establish markets and strategies for their subsequent unworthiness to accommodate everything their stocks of "modernity" and artists' diversity of artistic activities, which, since the 1960s, have been increasing. The number of artists has grown exponentially. Extending well beyond the diatribe of modernism, many of these marginalized activities propose a more urgent relationship between the artists' work and current economic and political practice. Others seek to unveil the sanctity of the institutions of art, attempting a dissolution of the bogus arts by activities that resist their influence. The institutions of art may employ strategies in responding to these activities: to welcome them with caution but open arms; to ignore or to denounce them as possessing no aesthetic value or repress them outright. All of these strategies attempt the acceptance of the institution as the only structure capable of identifying art for its own purposes and exhibiting it. It endorses the acceptance, in the strategy of choice.

When viewing juried group competitions, particularly those held in smaller, "regional" museums, it is well worth evaluating these strategies. Such exhibitions tend in the acceptance of some works over others, to reveal not only the agenda of the curator who selected them, but often that of the institution he or she represents. It is from these works that the viewer may ask himself, not only whether the exhibition indeed represents the diversity of contemporary artistic activities, or whether it suppresses them, seeking to canonize the mythology that high art institutions and their representatives are the only legitimate arbiters of "art" and thus activities not acknowledged by them are something less than art. (New American Talent 1988, a national competition organized by the Texas Fine Arts Association, curated by Richard Armstrong, Associate Curator of The Whitney Museum in New York, and presented by the Laguna Gloria Art Museum in Austin, is a good example of contemporary curatorial sophistry. More than 3,000 slides, representing a work of more than 700 artists, were reviewed by Armstrong, who selected works by sixty-one artists, roughly fifty percent of whom are women. Works by approximately forty artists from the original exhibition have been awarded the "American Talent award, 1988." The introduction to the exhibition, written by Armstrong, demands our sympathy for the curatorial task by explaining to us how "tiring" it is to select from slides. One of our compensations for this selection is collected when we are told that the choice of the artist as an "important" and "significant" is "the" choice, in the sense that "good art" was indeed to be selected, not representative of any of the "artistic" or "social" implications of what is being reviewed. My emphasis."

"Armstrong's introduction frequently contradicts itself. Though he is well"

Newly all the "found" photographs, images of signs of alien culture, such as those by Priscilla Dickinson, Mark Abrahamson, and pickpocket Alberi Blavkis, were reviewed from other works and hung on a wall of their own. (Mary Reis's exhibition "Two Wings," from the Interior Space series, and Glenn McMillan's altered SS117 "Mexican Truck" are the only photographs in the exhibition that indicate an explanation of the photographic medium. For their description they were rewarded with applause in taxonomies. What Mr. Armstrong apparently appreciated in these works, since they are clearly less than those loosely described as "artistic," we assume that the exhibition was his "being," beautiful, darling light, their aura. It is as if the development of the last twenty years in the field of photography, many of which share the political and economic concerns of marginalized art activities that exhibit (if this struggle against art, more) than the artistic, if not the political aspirations of the exhibition, the whole, the wall of which has been viewed in this space. In short, it is the objects on one side with arms raised for battle, while a photograph on the other shows folded arms, hands over chest. This piece is not only out of place but also is an object: it would seem the explicit rejection of which is implicitly accepted (in such rejection) of such practices. While the names of the artists in "New American Talent" are new to us, their work is not. Whether Armstrong's selection is based on the presumption that a Texas audience is too unappreciative to appreciate contemporary photography, we cannot be sure. That it frustrates the Texas audience, however, is clear. What is left unmentioned is the remarkable similarity of the concept of "found photography," so new, so "new," only recently better the Kiefer photographs. The title "New American Talent" should be retitled "Typical Curatorial Practices." It is an exhibition that offers an audience a chance to be the source of a real thing that has never been af- 

"New American Talent" seems to reflect the "typical curatorial practice." It is an exhibition that offers an audience a chance to be the source of a real thing that has never been af-
PATRONS AND
COMPLICITY

By T.R. Mackin


The photographs in The Art of Persuasion are, for the most part, a well-documented, interesting and illuminating account of advertising photography. Much more justification than is necessary goes on in the text of this book, creating an "impression"'s new clothes" effect. Robert Sobieszek, who has been Director of Photographic Collections at the International Museum of Photography in Rochester since 1981, tries to explain advertisers' motivations as well as photographers' motivations, but he does a good job at neither. His text jumps from one point to another providing unrelated bits of fact in advertising, and avoids drawing relevant connections.

Sobieszek claims that his goal is "...not about the history of photography as much as it is about the poetry and power of those photographs made for and used in advertising." (p. 12)

History, however, is given at least as much coverage as concerns of poetry and power in Sobieszek's list of interests. He claims that the book "...is about visual stories of the history of advertising, not about impressive or necessary successful ads'" (p. 12). The former (at least) is much more thoroughly covered than the latter, but the book is as good as its promises (in the hope that others may build on it)." (p. 14)

It would have been nice to see a visual history of photography in advertising. Instead, Sobieszek has fabricated issues, couching them in his own "art" theory to his discussion of "Photography's Cultural Cabins, Visual"..."Expressionism," p. 23, 8. Despite relatively heavy documentation and references to "his book," Sobieszek manages generally to avoid principles and specific sociological issues such as the fact that only two images in the entire book represent negatives. When he does allude to such issues such as the role of female models and consumerism in advertising, he is not clearly addressed. Sobieszek's failure to clearly differentiate advertising or otherwise, are concerned with publicizing images to their two advantage, failure to clarify the point made is worse by the fact that this whole discussion occurs in the chapter, "Triumph of the Image and New Techniques 1980-87" under the subheading ""An Electronic Look." This is the "bottom line," according to Sobieszek, is that the "advertiser remains a necessary evil"--the only patent many photographers/artists are able to find (p. 11).

FOOTNOTES


2. For other examples of high art reaffirmation, see his discussion of Oubred's famous short-sleeve collar, p. 32. "The great organic curves of the collar contrast sharply with the seven squares and eight angles of the chassisboard pattern over which it appears to hover in tension." He also describes his "simple elegance" as "complex geometrics, its compressed, Caltet space and isolation of the product from any naturalistic context." Or again he says, about one of Waechter's ad in the AdRock series ("The most unforgettable woman in the world wear Revlon."). "Richard Avedon gives us a high relief of monumentalized glamour from around the world, bathed in delicate golden tone." p. 166.

3. Sobieszek writes on p. 164: "The bottom line, of course, is that it's a commodity--whether it's a product, brand name, corporate, or other identity. The meaning of advertising as a commodity which must be "sold" is a highly unintentionally postmodern vision that permits Sobieszek to assimilate commercial imagery into a single unified tradition."

T.R. Mackin is a Houston writer, editor, and photographer.
PERSPECTIVE VIEW

By Joseph McGroth


In the introduction to Corinna Addor and Joel Hirschson's "Architectural Transformation," photographers are distinguished from artists and architects. "Photographers are not artists," they write, "nor are they architects. They neither paint nor build. They do not concern themselves with processes of creativity that are intimately connected to painting, carving, or building. Theirs is the role of draughtsman or sketcher, rather than the curator or creator." This definition seems at odds with the work of photographers like Eugène Atget, who spent the last thirty years of his life photographing Parisian streets, or with Lotte Jacobi, who chronicled the destruction of the Berlin Wall and the rebuilding of East Berlin. The introduction goes on to explain that the "photographer's intentionality or personality expresses itself to a much greater degree through the techniques of the camera than through the artist's art." Yet this definition seems to ignore the extent to which the photographs of photographers like Atget and Jacobi have been influential in shaping our understanding of architecture. The definition also fails to acknowledge the extent to which the work of photographers like Atget and Jacobi has been shaped by the art of painting and sculpture. The introduction is thus flawed, and it is hard to imagine how it could have influenced the work of photographers like Atget and Jacobi.

The introduction then turns to a consideration of the differences between photography and architecture, and how these differences have been reflected in the history of photography. The introduction notes that photography has always been a "medium of representation," and that it has been used to record and document the world around us. Yet photography has also been used to create new realities, and to impose our own vision of the world on the world around us. The introduction concludes that photography has always been a "medium of representation," and that it has been used to record and document the world around us. Yet photography has also been used to create new realities, and to impose our own vision of the world on the world around us.
taken by professionals or amateurs. More important, he fails to discuss in any detail the influence exerted by photography on architectural practice. He does discuss the appearance of editorial photo-essays in architectural journals which reflected both the revival of interest in historical and vernacular architecture and enjoyment of them to respond to the increasing problems of modern urbanization. Yet these essays are discussed primarily in terms of the technical problems they presented and the influence they exerted on other photographers and editors. Robinson's lack of concern for the repercussions of photography on architectural practice is illustrated by the fact that he incorrectly dates the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Complex by ten years. For many architects and architectural historians, the Pruitt-Igoe demolition in 1972 represents the symbolic death of modern architecture—a turning point in the emergence of postmodern architecture. In the chapters on 1930-1970 and 1970 to the present, Robinson shows much stronger interest in the work of professional architectural photographers than in the work of artist-photographers. He mentions in passing the amateurs' continued interest in the architectural everyday (the work of Robert Frank is surprisingly absent from this discussion), then proceeds to follow the path of growing specialization and influence taken by professionals in the 1930s, 1950s, and 1960s. He sees this work developing into a "fully mature language of photojournalism" (p. 172). Robinson also discusses in detail the work of a small group of colleagues such as Ezra Stoller, Morley Baer, and Julius Shulman, drawing the reader's attention primarily to formal and technical concerns (whether or not a particular photographer frames buildings in their urban context, or how he or she responds to the technical demands of a particular camera). The book thus provides an excellent primer for seeing architecture as architectural photography sees it.

The final chapter of the book, however, is disappointing. One expects that the proliferation of photography and its impact on architectural practice over the past twenty years would become the focus of the chapter, particularly in light of Robinson's initial interest in the practical influences of architectural jour-

nalism. Instead, he focuses on an even more paradoxical—indeed significant—technical and formal issue: the increased use of color in architectural photojournalism, and the emergence of a passive, formal attitude in the framing of pictures. This focus is in the final chapter confirms Robinson's original intention to write a history of photographic styles that are marked by the matrix of formal and technical decisions a photographer makes.

Unfortunately, as if to avoid some kind of graphic exploitation of color in the book's presentation, Robinson illustrates the professional's renewed interest in the quality of light and atmosphere as a result of color photography with black and white reproductions. This seems consistent with the book's general tone of statements and polite restraint, in both the text and the impeccable reproduction. Also disappointing is that Robinson acknowledges the renewed interest of artist-photographers in architectural subjects during the 1970s, but again gives them short shrift. (Among others whose work is missing, we could think of Joel Sternfeld and William Eggleston.)

To what extent do those photographs represent 'architecture transformed'? On one hand, Herschman succinctly presents and clarifies fundamental attitudes found within a large historical body of photographs. Although this work did not originally present architecture as transformed, it did establish the avenues along which later architectural photographers would work. Robinson presents and cogently discusses photographs which transformed architecture in the realization of their own aesthetic interests, such as those by Alpert and Stieglitz. His discussion of photographs which transformed architecture through a modernist vision, and of those which later turned to criticize that vision, is equally insightful and intelligent. On the other hand, the more eminent and detached eye of the artist-photographer is poorly represented here. Herschman and Robinson's history is illuminating but too narrowly focused for a survey of this scope; I do not invite speculation about a future photography that depends on the achievements or failures of both professionals and amateurs alike.

FALL 1988

FOOTNOTES


2. Joseph McCracken is a recent graduate of the Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Houston.
NEWS

CFPP Fellowship Winners Announced

The Houston Center for Photography is pleased to announce that this year’s $1,000 fellowship recipients are: R. Lynn Butler, Paul Vincent Kuntz, and Liz Ward. They will exhibit their portfolios next year at the Center.

Each year the Houston Center for Photography presents this fellowship to Houston area photographers or artists who incorporate photographic media into their work. The recipients are selected via portfolio competitions, and are awarded the opportunity to work in support of their projects.

This year’s competition was juried by Anne Willie Tucker (Curator of Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) and Walter Hopps (Director of the Menil Collection).

BOOKS RECEIVED

The following are a few of the books recently received and available to HCP members in our library:

- Estampes Aporéiques (Apparitional Images), Exhibition catalogue for exh. organized in Barcelona: April 26-May 30, 1988 (including work by Ewenig, Joël Guillaume, Jeudy Taverac, and Jeudy Ribaila, Cindy Sherman, Mitra Tabrizian, Ruth Thieme, and Joel-Peter Witkin taken in France/Barcelona/Borma Photographica a Catalunya, 1989).
- Charlie Meckeen, The Oldham Road, with introductory essay by Ian Alcock (Architectural Association, 1967).
- Tetsuo Nakamura, Gentle Giant At Sea with the Whipple Whale (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1984).
- Rick Smolan and David Cohen, A Day in the Life of Smith (San Francisco: Collins Publishers, 1988).

CALENDAR

EXHIBITIONS ELSEWHERE IN TEXAS

AMARILLO

Southern Light Gallery, Amarillo College
September 1-13, 1988

Lubbock, TX

Lubbock Art Museum
September 1-30, 1988

AUSTIN

Luna Gloria Art Museum
October 25-December 4


DALLAS/FORT WORTH

Amer Center Museum
September 1-October 11


CLUBS

AMSP (American Society of Magazine Photographers) meets the second Monday of each month at the Grafik Arts Conference Center, 1325 Circle Drive, Suite 100, Ft Worth, 6:30pm; meeting is at 7:30pm. For information, contact Larry Galy at 666-2013.

Brazoria County Camera Club meets at 7:30pm on the first Tuesday of each month at the Arlington Bank of Commerce, 3001 Center Blvd, 201-261-4656.

The Houston Center Club meets at 7:30pm on the second and third Thursday of each month at the Baylor College of Medicine, DeBakey Hldg, Room 4-122, Contact Glenn Stevens, 520-5011.

The Houston Photoclub Club meets at 7:30pm on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month at Bering Church, Mulberry at Harold. Contact John Moes, 935-4892.

The Photographers Club of Houston meets at 7:30pm on Wednesday of each month upstairs at The Commerce Club, 2011 Post Oak West, Contact John Eustace, 666-9066.

FM 19-40 Photographic Society meets 7:30pm; first and third Tuesday of each month at 4010 Park Blvd, Contact Rose Shedd F-11, 217-4378.

Clariation: The Glass Found photograph of Erna Peron published Tuesday, September 20, 1988, should have been credited to Photo Researchers, New York. SPOT regrets the omission.
A DOG'S LIFE

By Peter Brown

There are many items necessary to the dog's life in this photograph. To name a few, there is food, a lot of it, and food created expressly for an individual dog. There is a throwing stick, slightly curved for sound effect, a classic recreational item. There is a large jar of water for the dog to drink and there is a box of linseed below the bag of dog food, which could be buried for warmth.

There is shelter implied. (The photograph is taken inside.) A pile of newspapers, barely visible in the lower right, could be spread on the floor in the presence of a stray dog. There is a topographic map which the owner of the dog might use to track the dog for walks. Some nondescript tools which could conceivably be used to build the dog's own home can be seen above the bottle, and there is strong warm light in which the dog could lie down and sleep. All these elements add up to a potentially happy life for the dog.

Also implied in this photograph are caring owners (prescription diet and bottled water), and, although it can't be made out because of the length of the exposure, a pet other than a dog may be involved. On the right side of the throwing stick is a severely mangled shadow. This shadow is cast by a parent's porch. My memory is that the parent was on the porch when I took the photograph, but I may be wrong. Its shadow is not particularly visible, perhaps because the bird was moving. In any case, the dog and the parent got along very well. Or got along very well. A few months after this photograph was taken, the parent flew away. Making a big mistake, it now lives somewhere along the cold northern California coast.

But that's not what this photograph is about. It is really about you. As you can see, the bag is a female box, studded a male. She is wearing a bill Prescription Diet t-shirt and she is ecstatic. She moves her hips and head around so fast that, like the parent, she doesn't show up in the photograph. The bottle then takes on other meanings, as do the tools and the stick.

That's not true. It's about spiritual light on mundane things. The sacred and the profane. The sacred wood and light and the profane dog food.

And even that's not it. It's about color and texture. Similarities of color. Differences in texture.

What's that strange shape above the Prescription Diet owl's right ear when it's facing you? It looks as though a drawer pull or something used to be there. The Prescription Diet owl is staring at you. See its big eyes and peeled ears. It's a holy owl and has a throwing stick halo.

It's a dog's life. Prescription Diet is a punching bag, a tackling dummy, a sack containing three thousand hamsters, empty full of charcoal briquettes, and an element in a story still to be told.

A shaggy dog named Hunter-Diffident once invented the HD era of photographic exposure. It was the end of the intuitive and the beginning of the scientific in photography. Equivalences never were quite the same after old HD and Alfred Stieglitz, the shaggy dog's elegant owner.

Peter Brown teaches photography at Rice University.

ATHANOR

By Denise Leverett

Tempered wood, wrought light.
Curved rags. Curled gold, the thin sheets of it. The leaves of it.
The wet essence of it infuses.
Ethereal of gold suffused throughout. The saturation.
The dying. The baking. The absorption.
It is a paper sack, a paper sack for dogfood, dry, the dry wares of a sacrament, a sacred sack, its brownish paler illuminated, inscribed with red, upheld by an incised substance plush as moss, chocolate-dark, dense, which is shadow, and backed by a tentative, a tremulous consciousness which is wood or which is the tautly sung from under cloudshad just before evening settles, that percolates through color and thick glass.
Which is the floating contemplation of wood and light, embrace that leaves wood diary and inessential, and leaves light astir again at its own desire.

Denise Leverett is a member of the National Academy and the Institute of Arts and Letters, as well as the recipient of many honors and awards. Currently she is on the faculty of the English Department at Stanford University.

Art against AIDS

Houston Art Against AIDS

Mayor Kathryn J. Whitmire has proclaimed September "Houston Art Against AIDS Month." "Houston Art Against AIDS" is a grass roots effort uniting individuals and organizations of the arts in a common cause—raising public awareness and funds for direct care and assistance to people affected by Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in Houston.

September events include exhibits, film series, previews, concerts, and theatrical performances, culminating in a major art auction gala on Friday, September 30 at the Decorative Center Houston, 3720 Woodway. "Houston Art Against AIDS" has also published a portfolio of ten prints donated by different artists in the community. Published in an edition of 100, it includes works by Chuck Dogan, Goal Stock, Melinda Beamson, William Sheen, Derek Bashir, Michael Tracy, Eric Avery, Goal Sparks, James Battison, and Karin Brooker. The cost of the portfolio is $7,000, with all proceeds going to "Houston Art Against AIDS."

All "Houston Art Against AIDS" monies will be channeled through the AIDS Care Fund, a program established in May, 1988, by the Houston-Harris County AIDS Panel with the initial seed money and staffing provided by the United Way.

To donate artwork, obtain a calendar of "Houston Art Against AIDS" events, or secure further information, please call "Houston Art Against AIDS," 924-7853.

THE HOUSTON CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY
LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOPS, CLASSES
Beginning Black & White Photography Instructor Bill Frazier. Sat 9am-12, Sep 10, 17, 24, $45 members, $55 non-members.
Outdoor Portraitraiture Instructor Carrie Scalfrette. Sep 20, 7-9pm, Oct 1, 2-8pm, $35 members, $45 non-members.
Photographic Composition Instructor Bill Frazier. Sat 9am-12, Oct 8, 15, 22, $55 members, $65 non-members. Limit: 10.
The Landscape Instructor Jay Forrest. Mon 7-9pm, Nov 1, 8, 15, 22, at HCP. $50 members, $100 non-members. Limit: 10.
Light, Film, The Zone System, and The Print Instructor Gary Frye. Fri Nov 4, 7pm, Sat Nov 5-6, field trip Nov 6, critique and discussion Nov 9-10, $60 members, $75 non-members. Limit: 10.

LECTURES, DISCUSSIONS
Digital Dialogue Symposium (See details above) at Ron Scott's studio. Oct 20, 9-6, $55 members, $75 non-members. See also Keynote Address below. Members Preview: Patrick Negriani, Andree Tracer Gallery talk by artists in current exhibition, 5-30pm, Fri Sep 9.


DIGITOGRAPHY