

MATRIART

A Canadian Feminist Art Journal

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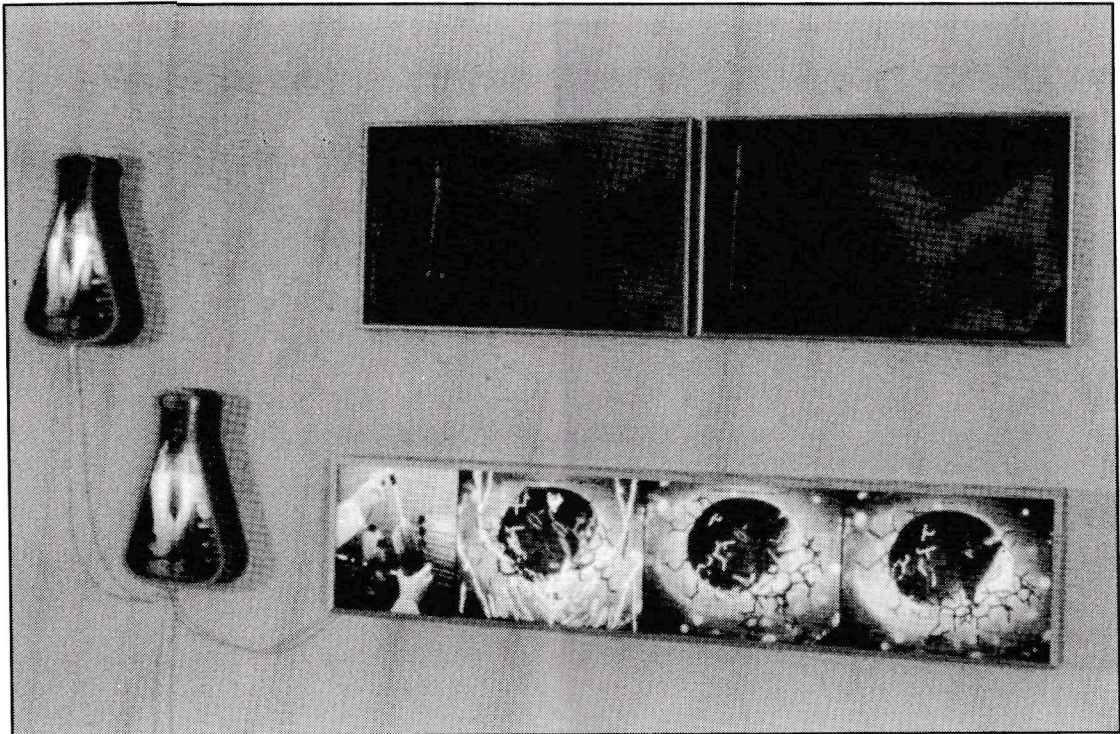
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Women and
Technology



Nell Tenhaaf, detail, Oedipal ounce of prevention, 1993, courtesy of Gallerie Samuel Lallouz.

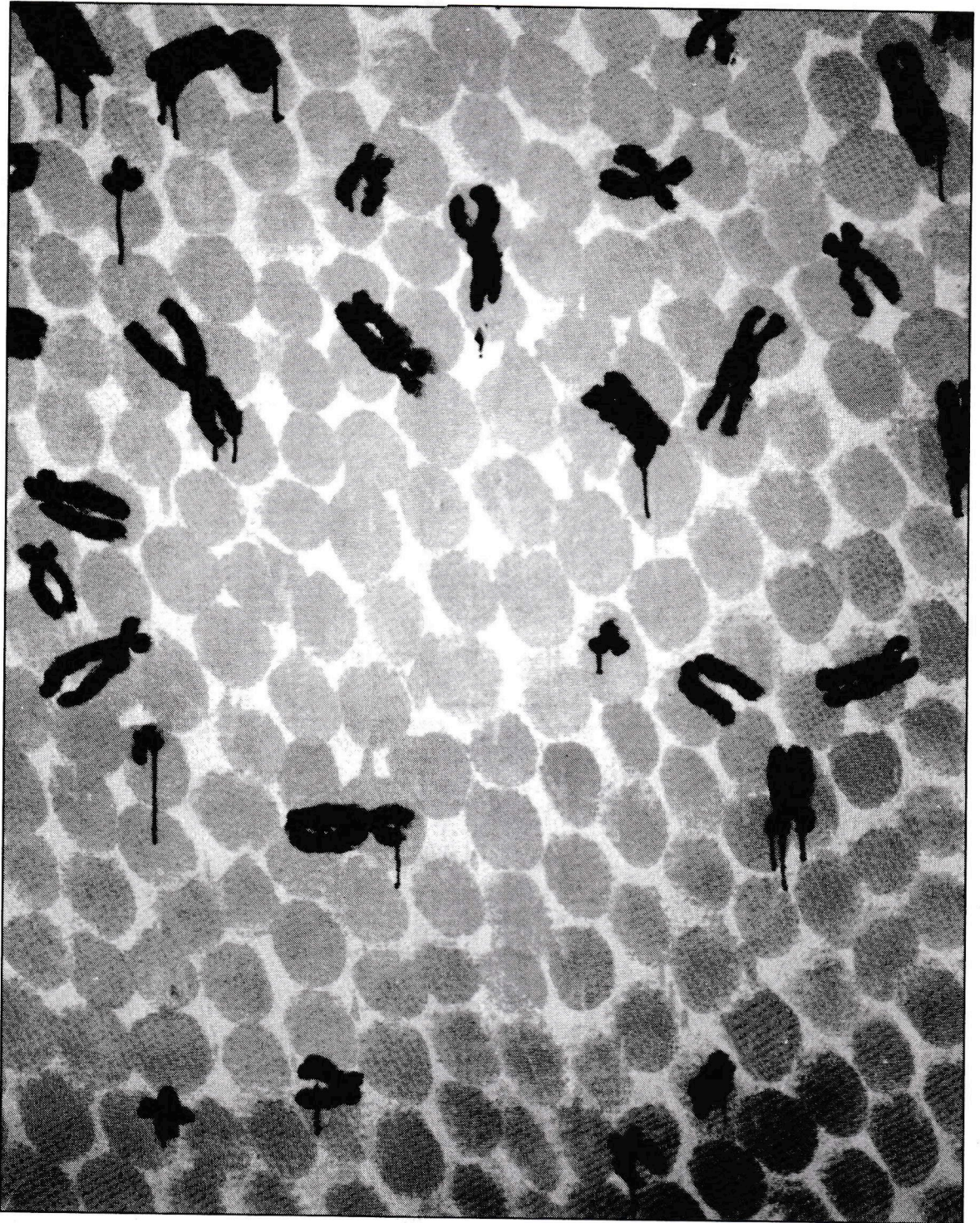


*Nell Tenhaaf, detail, Oedipal ounce of prevention, 1993, courtesy of Gallerie Samuel Lallouz.
Photo by Ian Murray*



Nell Tenhaaf, detail, Oedipal ounce of prevention, 1993, courtesy of Gallerie Samuel Lallouz.

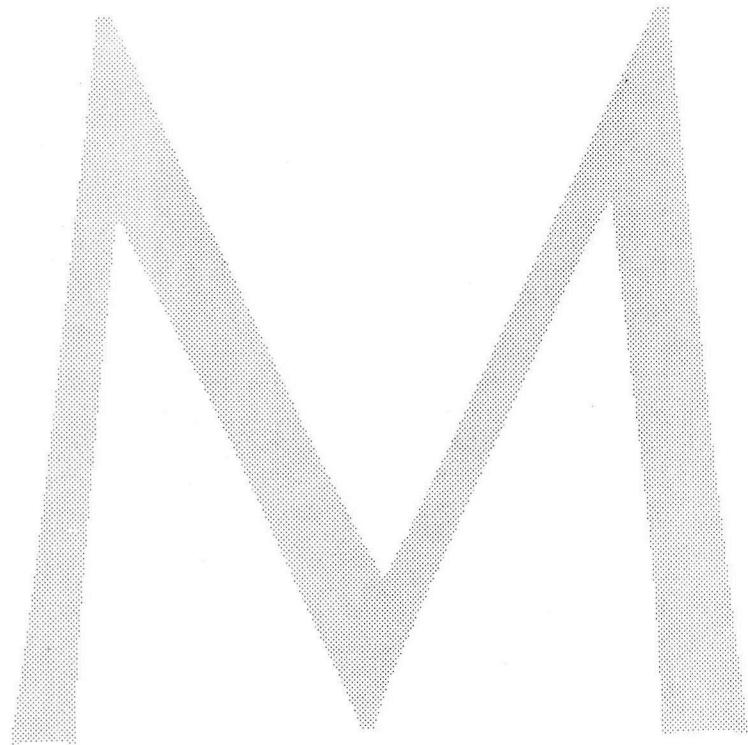
Nell Tenhaaf is an artist, writer and educator living in Montreal, Quebec.



Nicole Collins, detail, Cover Me, 1993, oil, wax, acrylic blanket, 4' x 6'

Nicole Collins is a Toronto based artist. Her current work investigates cellular structures and their properties, exploring the metaphors of skin, surface and interiors.

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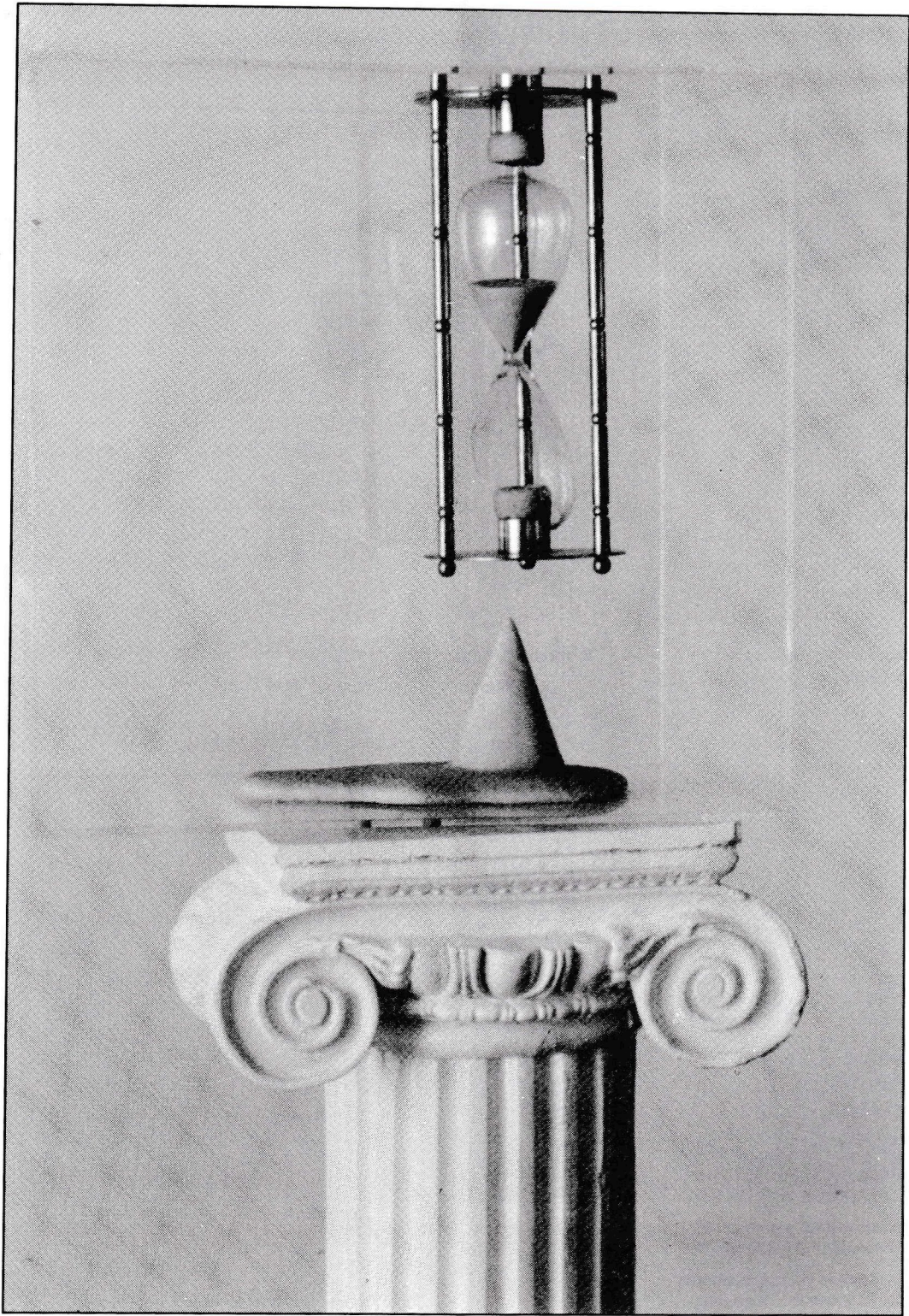
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E.J. Lightman, Stopping Time, 1990, mixed media

Foreword

As we approach the twenty-first century, the technological infrastructure of McLuhan's 'Global Village' perniciously influences our concept of imagery, physical presence and human communication. The artists in this issue of *Matriart* elucidate areas of critical concern, re-configuring, re-contextualizing the medium, the message, positioning perceptual consciousness along the continuum of our increasing integration with the 'electronic highway'.

In *Worlds Between: An Examination of the Thematics of Exile and Memory in the Work of Vera Frenkel*, Dot Tuer evinces how Frenkel syncretizes digital technology with the informal rhythms of oral storytelling, creating a tension between pre-modern and post-modern structures of communication. In *Techno Porn*, Shonagh Adelman, interviewed by Janice Andreae, discusses notions of ownership and appropriation and proffers the metaphor of Frankenstein: the body colonized by technology, already imprinted by the social effects of advanced capitalism and technology. Nancy Paterson locates the emergence of Cyberfeminism and identifies the potential for a political divide based on accessibility to technology. Stephanie A. Smith, in *Morphing, Materialism, and the*

Marketing of Xenogenesis, analyzes the significance of technological functions that dissolve perceptions of nationality, ethnicity, racial heritage and gender assignment. Ingrid Chu reviews *The Silence of the Body*, in which Sylvie Belanger directs the viewers gaze to the capacity for technology to control the view. In the film, *On the Eighth Day: Perfecting Mother Nature*, the producers reveal the potential for advanced technology to appropriate the birth process and direct it toward a multi-faceted exploitation of pro-creation. The moral implications of technology are further examined in the potent example of *The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*, who, through the application of her technological genius, contributed to the realization of the Nazi Regime.

The control and development of our technological base is largely maintained by white males, often from a military background. It is crucial that as their 'product' further saturates our daily existence, we interject, and imprint the fundamentals of a feminist perspective. The contributors in this issue provide us with a substantial framework from which we can begin to negotiate a position within our increasing dependence upon technological resources. **M**

Fay Cromwell-Tollenaar is a writer and video artist living in Guelph, Ontario.

An Examination of the
Thematics of Exile and
Memory in the
Work of Vera Frenkel

WORLDS BETWEEN

*Freedom. It isn't once, to walk out under the
Milky Way, feeling the rivers of light, the fields of
dark – freedom is daily, prose-bound, routine
remembering. Putting together, inch by inch the
starry worlds. From all the lost collections.*

Adrienne Rich: For Memory, 1979.¹

by Dot Tuer

Vera Frenkel is at once an artist and a storyteller: spinning tales through technology's electronic windows, weaving visual metaphor through montage and tableaux. The enigmatic characters in her videotapes, played by Frenkel herself as an expert, a witness, an investigator, enwrap the viewer in narrative tendrils. Her use of video as installation, in which the physical environment framing the video monitor is a foil for images on the video screen, entangle the viewer in an intricate skein of fictional space. Through the use of props, ordinary, almost mundane, and the telling of stories, complex,

almost fractured, themes of exile and memory, of false messiahs and primordial longings, emerge. Echoing the conceptual premise of one of her earliest video-based works, *String Games: Improvisations for Inter-City Video* (1974), in which participants play out the bodily gestures of a cat's cradle string game through the technical vehicle of simultaneous image transmission between Montreal and Toronto, Frenkel's body of work over the last twenty years resonates with the unresolved tensions of a modernity between presence and mediation.

Modernity as a marker of vision and



Vera Frenkel, Messiah Speaking, 1990. Picadilly Spectacolor Board, London.

machine, as a mythic dreamworld reshaping consciousness, finds its cadences in motifs that repeat throughout Frenkel's work. Her fascination with simultaneous points of view, her unravelling of the literary genres of romance and mystery, suggest an affinity with modernity's fragmentation of perspective, its dismantling of linear narrative. Freud's discovery of the unconscious is played out through an intricate game with truth and falsehood, in an incessant quest for an instable memory. The utopian impulses of revolutionary culture, and the impossibility of its realization, come to rest in images of a palm laced par-

adise, remembrances of a primordial rain forest. A roulette wheel spins the chance encounters of relativity. The prop of a bicycle wheel casts an historical shadow upon the first of Marcel Duchamp's Readymades. A mask, an explorer's straw hat, a tango, a photograph, invoke a dusty era barely remembered when Europe was at the height of its colonial power, when cinema was invented and "primitivism" embraced, and the foundations of modernity were being laid.

Thick with allusions to a culture of shifting time and space that overtook the twentieth century, Frenkel's work also employs framing

devices which evoke the future, not the past. Choosing video monitors to contain the speech acts of her subjects, her intricate game with truth and falsehood is played out in opposition to mass media, hemmed in by the larger social context of television. Syncretizing a digital technology with the informal rhythms of oral storytelling, the tensions in her work between presence and mediation become predicated upon a formal clash of premodern with postmodern structures of communication. As such, her re-enactment of modernist thematics is not a gesture towards nostalgia, but one of artifice. Her palm trees, after-all, are either potted houseplants or cinematic reproductions. Her mask is not African, but white and plastic, like a hockey goalie's protective face gear. Her hat is the common garden variety, as easily worn by the suburban stroller as the intrepid tropical explorer. Rendering these ordinary props exotic through a juxtaposition of oral and visual textures, Frenkel's embrace of modernity becomes an exploration of its elisions and its ellipses, casting a critical eye upon a canon that fragments consciousness while homogenizing women's experience, universalizing European values.

"The spoken narrative," writes Martinique writer Edouard Glissant, "is not concerned with the dead. We stand, our mouths open under the sun like bagasse, silenced from elsewhere."² Privileging the spoken narrative in her art through the use of video, Frenkel's retelling of the story of Cornelia Lumsden, "a little known Canadian writer who lived in Paris between the wars and has since disappeared"³ in the installation work, *The Secret Life of Cornelia Lumsden: Her Room in Paris*

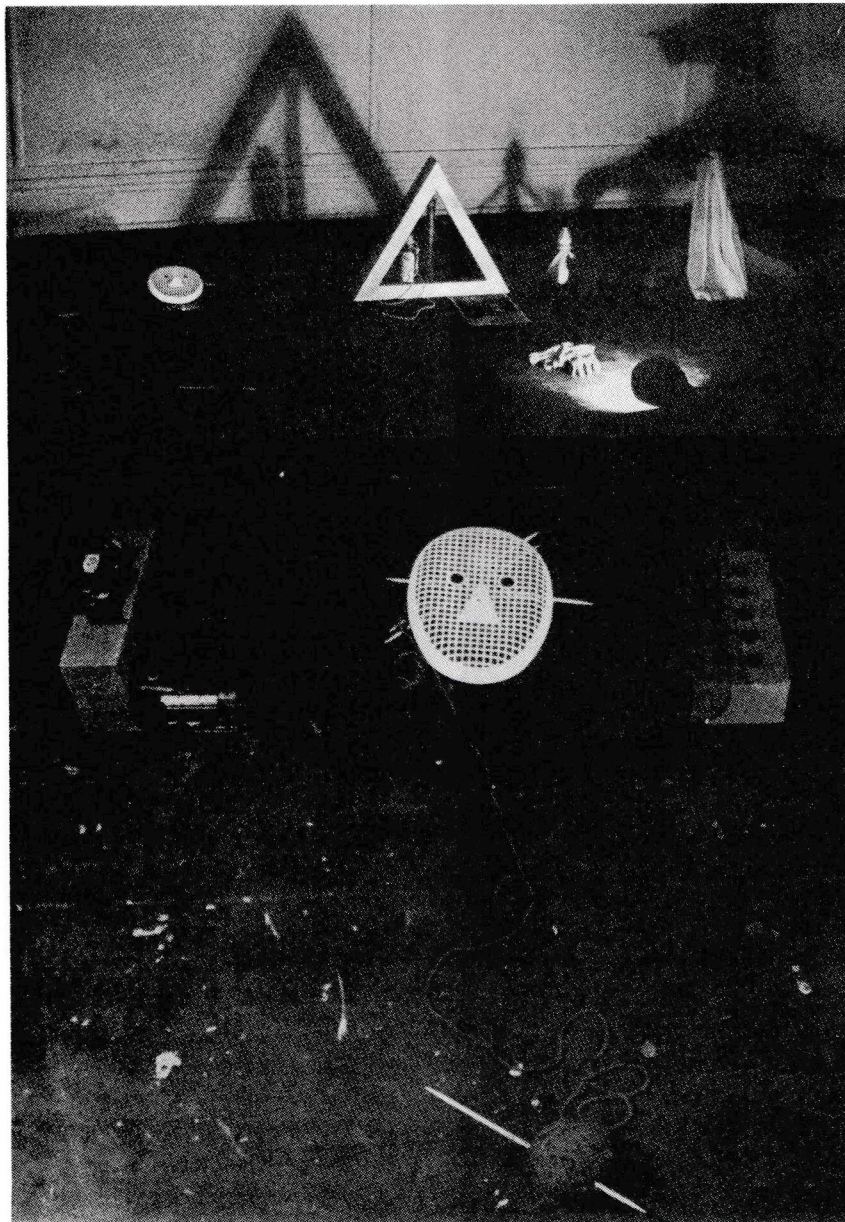
(1979), is likewise not concerned with the dead. Exploring ambivalent legacies of memory and exile, Frenkel does not prop up the tired mythologies of an avant-garde, but exposes instead aspects of modernism that have been submerged, suppressed, silenced from elsewhere. Echoes can be heard here of other women's voices: of the feminine and feminist storytelling of Edith Wharton and Djuna Barnes, Mavis Gallant and Colette; of Virginia Woolf's manifesto of place in *Room*

of One's Own; of Jean Rhys's reclamation of place in her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in which she frees the madwoman's story from its confinement to the attic in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.⁴ Reverberations can be felt here of Freud's speaking cure. Promises linger of a modernity that would challenge a rigidness of gender, an hierarchy of reception, a hegemony of form.

"What happens in exile," declares Vera Frenkel in a voice-over from *Her Room in Paris*,

"is slow and relentless but it does happen." In the instance of Cornelia Lumsden, what happens in exile is complicated by the silences, and the speech, that surround her as the subject of investigation. Conjuring Lumsden as a ghost from an unmarked grave through the conflicting videotaped testimonies of her rival, an expert, a confidant, a broadcaster (all played by Frenkel) her lover and friend (played by Tim Whiten), Frenkel circles around memory as absence, as incomplete. Creating (from a rare photograph) an installation of Lumsden's room in Paris, where she wrote her 1934 novel, Frenkel uses the specificity of place to intertwine memory and presence, to reconstruct from fiction a tangible body of evidence. Her whereabouts

"...Frenkel's embrace of modernity becomes an exploration of its elisions and its ellipses."



Vera Frenkel, *The Storyteller's Device*, 1979. Audio installation, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax (reconstruction) Photo by Rick Porter

unknown, her cause of death untraced, her journals misplaced, Cornelia Lumsden becomes emblematic of a modernism in which memory was at once unfettered and repressed, where exile permitted the dissolution and reinvention of self.

A complex layering of stories upon stories, and spaces upon spaces, the thematics of exile and memory in *Her Room in Paris*

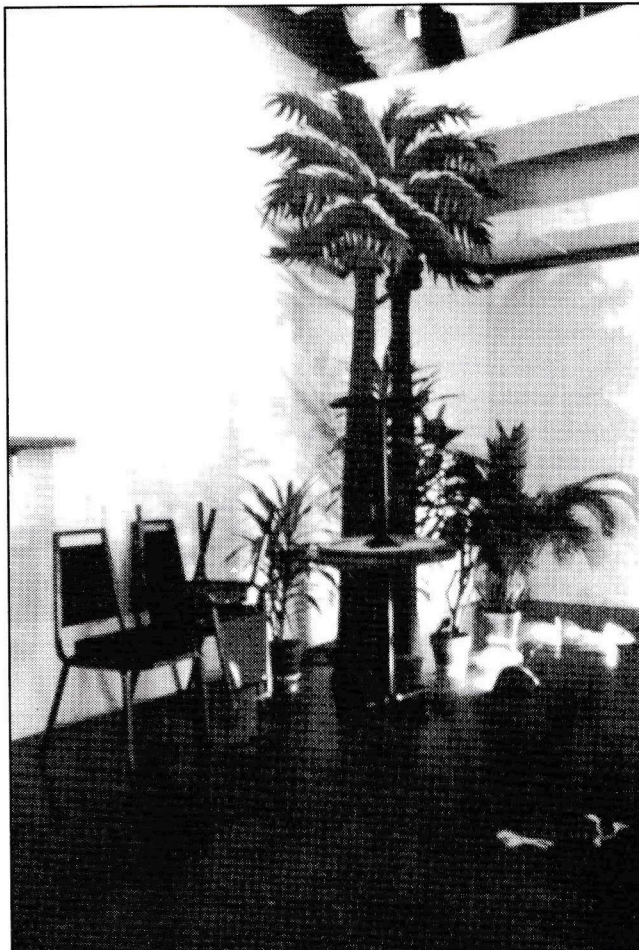
implicate the viewer as well as Lumsden within a convergence of the imaginary and the real. Physically occupying a partially restored space of exile, yet simultaneously a witness to its construction as a facade on the video screen, the viewer is positioned both inside and outside a body of evidence. Enclosed by the concrete manifestations of memory, an audience to the inconsistencies

of remembrance, the viewer becomes a listener, a sounding board, an analyst who pieces together fragments of a narrative into a coherent whole. As such, the context for the reception of a contemporary technology in *Her Room in Paris* becomes one of transference rather than consumption. From the entangled contours of presence and mediation, the video screen, as an electronic repository of representation, is used to provoke, not anaesthetize memory. Artifacts, as the curios of a collector's archive, are used to evoke a sensation of the past as subjective, not to rationalize history. Truth emerges, not as static information, but as an active interchange between the subject and the viewer.

Formally referencing two distinct systems of cultural dissemination, the cataloguing of art as a series of discrete museum objects (through the use of artifact), and the mass bombardment of television's one-way imaging (through the use of video), Frenkel's work points towards the distance that lies between the subject and its mediation. In the making of her 1984 video installation, *The Last Screening Room: A Valentine*, Frenkel realizes this distance through the reframing of exile as a metaphor for forgetting as well as remembering. The subject of investigation in this artwork is not an expatriate novelist from the past, but an imprisoned storyteller from a future time when memory has been declared illegal. Anonymous, alone, without identification, (no social insurance number or passport is found in her possession), the storyteller leaves behind no material traces of her life and work. All that remains as a body of evidence is an "odd, incomplete, fragmented tale,"⁵ told to a Privacy Guarantor from the Ministry of Health, whose job it is to listen to the prisoners' stories when the surveillance equipment is turned off, and then forget them. *The Last Screening Room: A Valentine*, as a retelling of this tale, speaks to the subversive quality of memory, to the threat of its disappearance within the totality of a technologically engineered reality.

Convinced by the prisoner to break the law, and to remember her story, the Privacy Guarantor uses the opportunity provided on St. Valentine's Day, the one day of the year citizens are permitted "to retrieve part of the past and to re-enact it," to reconstruct the prisoner's tale as an electronic romance. Building a replica of a screening room described by the prisoner where stories were once recorded, and retold, the Privacy Guarantor creates a tangible field of remembrance in which the subject of representation is not revealed through a multiplicity of viewpoints, but veiled through a site of mediation. With rumour forbidden, and remembering dangerous, only the Privacy Guarantor has access to the original fragments of speech, to art as an encounter between the imaginary and the real. The viewer, physically positioned as the audience of the screening room is barred from the act of transference. Enclosed within a system of representation where the electronic reproduction of image is the only "real," she/he becomes a kind of technological voyeur. Exile as a modern catalyst of self-deception and self-discovery is transposed here into exile as an involuntary isolation within the social: a deterritorialization of self that a postmodern condition threatens.

As the witness to the retelling of "a story about storytelling, about a journey, about the Ministry of Culture, and about the screening room there" the viewer learns of a time in Canada before the rain, and remembering, were outlawed, when storytellers travelled the country back and forth, weaving commentaries about what they saw. In contrast to the conceptual space of censure, bureaucratic control, and centralized information that the Privacy Guarantor inhabits, the viewer learns of another space for representation. It was a specific place on the West Coast of Canada, where the rain fell thickly and luxuriously and people told stories to each other, where as "reporters on their own lives" storytellers searched for the "true blue romance". A cluster of narratives that is alive, circular, dream-



Vera Frenkel, *installation shot*. 1993
courtesy of AGYU. Photo by Issac Applebaum

ing, the “true blue romance” forms a site of memory where oral histories emerge, where resistance to an involuntary exile is collectively voiced. It is this site of memory alluded to in *The Last Screening Room* and first materialized in the 1981 videotape *Stories From the Front (& Back): A True Blue Romance*, that becomes the subject of investigation in Vera Frenkel’s recent video installation *from The Transit Bar* (1992).

From *The Transit Bar*, first constructed as an installation piece for the documenta IX exhibition in Kassel, Germany, is a self-contained space within a public domain: a refuge, a meeting place, a waystop with chairs to sit at and drinks for sale, located on the second floor of the Museum Fridericianum. Off-kilter, slightly skewed, it is

constructed from partitions veering outwards at a one degree angle from the original standing walls, creating an impression that the entire room has been physically picked-up and shifted on its axis. This physical decentering is in turn reinforced by the orientation of a free-standing rectangular bar in the centre of the installation. Its dropped ceiling and raised dais run parallel to the structural lines of the original room, run ajar to the structural lines of the fabricated walls. A “real” bar within a “false” faade, the altered dimensions of *from The Transit Bar* construct a structural metaphor for the deterritorialization of the self within postmodernism. A binary confusion ensues between the original and the copy, the genuine and the forgery, authenticity and dissimulation.

This doubling effect, in which appearance and cognition are folded into a conceptual simulacrum, extends from the architectural framework of the installation to objects within its parameters. While viewers, positioned as patrons, sip upon drinks at tables in alcoves with large windows overlooking *documenta's* outdoor caf, or lean against the bar to ask for another round, a piano medley is heard throughout the room. Sometimes played by a piano-player, at other moments, playing itself: an acoustic instrument is transformed by an internal computerized system into a mock version of a mechanical player-piano. Echoing this play upon illusion, two jagged holes have been cut into one of the fabricated walls. Beside each of these apertures, a video monitor is neatly embedded into the partition. The holes, slightly smaller in size than the monitors, open onto a gap created between the original walls and their facsimile, to reveal the existence of other windows hidden by the installation. Within this other space, fake palm trees, suitcases, memorabilia, form a still life tableaux. A third term of artifice is conjured between the aperture looking outward toward an exterior landscape and the video monitor projecting inward upon an interior world.

Spaces within spaces, apertures facing windows, monitors mirroring apertures, *from The Transit Bar* becomes a literal embodiment of a mimetic web entangling perception and reception. The thematics of exile and memory, the evocation of a modernism that would challenge systems of cultural dissemination, enter here through a strategy of camouflage and revelation. The exterior of the museum remains untouched.

The legitimizing function of the museum remains intact. Yet from the interior, a transformation occurs. Through the use of video monitors to interrupt the spatial configurations, a slow and careful syncretism of other voices, other languages, builds. On the two monitors embedded in the wall, as well as monitors perched upon the piano and upon the bar, fourteen Canadians, most first generation immigrants, tell of experiences that have shaped their identities as newcomers in a New World. Sitting at a bar room table or in the club car of a moving train, directly facing

the camera, each of the individuals, at times humorous or sad, describes his or her sense of disparity, of discrimination, of being shut out, hemmed in. The viewer, addressed as if a stranger encountered by chance, is confidant(e) to memories of racism, of stereotyping, of anonymity, of isolation, of escape.

Like conspirators speaking in a secret code, the disclosures by the video characters are fragmentary, partial, traces of the whole. Voices-over in

Yiddish and Polish supplant the original spoken language of English. Subtitles interpret back the voice-overs in German, French and English. Each monitor functions independently, with different people speaking at different times. Sometimes, cadences of repetition occur on two or three monitors at a time. Amidst remembrances, an enigmatic image of a palm tree forest sweeps by. A character admits she misses where she came from but responds to the idea of return by declaring that "the place is like quicksand; how could you ever really miss being in quicksand?" A text that warns "the story is always partial, partial to what? you ask. To nothing. A frag-

"Truth emerges,
not as static
information, but as
an active exchange
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and the viewer."

ment, only a fragment." flashes upon the screen. Another woman tells of how her mother – suddenly believing they were on their way to Auschwitz and not to Regina – attempted to throw her off the train. In isolation, each image is fragile, tentative, personal. As a cluster of narratives, the terms of reference shift from the private to the public, from the instability of memory to the unsettling of history. The viewer, listening to the whispers of other times, experiences a counter-transference, recognizing in the disorientation of the encounter, a dispossession from his/her own past.

In *from the Transit Bar*, fragmentation is revealed, not as a consequence of modernist aesthetics or postmodernist technologies, but as lived breathed experiences deeply embedded in the political, economic and social fibre of the twentieth century. Exile as a modernist mythology, and as a postmodernist condition, becomes here the subject of immigration and assimilation: of the stories and silences that lie below the flat surfaces of a technologically dominated reality. In contrast to airports across North America, where CNN has installed special monitors in waiting rooms so that all those in transit will have the same access to the same information, Frenkel offers the traveller an alternative to this bleak homogeneity. Within the conceptual space of *from the Transit Bar*, storytelling becomes a collaboration of viewer and artist, a reterritorialization of the self within the social. Suspended between worlds of artifice and remembrance, fragments of speech are pieced together to form a collective field of memory. Hemmed in by a convergence of the imaginary and the real, these fragments act as the disclosures of history, displace the unresolved tensions between presence and meditation from an issue of the technological apparatus to that of context and politics.

The legacies of modernism that emerge in *from the Transit Bar* are ones of war and colonialism, of displacements of peoples and dispersions of language. Submerged,

suppressed, silenced from elsewhere, the collective enunciation of these legacies evokes a modernity that is still in a process of unfolding: in which the dismantling of one set of borders leads another to appear. Here, the dissolution of Old World barriers collides with the borders of ethnic identities, the disparities of a New World Order. The displacements of a revolutionary culture, the multiplicities of voice, surface from beneath the rubble of a bipolar ideology. As such, in Frenkel's work the thematics of exile and memory, of false messiahs and primordial longings, point toward modernity as the return of the repressed: as a condition in which dispossession can lead toward a repossession of identity, of location, of self, of history. Walter Benjamin writes that "to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger."⁶ It is these memories that Frenkel seizes upon in her work, materializing them as a body of evidence, offering them up as a settling of accounts of absence and exclusion. **M**

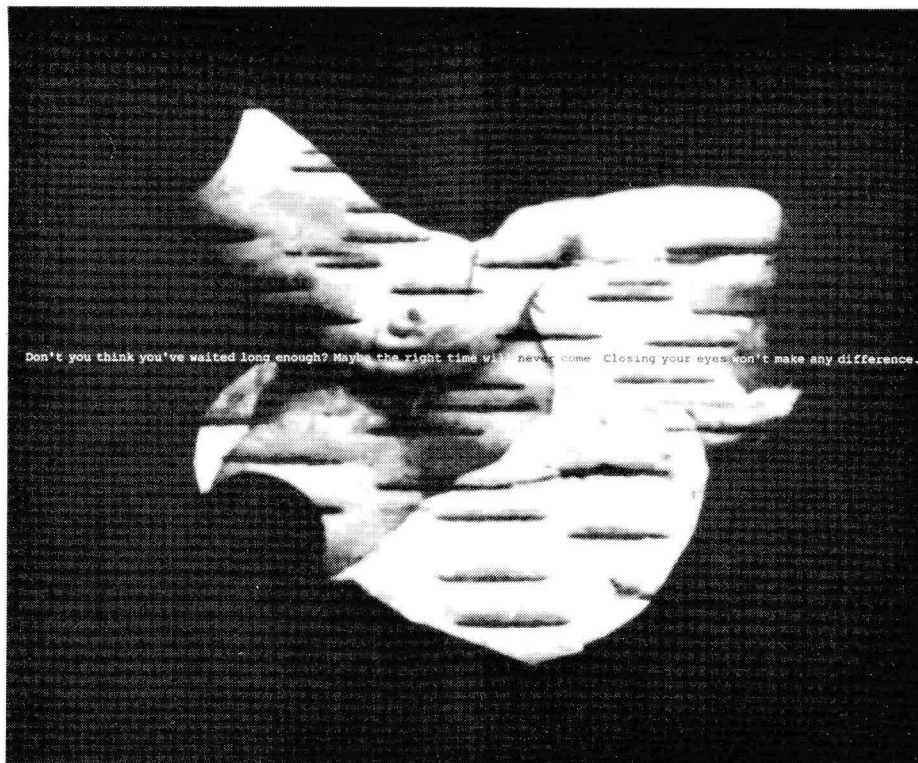
Dot Tuer is a writer living in Toronto.

NOTES

1. Adrienne Rich. excerpt from "For Memory," *The Fact of a Doorframe: Poems Selected and New 1950-1984*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984) p. 285
2. Edouard Glissant. *Caribbean Discourse*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989) p. 237
3. Testimony of the expert (played by Vera Frenkel) from her lecture on Cronelia Lumsden featured in Her Room in Paris (1979) from *The Secret Life of Cornelia Lumsden: A Remarkable Story*.
4. For an history of women artists working in Paris see: Shari Benstock. *Women of the Left Bank, Paris 1900-1940*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).
5. Testimony of the Privacy Guarantor (played by Vera Frenkel) as recorded in *The Last Screening Room: A Valentine* (1984). All subsequent quotes referring to *The Last Screening Room: A Valentine* refer to the testimony of the Privacy Guarantor.
6. Walter Benjamin. "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*. (New York: Schocken Books) p. 255

Dot Tuer was awarded the Inco Ltd. Curatorial Writing Award in Contemporary Art for this essay which originally appeared in Raincoats, Suitcases, Palms, published by York University in 1993.

Techno PORN



Shonagh Adelman, detail, Tele Donna, 1994

**JANICE ANDREAE
INTERVIEWS
SHONAGH ADELMAN**

re-configuring, re-contextualizing.....

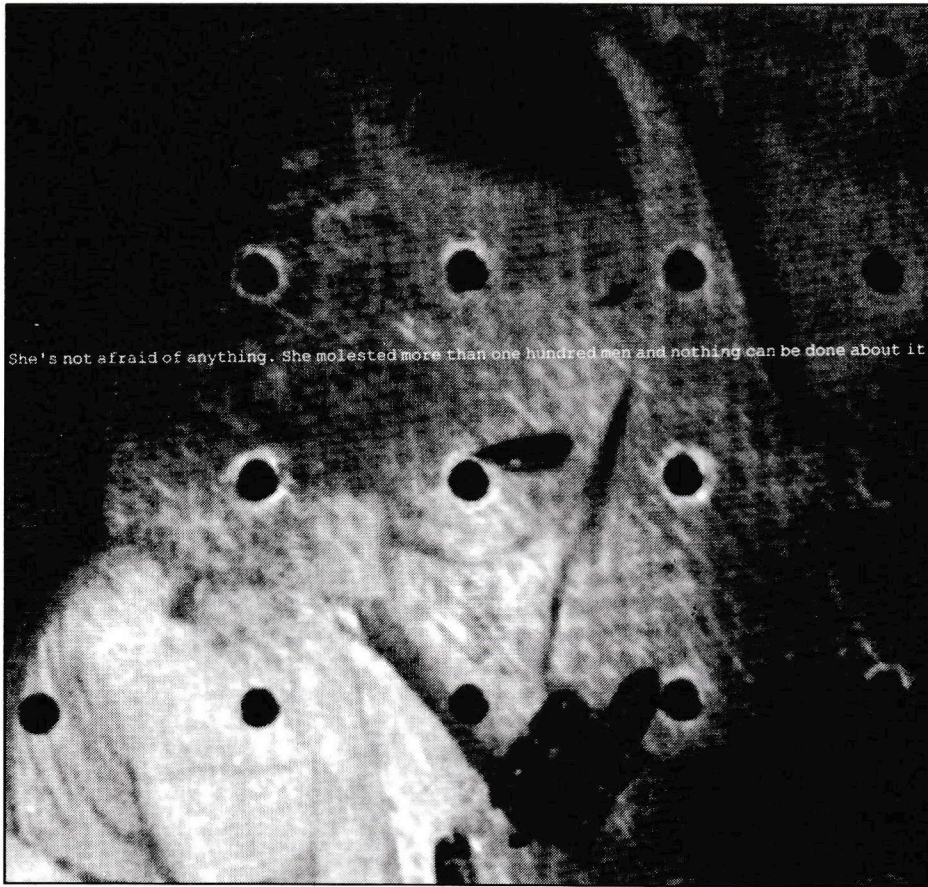
Janice Andrae: There's a sense of discovery involved in the reception of your exhibits, both *Tele Donna* and *Skindeep* – a process of reading/viewing that interests me. You use a type of mass production technology that leaves a trace of something hidden and you use that hidden element – secrecy – as a component to pull together, however tentatively. There's a certain disturbance in how you manage to manipulate and facilitate this. Even in the cibachrome images in *Skindeep*, there's an element of masking going on. In a few of the pieces, you can barely see the image, yet the masking is there. It's also there in the relationship between the image and the text.

Shonagh Adelman: There definitely is a masking or veiling. Most of the images in *Skindeep* invoke some sort of familiarity, but because they are torn out of their original context, there is no spatial reference. The figurativeness of the image becomes obscured by its proximity, and if you choose to stand back, it then becomes difficult to read the text. In a way, the veil is lifted when you approach the image to decipher the text. This is similar to the way in which the viewer is drawn in and implicated by the telephone sex component in *Tele Donna*. When you are too close, it's difficult to make out the figure or the sex act and so, one could say, another veil descends over the image. Masking can also be a form of seduction, something that reels you in much like a striptease. All the elements (technological, intellectual, sexual and emotional) come together to seduce, to

flaunt and to pull the viewer inside the image, while, nevertheless, maintaining a distance – no touching allowed.

JA: The catalogue, however, provided a private experience. I could close it and put it away. It's possible to have a certain control, because you can manipulate it with your hands. It allows you to look at the material without feeling intimidated or overwhelmed by the scale and content of the images. In a gallery context, it would be difficult to focus on one image at a time because the relationships between all the exhibited images would be very distracting.

SA: I agree. This tension is much more evident when you see the actual work. It creates a kind of paradox because of the push/pull effect. In *Tele Donna*, the explicitness is in the audio, the sex talk, which is fronted or even stymied by the presence of the strike-a-pose type images, and the private fantasy revealed in the hearing. But, there are contradictions in all of the components. For instance, the generic aspect of the sex talk, which can also be distancing, certainly left some people cold or out in the cold. So what might seem intimate can have the opposite effect. This paradox dislodges and blurs the clear cut distinction between public and private realms of socialization – legal, medical, familial and other kinds of regulatory regimes, including public art galleries. The state funded, public art gallery becomes a potential porno theatre that blurs the high/low cultural hierarchy.



Shonagh Adelman, detail, *Tele Donna*, 1994

JA: Because this work isn't painted, but is reproduced and therefore has a more generic look, and also because the voices are anonymous, I didn't have a clear sense of how to place the work. The fact that the reference to you is not there, made it a more powerful exhibit for me. Whereas your presence in *Larger than Life* interfered with my reaction to the images, in *Tele Donna*, the facsimile images, like multiples, could have been reproduced by anyone. There was no interference of a personal gesture. At the time of your *Larger than Life* exhibit, my reading of painting as a medium was informed by a modernist notion of mastery and I didn't realize how much I was still rooted in those notions until I began thinking about *Tele Donna*.

SA: That's an interesting aspect of technology, especially if you're working with image processing in the way that I am, using appropriated material, re-configuring and re-contextualizing it. The question of originality and authenticity, as well as the legal aspects of property rights, copyright, come up. For the photographer, there's still a representation of real life, so to speak, a 'real' referent as opposed to an already circulated, highly mediated referent. Of course, there are power relations involved. If appropriation is practised within a context of disenfranchisement, it may be a 'Robin Hood' sort of scenario (although Robin Hood himself wasn't disenfranchised), but if marginal cultures are the locus of theft, then appropriation becomes a form of parasitic exploitation.



Shonagh Adelman, detail, *Tele Donna*, 1994

JA: What you're speaking of, in terms of control, or the concept of originality, seems also to be related to the issue of ownership, of control over one's life and the ability to exert power. I think that's why I worry about technology. I anticipate losing control. Perhaps I have to change the way I think about it, but it seems to me that there aren't any boundaries or barriers. Everything is possible, but I may not be able to make the appropriate choices or it may take away the kind of power, ownership and property rights central to Western culture.

SA: I like to think that it can go both ways. By the same token, everything could potentially belong to you. It opens up your 'private property' to other people, but it also avails you of what belongs to them.

JA: In your *Tele Donna* exhibit, traditional uses of representation and signification can't be applied. Ethical, and sexual references change. I felt that the viewer was also a voyeur, something he or she may not have been ready for when entering the exhibit. You don't usually expect to see or participate in what might be pornographic or sexually stimulated in an art exhibition. That you don't expect it, is also a seductive component, because it pulls you in before you realize that you have a choice. There's an unexpectedness that is very important to the work, in part, because of the shift in context. But you do rely on traditional ways of reading, in the sense that the shock effect assumes a viewer who doesn't know the codes you're working with, though they may be knowledgeable

.....closing your eyes

enough to get hooked into the seduction. There's definitely a power relation going on, which involves desire and stimulation, and looking at something on the edge of recognition which again, brings up the play with masking. I think that's an interesting situation to be in, as a viewer. Does the use of technology make the work more disturbing? How does that affect the work and the production of meaning in *Skindeep*?

SA: The most pressing question for me, which links this series with earlier work like *Larger than Life*, is the way in which technology facilitates direct appropriation. Mediation through technology has a very different salience than painting. When you're working with photographic, realistic images, the cognition that, at one time in the genealogy of the image, there was a real live mode. – the evidence of an actual body – despite its metamorphosis, evokes a kind of engram, a memory trace. What I've tried to do in *Skindeep* is create a contradictory experience of recognition and misrecognition. The word that captures this idea for me is *unheimlich*, the German word for uncanny – that which is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. Technology can foster and push this in a way that painting may not because of that personal mark, like a finger print, which automatically links painting to authenticity and to subjectivity, although certainly there have been many techniques of formalist and minimalist painting which have attempted to thwart this alliance. But the appeal of this kind of work is produced partly through the contradiction –

the impossibility of denying the medium. The 'impersonal' aspect of technological mediation potentially denaturalizes the notion of an original which may mean that the use of technology in art production will open up all sorts of other questions about the art market, about the business of art and the way art is centrally implicated in the capitalist economic system.

JA: What happens when it gets into realms which are very private, such as sexuality in a family context? Then it might be something that you don't want to put together because you may find it extremely disturbing. In some ways you are asking viewers to begin to decode these relationships for themselves. I think people don't normally look at the dynamics of how erotic and aggressive drives interrelate or interact. I wonder how using technology enables this process. Is there a mirroring that occurs, that throws the dynamic back onto the viewer?

SA: I think it's about implicit meanings. There is no definitive, end sense that you can come away with, because the meaning constantly vacillates unless the viewer anchors it. This is a well trodden debate – the question of where meaning resides. It's not specific to post-modernism or to the use of technology. But this work does foreground an awareness of the interpretive process. It doesn't just pose some troubling or uncomfortable associations, it forces the viewer to locate the act of interpretation within personal experience *and* within shared socio-historical and epistemological frameworks.

won't make a difference

JA: I do think, though, that in order to follow new meaning, there has to be something familiar which contributes to creating and establishing a meaning. Suddenly you realize oh! – it's different – there's more to it than I thought. Like any good detective story, there's something leading you along, you give a person enough in the reading that they have a sense of being at the same point, then suddenly you're leaping ahead to find where the next body is, or the next clue. It's somewhat like a red herring. I find it disturbing that I don't know the language. I feel there is another world that I simply can't get a handle on – a hall of mirrors that you enter without knowing in which direction you're going – or whether there's a way out – or if there is, whether you might miss finding it. That's the frustration. It's hard to identify what's real and what isn't. The signifiers are there, but you never know where the signified is or if there still is one. How does your investigation into the effects of technology on systems of signification inform or re-work prevailing feminist concerns with the representation of women's bodies?

SA: In the late seventies some feminists thought that there was no point in trying to represent women, because women have been so colonized that there's no way of erasing or of counteracting the way women have been historically depicted. There was a sort of resignation. Although this tactic of refusal was strategically important, the level of debate has changed radically, and now we can build on it. It's not a question of either/or anymore. It's

possible to acknowledge that we've all been socialized in certain ways without eliminating agency. It doesn't mean we're passive recipients of predetermined social and symbolic systems.

JA: But it does give people more agency to acknowledge that mass technology has colonized the human body and the way we understand it, particularly in terms of sexuality. To simply ignore it, is disempowering. I think this issue is extremely important. How does your most recent work relate to this?

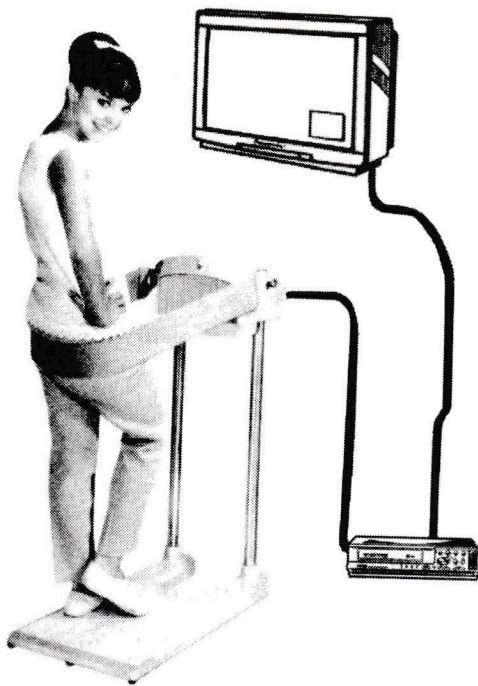
SA: It confronts the notion of humanness and breaks down the question of what is human about the body, by using the image of the vampire as a foil. I have been thinking about the vampire as a metaphor for appropriation which feeds on otherness, which brings us back to the act of theft, of stealing an original. The vampire can be seen as an earlier version of the cyberbody, like Frankenstein: the body colonized by technology, already imprinted by the social effects of advanced capitalism and technology. The vampire interests me in many ways in relation to technology, the preternatural cast of the vampire, the fact that the vampire is the 'undead' and feeds on the living is a very useful way of personifying technology, especially in relation to Donna Haraway's suggestion that, as we approach the end of the second millennium, at least in the orbit of the Western world, we *are* already cyborgs. **M**

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Towards

CYBERFEMINISM

by Nancy Paterson



Nancy Paterson, Ex(or)ciser, 1993.

Cyberspace, a word which Vancouver-based science fiction author William Gibson is credited with having introduced into popular culture, describes electronic space in all of its manifestations, ranging from the telecommunications infrastructure to virtual reality. Ubiquitous and omniscient, the significance of these new electronic technologies – their development, design, implementation and dissemination, impact directly or indirectly upon issues of economics, class, race, nationality, personality and gender. ‘Cyberfeminism’ has emerged to challenge and create alternatives to the applications of these new technologies that are generally designed and applied to maintain patriarchal values, including cultural and sexual stereotypes. Cyberfeminism is essentially subversive.

In the very near future, lines of socio-economic influence may be drawn based on computer access and literacy. It is becoming the new political divide – those who have access to computers or are computer literate vs. those who are not. Margaret Benston, a Canadian activist with a background in engi-



Nancy Paterson, The Machine in the Garden, 1993, Interactive Videodisc Installation.

neering and an interest in the social and political dimensions of science and technology, in *Women's Voices/Men's Voices: Technology as Language*, describes technology as a language for action and self expression. Access to machinery and technology has been culturally sex-typed as masculine, and through maintaining control over new technologies, as well as promoting and adhering to a technological world view, men are once again attempting to silence women's voices. Electronic technology represents a 'magic circle' from which women have been traditionally excluded and there remain definite barriers to the participation of women in the discourse shaping the tools and the applications of the new electronic media. Women are still largely absent from the institutions, networks and structures which determine when and where new technological applications will be developed, and how the potential of these new media will be described. Another factor contributing to the discouragement of women from this field may be attributed to the historical foundations of these media. The internet, a worldwide computer network, was originally a small military network of four

computers known as ARPNET. This computer network was designed to research the feasibility of creating a decentralized system of communications which could function effectively in the event that the current centralized systems are incapacitated by nuclear warfare. Similarly, virtual reality also had militaristic origins, having been initially envisioned as a tool for battlefield simulations. The links between the origins of these media and the future towards which they are being driven can, to some extent, be mapped culturally.

It is obvious that underlying cultural assumptions are manifest in current popular applications of these media. The evidence is in the video arcades, video games, television shows, science fiction films and publications. In her latest incarnation, the 'cyberfemme' is exceedingly voluptuous. The scalpel blades beneath her nails are discreetly retractable. The arm twisted up behind her back is, at first glance, barely noticeable. Meet Molly in William Gibson's novel, *Neuromancer*, or Melanie Griffith in the film *Cherry 2000* – sexy, tough, aloof, and ultimately a fantasy. The influence and techno-

logical power which these women wield is usually contextualized as evil and of course, seductive. The powerful woman, bitch/goddess, ice queen, android, is represented as good girl turned bad, or bad girl turned worse and very definitely plugged in.

Linking the erotic representation of women with the often threatening impact of new electronic technologies is not new. Cinema addressed the desire to anthropomorphize machines and villify women in the process as early as 1927 in Fritz Lang's cult classic *Metropolis*. Sex, danger, women and machines: the plot of every other futuristic, sci-fi movie in which women play any role at all. In these scriptings cyberfemmes are everywhere, but cyberfeminists are few and far between.

Despite the many obstacles, and against the bleakness of this patriarchal landscape, a line of cyberfeminists do move, gathering speed, remapping the cultural space of cyberspace and virtual reality. Virtual reality by definition, describes a wide range of experiences, including the transformation of two-dimensional objects and spaces through media such as holography; installations which use multiple video monitors to surround the viewer; and the 'Hollywood' definition with which we are all familiar – head mounted display, touch sensitive gloves and/or full body suit. It is notable that this particular type of virtual reality is the newest development in cyberspace to be targeted for commercial development. This virtual reality will introduce gender deconstruction, which historically has been a focus of feminism, into the realm of pop culture. The body, in this virtual space, is no mere user-interface; virtual reality offers the chance to trade-in, remodel, or even leave behind the physical nature with which we are, in reality, burdened. Feminists have become adept at grounding themselves in the personal and this skill will serve well as we venture into these dimensions and back home again. Virtuality may be patriarchy's blind spot.



Nancy Paterson, Bicycle TV: Some Interactive Exercise, 1992, Interactive Videodisc Installation.

Transgressing order and linear organization, the convergence of new electronic technologies presents opportunities to challenge prescribed roles and scripted dialogues – a rabbit hole through which we may tumble. The electronic communications infrastructure should not always howl with the restless, aimlessness of 'generation X' so beloved by the media; it should also shriek with the concentrated energy of cyberfeminism. **M**

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Morphing, Materialism, AND THE Marketing OF Xenogenesis

by **Stephanie A. Smith**

"You know that we are living in a material world, and I am a material girl".

– Madonna

Morphing", the software program first designed to construct the undulating alien seawater tube in James Cameron's *The Abyss* (1989), has also produced Oscar-winning 1991 *Terminator 2*'s T-1000 liquid-metal android, Michael Jackson's man-to-panther shapeshifting in the music video "Black or White", and that video's sequential merging of thirteen singing heads.¹ As the term "morphing" suggests, this process creates a visual mutability so flawless it makes

earlier film simulations of such transformation seem benighted. In the 1992 Stephen King adaptation *Lawnmower Man*, morphing simulates simulation technology by purportedly providing access to the oft-ballyhooed but as yet commercially unavailable Virtual Reality (VR). Alien mirrors, monster machines, marvellous mutations, and, no surprise, a potential marketing boom, if the fervid, quasi-religious predictions of VR proponents have their way,² "morphing" provides a seamless mimesis of (virtual) metamorphosis. Physical, physiological shifts occur without the possible shearing incongruities that any (actual) implementation of such morphological restructuring might entail.

“ ... In breaking on through to the
no-one has bitmapped before,

For example, the sinuously fluid facial transformations of the singing-head sequence in “Black or White” are rapid and surprising. Features blur; a white, freckled, red-headed woman and brown man in dreadlocks conjoin. But the sequence depends on a seductive velocity that dissolves the varied histories of cultural violences which have put distance between these sutured morphs, distances of nationality, ethnicity, racial heritage, and gender assignment. It is a distracting velocity that refuses potentially troubling questions such as “Is s/he from Dublin? Kingston? Soweto? L.A.?” and encourages the question, “What if ‘we’ could just recognize our common humanity?” Does this plea sound like the one Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the (Next Generation) Starship Enterprise might make?

Indeed. Morphing produces a fiction – a speculative fiction³ – reminiscent of the United Colors of Benetton’s 1989 advertising campaign, where children of varying skin-tones wear items signifying global, cultural mixtures.⁴ The way to make a kinder, gentler world is to Visualize Peace.⁵ Joyfully remix cultural signs, dress MacCauley Culkin as Hammer a la “Black or White”, and voila, tolerance. If only.

Such fictions have been criticized as oppressively naive. And, not surprisingly, Benetton has a new strategy for 1992.⁶ The March 1992 *Vogue* layout featured a triptych of muted, grainy close-ups (a burning car, boat-people, a deathbed⁷), scenarios that

oddly replay the Joker’s assessment of Vick Vail in Tim Burton’s 1989 *Batman*. While flipping through her portfolio, the Joker calls her fashion layouts “crap, crap, crap” until he hits a *Time* magazine spread on war casualties, about which he exclaims, “The dead bodies – you give it all such a glow... I don’t know if it’s ART, but I like it!”⁸ – a tediously familiar comment about how advertising and art photography depend on, like the Joker and the Batman, potentially fatal objectifications that mask murder. Tediously familiar yet terribly apt. Benetton’s 1992 series operates on the same principle as its global mixtures, the same principle that drives “Black or Whites’s” singing heads: such visualizations give it all such a glow! See messy ambiguities polished to resolution! Splice out particulars that might rupture smooth operations! Or, as Donna Haraway has written, such advertisement suturing depends “on the absence of the ‘other world’, the ‘third world’.”⁹ The resulting razzle-dazzle distracts from the often painful absurdities and fatalities of conflict.

Still, what if “we” could morph? After all, Jackson’s singing-head sequence, ending as it does on a young black woman, appears to literalize Donna Haraway’s pleurably dangerous cyborg subjectivity, a subjectivity she personified in 1991 as a “polychromatic girl”.¹⁰ Constructed by, yet elusively resistant to, information technologies of domination, Haraway’s chromatic girl is a “bad girl ... a shapechanger whose dislocations are never free, who’s trying ... to remain responsible to

other side, to that cyberspace where
old territories often re-emerge.”

women of many colors and positions” while also committed to articulating gender-b(l)ending politics.¹¹ A polyvalent trickster figure,¹² then, the bad-girl morph might be a meet emblem of “bleshing”, to use another science fiction coinage.¹³ the bleshing of identificatory categories much postmodernist criticism theorizes. Morphing offers a visual spin of hyper-reality, a hypertextual masquerade. Here, then, is simulation that simulates simulation, rendering the real virtual. Performative dislocations, fragmentary interfaces, vertiginous velocities.¹⁴ Isn't it fitting that the most popular morph is a literal cyborg, the T-1000?

Of course not. Since T-1000's most frequent manifestation is a white, male police officer in LAPD blues, it is hard to see “him” as a polychromatic bad girl, especially given L.A.'s 1992 May riots over the stunning, counter-evidential Simi Valley acquittal of the LAPD officers who beat Rodney King.¹⁵ As Haraway has noted, for post-modernists, VR simulations like the T-1000 offer a frisson of pleasure because “the virtual is precisely not the real; that's why postmodernists like virtual reality. It seems transgressive” – an escape pod. Yet, for Haraway, such a transgressive mode represents the “infinitely regressive practice of boundary violation”.¹⁶ Violation might seem a liberatory transgression, but violation is also a potentially fatal act – as the etymological relation between violent and violate indicates. And indeed, the T-1000's flawlessly swift replication properties kill. The symbolic fata-

lity encoded in T-1000's fast, fluid impersonation, or in the morphing-heads of “Black or White”, is only too clear – “escape velocity”, wrote Haraway, “is a deadly fantasy”.¹⁷

But there is another issue besides escape-pod velocity that might be raised here: why is “Black or White's” vertiginous morphing-head sequence diegetically ascribed to one young black woman? At the close of the morphine, the camera pulls back to reveal a putative (white male) director asking a putative (black female) actor, “How do you DO that”? His wonder at her morphing diegetically naturalizes Pacific Data Image's software technology in suggesting that the director's camera was just “there” to catch this woman doing her marvellous polymorph thing. Is this a s/he who is, more than the T-1000, the fabulous polychromatic bad girl? Is this a s/he who is an “inappropriat/ed other”, who is “not utopian nor imaginary; s/he is virtual” in the archaic sense of virtual, as in having merit and capacity, a symbol for what Haraway calls “a rainbow political semiology?”¹⁸ Yet I might also ask, is s/he *not* a colored girl? Why do I hear an echo of Ntzoke Shange asking “Is this (polychromatic) rainbow enuf?”¹⁹

If I sound sentimental, I mean to be, because it is to the increasing swift manner in which conflicting sentiment is bypassed, cropped out, or made marvellously invisible in much contemporaneous cultural critique and aesthetics, where “post-modern” or “amodern”, that I wish to direct attention – attention that some still dismiss as a naive

luddite's romance of essentialism, or as sticky sentimentalism.²⁰ And yet, haven't technologies of polyvalence or polymorphism often been assigned, in Westernized metaphors, to essentialized embodiments that evoke romantic, if not religiously transcendent (albeit tragic), sublimities? Ovid's *Metamorphoses* comes to mind. In other words, what exactly is so promising and playful, even so asentimental and amodern, about a (bad-girl) polymorph?²¹

Another different and yet pertinent example of spliced-out sentiment, diffracted and diffused conflict, surfaces in the last of 1992's *Vogue* Benetton series. Here, a post-modernly fragmented and complexly "signed" scenario is framed: A white man, with a beard and long brown hair, whose emaciation is evident, is supported by a tearful, heavy-set greying white man in a black, short-sleeved shirt. A painting on the wall shows outstretched hands clothed in blue, flowing sleeves; hospital-bed safety arms are visible, along with machinery of an indeterminate function; a crying white woman in a flowered dress clutching a girl sits at the bedside and, in the middle of the whole frame, another set of arms clothed in black sleeves reaches for the dying man, arms belonging, it would seem, to another white man whose body has been cropped out.

If given only that Benetton has run another ad showing polychromatic condoms, it seems clear that a semiotics of AIDS operates through a scrim of Christianity here. The ad itself, in variously mimicking the painterly, echoes palimpsest, the "meanings" of

Christian verities rising through an increasingly familiar, contemporary death-bed setting. And, predictably, there was an outcry, death doesn't belong in advertisement, death doesn't sell clothes. What has AIDS got to do with a fashion layout (Holy photography, Batman!)? Leaving aside this issue of propriety, however, the questions that come to my mind are the following: where is the dying man's lover or lovers? Is s/he the cropped-out figure? Has s/he been served a restraining

order by these grieving parental figures? Is s/he HIV positive, or somehow blaming her/himself for this death? Whatever narrative might pertain, the figure of a clearly identifiable, embodied, material lover is not, apparently, pertinent to the scene, according to Benetton. Yet it is precisely this (sentimental? angry? dying?) figure who might force the aforementioned questions into "sight".

Postmodernist shatterings – whether of stable identities, as the morphing-head sequence suggests, or of conventional expectations, as the

Benetton ad certainly attempts – may be, as Andrew Ross claims, a "response to the social condition of modern life, teeming with the fantasies and realities of difference that characterize a multicultural, multisexual world".²² To turn aside from the seductive dislocations of a cyborg manifesto may indeed be giving in to a potentially devastating, historically feminized technophobia, as Haraway warns.²³ But if determined, as both Haraway and Ross are, on charting a theoretical intercourse – a superluminal journey – between the mechanical Scylla of teledildonic fetishism²⁴ and the

"Cyberpotency
depends on aliens
– others made
monstrous – to
give it shape"

witchy Charybdis of an essentialist “eccentricity”²⁵ it also behooves one to pay attention to the drift of popular tides. To quote Mike Saenz, president of the software corporation Reactor, Inc., and whiz-bang animator of the whitegirl McIntosh packages Maxie MacPlaymate and Virtual Valerie, “lust motivates technology”.²⁶ But this lusty new wave of commercial “cybersex” – can its effects be read as playfully polyphonic as it claims to be?

Cybersex, quips Saenz, is a “non-violent, interactive simulation” that allows for an engaging redundancy, which he terms “that rutting aspect of sex”. Saenz has claimed, too, that Virtual Valerie isn’t pornographic or “technopornography,”²⁷ despite being the electronic grandmother of a teledildonic Virtual Reality Madonna, Valerie is not graphic, she’s “bitmapped”.²⁸ Such punning cybererotics offer supersonic phon(book) sex;²⁹ Reactor sells redundancy without the mess rutting entails. Comparable to Sunshine Genetics or the Quality Embryo Transfer Company,³⁰ “actual” corporations selling ectogenetic IVG services, or reproduction without rutting, Reactor’s cybersex is a bypass technology that performs an end-run around flesh. But doesn’t such cybersex cater to those whose desires both historically and culturally coincide with teledildonic fun? What configurations have been mapped, how has pleasure been inscribed? Besides, cybersex is a very expensive bypass system; indeed, in its most elaborate forms it is more costly than “routine” coronary bypass surgery, which for those without adequate health insurance in the United States as of 1992 is neither routine nor accessible.³¹

Mutatis mutandis. The fluidity of pure imagination that cyberneticists – and many postmodernists – claim for cyberpunkdom depends, after all, on the existence of the cyber, a pilot with a purpose, or Ulysses with

a bitmap. And Ulysses can’t bitmap gracefully or even effectively without Scylla and Charybdis. Cyberpotency depends on aliens – others made monstrous – to give it shape. Thus the cyber is often the site of an all-too-familiar fantasmatic integrity. This is not to say that the “promise” of Haraway’s monstrous ontology does *not* argue eloquently against “the postmodernist observation that all the world is denatured and reproduced in images or replicated in copies”.³² Indeed, Haraway “would...like to displace the terminology of reproduction with that of generation” since “very rarely does anything really get reproduced; what’s going on is much more polymorphous than that”.³³ In the Brave New World of cyberpunk, cyberpunks do claim to constitute an Alien Nation, instead of suffering alienation. Nevertheless, in *Breaking on Through to the Other Side* – to that cyberspace where no-one has bitmapped before – old territories often re-emerge.³⁴ Many of the so-called celebrated representations of post-modern cyborgs, from neuromantic Molly in William Gibson’s cyberpunk trilogy *Neuromance*, *Count Zero*, and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*³⁵ to Haraway’s polychromatic bad girl Po(D)ly (or *RE/search*’s recent gallery of *Angry Women*), demand attention be paid to the dynamic extremity of the alienness of their hybridizations.³⁶ These heady mixtures – say, the sexy ability to morph from ivory-tower academic theorist to tattooed street-mama terrorist – depend on ghosting an all too wearily familiar homogeneity.³⁷

Cybersynaesthetics³⁸ may sing the body dialectic, but even if pilot and piloted dance fusion, the old operational system, a subprogram with kick, remains online: multiplicity is exoticized. When teratogenesis is desire, we may all be aliens, but, nevertheless, some of us are more alien than others (particularly if my access to material resources is not as certain, as reliable, or as legal as yours). **M**

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NOTES

- Pacific Data Images is the patent owner of this video technique, which has now been used in a number of television commercials as well as film production. For further information on morphing, contact Pacific Data Images, Inc., 1111 Karlstad Drive, Sunnyvale, California 94089.
- In her *Village Voice* cover article "Slouching toward Cyberspace" (March 12, 1991, 34) Teresa Carpenter has noted the nearly religious fervor with which "virtual reality" has been hailed; in *Launmover Man*, Virtual Reality takes on the aspect of a Christian conversion experience, as Jeff Fahey, a retarded gardener who is the ward of a Catholic priest as well as the priest's whipping boy (A Child Is Being Beaten?), undergoes an "intelligence" enhancement reminiscent of Daniel Keyes's *Flower for Algernon* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966; later filmed as *Charley*). Pierce Brosnan's super-software-scientist's intelligence enhancement program, designed, of course, for "peace" but intended for "war" allows Fahey to transcend (read discard) his body and transfer into a vast computer network that includes global telephone systems. Along the way he gets to play God (or at least judge, jury, and executioner of nasty authority figures). If being a Virtually Real "Soul of the New Machine" makes one righteously murderous, it also offers both the satisfaction of revenge and a diffuse and powerful electronic immortality that may give us a film sequel in the near future.
- "Speculative fiction" has often been the preferred term for the American genre popularly denoted "sci-fi" (pronounced skiffy by those who dislike sci-fi). SF in the United States has taken a number of generic terminological permutations: fantascience, scientification, science fiction science fantasy, weird science, New Wave, speculative fiction, Next Wave, cyberpunk, to name a few. For more sustained historical accounts of the genre, see also Brian Aldiss (and David Wingrove), *Trillion-Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* (New York: Atheneum, 1986); Samuel R. Delany, *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw* (New York: Berkeley Windover, 1977); Andrew Ross, "Getting Out of the Gernsback Continuum," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Winter 1991); and his fuller account of the same material in *Strange Weather* (London: Verso, 1991).
- Benetton's advertisement gave a visual "kick" to the Italy-based company's full name, The United Colors of Benetton.
- Courtesy to bumper stickers on the streets of Berkeley, California, as well as to "new age" creative visualization therapies.
- Naiveté and property have both been at issue in the critiques of Jackson's music video as well as Benetton ads; indeed, the most recent Benetton campaign has inspired a varied and continuous spate of media commentary and controversy over the "message" of such images, particularly with regard to violence and possible effects on private property (briefly, in "Burning Car Billboard Removed" [*Gainesville Sun*, May 22, 1992], the Associated Press reports that the Boston neighborhood in which the Benetton billboard showing a burning automobile was placed demanded the billboard be removed because it might incite rioting). Similarly the controversy over "Black and White's" depiction of sexuality and street violence—again, an assault on an automobile, which leads me to speculate briefly on the sacred nature of the auto in the United States—resulted in Jackson's self-censorship. He cut the four-minute sequence in which he "morphs" from (literal) black panther (begging questions as to how the Black Panther movement might be referenced here) to sexualized, violently destructive street-rioter.
- Vogue* (March 1992).
- Quoted from Tim Burton, dir., *Batman*, with Jack Nicholson, Michael Keaton, and Kim Basinger (Warner Bros., 1989).
- Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 308.
- Donna Haraway, in an interview with Andrew Ross and Connie Penley, "Cyborgs at Large," in *Technoculture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1991) states that her cyborg "is a polychromatic girl" (20; emphasis added).
- Ibid.
- Haraway often uses what has been loosely identified as a Native American emblem, coyote, to signal what she means by a trickster figure—"the subject is cyborg, nature is coyote and the geography is elsewhere" (Haraway in *Technoculture*, 4, 21). Decontextualized and evacuated from a cultural context that is aggregate and conflictual, resituated in her work as "nature," Haraway's use of coyote as a "sign" forces me to question how her work may or may not diffract attention or leave aside a so-called Third World.
- Theodore Sturgeon's construction, a melding of blend and mesh, in *More Than Human* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1953)—currently "Blue Man Group" (1988) is using Sturgeon's term to describe their performance art (*Time*, January 20, 1992).
- Hyperreality, given currency by Jean Baudrillard in *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), serves as conceptual, theoretical precursor to virtual reality technology, as well as a kind of preemptive critique of such postmodern simulation technologies; as previously noted, the relation between virtual reality and morphing has been literally forged in *Launmover Man*, but they are also closely allied insofar as they both rely on a desire not only to shape-shift, or metamorphose, but also to extend apprehension dimensionally. Baudrillard's manic suspicions about the "hyperreal" being that which allows "reality itself...[to] disappear utterly in the game of reality" (148) sound curiously applicable to virtual reality technology, if not prophetic.
My own vertiginous condensation of terminology here is meant less to reduce the viability and complexity of postmodernist criticism and more to simply gesture at the various ways the loose aggregate called "postmodernist" criticisms beg alliance with Theodore Sturgeon's concept of identificatory "blething." The works to which this condensation very generally refers are as follows: Baudrillard's *Simulations*; Linda Nicholson, ed., *Feminism/Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); Andrew Ross, ed., *Universal Abandon: The Politics of Postmodernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1990); Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991); George Landaw, *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992). This, by necessity, is a partial list.
- Whatever else might be said about the Simi Valley decision (and much else has been said), if one empathizes at all with King's position, or with people who try to live and work in South Central L.A., one would have to say that the sight of an LAPD officer would now probably inspire neither confidence nor a sense of complete security.
- Haraway, "Promises," 325, 306.
- Ross and Penley, *Technoculture*, 16.
- Haraway, "Promises," 329.
- With apology to Ntozke Shange's *For Colored Girls who have considered suicide, when the rainbow is emf* (New York: Macmillan, 1977).
- Haraway's "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s" (*Socialist Review* 80 [1985]) resulted in a round of debates in feminist criticism. The most well-known critiques, i.e., those of Christina Crosby, Joan Scott, and Mary Ann Doane in *Coming To Terms*, point out how much Haraway's all-inclusive, sweeping notions often skirt close to enacting the very appropriation, racism, and political heterogeneity she attempts to avoid, as well as being specifically indebted to, rather than dismantling, the so-called anachronistic binary oppositions the "cyborg" has supposedly collapsed. As Doane has already noted, the cyborg itself functions as an essentializing mythos (214), and perhaps a totalizing one, in ways that those who have jacked into the slipstream of cyborg existence, to steal from cyberpunk terminology, do not—or perhaps are unwilling to—account for. Or, as Diana

Fuss notes, "politics marks the site where Haraway's project begins," but it fails to posit one (36) that isn't "essentialist". See *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, ed. Elizabeth Weed (London: Routledge, 1991), 173-215. For a brief index to the extended debates on theoretical questions regarding essentialism, see Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking* (London: Routledge, 1989).

Haraway has responded to such critique; in her most recent article, "Promises of Monsters," she demurs on the label "post-modern" (in conversation with Bruno Latour), fixing instead on the term "amodem" in order to sketch an artificialism "outside the premises of enlightenment" (330, fn.6), a space that is both presumably atopographical yet also topical though not utopic: "When the pieties of belief in the modern are dismissed, both members of the binary pairs collapse into each other as into a black hole. But what happens to them in the black hole is, by definition, not visible from the shared terrain of modernity, modernism or postmodernism. It will take a superluminal SF journey into elsewhere to find the interesting new vantage points." Although suspicious of Latour's own blind-spots (he "never ask[s] how the *practices* of masculine supremacy, or many other systems of structured inequality get built into and out of working machines" [332, fn.14]), Haraway nevertheless situates her own reading at the not visible, the superluminal, gestating with "in" the black hole resulting from the collapse of modernity's binarisms, which fueled the Enlightenment machine. Putting aside for a moment how the effects of the theoretical construct "black hole" have been discursively comprehended—i.e., such imploded collapse has served to signify such profound transformation that its closest associative term remains death—and putting aside as well the murderous historical and, I might add, colonial antecedent to these words—i.e., the 1756 Black Hole of Calcutta—I would question how a superluminal journey into a-visibility fueled by dismissal logically restructures the theoretical shape of the destination. As Althusser wrote, "In the development of a theory, the invisible of a visible field is not generally *anything whatever* outside and foreign to the visible defined by that field. The invisible is defined by the visible as its invisible, its forbidden vision: the invisible is not therefore simply what is outside the visible...the outer darkness of exclusion—but the *inner darkness of exclusion*, inside the visible itself because defined by its structure." (Louis Althusser [and Etienne Balibar], *Reading Capital* [New York: Verso, 1987], 26). Thus I am forced to ask, is not the a-modern, purportedly not visible from the shared terrain of the modern/postmodern, still structurally, historically, and proximally related by negation to that which Haraway seeks to dismiss as "modernity"? I am indebted to John Murchek for helping me to focus my questions here.

Although I would like to join Donna Haraway on her superluminal journey, to take the risk and Press Enter, or to inhabit a (cyborg) subjectivity that has somehow managed to simply skirt psychoanalysis, although I am invested in John Varley's Lisa Foo of "Press Enter" or Laenea Trevelyan of Vonada McIntyre's *Superluminal*, who believes that by her cyborg status she has dismissed the effects of history, or become free from a bondage to "normal time and normal space, to the relation between time dilation and velocity and distance" (Vonda McIntyre, *Superluminal* [New York: Houghton, 1983], 22), as Laenea herself discovers such transit cannot, in fact, dismiss its relation to prior fields of force structuring knowledge.

21. Debating Nature and the Sublime as parts of a Western philosophical epistemology is far too wide a discussion for either this paper or this note; my own familiarity with this discourse is mostly indebted to the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Sarah Margaret Fuller. However, briefly, see Dionysus Longinus, *On the Sublime*, trans. William Smith (London: For B. Dod, 1752); Edmund Burke, *On taste, the sublime and the beautiful* (New York: Collier Books, 1937); Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960) again with thanks to John Murchek.
22. Ross, *Strange Weather*, 167.
23. Haraway delineates the relation between "femininity" and

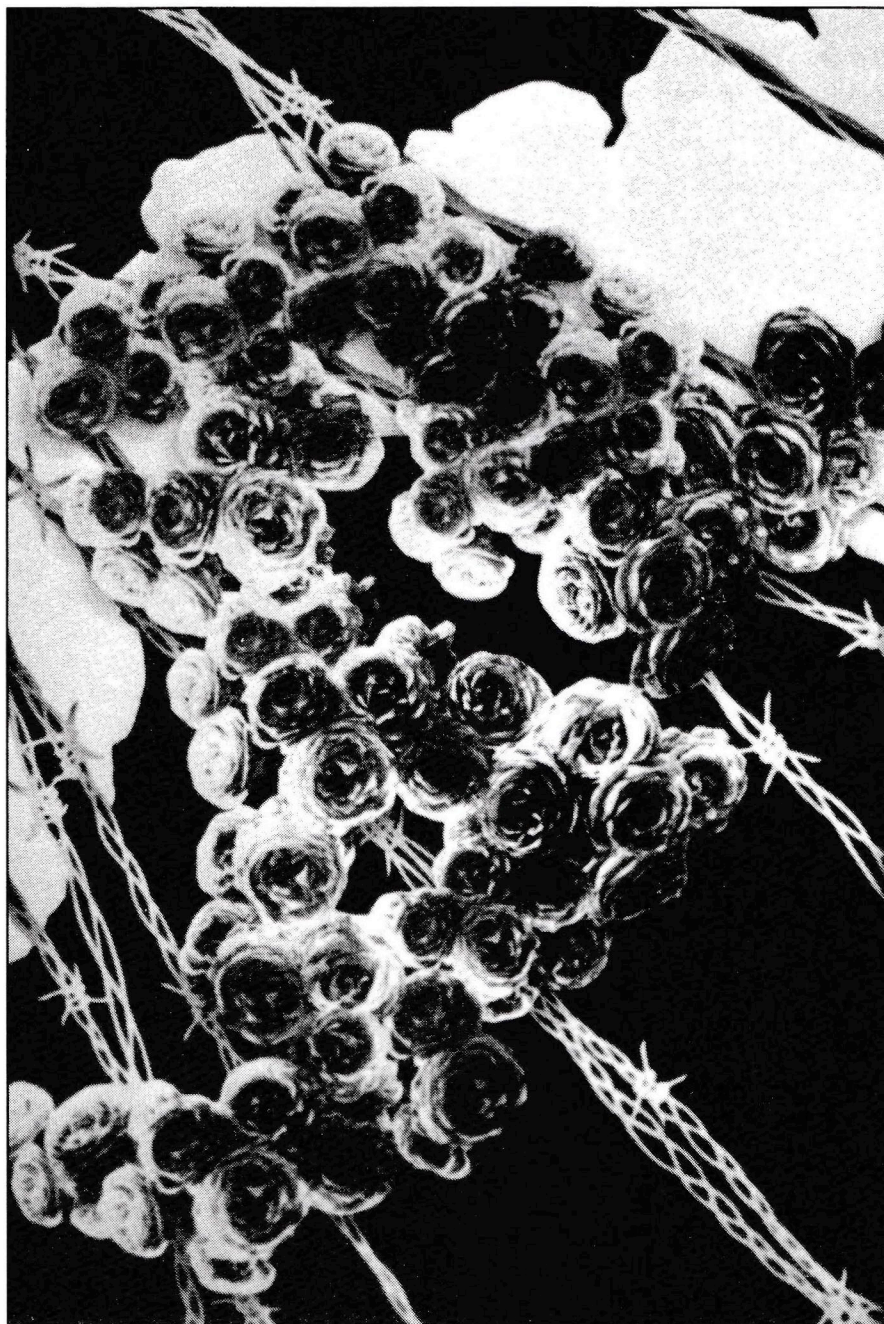
technophobia, as well as warning against it, throughout her work. See especially Ross and Penley, *Technoculture*, 14. See also *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991); *Primate Visions* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

24. Teledildonics, or "sex with a toon" (now you can HAVE Jessica Rabbit, all for yourself), as Teresa Carpenter sarcastically calls it, would replace the clumsy virtual reality Dataglove™ with either a "form-fitting bodysuit (the future resurrection of the Catsuit) lined with tiny vibrators" (*Village Voice*, March 12, 1991, 34) or, as Mike Saenz quipped in "The Carpal Tunnel of Love: Virtual Sex with Mike Saenz," Jeff Milstead and Jude Milhon, *Mondo 2000* 4 (Berkeley, 1991), "When I saw the data glove I was like yeah man: but you gotta lop off four of these fingers" (145). See also Howard Rheingold, *Virtual Reality* (New York: Summit Books, 1991) and Michael Benedikt, *Cyberspace* (Boston: MIT Press, 1991).
25. In reference to Teresa De Lauretis's "Eccentric Subjects" in *Feminist Studies* 16 (Spring 1990).
26. Saenz, *Mondo 2000*.
27. Haraway urges that sight as part of the sensorium ought not be given up to technopornographers ("Promises," 295).
28. Saenz, *Mondo 2000*, 145.
29. Avitel Ronell's *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia and Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1989) may not be about Phonestex per se (according to Saenz as big a business as VR's teledildonics will be [*Mondo 2000*, 145]), but then again, her interest in what she calls Nietzschean insights into the eros of pleasure and pain does undergird the deliberately obfuscatory epistemology of her very well designed, very expensive *objet de livre*. See also Gary Wolf, "Avital Ronell on Hallucino-genres," *Mondo 2000* 4 (Berkeley, 1991), 63-69.
30. IVG, or in-vitro generation, corporations as quoted from Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Reproductive Ethics," in *The Progressive* (June 1989). There are a great many works on this topic. For a general introduction, see Michelle Stanworth, *Reproductive Technologies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
31. The average cost of a coronary bypass operation as of 1991: \$49,000 (*Time*, November 25, 1991). Health insurance and appropriate health care continue to spiral beyond the financial reach of many Americans.
32. Haraway, "Promises," 297.
33. *Ibid.*, 299.
34. Stealing from film and television versions of *Alien Nation* and with my apologies to Captains James T. Kirk and Jean-Luc Picard and my thanks to Daniel Cottom.
35. William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace, 1984), *Count Zero* (New York: Arbor House, 1986), and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (New York: Bantam, 1989). All further references to these novels will appear in the text.
36. *Angry Women*, *RE/search* 13 (Berkeley: RE/search Publications, 1991).
37. Reference to Ronell/Juno interview in *ibid.* Advertised in *Mondo 2000* as "deviant boss girls" who parodying "the late '50s Angry Young Men," Ronell and Juno sport a lot of black leather. Whether this parodic, playful, and creatively expressive or not, leather is, at any rate, an expensive commodity that requires a salary (or an inheritance) to buy.
Still, this reference is also meant as a self-reflexive caution insofar as I, too, quoting Manohla Dargis (in "Secret Vices," *Artforum*, March 30, 1992, 13-14), have a "secret vice" for Bad-Girl Boots. Yet, as Dargis notes, "the appearance of the paramilitary style so soon after the Gulf War and its orgy of patriotism surely raises a question: despite her appeal, the refurbished Bad Girl, groomed and sleek, is suspiciously revisionist in spirit, a throwback to '50s masculinity. I can't reconcile her with the brute material of everyday life in the '90s" (14).
38. Music for the cyborg age, courtesy Sarah Drew's Infinity Personality Complex from the Synaesthetic Studio, P.O. Box 12771, Berkeley, CA 94701.

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Ingrid Chu, detail, Salvaging Paradise, 1994, mixed media, Photo by Sandra Hub

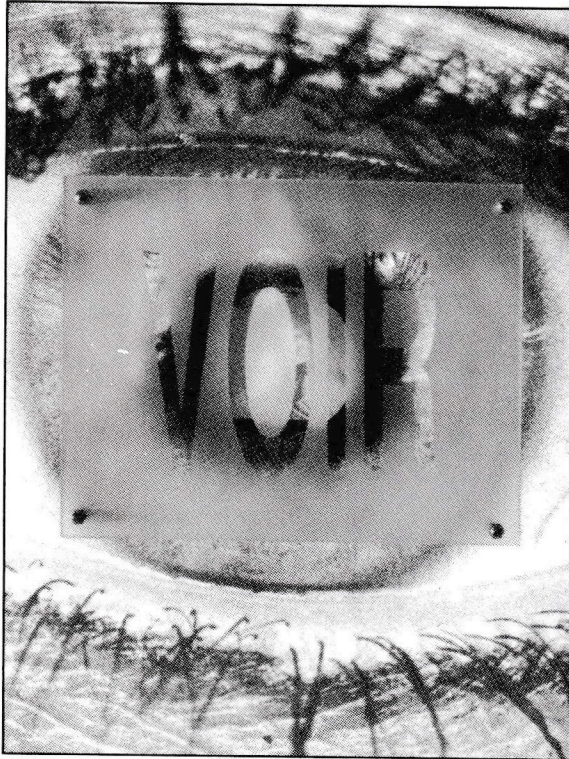


Ingrid Chu, detail, Salvaging Paradise, 1994, mixed media, Photo by Sandra Huh.

Ingrid Chu is an artist and writer living in Toronto. Chu's current work employs the use of mechanical processes to investigate concerns dealing with humanity's shaping of the natural environment.

Sylvie Bélanger: The Silence of the Body

Oakville Galleries
February 5 – March 27, 1994



Sylvie Bélanger, detail, *The Silence of the Body*, 1994.

It is appropriate that Sylvie Bélanger's exhibit, *The Silence of the Body* be showcased in a gallery situated next to a public library, as this space too, reinforces just how potent silent communication can be.

Venturing into the darkened room to view *The Silence of the Body*, one might expect to see comprehensive images of the female body. However, this expectation is immediately contradicted by how little of it there really is to see. Bélanger chooses to eliminate everything from her 'body' but a mouth, one ear, and a pair of eyes, situating these pieces so that the body becomes physically frag-

mented. This fragmentation is reinforced by the fact that each piece is further separated into six individual components. Presented in this manner, the viewer is asked to piece together the significance of this particular construct; physically, mentally, and artistically.

'The Silence of the Body' can be taken quite literally in the first piece we encounter. Barely visible at first glance, a circular arrangement of box-like structures rests on the gallery floor. Upon closer examination, we see that the top of each box is illuminated with images of teeth and gums, the entire ensemble forming a mouth. The particular pattern that the boxes are set in is reminiscent of a ritual space such as Stonehenge. The space, or void, created within the circle of boxes is critical to the method Bélanger uses to address the 'silence' of the body, for in this space, the viewer becomes a significant component of how the ensemble functions. This is achieved through the benefit of video technology. One might expect that this technology would be applied to enhance communication of voice, but in this case Bélanger subverts such an expectation, and instead allows the machine to dictate to the viewer both what is communicated and how it is communicated. She does this by projecting pre-programmed text into the space of the 'open mouth'. In effect, the mouth swallows its own words. Ironically, Bélanger has chosen the french verb 'emmettre', (to emit or utter), as the voice of her mouthpiece. Once it has been discovered that it is actually a video projection transmitting these messages, it becomes clear that nothing is really being uttered, but rather the semblance of speech is being referred to by way of the camera, thereby silencing, even negating the characteristics of speech as we know it. Of course, this is not to imply that silence itself cannot be just as 'loud'. On the contrary, Bélanger allows the 'silence' of the body to speak to us. So, while the physical voice may not be heard, the artistic one most certainly is.

Silence can also be 'seen' in the second and largest of all three pieces of the body included in her installation. This particular piece is an enormous pair of eyes which Bélanger chooses to locate at the far end of the gallery, on the right side wall, as opposed to the wall directly in line with the approaching viewer's gaze. Just as the mouth reveals power within its silent voice, so too, do the eyes offer new perceptions within its site. Rather than using a dramatic approach, this time the desired effect is achieved through a more subtle use of the video camera and text. By examining the work closely, it becomes clear to us how well the eyes can observe. We literally see the word 'voir', which is the french verb 'to see', etched into semi-opaque glass placed overtop the pupil of each eye. In terms of video, the camera itself is not readily visible to the viewer. However, this invisibility does not take away from the importance of the camera's role in this piece. When the viewer approaches within a few feet of the eyes, they are confronted with their own image being reflected back to them – the video functioning this time in the manner that surveillance cameras operate. Our senses are challenged by the realization that this technological body is able to direct our gaze in a very tangible manner. Bélanger uses the invasive potential of video to confront us with the question of who exactly controls the view.

The 'ear', which is the third and smallest piece of Bélanger's body, is situated on the back wall and although the 'ear' resembles the two other pieces in its presentation, its effect is somewhat anti-climatic. Devoid of any use of video, this piece relies upon text as the component which incorporates it into the exhibition as a whole. Similar to her use of verbs to animate the function of both the 'eyes' and the 'mouth', Bélanger etches the french verb 'entendre', (to hear) into semi-opaque glass, superimposed overtop the illuminated image of the ear. But for the very

same reasons that both the 'mouth' and the 'eyes' work as silent, but 'loud' pieces, the 'ear' is silent, but 'quiet'. A type of silence that we are only too used to, one that we are able to dismiss far more quickly than the penetrating silence of the eyes or the mouth, which literally go beyond what constitutes the spatial boundaries that exist between the viewer and the work and so breaks the silence of the body without having to say a word.

The unobtrusiveness of the video camera provides an appropriate medium to address the equally unobtrusive space between the mouth, the eyes and the ear. For, while the cameras may be out of view, their effect remains present. The camera actively, as well as physically penetrates the space, providing the potential to allow the otherwise 'silent' body to come to life.

Aside from the use of video technology, exactly where Bélanger chooses to locate each piece plays a significant role in this exhibit. For example, one might consider it logical to place the 'eyes' on the back wall, thereby engaging eye contact immediately upon entering the gallery. But Bélanger chooses instead to mount them on a side wall, and although this may initially appear to compromise their presence somewhat, the monumental size of this particular piece is overwhelming, with the potential to distract from both the ear and the mouth. Also, as already noted, Bélanger's work is most effective when closely observed. Thus, her choice of arrangement ensures that the significance of each piece remains distinct.

Ultimately, *The Silence of the Body* is rooted firmly in our day and age as Bélanger turns to a technological means to identify artificial constructs. Video technology becomes a liberating tool, Sylvie Bélanger clearly knows where she is; part of a modern technological world which she uses to address issues of the body, rather than trying to create, what might be in any other medium, just an imitation. **M**

ON THE EIGHTH DAY:

PERFECTING MOTHER NATURE

Film 1:
MAKING BABIES

Film 2:
MAKING PERFECT BABIES

Director:
Gwynne Basen

Producer:
Mary Armstrong

Studio D Producer
Nicole Hubert

The producers of *On The Eighth Day: Perfecting Mother Nature* have accomplished the difficult task of explaining an extremely complex process in understandable terms while avoiding the pitfalls of oversimplification. At the outset of the film, they chose to reveal the 'spectacle' of the advanced technologies – the hyped sales pitch in the competitive marketplace for embryo storage facilities – drugs to stimulate human egg production and various methods of surrogacy. From there they cut to the human concerns of doctors, activists and critics who monitor this accelerated growth and begin to delineate where these technologies stop being used as a "cure for infertility" and start to be utilized for the manufacture of gene manipulated, genetically correct, human clones. This documentary effectively answers such questions as: "What happens when the most fundamental human act – procreation – becomes a laboratory procedure? "What does it mean when science and industry become partners in the production of human life?" The real implications of the marriage of technolo-

by Fay Cromwell-Tollenaar

gy with human reproduction is presented with factual documentation of the state of the art technologies utilized in 1992 for the manufacture of the human embryo outside of the female body. From this investigation of the In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) Assisted Procreation three distinct paradigms emerge.

In *Making Babies* the first paradigm focuses on the "cure" for infertility. In essence, what occurs is that with the use of drugs such as Pergonal and Metroden, the female reproductive system is hyperstimulated to increase the production of eggs. This is achieved by eliminating the body's natural regulation of egg production. The common medical term for this process is "chemical castration or women without a head". The next step is oocyte retrieval (harvesting the eggs), which is followed by placing the retrieved eggs in a petrie dish, combined with sperm and incubating them for 48 hours. The resulting embryos are reinserted into the womb, where they have a 19 to 20% chance of development. There is no determined method to make the embryos stick to the uteran wall so that they may gestate. So the resulting principle is to insert multiple embryos into the womb. Then, in order to decrease the chances of multiple births, a reduction process is instituted, whereby a solution is injected into the womb to cause the demise of superfluous fetuses, with the hope that this solution will not cause harm to the desired fetus. This process has a 85% failure rate, an increase in premature births, with a rate of death 4 times higher than the rate for natural birth.

Another process which treats male infertility is Zona Drilling. In this procedure, a hole is drilled through a protective shield located in the ovum so that the sperm has easier

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access to the egg. It is still unknown whether this shield is there to prevent defective sperm from reaching the egg.

For women who became involved in IVF, the experience proved to be an emotional, roller coaster ride. One woman became involved in IVF in 1984, in 1985 she had two unsuccessful transfers, in 1986 she became pregnant and gave birth to premature twin boys who died shortly thereafter. She endured two more unsuccessful attempts, before finally, in 1988, giving birth to a daughter who survived. Following an early miscarriage in 1990, she became re-involved in the procedure in 1992. A second woman, Jan Rehner, was involved in the procedure for six years, but her experience did not produce a child. The insight she offers the viewer is fundamental to understanding that when a woman becomes involved in these procedures, she risks feeling a sense of personal failure or a fragmented sense of self, as other intellectual or emotional achievements become secondary. However, IVF technology does offer an alternative to having the embryos reinserted into the donor 'mother'. Incubated embryos can be frozen in nitro glycerin, then defrosted

and implanted into a 'carrier' or surrogate.

Issues of surrogacy are the focus of the second paradigm. Due to advances in technology, there now exists a variety of methods employed for the realization of a full term birth. For \$40,000.00 (U.S. in 1992), you can arrange the 'traditional' surrogate situation where the father's sperm is fertilized with the 'carrier's' egg and brought to full term without any genetic involvement from the future 'mother'. For \$45,000.00 (U.S. in 1992) you are offered In Vitro Fertilization, in which case the sperm and egg of the biological par-

ents are mixed and incubated in a petrie dish, then inserted into the surrogate, who carries the embryo to full term, but has no genetic relationship to the baby. For \$17,000.00 (U.S. in 1992) a couple can purchase donated eggs, and have these eggs mixed with the 'father's' sperm in a petrie dish. Following incubation, the resulting embryos are injected into the 'mother's' womb. This same process can be done with donated sperm.

Women who were deemed suitable surrogates, were paid \$10,000.00 (U.S. in 1992) for their services. The two women interviewed in *Making Babies*, were very matter of fact about their experience. The procedure, which includes taking drugs to either speed up or slow down their natural reproductive cycle, attending group therapy and carrying the child to full term, demands a one year to two year commitment. The emotional detachment displayed when giving the child to the 'biological parents' was noteworthy in both of these women. Contrary to what one surrogate therapist claimed, the primary motivating factor for surrogates seemed to be the money. It is at that juncture that the principles of industry, in this case the best surrogate for the dollar, intersect with technology and procreation.

In *Making Perfect Babies*, the third paradigm to emerge from the offspring of IVF is EPICS, Early Implantation Cell Screening or pre-implantation diagnosis. Because of the existence of IVF, scientists are now able to manipulate the human embryo. In 1992, the primary focus of embryo biopsies was the investigation of disease producing genes, however, in order to understand the implications of this type of research, it is important to examine how altering DNA or genetic manipulation, is conducted to produce genetically engineered animals. Procedures

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include; taking two embryos and joining them so that the animal has four parents, introducing foreign genetic information, creating mutations, deleting pigment genes, and finally, nuclear transfer cloning, which enables scientists to recreate the 'perfect' animal over and over again. Genetic screening could make it possible to make 'perfect' human beings. Medical biochemist/cattle rancher Bob Church, says "he wouldn't be surprised if in the future, other countries like China, started to insist on licences to have children. And if I can only have two kids, do I want them to be physically and mentally correct?" Connie Panzarino, a 43 year old woman artist and published writer, who at birth had been given two to five years to live, was asked to donate samples of her DNA for testing. "So no one else will be born like me? I cannot with all conscience contribute to the elimination of people like myself." The process of selective breeding by weeding out genetic undesirables is the basis of Eugenics, a movement which began in England at the turn of the century and won enthusiastic support in North America in the 1930s, at the same time that the Nazis began to implement their racial hygiene program.

So what does happen when procreation becomes a laboratory procedure? Fundamentally, nature is no longer the driving force in procreation. There are thousands of human eggs stored in freezers around the world. Doctors can manipulate the genes of a human embryo created in a petrie dish. Moral and ethical questions are debated such as is IVF standard medical practice or basic scientific research? Are the women participating in IVF procedures medical patients or research subjects? Should the eggs they have sold be considered raw material readily available for experimentation and research? Is IVF a 'cure'

for infertility, when as of 1992 it had a 85% failure rate?

What are the implications when science and industry become partners in the production of human life? Social critic and feminist Gena Corea, envisions an ominous future where women will no longer have control of reproduction cycles, and women will be perceived as less than breeders, becoming merely providers of necessary materials for reproduction such as eggs, wombs or pieces of the fallopian tube.

All aspects of IVF explored in *On The Eighth Day: Perfecting Mother Nature*, including research of the existing technologies, the rationale for the development of the IVF program, the philosophical and social debate that surrounds the manufacture of humans, is presented in a comprehensive and thought provoking manner. Dividing this extensive information into paradigms provides a means for the viewer to digest the actual impact of IVF on the future development of the human race. The producers do not question the joy which In Vitro Fertilization has brought to the 15% of women who have delivered healthy babies. What they do question is the existence of a technological process that can literally dictate the genetic characteristics of humankind. Both films present images that remain disturbingly clear long after the viewing. The information presented, creates a desire for more knowledge about these experiments in the technological manufacture of humans. *On The Eighth Day: Perfecting Mother Nature* is worthy of repeated screenings. It is vital that we are aware of these developments, as well as the policies related to this technology, and even more importantly, question who is directing these developments and why? **M**



Leni Riefenstahl filming Olympia, 1938, Courtesy of Libra Films.

The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl

Libra Films

Directed by Ray Müller

1993 Color and B.W.

In English and German with English subtitles

by **Randi Spires**

Quickly, everyone, who is the most widely known female film director in cinematic history, the person whose technical achievements and influence rivals that of D.W. Griffith and Sergei Eisenstein? The answer is Leni Riefenstahl, the doyen of Nazi-era filmmakers.

In *The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*, Ray Müller's three-hour epic on her working life (he purposely avoids anything to do with her childhood or domestic life) the feisty, 90ish Riefenstahl emerges as a

bossy, unrepentant persona. Age has dimmed neither her intellectual faculties, nor her will.

She was born in Berlin in 1902, the daughter of an industrialist. She began her career as a dancer (as did another great female filmmaker, also noted for the rhythmic qualities of her filmmaking, Maya Deren). Her performances attracted the notice of theatre director filmmaking great Max Reinhardt. Later, she appeared in several films by Arnold Fanck, the inventor of the mountain film genre.

Riefenstahl's athleticism and physical daring were well-suited to mountain stories. There were no stunt doubles back then. If a film script called for a character to be caught in an avalanche, the actor would be subject to the real, bruising dangers of falling rocks and snow. The sensibility which produced the mountain film genre, a form indulging in the melodramatic, Wagnerian hugeness of those land forms, as well as the mystical identification of Teutonic purity with that landscape, dates back decades to racist, political theories developed in the nineteenth century.

Before long, Riefenstahl discovered that

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her true metier was working behind the camera. Nonetheless, she has never stopped being theatrical in her own life, something quite evident in Muller's film. Her first film was *The Blue Light*, (1932), a fairy tale set in the mountains. She wrote, directed and starred in the film. Her power as the lone maverick female on the German film industry was such, that she was able to send away to Hollywood for special lenses and order a film lab to develop special stock for night scenes. That was merely her first innovation. *Triumph of the Will*, (1935), which documents a Nazi party rally, and *Olympiad*, (1936), which documents the Olympics, held in Munich that year, were her two greatest films and the ones she made under Hitler's imprimatur. These films were notable for her innovative editing and camera techniques, which included the frequent use of hot-air balloons and other devices for aerial shots of all kinds, as well as the extensive use of tracking shots to capture movement. Prior to this, documentaries were visually rather static affairs. Her influence can be seen in films to this day, especially in sports coverage. Fifty years later, she is still able to remember the camera aperture numbers for specific shots. So we must acknowledge that she is indeed an innovative, technical genius, despite our revulsion at her political collaboration with Nazis. She seems to have been an opportunist who utilized her attraction to and friendship with Hitler to advance her career, although she never did join the party. She plays down her association with the Nazi and denies socializing with criminals such as Goebbels. Excerpts from his diaries suggest otherwise. She also claims not to have known about the Reichstag book burning (she was out of the country at the time), the concentration camps, or Hitler's anti-Semitism. Considering that Hitler's every speech was drenched in anti-Semitic fervour, she is either lying or wilfully blind.

Despite being a female pioneer in an ultra masculine society and a technical whiz whose work disproves the patriarchal lie that women have no attraction to or ability with machinery, she is no feminist, for feminism implies a social consciousness. It's as much a moral as it is a political orientation. She used her clout only to advance her own interests, not to help anyone else.

The Triumph of the Will, has been called the greatest propaganda film ever made. It truly is a stunning piece of filmmaking. To this day, she insists that her focus was not on the political content but only on the artistic aspects of the job. She says that her edition of Hitler's speech was merely a technical exercise that any good editor could have done. This is surely self-delusion.

She also claims to be merely a recorder of events. But she is a perfectionist, and *Triumph of the Will* is incredibly complex technically. It was shot in a mere six days. Looking at it now, it is difficult to believe Riefenstahl was not involved in the choreography of the rally and the creation of a key element of Nazi sensibility.

The Olympiad is also a breathtaking film and not as ideologically disturbing as *Triumph of the will*. But it nonetheless contains elements of the fascistic worship of masculine physical strength. This fascination with male musculature has continued all her life and can be found in her post-war photographs.

After the war she was arrested and charged with collaboration with Nazis. The charges were subsequently dropped and she was released, but she was never allowed to make another film. Other Nazi-era filmmakers were not so severely punished. It seems she became a scapegoat, not only because she was a lone woman in a man's world, but also because she was such a brilliant artist, one who vastly outshone her male colleagues. **M**

Listings

Call for Submissions

The Photo Passage at Harbourfront Centre. Photo Eclipse is a group of artists committed to the continuation of photography at Harbourfront Centre. In conjunction with Harbourfront Centre, they program The Photo Passage. They present four exhibitions a year, each running approximately three months. In submitting work, photographers are reminded to take into consideration the unique opportunity afforded by this open-access hallway. The submission deadlines are March 15th and September 15th. Submit work by mail to: The Photo Passage at Harbourfront Centre, Dianne Bos, Visual Arts Manager, York Quay Gallery, 235 Queen's Quay West, Toronto, Ontario, M5J 2G8.

Access Art Now. This new contemporary art gallery located in The Toronto Eaton Centre is welcoming project proposals from new artists, curators, writers, designers and administrators. Proposals can take the form of exhibitions of artwork, publications, film and video screenings or other special projects. Priority will be given to projects created specifically for Access Art Now. Please forward proposals including visual documentation (if applicable) and resumes of individuals to: Access Art Now, The Toronto Eaton Centre, 220 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 2H1.

Toronto Sculpture Garden. The Toronto Sculpture Garden invites proposals for future 6 month exhibition periods. For more information contact: Toronto Sculpture Garden, 155 Hudson Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2K4. Phone (416)485-9658, Fax (416)485-1166. Submission deadlines: January 15, April 1, June 15, October 1.

Le Mois de la Photo a Montreal. Vox Populi, an artist run centre working in the field of photography invites emerging artist photographers to submit their projects to be included in the fourth edition of Le Mois de la Photo a Montreal. Deadline for submissions: September 1st, 1994. Proposals should include 10 to 20 slides, identified with titles, size, dates and materials, (please include orientation dot in lower left corner), a curriculum vitae, a description of the equipment and space required, SASE. Send to: Emergent Photography, Le Mois de la Photo a Montreal, Quebec, H2W 1Y9.

OR Gallery. Seeks Submissions, no deadlines. For information contact: OR Gallery, 112 West Hastings, Box 1329 Station A, Vancouver, BC., V6C 2T2, (604)683-7395. Hours: Tues. to Sat. 12 to 5.

Matriart. Call for writers for up coming issues. We are looking for writers to review exhibitions, book and films as well as for feature articles on artists whose work explores the following themes: Arts, Crafts and Hierarchy, Status of Canadian Women and the Arts, Re-mapping Culture and Creating Memory. Please send a resume and one sample of your writing to: Matriart 80 Spadina Ave. Suite 506 Toronto, Ontario, M5V 2J3.

Film and Video Festival. The St. John's Women's Film and Video Festival is committed to searching out, presenting and promoting films and videos made by women, to providing the public and film/videomakers from Canada and abroad an opportunity to discuss these works and to supporting and stimulating regional production. So whether you are an emerging or established film/videomaker, send us your film or video. Inquires to: St. John's Women's Film And Video Festival, PO Box 984, St. John's, Nfld, A1C 6C2. Tel: (709)772-0358; Fax: (709)772-4808. Entries must be shipped pre-paid to: St. John's Women's Film and Video Festival, c/o Noreen Golfman, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1C 5S7. Deadline for submissions is July 15th.

Visual Artists. Vancouver Women's Bookstore is currently seeking submissions for the window display of visual art and literature initiated by women. New works in painting, photography and mixed media as well as previously exhibited work are all requested for entry. Submissions are accepted throughout the year. Contact: Remick Ho at (604) 684-0523.

Blyth Festival Art Gallery. We invite submissions from South Western Ontario artists for future shows in the new gallery. For more information contact: Eugene Diamond, Blyth Festival Art Gallery, Blyth N0M 1H0 (519)523-9715.

The Orangeville Theatre Project. Inviting submissions of full-length plays suitable for family presentation for future seasons. Information Jim Betts, 14 Mill St. Orangeville, Ontario, L9W 2M3.

The Playwrights Network of Toronto. A new organization aiming to provide literary and networking support to developing writers inviting writers, dramaturges and theatre to join. Information Dawn Severenuk, the Co-ordinator (416)698-0705.

St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts Toronto. Seeking proposals from theatre companies or producers interested in participating in the 1994 season of "Summer at the Centre". Information Michael Noon, General Manager (416)366-1656.

TV Ontario New One-hour Public Affairs Documentaries. Inviting proposals from Canadian independent producers. Submissions open and on going. Information Rudy Buttingnol, Commissioning Editor, Documentaries, TV Ontario 2180 Yonge St. Box 200, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2T1 (416) 484-2600 ext.2972.

Georgian Bay Art Exhibit. July 8-31. Georgian Bay Arts and Craft Association. Inviting works depicting Georgian Bay. Deadline: July 7th. Information (705)445-7701.

Foti Functional Art Gallery. Seeking artists to represent in the Kitchener-Waterloo and Guelph area. Specializing in sculpture, painting, glass and functional art. Information (519)744-7397.

Gallery 44, Centre for Contemporary Photography. Inviting submissions of photographic works. Deadline: September 15th. For more information contact: Gallery 44, 183 Bathurst St. Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2R7. (416)363-5187.

Canadian Woman Studies. Winter 1994 issue is committed to an exploration of women's entrepreneurial skills. We hope the issue will profile successful Canadian women entrepreneurs addressing the ways in which women can break into existing entrepreneurial systems. A section of the issue will have an international component, looking at the efforts at the entrepreneurial women around the world as well as encouraging the development of entrepreneurship with other countries. Deadline August 30th 1994.

Winter 1995 issue is committed to an exploration of women's rights as human rights. This issue will have an international focus, bringing together articles from around the world that will analyze the gender dimensions of basic human

rights concepts while reporting on the areas where the most progress has been made and also where the greatest abuse of human rights continues. Deadline: November 30th 1994. Invited are essays, research reports, true stories, poetry, cartoons, drawings and other artwork which addresses the experiences of women in Canada as well as around the world. Articles should be double-spaced, 7-12 pages long. A short abstract of the article and brief bio should accompany each submission. We give preference to previously unpublished material. If possible please submit graphics or photographs to accompany your article. Write or call ASAP indicating your intention to submit your work. Canadian Woman Studies, 212 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele St, North York, Ontario, M1P 1P3 (416)736-5356 Fax (416)736-5700 ext.55356.

Courses/Lectures

Sheridan College Summer School of the Arts. We offer an expanded selection of workshops, and credit courses taught by professionals in the arts community. Join our dynamic summer arts community for offerings in the following arts disciplines: Book Arts, Business of the Arts, Ceramics, Drawing/Painting, Glass, Literature, MacIntosh Computer Graphics, Media Arts, Printmaking, Sculpture, Teen workshops, Textiles/Fibre, Theatre, Wood/Furniture. For more information contact: Summer School of the Arts, 1430 Trafalgar Rd., Oakville, Ontario, L6H 2L1. Tel:(905)845-9430, ext.2610. Fax:(905)815-4041.

Life Drawing at Arcadia. This opportunity is without instruction and hosted by Arcadia Artists Co-op. 680 Queen's Quay West in the Performance Space. Tuesdays 7:30-10:30pm, \$6 per session, bring your own materials, boards etc. For more information call: Jodi 260-6625 or Bill 260-5124.

Anthologies

Lesbian Motherhood. There is a call for papers for a book on lesbian motherhood/parenthood to be published by gynergy books in the spring of 1995. Articles by native lesbians and two-spirited women, lesbians of colour and disabled lesbians are especially encouraged. Articles should be no longer than 20 pages and can be on a variety of topics. Please send proposals to Professor Katherine Arnup, School of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5B6.

Lesbian Sex Anthology. This anthology by Women's Press seeks poems and short fiction. Materials should be typed and double spaced. Women with disabilities are welcome to use other formats, maximum length 5000 words. Do not send originals. Send SASE if you want materials returned. Please include a short bio with submission and include one business size SASE for correspondence. Deadline: August 31. Send materials to: Lesbian Sex Anthology, Women's Press, #233-517 College St. Toronto, Ontario, M6G 4A2.

Live/Work Space

The Studio is looking for mature artists who may need affordable housing with rent geared to income supplement. This planned housing development is in North York and will include studio and exhibition space. For more information contact: Judith Scholnik at (416)889-3165 or (416)539-0310.

Exhibitions

The Power Plant - 235 Queen's Quay West, Toronto, Ontario. (416)973-4949. Faye Heavy Sheild: Into the Garden of Angels. June 24 - September 5.

York Quay Gallery - Harbourfront Centre 235 Queen's Quay West, Toronto, Ontario. (416)973-5379. Transitional state of Mind and Body: The Passage of Time Seen Through the Eyes of Fine Artists. July 15 - August 28.

Gairloch Gallery - 1306 Lakeshore Rd.E Oakville, Ontario, L6J 1L6.(905)844-4402. Anne Raurdsden-Residence. May 14 - July 3.

Gairloch, Centennial and West Wing Galleries 1306 Lakeshore Rd.E. and 120 Navy St. Oakville, Ontario,(905)844-4402 Corpus I and II, July 16 - Sept 4.

Walls of WARC - 80 Spadina Ave.Ste.506, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 2J3. (416)861-0074, Ingrid Chu: Salvaging Paradise. May 26 - June 25. Nicole Collins: June 30 - July 30. Opening July 9th from 2:00 to 5:00.

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery - Civic Centre, 72 Queen St. Oshawa, Ontario L1H 3Z3, (905)576-3000. Cindy More: Vision Quest June 2 - July 31.

"Women's Business" 2 videos, July 28 at 7:30pm. *A Web Not a Ladder* 30mins *No Time to Stop* 30mins. Coffee served, admission free.

Agnes Etherington Art Centre - Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6 (613)545-2190. Carol Marino Photographs. June 26 - July 24.

Gallery 44 - 183 Bathurst Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2R7 (416)363-5187 Gaye Jackson: Tavelogue #2. June 11 - July 2. Sharon Alexander, James Dawson, Dave Donald, James Hayes, Eugenie Shinkle: Proof(1). July 9-30.

Latitude 53 Gallery - 10137-1094St. Edmonton AB, T5J 0Z9 (403)423-5353. Theresa Marshall: Department of Indian Affairs June 30 - August 12.

Strike Three Gallery: 129A Hunter St.W, Peterborough, Ontario. "Danced Shoes Hive Blankets" Aganeth Dyck. May 27 - July 9.

Grimsby Public Art Gallery: 25 Adelaide St. Grimsby, Ontario L3M 1X2 (905)945-3246. June 10 - July 17 Objects of Pleasure. The 1994 Juried Exhibition of the Potters Guild of Hamilton and Region. July 22 - August 28 Shelley Niro and Edith Soza: Dialogo.

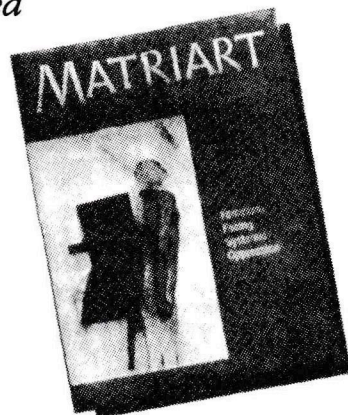
Resources

CRIAW Grants. The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women offers annual grants of \$2,500 for projects that promote the advancement of women. The project must make a significant contribution to feminist research and be non-sexist in methodology and language. Priority will be given to emerging independent researchers, women's groups and projects with Canadian content. Candidates should send four copies of their application and submissions must be postmarked no later than August 31, and sent to CRIAW, 151 Slater St. Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5H3.

MATRIART

A CANADIAN FEMINIST ART JOURNAL

Canada's national magazine devoted specifically to women artists and cultural production. Published quarterly, Matriart features articles, artist profiles, exhibitions, reviews and listings of upcoming events.



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MATRIART

Matriart, a quarterly publication of the Women's Art Resource Centre (WARC) is committed to the support and documentation of Canadian women's cultural production. Matriart provides a forum to empower and honour women's creativity. We actively solicit submissions representing the diversity of feminist communities across Canada. Matriart will not publish submissions that are racist, sexist, classist, lesbo/homophobic or otherwise oppressive in nature.

Each issue of Matriart focuses on a specific theme. We welcome feature articles and interviews; original artwork; fiction and poetry; reviews of exhibitions, books, films, performance and theatre.

Upcoming issues:

Status of Canadian Women in the Arts

Deadline: August 1, 1994

Remapping Culture

Deadline: October 1, 1994

Creating Memory

Deadline: December 1, 1994

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

For All Submissions:

Please ensure that you retain a copy of your submission for your own files. Include your name, address and phone number on the title or face page of all submitted work. Please include a brief biographical statement with your work. If you wish to have your work returned, you *must* enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope of adequate size and sufficient postage. *If you do not send an envelope and postage, we will assume that you do not need your work returned.*

If the work submitted has been previously published, please note the date and publication in which it appeared. If you are sending this material simultaneously to another publication, please let us know.

You will be notified if your submission has been accepted for publication.

Based on our current funding, artist/writer fees are as follows:

All articles and reviews — *5¢ per word*; Poetry — *\$16 to \$32*;

Images — *\$8 to \$32 ea.* Along with payment, you will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which your work appears.

For Written Submissions:

Work should be typed double-spaced with one inch margins. Your name should appear on each page. Articles should be 1,500-2,500 words in length. Reviews are 750-1,000 words in length. We encourage submissions to be written in accessible language.

All publication decisions are made by the Coordinating Committee and are final. We reserve the right to edit for brevity and clarity. In addition, manuscripts may require further editing for structure, length or philosophical consideration. An editor will contact you if such changes are required. If the writer and editor cannot negotiate mutually acceptable changes, the Coordinating Committee reserves the right to withdraw the work. In this event, the writer/artist will be entitled to 50% of the artist fee.

For Artwork and Photography Submissions:

Please submit reproduction quality black and white prints. *Do not send original work as we cannot be held responsible.* Prints of artwork should be no larger than 11" x 14". Please do not send slides or negatives. Indicate on the back of your submitted image "TOP" as necessary. Attach your name, address, phone number, title of piece, media used, the size and the date of the work. Also include any additional credits as appropriate. Please indicate if you wish to have your work added to the WARC registry of Canadian women artists.

Back Issue Order Form

MATRIART

A CANADIAN FEMINIST ART JOURNAL

Matriart Premiere Edition

Vol. 1, No. 1

Explores tradition as a celebration of cultural diversity. Featuring Jamelie Hassan, Sarindar Dhaliwal, Sylvat Aziz.

Lesbian Artists

Vol. 1, No. 2

Addresses lesbian visibility and artistic representation. Featuring Sara Diamond, Buseje Bailey, Marusia Bociurkiw.

Empowerment and Marginalization

Vol. 1, No. 3

Examines marginalization and breaking the barriers of gender, race and religion. Featuring Ayanna Black, Rebecca Belmore, Brenda Joy Lem, Sandra Harr.

Art, Motherhood and Reproductive Technologies

Vol. 1, No. 4

Discusses women's birthing experience, and the future of reproductive technologies. Featuring Jessica Bradley, Joyce Kline, Debbie O'Rourke, Carol Laing, Anna Gronau.

Women Artists of the First Nations

Vol. 2, No. 1

Presents a cross-section of contemporary issues and recollections by Native women artists. Featuring Shirley Bear, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Jane Ash Poitras, Rebecca Baird.

Women Against Violence

Vol. 2, No. 2

Exposes the continuum of violence from the authority of the family to the force of the military. Featuring Tasse Geldart, Amarna Moscote, Cheryl WaterWomon.

Spirituality

Vol. 2, No. 3

Locates the diversity of forms and practices in which women artists and writers are exploring spirituality in relation to their work, lives and communities. Featuring Edna Manitowabi, Jean Shinoda Bolen, Ingrid MacDonald.

Women, Art and Age

Vol. 2, No. 4

Reflections on age, ageism and agelessness. Featuring Joyce Wieland, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, June-Clark Greenberg, Pamela Harris, The Raging Grannies.

Women in Prison

Vol. 3, No. 1

Draws on the art of survival and the role of the creative spirit within the underworld of prisons. Featuring Juliet Belmas, Gayle K. Horii, Persimmon Blackbridge.

Feminism Facing Systemic Oppression

Vol. 3, No. 2

Confronts the pressures and relations of power. Featuring Betty Goodwin, Betty Julian, Fay Cromwell-Tollenaar, Mary Anne Barkhouse.

Body/Self Image

Vol. 3, No. 3

Celebrates both commonality and difference, affirming the inclusive process of female empowerment.



Matriart current retail price \$4.00 plus \$1.50 for shipping and handling. (GST exempt)

All orders must be prepaid. Enclose cheque or money order payable to the **Women's Art Resource Centre**, 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 506, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2J3 Tel: (416) 861-0074

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MATRIART

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This video is a humorous, absurd, heartfelt and worshipful look at SEX. Guided through this unique adventure by sexpert extraordinaire Annie Sprinkle and the "Transformation Facilitators", you will explore the ancient and forbidden knowledge about female sexuality.

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Starring Annie Sprinkle, Barbara Carrellas, Amy Harlib, Diviana Ingravallo, Jade, Carol Leigh (a.k.a. Scarlet Harlot), Jocelyn Taylor, Chris Teen, Trash and Kelly Webb. Cameos by Pulsating Paula, Donna Theresa

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Screen Play	Annie Sprinkle



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ARTISTS

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ARTIST TALK WITH YOSHIKO KANAI:

Thursday, September 8

7:30 pm, at 382 Harbord St

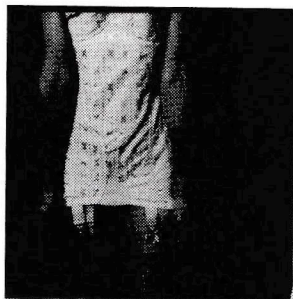
Locations for the forum and artist talk are wheelchair accessible. A Space sincerely regrets that exhibitions in the gallery at 183 Bathurst Street are not wheelchair accessible

June 25 - July 30

P. Elaine Sharpe

The Frugal Housewife

Opening June 25, 2-5 pm



September 10 - October 15

Clarissa Sligh

Exhibition

Curated by Margaret Belisle

Opening September 10, 2-5 pm

Artist's Presentation: September 13, 8 pm

V i d e o

Curated by Betty Julian

D a t e t a b a

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Gallery TPW

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**ART COMPETITION
WHITBY PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL
REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

The Ontario Government, under its Art in Architecture Program, is commissioning site specific major works of art for permanent placement in the new Whitby Psychiatric Hospital Redevelopment Project. The building will be located on the existing site on the edge of Lake Ontario in Whitby, Ontario.

An Art Advisory Committee has been established to award 11 commissions in a two-stage competition. Commissions will range from \$8,000 to \$38,000 and will include a terrazzo floor design, sculpture, stained glass and other media.

Ontario resident artists who are interested in participating in this open competition should send a letter requesting competition guidelines by **Aug. 12, 1994** to:

**Management Board Secretariat
Art in Architecture Program
Ferguson Block, 3rd Floor
77 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N3
Tel: (416) 327-1984
Fax: (416) 327-1852**

Guidelines are available in both official languages. Please indicate your preference.

The Art Advisory Committee Chairperson for this project is Linda Paulocik, Director/Curator of The Station Gallery, Whitby.



CLARISSA SLIGH

TORONTO PHOTOGRAPHERS WORKSHOP
80 SPADINA AVE., SUITE 310 TORONTO, ONT. M5V2J3
Tel: (416) 362-4242 Fax (416) 362-6510

July 1, 1994

Dear Friend:

I am writing to you from the Toronto Photographers Workshop/Gallery TPW where I will create an installation based on Sandy Ground, a former "free Black" oystering community in Staten Island, New York. Using historical information about the prosperity and eventual abandonment of this community as metaphors which resonate with aspects of my life, I will recreate Sandy Ground in Toronto.

I AM ASKING YOU TO JOIN ME BY BEARING WITNESS TO YOUR HISTORY: to make public – to send me a story about your, your family's, your community's movement, migration and/or relocations.

Sandy Grounders migrated northward from the eastern shores of Maryland and Virginia, in the 1830s prior to the U.S. Civil War. A "free Black" woman, Eliza Morriss, and her family was among those in this 1830s northward migration. She had purchased a slave, Philip Cooler, from his owners in Virginia, ten years earlier. They were married and had five children. Upon learning the story of Eliza Cooler and Sandy Ground, I felt an unexplainable deep sadness and loss. Did it have to do with my own lack of family – my own lack of community?

Do each of us carry a similar kind of longing for a lost connectedness? You may or may not have lived through your family's migrations/relocations, but know something about how those events have affected your life.

SEND ME ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: a personal reflection, experience, autobiographical statement, a photograph, or note from your diary in words, collage, audio tape or other.

I want your first thoughts. Not a whole lot of editing, please. I want it as it comes into your mind and hand: crossed out lines, hand writing, pencil or pen, typewriter, or computer. Take a few minutes to sit down and do it now. Do not remain invisible. Let me hear from you.

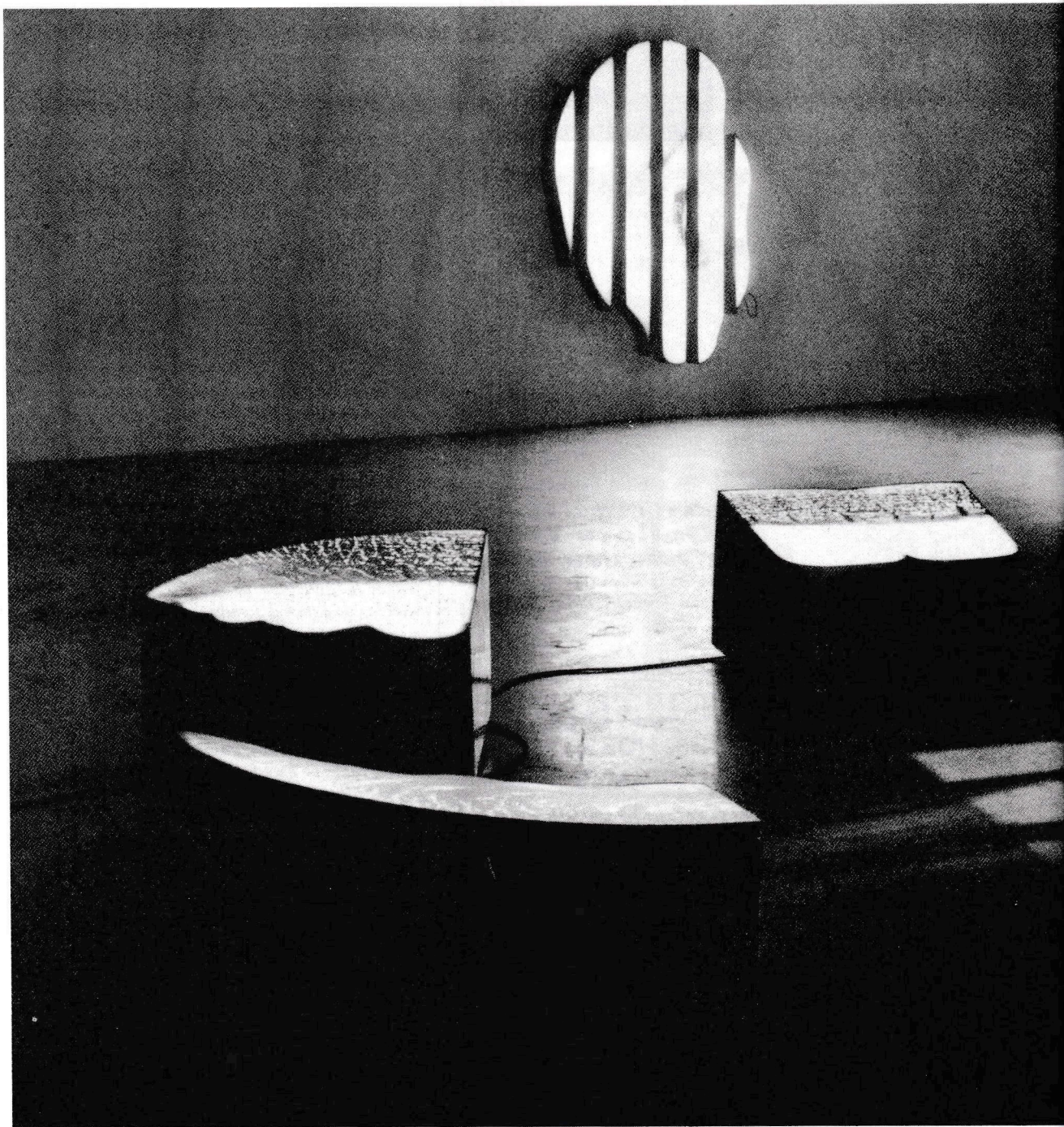
PLEASE DO IT NOW! Your contribution will become an official permanent part of the installation, which may travel to other sites. Your experiences will add to the richness and diversity of our collective voices.

PLEASE SEND OR FAX YOUR RESPONSE TO ME AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS OR FAX NUMBER BY AUGUST 19.

The installation will be open September 10 through October 15. For more information, please call the above number. Thanks so much for your participation.

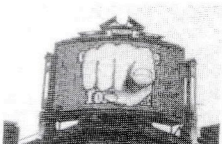
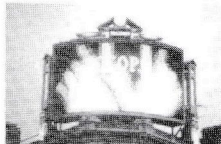
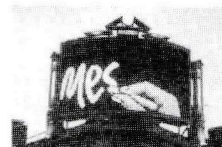
Sincerely, Clarissa Sligh

Clarissa Sligh is an African American whose work comes from a strong involvement in feminist, race and class issues. When she was in the 10th grade in 1955, she became the primary plaintiff in Arlington County's first public school desegregation case. Although this Washington born artist, now based in New York, gained several degrees and careers before practicing art full time, this experience has remained profound and informed her work. Much of her art, teaching, writing and political organizing is based in a collaborative working process. For the past ten years Sligh has exhibited and published her work internationally.



Sylvie Bélanger, The Silence of the Body, 1994, black and white back-lit transparencies, video projection, lead, fluorescent lights, photo by Barri Jones.





PUBLISHED BY

WARC

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