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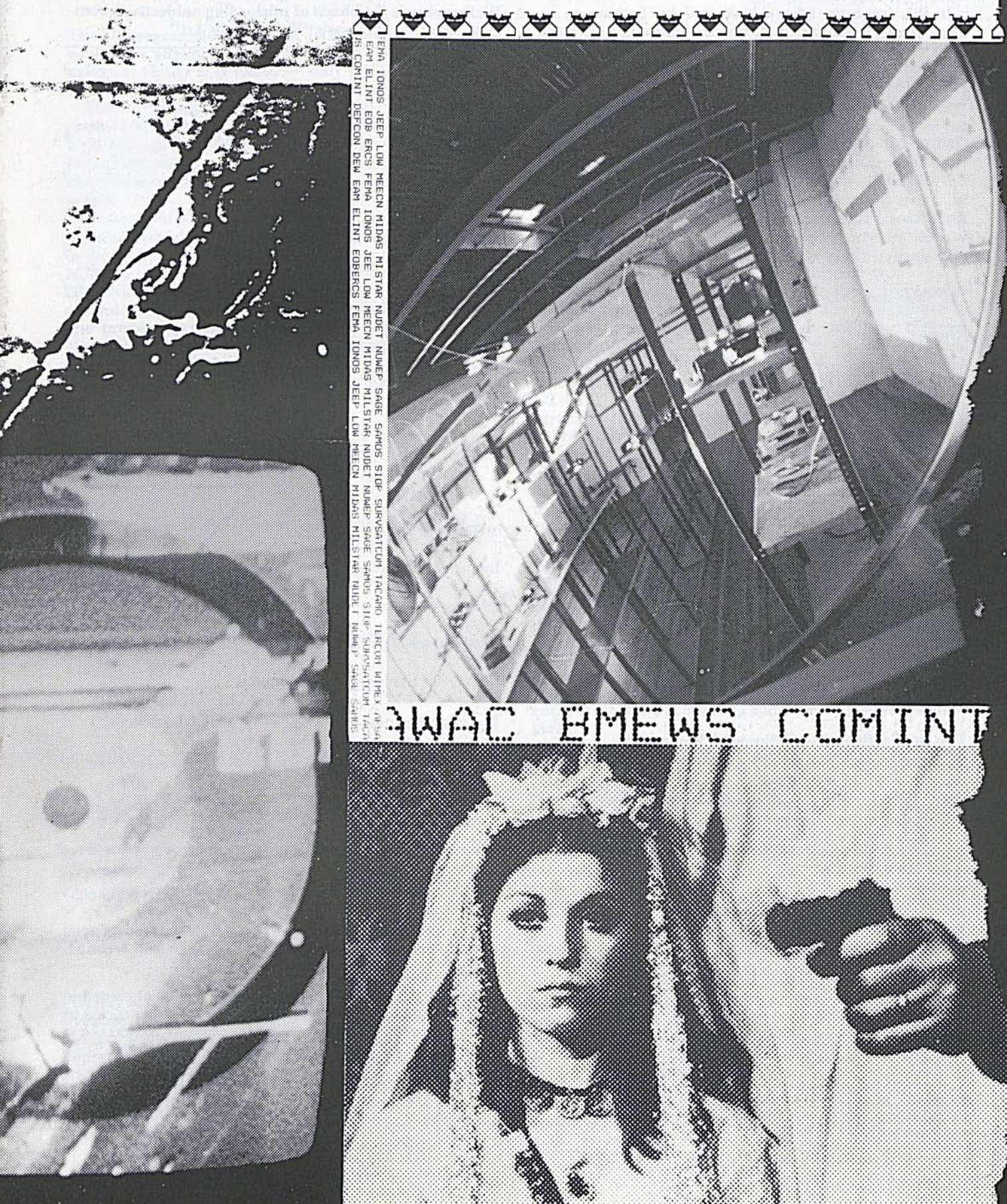

EDITORIAL

WHILST those who attempt to diminish art into non-existence by censorship through personal possession of demanded individualised art-works, artists with a social consciousness will continue to challenge and rebel against this State of Art.

"AND" intends to continue to provide space to reflect the challenges from those who are alert to this remotely-controlled threat of an impending redundancy sponsored by the capitalist system.

In this issue we take a look at John Latham as an 'Incidental Person' through his text extracted from the "Report of a Surveyor", in conjunction with his recent video works prepared for the "Dadarama" series on C.4. Altintas analyses the intertwining struggle which was dominant in Yilmaz Guney's life and films. Through two new installations in the ICA, Tim Head confronts us with the hopelessness of the divided being via the ambiguity of technology whilst John Roberts' article "Politics of New Technology" clarifies this saturation of organised confusion. With a thorough examination, John A. Walker shreds the bonds of misleading subjective potency in Peter Webb's book "Eroticism in Art".

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Educational Section

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JOHN LATHAM

The TV programme Horizon of 16 February showed once again that advances made in technical ability — technological ability it is called — only serve at present to increase the degree of insecurity in the world.

This technology rests on the level of integration reached in 1916 in the theory of General Relativity. This level belongs to a Divided State physics where as I show in the first paragraphs of my Report there is no connection whatever between physical and mental sources of action.

A new level of integration reached in principle in 1954 has resolved this problem of understanding. It is outlined in the Report at the technical level in appendix 3, shown to fit the trajectory of art in appendix 4, to be incompatible with ordinary grammar in appendix 1, and given its natural solution for public dissemination in appendix 5. The proposition it offers in terms of economics needs now to be stressed with urgency. A cosmic tragedy is drawing to its conclusion unless notice is taken immediately of the new orientation made possible.

The INCIDENTAL PERSON approach [appendix 5 and literature of the Artist Placement Group] proposes the following function in the context of economic problems.

Estimate the sum of items constituting Public Sector Borrowing on the part of governments, including:

Military and Defence Budgets .....
Civil Order budgets, policing .....
Habitat degradation measures .....
Education in Divided State understanding .....
Crime .....
Drug abuse .....
Other disaster reservations, and pending .....
_____
.....

then add effects including

Shortening of Time horizons .....
Blunted impulse in society, inversion of good will .....
Deformation Professionnel .....
Erosion of confidence, et cetera. .....
_____
.....
_____

Every one of the above constrictions on today's world-wide population is attributable to the failure within it to arrive at a level of integration such as is proposed in this Report. The Incidental Person proposition may still be in prototype stage, but it will bid to resolve the above listed threat to survival more effectively than existing approaches, and at 1% of the cost.

What is the most important difference between Divided State and Including frameworks...?

1. Physics as it stands propounds a universe that follows from an initial explosion, ab initio. The event framework shows a universe that is end-orientated. This is a primary difference in so far as language and customs, law, economics and education are subject to the logic of cause preceding effect. In ethical terms in western society "ends never justify means". Although theology adopts "God's Purpose" to account for human experience it has been impossible to fit this to the physical universe. Hence a Divided State insecurity.

2. If, however, we consider the Hawking proposition that the universe is an accreting, recurrent oscillation it becomes possible to state another position. We can extrapolate backwards to a time when this universe was "not infinitely small", but which in physical terms could be described as one photon. It is the development of such a Least Event that comes to be described as the Event Structure of this universe. To account for a Big Bang (or a little one) it is only necessary to demonstrate the sounder logic. That it is difficult to follow in practice is a problem for society to solve.

3. Hawking's "not infinitely small" when referring to the collapsed state of the universe demonstrates as conclusively as necessary that no means has been found to validate the General Relativity conclusion of a state where Space and Time are precisely zero. A significant imprecision about this point can be cleared by the concept of the Photon as Least Event (see my Event Structure and Surveyor Report, appendix 3). This argument postulates a State 0 source of a State 1 extension, which then appears of course to be continuous in that the non-extended State 0 does not show. The discovery of quantum mechanics (1900 et seq) finally validates this inference, in my view accounting for more with fewer postulates.

4. As it is very difficult to understand physical action by itself as end-determined, and equally difficult to understand human action except in terms of ends, the introduction of a system that can account for both physical and mental activity inclusively might seem a welcome development.

However, while no part of the argument has been refuted or even made the subject of enquiry, authorities have proceeded to resort to extravagant and impermissible efforts to prevent the expression leading to it. In psychological terms this condition in a country professing a complete belief in freedom of expression has to be a symptom of serious neurosis.

The phobia demonstrated is to be considered as part of that wider neurosis manifesting in the global destruction potential and the inability of existing frames of reference to restore equilibrium. The event frame resolution does propose a different approach to social ordering — but not one that would autodestruct.

John Latham is currently working as an (APG-negotiated) Incidental Person with the Ministry of Economics in Nordshein, Westfalen, Germany.

Report of a Surveyor

(John Latham)

Part I.

1. *In the past hundred years of art and science we are looking at a development that contradicts common sense and its logic. In spite of technical superfluency, primary assumptions underpinning social order are inconsistent. No notional base affords an inclusive view of the universal Event, and in the absence of consensus at such a level there is now doubt whether the world survives.*

We live within a network of contradictions where mind is as structurally indistinct from matter as ever.

2. *Illogicalities have stemmed from conclusions, first in physics and then in art, that matter in the first instance and meaning in the second are containable at a dimensionless point. That is to say, at zero extension and zero action. Language has expressed the idea but has afforded no explanation of what may constitute logic from such a point.*

A flawed and discredited logic is upheld legally, in the face of arbitrary use of force and anarchy; it is enforced as in an emergency, but against a tide.

3. *The contradictions may be resolved if* formal *logic shared unknowingly by art and mathematical media is recognised in terms of* event, *rather than in those of object. Languages depend on objects (that is to say nouns, named entities), and* is unfitted to handle event and process.

Art, on the other hand reverses this order. Art is Event Structure.

4. *From a resolution of the split logic thus entailed a principle proposed in terms of* the INCIDENTAL PERSON *has arisen, and is described.*

5. *During the past year cosmological theory has begun to affirm the primacy of Event, but it remains unable to say what this implies for human self-understanding.*

A common belief has been that an understanding of the Most will be afforded by an understanding of the Least. This belief seems justified, but it requisitions a dimensionality that is not one of appearances. Contra to language logic it declares the world to be an indivisible whole that is not a space-time entity according to the senses.

If, as in physical theory a concept of Least is held in terms of objects, (particles having mass et cetera,) the resolution to event and process is not made.

If however the idea of event is substituted and shown to be prior to the object, the concept of Least insists on this dimensionality of event, which is unrepresentable in common language. The dilemma is resolved only, at present, in art.

6. *A point has been reached anterior to distinctions between art and language, (art and science,) to generate a form consistent with the dimensionless points of (2) above.*

This form transposes the object-based idea into the dimensionality of event, visually, following which the universe is described in terms of visible form. This form is then open to discussion in language and decipherable. A circuit formerly assumed broken may then be completed.

7. *The transposition from object to event terms suggests that the problem of society lies within the medium of language itself and the way it imposes its dimensionality on the ordering process. Language is unable to tell the whole truth owing to the incongruity inherent in its framework.*

In necessarily dividing time, in its procedure, language is implicitly asserting dividedness and denying a feature of the expression of all cultural traditions, a state of omnipresent time. *As long as initial assumptions are stated in terms of objects in space or within that duality, reason will persuade that this conception of omnipresence is unsupported by evidence.*

New philosophy, new stratagem...

Though omnipresent time is inherent its relation to clocktime has not been visualised and it seems a contradiction in terms of language. Its implications for practical purposes are disregarded, or violently contested.

8. On the other hand, with Least understood in terms of Event, a nonextended State is logical and necessary. This nonextended State is an omnipresent component of event within the dimensionality of two constructs introduced and interpreted. They specify the incongruence between Object and Event frameworks.

9. Society is obliged to heed the object-based but flawed logic nonetheless – legal and administrative processes depend on it. On the evidence of current history belief in it has disintegrated, meanwhile.

In such conditions there is a conflict of authority and cataclysmic collision between opposing systems of belief as to its source.

10. The twin media of government, language and money, function as dividing media owing, along with the incongruity, to their inherent concept of sources of action. Neither medium grasps or comprehends the whole.

Both media generate energy in society by division, in a process comparable to fission in a nuclear reactor. Economies impose such (fission) energy on their societies aiming thereby to avert their collapse and assure what is defined as growth. But the impulses themselves contract in terms of time horizons, and degenerate in their intent.

11. Thus while power and rationality are ascribed exclusively to money and language, any principle of inclusivity such as that being proposed here, will be seen as not only 'illogical', – it will be in conflict with the way societies are organised. It will then be extradited by one means or another.

Consequent overheating in society seems to have no practical explanation through conventional methods of accounting.

12. The INCIDENTAL PERSON proposal introduces into the economic equation media complementary to language and money, by way of a procedure and method to bring about mutual interaction. Art proposes wholes within which parts relate integrally. Where language + money are dividing and excluding, the event structured media are including. (For this reason they have been administered in apartheid.)

13. So the economic logic of the Incidental Person stratagem measures against the cost to global society of maintaining divisive positions at all levels.

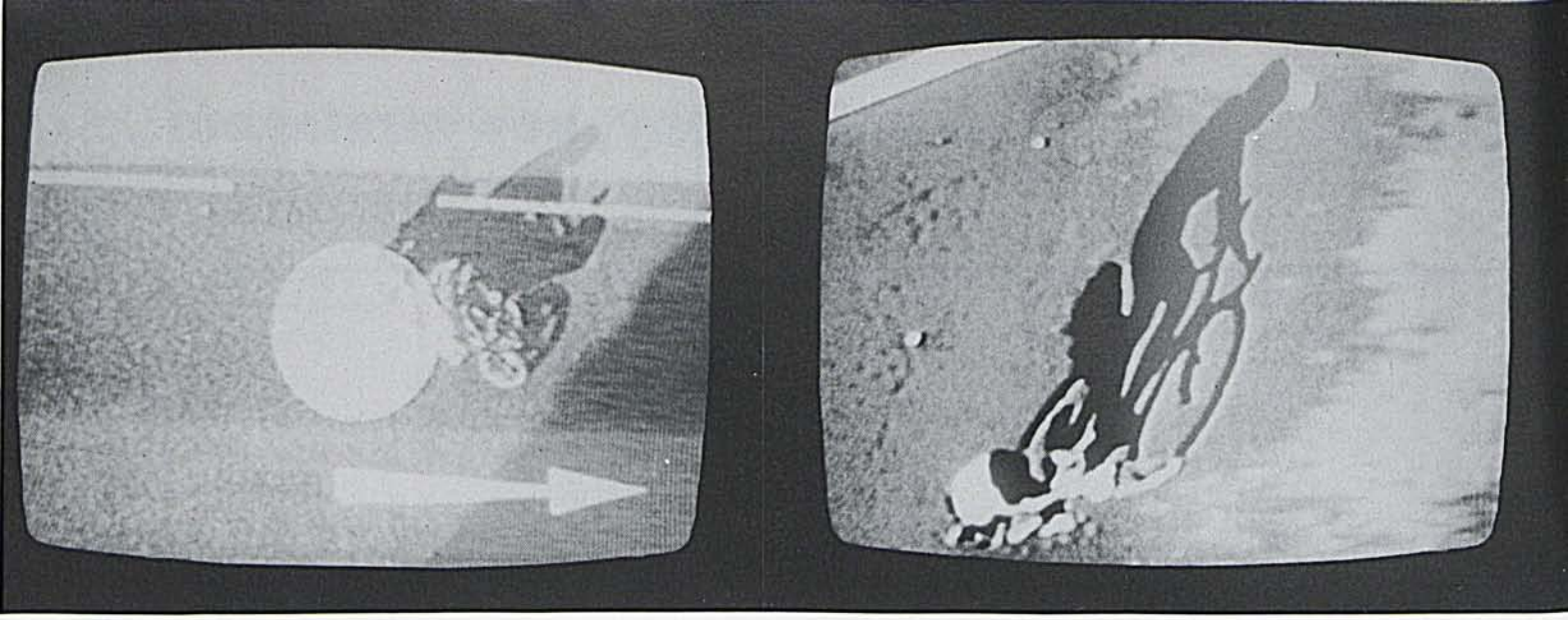
The limits of social coherence are determined by the nature of the media *predominant in decision making rather than from any personal or political fault. There are no faults. But there are energy equations that are overstretched and put into high tension by the language-money combination.*

14. Practical implications and methods found necessary for the association of such Incidental Persons as are found to communicate primarily and by nature with an including medium, with departments of government, have been researched in Britain by the Artist Placement Group, and its results are on public record.

15. For such a stratagem to become fully effective, a United Nations Instrument of sanction will be necessary.

Such an instrument of sanction is the essence of any action proposed in this report. The remainder is concerned with technical detail.

John Latham, "Report of a Surveyor" published 1984 by Edition Hansjorg Mayer in association with Tate Gallery Publications.



John Latham's "Dave's Bike" 7 mins 40 secs. 1984.

ANDREW DIPPER

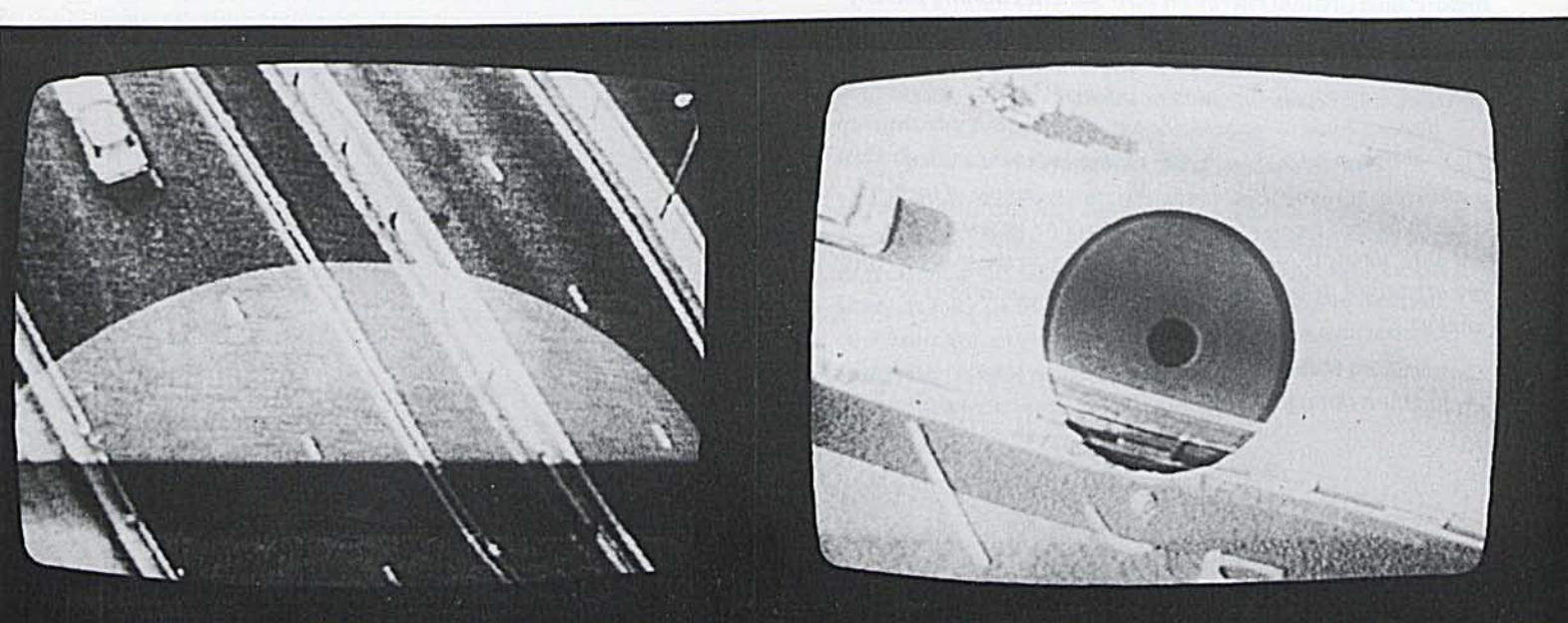
John Latham has moved his work through conceptual boundaries which he himself has helped to establish. He has created a new field of activity where language, thought and vision are compounded and cooperate to form a new framework and logical network fitting for the work of enquiry and comment on the phenomena of the modern world. One can feel his presence as a profound and accurate observer.

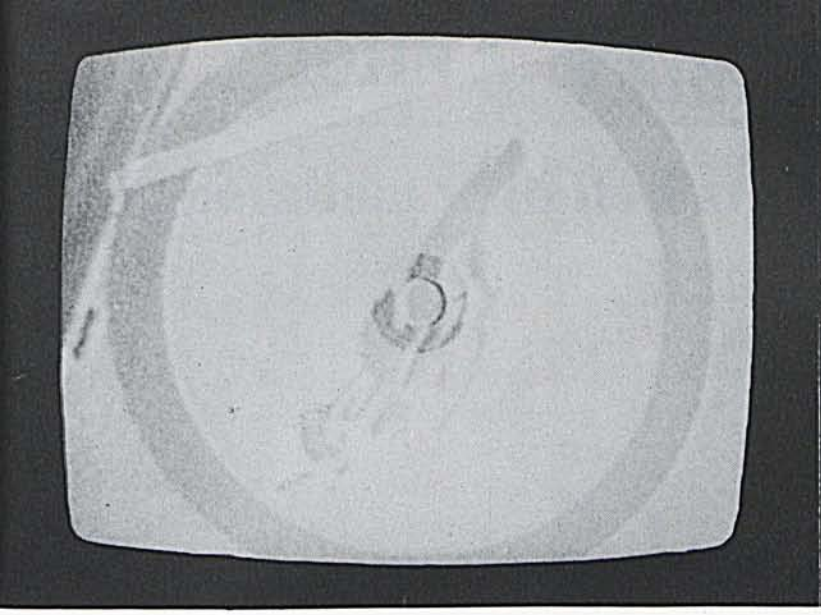
In the 1950s, artists had become conversant with the manipulation of concepts as a tool for artistic enquiry. The evolution of this idea led finally to the position of material abstraction, where the logic of enquiry had no further use for the appearances of visual form. It is a fact heavy with implications that the enquiries of physicists had taken a similar logical road and had arrived at a similar viewpoint. The use of a formal language of mathematics did allow them, however, to trade the path leading to the point of actual material abstraction for a form of enquiry which was in sync with the viewing habits of their spectators. This was something which the art world found itself unable to do.

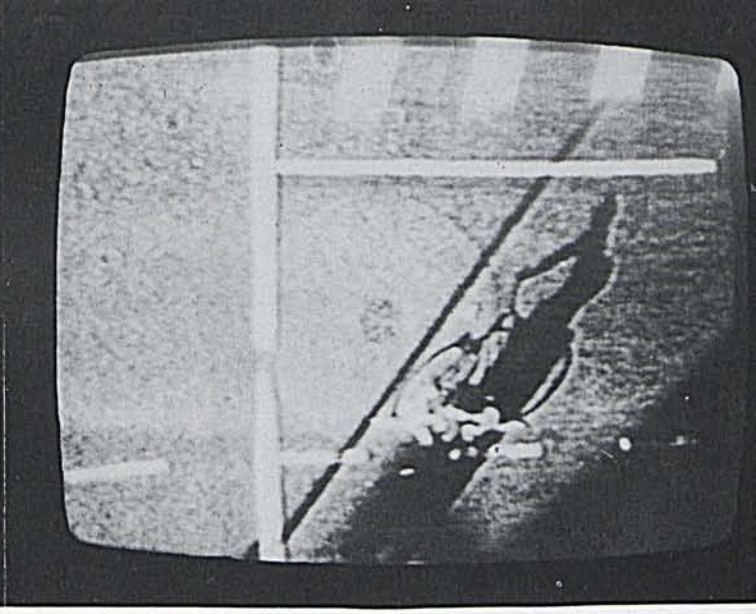
No one was able at the time to determine the implications of abstraction in art until the point of the ultimate minimalisation of form was reached. This by implication entailed a minimalisation of temporal extension, and this lack of temporal extension made verbal sequential logic inoperable as a medium for explanation and further research. Faced with the necessity of inventing a new conceptual framework which would be able to operate in this strange new world a few artists led by John Latham formed the bones of a conceptual framework, represented by various art works, where the idea of a structural morphology which would exist and link different time functions together was formulated. Thus it was recognised that in events an *'informing impulse'* existed which linked the ideograms of this non-verbal logic together.

The framework was thus established and delineated and it opened the way to a vision of the world consistent with our experience of the way that art *'utters'* to the senses. In their search for a universal unifying concept this artistic experience had been intimated by physicists! They attempted to break the bounds of the object world of particles, mass and energy by searching for a new conceptual framework now manifest in their equations.

The latest video works of John Latham bear witness to his awareness of the link between the conceptual development of art and physics, the marriage of the technology of video, with the concepts of the enquiring artist, mirror in a direct way the reality of the wavefront of conceptual ability now being ridden by the most capable artists. The dynamic principle which is Latham's own discovery allows the successful manipulation of previous unrelated ideas into a powerful and logical whole. The statements, through the virtue of this special language, do not merely stand as points of conceptual







A Cosmological Menu

brilliance but form a new cosmology of images and thoughts which are self-sustaining and must evolve into new and better works.

In the videotape pieces (late, late Channel 4, March 19-24 inclusive) a new syntax has been invented which attempts to drive direct to the expression of a dimensional frame structured according to the language of structure in events, a theory first formulated by Latham prior to 1970. The pieces propose a new way of *'seeing'* video expression, and move close to constructing a video experience closer to music than heretofore possible.

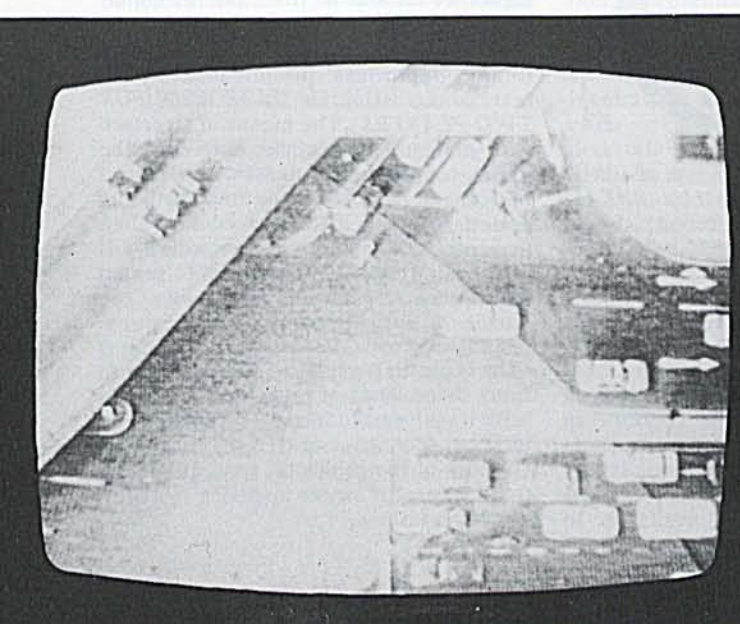
The tapes are composed from two concurrent but otherwise unrelated tracks. The one is an abstract recurrent sequence of concentric areas of colour (which) uses a regular *'octave'* for a scale of proportion; for example: A is a disc which nearly covers the screen, while G is a central point only large enough to be identified as a certain colour. The vocabulary of the sequence is constructed with sharps and flats, these being represented by circles, all of which were drawn out originally using the graphics menu of the paint box computer game. Using this data base, an extended theme was composed as a score and the work was eventually assembled on a videotape using the edit studio to thread each frame like a string of beads or a string of letters to make a sentence. The abstract theme is put together around about a *'Time base'* similar to the beat which occurs in pop music or in the shot echo sound of a helicopter, in one piece the thunk-thunk-thunk sound of a diesel taxi is used and in another the *'time base'* of Bach's *'Magnificat'* accompanies the sequence over London called *'DAVE'S BIKE'*. The abstract visual component functions as the informing component of the Time Base Theorem and this accompanies the alternate visual picture, which is a series of still shots of the earth from the sky.

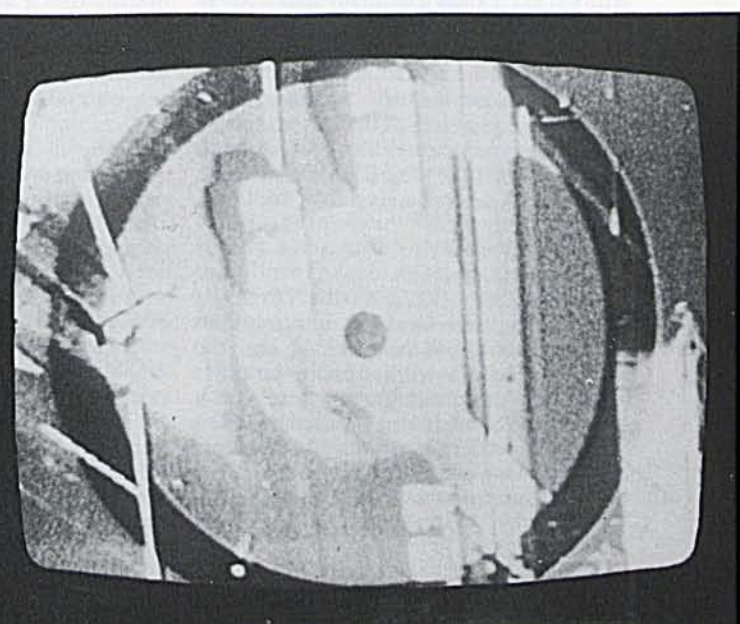
(The close-up in fact features the road surface of the street with the shadows of a cyclist projected forward from an overhead view of your actual Dave upon it).

Latham's view of the world as an observer from an extra dimension mirrors the images we see in the videotapes, but this view, far from being removed in a world of esoteria has implied that it is a view of ourselves — from the inside looking outwards. With the pictures which have come back to us from space in the last years, (those of the distant earth and the outer planets) came a challenge to construct a more profound and effective cosmology than has been arrived at by scientists and physicists. The tapes make the point that the artist has ridden stowaway on these voyages and human existence cannot be seen in the same way again.

Furthermore, that the current cosmology and explanations of the scientists lack the locus point of *'Humanity'*. In the end, Art is responsible for the world we perceive, not science.

Andrew Dipper trained as a sculptor and now runs a workshop in Oxfordshire for the conservation and restoration of art works.





ANNA RIDLEY

DADARAMA

THE proposal was made to Channel 4's commissioning editor, Paul Madden, to invite a number of artists to make works specifically for the context of television. Certain crucial principles were established: that the work would appear in its own right and not be framed by an arts programme format, the artists could determine the duration and method of transmission so that they were not bound by a particular slot, and that the budget was set so that they could have access to broadcast standard facilities. However, C4, whilst welcoming new and innovative programme-making, were limited in the amount of money that could be assigned to this project.

With agreement from Paul Madden, I proposed to invite a range of artists from across the disciplines rather than confine it to only those with video experience. Having worked in the TV and Film business for 15 years and even longer with artists making films, video tapes, installations, etc., I felt confident that a close collaboration between myself and the artists would bring about some unexpected results. I had previously tried to get the idea accepted by *'Arena'*. Mark Kidel, then producer of the series, agreed to a programme on Video Art and we made *'THIS IS A TELEVISION RECEIVER'* by David Hall using BBC facilities, (March 1976).

'IAN BREAKWELL'S CONTINUOUS DIARY', a series of 21 programmes broadcast in April/May 1984, was the first of the artists' work to emerge and we had an encouraging response from viewers. We selected a particular period for transmission so that public events could be included alongside the more personal observations of Breakwell, i.e. The London Marathon. This idea was

DADARAMA

expanded by taking the theme of Christmas for the series of 8 *'IAN BREAKWELL'S XMAS DIARY'*, broadcast from December 19 to December 26 1984.

Each work in the *'DADARAMA'* series is quite different from the next. 'THE *KISS'* by painter Paul Richards and composer Michael Nyman was developed on the Qantel Paintbox. This facility can generate images electronically or pictorial material can be fed into the system. An amazing number of treatments and manipulations are then available to change the image. The backgrounds were prepared and then run as a sequence into the studio recording of the singers shot against Chroma-Key. The foreground painting was a *'live'* event which could only be rehearsed beforehand.

John Latham's use of the paintbox was to treat black and white photographs, and, apart from a stills shoot, the six programmes were made in the edit. The antithesis is David Cunningham whose series of five programmes were made in the camera.

Rose Garrard expanded her video performance experience to produce a piece both highly structured in the shooting and editing. *'SPACES FOUR'*, a dance piece by Rosemary Butcher, evolved into an event for television by shooting three different versions on a single camera which were then edited together. Normal practise would be to shoot the same performance on four or five cameras simultaneously and mix between to produce a finished piece. Stephen Partridge set up a totally improvised performance by an actress and actor for *'DIALOGUE FOR TWO PLAYERS'*. The means of structure was made through time cues and the nature of the performances was crucial regardless of how they were eventually edited together. This proved to be an extremely complex procedure which was achieved through digital split screen techniques.

In order to persuade C4 to continue to fund these kinds of projects, individuals (albeit with vested interests) should write to Paul Bonner and Jeremy Isaacs in support of the principle. It is quite surprising to what extent audience response affects decisions.

Anna Ridley

JOHN A. WALKER

Liberalism with its Pants Down

"Without controversy progress is impossible".
"The weapons to use in the fight against prejudice are knowledge and honesty and these will prove invincible."
Peter Webb 1973/4

THE publication in 1983 of a new edition of *THE EROTIC ARTS* (first edition 1975) provides an opportunity for an evaluation of this book's contribution to the discipline of art history and to the cause of human freedom.

Some preliminary remarks: only Webb's name is cited on the cover and title page in spite of the fact that the text includes essays by various authors. A more accurate and honest title page would state *'Peter Webb and others'*. It is significant that all the contributors to this volume are men. The feminist viewpoint concerning the highly contentious subject of sexual imagery is not, therefore, represented by a woman (apart from the odd quotation and paraphrase).

How innovative and original was Webb's book? According to the jacket's blurb it was a *"pioneering venture"*. This claim is refuted by the text itself: *"The pioneer of studies in erotic art was Edward Fuchs, a German professor who published a series of learned books on the subject in Munich in the early years of this century"* (p.103).

One could also cite the more recent activities of Drs Phyllis and Eberhard Kronhausen who established a collection of erotic art and mounted two large-scale exhibitions on this theme in Denmark and Sweden in 1968 and '69.

1960s: SEXUAL LIBERATION

Webb's interest in sexual imagery was aroused in 1968. It was thus part of the more general social demand for sexual and political liberation associated with the Underground and Civil Rights movements of that decade. These movements did achieve significant changes which resulted in a greater degree of sexual freedom than obtained before the 1960s; the consequences of that change, however, soon attracted the pejorative label *'the permissive society'*. Although first published in the mid-1970s, *THE EROTIC ARTS* reeks of the liberationist ideologies of the 1960s: *"the idea that anything to do with sex is immoral is a dangerous one, and should be attacked by everyone concerned about freedom"* [*p.XXIII*]; *"sexual awareness leading to a freer and happier society"* 6*p.XXVI*]; *"In using sex as a revolutionary weapon in the fight for a free society"* (p.XXVI). 1960s guru figures such as Norman Brown, Herbert Marcuse and Wilhelm Reich are cited in Webb's introduction. Marcuse's idea of *'polymorphous perversity'* is noted approvingly. Reich is paraphrased thus: *"the desperate need of modern man for unrepressed sexuality... sexual repression as one of the principal mechanisms of political domination"*. The politics of the anti-pornography lobby is characterised as predominantly right-wing and sexual repression is linked directly to political repression via the argument that totalitarian regimes always suppress sexual freedom.

A stranger to Webb might conclude from the above that he is a radical extremist in political as well as sexual matters. But nothing could be further from the truth. He is a self-confessed liberal; he is, in most respects, a pillar of orthodoxy.

With touching naivety, sexual liberation is presented in Webb's introduction as politically revolutionary in itself, as if liberation in this one sphere would solve all the world's political and economic inequalities and injustices. Marxists are often accused of being Utopians and determinists in matters of history but listen to Webb: *"Society is moving inexorably towards the goal of individual freedom"* (p.XXVIII). (Would that he was right). In his appendix to the new edition Webb finds it necessary to qualify his earlier views as he notes the conservative reaction, the new puritanism of the 1980s. This development elicits the plaintive remark: *"PLAYGIRL no longer carried erections; and hard-core material was very difficult to find"*. (p.455).

"This book", claims Webb, *"is about celebration"*; it is *"diametrically in opposition to any form of exploitation"* (p.XXVII). Yet one has only to consider the existence of sadism to realise that there is a negative dimension to sexual desire. Eroticism cannot, therefore, be celebrated uncritically. Furthermore, various kinds of exploitation are integral to the workings of the sex and sex-image industries in our present society. A fundamental social transformation is needed before this situation can be improved significantly.

CENSORSHIP v HUMAN FREEDOM

Webb subscribes to what may be called *'the breakthrough concept of freedom'*: one by one the barriers of censorship are overcome; gradually more and more becomes permissible until the utopia of absolute freedom is achieved. Each relaxation of censorship is seen as a victory over the forces of repression, reaction, puritanism and prudery. Does this mean that Webb favours the total abolition of censorship? Does this mean that he is willing for any kind of sexual material to be made including *'snuff'* movies (films made by and for sadists in which real people are tortured and murdered for the enjoyment of others)? Webb replies to such questions in his new appendix: *"No critic, however liberal, would want to condone murder for entertainment"* (p.454). This being so one presumes that Webb now accepts that there are limits to individual freedom, that certain laws and censorship bodies are socially necessary and desirable. Thus the vision of absolute freedom — which was in reality a desire to transcend society altogether — is shown to have been the mirage of an immature mind.

What Webb does not seem to realise is that sexual taboos and censorship barriers are essential to the maintenance of sexual titillation. If everything was permitted sex would soon lose its appeal because nothing would be forbidden, no mysteries would remain. The real mechanism underlying the pressure for ever more liberalisation is surely exhaustion

and boredom with existing sexual practices and representations. To renew flagging desires, to sell more pornography, the barriers of censorship have to be continually transgressed. Yet their complete elimination would ruin the whole '*economy of desire*'.

ART HISTORY: METHOD

Underlying *THE EROTIC ARTS* is a totalising impulse: a desire to encompass everything in the realm of sexual imagery — ancient and modern, tribal and European, soft core and hard core. The scope of the book is immense: from sculpture to film, from pre-historic artifacts to post-war performance art. Clearly, the book is ambitious. However, in art-historical terms it is extremely conventional and simplistic in the sense that it is, in reality, a mammoth survey course transposed to print. Unfortunately, Webb is not alone amongst art historians in favouring the chronological '*cave painting to Caro*' conception of the history of art. One of the major weaknesses of this approach is that it does violence to the historical and cultural specificity of the material included. For example, the material culture of pre-historic and tribal societies was not considered by them to be '*art*' in the modern western sense of objects for aesthetic contemplation displayed in museums. General surveys which fail to consider the concept and social institution of art as itself a historical and culturally specific phenomenon can only result in a *misrepresentation* of the past and other cultures.

How can one characterise Webb's method as an art historian and sexual freedom fighter? It can be summed up as '*overkill by accumulation*'. Eroticism is described within literature, film, theatre, painting, sculpture, etc., etc. Sheer quantity is supplied in lieu of quality. The commonplace that eroticism and sexuality are widespread and all-pervasive is relentlessly driven home. Chapter after chapter consists of the piling up of example after example. No sooner is one erotic artist or art work introduced then we are on to the next in a breathless rush. Webb does not seem to have considered the more economic method of choosing representative examples to discuss — this would have enabled lengthier examinations of particular artists and works to have taken place. Webb's method resembles that of the collector or connoisseur: someone who feels compelled to acquire a complete set of something. In Freudian terms the method is anal-retentive. Unhappily, the appendix to the new edition is no different: the relentless accumulation of examples continues as if the author's appetite could never be satiated.

The superfluity of information in *THE EROTIC ARTS* and its chaotic presentation serves to exhaust and confuse the reader. Significant points are lost amongst a mass of detail. And despite the book's great length, almost no space is devoted to reflection and comparisons across the centuries and cultures to highlight the changes and differences in attitudes towards eroticism from one epoch to another, from one society to another. The main reason for this is the compartmented structure caused by the division of labour amongst a number of writers. As the main author, Webb ought to have supplied the links and contextualisation, but his myopic empiricism makes this impossible.

DESCRIPTION v FACT FETISHISM

In *THE EROTIC ARTS* priority is given to facts and description rather than to analysis and theory. But often Webb's descriptions are completely redundant. For example, on p.439 there occurs this account of a photograph by Robert Mapplethorpe: " '*MARC, NEW YORK*' *(1976) shows the right shoulder and naked torso of a tatooed man leaning on a table. His well developed genitals are meticulously positioned on the table top, carefully exposed by his crotchless leather trousers*". Since the photograph in question is reproduced on the same page, the description is superfluous. (It's as if Webb could not trust his readers to use their eyes). Furthermore, these unnecessary descriptions are sometimes imprecise. For example, '*NAKED LOVE*' by Gilbert and George is said to contain '*a falling angel*' when it is in fact an inverted image of Albert Scott's '*EROS*' (originally an Angel of Charity) statue at Piccadilly Circus; and the fact that the God of love is *inverted* is surely a point of symbolism worth noting. Accuracy in description, after all, is a fundamental pre-requisite for the correct interpretation of the meanings of images.

One must credit Webb's industry, the years of research spent in reserve collections, sex shops and film clubs underpinning this monument to sexual imagery. And yet, despite the author's fact fetishism, the information in the book is not totally reliable. For instance, the American performance artist Acconci is wrongly assumed to have been a member of the Wiener Aktionismus Group. Webb's pedestrian prose style makes the book an excellent antidote for insomnia and writing such as this: "*Boucher was the archetypal eighteenth century French painter, embodying and expressing the tastes and preoccupations of his age*" (p.140) rivals that shallow level of art-historical understanding one associates with school textbooks.

EROTIC ART OR PORNOGRAPHY?

Had Webb been content to call his book '*IMAGES OF SEX*' he would not have had to bother with the troublesome concepts of '*art*' and '*the erotic*'. However, he had to address these concepts because otherwise there would be nothing to distinguish his object of study from pornography. Chapter one attempts to establish a clear distinction between art and pornography. (Are they really mutually exclusive categories? Is it not possible for art to be pornographic and pornography artistic?) The culturally relative nature of the two concepts causes Webb considerable problems and his resort to such imprecise notions as "*commonly accepted standards of decency*", "*the average person's conception*" (p.1) (Whose? When? Where?) reveals a lamentable theoretical inadequacy.

Both works of art and pornographic images represent sexual acts but art, according to Webb, represents such acts aesthetically. Erotic art differs from pornography in "*intention and treatment*". The word '*erotic*' is preferred to '*sex*' because it connotes love rather than simply physical lust. A pornographic image of sexual intercourse produces sexual arousal and, possibly, masturbation while an artistic depiction produces aesthetic pleasure. In the first case the focus of the viewer's attention is the content, in the second it is the form. Webb reiterates orthodox views here, namely those of the formalist critics Bell and Fry, even though in practice he is much more interested in content than form. Webb fails to discuss at this crucial point Freud's theories of voyeurism and scopophilia, theories which reveal a displacement of sexual desire from the genitals to the sense of sight. the pure gaze of the aesthetic disposition is not so innocent after all. And this is borne out by the voyeurism Webb himself acknowledges is explicit in the child abuse paintings of Balthus (p.226). (It is surprising that Webb did not benefit from the 'Images of women' section of John Berger's *WAYS OF SEEING* (1973).

Western society, it seems to me, is riddled with hypocrisy and double standards. If this society considers it wrong and illegal for pornographers to depict sexual acts between adults and children then how can the same imagery be justified in the case of Balthus? Is there to be one moral standard for pornography and another for art? Is art considered to be above morality? The argument of artistic skill and aesthetic pleasure does not convince: the content of Balthus' paintings is as crucial as their form or style. In fact, is not the attempt to justify such imagery by reference to aesthetic form the means by which the middle and professional classes erect one standard for themselves and another for '*the lower orders*'? (The distinction between erotic art and pornography has therefore a political dimension the liberal critic fails to register). Since art embodies the highest values of the dominant social strata, there is great

reluctance to acknowledge that art too is complicit in the violence, exploitation and oppression manifest in our society and in visual culture generally.

Paradoxically, the distinction between erotic art and pornography so painstakingly elaborated at the beginning of the book is undermined by the amount of space devoted to pornography towards the end. It is also undermined by the sheer variety of illustrations in the book which brings together works by Michelangelo and the cover of *ZIPPER* magazine. The piquant conjunction of high and low culture is in fact one of the principal virtues of the book (a virtue because it gives an impression of the totality of images available in the age of mass media and mechanical reproduction; a virtue because it implies that erotic art and pornography have more in common than lovers of art would care to admit).

As already indicated, Webb's primary interest is in the content of images and the content which fascinates him most is that concerned with sex. This leads him to include images with a sexual theme but almost no *erotic* quality. For example, Toulouse Lautrec's paintings of whores waiting for customers in Parisian brothels. Some of Lautrec's paintings are so harshly realist that they can be characterised as anti-erotic. What the illustrations in *THE EROTIC ARTS* demonstrate is that not all images of naked bodies and sexual intercourse are erotic. But Webb is a literally-minded academic and the subtleties of erotic pleasure and sensuousness in art escape him. For instance, no mention is made of the famous lascivious eating scene in the film *TOM JONES*. Astonishingly, the name of Matisse does not appear in the index (and this is not because of its unreliability). A text explaining the erotic qualities of Matisse's colour schemes would indeed be an original contribution to art criticism.

WEBB'S EROTIC ARTS COURSE

In recent years Webb's book and his course on erotic art at Middlesex Polytechnic has aroused the antagonism of various groiups of feminists. In 1983 he was subjected to an abusive campaign involving the vandalism of his property and attempts to discredit him by means of letters to the press. Popular newspapers carried headlines such as *'Fury at "Porn" teacher'*.I do not wish to condone these tactics but one has to consider the reasons for such strong emotional reactions. On p.456 Webb remarks: "many women feel threatened by men". This is a typical understatement. Women not only *feel* threatened by men, they *are* threatened by men: they are subjected to sexual harassment at work and in the street, some are beaten up, some are raped and some are murdered. The fear that women experience has a material basis, it is not a hysterical fantasy. Any text discussing images representing women ought, therefore, to be especially sensitive to the issues of sexism and patriarchy. In his appendix to the new edition Webb makes some reference to these issues but they are simply token gestures towards the debate. Webb is the master of recuperation and diffusion of criticism.

RAPE

At the beginning of his book Webb argued that eroticism involved love rather than mere lust. The question arises: can the sexual violation of women by men by force ever be an act of love and affection? Most women — and especially the victims of rape — would say not. The further question then arises: what relationship do images of rape have to the crime of rape? If rape is romanticised and aestheticised, as it is in certain works of art, does not this tend to legitimise the act? Let us consider how Webb deals with an image of rape. On p.101 there is a Japanese print depicting the rape of a woman: her arms are tied, her mouth is gagged and her legs are bound to a pole to keep them apart. Webb's chillingly dispassionate comment reveals an astonishing lack of sensitivity to the horrific content: *"During the nineteenth century the figure print declined as Japan suffered the long term effects of isolation, as can be seen from the violent erotic prints of Kunisada"* (p.102). It is evident from the phrase *'violent erotic'* that violence and eroticism are not mutually exclusive categories as far as Webb is concerned. Aesthetic and scholarly detachment — what Raymond Williams has called *'the culture of distance'* - results in a failure to respond as a human being to the content of the image.

On another occasion Webb lists, as mechanically as a library cataloguer, various tortures visited upon women: *"Nuvolone's painting of St Ursula shows the saint in an ecstatic fit with an arrow penetrating her body between the breasts. St Agatha underwent various unmentionable tortures; a portrayal of her by Sebastiano del Piombo of 1520 shows two men attacking her breasts with tongs, and in paintings by Guido Reni, Zurbaran and Lorenzo Lippi she holds her severed breasts on a plate. Veronese painted her for King Phillip II in 1593 clutching her dress in an unsuccessful attempt to conceal her mutilated body. And like Saints Barbara, Christine, Catherine, and Margaret, she was often painted in the nude being whipped by excited torturers"* (p.126).

In view of the above is it any wonder that *THE EROTIC ARTS* has aroused the anger of militant feminists?

It is surely significant that Webb's book does not mention or illustrate Margaret Harrison's factographic painting/collage *'RAPE'* (1978). This is a work of art dealing with a sexual subject, yet it cannot qualify in Webb's terms as *'erotic art'* because it refuses to celebrate or aestheticise the act of rape, on the contrary the work is critical in content and function. To have included it would have been to undermine the whole theoretical framework — such as it is — of *THE EROTIC ARTS*.

FEMINIST CRITICISMS

For the second edition of *THE EROTIC ARTS* Webb decided to write a new appendix rather than undertake a revision of the whole text. In this new section there is a half-hearted attempt to respond to criticisms levelled against the first edition by feminists. Works by women painters are illustrated and a potted account of some of the issues raised within the feminist art movement is given. However, there is little evidence that Webb has read and internalised the arguments of his critics or of other scholars. For example, Michel Foucault's *HISTORY OF SEXUALITY* now merits a citation but there is no sign in the text that Webb has paid any serious attention to Foucault's work. The tactic here is significant: oppositional views or alternative accounts are neutralised and at the same time mobilised for Webb's purposes by being added to the stockpile of examples. By such cursory means the authority of *THE EROTIC ARTS* is enhanced.

Some feminist critics of *THE EROTIC ARTS* are reluctant to engage in public debate because they then find themselves ranged alongside Mary Whitehouse and Lord Longford. In his new appendix Webb cunningly lumps together Mrs Whitehouse and the group Women Against Violence Against Women — *"repressive forces from the extreme right and left"* — in order to embarrass them both. Furthermore, criticisms from a left-wing, feminist perspective can be easily discredited by ascribing them to enemies of sexual pleasure, enemies of academic freedom. Liberalism calls for an open debate, but only on condition that the exchange of views will leave everything as it was.

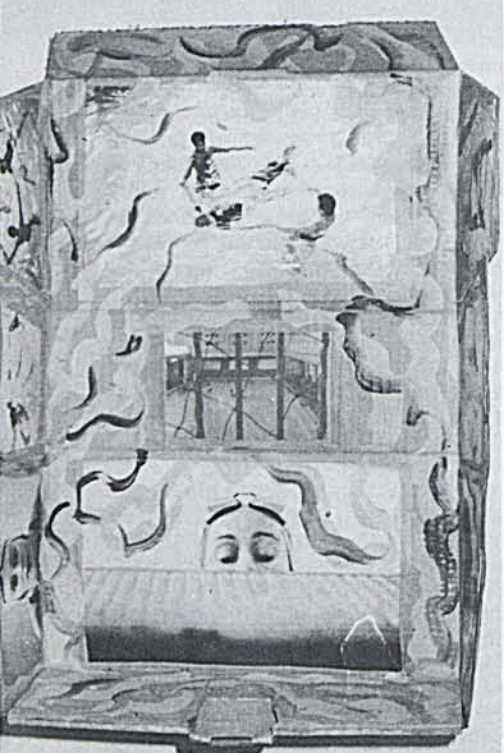
Although the campaign waged against Webb in 1983 was no doubt personally stressful, it did bring him much publicity — something Webb has cultivated assiduously from the day in 1971 he called a press conference to *'allay fears'* concerning his course on erotic art at Hornsey College of Art — and it rallied his supporters. As the mantle of martyrdom descended upon him, the real issues which had provoked the campaign in the first place were forgotten.

Certain rueful remarks in Webb's appendix to the new edition indicate that he has learnt something since 1975: *"Seven years ago, the issue seemed clear-cut. Sexual freedom meant freedom from sexual repression for both men and women, and that meant among other things ending censorship of sexual material...Today sexual politics tells us that the new freedom has merely provided men with power to do as they wish to women"* (p.456). He has learnt that reality is much more complex than he had previously imagined. Webb also regrets the increasing violence of pornography and the fact that women feel threatened by men. He adds: *"No liberal-minded person can feel happy that this is so"*. But his conclusion reveals that in spite of everything his basic position is unchanged: *"the new freedom and the slow erosion of censorship has benefited all the arts...has brought hope and encouragement to homosexuals, lesbians and other sexual minorities, and has enriched the lives of countless numbers of people"* Webb is still the1960s sexual crusader; his banner still reads: *'Liberate the genitals and all will be well'*.

John A. Walker

P.D. Burwell "Music Box" 1984

Ed Winter "Box No. 2" 1984



Tony Chircop "Syncro Box" 1984

JOSEPH ATTAWIA, ALAN AYERS, ANNE BEAN, NIKKI BELL & BEN LANGLANDS, MALCOLM JONES, ROGER KITE, SHARON KIVLAND, JOHAN KNECHT, HILTON STOCKWELL, GILES THOMAS, JULIA TONNA,

ANDREW SMITH

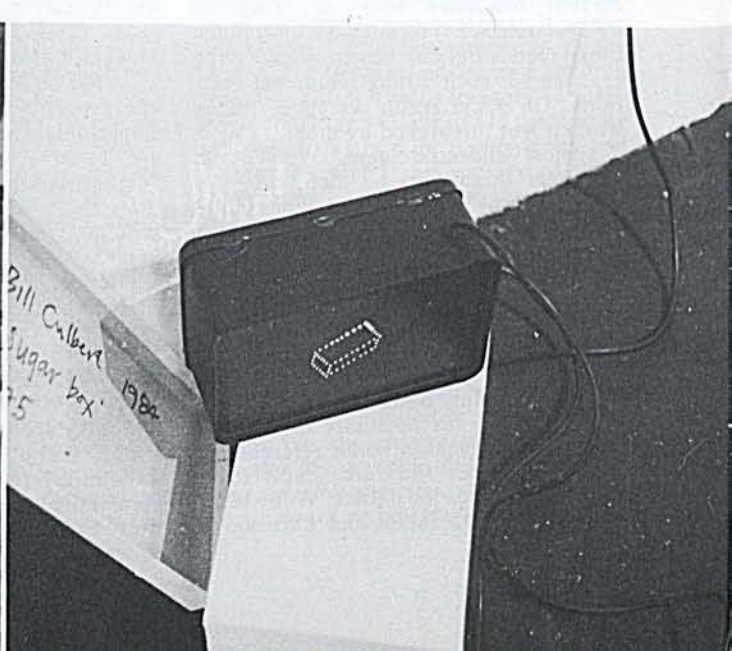
RON HASELDEN, VICKY HAWKINS, HERMINE, ALBERT IRVIN, DIANA SLOCOCK, ANDREW SMITH, JO STOCKHOLM, STEVE WHITTLE, RICHARD WINCER, ED WINTERS,

BELINDA ELLIS, JAMES FOOT, DUNCAN GLASS, RITA HARRIS, DAVID HARRISON, BRIDGET RILEY, PHYLLIS ROSS, STEPHEN SELWYN, KOMIKO SHUMITZU,

ON Saturday 15th December 1984 the basement of the Air Gallery in London became mysteriously filled with a large number of bizarrely assorted objects with only one physical common denominator; that they would fit inside, or in many cases were actually made inside, an ordinary shoe-box. Some works hung on the walls, others stood on tables or the floor or any combination of these three. Materials ranged from crepe paper to lead and stone, there were light pieces, projected pieces, sound pieces and many that used photography. Painting, drawing, sculpture, collage, assemblage were all represented. A large part of the morning was spent unpacking boxes and hanging or standing the contents in the first available space. Nobody knew what to expect. One box was found to be packed with old postcards and memorabilia, together with a packet of genuine dust to be poured over them. This was duly poured. The result looked wonderful. Another, gold-painted box did not open at all, but at the flick of a switch a small hole emitted a current of air in which a tiny tethered golden fish danced and span. One could go on. As the day advanced the show took on a more settled appearance, like an unusually cheerful jumble sale, except that it grew more instead of less crowded as time went on. Finally, that night, after people had been dangerously outnumbering objects for some hours a halt was called. In another, briefer whirlwind of activity work disappeared back into boxes and the Air Gallery basement was empty again. Thus came and departed the Shoe-Box Show.

Clearly this was not a very solemn occasion and the lightheartedness was characteristic of every stage leading up to the show itself. The seed of the idea first appeared when the organisers, Vicky Hawkins, Ron Haselden and Tony Chircop, began making small constructed sculptures from fragments picked up on the Thames shore. These were, to begin with, exhibited in Ron Haselden's house. Then other ideas about exhibition began to crystallise around them: hiring

Alan Ayers "Fossils" 1984



Bill Culbert "Sugar Box" 1984

Elizabeth Rettig "Chocolate Box" 1984

Nikki Bell and Ben Langlands "Untitled" 1984

The Shoe-Box Show

BARRY BROOKS, P.D. BURWELL, ANNE CAULFIELD, TONY CHIRCOP, HANNAH COLLINS, CHRISTINE LORRIMER, ANNE McNEILL, R.J. MILLWARD, MALI MORRIS, SUE MORRIS, DEE WHITTINGTON, SARAH TROUGHTON, WAJ, VERDI YAHOODA, SYLVIA ZYRANEK.

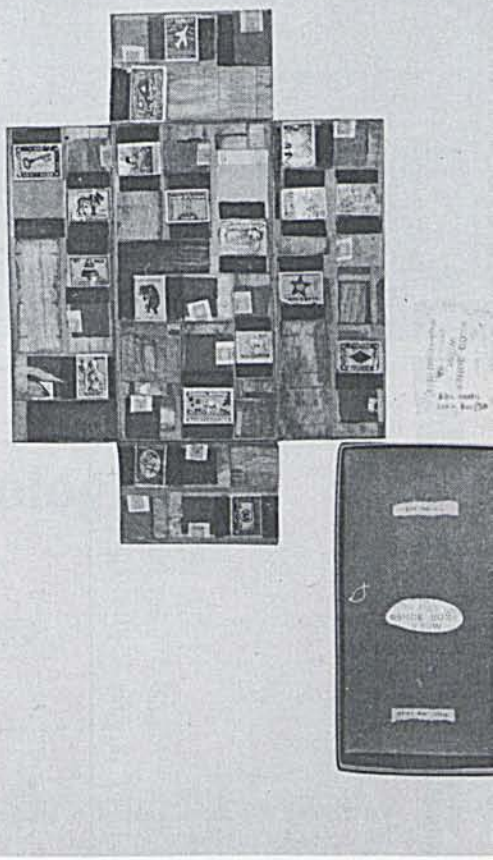
them out, a "Mantlepiece Gallery" carried in a shoe-box, contributions from other artists. The notion grew, like the sculptures, by accretion, until several months later the concept of the Shoe-Box Show was complete. A number of artists (who turned out to be practically everyone the organisers met during the period of organisation) would be asked to make a work or works which fitted inside a shoe-box. The exhibition would be held for one day and at least one piece by each artist would be shown (in practice all were shown, some 110 works by over 60 artists). The Air Gallery were quite happy to let their basement be used and a small amount of publicity was sent out. Costs proved to be virtually nil.

Why should such an apparently obvious idea have given rise to such an amazing burst of energy? One factor was certainly that by the nature of the "project" most artists were working in an unfamiliar field in some way, freeing them from constraints built up in their usual area of activity. Equally it was liberating to know that everybody's work would be shown. Artists were able to work not with the idea of pleasing somebody else (a hypothetical hanging committee or critic) but truly to please themselves. Thus, while no doubt some pieces were better than others in a purely aesthetic sense, all had a quality of "transparency" about them, one could see the artist's intention and how his or her mind had worked and how this (in nearly every case) related to something very personal and deeply felt. Yet everybody seemed very ready to see the show as a single unified event, and to offer their private interests and obsessions as part of that event, to in a sense relinquish them.

The result, in its totality, was immensely celebratory and affirmative, and what was being affirmed was that essential spirit which so often drops out of contemporary art shows like a lost component, yet is what made most artists take up art in the first place. I could write a book about that and not say any more, but it was embodied in a very tangible way in the Shoe-Box Show.

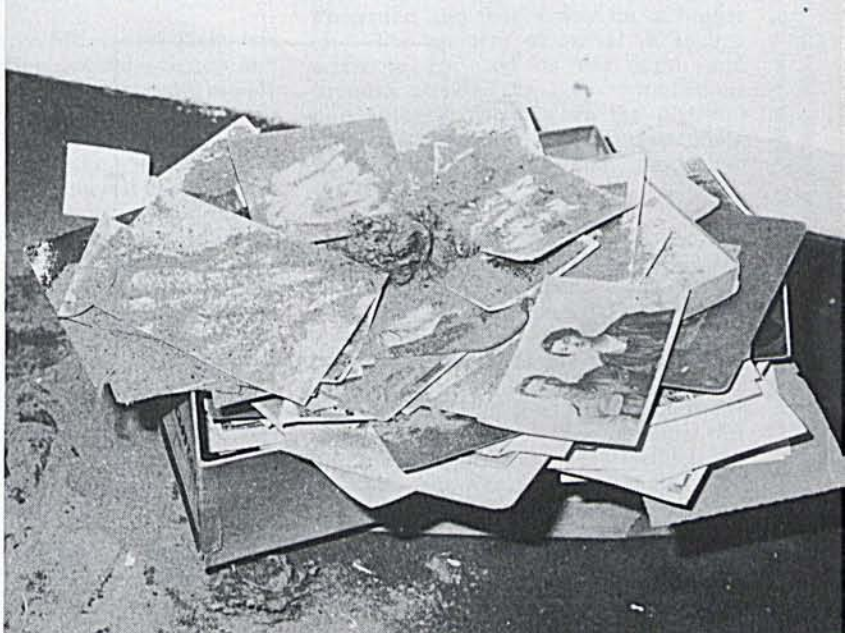
Andrew Smith

Rita Harris "India Box" 1984

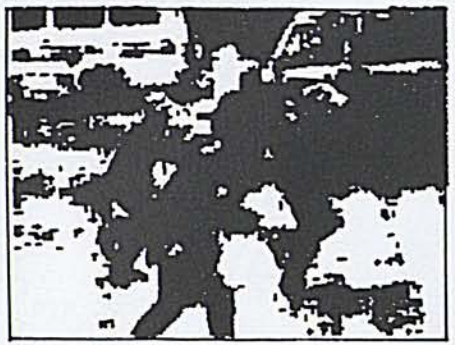


CULBERT, MIKE DAVKIN, RINZO DELATINZI, CLARE DOVE, DEBBIE DUFFIN, O. PALEY, MARK PAWSON, PAUL RAFFTERRY, ELIZABETH RETTIG,

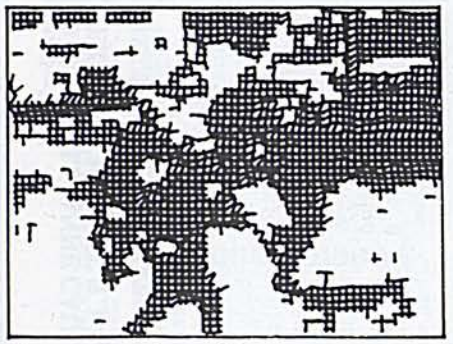
Vikki Hawkins "Bird" 1984



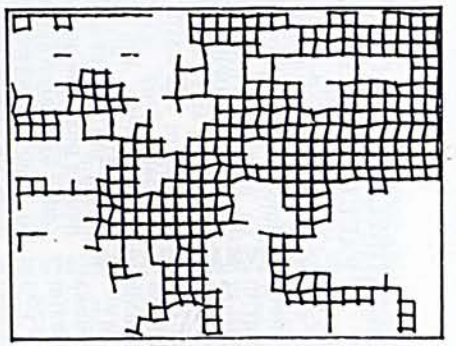
Paul Raftery "Untitled" 1984



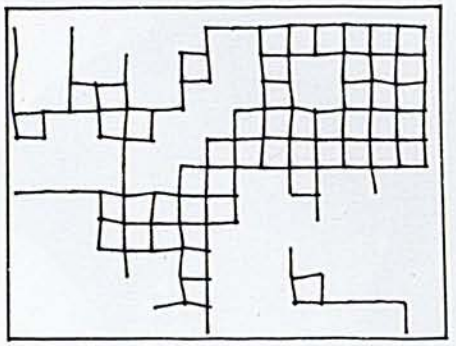
They caught up with one of the lads just outside my front window...



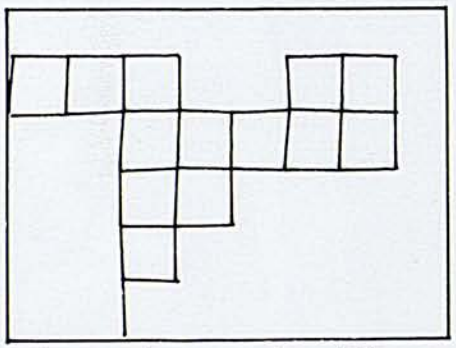
There were six policemen...



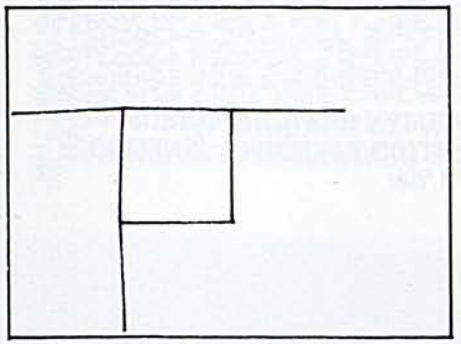
And the lad they were chasing was on the floor...



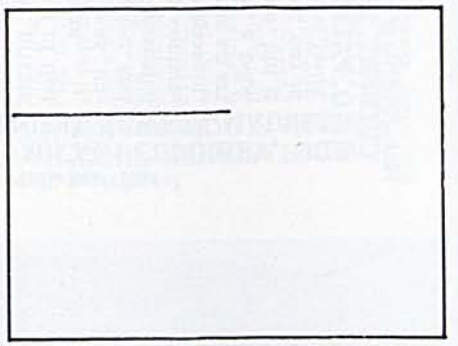
They were knocking hell out of him...



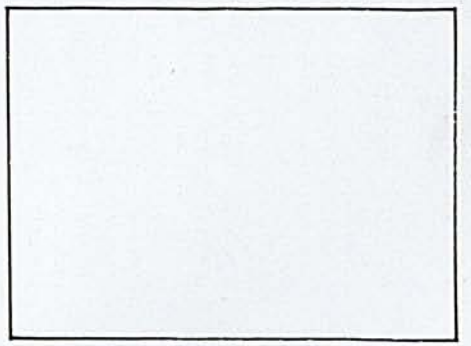
Unless you have experienced it you could not believe it...



I had been watching the telly previous to this and...



I thought the miners were at fault for starting the violence...



I did not believe the police in this country carried on like this.

BR Smith 1985

artoon ©

BRIAN SMITH *His book, "Soft Computing– Art and Design" was recently published by Addison-Wesley. His computer-based art and design works have been shown internationally.*

Photo: Tim Head 1983

The Politics of New Technology

JOHN ROBERTS

THE militarisation of the imagination and our social space has become the dominant vantage point on the new technology. It is difficult not to visualise the new electronic technologies without thinking of an all pervasive network of databases and information centres. The effects of the new technology are seen as ones of threat and subordination: the occupants of a car filed on computer as stolen being stopped and searched, a young boy hypnotised by an arcade computer game, a surveillance camera slowly panning around an office forecourt. Moreover when one extends this to the global control systems of the military and their continuous 99% 'maximum force readiness' (in the jargon of American nuclear defence) the extension of telecommunications becomes inseparable from a state of war. It is not surprising therefore that the new technology has ushered in a widespread technological determinism. In the face of a tightening nuclear state, technology has come to be seen as possessing an inexorable logic all of its own, severing its development from the economic interests it serves.

Since the early fifties capitalism has been restructuring around science and technology. It has done this quite simply because it needs to extract increasing amounts of surplus-value by reducing production costs and the general level of wages. It is this tendency of capitalism to replace living labour with dead labour that has led to the 'rationalisations' of the microchip revolution. Mass unemployment in the West in the '80s has nothing to do with a lack of investment, but on the contrary with a huge investment in new means of production that will increase the industrial reserve army and keep costs down. It is not so much that Britain and other Western countries are being deindustrialised but that rapid technological innovation is automating *all* levels of production. Marx's analysis of this logic of capital still holds good: "When ever a certain stage of maturity has been reached, the specific historical form is discarded and makes way for a higher one. The moment of arrival of such a crisis is disclosed by the depth and breadth attained by the contradictions and antagonisms between the distribution relations...and their corresponding production relations and productive forces".[1]

For Ernest Mandel [2] though, this tendency of late capitalism to accelerate technological innovation leads to a decline in surplus-value. "The mass of surplus-value itself necessarily diminishes as a result of the elimination of living labour from the production process in the course of the final stage of mechanisation-automation".[3] Writing before the full impact of computer technology, Mandel, however, underestimates the massive development of software in the

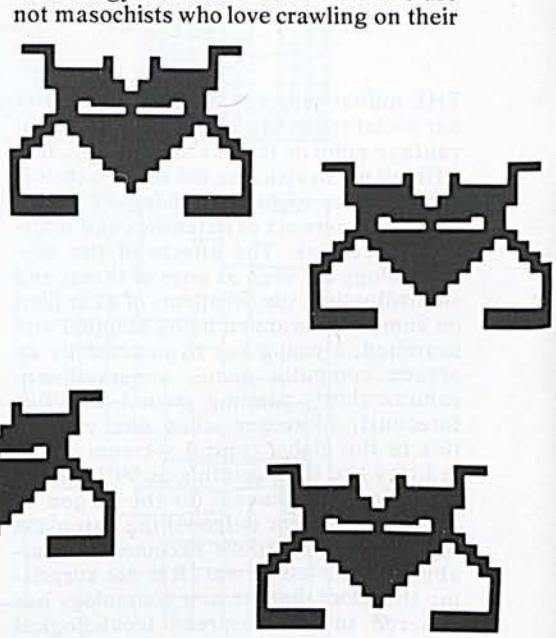
service and supervisory sectors of the economy. For Mandel such a re-deployment of labour had already reached its limits. The late seventies and early eighties has presented another picture: the rapid increase in the use of software in the labour process has shifted the extraction of surplus-value away from the production of goods to the production of innovation of new knowledge for making goods.[4] This is capitalism's new 'lease' of life. But it can only remain a 'lease' of life if technological innovation can be sustained. Thus it is quite possible that not only will we see an increasing extension of this logic into the reign of a new commodity war in the late eighties, but more spectacularly, a new expansion of American capital into 'pure' technological research, perhaps in another extensive space exploration programme. This will become increasingly necessary as a symbolic reassertion of Western vitality. Even though these speculations are the outer limits of what is possible within a limited resource economy, the current exponential growth of knowledge, unprecedented since the height of 19th century competitive capitalism, makes any short term retraction of technological innovation improbable.

One of the most dominant features of this exponential growth of technology in late capitalism is an increased ideological struggle over the so-called advantages of organisation and rationalisation. What we are seeing today in all areas of life, globally, as much as on the home front under Thatcherism, is a strengthening of the power of the State in an attempt to rationalise an increasingly unmanageable market economy.

The current emphasis on efficiency (as much in the miners' struggle as in Sir Keith Joseph's move to Taylorize productivity in the class room) is an attempt to divide and rule ideologically: if the economy is in 'recession' and your job is shown to be under constant threat then — as the conservatives have amply demonstrated — the first thing that can be played on is national interest. Moreover with the introduction of new technology in factories and offices resulting in a separation of workforce from direct control over production, work patterns have been subject to new patterns of control and specialisation. With the introduction of computer technology, management has always fought against the regulation of generalisable work tasks. New skill levels and hierarchies have been introduced in order to implement new wage differentials and thus weaken the collective power of Trade Union organisation. More specifically, though, fragmentation of the labour process, or its re-routinisation, is now made permanently unstable. As Mike Duncan has said, the introduction of microelectronics allows "capital to make the production processes obsolete every four years and therefore decompose the skills of the labour force."[5]

It is therefore very easy to dismiss such notions as 'post-industrialism' and an 'information economy' as the ideological effects of capitalism's fragmentation of production and social consciousness. However, although they are clearly partial descriptions of late capitalism as a whole, they nonetheless pinpoint the profound nature of the social transformations we are now undergoing. If Marx's categories and method still supply the basis for such transformations — capitalisms's tendency to replace lived labour with dead labour — then the language of horsepower and mechanisation in which the motive force of these transformations were expressed has ceased to be adequate. The microtechnical revolution has demanded new conceptions of the social totality, new spatial metaphors for describing the impact of technology. It has been left to writers who, though emerging from the Marxist tradition have set themselves against its productivist and cumulative visions, to articulate this new social space. Jean Baudrillard's notion of social "implosion" (a collapse of use-value) and hyper-reality (a loss of a sense of distance and geographical boundaries under the impact of instantaneous communication), Deleuze and Guattari's notion of social schizophrenia (consumerism's break up of the body into a multitude of desires and functions) and Paul Virilio's dissertations on technology as the history of speed, have all laid emphasis — like Mandel — on the Third Technological Revolution as the most motile and mesmerizing form of 20th century capitalism. But unlike Mandel all could be accused of fetishising the dominance of technology, as, in a perverse way, like the early modernists, celebrating it as something irredeemably doomed. There is little sense in their writings that the function and development of technology can be socialised. But all the same what is important about their speculations and metaphoric flights of fancy is that they have given vivid shape to the emergence of the ideological function of the new technology, to the Taylorisation and homogenisation of *all* areas of life. Essentially what their metaphors of collapse have articulated is the increased integrative function of technology in our society. The fact that the development of the arms race through the new technology is not some technological anomaly but part of the same logic that governs the expansion of technology in all areas of the economy. But what remains problematic in the end about their analysis of this integration between the civil and the military is their overt determinism, their refusal to historicise these conditions in any way that would make them seem challengeable.

For Marx, though, technology lay at the heart of any emancipatory politics. In fact it is quite possible to read CAPITAL as a study of the social dynamism of technological change. Marx never acquiesced in front of the collective social development of technology as the basis upon which men and women would be liberated from unnecessary labour. However, technology for Marx was not going to free us from *all* labour (a technologist fantasy that is regularly employed by conservative futurists as a sop to the unemployed) but free us from socially necessary labour in order that we might develop all our capacities and capabilities. It is important therefore to separate out technological 'progress' in the specific (the fact that whereas one million years ago a single acre of land could support only one person, today with the aid of fertilizers and machinery it can support 10,000) and technological 'progress' in the abstract (we are all better off). Clearly the latter — for the majority of the world — is obscenely untrue. The first material definition of progress though tends to be substituted for the political realities of the second definition. Defining the word progress must be a political priority that is rooted in an analysis of technology and science as part of the class struggle. Technology — its applications, its definitions — has to be fought over. The miners' struggle is perhaps the single most important struggle around this issue in post-war British politics. Their struggle is not just about defending communities, or about the right to determine what an uneconomic pit means, but for the right of workers to have direct — and collective — control over the means of production, which with the increasing introduction of MINOS (Mine Operating System) into the pits, is putting in jeopardy. Increasingly, production decisions are switched from the coal face to the mangement on the surface. Whatever the outcome of the struggle, the fight against all closures should not be seen as a struggle against technology in the abstract — miners are not masochists who love crawling on their



knees in the wet and the cold — but for the re-assessment of its place at all levels within the production process. Then the recomposition of skills, of duty rosters, of what it means to have a full-time waged job in a collapsing market economy with high unemployment can begin.

It therefore must be on the basis of a new politics of time (across the home as much as the workplace) that a new politics will be built in the face of the onslaught of the new technology. With or without an upturn in the economy the possibility of full-time waged employment for all in an age of collapsed craft skills and saturated markets is a chimera. Andre Gorz has rightly singled this out as the central issue that faces the labour movement. As he says in his new book PATHS TO PARADISE[6] there can no longer be any long term solution to needs through increased individual consumption of goods and services. The crisis in productivism has merely been arrested by the microtechnological breakthrough. A radical re-structuring of work is not just an economic necessity but a political and moral one.

For Gorz the right to a job and the right to a wage have been confused for a long time. The maintenance of full-time waged work as the norm within industrial capitalism is to maintain the relations of domination based on the work ethic. This can only lead to a dualistic division between the active and non-active members of society, the former acting as a repository of industrialism's traditional values. The new technology simply hides this problem by treating the fundamental asymmetry between waged and unwaged labour under late capitalism as a market variable. For Gorz therefore the direct socialisation of production in any feasible socialist economy must begin with the realities of the new technology. It should not be hypothesising about a break with technology as a break with capital but using technology to break with capital. As he says: "if society does not use microelectronics to extend the spheres of autonomy and self-management and thus to overcome the crisis by breaking with capitalism, then capitalism itself will 'spontaneously' turn towards a new form of industrialisation which...will mark the final triumph of the reign of commodities".[7] Clearly the choice now between mass immiseration under the technological heights of a perpetual innovation economy and the social development of technology under a socialist economy is starker than ever.

Gorz's vision of this future is specific and compelling. The left must take up the initiative on the new technology. It must move it away from its market rationalisation by the new right by emphasising its possible socially directed use, both in standardising and simplifying tasks in the workplace (instead of splitting them up into a multitude of different systems and specialisms) and in the economy as a whole (extension of local production, decentralisation of decision making processes) and in terms of extended self-autonomy and social interaction (work-sharing, networks of self-help). A politics of time therefore will give everyone access to a job at the expense of the sectional interests and careers of those in full-time employment.

The obvious question though is how will this programme of emancipation be integrated into some broader set of political strategies against the capitalist State? That social costs be seen as an integral part of production costs is the basis of any socialist strategy but it is necessary that this *removes* power from individuals and institutions as much as redistribute it.

This is something Gorz's book doesn't discuss: the "social and political project"[8] necessary for the implementation of what amounts to a total reconstruction of patterns of production and consumption under late capitalism is under theorized at the expense of the realisation that computer technology can put us all in reach of self-management.

However, Gorz has set the agenda for politics and technology in the eighties. The social and economic benefits of network technology are vast: computer conferencing (now widely used in America), the elimination of commuting and thus a saving in energy through the increased use of computers at home rather than in the workplace, the diffusion and decentralisation of responsibility and democratic exchange of ideas through instant access to information. These are benefits that are hard to argue against. But something Gorz does not address is the net effect of such a huge explosion in the exchange of information. There is an assumption that the de-centralisation of forms of communication will lead naturally to an increase in the 'quality' of social relations. The introduction of interactive technology into the workplace and the home may put us in reach of a liberation from alienated labour and facilitate common provision of all necessary common services but what effect will this have on the quality of human relations? The problems of people losing the ability or inclination to communicate and voluntarily associate with each other face to face will be no less evident under an economy in which technology is directly socialised. In what ways will we be protected from the increase in the amount of information we will generate and have to deal with? There is an assumption that an increase in access to information leads to an increased control over one's life. This is not necessarily so. Too much information can lead to a decrease in the ability to make quick and decisive decisions. Is the future we want as one recently described by Jacque Vallee? A future in which "every house was wired to every other house through computers and hierarchies of computers. In which a mini-machine watched energy use in the apartment and talked to the machine running environmental controls for the whole block, which was, in turn, wired to the computer regulating the whole city. In which there were cable networks for two-way interaction with the news organisations, and in which you could obtain profiles of people you had never seen, that would tell you if they wanted to play bridge or talk about sadism or ghosts or trade stamps."[9]

In the face of an expanded 'post-industrialism', therefore, the struggle for democratic control and development of technology must be based on a recognition that even socialised technology is no substitute for affective human relations. At the same time as we ask technology to free us from alienated labour we should also recognise that in the interests of 'existential autonomy'[10] it should not be allowed to perform certain tasks. The direct socialisation of production should offer us both access to and protection from technology.

NOTES.

1. CAPITAL Vol. 3, Moscow 1959, p.861.
2. Verso 1978.
3. Ibid p.207.
4. See 'Robots and Capitalism', Tessa Morris-Suzuki, NEW LEFT REVIEW 147 for a discussion of this.
5. 'Microelectronics: Five Areas of Subordination' in SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND THE LABOUR PROCESS: Marxist Studies Volume 1, edited by Les Levidow and Bob Young, CSE Books 1981.
6. Pluto Press 1985.
7. Ibid p.24.
8. Ibid p.40.
9. THE NETWORK REVOLUTION, CONFESSIONS OF A COMPUTER SCIENTIST Penguin 1984.
10. PATHWAYS TO PARADISE.

John Roberts writes for a number of magazines including Art Monthly, Art in America, City Limits. He is currently writing a book on politics, art and modernity.

Tim Head and the Social Space of Sculpture

Tim Head "The Tyranny of Reason" Installation (ICA 1985) Photo: Stephen White

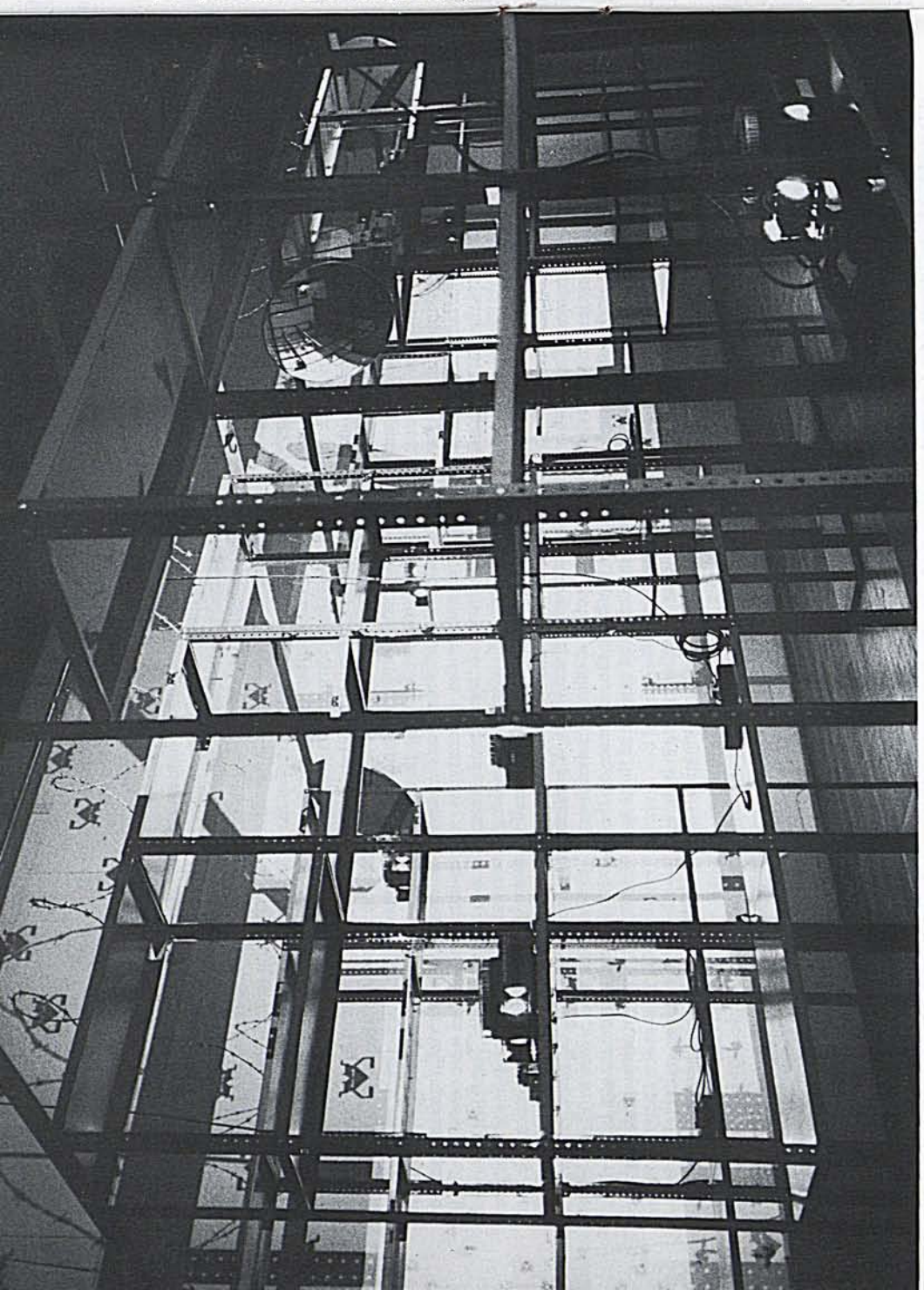
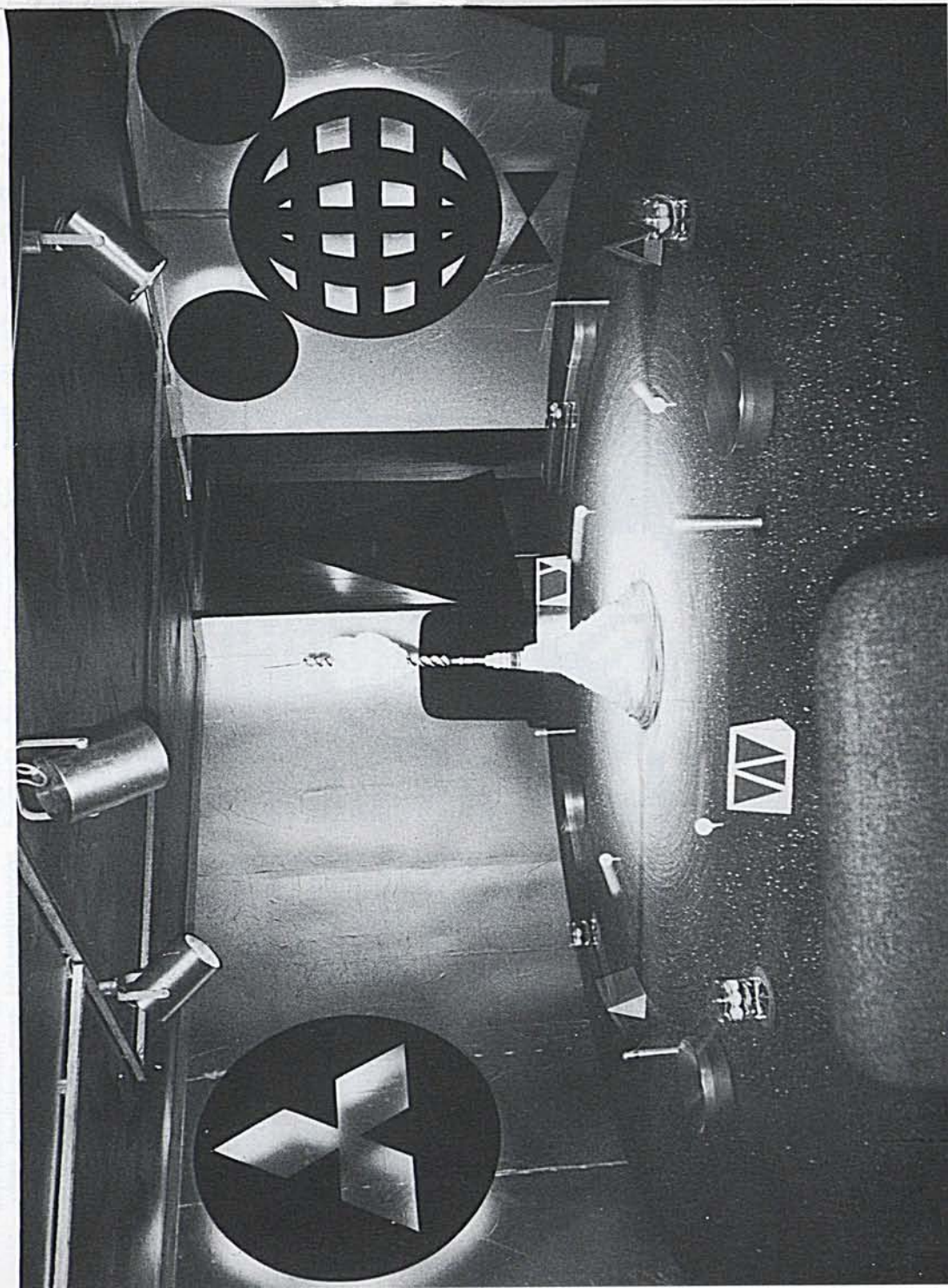
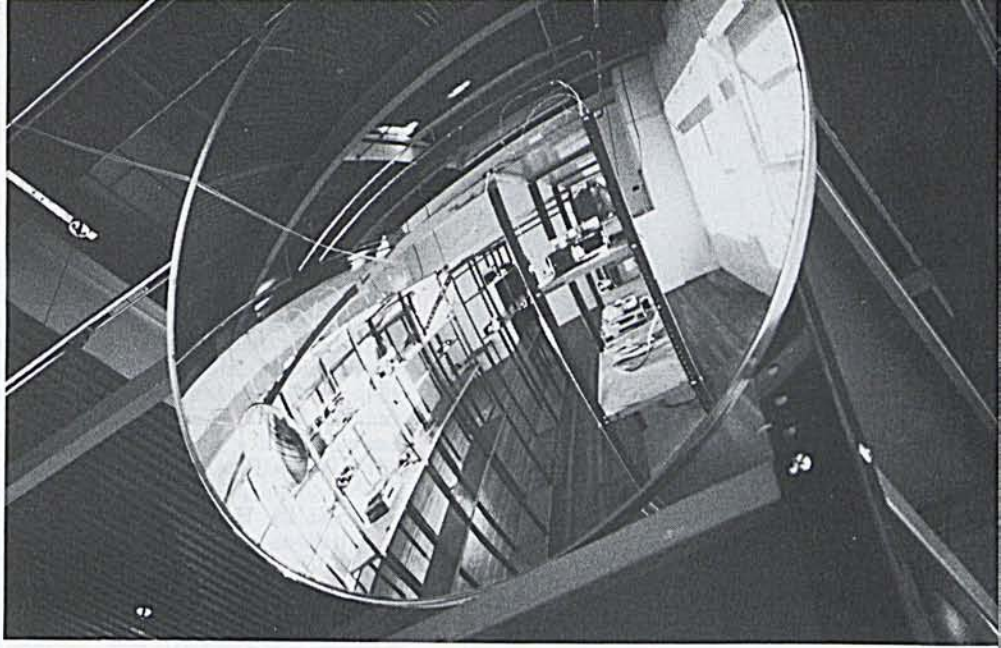


Photo: Stephen White Tim Head: "Power Pyramids in Executive Circles" Installation (ICA 1985)



JOHN ROBERTS

Tim Head and the Social Space of Sculpture



Tim Head "The Tyranny of Reason" Installation (detail) Photo: Stephen White

THE switch that occured within minimalism from the representation of the human figure to the architectural grouping of objects and the acknowledgement of the presence of the spectator could be said to be the basis of a whole new paradigm shift in sculpture. By moving away from traditional techniques of casting and carving to the construction of environments or tableaux from pre-fabricated elements, a whole new social space and social knowledge for sculpture was opened up. However, despite the success of a Bill Woodrow and a Tony Cragg, this new social space for sculpture has been far from the dominant concerns of recent discussions around the so-called revival of sculpture. One might even go so far as to say there has been a backlash against the notion of extended or contextual work. The installation-based work has been something that continues to be considered a poor relation to 'proper sculpture'; a hierarchy of values still exists in which meaning extracted from the crafting of form is held to be qualitatively better than meaning extracted from the presentation of form. The former it is argued draws on the powers of the imagination, the latter merely the mechanics of technique. Such prejudice is not surprising given that the current market climate allows so little ideological leeway for experimental work.

But even so, the idea of sculpture as an area where an extended field of reference and media can come into play continues to offer the richest possibility for a non-reductive and socially engaged practice. What needs to be emphasised though is not that a multiplicity of resources and materials will generate an aesthetically richer and more popular art, but that a multiplicity of resources and materials will offer us a greater knowledge-base in which to deal with the world. The problem with much recent sculpture is that it has only been concerned with the former.

Sculpture as a space of knowledge therefore offers something more than an awakened sense of formal innovation or novelty or release from the proprieties of modernism, rather it engages with the object directly as part of a set of wider social and political relations and realities.

Within the British context I would not only put the early installations of Woodrow and Cragg in this category, but Denis Masi, Stuart Brisley, Susan Hiller and recently the ambitious work of Tim Head. Like the others, Head lays specific emphasis on the re-contextualisation of objects and images as means of picturing the deeper political and social relations and structures which govern them. Woodrow and Cragg may have done it somewhat differently — they are far more concerned with the irony and humour of such an encounter — but the underlying principle remains the same: sculpture operates best when it extends its language and field of reference into the realm of social anthropology, to those objects we encounter on a daily basis.

In Tim Head's ICA installations THE TYRANNY OF REASON and POWER PYRAMIDS IN EXECUTIVE CIRCLES this encounter is concerned no less with the whole experience and logic of culture that rationalises its profound sense of political crisis by turning towards the nostrums of technology. Using a battery of technological and industrial hardware and the projection of various corporate insignia and symbols Head stages the disjunction between technology and the political 'reason' it serves and the reality of a late capitalism systematising itself to death. It is the elaborate concealment of this crisis that fascinates Head; not in direct ideological terms but in terms of our unconscious complicity. What Head's two installations are principally about is how capitalism integrates us as consumers into technology's means-ends rationale by separating the form of technology from its political conditions. For example, the computer game being enjoyed by an unemployed youth uses the same technology that may be preventing him from finding work, just as the technology that supplies us with our supermarket check out bill is the same technology that operates Cruise. It is this total systematisation of the new technology into our life world that concerns Head, the fact that the abuses of high technology are made benign by the benefits we accrue from its day-to-day use.

The Americans called the introduction of new technology into the military in Vietnam the beginning of the 'Electronic Battlefield'. This they believed would rationalise and tidy up modern warfare. The hardware and software in TYRANNY OF REASON with its profusion of wires and symbols, gives us a similar picture of computer technology powerfully linked in the name of a 'higher' reason to the eradication of human error and unpredictability. However, as an artist, what interests Head specifically about this increased regulation of social patterns are the visual forms it takes. Much has been written about corporate culture and the interchangeability of its forms. The airport lounge in Wisconsin is the hypermarket in Croydon which is the executive suite in Berlin. A similar sense of abbreviation is happening in Head's installation POWER PYRAMIDS IN EXECUTIVE CIRCLES. The high back black leather swivel chairs, glass tumblers, circular ash trays, rubber mats, golfballs and tees, plastic plants, mirrors and video game joysticks, all convey a strongly familiar sense of non-conviviality and standardisation. But for Head this sense of uneasiness is tied directly to the quality of the decisions and human relations that such a scene presupposes. If the furniture and artefacts of this scenario are obviously ersatz then it is an ersatzness based on the privileging of masculine calculation (power politics) above social costs. What has become so chilling about such a logic for Head — hence the low-key almost inviting quality of the installation — is that it appears so reasonable. The totemic and vertically controlled world being built for us by the new technology is purely a formal difficulty in face of the advantages of 'easy access' and 'increased leisure time'.

Head's two installations — the latter being the 'humanised' expression of the former — are in essence an attempt to highlight the aesthetic and moral depthlessness of this world of collapsed use-values and market rationalisations. This, however, does not mean that Head is indulging in some 'high tech paranoia' but rather, that the form of life and politics we may believe we're moving towards is, he is saying, nearer than we think.

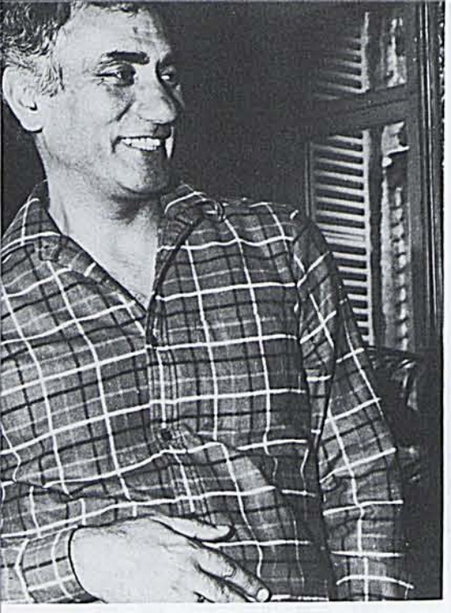
John Roberts

Tim Head "The Tyranny of Reason" Installation (ICA 1985) Photo: Stephen White

Photo: Stephen White Tim Head: "Power Pyramids in Executive Circles" Installation (ICA 1985)

Yilmaz Guney and the Cinema in Turkey.

Translated by Kathy McKenzie



Yilmaz Guney: 1937-1984

ALTINTAS

Introduction to Turkish Cinema.

From 1960 until today there have been many important changes in Turkish film-making. It is therefore worthwhile to look at the background of Turkish cinema preceding the military intervention of 1960.

Film activities were first introduced into Turkey by foreign film-makers during the Ottoman Empire, around 1895, in the form of documentaries. Georges Sadoul mentions in his books that the Lumiere brothers' technicians, during excursions to make films in Czarist Russia, travelled via Istanbul and shot film for their archives. Although none of these films are to be found in Turkey, it is known that the first films were shown to Sultan Hamid in 1896; a year later, films received their first public showing at the Sponeck salon in Istanbul.

The Turkish film industry eventually emerged in 1914 with Fuat Uzkinay's 105' documentary showing the demolition of a Russian monument near Istanbul. In 1915, War Minister Enver Pasa gave orders to set up the Central Army Film Department and invited Sigmund Weinberg to be its director. During Weinberg's directorship, two feature films were produced (1917-19).

From the early '20s, films were being made entirely by Turkish crews, actors and technicians and the cinema was dominated by Muhsin Ertugrul, a Turkish theatre director who had gained experience of film-making in Germany and Russia. He was eventually responsible for introducing the first *'talkies'* into Turkey, in 1931, and the first colour films, in 1953.

After 1948, the film industry was encouraged to expand its production through central government's various tax concessions, although most of the storylines either concerned themselves with the national struggle after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, or were lighthearted semi-musicals — an antidote to nationalistic heroicism.

The 1950s saw the emergence of a group of young, energetic film-makers who started to make more cinematic, as opposed to theatrical films. For instance, Lutfi Omer Akad's "KANUN NAMINA" ("In the Name of the Law"), 1952, which recalls Marcel Carne's "Le Jour se Leve"; and again, his "BEYAZ MENDIL" ("The White Handkerchief"), 1955. Also Metin Erksan's "ASIK VEYSEL'IN HAYATI" ("The Life of Troubadour Veysel") 1952, and "DOKUZ DAG'IN EFSANESI" ("The Fugitive of Nine Mountains") 1958 and Atif Yilmaz's "YASAMAK HAKKIMDIR" ("The Right to Live") 1958. All these films were seen as exemplary and influenced the direction of films made after the Military Intervention of 1960. Nevertheless, it must be added that along side this, the Turkish Film Industry had been heavily influenced by US political strategies, for after the Korean War (1951-2, in which Turkey was an ally), the US Military and Cultural input was stepped up via the establishment of the US Peace Corps. The US News Agency which was set up in Ankara not only saturated but controlled the film market with Hollywood imports.

The constitutional changes which occurred in 1960 did bring relief to most cultural activities, and after this time approximately 200 films were being made annually, although most were of a low quality, both aesthetically and intellectually.

The feeling of a new social freedom marked the decade 1960-70 and stimulated new attitudes in cultural and cinematic activity, yet like all things it came to an end with yet another military intervention on March 12th 1970. Unfortunately, this particular take-over suppressed all progressive and revolutionary movements and automatically had an appalling effect on the film industry, which now began to churn out Turkish *"Spaghetti Westerns"*, heavy *"porn"* and light *"musicals"*...

Alternative Turkish Cinema and Yilmaz Guney.

Yilmaz Guney emerged as an actor from a background of over 70 *"ham movies"*, in which he was generally cast as the moody but angry young man who everyone loved, and made his mark as an actor/director after two specific films: "SEYYIT HAN", 1968 and "UMUT" ("Hope"), 1970.

"SEYYIT HAN"
Seyyit Han (Yilmaz Guney) is proud but poor. He loves a village girl and she loves him, but he does not want to marry before leaving the village to seek his fortune and he is away for years.

Meanwhile, a rich man from the village wants to marry the girl. Her brother, attracted by the proposed relationship with the rich, makes her believe that Seyyit is dead, so destroying her resistance. A grand wedding is organised, but during the ceremony Seyyit returns. Finding out that she has been betrayed, the bride rejects her new husband.

A shooting match is arranged between the two men, but Seyyit doesn't know that behind the target, a daisy on an overturned basket, is the bride, buried up to her neck in the ground. When he hits the flower, he kills his love. (The subtitle of the film is "TOPRAGIN GELINI" — "Bride of the Earth"). When he has realised what has happened and given the tragic victim a more appropriate burial, he walks in to the village and wipes out the rich man and his gang in true Western style.

"UMUT".
Cabbar is the driver of a run-down carriage taxi in Adana. Customers don't favour him and he only keeps his hope alive by buying tickets in the National Lottery.

One day a car kills one of his two horses while he has stopped for cigarettes: the police listen to the blustering of the car-driver and not to him. but without the second horse, Cabbar cannot run his carriage at all, so he goes to try and borrow money from a former employer. He gets none and merely ends up shovelling sand by the river.

He decides to sell his household goods to raise money for the new horse, but while he has been away, his creditors have come to claim his carriage: he cannot imagine another way of life as suggested in the carriage-drivers' demonstration or in his wife's urging him to sell the carriage. Instead he prefers to listen to the quick money schemes of his friend Hasan. Together they fail miserably as muggers and eventually Cabbar is persuaded to give up his last money on an expedition to find buried treasure. The futility of this everlasting hope is expressed by the last shot of Cabbar blindfolded and turning in circles.

As an actor/director/producer and script-writer, he went on to make "AGIT" ("Elegy"), released in 1971; "ACI" ("Pain"), 1971; "UMUTSUZLAR" ("The Hopeless Ones"), 1971; and "BABA" ("Father"), 1971.

Although he used the usual melodramatic Turkish cinematic themes he expressed them with a new sensitivity in both form and imagery and quickly gained the support of the public; the open air cinemas in summer as well as the indoor cinemas in winter were packed with emotional audiences. Yet with the onslaught of the military regime in 1970 he was immediately arrested and accused of *"harbouring left-wing terrorists"* and of *"giving them financial support"*. He wasn't, however, alone: thousands of others, intellectuals, workers, students, etc., were interned at that time too.

In 1973, with a *"return to democracy"* and an elected government, he was finally freed from prison under the general amnesty. Immediately he made a powerful come-back in the cinematic world with his film "ARKADAS" ("Friend"), 1974.

"ARKADAS"
A mysterious friend (played by Guney) visits a rich man in his desirable Istanbul apartment. The friend, Azem, soon discovers that the rich man, Cemil, has lost the idealism of their student days together and tension mounts as Azem's actions reject the manners of the bourgeois. He spends his time talking to poor working people; he introduces a local youth to consciousness-raising books and so saves his soul from negativism; he attracts Cemil's daughter into interest in the same subjects through his rugged appeal and committed integrity; he refuses to be seduced by Cemil's wife, though he knowsshe has a lover and though he's not averse to visiting an attractive neighbour. But his main assault is on Cemil, whom he takes to the country to reintroduce to the real life, even while suggesting that Cemil has irrevocably lost it. And the revelation of his wife's infidelity is the final blow with which he attempts to bring Cemil back to his true senses.

The weight of the word "ARKADAS" in this context is the same as that of 'Comrade' in English.

Subsequently, during the making of the film "ENDISE" ("Anxiety"), 1974, in the small town of Yumurtalik in the Adana area of South Eastern Turkey, Yilmaz Guney and his film crew were confronted and disrupted by the town prosecutor, who was extremely drunk, and during the ensuing argument the prosecutor was shot. Yilmaz Guney was immediately arrested and although his bodyguard (who was also his cousin) admitted to the killing, it was Guney who was accused of the murder and sentenced to 19 years imprisonment. He was first sent to prison in Isparta and later transferred to the prison on the island of Imrali in the Marmara Sea (briefly shown in his film "YOL"). The film "ENDISE" was, however, completed by Guney's editor, Serif Goren. Guney's political message to the people emerges most clearly in the didactic and blunt approach of this film.

"ENDISE"
Cevher is a seasonal worker from a nomadic, Kurdish tribe. He is also the victim-designate of a blood-feud: according to the law of the clan, the offended family has the right to kill the head of the offending family.

The possibility of transmuting the blood-debt into financial debt is discussed and 15,000 Lira compensation is agreed. Since Cevher has no money, his only chance of raising the cash seems to lie in picking cotton.

The landowner is prepared to advance the money, but has no direct contact with the peasants, so opening the way for the schemes of his administrator. This character wants to employ Cevher's daughter, Beyaz, as a maid and when Cevher refuses this as shameful, he offers 15,000 Lira for her. This seems too little to Cevher.

Meanwhile, Beyaz falls in love with another cotton-picker, Sino; the plantation owners are waiting for the official rates before deciding how to assess the pickers' wages; and the local union is organising a strike to protest against such uncertain conditions.

Cevher's trouble deepens. The administrator doesn't raise his offer and the payment day for the blood-debt approaches. Although it is made clear to him that there is no long-term solution to his problems except in acts of solidarity, fear forces him to break his strike and spend day and night picking cotton. Finally, the administrator raises his offer, but too late: Beyaz and Sino have run off to town. Now Cevher can only wait for the vendetta to take its course.

During Guney's imprisonment, Turkish film output remained saturated with low quality *"pornographic"*, *"melodramatic"*, *"semi-musical"* brain-wash.

With a lack of economic support added to the heavy censoring of films, as well as industrial *"lock-outs"*, an industrial crisis emerged. All the employees in the film industry reacted with a mass demonstration and marched from Istanbul to Ankara (1977) to protest against the obsessive State censorship and *"star"*/producer dictatorship which was rife within the industry. The march was also strongly supported and joined by writers, artists, intellectuals, etc., and through this demands were made that the government pass new legislation to improve the cinema industry.

During these crises new film-makers emerged, one of them being Yavuz Ozkan, an ex-miner, who made the film "MADEN" ("Coal Mine"), 1977. This film brought a gust of fresh air into the industry, for apart from the subject matter and filmic style, the film was made with the close cooperation of the Workers' Union.

"MADEN" — using a semi-epic and semi-didactic style the film shows the mineworkers' working conditions and their efforts towards unionisation. Because of its subject matter and filmic structure, "MADEN" was accepted as the first *"militant"* film, even with the disadvantage of having resorted or conformed to *"box-office appeal"* methods in the use of a *"star"* actor, Cuneyt Arkin (who acts in anything and everything — even as a fat-bellied "SUPERMAN"). Yilmaz Guney managed to eliminate most of the restricting problems such as script-writers, "star" actors, economic pressures, etc., by personally taking on all these diverse roles. The only insoluble problem was that of the constant shadow of the State Censor.

During the second half of the 1970s, other film-makers in Turkey began to follow Guney's example in technique and attitude and a new filmic style began to emerge:—

"FIRAT' IN CINLERI ("The Genies of the Euphrates") KORHAN YURTSEVER.

"KANAL" ("The Canal") ERDEN KIRAL.

"YUSUF ILE KENAN" OMER KAVUR

"HAZAL" ALI OZGENTURK:

All these films brought a new and alternative economic dynamism into the Turkish cinema. These films were produced during the years 1975 onwards, when the Turkish National Front coalition government was in power, which openly supported the right wing, fascist terrorism that was rife against the workers' unions, university students, intellectuals, publishers, theatres, cinemas, and the media industries. Whilst these films were being made and during their showing at cinemas throughout the country, many fascist armed attacks occurred; although the government chose to turn a blind-eye the cinema audiences continued to watch these films, even under their own organised protection.

During Yilmaz Guney's third and final term of imprisonment, he continued to prepare several film scripts and due to his *"restricted"* conditions developed a very personalised style of film-making:

"SURU" ("Herd").

"DUSMAN" ("Enemy").

"YOL" ("The Way").

were all made during this time, and it was at this point that yet another military coup took place, on September 12th 1980. The social unrest of the '70s had made way for military intervention, the justification for which was said to be *"averting possible civil war"*, even though more than 14 major towns and cities were already subjected to martial law. Following this, all political parties were closed, all party leaders were imprisoned (along with thousands of others), all workers' unions were shut down, Universities and all non-political organisations ceased activity. Everything stopped, everything was restricted. Everywhere was under curfew, everyone was under the threat of imprisonment, everything was silenced.

Economically the country was bankrupt, the debts to the IMF were unpaid and this was followed by the financial collapse of several banks.

The film industry, the media and the arts were immediately, severely restricted. Radio and TV were under the direct control of the National Security Council. From these impossible conditions there was a mass exodus of artists, workers, intellectuals and politically active people, who had no choice other than to leave the country. In October 1981, Guney escaped from prison and, coincidentally, the negative of "YOL" were smuggled out of Turkey at the same time.

Yilmaz Guney's Concept of Cinema: Ideology and Film Aesthetic.

In the technology of film the two central activities of *"taking"* and *"showing"* are interspersed with both chemical and physical interference. A person who has an acute awareness of the tools of recording his physical and social environment, alongside the way in which this gathered information is represented, ultimately exposes a personal ideology. This is because the manner in which the selected images are recorded and the way the images are organised and joined show how the ideology is constructed. The technique of film gains its power through the masses, who retain endless images in their mind. The technical procedure of editing creates new insights and codes of understanding and distribution to the masses.

Yilmaz Guney had worked in every area of the film industry, starting from his work on the sets, and therefore had acquired an awareness of the process of cinematic dialectic, as briefly described above. The question now arises: how is it that Yilmaz Guney possessed such a special understanding of cinema in a country where that very same highly productive industry managed to produce an excess of banal films?

Coming from a background of poverty he was born in 1937, as Yilmaz Putun, the sixth child in a Kurdish family which lived in the village of Yenice, Adana. He eventually studied in the Faculty of Economics at Istanbul University and found his way into the film industry. His first acting role as Yilmaz Guney was in "BU VATAN'IN COCUKLARI" ("This Country's Children"), 1957. Alongside his developing career in the film industry, he was in the midst of the sharply contrasting social conditions of Istanbul. On the one hand was a newly emerging, ignorant and distorted petit bourgeoisie, and on the other, the poverty of the shanty towns on the outskirts of the city, and of their displaced inhabitants. Added to this the country's continuing political, social and economic crises greatly influenced the development of his character.

In his earlier career he became a *"star"* in the film galaxy and was a much-loved hero with the title *"King of the Uglies"* (Cirkin Kral — following his role in a film of the same name, 1966), in spite of the poor quality of many of the

Released by BFI.

"Suru" (The Herd) 1978/9 Dir: Zeki Okten. Script: Yilmaz Guney. 129 mins.

"SURU".
The men of a nomadic Kurdish tribe set out to take their flock of sheep to Ankara. Most have already been sold to a dealer and the rest will bring in vital money for the following winter. The nomadic way of life is being severely squeezed by agriculture and survival is in the balance. With the men goes Berivan, Sivan's wife. She is very ill and this causes deep discord between Sivan and his patriarchal father, as between this clan and her own.

On the way, disaster follows disaster as sheep are lost through bribery, DDT poisoning and theft. One of the brothers, an epileptic, is trampled by the stampeding flock when they are frightened by gunfire.

Worse is to follow in Ankara, where their passage to the market is in stark contrast to the bustle of the modern city. They will obviously not get enough for their under-nourished sheep to last the whole clan through the winter and Sivan's father is reluctant to give him the money he had promised to care for Berivan. Anyway, her torment is beyond the possibility of description to an unsympathetic, male doctor and she dies in silence. Sivan, distraught and outraged by his experience of inhuman indifference and exploitation, strangles the sheep-dealer and is dragged away.

Then the last blow to the patriarch falls as his youngest son, Silo, dazzled by the women and the modern city style, disappears in the crowd. The old man is left bewildered and alone in the centre of the alien city: his world has vanished.

films. His development in the '70s sharply contrasts with this earlier career: in his days of *"stardom"*, his portrait would fill two-thirds of the screen, but this *"over-exposure"* finally gave way, in his own films, to a concentration on images of the oppressed people's suffering.

With the political relaxation of the 1960s, Yilmaz Guney had formed links with intellectuals in political circles, and although his scripts and stories of the late '60s were in the usual melodramatic style they nonetheless contained a social realism. With this political and intellectual awareness linked with the advantage of cinematic experience (plus an accumulation of finance through stardom), he was able to stand independently as a filmmaker. Yilmaz Guney had arrived.

From the film "SEYYIT HAN", 1968, he drew a great deal of attention, as director and actor, as well as heavy criticism.

After making this film, he was called up to military service for two years. Immediately after his release from conscription, in 1970, he made the film "UMUT".

"UMUT" heralds a new era in the history of Turkish cinema: "Le Canard Enchaine", Paris, wrote about *"the frightening hope of suffering people"* — Elia Kazan said *"the director's way of looking at individuals and at people, is so real and complete."*

In "UMUT", we are able to observe how Guney looks at life in a social realist manner. The theme, scenery and people, which are portrayed, are so true that it is difficult to distinguish them from reality itself. At the end of the film the principle character turns in the manner reminiscent of the *"Whirling Dervishes"* although in reality this image is seen to represent the people's rising up against their position of hopelessness. Another interesting aspect of this film is how the audience is *moved away* from a weepy and emotionally pacifying character. In his other films following "UMUT":— "AGIT", "ACI", "UMUTSUZLAR", "BABA", "ARKADAS", he tried to *"stabilise"* lyrical emotionalism. In the meantime he was proposing that scriptwriters/directors should return to their own cultural resources. As I have previously mentioned, the majority of films made by the Turkish film industry were in the genre of Hollywood melodrama. Moreover, to enable a rapid turnover of cheap films, no *"studio proper"* set ups had been developed. Instead, the impressive private houses of the nouveaux riches were hired for the indoor shots (where the theme of rich boy/poor girl predominated) and the rest were filmed on location in the streets of rich neighbourhoods.

The new directors who emerged during the heyday of the '60s were greatly influenced by Italian Neo-Realism, and were encouraged to look more closely at their surrounding social conditions. Their films were now entirely shot on location, in the towns and villages outside Istanbul. This however, hindered the development of *"on-set"* filming ability.

The finished film is a reflection of the co-ordination of scriptwriter, director of photography and the set designer's input. Films which rely solely on their natural setting (on location) may be interesting but are in danger of becoming mannerist if not combined with a strong script as catalyst. For instance, when a social-realism is created by using real people within their own natural and social surrounding, films can be strikingly lyrical.

Yilmaz Guney attempts to use all the natural resources in the best way. He recalls the images of his youth and combines them with his developed sense of populist militancy.

Guney did not exactly languish during his imprisonment from 1974-81. In all, he produced five screenplays, two novels, three novellas, several children's stories and collections of social essays. The scripts for the films "SURU", "DUSMAN" and "YOL" were inspired by his novels, entitled *"Tales for my son"* (Oglum'a masallar), *"Stove"* (Soba), *"The Window-pane"* (Pencere Cami) and *"We Want Bread"* (Ekmek Istiyoruz). His films were therefore the result of a synthesis of his deep experiences in life put forward in these books. He wrote the scripts with the intention of directing them as films, although they were finally and very successfully directed on his behalf by Zeki Okten and Serif Goren, and became reputed world-wide. He was, however, able to edit "YOL" himself, paring down the 13 hours of footage to the present length of 111 minutes. Commenting on the urgency and pace of the editing style in "YOL", Guney said, *"life at the moment doesn't really give them time to catch their breath. It races them along."*

Another crucial stage in Guney's career came when he had to work outside Turkey. Following the successes of "SURU" and "YOL" (the former received awards at the Locarno Film Festival and from the British Film Institute; the latter won the Golden Palm at Cannes) he was eager to return to film-making, especially after having been imprisoned for 7 years. With the artistic and financial success of these last two films alongside attractive proposals and offers from other producers, as well as ideological and financial support offered to him by the French Ministry of Culture, he was eager to reflect without further delay the conditions currently existing in his homeland: Turkey. The result was the film "DUVAR", ("The Wall"), 1983. This film was made entirely in France, where he had been granted the *"security"* of political asylum.

"Duvar" (The Wall) 1983 Dir/Script Yilmaz Guney 117 mins. Released by Contemporary Films Ltd.

"DUVAR".

In a Turkish prison there is birth, marriage and death — none of them natural. Guards jog outside, political prisoners jog inside; there are women and particularly children.

One day the Director General of Prisons makes a tour of inspection — the boys in the kitchen are beaten by the vicious Cafer for not complaining about the food. Outside, Old Ali voices the grievances of all the prisoners: overcrowding, lack of baths, poor food, bribery. He is put in solitary confinement. In the evening Zapata sings a mournful ballad about the dormitory to the other boys there. The next day Hatice and Samil are told by their lawyer that the court will allow them to marry, though their only real ray of hope is their daughter, who was born in prison and is now about to go to school. Zapata's ballad earns him a beating on the soles of the feet — his screams are broadcast to encourage the others. The boys decide to apply for a transfer.

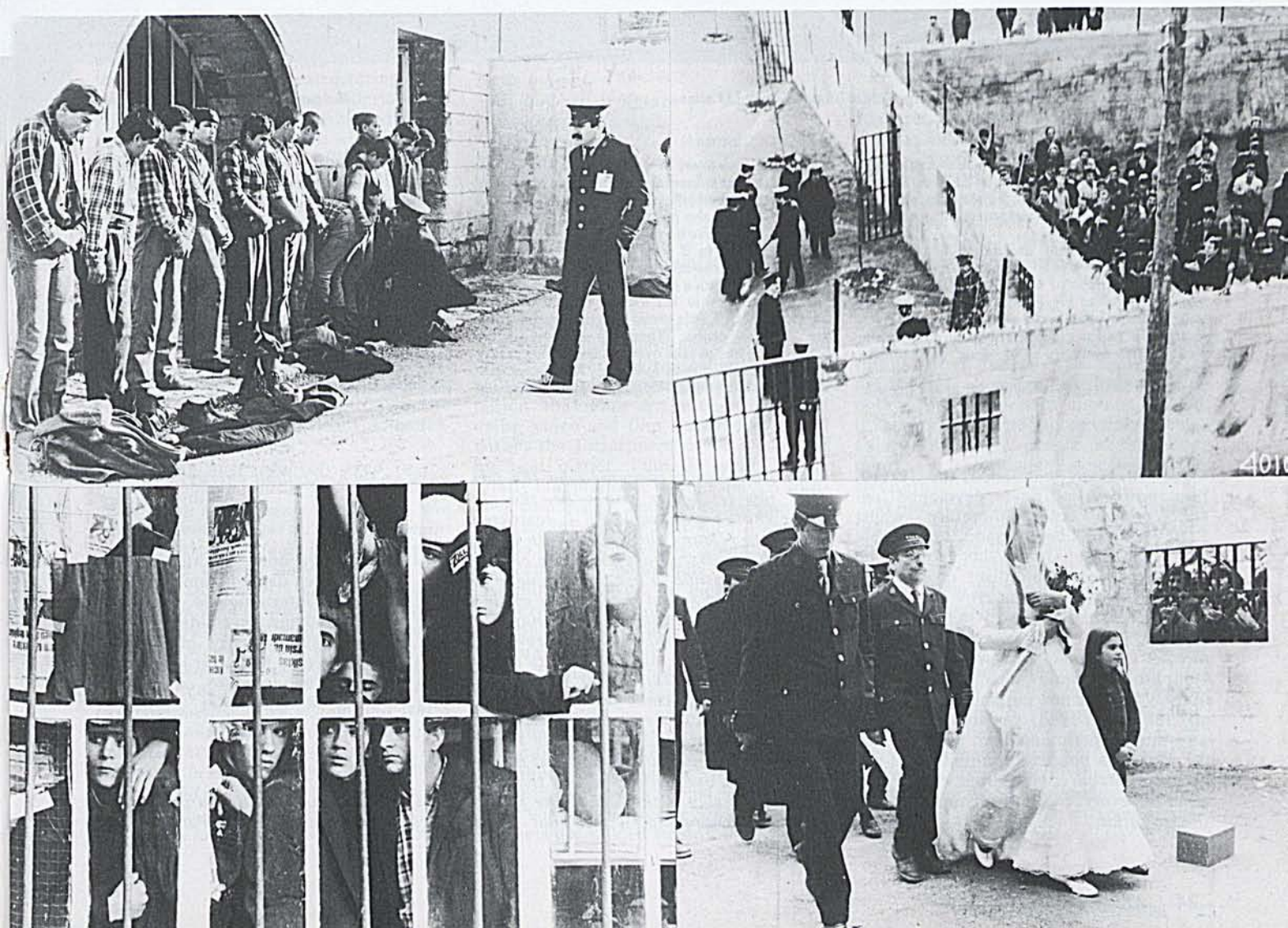
Kindly warder Uncle Ali helps with the transfer petitions but the head warder burns them after having humiliated some of the petitioners and humoured others. That night, Cafer chooses Saban for his pleasure.

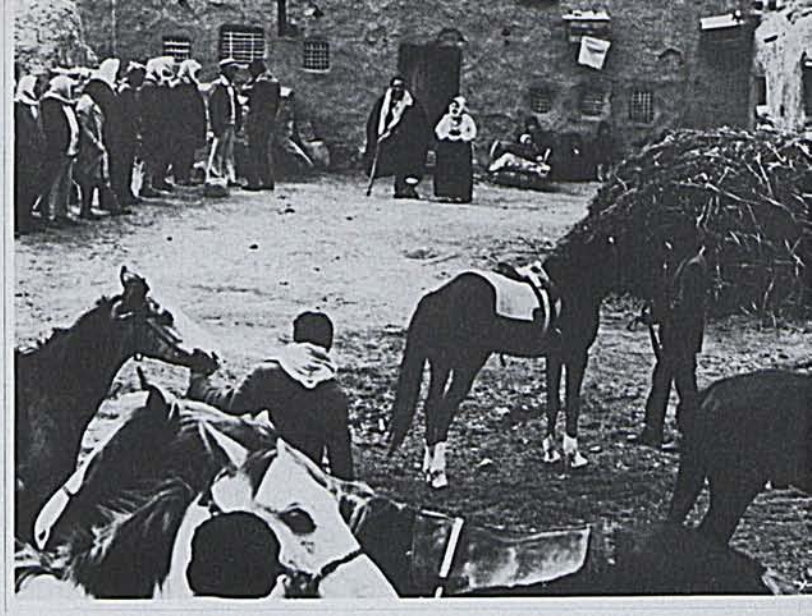
Saban's closest friend urges him to complain to the doctor but at the last minute his fear of Cafer wins and he is subsequently ostracised by his friends. The wedding parties for Hatice and Samil fill the night, but the next day, instead of the registrar, they find soldiers waiting to take them for execution.

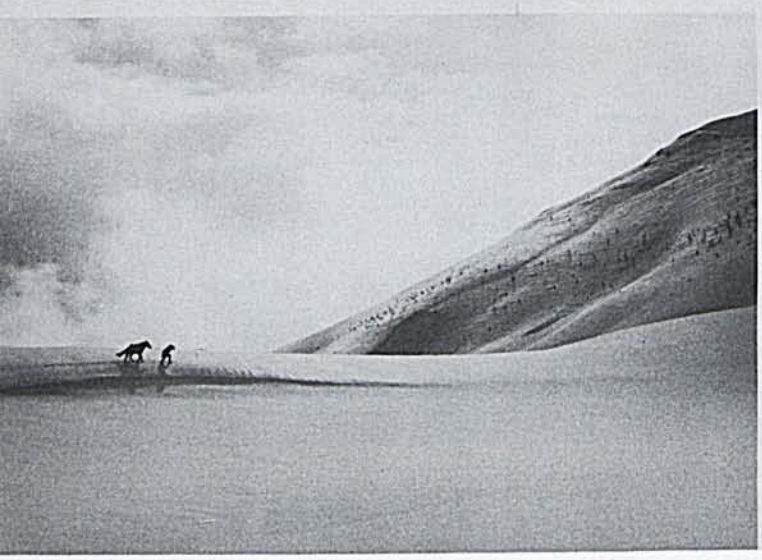
Saban, desperately lonely, is shot trying to escape. Ziya gets away in the confusion; Lofty is caught and beaten; Uncle Ali is sacked. Soon Ziya is brought back and, after saying that it's worse 'outside' than 'inside', dies from the inevitable beating.

On the same evening, a riot of the political prisoners is brutally suppressed and a baby is born in the women's dormitory.

The boys decide that the only road to a transfer is nevertheless riot and they try it. It succeeds, though not without considerable cost to life and limb — but the regime of the new prison may well prove harder still.







"Yol" (The Way) 1982 Dir: Serif Goren. Script/Editor Yilmaz Guney 111 mins.

Released by Artificial Eye Film Co.

"YOL".

A group of men are given a week's parole from Imrali prison and travel towards Eastern Turkey. As their journeys progress, we see that, although 'free', each is thoroughly oppressed by extremely restrictive social mores.

Yusuf, an innocent dreaming of his young bride, spends his week in detention after having mislaid his papers.

Mevlut goes to his fiancee in Gaziantep, but cannot escape her chaperones and soon resorts to prostitutes. In any case, she dotes on his grandly chauvinistic description of their forthcoming marriage.

Mehmet Salih goes to Diyarbakir to see his wife and child. However, her family hate him for the cowardice that caused the death of her brother in a robbery. Nevertheless, she still loves him and runs away from the family with him. Reduced to trying to make love on the train, they are publicly disgraced and, as if they hadn't already hit the bottom, the over-zealous youngest son of the family arrives with a gun...

Omer returns to his village near the Syrian border, where Kurds are in constant conflict with the Turkish army. When the army kills his brother, he has to take over his family, according to custom, rather than follow his heart's inclination towards a young village girl. He mounts one of his beloved horses and takes off to the hills and the life of an outlaw/freedom fighter.

Finally there is Seyit Ali, who travels to the mountain wastes of Sancak, beyond Elazig. His family are holding his wife bound in a filthy barn, having dragged her back from prostitution, and now he is expected to eradicate the family's shame. He is torn and decides to let 'fate' decide, which means making her walk, weak and inadequately dressed, across the mountain snow. When his heart warms enough to turn back and carry her, it is already too late.

After this, the issue of getting back to prison in time is irrelevant.

As previously mentioned, the Turkish film industry had never developed *'on-set'* studio skills, therefore whilst "DUVAR" was being made, inumerable problems arose. Guney shot most of the film in converted premises on the outskirts of Paris. His film crew and actors consisted of a mixture of inexperienced Turkish and unfamiliarised French technicians — people who were politically sympathetic. Guney also had to adapt quickly to these new circumstances. All in all, the film risked, yet survived a hit-and-miss experimentalism. Nonetheless, the film is a poignant expression of the insurmountable complexities which overshadow every facet of institutionalised life in Turkey.

"I was deeply concerned by the fact that my testimony might be thought somewhat unbelievable if I restricted myself to relating the naked truth about Turkish prisons. I have therefore chosen as far as possible to use the language of tenderness to soften the facts in writing the story and putting it into images... Although the central pivot is the revolt of the children in the fourth dormitory at the Ankara prison in March 1976, the parallel individual stories came from testimonies or observations gathered during my stays in different prisons...For me, the fundamental reason for this exceptional mobilisation, was our conviction that this film would be a slap in the face of the fascist military dictatorship. It was that which gave us such incredible energy..."

Yilmaz Guney

On September 9th, 1984, at the age of 47, Yilmaz Guney died of stomach cancer at the Hopital Internationale, Paris. He was married and had two children. Before his burial in the cemetry of Pere La Chaise, people paid their last respects to him at the Kurdish Institute, of which he had been a founding member.

Altintas is an artist and film-maker who presently lives and works in Paris.

EDUCATIONAL SECTION

THE Royal College of Art is presently being transformed into "third world" status by being subjected to yet another alien and imported management, in what has become an increasingly recognisable strategy of the present Tory government. One crucial department which was subjected to the "managerial axe" was Environmental Media (whose strategy and development was looked at in depth by Peter Kardia, Head of EM, in "AND" No. 2 1984). Below are several personal translations of the present situation from some of the people who are closely affected by these changes and their implications.

In the following section, the works and statements of those who were linked with Goldsmiths College of Art's unusual approach in the Department of Embroidery and Textiles, reappraise their position through participating in "Material Evidence". Whilst currently defined under the ambiguous tag of "textile-artist" they attempt to unravel the hornets nest of prejudices which are rife when "qualification" is paramount.

KATE MEYNELL

In Defense of Third Area Art Education

On December 5 1984 a meeting was held at Chelsea College, with the purpose of bringing together students and staff from different art schools, to discuss the implications of the restructuring programme which was being undertaken at the RCA. In particular, the alterations to the Fine Art faculty which will close the Department of Environmental Media.

My contribution to the discussion was to consider the proposal that while the specific department in which mixed media work was carried out should be closed, it would nevertheless be possible for this work to continue at the college. The Rector suggested that third area work could be broken down into a series of specific categories each of which could be dealt with by different departments; this was outlined in letters sent to students who had applied to join the department, as well as heads of undergraduate colleges, etc.

"As you have probably read in the press by now, because of a restructuring of teaching departments at the RCA, the work currently taught by the Department of Environmental Media is to be absorbed into other College departments in the Faculties of Fine Art and Communications. This means that there will be no direct entry into a Department of Environmental Media in October.

The above restructuring does not *mean that the College has lost its commitment to experimental work of the kind which Environmental Media has housed up to now; on the contrary such activities will continue in the College and will be encouraged in every possible area.*

In view of these developments, all applicants to the Department of Environmental Media this year can be reconsidered for entry to other departments at the RCA in which their main interests *lie. On current experience these would seem to be as follows:*

School of Sculpture — performance work and installations.

Department of Animation/Audio Visual or the Department of Television — video and time-based work.

Department of Photography/Holography — work involving still images."

From a letter sent to Environmental Media applicants from the RCA Registrar dated December 5 1984.

Firstly, using the Rector's model for what should happen on the closure of the department of Environmental Media, I would like to completely write off the notion that Fine Art time-based work using video and film should be housed within the Department of Television, or for that matter, Film. It seems to me totally inappropriate to put Fine Art within a commercial and industrial context, and the thinking behind such a suggestion is either completely ignorant of the differences in philosophy in academic disciplines involved, or, more likely, is a deliberate act of policy to prevent that type of work taking place. This argument is equally applicable to the suggestion that still images should go into the Department of Photography and Holography. Because media — tools used, can be common to more than one discipline does not reduce these different and distinct disciplines to a single practice; for example, why not combine sculpture in metal with automotive design as both end products use welded steel.

I am also unhappy about proposals to house performance and installation within sculpture. The thing which divides third area from both painting and sculpture within Fine Art is the flexibility of the parameters within which the chosen research is done. Painting or sculpture may be as experimental, closely investigative, highly critical, and thoroughly researched; but the fundamental difference is that the boundaries have already been chosen within which to carry out this research. That is broadly speaking the use of sculptural materials or paint in certain ways, and the product to be seen in understood contexts, a gallery, a wall, a plinth, a frame or whatever. Third area work cannot be undertaken with these things fixed, indeed it is necessary to deliberately choose to unfix them, and in doing so to enter into another level of investigation. The uncertainty which exists for many people about mixed media is essentially connected to its strength.

While it is relatively easy to indicate the nature of painting by pointing to the known objects that have been produced within the convention, the essentials of mixed media work can often be identified only by assembling a fairly complex conceptual work.

"Not only do we have to grasp that Art is part of social production, but we also have to realise that it is itself productive, that is, it actually produces meanings. Art is constitutive of ideology; it is not merely an illustration of it. It is one of the social practices through which particular views of the world, definitions and identities for us to live are constructed, reproduced and even redefined."

What we must find is how best and in what circumstances we CAN construct, reproduce and redefine OUR culture, which is not necessarily establishment culture, and is possibly better dealt with in a different framework. There is already a precedent set for small groups of artists and media workers with common interests to come together and provide themselves with the critical situation and access to equipment and distribution on a collective basis, groups such as London Video Arts, the Film Co-op, Black Audio Film Collective, Women in Sync, WEFT, C.O.W., Circles, Sancofa, New Gils Network, etc. These all tend to deal with areas of need defined by and for specific groups of people. They are invaluable and they also serve to illustrate the establishment's lack of ability and willingness to provide what is needed. But their existence is often vulnerable, funding minimal and with the GLC and Metropolitan Councils up for the chop, as well as others, public money is being clawed back, many of the organisations which are not 'economic' will go under.

The closure of Environmental Media is only a small piece of a reactionary puzzle: there is a shake up, but we can use it too — to examine and reassess the parts we have been playing. We must work out strategies that serve ALL of us, in this we can find ways of dealing with all forms of artistic and eductional bigotry. For example, our passive racism when we do not notice how few black students do post graduate work, not many apply, not many do undergraduate work, the academics can pass the buck right down to primary school and beyond — end up by blaming the mothers. People in power always blame the ones who THEY have failed.

New strategies must take into account everyone's needs, as a blind artist Kirsten Hearn made statements to the meeting at Chelsea College which made that perfectly clear.

In Environmental Media I was able to modify my education because of the flexibility and fluidity of its structure. I had tutors to act as positive role models, and so the course could cater for my needs far more successfully than anywhere else. It is a blow to future students who want that chance.

As a separate part of Fine Art, *'third area'* does not have a long history, you cannot find a whole section of the library with relevant information. Cuts and other forms of silencing, the wish to make cultural production seem invisible, seeing us from perspectives which distort us, is something many, especially women, will be familiar with.

I must reiterate my belief that third area work is a vital and distinct area of Fine Art that should be catered for within its own terms. It is the only space for some of us to work in, and that space should expand to a wider constituency, so that the production of art and definition of culture does not slip into the convenient reflection of the values of Keith Joseph, Jocelyn Stevens, etc.

Kate Meynell studied at the RCA in the Department of Environmental Media. She is currently on a London Video Arts, Arts Council bursary as well as being an active member of WEFT.

ANDREW IRONSIDE

the Technological and Art Education

WITHIN the RCA, schools are broadly separated on the basis of technology. For practical and organisational, though arguably not academic or creative, purposes, the college considers interests are best served by this arrangement. The RCA is, of course, not alone in employing this scheme.

No scheme is perfect so schools overlap in the range of resources offered to students. In the case of the Department of Environmental Media (EM) equipment is made available to its students which can also be found in the schools of Photography, Film and Television, Sculpture and Painting. Such is true of many other schools. In the past schools that have resources in common have been allowed to coexist as distinct areas if there was diversity of academic intention and aim. Such a situation is considered to be a luxury when funding of the institution is withdrawn, or is threatened, as is the present position of the college. The current re-structuring is a response to these pressures but one should not let this seemingly pragmatic solution disguise the fact that ideological motives are at work; the requirements of our technological society are being allowed to erode academic differences and creative diversity. What could have originally been justified as an organisation having some merits, and was tempered by not being adhered to too rigorously, has now been reified by the equation — similarity of technology entails similarity of use, function and intention. It will be objected that this is too crude a description of the management's position. But what is clear is that where the practitioners in these schools see significant differences, the management sees none, or consider them of superficial relevance.

Whilst EM students make extensive use of photographic, film, video, audio-visual and sculptural resources, the schools have unique and specific histories, and frequently incompatible aims, intentions and goals. Also, not only are the theoretical aims varied but the works produced look different. Students in EM elaborate and articulate distinctive attitudes too and produce different uses of the technologies. In the current order of things being a "multi-disciplinary" area (I dislike the connotations of this term but cannot think of a better one to describe our activities) has been perceived as a negative feature. In this article I would like to indicate how I perceive some of the rather heterogeneous activities of the department offer a unique and positive contribution to the RCA and also to the wider cultural and social context.

Television, film and photography are media of mass communication. Most people's experience of created visual material is derived entirely from the broadcast television output, the wide-distribution cinema chain, and in printed newspapers, magazines and advertisements. They do not generally see material that is produced and shown in other contexts — film and video workshops, art schools and art galleries.

It might be thought that all these independent sources aspire ultimately to achieve wide distribution of their work through the industries. On the contrary, many artists choose carefully the context in which their work is seen. The work is produced with acknowedgement of the character of the places in which the work is to be seen or installed. In fact the meanings of a work are frequently seriously affected by context. Consideration of place may be inseparable from decisions about the nature of the work itself and sometimes integral to it. For this reason many artists choose not to work in the large-scale media industries precisely because there can be no development of sensitivity to different physical locations and audience — a cinema is a cinema, whilst television can be received anywhere that lies within the broadcast area.

Media: Is the Tail Wagging the Dog?

One cannot communicate to, or entertain, mass audiences unless one knows something about the audience and extrapolates something from that knowledge. One also needs to construct the industry in such a way as to generate the technology and practices to make wide-distribution a reality. There are two related outcomes of these facts. (1) The bodies who decide what programmes are to be made must have a notional sense of public interests. (2) The industry encourages the division of labour into specialists so that production is streamlined and efficient to sustain regular production.

The mass media can be criticised for taking a pragmatic view of interests (one can appreciate their predicament when audience ratings are of signal importance) for it has the effect of engaging the audience in a limited number of ways through forms that tend to become cliched and predictable.

Individuals interests are multifarious — some more general than others. The media, however, do not simply tap the interests of particular individuals but can actually be shown to develop common interests and demands between individuals. Advertising is the ultimate development of this fact. It is true, therefore, that interests are susceptible to redirection, and that, in an individual, horizons and positions are developed by the media, as they are in social life generally, which were not there before.

While television, cinema and print may be innovative or interest-forming, they do not take a wide view towards the nature of innovation (its aims and achievements) and the interests it is intended to engage. The industries are too immersed in the business of production to institute for themselves the development of critical and theoretical aspects of creative practice. That is not to say that they do not give encouragement to others to do this work, but this means there is a further division of labour and responsibility which is not acceptable to many artists. The critique of the interests of television, cinema and printed photography, in line with a greater plurality of modes of expression, is an inseparable aspect of the current art practice of film, video and photography.

The arrival of Channel 4 has to some degree modified the relationship of broadcast to independent activity — through its system of contracting material rather than being a production company — it has allowed small groups, and individuals who previously would not have worked in the industry, to have their work screened to wide audiences.

It is the independent artists, among them graduates from EM, who have expanded the range of interests and subjects that are being broadcast. Some might argue that the audiences for such programmes as 'Eleventh Hour', are small by accepted standards, but numerical support is a limited judge of value. If such programmes are generating new perspectives and introducing audiences to alternative modes of visual expression, or more modestly, simply expanding the range of material being broadcast, these facts are of genuine cultural significance.

It should not be thought that EM graduates are now singularly devoted to tapping the opportunties afforded by Channel 4. Many artists would not accept that the broadcast of their work is a goal, or that it is desirable. The broadcast chain of transmission and reception cannot be constructed or manipulated by the creators of programmes, and, therefore, considerations about context cannot be developed and are ignored. The range of independent work that could be broadcast without affecting its intended meanings must be very small. Artists find that the galleries are still the most appropriate venue that can be modified to show or install their work.

The television is virtually a required item of technology in homes today, and the social implications of this wide distribution of information, meanings, ideas and visual forms, by electronic means is a fact of great significance. We cannot simply treat it as "the box" — another item of furniture. The manner in which television, as a communication system, establishes particular relationships between people and technology is, perhaps, of equal significance as what is transmitted (McLuhan said as much in the 1960s in his phrase *"The medium is the message"*). The TV broadcast is the outcome of much previous manipulation of visual material using video technologies. Independent artists have actively explored how this technology can be used to develop other forms of relationship that are not possible via the broadcast chain.

From an engineering standpoint attempts are being made to develop interactive television systems (where telephone and cable lines are the means of audience feedback) but the degree of interaction, beyond the level of simple responses, would require systems of such massive sophistication that they will not be a reality in the foreseeable future. By way of contrast, closed circuit video can be seen as the television chain in microcosm, and is capable of being experienced in its totality. Viewers of television are only directly addressed by the reception equipment i.e. the television, they have no access to the creative components of the system i.e. the cameras, mixers, lighting, personnel etc. Video technology, as used by some of the students in department, allows many different configurations of live and recorded material, single camera and monitor or multiple camera and monitor installations, small or wide-scale distribution of images, and, more importantly, the audience can actually be allowed to respond interactively with the technology: it is flexible and accessible. Video equipment can be used in the manner of sculptural elements, having signifying potential parallel with whatever visual content is being created and displayed. Such work has much in common with sculptural and architectural activity — testing out particular configurations and juxtapositions of fixed and transient elements to create a specific ambience or possible interactions in a space. Such considerations are alien to television which is limited by the very nature of the system which is essentially closed to its audience. This is not to attach intrinsic significance or value to open systems. Much video work and film activity in the department, and some of my own works reproduced here, correspond more closely to traditional *'closed'* forms of practice than to the open ones I am describing here. It is both to defend a plurality of forms and to indicate that it is not only the content of these forms that can be radical but that the forms and structures of communication can also be reoriented and reorganised in ways of fundamental importance to their signifying potential and their wider accessibility.

It can be predicted that the increasing availability of video technology will generate more widespread interest and consideration of the special possibilities of the video media which TV has been unable to accommodate. This is an area to which EM graduates have given attention over the last ten years in *"installation works"*.

It is the dismantling of the department as a central core for this work, where such developments are understood and treated with familiarity and sensitivity, that will leave the RCA in a poor position to make a contribution in this area. In the departments to which existing staff may be disseminated, and to which students who would have applied to EM will be accommodated, such activities will be *'fringe'* and tangential to main concerns.

This activity, as described, could be construed as a rather superficial tinkering with technology, and, of course, this is a legitimate criticism that can be leveled at some of the work produced. At its best, the enterprise is a serious one with the work conceived to establish structured relationships. Structural aspects and their metaphoric and significant connotations can be very dense — the work can be very difficult to engage and cannot be exhausted in its possibilities by casual inspection. This it has in common with all the best forms of art practice.

It is perhaps inevitable that particular working methods and techniques of creative production dominate and become the norm against which other modes will

appear *'odd'*, *'deviant'* or more threateningly *'subversive'*.

The strategies of independent artists, working in film, video and photographic media are justifiable in their own terms, but one direct consequence of their separation from the media institutions is to radicalise creative practice by refusing to absolutise methods or subjects. The potential of these media are not exhausted by the media industry giants.

The RCA should be giving greater encouragement to artists working in this area, for it is to them that people, recently introduced to the media, will turn. The most important requirement is that the processes of production, and decisions of creative responsibility, are not carved up into specialist regions. The whole enterprise has to be on a scale that the individual or small groups can control. This requires a special mix of critical and production skills. The department of EM has always structured its resources and tutorial sessions (so far as limited availability allows) to achieve this aim.

It is the organisation of resources that requires particularly sensitive handling. Some students in the department use video and photography as a means of collecting material in the manner of a sketch-book. The perceived possibilities of the material gathered may only emerge later. This is totally alien to the methods of the industry where material is commissioned, storyboarded and logged, to determine precisley what one wants prior to its realisation in visual form. It will be objected that the industry procedure is the only sensible means of using expensive resources — that the first method is too hit-and-miss and that nothing might emerge from it. This is the risk, but the truth is that such a procedure is never totally blind or neutral and that from a careful inspection of the material, content can be found and developed where none were previously articulated.

Such techniques are a challenge to accepted industry practice. It is a method that works well for some students and artists, but it requires that equipment be at hand, and available to service a number of students simultaneously.

The film schools have largely served the needs of industry whilst fine art departments have sought to develop other attitudes towards production.

Students frequently bring together diverse technologies to create complex pieces which require the audience to experience duration and space as a shifting of relationships and possibilities between oneself and objects.

The availability of diverse means for producing visual material encourages a philosophic interest in how these different forms are constitutive of perception and able to represent things to us. While some equipment is used more than others, preference for one is developed on the basis of the appropriateness of that media to the artists' conception of representation. Equally, close observation of the way the technology actually gives the representation a particular quality, and allows one to do only a limited number of things may itself serve to generate ideas of possible contents for creative work.

Since our students share the same technology as the television, film and print industries, it is only to be expected that there are shared techniques and interests — one cannot push the notion of radical practice too far. However, whilst the film and television industries have to think in and through film or television modes, this is not so for the independent artist who does not necessarily perceive fixed outcomes and may import new elements at any stage of the process. As stressed earlier, this *"freedom"* is taken seriously and one demands that elements are integrated with critical insight.

Because there are no industrial parallels that correspond to this type of activity and to which graduates can aspire, it is easy to denigrate and discourage these minority skills and traditions. The working practices of EM students are much closer to those of the sculptor with whom they share similar employment traditions and aspirations.

The acceptance of film and later video and audio-visual technologies to the realm of fine art practice can superficially be seen as simply the expansion of the available methods to investigate the range of its traditional interests. But artists generated this expansion from fundamental critical and ideological positions. Current practice is frequently antagonistic to the tradition from which it emerged yet is still identified.

It is implicit to the academic philosophy of the department that the creation of works of art does not take place in a social vacuum — that there are other practices in our society that also significantly contribute to the richness of individual expressivity within our culture. It is of interest that apparently diverse cultural practices, *"artistic"* or otherwise, can be shown to have a fundamental coherence, to be guided by the same paradigms, and therefore be of the same cultural orbit.

Departments of anthropology, cultural analysis and media studies have done much relevant work in describing some of the ways in which particular social practices constitute, in microcosmic form, the world view which sustains that society's coherence. It is only through immense effort that individuals can modify their own perceptual and conceptual horizons so as to do other than return the representations that are one's cultural inheritance. Students in the department of EM are encouraged to entertain broad notions of content and so pursue open frameworks such that they might perceive new potential in their activities. They do this whilst being aware that creation is seldom out of nothing, and that tradition, history and custom constrain, or serve as the context within which their own work will be received and understood.

One of the significant contributions that EM has made to the academic life of the college, and to its wider credibility, is that it states openly the significance of both history and the current social scene and yet has not allowed these facts to legitimise its practices and to stay in a safe position.

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MARIA ROBERTS

THE recent announcement of the radical restructuring of the schools and faculties within the Royal College of Art is symptomatic of a great many changes the present government has in store for not only art education but education as a whole. Throughout its history, Art and Design education has periodically undergone shifts in emphasis, usually corresponding to the ebb and flow of economic fortune. It is no surprise that at the time of the first Coldstream report in 1960, which positively valued the privileged position that Fine Art held in relation to Art and Design teaching, that the country was enjoying a time of relative economic prosperity. It was a period of optimistic expansion, not only economically but also in terms of the liberality of ideas. New courses were being planned and old definitions were being broken down. The development of a liberal and experimental educational system did not pose a serious threat to a country which was not under the type of economic pressure that we are familiar with today.

The end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies were, however, a significant turning point in both economic terms as well as in ideas and outlook. By 1970 the recession was on its way and not surprisingly the importance placed on the role of Fine Art was now revised with increasing emphasis being put on the development of more vocationally orientated courses.

"Although we wish to give full credit to those colleges which are conducting successful vocational courses with proven employment records, we cannot escape the conclusion that in some cases there has been a lack of effective consultation and an insufficient regard to the needs of society and to the prospects of employment. In such cases the courses have, in short, failed to be vocational in the proper sense . . .". (Joint report of the National Advisory Council on Art Education and the NCDAD: The Structure of Art and Design Education in the Further Education Sector).

The precedent was set.

With today's worsening economic crisis and the re-emergence of mass unemployment, the fact that the present government has been increasingly focusing its attention of the utility value and cost effectiveness of not only Art and Design Education but education as a whole has quite serious implications when it is regarded in the context of the Government's overall policies. A Government dedicated to the development of a robust, vigorous and competitive British Capitalism able to make strong inroads into the world market is required within the context of a world economic crisis to minimise any opposition to its policies, and, as a consequence of this it becomes an economic necessity for capital to instigate a fundamental change in the balance of power and wealth away from working

The "Net" Value of Art Education

people. It is these two reasons which explain the Government's legislation directed towards weakening the ability of trade unions to defend its members, stringent control of local government spending, the abolition of the GLC and the Metropolitan Counties and its cuts in the social wage in terms of housing, health, education and so on.

The whole of society is being *'recruited'* (Your Country Needs You) to the service of this central thrust Government policy; what resources are available are to be put at the service of capital. The *'enlistment'* of all areas of society into the support of capital is resulting in the Government taking more and more control over the affairs of the country. In terms of education its intentions are made quite clear in the following statement by Sir Keith Joseph: *"Until recently the prevailing attitude was that this sector of the education system [training] could be left in the hands of the institutions concerned. But now there is a need for strategic decisions to help colleges prepare for the future changes in demand."* (*Education and Training Development Exhibition and Conference, Birmingham, July 1984*). It doesn't take much to read between the lines and realise that what is being implied here is that the Government will be taking increasing control over the implementation of its policies and will be forcing colleges to respond to market demands.

An important example of how this is happening is the fact that the Manpower Services Commission is taking over a substantial amount of the funding of non-Advanced Further Education from local government *"to ensure that public sector provision for training and vocational education is more responsive to employment needs."* (*Taken from the Government's White Paper, 'Training for Jobs', January 1984*).

Exactly what form the increasing intervention of the MSC will take is clearly revealed in its decision in November 1982 to accept the Government's invitation to develop a pilot scheme of technical and vocational education for 14-18 year olds. The pilot schemes are already operational in 14 local education authorities and if the scheme is given the go-ahead to be implemented nationally, the entire role and function of our education system will be seriously affected.

For those people not considered as potential applicants for the new National Certificate which will replace all CSEs and GCEs, the scheme will place strong emphasis on vocational training particularly in the form of *'on the job'* work experience. Together with the encouragement of strong links with local business and industries, the scheme effectively lowers the school leaving age for the majority of pupils to 15 (and maybe even lower), with young people being used as cheap labour power for the benefit of local employers and their firms. Pupils will be denied the opportunity of receiving a full education in a broad cross-section of subjects and forced at a ridiculously early age to be trained for a specific job before they have even had the chance to develop fully as *people*, not programmable robots, with their *own* interests and ideas about how *they* might like to structure their future lives and careers.

"Training is an Investment: It must be seen to pay for itself by making people better able to produce the goods and provide the services that other people are prepared to pay for. Thus the decisions as to who is trained, when, and in what skills, are best taken by the employers (and indeed the individuals concerned), who have to satisfy the needs of the market rather than by central direction." (*Training for Jobs, page 5, paragraph 8*).

The fact that the desires of the *"individuals concerned"* are only included almost as an afterthought says much about who will be benefiting from the schemes and it certainly isn't the trainees, either in educative terms or in monetary repayment for their labour as can be seen in the following quote: *"So investment in training needs to be attractive financially. That means keeping training costs down, including the acceptance by trainees of levels of income which reflect the value to them of the training given"*. (*Training for Jobs, page 5, paragraph 9*).

The following set of guidelines laid down by the MSC as regarding the aims of the scheme not only reinforces the argument that young people would be increasingly put at the service of capital at an increasingly earlier age, but, more frighteningly, their hearts and minds would be invaded by the ideology of free market capitalism.

The scheme will: a) improve competence in a variety of study and vocational skills, b) develop adequacy in numeracy and literacy, c) promote flexibility of attitude and willingness to learn, d) progressively develop physical and manipulative skills, e) assist in the appreciation of the role of young people in adult society and the world of work, f) assist in coping with changes in technology in working life and to promote relevant skills, and finally f) encourage the development of moral values (!).

Essentially these requirements mean that young people become servants of the System; they toe the line in the factories (if there are any left), they think what they're told to think, learn what they're told to learn, appreciate their role as *'functionaries'* for capital and uphold the morality of a system dedicated to the exploitation of their labour power.

It is significant that the only mention of any form of academic criteria comes as a reference to the development of *'adequacy'* in numeracy and literacy — *'adequacy'* is a very ambiguous word, *'adequacy'* by whose standards? Education isn't just about teaching people to read, write and add up. But the Government's notion of education, which might be better classified as training, seems to entail the development of the necessary number of *'skills'* needed to carry out orders efficiently and is not designed to engender any form of social or political self-awareness.

For those people who don't appreciate the role the Government has decided to dole out to them and who actually voice their opposition, there are other forms of management available to deal with any *'dissention from the ranks'*. As one policeman reportedly told a striking miner during the current dispute, "if you overthrow this Government you'll get us instead". Perhaps we don't need to overthrow the Government to get them in any case.

It is not surprising considering the current climate that education is one of the first areas to come under attack. The *'catch 'em when they're young'* idea is a well tried and tested method and it isn't only the pupils being affected either. Sir Keith Joseph's plan of *'vetting'* secondary school teachers in order to cull out those who aren't up to standard represents another form of control. One wonders what kind of criteria will be used in the application of these standards. In the absence of a fifth amendment in this country what do we plead when they ask the inevitable question? In the realm of higher education, particularly at degree and post-graduate level the number and types of courses available are becoming increasingly limited, and if the MSC's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative is implemented throughout the country it seems likely that the number of students who actually *'pass through the net'* and apply for degree courses will be far fewer with the likelihood that their success at this level will probably be more dependant on their class background than on any real talent or ability.

The same principle that is being applied to secondary schooling (i.e. vocational training), is being applied to degree courses. In the realm of Art and Design Education, the balance is being tipped in favour of a utilitarian notion of design as against the more economically and socially dubious practice of Fine Art. As can be seen by what's happening at the RCA, the design sectors are not just being expanded but are being restructured and re-orientated *"to prepare young people for work within the constraints of user needs and the market"*. (*Margaret Thatcher, TES, 7-11-83*).

The consequent reduction of the Fine Art provision within education fits in well with the Government's overall strategy. This distinct area of practice which encourages personal development and free experimentation, in many ways works as a direct antithesis to the present needs of capitalistic Britain, although it is ironic that prestigious Fine Art products can fetch a higher price than just about any other consumer item.

However, in our defence of Fine Art we shouldn't be seduced into suspending the criticisms many people working in this area have had over the years. The way that Fine Art education is mainly conducted at degree level, i.e. students following their own highly individual concerns in their own little *'garrets'* with the occa-

sional tutor wandering in and offering a few pearls of wisdom on the subject, is not above criticism. The development in Art Schools as well as in the Art World in general of the highly sophisticated notion of the *'artist'* as a uniquely insightful individual has contributed to the aura of elitism surrounding art and has succeeded in alienating large sections of society from understanding many of the issues involved in particularly the development of modern art practice. In general, Fine Art education has too frequently stressed many of the negative values of a liberal education and has remained disassociated from worldly affairs. It is not surprising that Art education appears to be an expensive and unnecessary luxury and it must be admitted that much of the blame lies with its own practitioners, educators and historians. With art education under constant attack, admitting its shortcomings in any way whatsoever is immediately used as evidence against it. It would, however, be reactionary to suppose that it is a perfect system which should be preserved at all costs. It is ironic that it is only in times of crisis, coupled with the threat of extinction altogether that people suddenly start questioning the very identity and value of what it is they are involved in and it is unfortunate that by the time a critical approach has been adopted that there is no longer any room for manoeuvre.

Having said this, however, it is essential that an understanding of Fine Art must be developed that is defensible, and art which relates to and becomes involved in society rather than one which prefers to stand outside it merely observing from a distance.

The Platonic tradition which gave rise to the idea of a liberal education, as was mentioned before, is not above criticism, but within it there are many elements which deserve not only retaining but which should be allowed to develop and expand. It is important to acknowledge that Fine Art education is inseparable from general education. To encourage and stress the importance of a wide breadth of knowledge and the development of the totality of a person is a concept which applies to all areas of learning and is an essential and integral part of the very notion of a *'liberal education'*. It is important to develop a system of learning which doesn't privilege theory at the expense of practice, an education which embraces the unity of these two fundamental areas. To view educational enterprise in terms of narrow specialisations or the acquisition of specific skills is dangerously limiting and retrogressive.

Although undoubtedly the training of skills is an important element, education cannot be reducible to this single aim. Coupled with it should be the necessary conditions with which to enable students to develop the critical consciousness and self-awareness that allows them to become active social subjects rather than being seen as passive objects and manipulative tools for others to play with. It is not just knowing how to fulfill certain tasks or how to perform in a certain way that is important, it is to be able to critically assess and evaluate the meanings and purposes to which their *'knowledge'* and *'skill'* can be harnessed.

In the case of Art and Design, a distinction has often been made between the contemplative and the applied. Such a distinction partialises humanity and presupposes an absolute split between thinking and doing, knowing how and knowing that. This is a false dichotomy, education should be addressing itself more to the manifold development of human thinking and doing as one process and that Fine Art has an important contribution to make within this development.

As a point of reference the current exhibition of **"SOVIET CERAMICS, TEXTILES AND FASHION, 1917-1935"* provides a role model of how art can enter into a very positive relationship with industry. By focussing their attention on a radical improvement and transformation of the functional and aesthetic quality of mass produced goods, artists, designers and craftsmen began to dismantle the artificial barriers between the creative, the political and the technical. a cup and saucer could be as beautiful and aesthetically pleasing as any painting, it could be agitational, putting forward views of society, how it is and how it could be, as well as performing its role as a functional object for everyday use.

It is ironic that at the moment many employers in the design field are stressing the importance of a multi-disciplinary practice. On face value this system has much to recommend it, but the fundamental and primary motive on the part of the employers, and herein lies the problem, is the acquisition of profit. No matter how good a design is, it is first and foremost a commodity and exists primarily to enhance its exchange value on the market. Its use value becomes secondary. The positive relationship that is possible between art and design and manufacture in general can never be adequately realised within the social relations of capitalist production.

The underlying issue that we are now faced with is the relationship between human labour and society. People cannot be divorced from their activities, what it is they produce and why, what they give of themselves and what they get in return. Education in all its forms plays an integral part in the formation of how people begin to develop as social beings, how they start to view their future role in society. A denial of the fundamental function of education, of the right of people to be allowed to develop freely as individuals, not as mere functionaries for use by others, represents a gross injustice to human *'being'*.

It is this basic liberty which is now at stake, which isnow being threatened. It is towards not only its retention (what is actually left of it) but also its expansion and development that we should now be addressing our attention.

**'Art in Production: Soviet Ceramics, Textiles and Fashion. 1917-1935', an exhibition organised and previously shown at MOMA. Oxford, and presently showing at the Craft Council Gallery, London, 20 February — 28 April 1985.*

Maria Roberts is a student in the Department of Environmental Media at the RCA.

MARIA McMAHON

EM:

More than twenty leading art educators wrote at length about the validity of Environmental Media as a course, but their letters were addressed to a man *"who cheerfully admits that he knows next to nothing about art and design"*. (The Times, 2.2.'85). In a ludicrously literal application of Mrs Thatcher's hopes to marry British design with industry, the RCA has eliminated one of its most innovative and relevant departments. With no hesitation or thought of repercussions, this institution removed the sole opportunity for those wishing to pursue their studies in mixed-media or time-based work at Masters level, despite the well documented evidence of an increasing demand for courses of such a contemporary and vital nature.

At a time of rapid technological development, it is essential in any educational field to support an intellectual development within a flexible framework, maintaining the desire for high technical standards without necessarily leading to specialisation. The critical, didactic and questioning base to Environmental Media should be a model for art education as a whole, for the abilities developed are not dependent on any particular medium. Historically, our "third area" practice grows from the twentieth-century notions of evolution and dynamism in art, change being the result of a critique around deconstruction and restatement to produce new meaning. The course does more than to encourage chameleons of style, *fundamental* investigations prompt any development.

Freedom

Degree of

A

Perhaps this explains the feel of the department's work, often involving a real time experience and offering a transient sense of discovery. The work is experimental, and so difficult to categorise, yet there is a common thread to the means of approach. The medium, form and presentation of a piece results from a decision-making process where choices are deliberate and the means of expression is that *required* by the concept. Of course, this approach is usual in contemporary challenges within only one medium, those working in mixed-media are highlighting critical perception in their requirement for *appropriate* media.

Below are some extracts from the letters written to Jocelyn Stevens, the Rector at the RCA.

"The work undertaken in the Department, especially the time-based media element [film, video and performance], has been developing and has intensified over the last twenty years both as a practice and as a distinct interest among international art audiences. There is no doubt that object orientated art, through the forms of painting and sculpture, represents the traditional cornerstone of Fine Art, but the desire to explore beyond traditional boundaries has driven many contemporary artists to find alternative, and in their minds more apt, means of expression. This work is reflective of an age which demands Fine Art appropriate to current values and is based in those media most appropriate in our time."
David Hall (ARCA). David is head of Time-based Media at Maidstone College of Art.

"This area of studies grew entrepreneurially out of the demands of students to relate to studies based on concept and philosophy, using whatever relevant media necessary, rather than accept a single medium tradition.

It seems inconceivable that the premier College in the country should cease to have an M.A. course in the very area which by all counts should be expanding at this juncture. We live in a world of increasing televisual provision and general multi-media development and it requires little imagination to realise that the demand for education in this arena will increase.

We surely must, to maintain our position in the world of action and ideas, retain those philosophic and discoursive areas of education, as well as the singularly technical. It seems signally crass and scarcely comprehensible that a College proudly heralding ten years of mixed media education in the recent "CROSS CURRENTS" show in its own galleries, should, scarcely before the breath has left that show, be cynically setting about the destruction of the very department which had engendered it. In the recent TATE ART PRIZE opening it was evident that we have to remain confident in the provision of British Education at the highest and broadest level of endeavour. There is a correlation between this past provision and the achievement of British Artists (especially as recognised abroad)".
John Gingell. Principal Lecturer in Fine Art, Head of Alternative Studies Area, South Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education. Also, member of Executive, National Association for Higher Education in Film and Video.

"The belated shift towards a Fine Art network which we are now experiencing is in part an acknowledgement of the failure of the traditional categories, of themselves, to provide a basis for education in Fine Art. It would be odd, when the CNAA is pressing this conclusion on the joint St Martin's-Central course if the leading postgraduate institution in the UK were to be reverting to a more conservative position."
Praveera (Ken Adams), is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sculpture at St. Martin's School of Art.

"I should have thought that the recent retrospective exhibition put on by the Environmental Media Department would have been ample proof of the viability of that Department — of its wide-ranging vitality and achievements — making the recent news of its sudden closure even more poignant.

The closure of the Environmental Media Department will be an irreplaceable loss to art education in this country, with far-reaching and damaging implications for all Degree Courses in Fine Art.

In particular, a dangerous blow will have been dealt to the idea of a healthily balanced education policy in Fine Art at the Royal College which can genuinely reflect the real needs of students at this time."
Tim Head, Lecturer in Post-Graduate studies in Mixed Media, Slade School of Fine Art.

"The M.A. opportunities offered by this unique department have become absolutely vital within the very limited spectrum of national provision. In my opinion, the provision it offers could not be preserved by incorporating its constituent parts into other departments. It would be a mistake to assume that because certain Environmental Media students produce work in Film or Video, that this aspect could be incorporated into the Film School. The terms of reference, philosophy and student constituency of these two departments have very little in common. The Environmental Media Department's academic philosophy relating creative and critical practice to a range of media — outside strict predetermination — represents a fundamental contribution to Fine Art education and this philosophy is not duplicated anywhere at this level. It represents the only M.A. opportunity for some of the most challenging of Fine Art graduates whose work does not fit into traditional categories."
Malcolm Le Grice. Malcolm is Dean of the Faculty of Art and Photography at the Harrow College of Higher Education.

"Finally I would draw your attention to London Video Arts, an organisation which now employs five people and represents over three hundred video artists and producers worldwide. It has two central London offices with editing, production and screening facilities. We have international distribution of videotapes and are acknowledged by foreign curators as the first place to go in Britain when looking for contemporary video art. Quite simply, this organisation would not exist in its present form were it not for the support of Environmental Media during its formative stages and early days up until 1979. Several of LVA's management committee and staff are ex-Media people, and we have always maintained links with the department.

On the basis of this brief catalogue of some of the things which have happened outside of the College as a result of Environmental Media's existence, I would venture to suggest that rather than closing it down, you might think instead of expanding and upgrading the department, and run a specialist video course with strong links into the industry."
David Critchley, London Video Arts.

Maria McMahon is President of the Students Union at the RCA.

ADAM LOWE

The Implications and Philosophy

From all that has been read in the press, the RCA under the guidance of a new and flamboyant rector, is being set to rights. The aspirations of the past are being pushed aside to make way for new policies, based on technology and production, which are both socially and economically sound.

The view from the inside, to a member of Senate and the Fine Art Faculty Board is somewhat different, and the purpose of this article is to throw some light on the background from which the present regime emerged, the changes it is making, and some of their implications.

In October 1981 Lionel March was appointed Rector. Emerging from the Open University, he was an academic very much influenced by the American System, desiring to impose some of its better qualities upon the College. He proposed to change the name of the RCA to *"THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART FOR INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT"* and, amongst other things, introduced concepts like *"COST CENTRES"* and *"PROFIT CENTRES"*.

His inaugural address to Senate on October 12 1981, was full of hesitations, qualifications, clarifications of word usage of a generally verbose manner, yet it clearly showed that he had started looking in depth into the College. It displayed an awareness of academic idiosyncracies and a realisation that changes must be accompanied by research and consultation. He touched on the need to maximise financial efficiency, to reassess the College staffing system and to restructure the faculty framework. The main feature of his plan was that the College should be divided into three main areas which he referred to as clusters of vocational schools (in line with the S.A.I.D. code).

Each of the three areas would have objectives in common and he outlined them as follows:

1. A cluster concerned with Industry and the Environment which would take in the current schools of Ceramics, Glass and 3D studies.

2. A Cluster concerned with Commerce and Fashion which would embrace the current Fashion, Textiles, Printmaking, Illustration, Graphic Information, Graphic Design, Silversmithing and Jewelry schools and departments.

3. A Cluster concerned with the Arts at present represented by Painting, Sculpture, Environmental Media, TV, Film and Photography.

Each area would have 150-200 students, 3-4 Professors and be based on a three year course as the norm.

He qualified this proposal with the following statement: *"I have no idea how such a proposal might be met and have not discussed it with anyone but I do know that there exists some unease with the existing groupings of Departments and I would hope that a proposal along these lines would be given serious consideration."*

Whether he would have been able to implement any of these ideas under normal circumstances is a matter of conjecture, but in the light of demands that the RCA should make a saving on its recurrent grant of 25% over three years, such soundly based and rationally determined academic changes were impossible. In the confusion which followed two rather bizarre appointments were made by the Rector.

In spite of considerable opposition from within the College he appointed John Hedgecoe (Prof. of Photography) to the post of Pro-Rector and Dr. George Styny to the position of Dean. In choosing John Hedgecoe he seemed to have in mind the need for a person who would counterbalance his own qualities and appointed a man who appeared to have little interest in academic matters, was an astute business man and who represented aspects of the autocratic regime of Sir Robin Darwin which, for some at the College, represented the golden era. In George Styny he chose an American academic whose main pre-occupation during his period at the College seemed to be with insisting on the superiority of the American education system.

The Rector's inaugural speech ended with a prophetic ring: *"To be the 'Everest' of world Art and Design Colleges is an ambition which everyone could work towards, if that ambition is not achieved during my rectorship, then the failure will be mine as a leader."*

The failure was in part his, but then it seems his objectives would never be tolerated by the external sources of pressure which have constantly influenced the College's history. After his resignation, and a brief period in which Hedgecoe assumed the Rectorial post, Jocelyn Stevens, one time editor of *QUEEN* magazine, managing director of the Express Group and the man who gave the world the *STAR* was appointed as Rector.

A few weeks after his appointment the ADC met and finalised a plan which was presented to and passed by a meeting of Senate on November 21, 1984. This involved a radical restructuring of the Royal College of Art, resulting in the closure of five departments, a reduced intake in five more, whilst eight new ones would open up. All course lengths were to be reduced from three to two years.

These radical changes have been attributed to Jocelyn Stevens and much has been made in the press of his swift action and bold, assertive leadership in implementing them. In reality, Lionel March's proposals formed the backbone of the Stevens plan, the only differences being the spirit in which they were implemented, a lack of precision as to their desired effect and the notion of the *"integrative model"*. Whereas March was aware of the importance of words and verbal exactitude, Stevens believed in action, eradicating grey areas which he believes demonstrate weakness of thought. To get a hearing one must have ones facts clearly drawn up at the start. An attitude very much in line with the present government and one of the reasons why the DES has tended to give Stevens such support. But the question still remains whether, even if one does have one's facts clearly drawn up, but seeming to contradict existing attitudes, one will get much of a hearing.

In pushing the plans for change through the various College academic bodies Stevens was able to use the threat of punitive economic cuts from the DES if changes were not made. In particular a letter from the Under Secretary for Education, Peter Brook, was quoted as threatening the College with a year by year 5% reduction in its recurrent grant unless significant changes were made. While the letter proposed the reason for the reduction as being the alleged high unit costs of the College as compared with other universities, the required action was not simply a reduction of these costs. Included in the letter was a list of five points which were directed at radically altering the academic conduct of the College.

This could be seen to be the purpose of the rather nebulous term *"the integrative model"*. This term seems to be summed up by John Hedgecoe's assertion that *"Fine Art ought to go on everywhere in the College"*. In light of this the reasons behind the closure of Design Research and Environmental Media become apparent. Design Research was seen to be a focal point for research into design within the College which, under the integrated model would seem to imply that research is limited to this area whereas it should take place within every design department. The argument against environmental media is much the same. Environmental Media had come to represent the experimental aspect of the Fine Art Faculty. If experimental work was encouraged in the rest of the Fine Art area, then there would be no need for Environmental Media. this line of argument demonstrates a clear misunderstanding of the nature of the work undertaken in both Environmental Media and Design Research. The following minute from the November 1984 Senate implies there are grounds for such an interpretation of the term integrative model.

"4.4. Noted Mr Kardia's point that provision needed to be made for the Fine Art Faculty to develop in the area of advanced experimentation. In reply, the Rector stated that all departments ought to be engaged in such activities." (*Minute of Senate, November 1984*).

Behind the "Restructuring" of the RCA.

It was in relation to this (the integrative model) proposal that the main debate at Senate took place. It was stated that the changes had been fully discussed at faculty level and at the appropriate meetings of the Academic Policy Committee; what had in fact been discussed over a period of two years were plans for new developments which were all based on the existing structures of the College remaining intact. The new radical restructuring proposal had surfaced only three weeks before the Senate meeting at which they were ratified. This debate was fairly lengthy, but took place almost entirely between the Rector, Christopher Frayling (who presented the plan on behalf of the APC) and the non-voting student delegation. (A sense of complete disorientation seemed to envelope the majority of the members under which lay a desire for self-preservation).

Because members of Senate had only a limited period to consider the implications of the plan only some of its important effects were discussed but it was clear even from this limited range of debate that the main conceptual framework of the plan was very highly suspect. Very few of the practical consequences of the proposed changes had been worked through and it is only now that they have become a reality that these practical consequences are emerging.

The second half of the November 1984 Senate meeting was devoted to a discussion of the reduction in course lengths from three to two years. Most of the College already operates on a two year model with only the Fine Art Faculty and the School of Film and TV repeatedly objecting to the loss of the third year. Within these areas, learning and understanding is not essentially product orientated, its boundaries and aims are not clear cut, and the manner in which these aims are realised is often unpredictable. Time is of the essence if the results of work within such an area are to have any value. Dick Ross (Prof. of Film) delivered a paper outlining the effects of a reduced course length upon the Film School, the central argument of which was that he would no longer be able to take students from Fine Art courses as it was impossible to impart a reasonable degree of technical competence in two years.

Positive arguments for the reduction were non-existent other than that it represented a *"rationalising"* of the College structure. The re-allocation of grants, an important element in the change, had not been considered at all.

The result of these changes, rather than unifying and cementing the College's function have fragmented it — driving a wedge between Fine Art and design work, assuming they can both thrive in the same environment governed by the same pressures and market forces. The closure of Environmental Media, and the accompanying prediction of its re-emergence demonstrating this only too clearly.

Environmental Media functioned as a distinct area within the Fine Art Faculty, undertaking mixed media work and its only equivalent is to be found at the Slade School of Art. The redirection of students to the Schools of Sculpture, Film and TV and the Department of Photography demonstrates an ignorance of the ideological differences and aspirations which to a great extent will preclude the possibility of mixed media work continuing at the College, thereby losing a department acknowledged to carry out *"exciting and experimental work"*.

The re-housing of the Department of Textiles within the painting school is another demonstration of this shift as is clearly stated in a paper delivered by Bernard Neville (Prof. of Textiles) to a meeting of Senate on January 16: *"Creating with fibre has become one of the robust vital arts of our time, with results so varied that they defy classification into accepted disciplines, and in my opinion would be more appropriate to the Faculty of Fine Art, particularly as the Department of Textiles moves more towards an industrially and fashion orientated future in line with the commitment given to the DES in the College plan."*

So what now emerges is that the *"radical restructuring"* is merely a shift in emphasis away from Fine Art towards a product orientated training school. Accordingly a few course names have been altered but in the role descriptions for the new professorial posts it became obvious that the thought behind the plans was lacking. It seems unlikely that the previous failings of the College lay entirely in the names of its courses yet the new posts, now being advertised, are essentially based on the existing structure — a structure which appears less and less able to fulfil its desired purpose. The term *research* has gained currency at the college and accordingly D.A. and B.Phil degree work is being encouraged. Highlighting the shift away from the existing *"catchment areas"* from which students have been taken. That course structured post-graduate work and research based doctorate work require a different framework is self-evident, (the College already undertakes both types of work, fulfilling neither as satisfactorily as might be desired). Yet it is a factor that was consistently overlooked at the January Senate. Until it is realised that research is not merely concerned with fact finding and that technology, unless seen in context and with purpose, will not produce the desired climate, the future of the College as a place of learning looks dubious. The fact that every syllabus presented for the new courses was returned by the APC to its respective source on the grounds that they lacked substance is indicative of the craving for change but the inability to substantiate that change. (The syllabus for Holography and Light Transmission, a radical new departure for the College, for which an expensive pulse laser system is being installed, consisted of half a page of cliched ideas as to the possible uses of holography, reading more like a precis to a beginner's guide to "do it yourself holography" than a syllabus from the most *"dynamic and prestigious"* post-graduate college in the country).

The College has been under pressure, it has not chosen to respond to that pressure by making a principled stand and assert the value of its work in art and design and to state its view that to accommodate the need for change is undertaken not by amputation but by evolution. Under the leadership of Jocelyn Stevens the changes that have been made have found favour with the government. But throughout art education both within the College and in the country at large there is much disquiet about the effects of such Government policy. At a time when all sectors of art education are experiencing savage cuts and there is pressure to move towards a narrowly based vocational education policy, the College can no longer afford to perpetuate the unsatisfactory nature of its relationship with other Art and Design Schools. It can no longer afford to be seen as a self-consciously prestigious institution with a virtual monopoly of post-graduate grants.

Paradoxically economic pressures which in the College have given rise to retrogressive moves have in other sectors created conditions in which a much more fundamental questioning of the future of Art and Design education can take place. Many small post-graduate courses are being established around the country. The proposal for the amalgamation of London Art Colleges into a London Collegiate Institute has instigated what promises to be a far reaching debate.

The Council for Higher Education in Art and Design is urgently seeking discussions with the College which will result in a major conference in May. The combined effects of these changes may provide the strong external questioning the College needs.

The atmosphere has changed at the RCA but now, having averted further cuts by the DES, a period of genuine discourse and the sharing of ideas must be entered into if it is to achieve the level of success if requires — success can only be measured by looking at the type of students it is sending out and not by any transient media coverage.

Adam Lowe is a third year painting student at the RCA. For the last three years he has been part of the Student Representative Council, and has been on both Senate and Faculty Boards.

SUSAN STEIN

Spaces are closing in; the gaps are narrowing. We are experiencing one expression of our powerlessness. We have had a modicum of representation, but never any power: we did not determine the running, the control or the basic demands of these spaces and what went on in them. These "gaps" had basic reasons for coming into being: they superficially appear to be created for us, while at the same time providing a gloss of *"toleration"* for when the State is healthy, yet can be withdrawn in times of economic *"downturns"* without much public concern as they are neither *"necessary"* social services nor of obvious industrial use.

Who is the *"we"* and what are these spaces? The we refers to all students who are either threatened with or have been told of the definite closure of their course. The spaces are the departments, the internal contexts in which the particular areas of study or work is carried out. All education is being cut, whether it is in the field of science and technology, medicine, the humanities or the arts in general. When one particular department or school within a large educational establishment is closed, a general divisive atmosphere is created, which makes the departments concerned endeavour to evaluate itself in relation to the other (at that time) non-threatened departments. Closures are announced; they are not negotiable. Once the basis for cuts are accepted by the college authorities, unions and students union, divide and rule operates, motivating a competitive fight for survival between departments and schools, rather than a consolidated fight against all closures as a matter of principle.

When the closure of Environmental Media was announced, students and staff on the course protested both within the RCA and drew support from outside (by outside I mean other colleges). This involved some of us in very immediate, committed and time-consuming activities; our *"work"* became campaigning, writing, speaking and holding meetings. Tutorials and the practice of *"art"* took second place for some of us, and the social life involved in meetings continued all day and most evenings. For some of us, this directly affected our home life and relationships outside college. This is not to exaggerate our involvements or their repercussions, but illustrates that even minimal and small scale commitments do affect our lives.

My relationship to *"home"* changed in this process; the separation between public and private was less distinct, and so were the values I attributed to them.

This was a comparatively short-lived fight of approximately six weeks' duration, although writing and meetings are still in progress, and what is possibly more important, the fight was without risk — financially. Those of us in receipt of grants did not forfeit six weeks' money. The activities and the students' attitudes towards them, highlighted for me the vast difference between our efforts and those of, for instance, the miners' wives. It made me reconsider what political action necessitates, and that although there are general similarities between our closure and pit closures, the urge to assert that our campaign has been politically or physically similar would be reactionary in the extreme.

When miners' wives came out in support of the 1984-5 strike, it was partly to counter the representation of striking miners as *"making their families suffer"*. They organised collectively, providing vital services such as food supplied from collective kitchens, launderies and child care facilities, the latter being necessary in order for women to join picket lines and to continue their own jobs.

' God, she's off again. People say we'll never be the same after this strike. And they say I've changed. I don't see that though, except that I'm more aware, and confident too. It's a big change for women. I can't see them all suddenly dropping back into how they were before.' 1

If the closure of Environmental Media has raised political consciousness by way of revealing the similarities between our struggle for existence and other workers' struggles for parallel aims, then this is one potentially positive aspect stemming from an actually negative condition. This presents us with a double task. One is to utilise raised political awareness by taking it out of the specific college context and channelling it into other areas: supporting people who are opposing oppression, making direct contact with and formulating actual demands in conjunction with other groups. The second task is how this mixture of awareness and spontaneity can relate to and be reflected in our *"art"* work at college: what kind of art-works can I make now? Have I been and am I continuing to prop up the existing standards and relations which define what is and is not art, particularly when I realise whose interests I am serving? What am I preserving by protecting artistic *"qualities"* and, which is intimately connected, what precisely are the contents contained within these qualities? Could the *"quality"* of a work of art be measured by its usefulness for people who are not represented but excluded from both *"high"* art and so-called *"popular culture"*?

"Overtly or covertly, the traditional allegiances of Art and the economics of its support have always been with the ruling class...long before the term 'art' derived its modern usage, the whole mainstream of high culture with the 'Western tradition' had been supported and promoted by various ruling groups... (art's) structure — use and status in the economic structure — reflects obviously its class position."[2]

Historically, the logical progression of art-practice arriving at our current condition is one which demands the simultaneous denial of our class interests and the specific oppression of women, black women and men, lesbians and gay men and people with disabilities.

The relation between all art and society is a mutually dependent relation which exists a priori. We cannot transpose, for instance, Soviet Art from the revolutionary period, or borrow the Nicaraguan term *"cultural workers"* instead of *"artists"* without a change in society taking place. The reason these works exist lies not in an individual or micro-collective opposition to dominant ideology, but is based in and stems from the politicised revolutionary consciousness itself. This work represented a change in society, ours can only represent the continuation and increasing domination of the ruling class at the moment. Emulating revolutionary art mistakenly appropriates the products from massive social upheavals, and the outcome of this is an escapism which demands a false or idealist identification, a *"release-valve"* as well as a philosophy which promotes the autonomy of theory without practice. Perhaps we need to construct works which reflect critically our *"unfreedom of expression"* and the *"unfreedom of the individual"*; this can then develop into a revolutionary awareness which provides both a critique of capitalism and shows its transient nature:

"The rift between dreams and reality causes no harm if...(they) attentively observe life, compare their observations with their castles in the air, and if, generally speaking, they work conscientiously for the achievement of their fantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well."[3]

Environmental Media does not see itself as one of the areas of 'mainstream' traditional art practices, but a development from the 1960s explosion in the use of mixed-media, collages of basic technologies and a more critical approach to the individuality of art-practice. *"Contradictory"* areas in fine art such as that of Environmental Media, along with other oppositional tendencies share a dual role: one is the possibility for actually radically criticising capitalist ideology and another is how this in turn is usually re-appropriated and used to consolidate the class-based strategies of the Right and the reformist parties (because of the existence of such work can disguise this very repression):

"A degree of formalised dissent is an asset to the projection of a liberal image."[4]

The RCA's attack and destruction of Environmental Media is not based on a consideration of the kind of work we do — that it's particularly *"threatening"* — but because of the economic recession. Environmental Media as a department does not have a history of radical political work, but does provide the space for that to occur, with technical and critical aids available within it. There have been students on the course who were and are engaged in various political issues, and who attempt to combine these with radical forms and experimentations. In fact, before the *"radical restructuring"* of the film school, Environmental Media and the Film School were the only depart-

and EM.

ments within the RCA which offered the possibilities for making critical works on a scale which involved the technology and transmission potential of the film and video media.

The closure brings sharply into focus that even a liberal image has to go — it can no longer be afforded. It also reveals that the Right are assuming a liberal display is no longer strategically necessary, since one of the impressions it likes to make is strength: no U-turns and no compromise. The propaganda of 'Freedom of Expression' (meaning the privileged art student is free insofar as s/he can re-establish, through individual talent and inventiveness, *"untraditional locations for bourgeois ideology"*[5] and *"Freedom of the Individual"* (meaning that each of us is *"free"* to accumulate wealth, which is also a contradiction in terms) have now been subsumed under the new Tory slogan, announced by Margaret Thatcher in February: *"EVERY PERSON IS A CAPITALIST"*. Although any concept of *choice* has disappeared from the vocabulary, it illustrates the Tories' confidence in believing that their ideological offensive has been successful; that they have materially and psychologically conquered.

An example of this development can be seen in the policing of the 1981 riots. Major riots took place in cities throughout Britain, but were mainly centred in Liverpool, Bristol and London. Instead of adopting militaristic-style police operations immediately, the government reacted surprisingly slowly, with a marked degree of *"toleration"*. Eventually, water cannons and rubber bullets were used, at the same time that black community group leaders and labours spokespeople were ushered into the roles of containing the rebellion. The Scarman Report was instigated not because of concern about youth, and black youth unemployment especially, or racism within the police force, but in order to soften and effectively destroy the confrontations which were basically the people against the police. Although *"INNER CITY DEPRIVATION"* was hailed as a major contributing factor of the riots, nothing at all has been done to change this deprivation: the proposed Rate Capping schemes will only concentrate it. However, two tactics with similar motives were instigated: the first was to introduce *"community policing"*, which effectively turns citizens into part-time police and paves the way for the extension of police powers, and the second was to allocate grants to community groups, which was the cheapest way of pacifying their demands, keeping them quiet and off the streets. A daily newspaper ran an article on the attire and weaponry of crowd-control police who would be introduced in Britain by 1985: this has happened.

Community policing is no longer required; just crush real opposition. The miners' strike has caused the largest mobilisation of police ever in this country, which was a reaction to picketing not rioting: as shown at Orgreave, the police are now free to attack civilians, or occupy complete villages, keeping inhabitants under lock and key without any charges being made. This could be termed a mixture of siege and house-arrest.

Another way to gauge the extent of the recession and the increase of central government control, is by looking at the way women are being pushed back into the home.

The drop in women's full-time employment, with an increase in part-time, less secure and more badly paid work, the steady fall in nursery provision, the decrease of women's pay in relation to the percentage of men's under the Equal Pay Act of 1975, and the overall reduction of abortions performed by the National Health Service in comparison with the steady rise in private abortions, all point to a whittling away of any *"gains"* made towards the goals of the early women's movement.

The recent court ruling, introduced by Victoria Gillick, which prevents any contraceptive information or practical help being given to people under sixteen years of age without the consent of their parents is part of the return to *"Victorian"* values and the *"traditional"* family unit. The fact that in the US in 1982 15% of families were headed by single-parent women, while only 14% of families formed the *"traditional"* patriarchal unit, would suggest that even if the *"family"* is not on the decline (did it ever exist?) it is certainly not by any means on the increase. If people do not have any social power, they can, as parents, still control family life, as the Tories say.

Who would have thought Enoch Powell would reappear in the guise of *"preserving the dignity of man"*, by presenting his *"UNBORN CHILD (PROTECTION) BILL"* to the House of Commons? It calls for the banning of embryo experimentation and *"In Vitro"* (outside the womb) fertilisation. The resurgence of the *"moral right"* appears at a time of systematic attacks on women's *"rights"*: the Bill's emphasis on embryo rights will mean a definite restriction of abortion and certain types of modern contraception. As an Ulster Unionist MP, what happens to Powell's *"morals"* regarding the murder of Irish children, who are not killed in the cause of any scientific investigation, but entirely for the upkeep of British imperialism, the epitome of commercial gain coming before *"human rights"*? Although the Health Minister Kenneth Clarke will be proposing a more moderate Bill for the government, this did not prevent Powell's Bill receiving a majority of 172 votes and therefore a second reading.

Women's partial gains being attacked reveal that the right is never satisfied: from utilising liberalism in economic upturns, to not needing or affording it in times of near crisis, to the point now where the New Right must compulsively destroy anything which smacks of liberalism, because it might provide just enough of a connection for people to see why the ideals of liberalism cannot be met in times of capital in crisis:

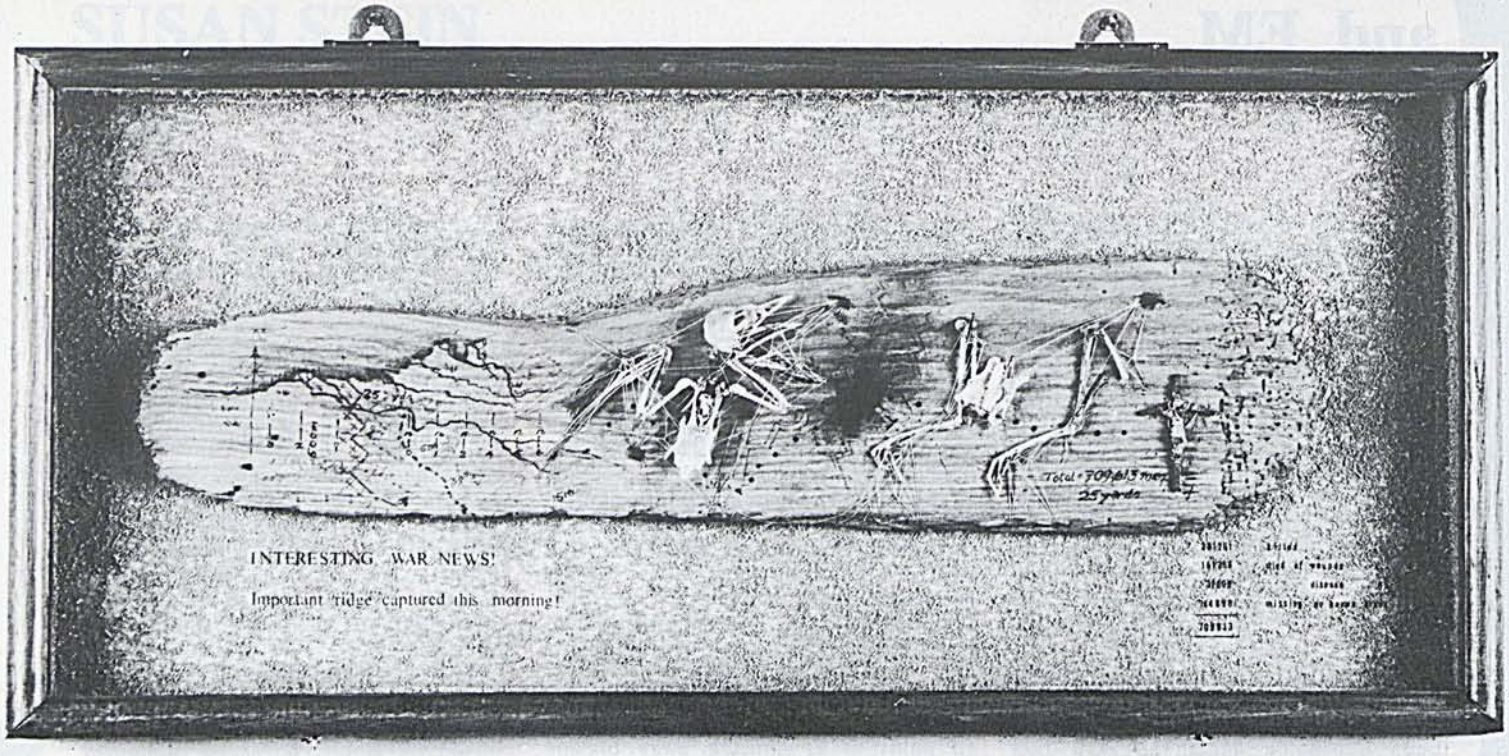
"The New Right (in the US) focuses its attack on both liberalism and feminism precisely because mainstream feminist demands derive from the promises of liberalism in an ideology — individual autonomy and independence, freedom of choice, equality of opportunity, and equality before the law — and because they threaten to transform patriarchy, and with it capitalism, by uncovering the 'crisis of liberalism'. Feminist demands uncover the truth that capitalist patriarchal society cannot deliver on its "liberal" promises of equality or even equal rights for women without destabilising itself."[6]

The "crisis of liberalism" is not just capitalism in crisis, but the result of the conflict between the 'traditional' white patriarchal family, advanced capitalism and the ideology of liberalism. The New Right constantly refers to being against state intervention, yet strictly supports state control (repression) in legislation, for example of sexual matters, such as abortion, contraception, VD programmes and the curtailment of sex education.[7]

All these wider issues which I have cited can be found in microcosm in the closure of Environmental Media: increased state control covers all aspects of our lives. We have learnt that a *"right"* to education, for example, is not a right at all but a variable allowance dependent on economic conditions. At the sametime, *"choice"* only exists for those who create the options. For those of us who still have a limited access to some of these options, we need to make as much use of them now as we possibly can. Learning from the techniques used by the Right in their ideological and physical offensive, we can see our position, as for instance students on the soon-to-be-extinct Environmental Media course, quite clearly: we have been allowed within such an institution as the RCA. Without making overtly political or critical work, our course and therefore our own work, has been axed. For the next year and a term we could produce work which does not have to toe any middle line. Constructed as consciously, perhaps collectively, politically challenging work which combines radical form with radical content, these accumulated *"statements"* from Environmental Media could serve a useful purpose in counter-attacking the Right's domination and making our interests heard. What have we got to lose?

(1) Kate Marshall, in The Next Step, February 1985.
(2) Lorraine Leeson/Peter Dunn in "The Fire and the Fireplace", in BLOCK no. 1, 197.
(3) Pisarev, quoted in V.I. Lenin's "What is to be Done?", Moscow, Progress Publishers.
(4) as (2).
(5) as (4).
(6) and (7) Z.R. Eisenstein "The Sexual Politics of the New Right" in 'Feminist Theory', ed. Keohane, Harvester Press, 1982.

Susan Stein is a student in the Department of Environmental Media at the RCA.



Rozanne Hawksley "Interesting War News! Important ridge captured this morning!
381,261 Killed.
151,356 Died-Wounds.
32,098 Died-Disease.
144,898 Missing, no known grave.
total 709,613"

Photo: Mike Sage

ROZANNE HAWKSLEY

Images of Confrontation

IT IS the prerogative of the organisers of an open exhibition to select from submitted works and set out those works in such a way that the observer's eye and mind are given a pre-destined term of reference. From this he/she can make some emotional response to the works as a whole and subsequent further intellectual judgements on individual pieces.

The work at Camden has obviously been selected to show a wide range of textile work and it can be argued that from the educational view-point alone it is of value to observe a variety of disciplines such as print, stitch, felt-making, piecing, etc., and to be made aware that traditional methods can be extended in a number of directions.

It is in that extensiveness, that lies the weakness of 'Textiles' as a whole and also begs the questioning of cateogrisation. Briefly, should 'Textile art' be separatist? ...become insular with all the inherent dangers of sectarianism: perpetuating self-satisfaction, a decline from existing standards and the non-recognition and un-attainment of potential.

Should it, as it exists, put itself into that situation, or does it invite itself to be?

Encompassed by the understood heading are two distinct options: to produce a) works aiming to have *"a strong deliberate design element worked out and planned ahead"*[1] the resulting object *"to perform its tasks well, making good use of its materials,"*[2] and being constructed with a high degree of workmanship; b) those works that externalise thoughts of creative imagination; that use the medium when and where it forms a vital means of expression to manifest the central core of feeling.

Wandering around between the two are works that purport to be art but lack the content and strength of commitment to be such and fail as functional pieces through a non-recognition of purpose, often coupled with poor craftsmanship — work that would seem to have evolved through a lack of self honesty, a non-recognition of the two (options) and carried *out*, rather than *through*, with half an eye to selling. It is this middle area of watered-down half-art, half-craft that has been turned into an occupational style and fostered by Embroidery/Textile groups that have grown throughout this country and abroad. Concepts and strength of feeling dissipated, their place taken by the over-riding stress on techniques.

In any situation an over-refinement of technique for its own sake can lead to a negation of subject matter and content, resulting in a gutlessness however powerful the origin.

From this arises the question of audience; that at which any exhibition is aimed (if specifically at all), or rather, that which it draws. Does a certain kind of audience feel less threatened at a Textile Show than it would at a show of new painting, sculpture or performance? If so, why?

Perhaps...because woven, printed, pieced textiles are an inevitable and familiar part of the domestic environment — in the form of clothes, hangings, surfaces, etc., and women particularly are involved in their selection and use:— *Therefore* women in particular patronise Textile/Embroidery groups/shows... *Therefore* the individual woman feels qualified to make a judgement...She may well be and why shouldn't she.

But too often the judgement is based on 'Taste'; the imaginary 'Good Taste' dictated by the strived-for position within a social group.

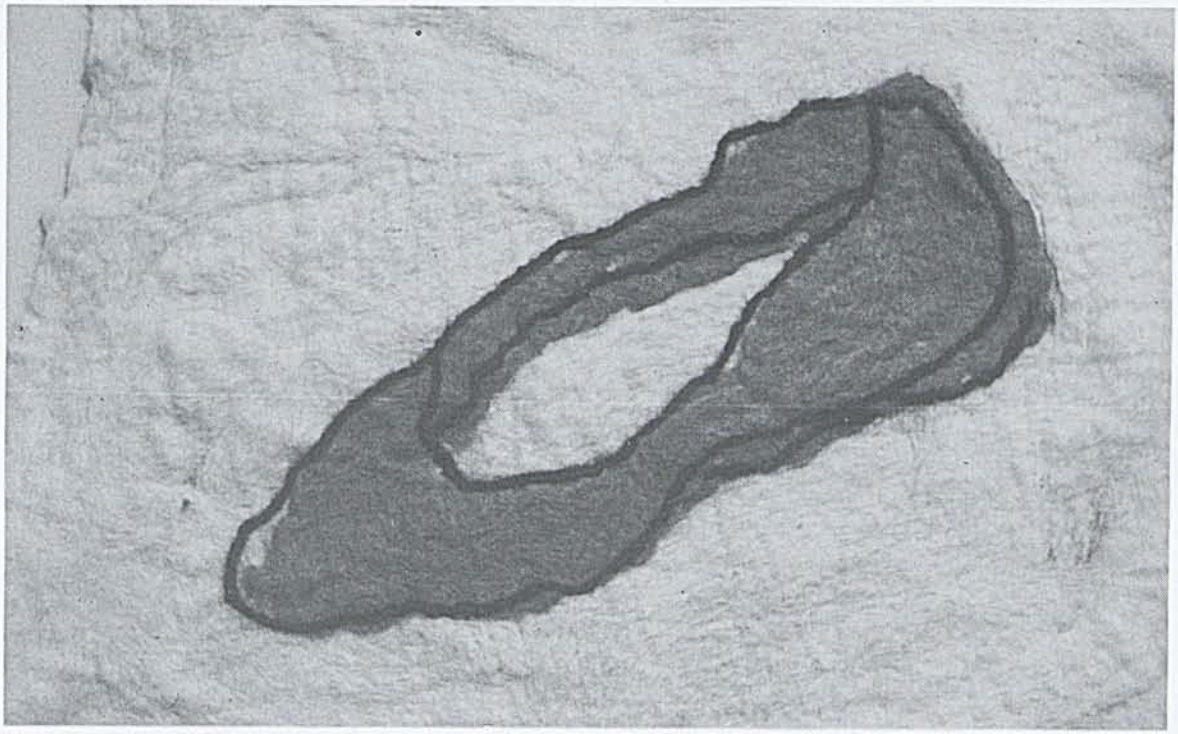
The active or non-active participation in the meaningless, unchallenging middle area has supplied a tangible excuse for a comfortable middle-class nod in the direction of Art.

A continuing individual non-questioning and self-inforced categorisation of 'Textile art' will not only foster this but prevent those honestly working in the main areas of functionalism and expressionism from being taken seriously by the main-stream of current Art.

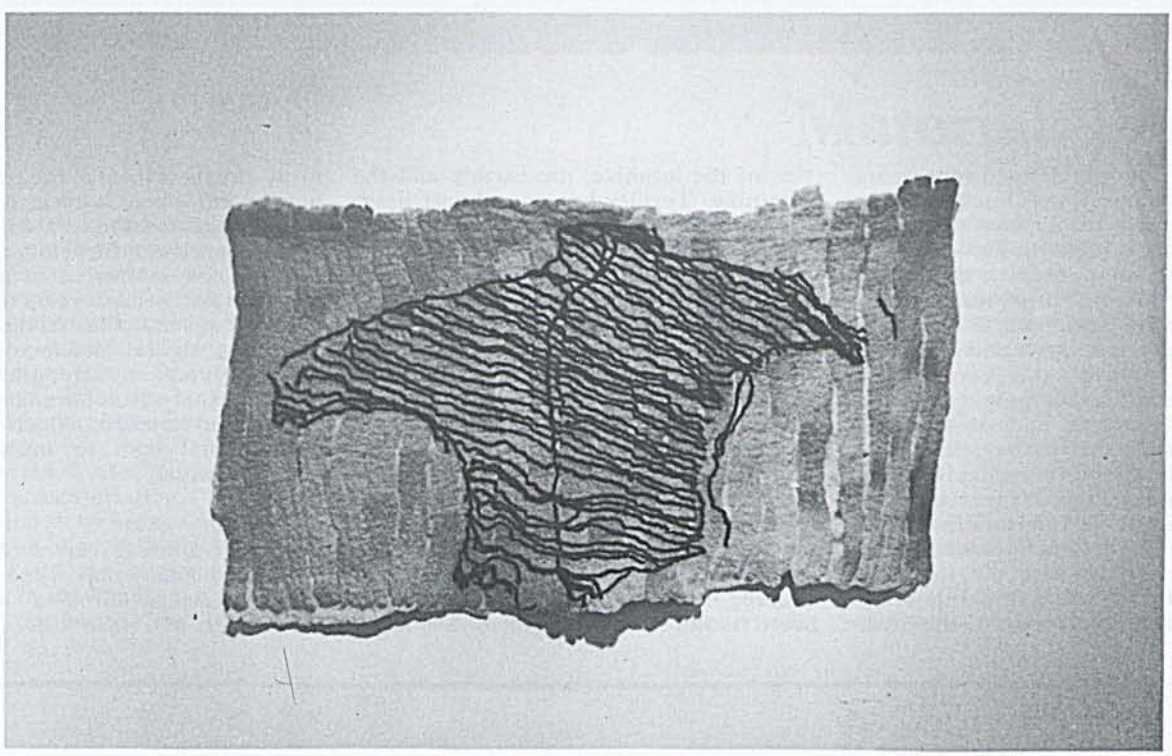
(1) John Mallett
(2) Nick Butler

Rozanne Hawksley teaches at Goldsmiths College of Art.

Heather Belcher "Shoe" Hand-rolled felt 50 x 45 cm 1984



HEATHER BELCHER



Heather Belcher "Untitled Torso" Hand-rolled felt 74 x 124 cm 1984

The issues with which I am concerned centre largely around costume, with regard to its inevitable social and psychological implications. I find garments are interesting in relation to the numerous other material possessions we place around ourselves including the habitats we place ourselves in. Costume particularly, is interesting, in that it infringes directly upon the individual as a portable environment.

The exhibition, 'Material Evidence', demonstrates well the extent of textile work being made, but I feel exhibited as it is, there is a problem that the issues and concerns of the individual artists may be restricted or even confused by the sheer diversity of interests within the exhibition. However, this perhaps is a problem of any large, open show, but I feel the point must be made that 'textile work' is a very diverse term, just as 'painting' is to describe the work which is created within that discipline.

In some senses, perhaps from a Fine Art point of view, it seems there might be a danger of suggesting an aesthetic which turns simply on the notion of a specific medium. This is certainly not the case. Textile work must not be viewed solely from the perspective of the material, or the technic, or the function. The show must be looked at in a much wider context with emphasis made towards viewing the issues and concerns of the individual exhibitors, hopefully exclusive of the categorisations as to whether it be art, craft or design.

Heather Belcher studied textiles and embroidery at Goldsmiths College of Art.

BRIGITTE GIBBON

Brigitte Gibbon "Chance of Change" 264 x 48 cm 1984

Material and Limitless Flexibility

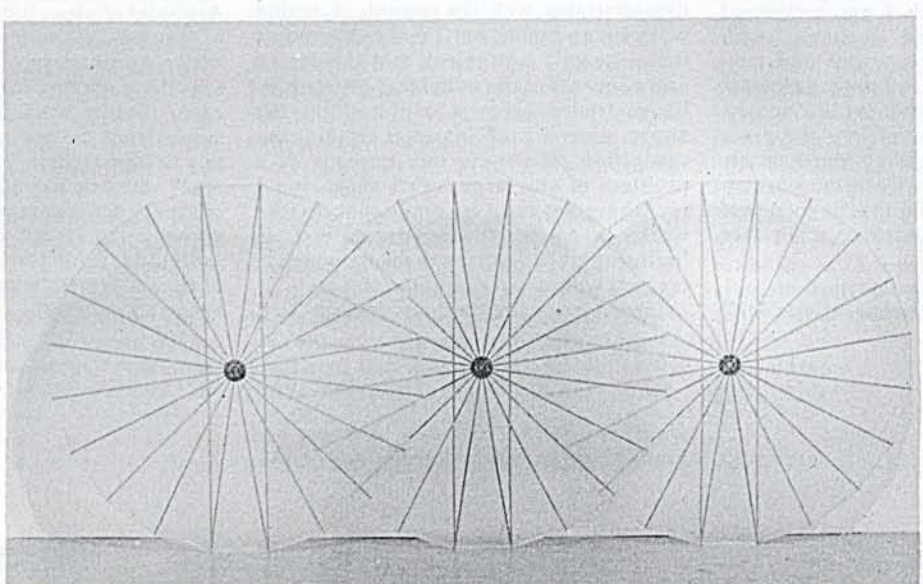
There is no narrowly defined representational programme which I follow in my work; rather I try to explore the atmospheric-evocative properties of textiles. I feel this is important because these properties can be used to draw the spectator towards certain fundamental aspects of art which have been neglected in our culture: the intuitive, the earthly, the feminine. Textiles can propagate these values and concerns and draw people towards them for two reasons: Firstly, the sheer familiarity and everyday connotation of textiles unfreeze the fear of art and of relating art to the fundamental values which people feel when faced with a canvass or a casting. Secondly, the qualities or potential qualities of textile sculpture are directly expressive of the qualities of the intuitive, the earthly and the feminine. Textiles have an almost limitless flexibility and a capacity for versatility, arrangement and rearrangement, which interests me when shared with those specific aspects of the human spirit. It could be said, in other words, that textiles represent a humanised art medium, provided that "humanised" is understood from the viewpoint of these specified human attributes.

My interest in these particular concerns dates back to my original career in fashion design, when the intimate relationship of mutual dependency founded on certain profound similarities. Of course, in fashion this relationship has been traditionally found in an alienated form; the movement of the textile and the human movement it enclosed, expressed only the submissive and adjustable side of the capacity for flexibility.

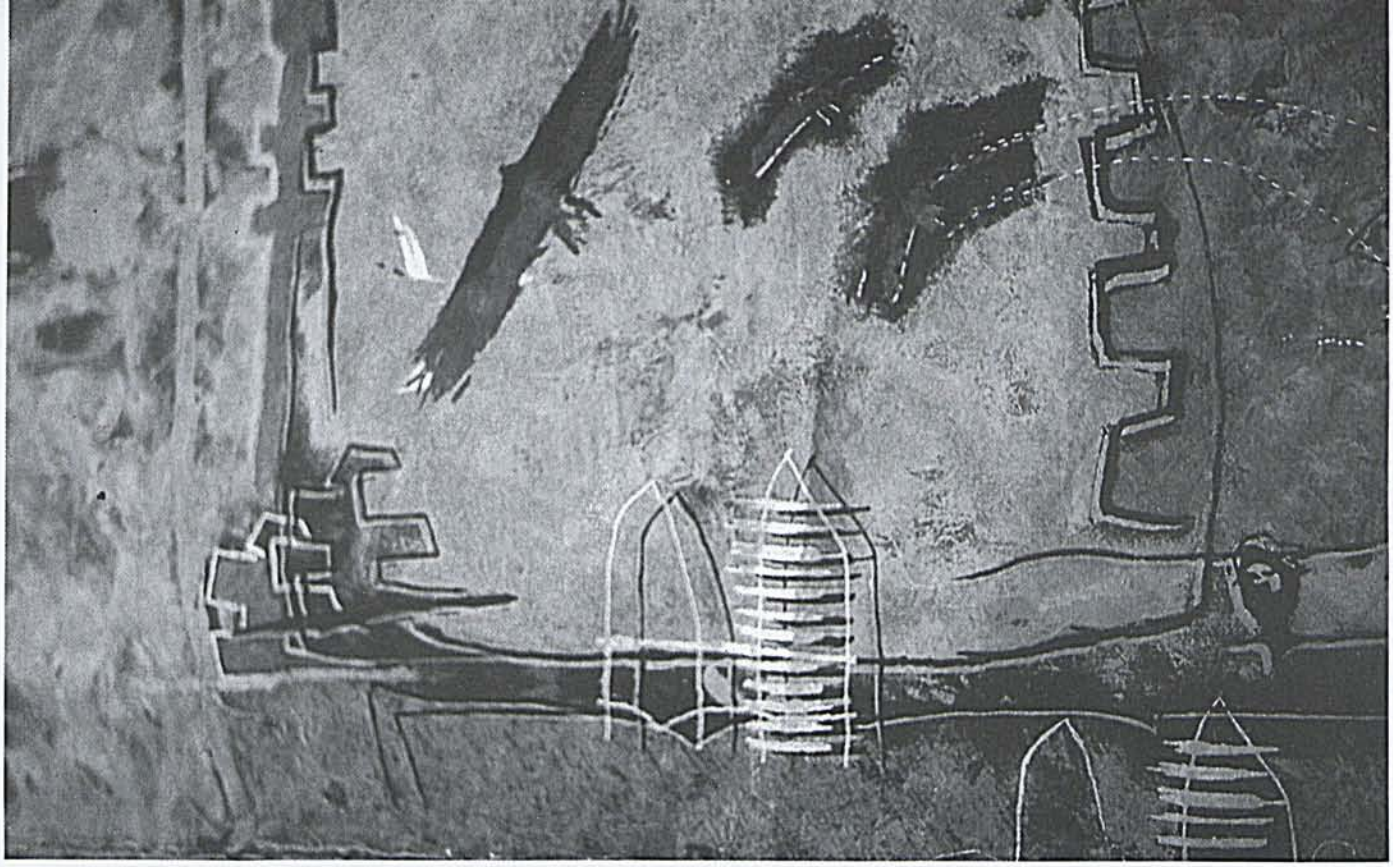
I am now interested in textile works which express and develop the other side of this capacity, that is, movements of strength, vigour, defiance and power. Not, of course, any strength, any vigour, etc., but that which harmonises with the values and concerns which I regard as fundamental both to myself and the textile medium.

Brigitte Gibbon is currently on a Yorkshire Arts Fellowship at the Swarthmore Centre, Leeds. Studied textiles and embroidery at Goldsmiths.

SALLY FRESHWATER



Sally Freshwater "All Saints Day" 185 x 420 cm 1984



NICOLA HENLEY

Nicola Henley "Buzzards" 227 x 185 cm 1983-4

Material: Images

The pieces I have in the exhibition are wall-hangings made primarily with textile techniques. Many viewers would categorize the work I do as "painting", although this intepretation is in my view erroneous. The essential difference being that the final piece is arrived at through a combination of traditional techniques drawn from a heritage of embroidery and textile printing.

The processes I use, such as hand stitching, screen-printing, machine embroidery and so on are essential in the development of the aesthetic "whole". As I work, I am always aware of the textile media in my hands: the warp and the weft of the calico, the tightening quality of a series of running stitches, the contrast of heavy and light materials. I use the various qualities of the materials to build the final visual statement.

In traditional painting the paint is applied to the material's surface whereas I create the picture from the material itself; building new surfaces with embroidered paper and muslin and discharging colour into the background cloth.

I consider my work to be decorative as well as attempting to be aesthetically stimulating, and encourage viewers to accept it on a purely visual level. People may find difficulty in this, as textiles (particularly printed textiles) have traditionally been for practical use, associated with clothing, furnishing and other domestic functions.

Since leaving college last year, the gallery owners I have approached have initially been unwilling to exhibit my work, as they view it as "craft", and simultaneously I have been unable to include pieces in certain craft events because they are not considered as functional. This is a very common problem for textile artists, which is why, in my opinion, "Material Evidence" is a significant exhibition.

Nicola Henley studied textiles and embroidery at Goldsmiths College of Art.

"Material Evidence": A Comment

I never consider myself a *'textile artist'* until something like the Camden exhibition puts me in that category. I see myself as no different from artists with a fine art background, except I have a different training to draw on. I use textiles in combination with other materials to build structures as an expression/exploration of my ideas — textiles are necessary to but not the main reason for my work.

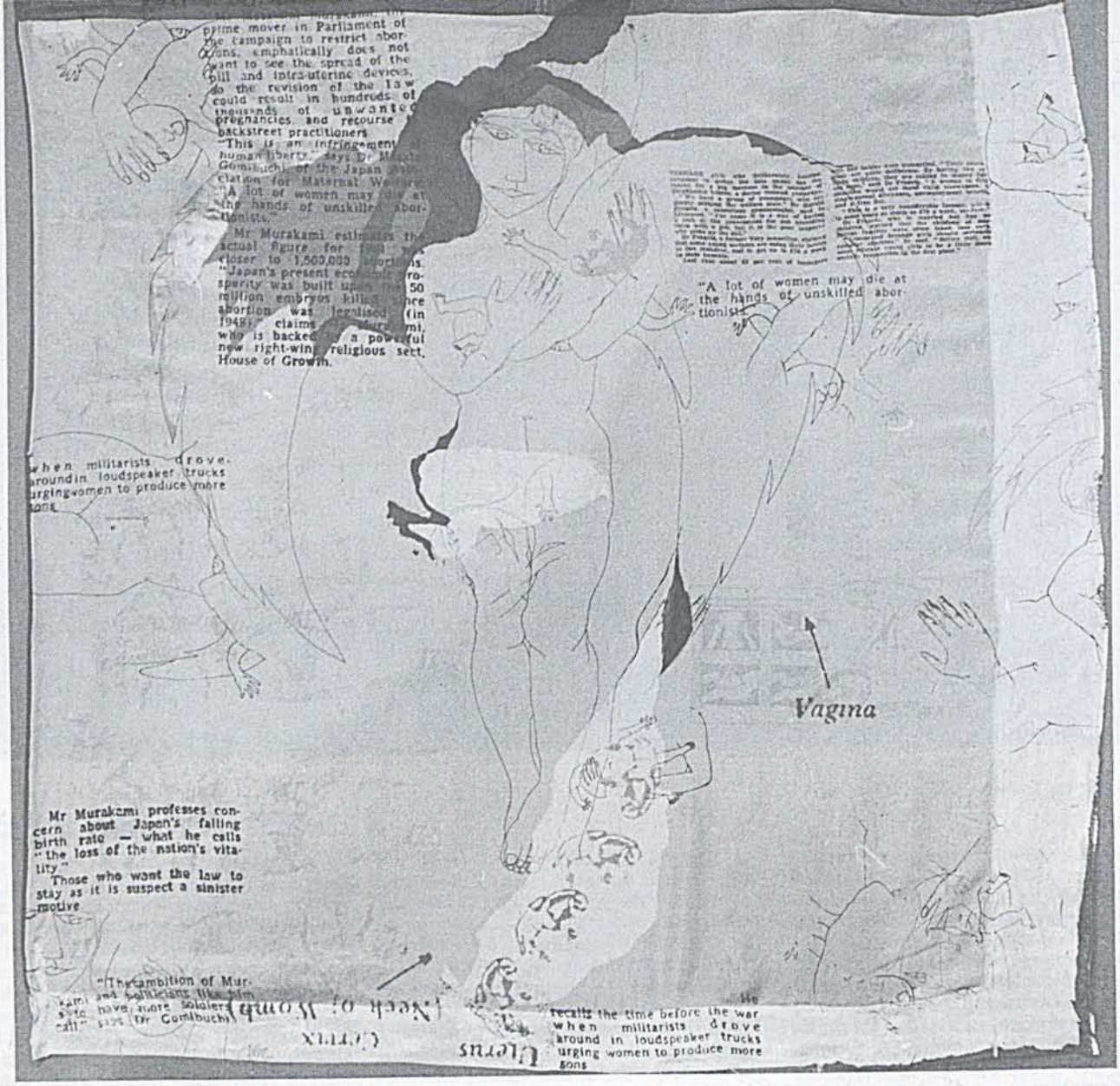
The best pieces in the exhibition have strong views and concepts as part of their reason for being and they are very much more than exploration of a textile process or creating a beautiful textile artefact.

I hope the diversity of the exhibits was not too overpowering for the general audience: though it illustrated well aspects of the work produced at Goldsmiths', a theme for future exhibitions would allow a more thorough survey of specific areas of the art.

More galleries should follow Camden's lead and create opportunities for this area of art to gain the exposure and recognition in this country that it has on the continent. Chances such as this exhibition are few but with regular visibility textile art will gain the acceptance it deserves and be viewed on a par with the other fine arts.

Sally Freshwater is presently working towards the 5th International Triennale of Tapestry in Lodz, Poland. Is also the Exhibitions Officer for Fibre Art. Presently, visiting tutor at Great Yarmouth College of Art and Design.

FRANCESCA SOUZA



Francesca Souza "Dying for the Cause" Print on silk 1m x 1m 1983

Talking of a Social Fabric

'.....*But she's got a little boy's face*', remarked the woman at the old folks' luncheon club. She was speaking of my young daughter who'd wandered in from the creche next door.

It has always struck me as peculiar how gender distinction takes precedence over that which is individual, as if communication could not continue without knowing what shape of human flesh lurks below. Our persistence to do so pervades with equal doses of blatancy and nuance, translating into monumental systems of sexual inequality. As a woman, mother, artist and childcare worker, there is a theme of issues which refuse to go away. So '*being on the ball*' is the only way to be, constructing my '*social*' fabrics as messengers who bring forth those areas of reality for which institutionalised logic has no time. For that matter not many galleries have either; giving exposure to art of the textile variety might be seen as making those definitions between art and craft a little too woolly, whilst that textile art which is deemed '*political*' can only hope to be shown in the context of exhibitions which celebrate the medium as women's work (unless, of course, it becomes fashionable...could it?).

If the ruling triad of Money-Dealer-Art (painted and sculpted) sickens you, then doesn't it make you ill that textile art (popularly known as craft) has always been demeaned to play second fiddle. There are many of us who were not at all surprised to learn this, what better classification would match the traditional makers of this visual expression than the second class citizen.

'MATERIAL EVIDENCE' is the third exhibition in which my works have been included. The show, whatever else, consists of over forty women (and one man) displaying a diversity of creations a la textiles in an exhibition which unfortunately doesn't escape the problems of fragmentation and mix'n mis-match typical of most large combined shows. Nevertheless, it can only be a good thing which disturbs the 'natural hierarchy' of fineness.

While jointly '*presiding*' in the New Contemporaries 1984, a considerable campaign was launched on art schools to encourage the submission of "*non-functional*" textile works. The purpose of this policy was a shot at supporting the dismantling of the great divide, (textile departments still comprise of 99% women) and the ludicrous prejudice which determines what is Fine in accordance with a classification of materials. Unfortunately, good news travels slowly, or old attachments die hard, for by the time the show was hung only the most discerning of observers would have noticed that any attempt to infiltrate had been made at all.

Like it's been said before, art alone cannot change the world; and on that score, no one alone can change the world. Given that our individual influence is minimal, it is only possible to work on a level of interference, where the viewer is nudged into digesting something more than the meaning of colour and form.

Speaking of my own work, the feminist's old cliche of "*the personal is the political*" lives on.

Francesca Souza studied textiles and embroidery at Goldsmiths College of Art.