Peter Moore

GHOST REV

November 17 18 1965 New Cinema Festival I, Cinematheque (Astor Place Theater) NY

My first performance to incorporate film—film as a material element—began when Gerd Stern asked me to collaborate with USCO* on a film/performance event for the new Cinematheque, where Jonas Mekas had arranged a series of special evenings. The year before I had started to edit the first footage of "Fuses" in my loft: at some moment I projected the film onto a wall of irregularly-shaped rectangular white boxes which I'd made as a sectional bridge between two floor-to-ceiling panels of a construction. Until that time I'd considered filmmaking only as an independent, discrete, self-contained language. But studying the film as it was split into multiple moving images and planes shifted my reticence about including film in performance. "Fuses" was structured to emphasize my concern with impacting and intensifying the focal plane, the illusory spatial dimensions—while at the same time "breaking" the frame by scratching, dying, bleaching, cutting and gluing frames, layering and collage. Because of its visual complexity a film such as "Fuses" couldn't become part of a performance. But I saw the way film could be activated by literal, formal properties into a material equation with the constructions: increasing the ambiguity of the focal plane of film into actual space; extending, compounding repetitions and variations of color, rhythm, texture and literal imagery from film into environment and performance.

The electronic systems USCO was using in 1965 were advanced and original: strobes with film and slide projection, alternating currents for projectors on tilting bases and fitted with macro and micro lenses, cathode rays . . . and other systems developed by their community. Gerd screened the films for me and we agreed to the collaboration on the understanding that I would work **against** the physical integrity of the films. The USCO films incorporated real time or established image-sets of specific things—highways, signs, symbols—and several films were not too complex to preclude live performance.

What I proposed (Gerd consented) was to dominate the films perceptually with

Peter Moore

*USCO (us company) was composed of artist/technicians working and living cooperatively—variable number of men and women who, like guild artisans, did not want to be individually identified apart from the group. Stern asked me to work without my name being used, though he was well known as the director of USCO. As a painter I stubbornly identified with the signature scrawled on my canvasses since I was fourteen. As a young woman, the world was constantly trying to absorb me, rename me, and define my functions. It was all very well for men to choose to be anonymous! I was aware I was fighting for my actual functional identity by insisting on attribution by name.

Peter Moore

physical activity. The performance presumed the films antagonistic, that the two performers would spread action in literal dimensions **away from** the fixed-screen illusions of image, depth, speed, rhythm, direction, duration. It was that or have a performance embellishing and ancillary to the films—a stylization.

Ghost Rev (I took the title from the final film) was a curiously calm but intense performance—the first time I made a work for just myself and another woman, and it had a deep intimacy and mystery. Phoebe Neville has always been a rare dancer, one whose training never interferes with her ability to take physical risks in unrestrained improvisation, and one with whom I was always able to freely extend my most fluid, untried ideas. We stained our bodies with whiting under painter's overalls (worn to de-emphasize our body shapes). Our props included buckets of red and white paint, large brushes, knives, small flashlights on cords, ropes, iron and ironing board, whistles and brooms—a strange combination of transposed painting and domestic implements.

SCORE

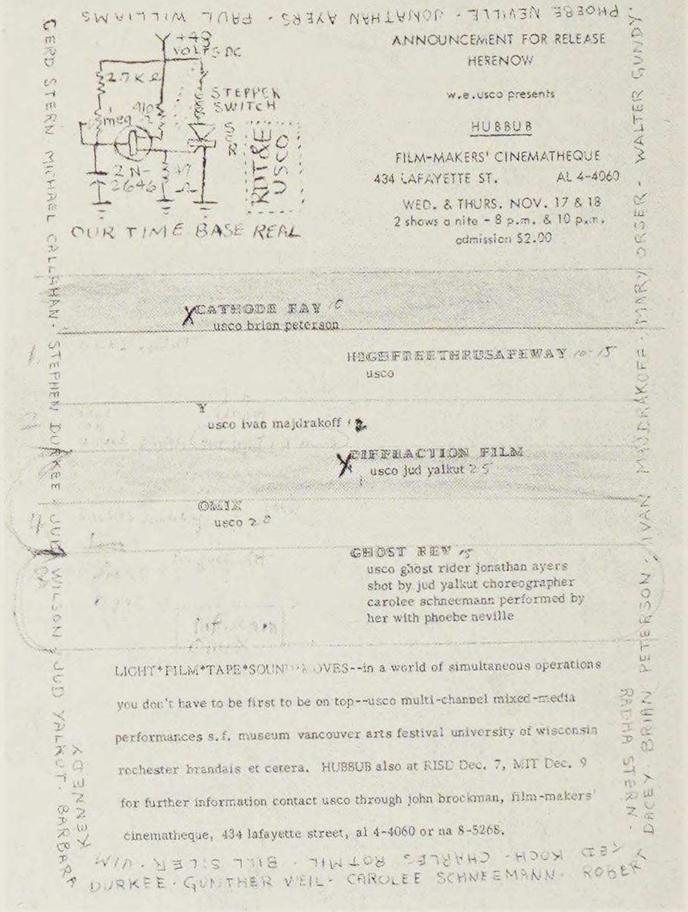
1) HIGHFREETHRUSAFEWAY

Centered in the projection beam, Neville and I slit layers of paper screen away with knives until the images are intersected with wavering lines; slicing finally through the last layer the film imagery dissolves into the dark back wall.

We blow the whistles (against the soundtrack of a motorcycle), crawling slowly down ladders we have tipped from the stage onto the first row of seats; we crawl across shoulders and laps of the audience, film projected on our overalls. We reach into pockets and give the audience bubble-blowing jars, blowers. As we approach the rear seats and turn to crawl back, we drape strings of flashlights around ourselves. Soap bubbles blown by the audience shine in the projection beam.

2) Y

We crawl up the ladders to the stage, lift and position them in front of new screens which we unroll from large cores of paper. With brushes and buckets of paint we "attack" the multiple projection of filmed words—one of us "catching" strokes of circular letters, the other vertical letters—as they flash on. Quickly we move back and forth. The "frame" edge begins to blur as shreds of piled paper and glimmers of splattered paint accumulate on the walls and stage.



During Jud Yalkut's DIFFRACTION FILM we disappear.

3) OMIX
Phoebe enters with an ironing board, sets it stage center, and in the flickering light begins to iron white shirts. They are hung on hangers onto the ladders. She irons and calls to me: Where are you... come on out here...bring the ropes... where are you?...I enter and remove the iron; Phoebe tips the ironing board against a ladder; we turn slowly, go down on our knees, crawl forward to each other with arms extended. We touch one another's shoulders and begin a slow exchange of pushing, falling back, rising, pushing, falling back. We carefully unbutton our trousers, pull out a length of rope, lean forward to tie it around each other's waist—a coil of rope in each of our pockets. We rise swaying against the tension of the rope and begin a sequence of roping each other in and out—letting our full weight pull against the rope the other holds, so that at times we are almost reeled out into the audience, off the edge of the stage. As we are reeled back and forth we call out the words seen in rapid cuts in OMIX: go do don't won't can't ow no now how our your us let hold on high up want blow. **Black out.**

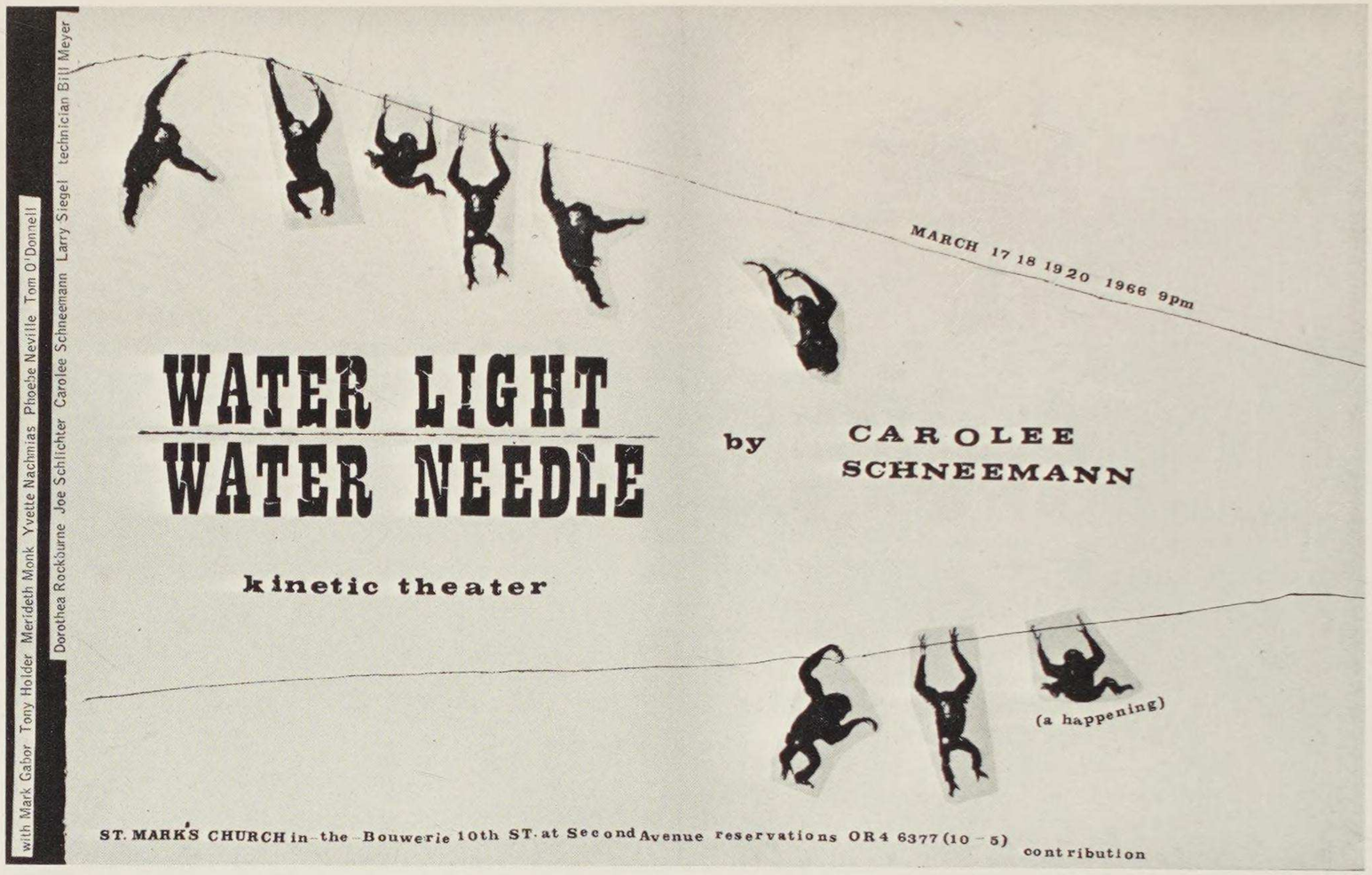
Peter Moore

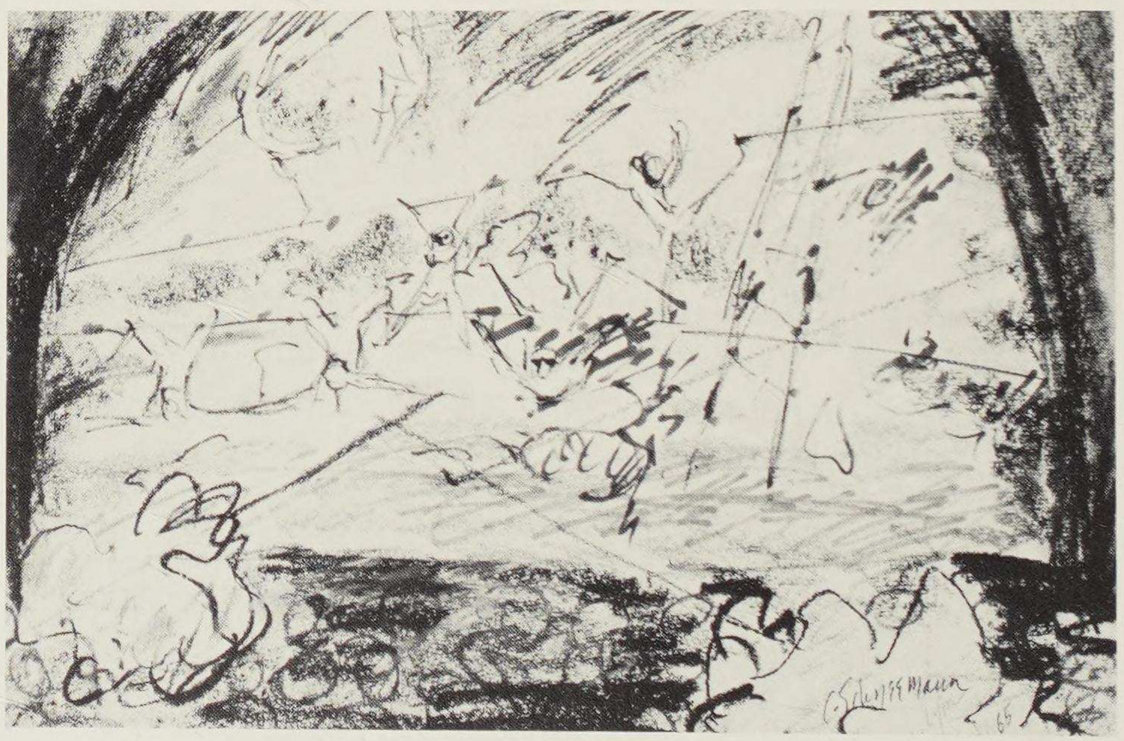
Ted Wester

4) GHOST REV

Creation of Faces. We are seated side by side on stools, facing out slightly towards the audience, the film continuously projecting across us onto the screen behind. We cannot see the audience, we sense their shapes: shadows as boundaries within the light. Slowly, looking directly at each other, we smear white grease paint on one another's faces in a sustained exchange. The whiting is buttery, applied thickly with the fingers, full arm awareness with the touching strokes.

With one or two hands the first woman reaches out to the face of the other, slowly pushes her cheeks, brows, nose, chin, lips or jaw into an expression, and withdraws her hands. The first woman watches the "face" she has created... and its transformation. The woman receiving the face finds that it creates emotion, evokes memory, assumes character...She allows her facial muscles to relax and the face to fade away. Certain created faces (the most ugly, painful ones) will not fade, as if they possess our muscles and have to be **broken**; we seek some counter muscle movement to dispell the rigid face by opening the mouth wide, shifting the jaw up or down, or slowly shaking the head.


WATER LIGHT
WATER NEEDLE
kinetic theater
by CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN
MARCH 17 18 19 20 1966 9pm
(a happening)
with Mark Gabor Tony Holder Merideth Monk Yvette Nachmias Phoebe Neville Tom O'Donnell
Dorothea Rockburne Joe Schlichter Carolee Schneemann Larry Siegel technician Bill Meyer
ST. MARK'S CHURCH in-the-Bouwerie 10th ST. at Second Avenue reservations OR4 6377 (10 – 5)
contribution



WATER LIGHT
WATER NEEDLE

March 17 18 19 20 1966 St. Mark's Church NY

May 29 1966 Havemayer Estate MahWah NJ

To celebrate the success of **Meat Joy** in Paris, my friend Francois-Bernard Mâche gave me a train ticket to Venice to attend the Biennale '64. I walked off the train and across the station into startling reversals of figure and ground, water and stone, dazzling light and shadow, solidity, transparency. It seemed musical, contrapuntal: echoing footsteps in narrow alleys, the surge of bodies, the constant unexpected appearance of water lapping at the side of a street, the recurring verticality of steeples, spires, posts, masts, and the human figure itself—cubistic, spatially ambiguous. Palaces rose out of the water—closed, impenetrable, or festive with lines of blowing clothes. Moving fluidly by vaporetto along the irregular canals induced a sensation of floating, suspension.

It was as if I had physically entered my own mirror constructions where focus will converge and splinter depending on the angle of observation; like the fragmented mirrors the waterways shaping Venice enlarge detailed optical effects, merging and duplicating whatever is "outside," including the viewer. The network of waterways and the mirror constructions arouse a sense of "rising out of", rather than "being upon" a fixed plane. Sensory disorientation led to new conceptual considerations over the days of my explorations of Venice (including the frenetic international "art world", reunions, the drunken parties and receptions, hours on the beach, sleeping under an equestrian statue in Piazza Academia lacking money for a hotel room): the inclusion and transformation of subjective response to environment, the city as a model of fixed transience. The accumulation of visual and sensory effects was more extensive than any of the observable components would indicate of themselves.

Venice and the Illinois prairies are the opposite extremes from the rolling, dense Pennsylvania and New England landscape I know best. If Illinois had been an "empty stage," Venice was full, a constant performance arena of operatic proportions. In Illinois my own verticality and frontal vision centered as a hub in a wheel, or plumb-line positioned in the unvarying expanse; only the details of forms close to the body shifted scale. In Venice water is "ground," duplicating, reflecting the repeated upright rhythms—whatever is above the horizon line is also below the horizon line mirrored in water.

Underpinning the incredible Baroque details of Venetian architecture was this basic grid: scattering light on waves, on glass, the moving colors of crowds, the continual horizontal pulse of vaporetti, speedboats, gondolas. Sounds them-

March 17 18 19 20 1966

St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery presents

10th St. & Second Avenue N.Y.C.

WATER LIGHT
WATER NEEDLE

Kinetic Theatre by

CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

with-

Mark Sabor Tony Holder Meredith Monk Yvette Machmias Phoebe Neville

Tom O'Donnell Dorothea Rockburne Joe Schlichter Carolee Schneemann

Larry Siegel

****

Guides--Michelle Stuart Linda Sampson

Exterior Sound--Philip Corner with Ferdy Buonanno

Interior Sound, Organ_-- Aldis Lagzdins (Fri. Sun.) Larry Leitch (Thurs.Sat.)

William Meyer -- Rigging Lighting Technical realizations
Joe Forn -- Stage Manager Technical assistance
Phoebe Neville -- Technical assistance
Joe Jones -- Cloud light realization
Bernard E. Kirschenbaum -- Architectural advisor
Bernard Olderman -- Roustabout

****

Rope - Mr. Schenk Paper - Harry Lerner Ribbon - Stylecut
Trucking - Ed Iverson Fans - David Stone

Mailing: Emmett Williams Alison Knowles Judy Vyssotsky Mrs. Allen
Phoebe Neville Jonathon Altman Max Neuhaus Horatio Szwarcer
Al Hansen Valerie Hansen Pat Cook Ralph Cook Barbara Harris

Detail work: Judy Vyssotsky Marta Minujin Ann Charters Mark
Brusse Jonathon Altman John Brockman Barbara Harris Jack Agueros
James Tenney Alex Sobolowsky

Very special thanks to Ralph Cook, Rev. Allen and the St. Marks's staff and parish, who made these performances possible by providing us with time, space production costs and good will.

Grateful thanks to William Meyer, Phoebe Neville and Joe Forn who volunteered their invaluable help for over three weeks.

****

No photographs may be taken of the performance without permission from Miss Schneemann.

selves were lifted and mixed in the air, their physical origins deflected. A tissue of light seemed to be the source of color, form, the substance of matter. Added to this was the relative invisibility of the domestic and social lives of Venetians apart from their services to tourists.

Water Light/Water Needle was conceived as an aerial work for ropes rigged across the canal at San Marco. I proposed "Acqua Notte" to Leo Castelli at the Biennale. Later that year I re-designed it for L'Opera de Lyon, the director's son, Humbert Camerlo, being intrigued with images of performers gliding on pulleys stretched for 500 yards between the highest balconies and the stage. I built a model with dolls in harnesses on pulleys (which I subsequently destroyed as the rejections for this "impossible" proposal accumulated). The images of suspension, floating effortlessly, continued to be confounded as I tried to produce the work in New York. It seemed I was dedicated to a structural fantasy. There had to be walls to which steel supports could be anchored, steel pulleys and fittings which would accommodate 3/4 inch manilla rope: thinner rope would cut performers hands and legs, fatter rope was impossible to grasp for periods of sustained time.

Peter Moore

Metal fatigue, rope tortion, knotting, braiding, the hardware of rigging dogged my dreams of a possible space. And the image insisted on an open rigging of interdependent ropes—not placed against a wall or anchored behind a stage.

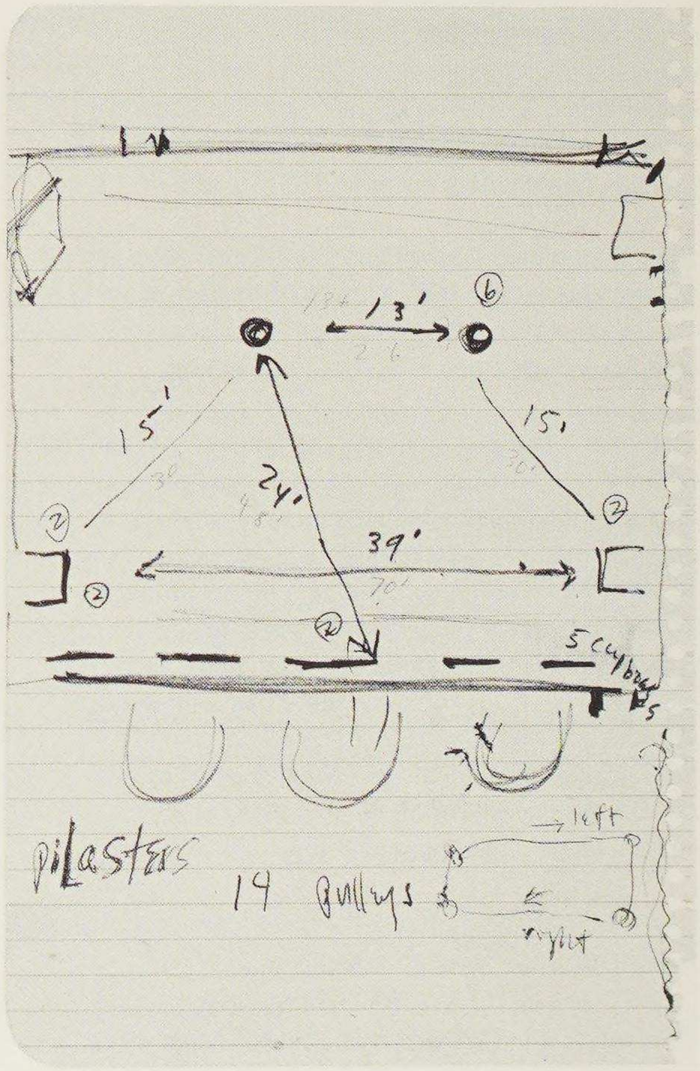
Water Light/Water Needle was finally realized within a large open room at Saint Mark's Church in the Bowery (Venetian name sake!), then later rigged in a grove of trees to be filmed. The transparencies of Venice still motivated the actual aerial arrangement of ropes which enclosed or surrounded the audience seated below.

Discovering that the two delicate fluted pillars twelve feet apart in the middle of the St. Mark's parish meeting room were indeed made of steel seemed a religious miracle worthy of the Venice cathedrals. The side walls of the rooms were solid enough to be braced with steel supports. Reverend Allen and Ralph Cook would risk performers falling onto an audience. And they would pay for the mailing and provide production funds of $200.

The next physical paradox was human: "effortless" movement on the ropes was exhausting and painful; we had to slowly build calouses on our hands, feet, behind the knees. To raise ourselves and to hang from the ropes we had to sustain "muscle memory" which required a minimum of working out on the ropes for three hours every other day. Missing one rehearsal was starting all over again.

The sculptor and architect Bernie Kirschenbaum generously gave structural advice. The sculptor Bill Meyers single-handedly built the steel wall supports, designed pulleys and rings. I somehow convinced a shipyard to contribute a hundred and fifty feet of 3/4 inch manilla rope. Joe Jones, Flux musician and sound sculptor, worked with me constructing the "clouds" which floated on adjacent pulleys under the ceilings down into the audience; filled with twinkling lights the clouds signaled the beginning and end of movement sequences. The church gave permission to open the choir loft where a volunteer organist would play the Bach-Vivaldi A minor concerto—which flooded in at the conclusion of **WL/WN**, the performers barely visible in near darkness, slowly moving back into the row of white cupboards against the wall from which they had originally burst out. The window above these cupboards faced into the church courtyard. A firescape was behind them.

The interior sounds were the swooshing of the "clouds" on pulleys, the threatening clanks and bangs of the steel rigging as the ropes were traversed, and the calls of the performers to one another. Outside in the courtyard Philip Corner evolved a score of seemingly random noises, peripheral and threatening.



NOTES 1

Character of movement: NOT acrobatic
NOT balletic
always functional: you are always consciously involved with gravity, your precarious, variable journey on the ropes: your partners are each other, gravity, ropes.

Concentration on contact with the ropes: balance, stretch, the continuous slight sway of the ropes strengthens and relaxes the motions of the body; the facial expressions are natural. The balancing and stretching opens the diaphram; sounds which echo in your chest/throat from muscular pressures can be emitted. The tendency in current performance to tone down both facial and vocal expression should be avoided (half of you have performance experience): relax your throats—the breath carries the energy of each motion—permit the spontaneous impulse to sound. Range of grunts, groans, exhalations, exclamations, panting (by the time you're on hand-over-hand hangs), and cry out if falling—we'll all need to know.

Signal vocally to other performers when you are going to change the tension on the rope they are using; when on a higher rope and swinging down and for jumps from one rope to another.

You must not pass another performer on the ropes without physical contact; each independent journey will be temporarily suspended, deflected or changed by an encounter. Each presence should be treated as contact—combinations of bodies remains an extension of the ropes which support us, a unique spatial configuration. Encounters of more than two people will change the movement rhythms of individual journeys by tightening their sections of the rope. Our awareness of each other stretches the entire length of all rope levels.

When passing on parallel ropes above or below another body, try to make contact with it.

The basic rope walk is hand over hand: frontal, back and forth, sideways, forward and back. Impulse to change the basic walk is taken from the tensing or slackening of the rope dependent on the motions of everyone else.

1 March 66

NOTES 2

Phrases of movement build by individual body's energy duration; relational shifts between one another.

(visual verbal tactile genital—action flow stream impulse to each other sparking a harmonious collusion)

Preparatory exercises to rid the men of competitiveness, muscular feats, unnecessary exploits on the ropes, risks which become dangerous to others—not being sensitive enough

For everyone: more intensity, concentration; greater visual focus on where you are in space; don't take your body movement for granted and don't predetermine it—feel the motion as part of the ropes, flow into it (sway of the ropes like an ebb and flow of water)

Reminder: this work is actual, functional movement and evocative. No gesturing, funny, mechanical or acrobatic "effects." We are a unitary system; your own energy and the position of the ropes expands, vibrates and extends each motion. Every movement and every moment is relational.

Think of the ropes as flesh extension—conveyance. Concentrate on "feeling" HERE—not a literal emotion but a sense of connectedness. In beginning rehearsals we will work alone, stay alone until we begin to flow into someone else, an object, the floor, the ceiling, lining of our stomach, weight of our wrists stretched out above our heads...

...each particular moment contributes to the total time in space—every individual body unit is in relation to the environment and to any other body which leads us to a full peripheral awareness...

The freedoms we have in this work exist within the unique conditions of the rope for which we mutually assume responsibility for ourselves and each other.

You are the imagery and you are not the image.

5 March 66

RULES

I. Entrance & Approaches

On your first entrance from the cupboards and after each rest, decide which rope you wish to move to; go and make contact with it and immediately leave the rope—turn away, move in another direction before returning to the rope you have chosen. Or, having turned away from the rope, you may change your mind; pick another, go to it, make contact, turn away...or choose a third rope...turn away...return.

Moving directly onto a rope you've chosen slackens your time impulse; the turning away and returning builds the energy with which you finally mount the rope.

II. Contact

1. Low ropes: frontal and hand-over-hand movement. When another performer is met on the ropes, each frees a hand from support on the rope to turn the head of the person encountered; the turns are slow, deliberate, sensitive; may be done simultaneously, from face to face, from behind. At times there may be three or four almost simultaneous head-turns. Each person continues their movements with the meshing of their bodies.

2. Low and Mid Ropes: frontal and hand over hand and lying across ropes. At each encounter a head turn is exchanged and the bodies combine, impinge on each other's movements; these combinations alter the specific directions and forms of individual movements. The performer situated on the rope to accept the weight of the other may

carry them along in their motion; there is never a struggle; the balance of each on the ropes regulates the possible combinations.

3. Low and Mid and High Ropes: knee hangs, arm hangs, swings
   Encounters effect the head turns, body combinations, carries and lifts.

III. Rests

1. Voluntary—at any time you choose you may leave the ropes and go to the cupboards, the shelf, the center area. You may rest as long as you wish.

2. Slips from the ropes—if a slip from a rope (or a fall) puts you on the floor in a position from which you cannot simply reach out and re-establish contact with a rope, you must take a rest for a few moments.

3. Enforced—the clouds will be pulled along their pulleys at specific intervals; when they reach the end of their cord—descending into the audience area—the Guides signal the immediate start of the enforced rest by shattering glass bottles with hammers. If your position on the ropes is not comfortable for a rest there, drop down to the center area, to the cupboards or to the shelf. You must rest a minimum count of two minutes.

   The first person to begin moving on the ropes after an enforced rest is left alone for a minimum count of sixty seconds. The duration of the enforced rest depends on the impulse to move of one person.

4. All rests—at the conclusion of any rest, performers must pause at the grease crayons and apply a smear of crayon on their face.

   The white workclothes as they get dirty will model the shapes of our bodies; the crayon smears have the effect of modeling our faces—toning the face as the white clothes become toned.

The character of our rests should be as relaxed as a resting animal; experience the fatigue and muscle strain; we almost completely give up contact with the activity of the others still on the ropes. A completely experienced "rest" can convey the consistent and unique muscular activity which—on the ropes—looks "effortless"—by its actual loss of effort. The selfless absorption of an animal resting. If you go to rest in an area where someone else is already resting, curl up on them...be comfortable (it is a nesting).

10 March

REMINDERS

Signal changes from one rope to another; speak to each other whenever necessary: for help, coordination of movement, to adjust position, for the pleasure of it...

All sounds occurring from your physical actions are part of the sound environment (the noises from outside, noises made by the audience, the constant clank and metalic rings of the rigging...)

The minimal physical exchange would be when the person who is either first or able, takes one hand off the rope and carefully moves the head of the encountered person to another angle or position. Instantaneous decisions as to who is first to free a hand or hands: you may have to support your partner. If a third (or even a fourth) performer comes into contact with two others, all suspend intended movement until the relay of contact exchange is made. The quality of the head-shifts is always intimate, sensitive, intense...

After a face shift you may evolve more complex body encounters...or you may pass on. The person whose face has been turned lets the position gradually relax before continuing.

When you come up behind someone on a rope you must imitate their movements until you overtake them—not as a game but to echo their rhythm so as not to throw them or forcibly change their motion.

Secret instruction to the women: take more physical risks, chances with the men: hang on them, leap on them, embrace them, creep up on them, give your full weight to them.

In the beginning when we are locked in the cupboard shelves use the isolation to find your real attitude for the time; we'll be under great pressure—try to come in contact with it—tired, anxious, fearful, high, pleased, anticipatory, blank...Work that into the silence, the sense of all our bodies in proximity through the walls. Unity, conspiracy, warmth, potential action; the strange but familiar world we share waiting...edged by the energy of the spectators...feeling them also through the cupboard walls...spectators as definition and containment of our unique focus, our coherence.

Our closest moment should be in these separate cupboards. Each sends their full energy stream forward to the person in the next cupboard. Wait until you do feel connected to one another...wait as long as necessary. Concentrate until all of us sense linkage through the walls as clear as the ropes waiting outside.

There will each time be one of us who gathers the energy increment of all of us and explodes the cupboard door open.

(During this time the tension may provoke disturbances among the audience. For instance one man started yelling "What is this, a sacred ritual or something? Where's the action?" One of the guides went to him with the previous instruction to touch him with her pole, kneel down and whisper in his ear "just be patient" or "I'll lead you out now if you want to leave." It was usually only men who made disruptions, any aggressive response intensified theirs, we anticipated that the guides (Shepardesses) would have a calming effect.)

SCORE

I.

9:00-9:20

The audience is led in by Guides (carrying shepardess staves) in twos and fours; settled in semi-circle of crumpled papers around ropes. Two house lights, soft, murky (green & blue).

The Guides ask the audience groups to read their programs while they fluff the papers around them, which they do repeatedly, adjusting the papers around the accumulating groups. A row of seats against the walls is reserved for the old, infirm or fearful.

Performers are all hidden in a row of open cupboards behind a curtain. We relax in the cramped positions and concentrate our energy through the cupboard partitions.

Musicians: Philip and Ferdi are in back room waiting to go outside by rear door.

9:20-9:30

House lights out, Xmas lights on. Carolee and Larry enter from the kitchen carrying trays of crumpled paper; we go through the audience to the fans, kneel down, turn them on, listen to them. . .begin to drift papers in front of the blades slowly, finally filling the center aisle with blowing paper heaps.
Silence. Musicians wait.

II.

9:30-9:40

Turn off the fans. Push fans to side walls. C & L exit behind curtain, close all the cupboards quietly and each choose a vacant shelf for themselves. Joe and Bud walk through the audience and slowly roll up the huge curtain, revealing closed cupboards, unoccupied space. Exit with curtain.

9:40-9:50

Emergence from cupboards. The performers have concentrated on passing their energy to each other through the five cupboard partitions. The audience becomes anxious. The first performer to feel that the energy of all has centered in their cupboard bursts it open, shattering the hinges. The others wait until they individually feel the cumulative impulse to emerge.

The first performer moves onto a low rope slowly after hesitation/choice. If two performers arrive at ropes simultaneously, one waits in position for the other to move for two minutes; each performer counts two minutes before moving onto the ropes after another.

III.

9:50-10:10

Walking/Encounters/Carries—all performers. **Low & Middle ropes.** Musicians begin soft noise clusters outside the windows. Guides send up lighted clouds on the pulleys which

traverse from audience level to ceiling on opposite walls beyond the ropes. The clouds are brought back down after fifteen minutes. Shatter glass to signal first enforced rest, 10:10-10:13.

IV.

10:13-10:30

Clouds pulled back up. After first performer has begun to move again on ropes for two minutes, the Guides count for fifteen minute sequence.

Go directly to rope you want, face it, touch it, turn away and return, or turn away and lift anyone still resting and carry them to a position on the rope; they in turn face the rope, touch it, turn away and return or turn away and lift a resting performer, and drag or carry them to rope . . .After each rest, enforced or chosen, smear a streak of blacking on face. Climbs/Hanging. **Middle & High ropes.** Broken Line Relay.

Guides bring clouds down through audience. Smash glass signalling enforced rest. Turn off cloud lights. Gold spot light on. Joe ready on ladder. Organist up to choir loft. Musicians outside silent.

V.

10:30-10:34

Lights out, flashlight beams on. Performers climb onto cupboard, huddle together, decide in whispers which four will go out onto the ropes in the dark, following flashlight beams directed by Joe. Two figures remain standing on top of the cupboard; two others sit or lie down there.

10:34-10:42

In the darkness the two teams slowly follow light beams guiding their movement. The lights shift from one team to the other: a start-and-stop series of hand-over-hand walks and carries on the **middle ropes.**

10:42-10:50

Xmas side lights up on floor. Side doors open as Organist begins Bach-Vivaldi A minor at full volume. The other performers slide from shelf onto floor. . .moving on low ropes in the minimal light. The two teams are on the high ropes—they return to the floor, or make an exchange with two others on the **low ropes,** or with one another on the **high ropes.**

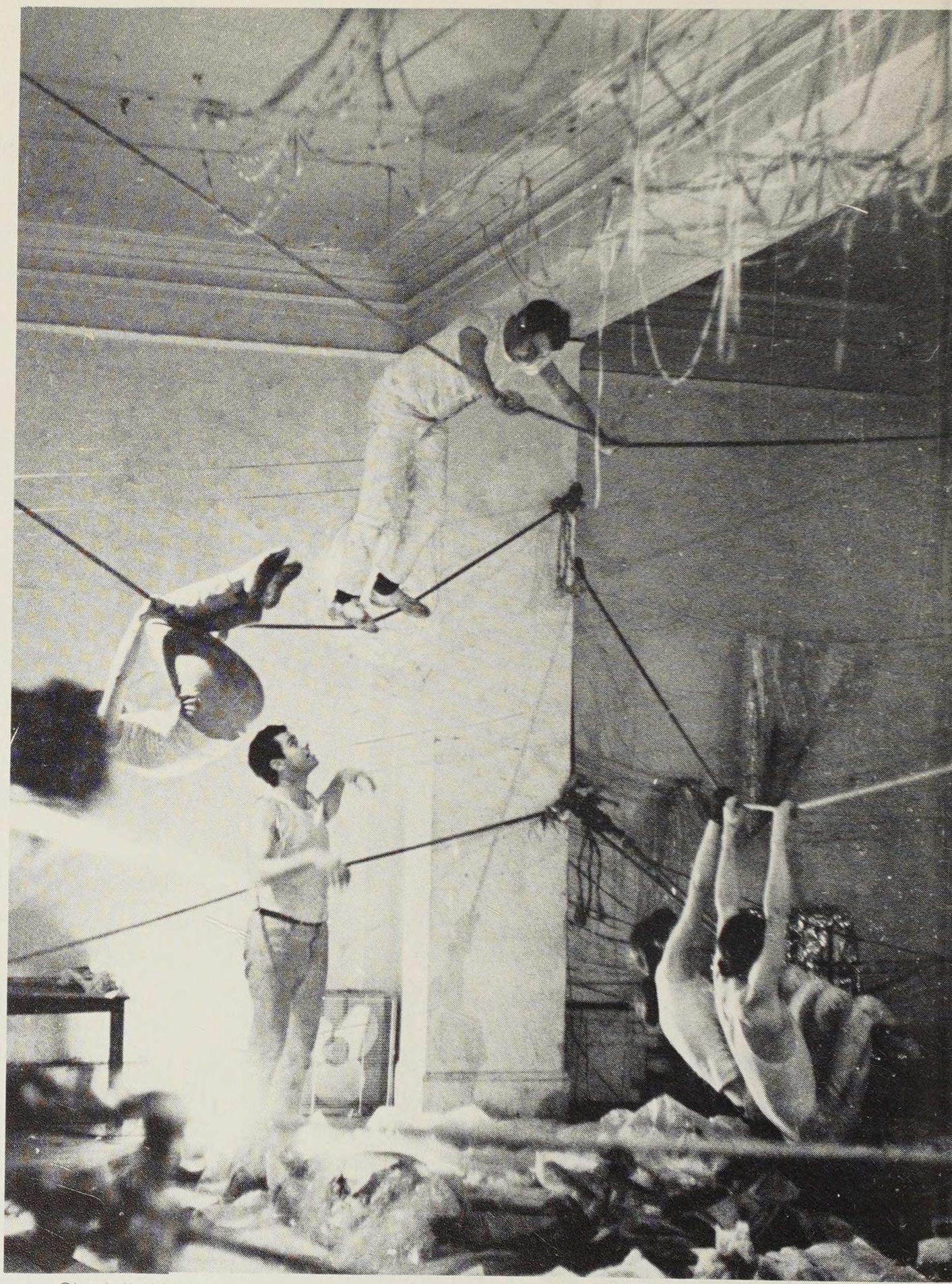
10 50-10 57

Organist continues. . .first movement of the Bach-Vivaldi over and over. Performers slowly touching, shifting contact with each other, begin to draw back into cupboards—falling, dragging, lying, sitting in the open shelves. Joe and Bud enter with the long curtain and spread it over the back rope. . .the cupboards disappear from view. Side lights out. House lights on. Guides signal the organist to stop playing as the audience exits.

John Weber

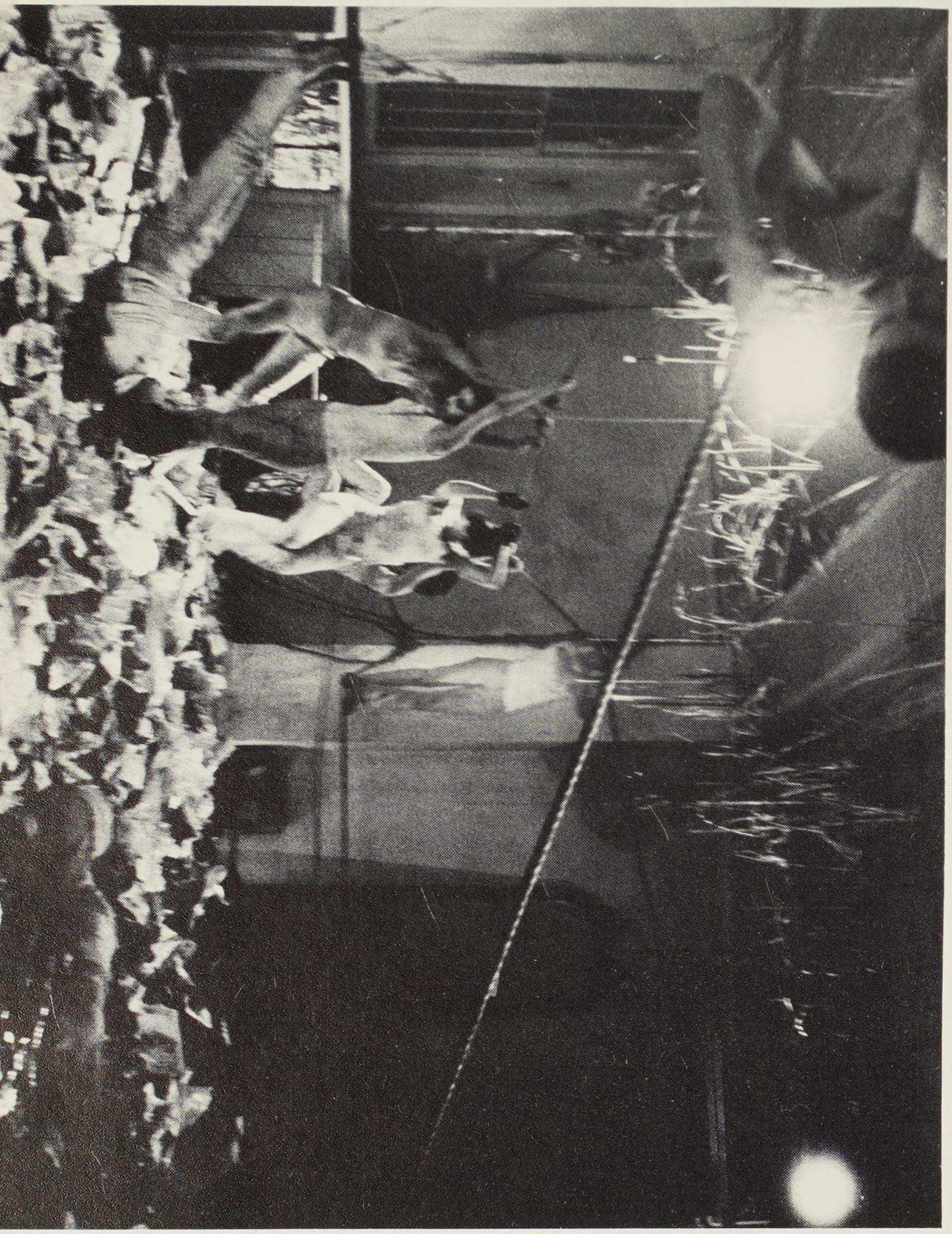
Peter Moore

erry Schutté



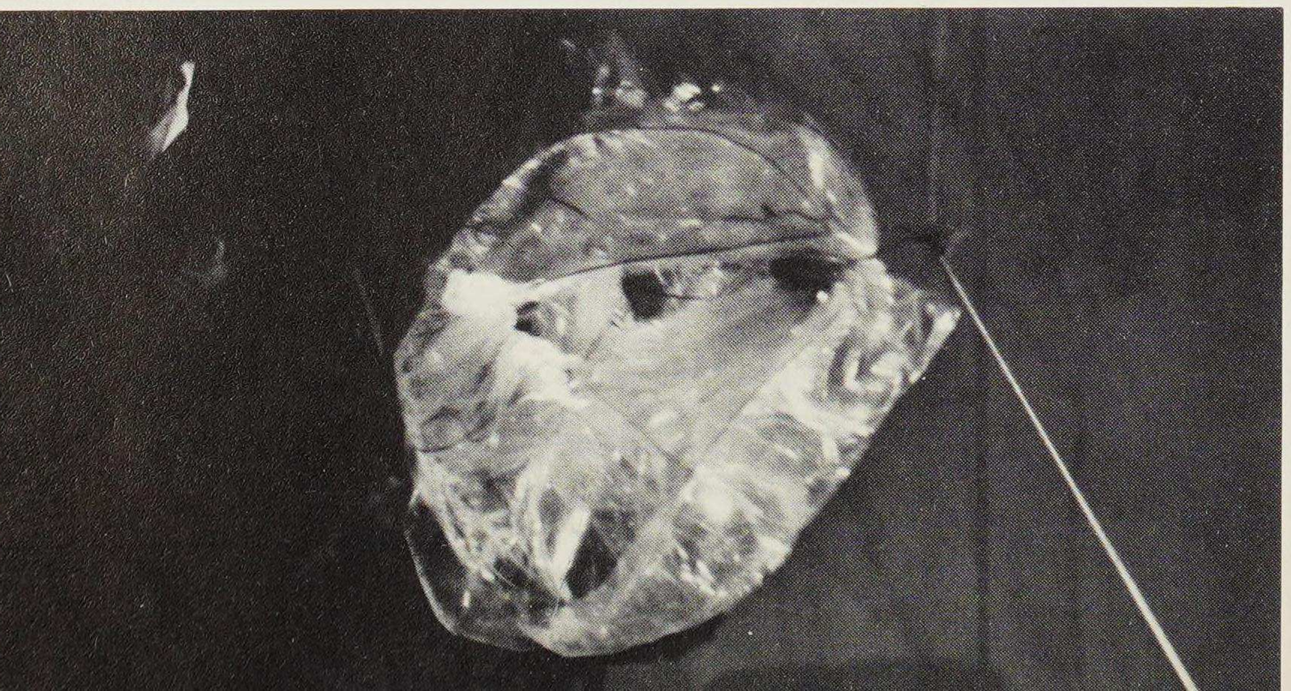
Charlotte Victoria

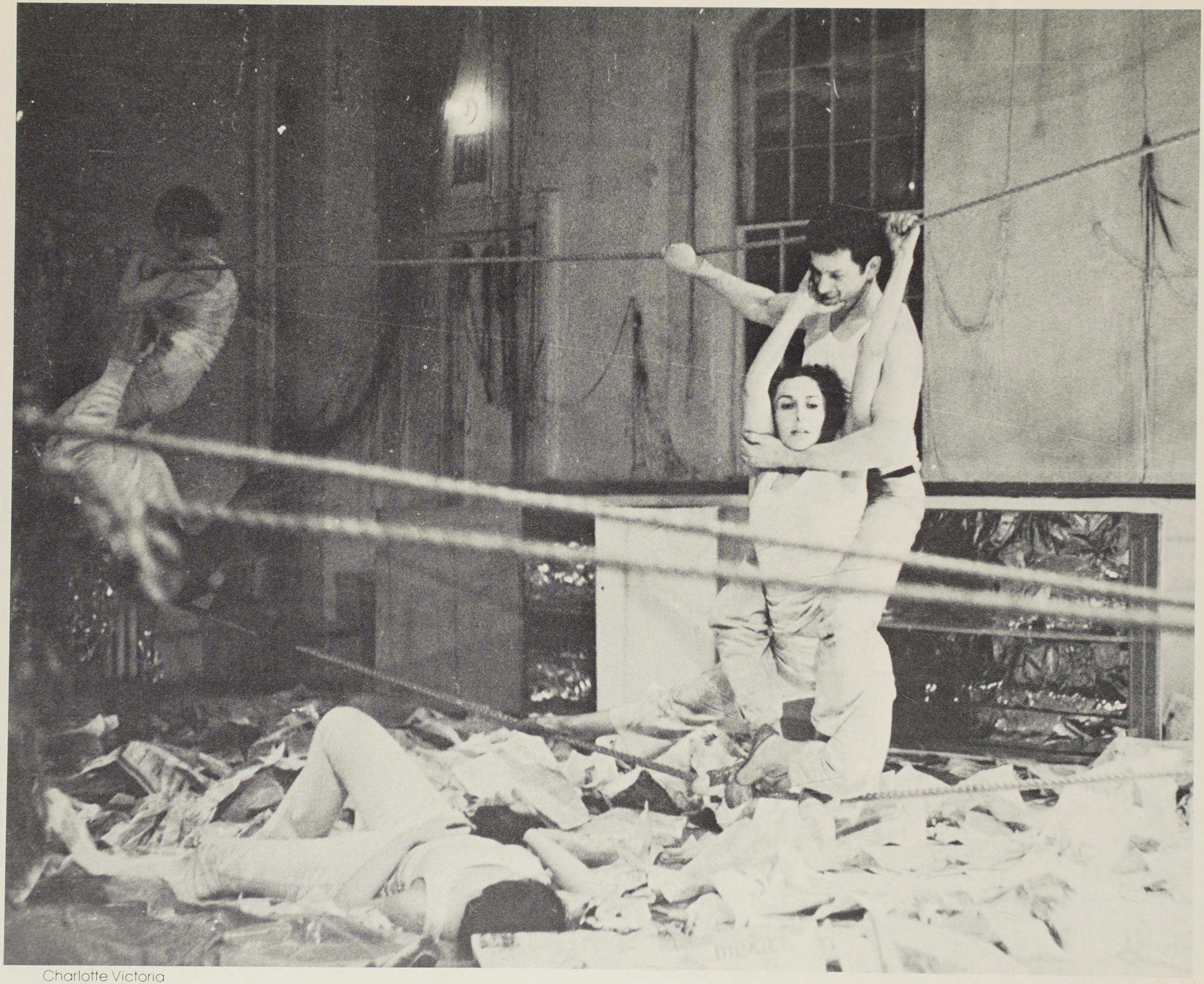
Alec Sobelewski



Peter Moore

Peter Moore

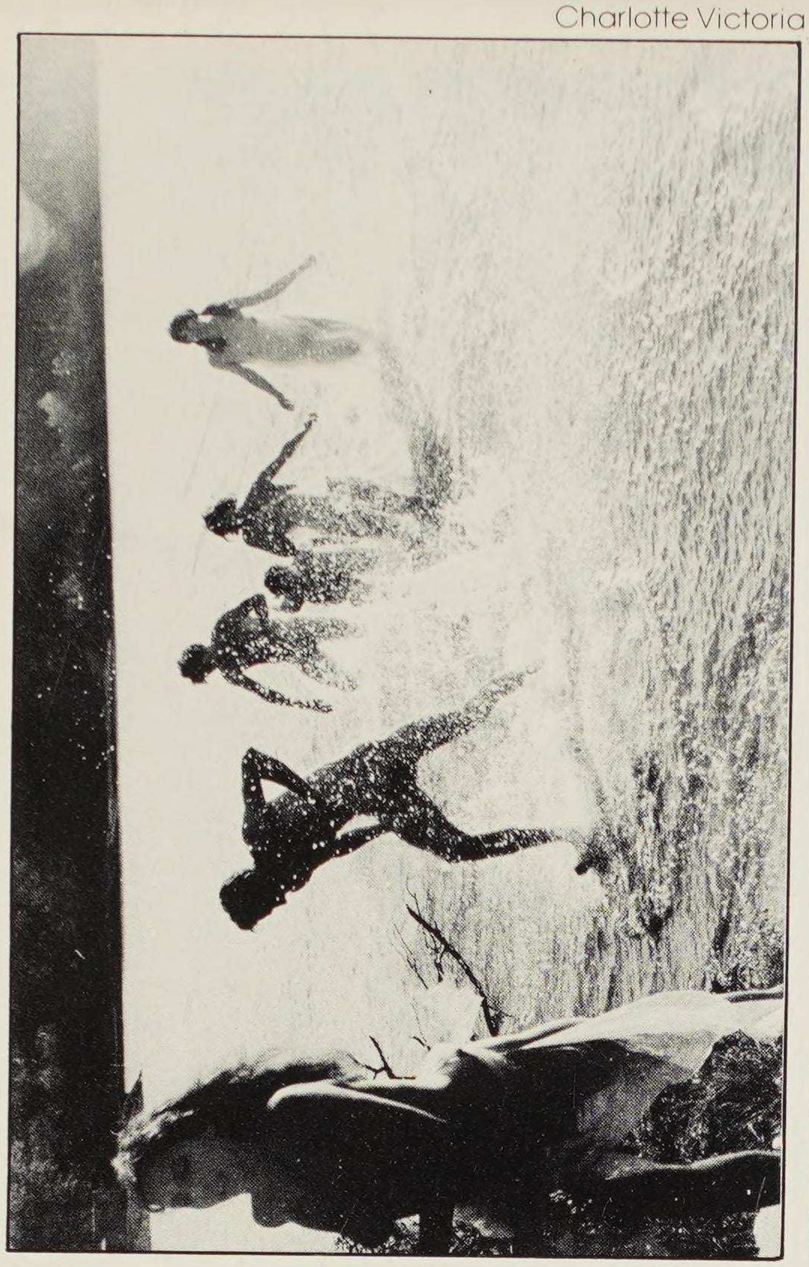




Charlotte Victoria

Charlotte Victoria

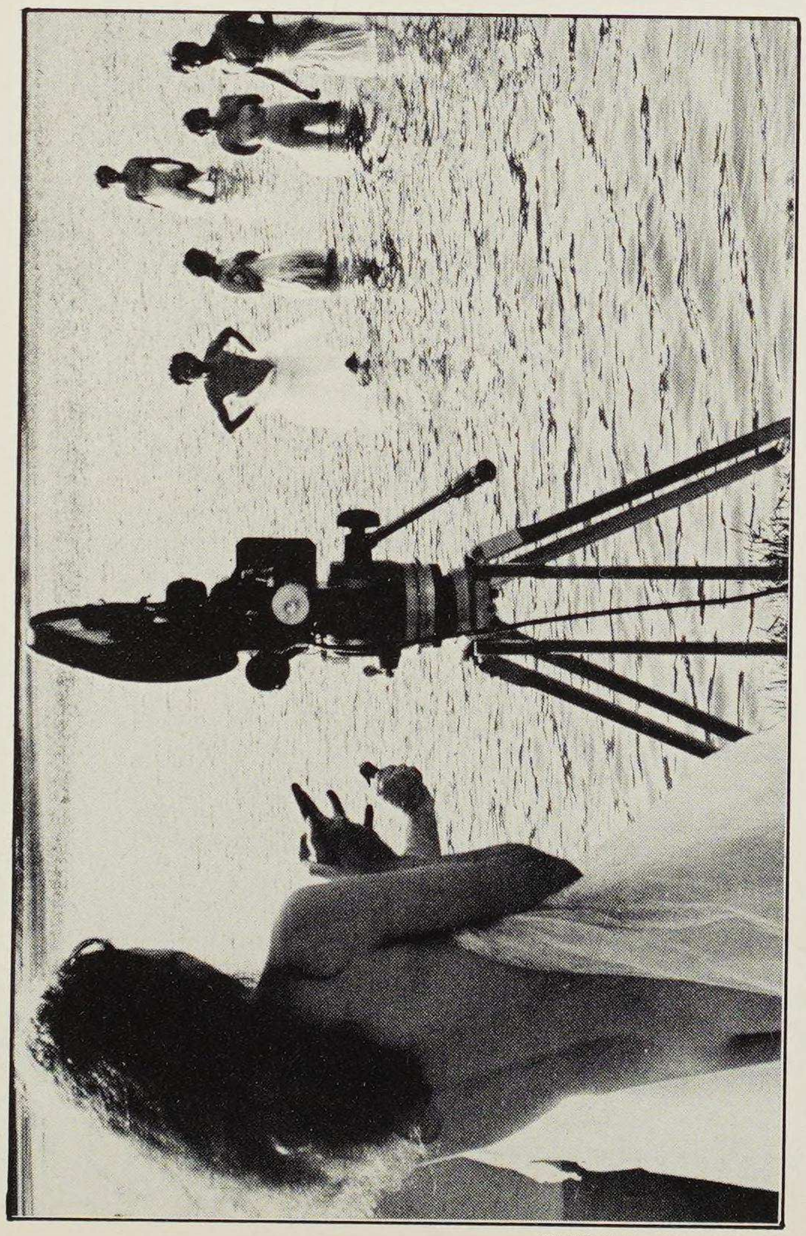
Charlotte Victoria



John Jones

Charlotte Victoria

Charlotte Victoria



All of us wanted to continue with the piece; its formality was engrossing, involving, in ways we felt could go on indefinitely. I now wanted to try **Water Light/Water Needle** outdoors, approaching the original conception. Ferdi Buanano had assisted Philip with the outdoor cacophony at St. Marks. He said he knew of a place in the country where we could rig the ropes and perform undisturbed for filming. It seemed unlikely: we required a grotto of trees strong enough to take our combined weight, at least twelve feet between them, no obtruding lower branches. We would need a sunny day, transportation for all the performers, technical help, filmmakers, photographers.

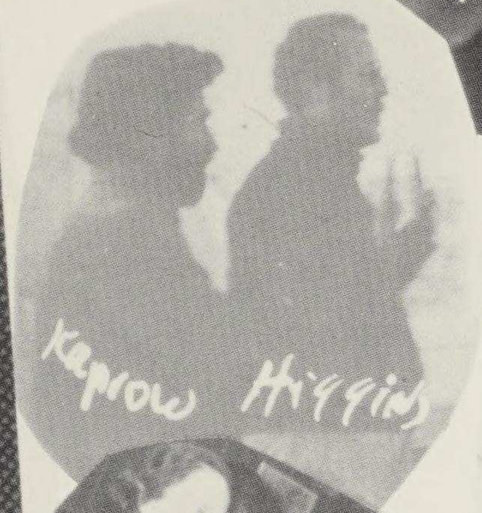
A further series of magical conjunctions ensued. Ferdi's father was from Venice, negotiating the purchase of an abandoned estate. Most incredibly for me it turned out to be the old Havemayer Estate. Their distinguished and extensive collection of Impressionist works had been acquired through the persuasion of Mary Cassett, a close friend to a Havemayer daughter. The first Impressionist works I'd ever seen were those of the Havemayer collection in the Philadelphia Museum of Art—the Monet's of Venice! My roots past and present were completely tangled, ending up through the intricacies of the Venetian imagery in the perfect circle of Havemayer pine trees, overlooking a mirror clear lake.

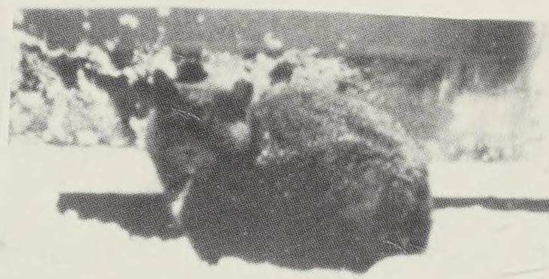
The Saturday morning we organized for MahWah began with a torrential rain, forecast to continue throughout the day. I put my entire will to it. . .we set off in the downpour, and as we reached the gates of the estate the sun broke through.

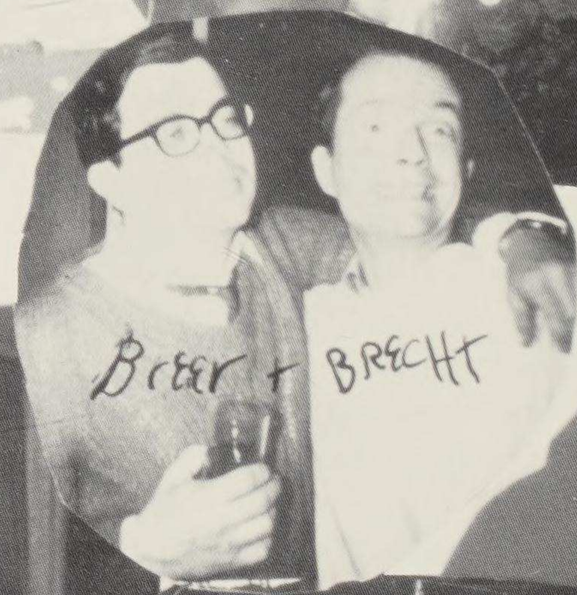
Herbert Migdoll

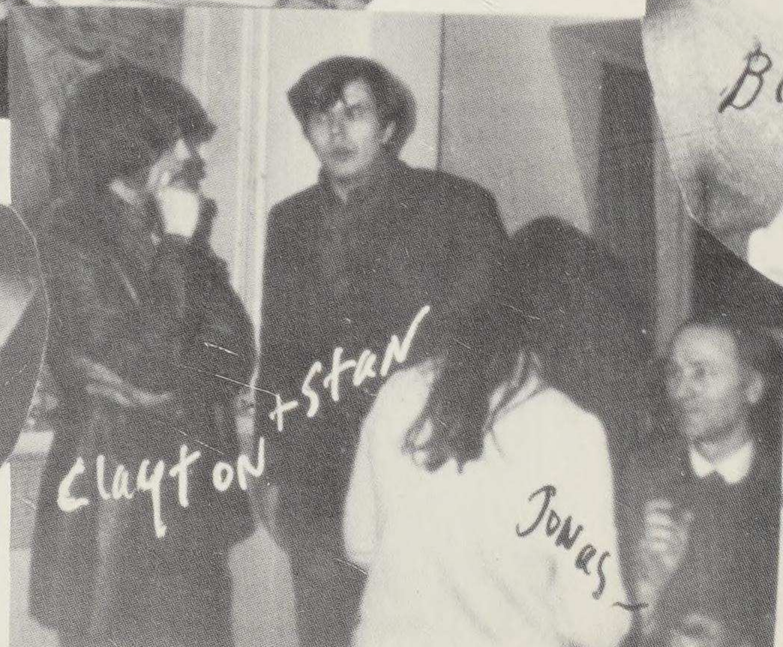
from The Notebooks
1966-1969

Artists, Carolee Schneeman Robert Rauschenberg
the party for the motion picture, HEAD









Carolyn Brown + Jim

122 West 29th
N.Y.1, N.Y.
7 February 1966

Dear Jean-Jacques:

It's been a slow, hard year . . . getting better now. Last spring, so broke, had to sublet my loft, go away to a free-for-all quiet place in the country. Things brightened to hysteria for Charlotte's Festival (EVERY year EVERY one saying no, no never again and every year we all are drawn in and out). I did a new work for myself and Tenney—bodies completely encased in metal debris/a debris wheel falling from the ceiling/playing our sounds and each other's with metal rods . . . in the dark, little lights flashing on our junk-bodies. I directed Kaprow's "Push and Pull" with Paik—and provoked a riot. Utter destruction of the environment we built: old ladies, collared, hairless business men astride cracked two-by-fours, beating each other and the remains of the environment with objects I had asked them to go into the streets and bring back to furnish the environment. Police, paddy wagons, riot squad. Then endless interviews . . . . . "yes, that was a possibility, but not my intention." Lawyers calling to tell me to disappear, the Festival cancelled, then reinstated with bonds, conditions . . . ! Violence and pent-up rage exploding in the grey ones—as you well know—but here it was the first such manifestation.

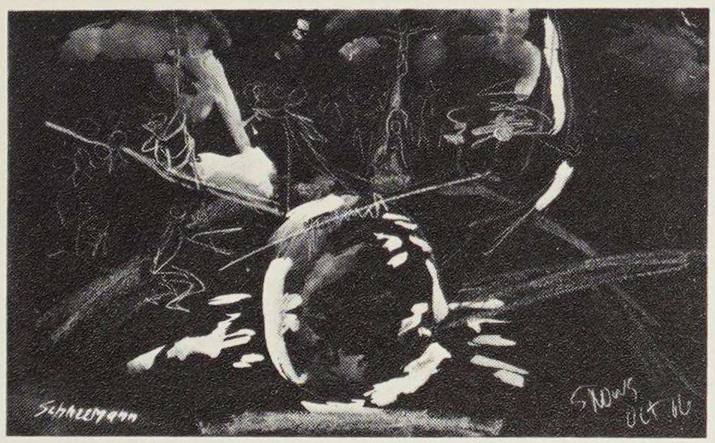
Then in December all the grand people started dying: Varèse, Kiesler, Cowell . . . the plumber's mother, Higgins' step-mother, somebody's father (under his tractor) . . . on and on like a rain around us.

The news from Europe all garbled. That you had married; that you were living in the south of France, going to Russia. And with Joyclyn the misunderstanding about "the book"—Erró tells me about *your* book; Joyclyn wrote that HE was writing a book on your festivals; he didn't answer when I wrote that I was broke and asked if his publisher would pay for the photos here . . . . . What you are doing and single-handedly is fantastic; perhaps now "they" are ready; here we are beginning to be treated differently—invited to panels on theater (!) and such; the press ready to eat us alive and belch out some capsule synthesis . . . to break down the distinctions we found by heart, nerve, funny guts. The press is hip, anxious to capture and render-harmless. I can't imagine that process ever breaking over your head, and that finally the tension, resistence and insane, hungry response Paris can produce will keep your energies ferocious, determined. Something soft happens here . . . like the helpless, apathy over, what is now, our Dirty War; there is almost no motion towards political engagement, statement, by the advanced artists here . . . . . Warhol's Velvet Underground giving a week of live performances: "Fairies I Have

Known".....a perverse, charming melt into chic; the normalization of terror, sadism, masochism become a popular consecration...almost homey and warm and friendly in character. One end of the spectrum, spectre.

The "Season" here was incredibly dull—dull in the sense of diminished finish, shine, patina, light interchange cut down. Exceptions being performances of new pieces of Oldenburg, Whitman, Rauschenberg at Cinematheque. Each with a beautiful piece; a mastery, fineness, and calm; clarity marking some point in our time of acceptance/accepting that is completely new. I'll have four nights at St. Mark's in March for a new work—all in the air, performers over heads of audience; strange objects. (Imagery begun in Venice into Vietnam.) I'll enclose a scenerio and also the issue of *SomeThing* documenting *Meat Joy* in New York—how it changed from Paris. Did you see Hansen's *Space/Time Happening Primer?*

Erró is fine here, happy with Mary—more than I've ever known him to be, working very hard. We'll all be at Marta Minujin's Environment tomorrow—going like wild-fire, perils of Pauline. Erró and Restany suggested I send you a list of my Happenings—Theater Pieces and their materials for your exhibit. I expected you would write me. Why not? Hey?



Snows 1966
Drawing: inks, chalk, watercolor. 12½" x 18"

NOTES ON AND AROUND *SNOWS*

Vietnam a vegetable culture which leaves no garbage.
Misery America ------ ------ been gone wild vogue of nuclear power plants pollution delirious cut off from ecology from living relations between organic parts: the new sex book ("definitive"), Dow Chemical earnings, "mass art," when there is no "mass"; fragmentations, de-sexualization, de-sensualization and they're going crazy alone together, take shine and plastic onto into their half-starved bodies. Feeling low between "highs"..... and some of us work, scramble, clear ways to unity, joy a plateau.....

Can only tell it from where I am, what I do see and how, just here.

Tenderness of Charlotte's and Paik's performance (the T.V. Bra); the melodramatic brutality of cops arresting *her* (the "nude")....rotten theater: everyone playing a predictable role out of conditioning or preparation/anticipation. Cops jumping on the stage in their "plain clothes," flashing badges: "WE'RE THE POLICE—YOU'RE UNDER ARREST." The invited audience become stoney, watching. I began yelling "Boo, Fascists" and then all of us yelling, running onto the stage; utter confusion; angry humiliated

---

Charlotte, struggling for her cello, waving the bow, searching for her lost wedding ring which she always parks on the music stand.... loss of propriety, freedom to work—the arbitrary circumstance... trying to move and being trundled away. We should have all of US stripped stark naked then and there.

My life is sweet and my skin is crawling.

Handful of thirty artist/activists in and out of jail; all lying in monster belly shaking it as it shits its poison its contempt for life process for brown black red yellow white flesh dancing agitating the rotten belly confounding its monstrous stupidity where we can.

Charlotte and Paik child-like. Mixture of naiveté, the wisdom to trust themselves completely, courage and simplicity to share, expose, indentification with form, materials. Their gifts out of the presumptuous, bungling, rigid belly which wants to devour them... slowly, inexorably, blundering tape red/worm

Country without vital nerve center: cut, chopped, lobotomized in self-interest-greed. Consciousness hacked into paranoid bits of shifting evil... turn on yourself—monster, show your violence, impotence—bombing, flaming game ritualized machine that you become: your "culture" as vapid, paternalistic, frenetic and corrupt as your angry lusts....

Sweet mold in midst of it, rises bitter-sweet, ferment: finding the ways quietly, by internal necessity, integration of emotion/action, so simple becomes thunderous: sky falling flowers filling.... And the *patrons* of art ran to the doors, to escape! Their henchmen. They needn't live the esthetics but simply defend, stand in place of their desire—which is us—uphold our need to form and manifest which is their need.

Movement Mass Murder Vietnam Peace Parade Committee Commitment
1966

Meat Joy *1964*
Drawings: pencil.

Alice Uber Alles Aurora Uber Alles Unter Uber SNOWBALL (Cool Clear Courage)

15-30 July - London, "Round House". 8 August - Franconia, N.H. "Love Games" (Jim's). 24 August - NYC, Judosn Church, "Torture Environment - Ordeals". 8 Sept - Montreal, Expo '67 "Night Crawlers". 28 Oct - NYC, Goethe House, Napalm piece? ----- Mexico?.....N.Y. State Council Grant Environmental Arts?

will be a sensory expression of certain of the conditions explored verbally by the Congress....NOn Verbal get them into their senses

22 words all Joseph Berke 4 St. George's Terrace London NW 1 keep reservation early July send date nothing available here lack plane fare
love carolee

POUNDS OF CREAM **** HELLY SLATHER EACH OTHER june

********** pushing down

1) stand centrally blow whistle 2) run down among spectators begin sorting piling on materials blow whistle..couples 3) pushing other rolled into a ball into spectators 4) body sculpture walking around each woman moves between men -- when they have been positioned 4 times they position next on over (who will not necessarily know they are 5th mover) they in turn accept "shaping" 4 times and then take initiative.

IMAGE dividend/increment what I'm after -- that dislocation (it dissociates, I compound, it insists on itself, grips senses, expands recognition into unknown relations)

coverkxd body with grease and stick plastic to it

use up old images XCLEAR OUT! 6666 posture crawls screams

naked figure plastic against body other figure holding fan blowing and they walk face to face some are standing lifti ng their hands SCREAMING

Happening as basic psycho-social guerilla life-fare
as form is life-like or interchangable with life circumstances (not explained beyond language which has been coercive, negative, excluding, devisive, pulling apart where integration should be....)
1. organization 2. form 3. frame or focus 4. intensification of all elements (action) 5. response(intensity of awareness) appropriatness of reaction 7. unpredicability within the structure 8. immediate adjustment to circumstance - perception. ALL slapped in on senses without obstruction, convention, pre-determination. SOCK IT IN OUT

(take someone's hand a person close to you and sit down please everyone just sit down where ever you happen to be sit down and be comfortable

and hold someone's hand) May

Think of this huge round high space as an arena of shifting focus: u nleash spatial variations....like a telephoto lens -- figures fly in and run out -- groups rush forward and receed, ebbxxxxxx, flow, great speed to it.
1 July

I'v thought of it for years SPLAT
You never thought of it before SPLAT

revolving light bicycles ropes have them GROWL ropes film flood space

journey ride drive American trips car held highways dancing & stops in the snow exhausted little hotel in Indiana nobody there multi-layered collage-like perception endless passage an IMAGE persists all my theater pieces structured like a ride cross country I realize know the beginning the probable or possible end points of arrival in between and all passage dense compacted fluid streaming on

I come to a microphone in filthly mens underwear....."good evening.....
I would like to explain about the action of visual Gestalt' SPLAT...lorry pulls up piled with crushed metal fragments, piles of bodies; men come and dump over lorry infront of spectators: crashing metal, falling bodies, flesh and metal lumped, sprawled. I go andkick debris around...silence...kicks, clanking...scraping.....

with Jim awaiting flight departure to London....
our farewell, Scotch and SideCars, Principes of form! 2nd law of thermodynamics/entropy of universe is continually increasing Heisenberg indeterminancy cant simultaneously determine velocity and position of particle...

special theory of relativity "in a frame of reference (closed environment) which is moving uniformly (in a state of uniform motion) all laws of physics will operate the same as with frame of reference at rest". No absolute frame of reference in a moving train moving evenly you can't tell.....
landscape or train moving!

whitehead russell 1910? in a logical language there are certain axioms which are basic to this language but these axioms can never be proven in this language itself but in a "meta-language" assumed but Not proven become circular have to go xxxxx outside to demonstrate it.
action-readtion astronomy apple falls to earth earth moves a little bit to receive it!

Parkinson's law amount of work to be done expands to fill available time

Brownian motion -- random collision of particles and what particles are suspended in --- comparable smallness comparable

anything designed to transmit (derive) information will create a corresponding entropy increase in environment in which it is carried out Brillouin's Law

Jim's ideas for telephoto: figures run forward they have a banner folded between them unfolding it as they advance (enlargement).....

the waitress.....?
the airline.....?
the heiress.....?
the hostage.....?
the steward.....?
HOSTESS STEWARDESS....!

need powerful projectors sound-sharp loud to hear reverberations:
slapping stamping

with the carts -- just keep loading and unloading bodies (some jump & run away

"The brick a brac is es ential to the inner form". J. 12 july

IF YOU'RE GOING TO CHANGE THING YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE A MESS every housewife knows that! But the condition of dislocation/random configuration which arise in changefull process is where we find the new possibilities and where we may find relations we were not previously aware of or even in favor of!

Suddenly (6:05 one hour in the air) they are all moving about like barnyard animals a concurrance of reaching for blankets pillows heading off to the toilets smoking vomiting passing cookies changing shoes exchanging newspapers (from another continent content contentment) and religious tracts. I'v wrapped up in axpixx pale organe blanket which says HSIRI upside down; it smells of scones; I'v found two tiny lemon colored pillows which keep slipping back onto the feet of a woman behind. It is cold. And strange. This Irish choice of citrus colors, provoking while whizzing through inter stalactite space disembodied murky colorless floating through space nuzzling infiniate air. Touched only by scraps of wool and linen. Encapsulated. No human expression to equalize suspension between...through the AIR destination destiny determination. Held captive given over -- entire anonymous flock of us -- to "controls"...with my guts exploding, turning tumbling I admire relish all this bizarre organization....we're IN the AIR uh oh now we're stopped somewhere in mid-air...over

Announcements...yelling Shut Up! someone something rugfling my hair spitting scratching pulling stuff out of huge overalls speaking again distractions.....scratching

At the Round House. Begin running around balcony (dirty splintery wooden boards grand iron arches cascading up to glass dome) running collisions hollering keep it there a huge mass of us stops and starts

One figure appears downstairs in the dark flash of light others in the dark shifting in the dark ominous slowly increase densities

.....little bunched bells ring in the balcony as he walks

NEVER NEVER AGAIN -- if I get another chance! Impingement terrible my sense of mortality -- crowded crammed into this plastic urethra this hurtling tin ofsardines who chew gum.....

Finally off: sprinkling light, delays. Somewhere in the mass of little figures against a railing he watches. I weep bitterly: what the hell am I doing in here, where is Jim? his grace, shape I can't tell it from any other human dot.....scratching xxx on the window pane, twisted in this weird space to see through: tears, moisture, blurs, on window fog shine on pulsing lights now heaving, squealing motors; dizzy spin temendous push against gravity -- the wind swell bounce motions outside on my insides pound the stick of plastic metal. MUSIC! For Christ's sake -- wired for sound, calm the beasts: "Sheep May Safely Graze"! That really breaks me up....theme song camp HSIRI

thunderous heave rolling....off we went (my love among a hundred headless shadows...going to the car him going now where back empty lone)

we are promised drinks dinner "orange tea or coffee" in one hour fifteen minutes that is heartening -- our invisible path is programmed with comforts

Over the wing again (revenge on an old chicken farmer): how is it stuck on? what's in the secret underbelly? (can it be singed & plucked?); how much pressure is "pressurized" (pasturized); while my ears are filling, dull heavy roar from below from above a streamy hisssing, bleeps of sound escape.... release belt o.k. smoke o.k. find pen o.k.....looking around. Deadened, blank, hapless, ugly creatures strapped to their seats reading, sucking candy drops passed out by the sinister hostages trained to distract us from what is REALLY going on. I'v clawed through the stems of the rose Jim gave me....sucking sugar drops.... reach for the newspaper...IRISH.....

A young fisherman sits next to me-- really. I want to tell him to put aside his insane fishing pole and let me sit on his lap.....

Up and down the aisle priests meander, peristently offering literature litergy to prepare the soul for God before Dublin. Oh dire dour drear bargain tour. (Dr. Joe this is a trying sort of joke to start off with.....)

(Ed Sanders on 86th St. day before leaving said he cant bear it either. Turn on and sleep through he said. But I'v got to pay attention, see what they're up to.)

A RAG MAN HORSE AND CART Eastwood Plastics little striped plastic tents on construction sites...red and white....Westbourne...Shepards Bush..... women in knit dresses big streets trees like Raspail...Holland Park Avenue W. 11 Embassy Hotel...Bayswater Road...The Swan Watneys Clear Cool Courage Sussex Gardens W.2...where are we going in this incredible fat black taxi that Joe says is his "car"?

Do the OBVIOUS. The obvious is never traditional. Work out of where you really are.

One group running. Another throws out pink plastic mats runners can fall on mat or rest leaping when one is tossed in front of them.

polite honest careful patient tolerent fair its warm here not cool shoes are sandals mostly beards saw a POLICE MAN WITH A BEARD Shamlessly Poet directing traffic on Sunday vast numers of young people pushing prams walking great distances pets on buses and tubes big sofa seats in subway not knifed slit smoke o.k.

YES END RUN with banner slight split in top and they tear them apart fall over as fabric rips apart until all fallen body mass group rushes on horse and cart slowly to enter pile them up and take them to under screen of rags for Viet-Flakes film Rock and Roll group goes directly into fragment tape as cart is driven away...mass group in the rubble, spectators escape from ropes to dance in debris

cascade build-up from balcony? tape scrap? paint mud styrofoam

I'm sick and tired of thinking about COLOR - "black and white"...I think about tones pigment green blue vermilion orange umber yellow burnt sienna and MIX THEM US we're going slow among ourselves show among ourselves longing and terrors of ADMIXTURE its obvious we do it as a matter of priviledge -- like regular meals or shelter -- that's just human beings turning on to what moves them beyond pigmentation.....

.....and after; it is those elements, fragments which for any reason do stay in memory, burn your senses....which are the IMAGES

catch from behind full head turn (like chicken)

like coming to a vast new city and watching the transportation of people, the unfamiliar signals, signs, indicators, traffic events: all without clear order and non-comprehensible as system but you know that an order, a structure fulfills specific necessities (to get from here to there), and you yourself a center point within which the pattern and configuration turns....

Just show what is possible. They forget they function through older forms fulfilling describable roles (male) towards new principles (leaderships). I can't accept the form of their proceedings for myself but I don't deny it for them....

they are rather gentle stringy warmblooded but awkward curious but reserved a certain wild childish abusive humor integrity none of our paranoia ("we can work it out") politically keen -- what David and his friends organized at Essex -- students taking over the University, run it....

1) push up and down 2) slather 3) reshape the flesh

Our response-ability to our lovers is to share our sexual strengths, to express our greatest intensities, value need, desire. It's perverse destructive to fragment our own bodies or anothers loves loving is inclusive not measured proscribed and everything that contributes to sensation is to be used yes woman depends on the man for type quality or orgasm -- his rhytms in her genital character shape pressure impulse dominant its a dreadful mistake sophisticated oversimplification "equalitarians" to equate female and male sexuality woman is simply orgasmically more complex a sensitive lover feels his own desire intensified by hers the joy of his powers in exchange both transforming each

call to the audience: we need thirty seven volunteers
bring them to bath of dough which they kneed

seared fire light (we wasted weeks I didn't know) unsuspected spontaneous exquisite...it happens...or not...no way to control xxxxx provoke out of our minds...flying around each other...simplest things charged balls of fire pass between us.....

I'd like a time-mind machine: the next thing. To travel between generations. Returns and extensions. Tune in on Mme. de Stael the day Constant came back. Where are you originally from? The drop off of memory-generation. Remembering that three hundred years ago this mix of nationalities, races in flux was uncommon. One came from where one was. (How far could a woman

dream to travel?) And because we are capable of simultaneous ideas, curiosities and desires with the time-mind we will grant each other the right and help in discovering utilizing simultaneities. (Not literature).

First day at the Congress seminar I explained the shift in art-life attitudes; that many of us rejected being "outside" society -- "alienation", "neurosis", not making-it, troubled relations, mythification or life, fragmentation as basic to creative process, "role of the artist". That we worked from communality, integrations, trust or self and each other, shared process, abandon, certain joys, pleasures (as well as darker forces to be grasped) -- but emphasis has shifted. Old romanticism, neo-Freudianism was not where we pivoted. The older people didn't believe me; the younger ones didn't know what I was talking about.

Lying in the grass together: the sun spills a web o Bach flute, birds, regular hammering, bees; heavy roses, orange cats moving close by. Melted in one each other to...such a short time, Takes my hand. Too strong, don't understand it. Need time, a softening proportion...too soon to leave. Misery. He's joyous, sad, bedeviled, comforting. Driving again...Brompton Road. I love you London and goodbye. Return to beloved Jim and my evil country. Wrung out...waiting...coffee...whiskey. Holding to each other once more... into dreadful bus, wet down my thigh. Lucky Jim he said. Empty sky through the window...he watches...I watch...we are moving inside out....hands to the window...backwards...

PLEASE HELP TO KEEP THIS BUS TIDY "By not getting on", someone had scrawled.

I'll collect you now MIND THE STEP MIND THE DOOR As hard as bloody nails
overtaking (passing cars) guess they must do well hang about hang on
Thrupence Opera It doesn't smell half bad (it stinks) super messing around
Irish confetti (broken glasses in the pub) I'm a bit short of the ready
I'm a bit short of the green and foldable (upper class) stand on me!
(I'M astounded) carsey bog loo slashouse doxie (toilet) HOLD TIGHT DUCKIE
Miss, he fancies you

expose exposure demystification yes get rid of old deadly mysteries
women our genital and our pronoun new mysteries waiting for us
get it all out tell and show

fear of genital pleasure fear of woman terror of life process will to dominate inability to feel to be in relation to immediate moment to let go
use generously inability to realize full range of sensations/emotion starvation-atrophy and a dull remote anger a vague awareness of deprivation
but so armored its expressive depth masked hostility so things "don'T work out", are not seen, go against themselves of the person who provokes deeper appetites, desires

BLACK OUT
blow whistle tape of drums resonating
bodies on ropes slowly slid down from balcony
bodies on ropes slowly dragged through the aisles
begin mixing mud and silver foil

luminous flying transparent wings
feathers prisms of fire light
cold stiff paralysing light

London july '67

Jan 21 22 27 28 29 Feb 3 4 5 1967
Martinique Theatre
32nd Street and Broadway, NYC

Paul Libin presents

S N O W S Kinetic Theater by

C A R O L E E S C H N E E M A N N

with SHIGEKO KUBOTA TYRONE MITCHELL PHOEBE NEVILLE
CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN JAMES TENNEY PETER WATTS

* *

revolving light sculpture -- Laurence Warshaw

lights & sound controlled light system -- Robert Schultz

technical coordinator -- Ralph Flynn

sound collage -- James Tenney

entire environment, "Viet-Flakes" film, flyer -- Carolee Schneemann

projectionists -- Karl Schenzer Jack Agüeros

* *

technical assistance -- Robby Robinson Per Biorn Mike Yareck

builders -- Karl Schenzer Peter Watts Jack Agüeros June Ekman
James Tenney Per Biorn James Finney

snow machine -- Jack Agüeros

roustabouts -- James Carroll James Finney Jim Kuo

* *

SNOWS is dedicated to poet friends.

SNOWS supports and is one of the events of Angry Arts Week.

grateful thanks to: Foundation for Experiments in Art & Technology
Consolidated Aluminum Reynolds Aluminum
Thomas Morley Alphonse Schilling Judy Kass

taking of photographs is absolutely forbidden

SNOWS

January 21 22 27 28 29. February 3 4 5 1967 Martinique Theater NY

SNOWS: to concretize and elucidate the genocidal compulsions of a vicious disjunctive technocracy gone berserk against an integral, essentially rural culture. The grotesque fulfillment of the Western split between matter and spirit, mind and body, individualized "man" against cosmic natural unities. Destruction so vast as to become randomized, constant as weather. Snowing...purification, clarification, homogenization.

Snows was built out of my anger, outrage, fury and sorrow for the Vietnamese. The performance contained five films whose related content triggered juxtaposition of a winter environment and Vietnam atrocity images. Of all the films "Viet-Flakes" was the heart and core of the piece: a source of confirmation and insistence from which movement and related imagery spilled onto the "snowbound" audience.

As in **Ghost Rev** I wanted to use film as integral to performance while emphasizing it as a contrasting visual language—handled as tactile, palpable material. I saw film as a conveyance—a passage of realistic imagery—a powerful spark to memory—but film interested me also as a textural and structural element extending the visual densities of the Kinetic Theater works.

With film I could introduce literal information in rhythms spread spatially through performed movement sequences—the tension of live and celluloid "frames" of action. I didn't want to insert film as subordinate image concentrations; nor did I want image juxtapositions apart from the overall spatial texture. Each element (movement, film, lights, sound) was created to hold its defining edge and to merge with surrounding units.

Each film spilled out of its fixed frame, projected onto surfaces throughout the theater: spread, pulsing, centralized to have as much physical stretch and shift as the performers themselves. It was as if film could be projected back into/onto film, a collision and absorption of images like the collisions of our bodies. Dual projectors swung 360° across space. The structural intervals and gradations of light and darkness, the paper-layered walls, the water-lenses and revolving-light sculpture, the performance movement, the highly visible technicians: each element was drawn into a vortex of increasingly disturbing energy.

I preter my work process to be as exposed as possible, while equally disguising the motivating source, the "textual" content. If I had told the performers that

Snows would be a work based on Vietnam atrocity images they would have had to assume a particular method and attitude. Without being aware of the central metaphor the performance movements were able to evolve with spontaneity, suspense, immediacy, both directly and indirectly, from the related films and tapes. The cultural discrepancies were constantly in mind: our inability to act directly on a situation where we humanly wanted to intervene, to make a difference. The evidence of the personal experiences of the Vietnamese was reaching us at a great remove, through reproduced photographs: the unknown outcome of the situations depicted and the ambivalent role of the photographer (whose life was also threatened) "taking pictures," as people burnt, bled, fled, were tortured.

With one exception none of us was formally trained in theater or dance. We discovered the nature of our work together by experiencing and creating it. Although sequences were fixed, durations were determined in performance: light cues for partnered actions and group convergences were always varied, made unpredictable by audience-activated electronic

Alec Sobelewski

systems. We were actually frightened in **Snows**—the experience was enveloping, we were conscious of the audience as an extension of ourselves, but not of ourselves in self-conscious presentation. Walking the planks was actually dangerous, and the central imagery of "Viet-Flakes" once fully apparent, was so dire and agonizing that our own pleasurable expectations and collaborations within the glistening white environment were confounded.

"Viet-Flakes" had been made a year earlier from a collection of Vietnam photographs clipped from papers and magazines over six years. I used a close-up lens and magnifying glasses to "travel" within the photographs giving the effect of a rough animation. In broken rhythms, in and out of focus, abstract motions and shapes converge into the terrified frozen expression of people burning, dragged, drowning; a pointillism of falling black specks with focus becomes bombs dropping; the blurred face of American soldiers emerge leading girls from a shadowed hiding place; "a Rembrandt ink drawing" is a burning house...

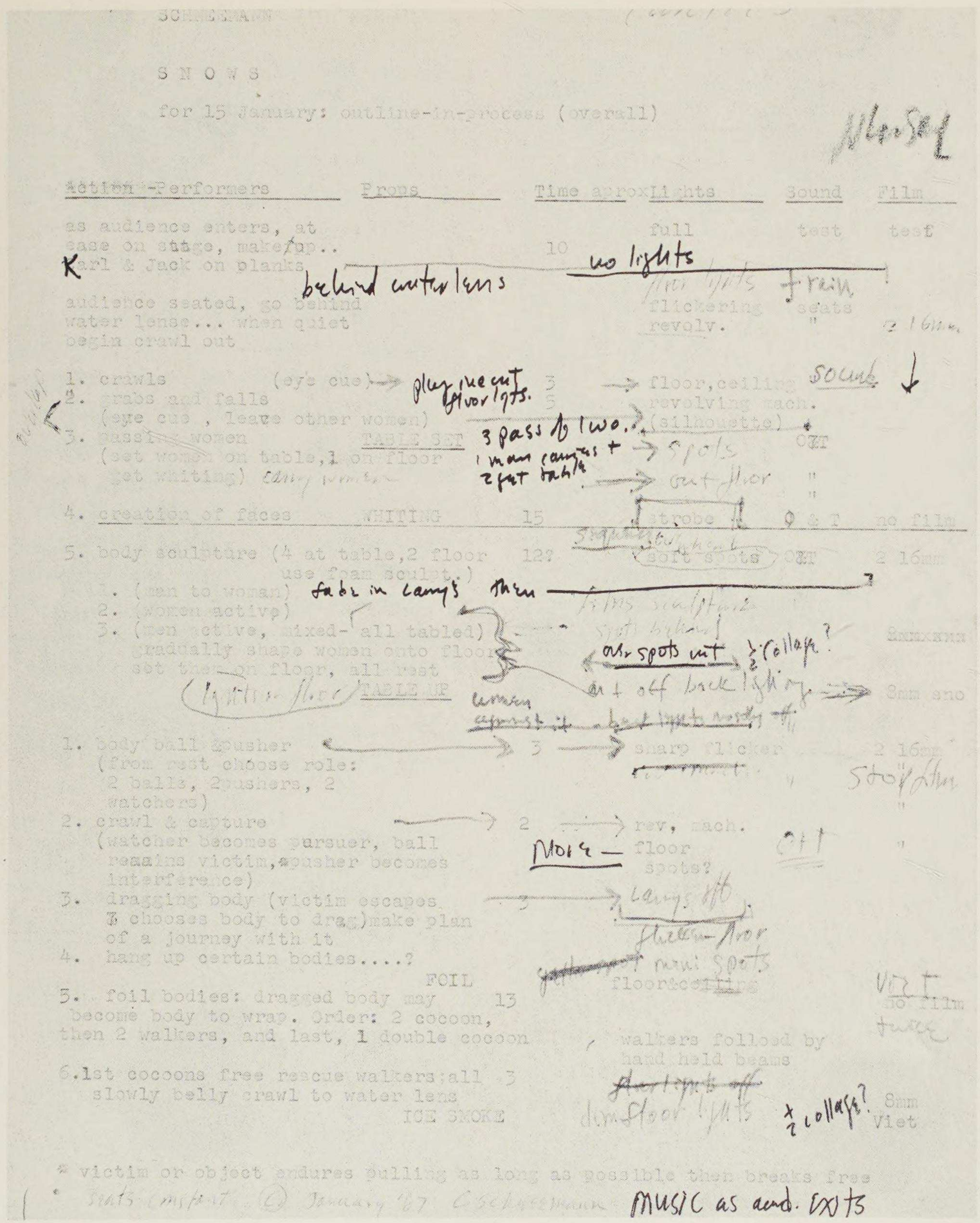
The film which begins **Snows** is a five minute 1947 silent newsreel of one catastrophe after another. I found this film by "closed-eye vision"; that is, I stood in front of a rack of old remaindered newsreels in a camera store waiting to feel some impulse to let my hand be attracted to the packet which seemed to "speak." Projected at home the film justified my hopes; it begins with a ship exploding, then a sequence of tiny figures massed in a "riot," cut to tiny figures of "red" Chinese being shot by nationalist guards; then the Pope blessing crowds, a volcanic eruption in Bolivia, peasants running through a broken landscape, an American Legion parade in Philadelphia in a snow storm, an automobile race, car crashes, explosions. Amazingly, I had already used an image in "Viet-Flakes" from precisely this newsreel, which I had found in a book.

During the early sequences of our actions, two projectionists at the edge of the performing area each have a swivel head 16mm projector with which they direct two films over our figures and around the theater by hand. Both films are of Bavarian winter sports, made during the Second World War. Later, an 8mm color film is projected on the torsos of the three women leaning against the white "moon" disk. Images from a winter diary I'd shot flash over us: the neighborhood of my loft, the Martinique Theater, Gimbels, Greeley Square Park in a blizzard, driving through the whitened city out the West River Drive, into the night and country landscape.

James Tenney made the sound-collage for "Viet-Flakes" by breaking music sources we selected into sound fragments so small that they became recognizable only cumulatively, in time: Mozart Piano Concerto #20; Bach Cantata #78 (Aria Duetto); Bach Partita; Bach Alleluia from Christmas Cantata; The Beatles' "We Can Work It Out"; Jackie de Shannon's "What the World Needs Now"; Question Mark and the Mysteriums' "96 Tears"; Vietnamese Folksong; Laotion Love Song; South Chinese Folksong.

The other tape used in **Snows** is a collage of trains shunting, whistling, moving in and out of an Illinois depot, overlaid and juxtaposed with sounds of orgasm.

The performance imagery is finally ambiguous: shifting metaphors in which performers are agressor and victim, torturer and tortured, lover

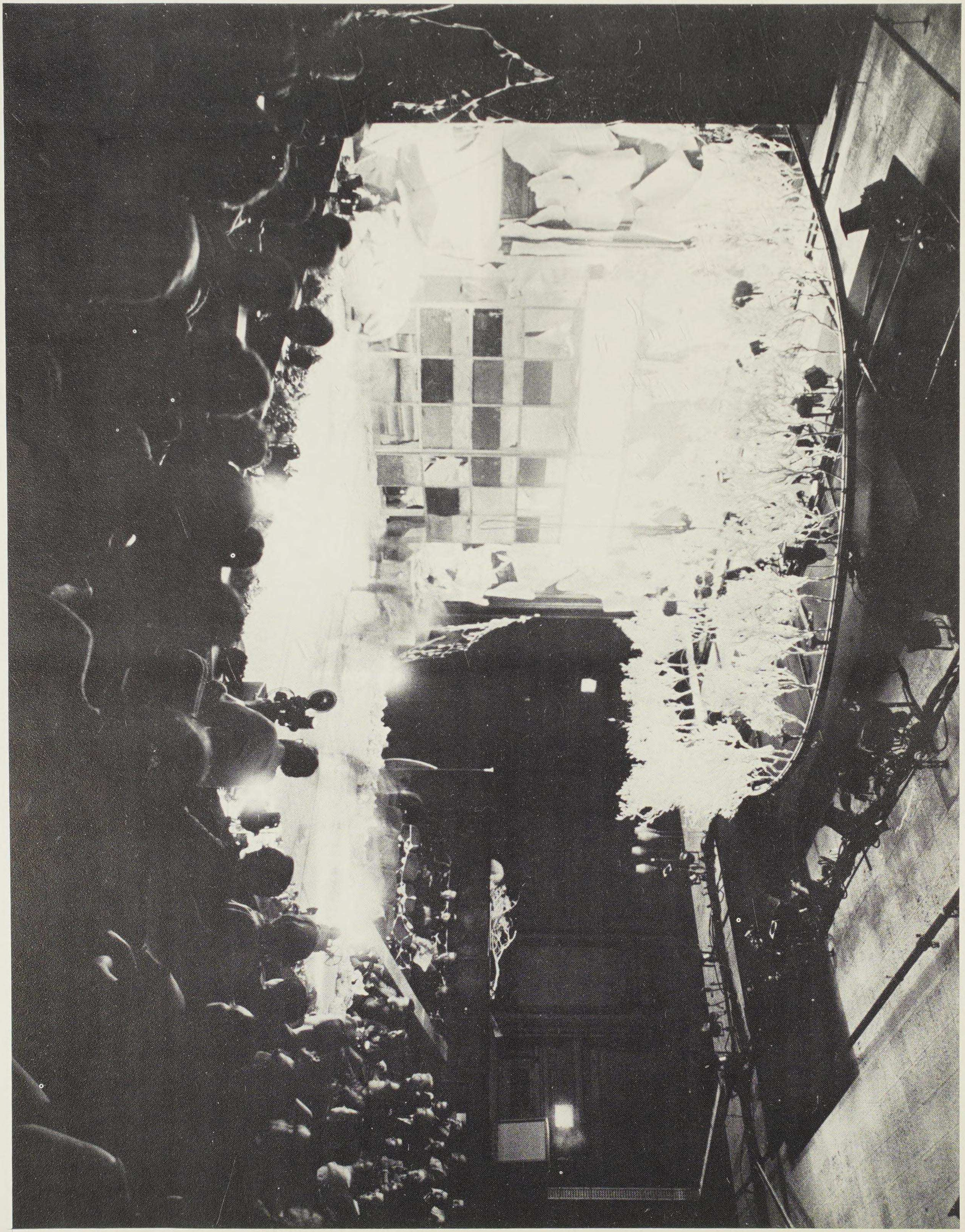


and beloved, as well as simply themselves. We set each other on fire, we extinguish the fire, we create each other's face and body, we abandon each other, we save each other, we take responsibility for each other, we lose responsibility for each other, we reveal each other, we choose, we respond, we build, we are destroyed.

SCORE

"The large arena stage of the Martinique Theater is covered in silver and plastic sheeting. Bare white branches hang down from overhead. The rear wall is flaked with large ragged sheets of white paper. Even the seats are festooned with white plastic scallopings; unoccupied, they look in the dark like receding ranges of snowy mountains. The lighting is icy: chill greens, blues, lavenders, with sometimes a flash of fire or sunlight. Two movies of skaters, skiers and related scenery are projected here and there on the set. At the rear is a large double construction; up to eight or ten feet, white outlined squares of varicolored plastic and open space on top; and a revolving light sculpture by Laurence Warshaw—flickering, reflecting, moving, shading colors and intensities within striations of plastic. It is very beautiful and surprisingly, not at all cold."

Michael Smith, Village Voice



The audience has been led into the theater through the backstage door. In the dark they squeeze through two floor-to-ceiling foam rubber "mouths" and crawl over and under two long planks which stretch from the stage to the rear wall (across aisles and over the seats). Technicians rest on these silver planks—assisting the audience or not. The performers, wearing grey shirts and work pants, are sitting in a basic Oriental rest position, (squatting).

The Red-Newsreel begins. Train & Orgasm sound-collage A woman sweeps snow debris along the stage. The performers watch the film; when it is over they disappear behind the water-lens.

The light machine flickers dimly. Silhouettes of the performers appear—shifting shadows—behind the water-lens construction. They crawl or fall through empty apertures, and begin a slow animal-intense crawl toward the audience, some partly onto the planks. Turning back, they meet in the center of the stage and form a knot, crawling in, through, and out of one another's bodies.

Blue floor lights. Snow Speed and Winter Sports are projected across the ceiling, then center on side walls at varying levels.

The performers move apart. Crouching, staring at one another, they begin Grabs

Alphonse Schilling

Alphonse Schilling

& Falls. Bodies thunder onto the stage; instantaneous collisions, a giving over of weight and impulse upon impact.

After an unspecified series of alternating encounters, a man about to enact a grab with a woman instead lifts her. The two other men stand, leaving their partners where they have fallen in snow, foil, foam rubber debris. Passing Woman: in clumsy walks and holds the men pass and carry the body until one of the men at last places it on the white horizontal disk.

After passing the remaining two women, all are seated on the disk and begin Creation of Faces. **BLACK OUT. Strobe begins.** T & O tape.

In pairs determined by the preceding sequence, each partner begins to cover the other's face with clown-white, silently responding to the other in a series of exchanges. When both faces are covered, one partner begins to shape the other's face; which takes on whatever aspect is pushed and prodded into the musculature—a transformation inducing a corresponding but unpredictable emotion. The created face turns toward the audience until the muscles relax by themselves and the expression fades.

Simultaneous overlappings of faces among the six are caught in the **flashing strobe.**

Charlotte Victoria

Charlotte Victoria

After an unspecified series of face-creations, one person will begin to move another (not necessarity the face partner) into Body Sculpture.

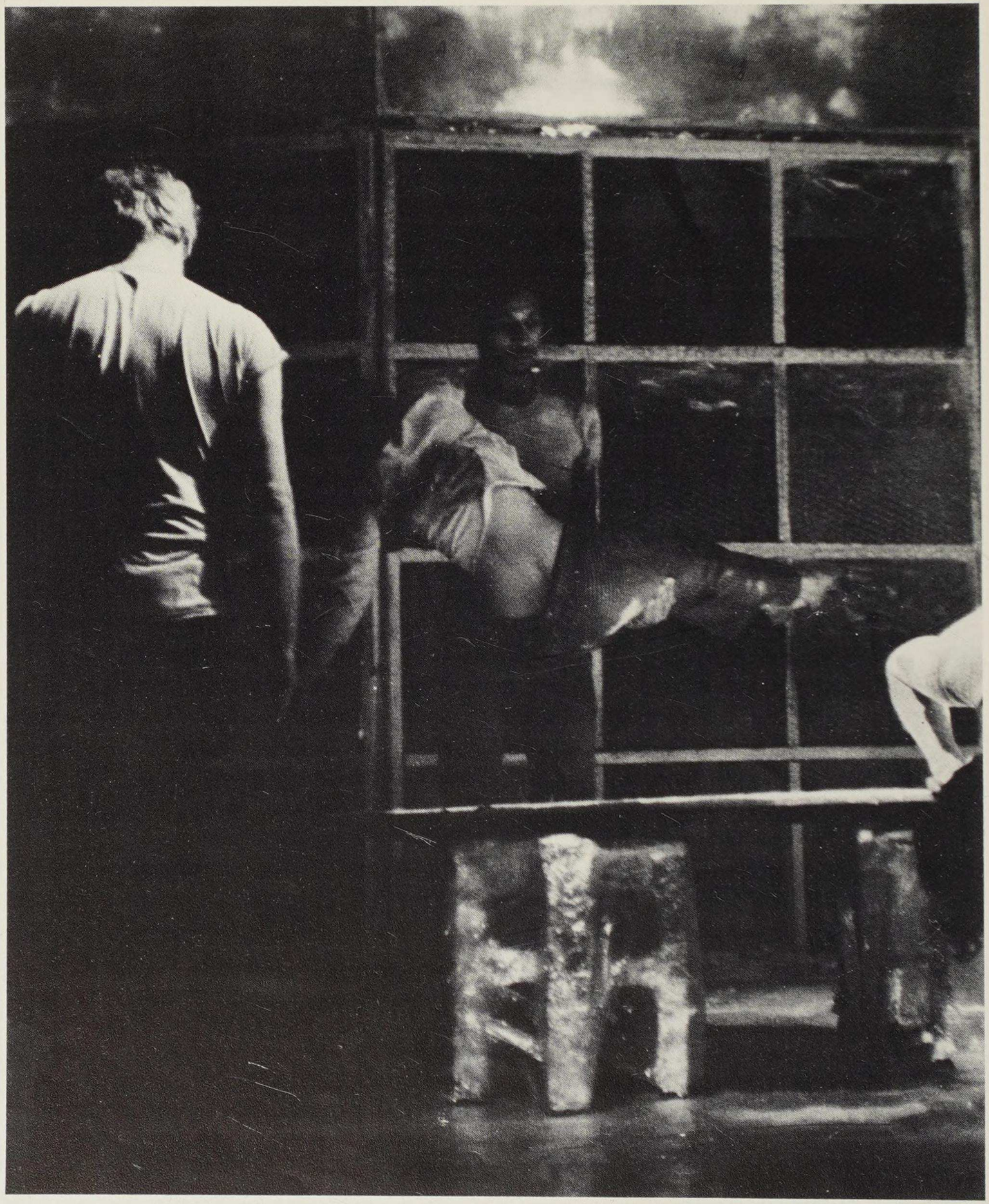
As the audience shifts, settles, they trigger the **lights overhead which slowly brighten.** T & O tape. **Films.**

Initially the men shape the women, who accept and hold whatever position they are given. Suddenly one of the women being sculpted will grasp the hand shaping her: the shaper freezes his action and becomes the one to be sculpted.

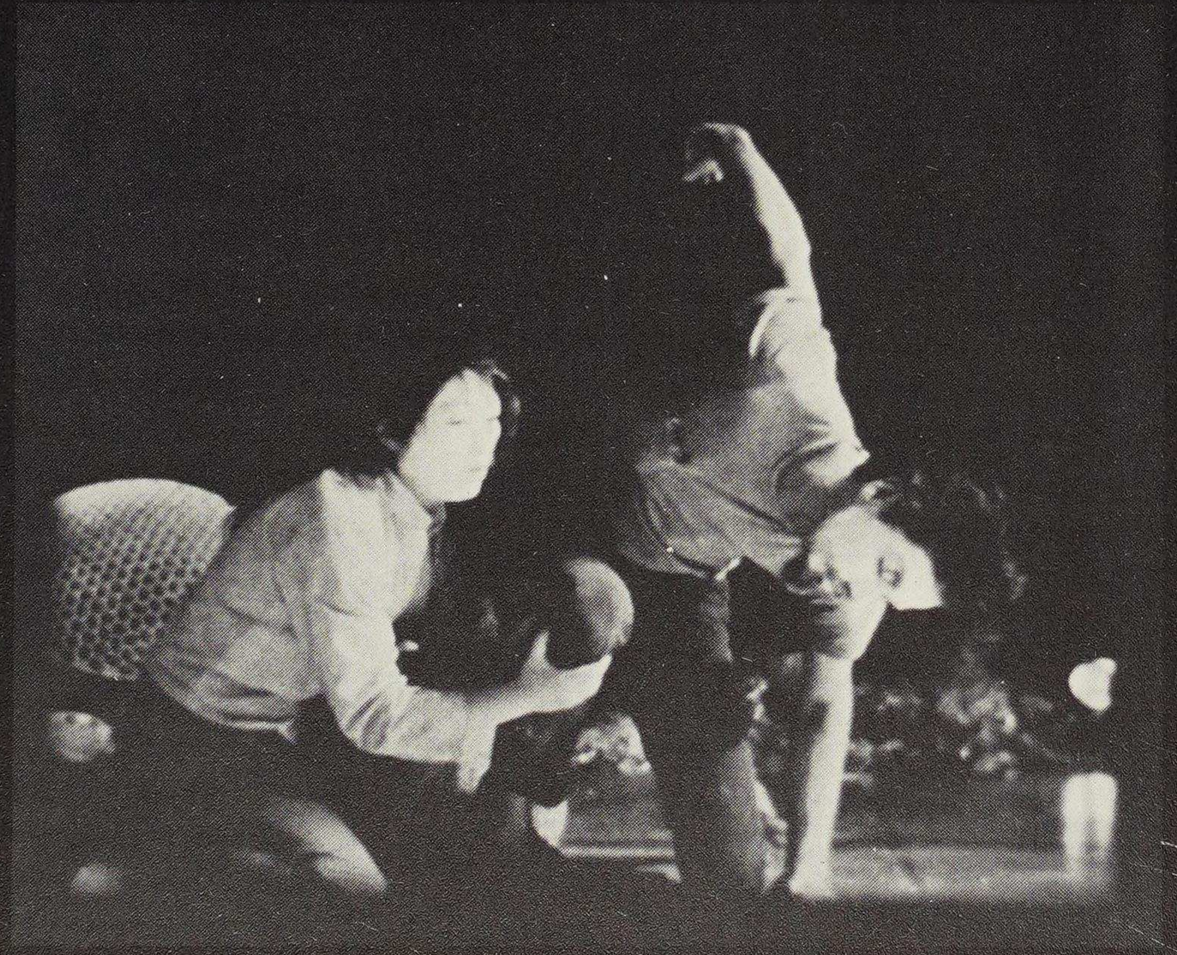
After the series of Body Sculptures the men center the women on the white disk; they are gradually sculpted onto the floor. Here they hold the positions, immobile.

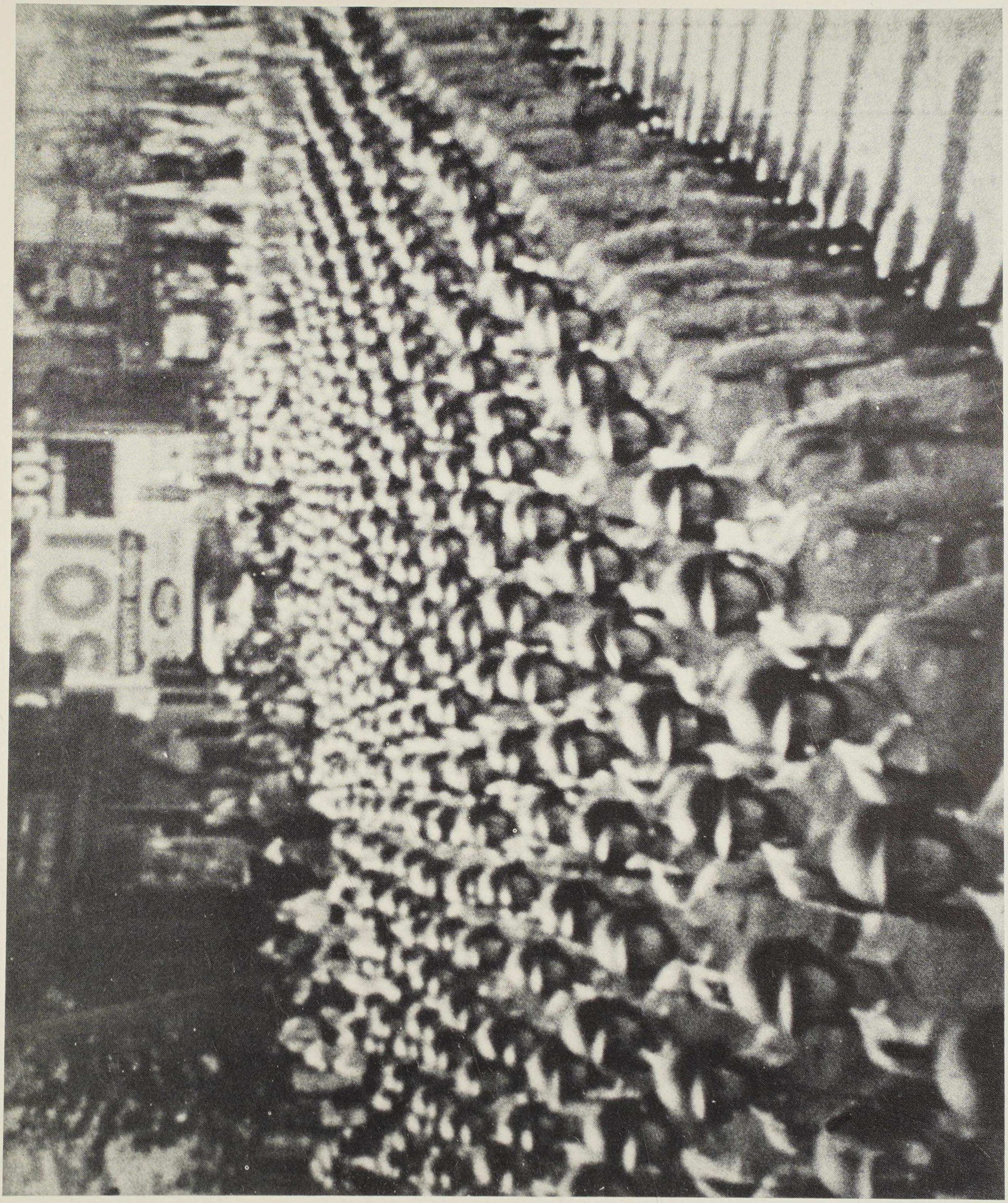
Having raised the white disk vertically the men carry the women and prop them against it. A **color film** of a snow storm outside the theater is projected against their torsos. Lying on the stage, one of the men watches the film; the other two climb onto the water lens. On signal from the watcher, they slowly spill piles of "snow" over the women, who sink into a heap.

Audience motions are monitored and **the sculpture lights flicker sharply. Then flashing blue side lights.** Scrambling across the floor, two performers fall and



Ted Wester





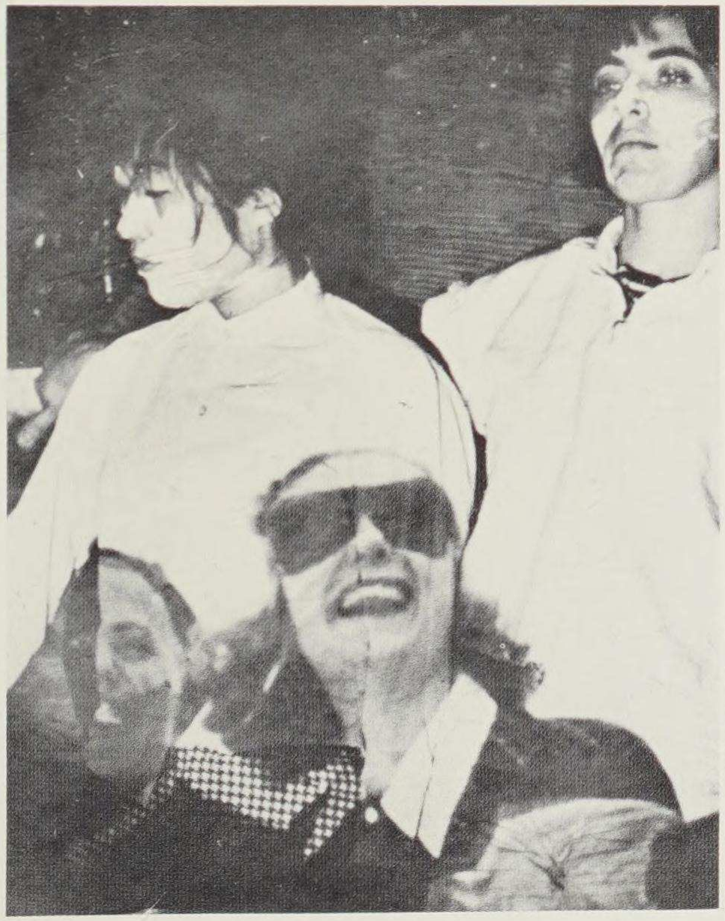
Ted Wester

Alphonse Schilling

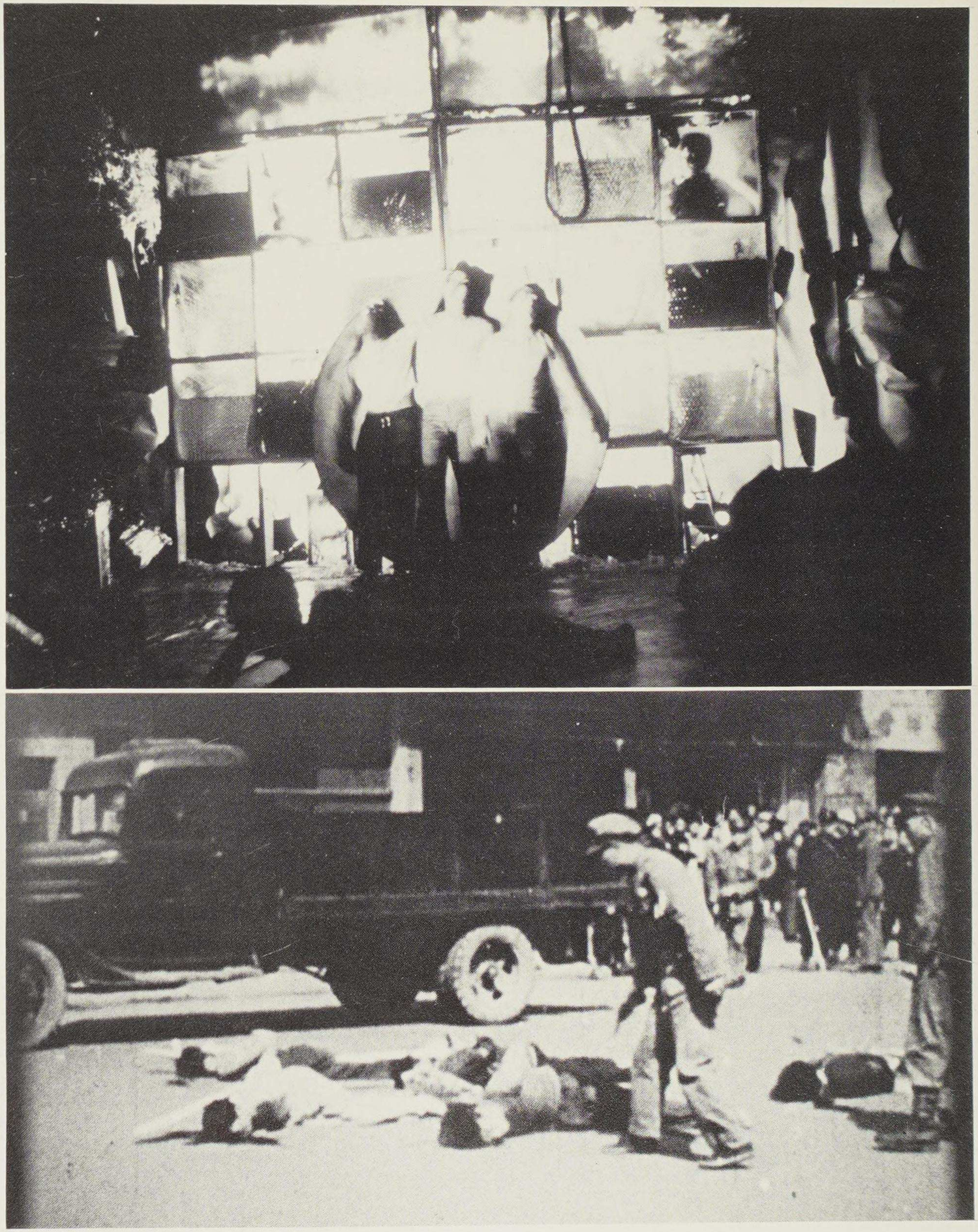
roll, choose to be the "body balls"; two standing become the "pushers"; the two remaining are "watchers." The Body Ball is pushed, rolled, and shoved in an uncertain journey by the Pusher, who may not use hands.

Quickly, they begin Crawl & Capture: body balls become "victims," watchers become "pursuers," pushers become "interference."

Flat on the floor the Victim crawls to escape the Pursuer, while the Interference hangs onto the Pursuer's ankles. When the Pursuer catches the Victim, the Interference moves suddenly to grab from the other end: a tug of war. (Usually each victim can gather enough force to leap from the grips of both tormentors:

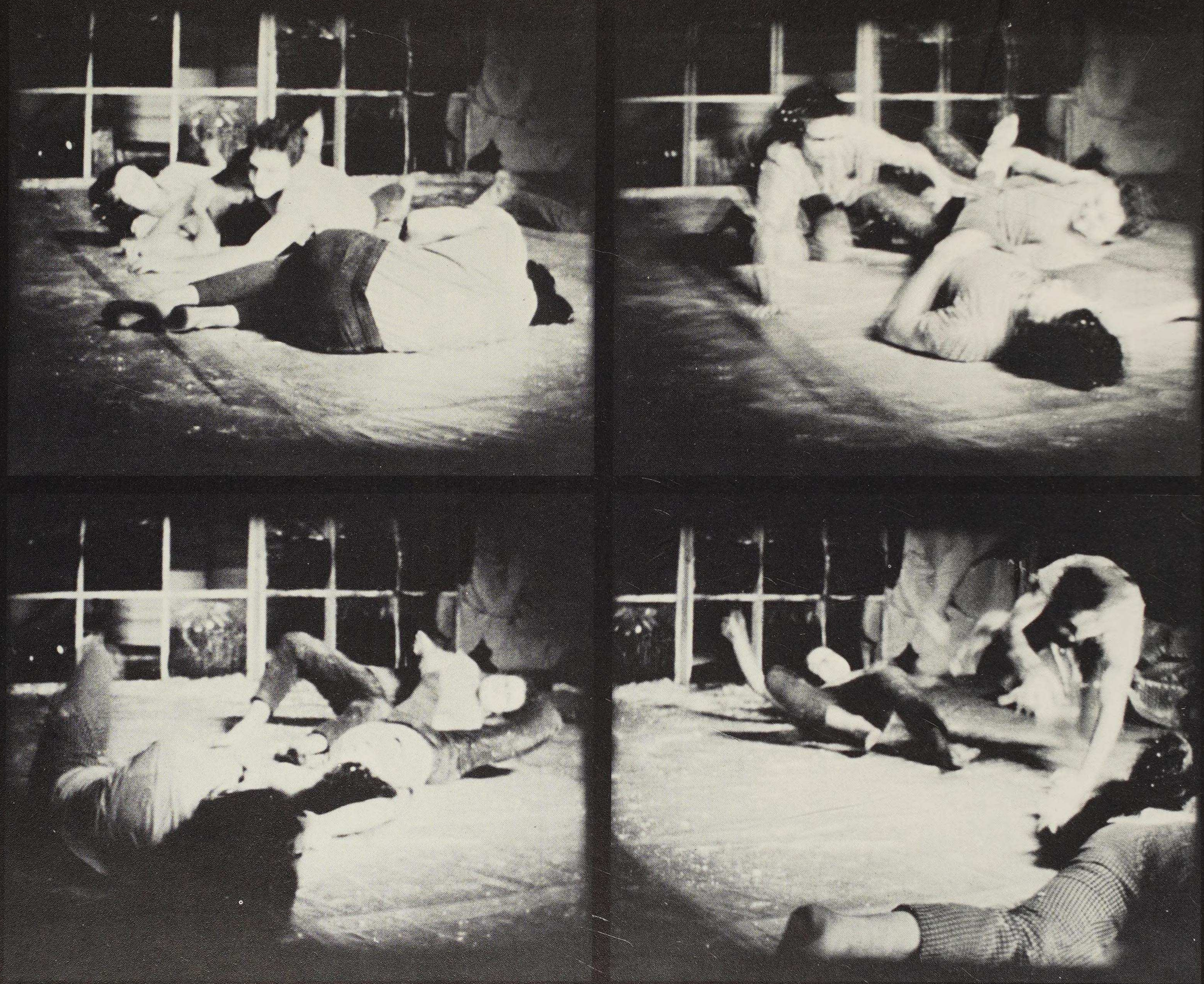


Herbert Migdoll



Herbert Migdoll

Alec Sobelewski



the leap and cry stops any movement of the other two.) Audience reaction triggers **sudden flashes of blue floor lights.**

Victim now chooses between pursuer and interference, one of whom becomes the Dragged Body (to be dragged and then hung from the looped rope). Gathering foil, two persons completely cover the first body hung; two others cover the second Dragged Body.

These bodies will become the two Silver Walkers. The remaining four become two Cocoons and a Double Cocoon (the last two unwrapped performers cover

UPI

Alphonse Schilling

Charlotte Victoria

each other as one form, falling together when wrapped).

The fallen cocoons slowly, slowly twist from their silver wrappings without using their hands. Silence, but for the crackling foil. The silver walkers, nearly blind in their wrappings, walk out onto the planks into the audience area; projectionists with blue flash lights guide them. The planks are slippery and slope upward—the walkers precariously make their way to the end, where they sink into the sitting position.

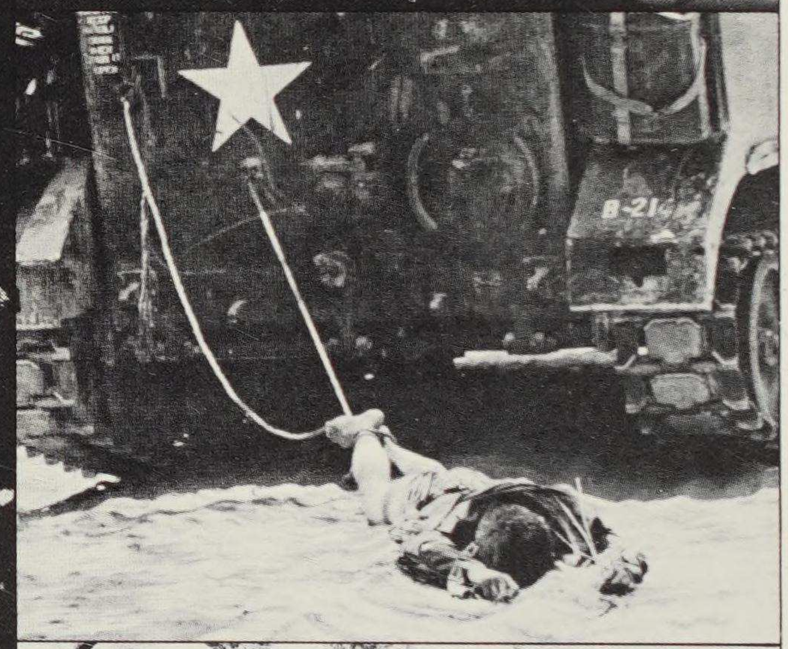
The first freed cocoons become Rescuers.

As **Viet-Flakes** begins against the white disk, a rescuer—sensing danger—crawls up the plank, and drags a walker down.

The walkers are corpse-like, nearly unmoveable. The other freed cocoons wait prone at the end of the planks to assist the rescues. Together in desperate struggle and clumsy haste they gather in a pile, collapsing under the film projection. The snow machine begins—snow falling, filling eyes and ears, covering all.

Herbert Migdoll

Herbert Migdoll



Kyoichi Sawada—UPI

Herbert Migdoll

Kyoichi Sawada—UPI

On The Making of SNOWS

I've always had great difficulty in asking for help and in believing it could be a source of satisfaction for someone to be of aid in accomplishing my work. I understood this as one of those twisted female inheritances, "Don't take up too much room!", against the social assumption "You have a right to all you need." This sort of conflict has hindered the smooth or efficient passage of my work into the art world maelstrom, but as well has made the energies and congruencies of collaborations on my work especially vivid and personal. The people I worked with all shared a devotion to our processes and the sense of bringing the work through against all odds. Essential to the risks and psychic submersions, the strains of personal daily efforts and preparations for a public work, was the emotional core, the interchange of ideas and the ballast of a shared life with James Tenney. There was always a direct flow between the confirmation of my work and personal life. Because there was the one person with whom I felt integral and whole, I could risk myself in public, and felt free to pursue forms of creative work for which I had no "special" training. Because Jim was a composer, pianist and conductor, the range of concentrations, tensions—working to a deadline, organizing groups, periods of abstraction, neglect of daily routines, had been endured by us both since the time we were college students. In the summer of '66 Jim was witness to hallucinations I suffered in the country, of Vietnamese bodies hanging in the trees; the kitchen stove became a miniature village, smouldering—seen from above—and I was afraid to bake in it. I was editing "Fuses" (16mm) and began making super 8 film from Viet-nam atrocity photographs; gradually drawings and notes formed a sinister reverie building towards a theater piece.

In 1960 when Jim and I had graduate Fellowships (his in electronic music, mine in painting) at the University of Illinois, we had met a young woman Vietnamese poet, through his composition teacher Wen Chung-Chou. She told me about the deep and pervasive traditions of poetry among all the Vietnamese; that reverence for nature and for ancestors was shared by rural and urban settlements, that the French had long been a distruptive presence there controlling oil, tin, rubber and opium; that American military forces were subverting the economy and were destroying farming villages, building barbed wire encampments for farmers, radical professors, intellectuals. We had heard nothing of this before. This fragment fit with other astonishing stories we had heard from artists who in their free-wheeling travels had told us of underground military installations in the New Mexico desert, where they had been brought to do a concert; or of passports withheld, of a relative dying from germ warfare research, etc....and also fit with an uncanny paranoia we felt to be the unraveling fabric of the cold-war and McCarthy pursuits. It related to humble health food stores in Illinois receiving bomb threats; to the firing of Prof. Ivey—head of science research at the University of Illinois for his espousal of Krebiozen as a cancer cure; to the death of Reich in prison; to the bizarre notification from the Urbana bank informing us that in the event of a nuclear attack we should mail in our checks rather than come in person!; to a theater director friend in Chicago who discovered his phone was tapped when the mechanism broke down and replayed his conversations as he dialed. And then there were the periodic newspaper reports from Kankeekee, Broadview or Tolono farmers, of spaceships landing in their corn fields, helmeted figures taking a pumpkin pie and pitcher of water from their kitchen tables before whirling away in silver disks.

In September '66 Paul Libin called to offer the use of his Martinique Theater for a series of "Angry Arts" performances relating to the Viet-nam war. I had the rough beginnings of **Snows**—a range of images which might incorporate complex technologies. I could "see" the atmosphere of the work, I knew I wanted the audience to somehow control the performance cuing systems, and I was obsessed with the contradictions I wanted the work to effect. But I didn't want to present **Snows** on a stage—even the low circular one of the Martinique. Libin generously wasted three weeks with me, searching for permission to perform on a boat as it circled NY harbor, or to use a cavernous ruin under

the Brooklyn Bridge, or the Greenwich St. piers. We were in each case refused a "permit to assemble."

A performance work requires that antagonistic states of being co-exist and become mutually re-enforcing. A physical space has to be found; this becomes a formal reference, a basic structure on which the environmental and movement images take form. I have to mentally "dwell" there. I have to invite/provide for a para-normal state of "envisioning," becoming a vehicle through which the energies of the work will pass; in dreams and "abstracted" states I pay attention, concentrate for unpredicated relations, sudden elements running concurrently which may synchronize into a forceful sequence, an idea of film or equipment or a gesture... It's necessary to be strong physically: rehearsals are grueling, the body has to find the thoughts in concrete forms, to propel the collaborations and search in improvisation during rehearsal; then it is necessary to build, carry, cart, run around the city all day locating materials, deliver copy, films. Things go wrong, the strains increase. It is impossible to get ill, to miss a day, once a performance is set.

The conception of **Snows** began in the summer; the production was underway only a month and a half before the performance dates Libin provided. During this time I was working part time as a standby figure in a cocktail dress for unmemorable porno films; and I taught "art" to a Unitarian Sunday School class in Queens. Jim travelled every week to his job in electronic music research at Yale; I scrabbled for the $85 a month loft rent and we travelled back and forth between the loft and a country place, sustaining our belief in brief times apart—that we continually "choose" each other. Production chores were my singular responsibility, combined with domestic concerns for two places—I struggled for undisturbed time to work in my constructions, light boxes, and the drawings and films which were crucial to **Snows**—and we had an active round of events in the art world.

Diary Notes during the week before the opening of **Snows**:

12 Jan. Worst day of all...no money, no breakfast, rehearsal.notebook lost, no lens on camera I rushed to borrow...too much to do! Films at Phila. lab may not get back in time. Aluminum is coming free! Talk with Paul Libin. Rehearse at 4:30 half of the piece...rough and ragged. The group is fantastic together. Delight with them. Ralph at work on electronic wiring, Larry rebuilding sections of light machine. Jim goes to work. Rush down to get lenses and look at 8mm o.k. Work with Jim on tape, it's coming wonderfully exactly what I hoped for...analogies and almost imperceptible transitions of sound sources.

13 Jan. Jim brings in eggs, a real breakfast. Wishing to stay quietly in one place together. Alphonse comes to check out Bolex for me—lenses all wrong. Go to 5 & 10 for magnifying glass. No good on Bolex; tape it onto 8mm Nikon. Re-do Voice ad. To Willoughby's trade my 16mm Craig editor for an 8mm. They give me $15. Finally shoot the (new) Viet images over again. Jim takes me to Max's for hamburger. No world but the theater these weeks. Finish Voice ad. Cut super 8 films; Kitch happily on my lap, cat hairs in the viewer. Talk with Jim on phone over an hour! He's so with me on everything, real joy to do the piece, go through it together.

17 Jan. Filliou Happening at 8:30. Calling to locate projectors; mad wild rehearsal. Karl and June work on covering floor. Collaging walls. Collapse on floor middle of spreading foil, plastic...too much.

19 Jan. Wake up full of plans, errands to do, become hysterical...we go back to bed for loving. So, everything changes. Messy angry rehearsal; technical things still unresolved, unrealized...and I've got to insist. Change ending of piece...middle section altered.

20 Jan. Pick up projectors; programs typed for theater, good rehersal; projectors working with contact mikes and speaker placement set. Finally clear. Shaking with exhaustion. Jack and Karl finish a "snow-bucket" machine. 4:00 am both dead asleep, Shigeko calls...she cannot perform!

Week of the 21st—**Snows** opening

Yves Klein memorable opening Guggenheim; May Wilson exhibit; Gypsey dinner—Rotraut & Phillipe; Claes; Alphonse Shilling films; Brakhage films; call Victor P. for a job...feeling sick, kind of ghastly, sweet last hours in the theater....

I had presented Paul Libin with one of my typical $500 budgets for: 8 performances, six performers, five technicians, a complex environment to be built by my crew; I would design the flyers, print, address, mail them; I asked a guarantee from him for sandwiches, brandy and carfare for the troupe during rehearsals, a promise of ten complimentary tickets each night for friends who couldn't afford the $2.50 ticket...It was impossible to tell if Paul was accustomed to working this way but his faith was evident. He arranged to keep the theater empty for

us for two weeks, understanding my need to construct the work in its physical environment.

From the beginning certain images for **Snows** had formed around Jim and Phoebe Neville; fortunately both found time to work with me again. Peter Watts, a sculptor, saw an earlier work and asked to be involved; I found Tyrone Mitchell, also a sculptor, in a store and knew immediately that I wanted to work with him—I convinced him right then to give us a try. I knew Shigeko Kubota only slightly—she lived then with the composer David Behrman, a friend of Jim. My friend and neighbor, June Ekman, the dancer, agreed to stand-in for me during later rehearsals.

! had designed a reflective prism across the back of the low horseshoe stage; the glass or lucite necessary for this refractive surface was beyond my means. Instead, an open grid of two by fours evolved into which I wanted to place heavy sacks filled with colored water; at either end of the structure I envisioned vertical rectangles of moving lights. (And I had to sacrifice my plan for a transparent plexi-glass floor cut with circles through which lights would shine.)

At this point the collaboration of sculptor Larry Warshaw became crucial; Larry proposed a light machine in a horizontal span across the "water lens," composed of many small motors driving mirrors and colored foil at speeds which could respond to the audience's motions. Through Deborah Hay, Larry had worked with Robbie Robinson on the "Nine Evenings" performances under the auspices of Billy Klüver's Experiments In Art and Technology. In order to realize the complex technical aspects of **Snows,** Larry contacted Robinson and Klüver for assistance. Klüver had created EAT to provide artists with access to equipment and technicians. He had been a friend to Jim and me when we first came East, when Jim had become composer in residence at Bell Labs developing music programs for the computer systems that Klüver was also involved with. It was Billy who had introduced me to Oldenburg, Rauschenberg, Brecht, de Maria and Breer, and who formed a vital nucleus of artists in association. I submitted my proposals to EAT, and **Snows** became the first occasion that EAT turned its resources over to a single artist.

One bitterly cold morning Jim and I drove through light snow with Robert Schultz and Larry Warshaw out to Bell Labs. Robbie Robinson (who, with fellow bell engineer Ralph Flynn, worked out the overall technical requirements of **Snows**) took us to an equipment house where EAT materials were stored. As if at a jumble sale, we pick and choose "these transistors, those cables, let's have this SCR system." We loaded up the station wagon, barely squeezing ourselves in. . .I'm told we're carting about $4,000 worth of cable, wire, power amps, transceivers, photoresistors, preamps, mikes, contact mikes, speakers, and motors. . .a pile of stuff representing 10 times the budget of the whole performance piece!

My ventures with technology had been concrete and personal; my difficulties with working with technicians who knew the possibilities and limitations of machines had been mechanical. I could not be sure whether my technological systems would be ridiculous or inspired. With the help of Warshaw, and EAT's Ralph Flynn, Robbie Robinson & Per Björn, new perceptions were made possible.

Six years before, people had been disturbed by my having transformed the function and look of mechanical parts—lights, clocks, motors—including them in constructions where they no longer resembled what they "really" were. Now I also wanted all the mechanical parts exposed, edging (the stage) out of their boxes, jackets, casings. I wanted the pile of cables filling the aisles, to be walked over and around, but fire laws and the fragility of the electronic elements prohibited these ideas. The machines which finally did function visibly were the light sculpture, the snow machine, hand-held beams, the two noisy swivel head 16mm projectors, an old 8mm projector, two large strobe lights, and floor mikes sticking up in the silver foil on the stage.

I wanted the mechanical gestures of machine parts to equal performers' movements—exposed as part of the

total environment to which they contribute particular effects. Whenever possible I wanted the technicians to be interchangeable with performers: the work of technicians an overt parameter—clearly embedded within the overall forms. Everyone took part in rehearsal exercises. I held a double reign: visual images and physical impulses which are enacted, in action. My performers are natural "objects" whose personal attitudes, gestures and responses move within a generative dream-vision source—meshing the fantastic and actual. And I had the wish that technicians and machinery could actively evolve their roles by discoveries of functions that the "personality" of the machines, and the emotions of the technicians could realize in active relationship with performers—a total sense of the situation which they shape; the process of collaboration freely transforming their presumed use.

In the thick of rehearsals the media began to take form. Karl Schenzer, Jack Aquiros, James Finney were building the "water lens" late into the night and offering overviews as the performed aspects grew and shifted. Robert Schultz was building a color organ to be operated by sound sources. Larry Warshaw's Light Machine, placed on top of the lens, was constructed and re-constructed until the final form consisted of:

Ten spot lights, mounted on two 5-foot frames, covered with colored gels and connected to the Schultz color organ. Aimed away from the screen of the frame, the lights were reflected off foil-covered spinning drums and refracted through the diamond patterned plexiglass screens, pulsing according to sound intensities and manual controls. The machine had been inspired by works by Nicholas Stoffer, and the motor systems were designed by Per Björn.

The seats of the audience were to be wired with contact microphones feeding into an SCR switching system to which all other motors would be connected. I began a cue sheet to incorporate all the variations in our electronic equipment which could be altered by the unsuspecting audience:

3 16mm projectors—
five films: direction, speed, light intensity, grouping of films, on/off

3 sound tapes—5 speakers
volume intensity, on/off (variable speakers)

light machine—
speed, variation of motors, brightness intensity, on/off

color organ—
specific areas to be illuminated, colors, on/off

floor lights on stage—
randomized illumination, intensity, on/off

contact mikes on stage—
randomized active/inactive

performers cues—
durations of actions, sequences linked to the tempo, occurrence, position, of the above elements

Finally the magical coup for the environment:

Gimbels Department store is two blocks from my loft; I go there to get warm when the landlord turns off the heat. The Martinique Theater is directly across Gimbels at Greely Square. In December, Gimbels is decorated with acres of hanging white branches, imitation snowfluff covering the stems. I need these branches. I call to speak with the decorator; the branches are to be taken down Saturday night and tossed into a garbage truck. I invent some story—that I am teaching children to build things by hand and need the branches. Wednesday, December 28th at 9:00 p.m., Carl, Jack and I arrive at a side door; bundles of branches carried on our shoulders across 6th Ave. to the Theater. It is snowing! We need 150 feet of heavy duty aluminum foil. Call all the companies—it is too expensive. I invent some story—we are a charity church group making a Christmas party for orphans. A huge package of foil is sent ot us!

Snows was performed eight times to capacity audiences. We lived in it, dwelled there so deeply, it could have continued many times over without becoming repetitious to any of us. Libin would have liked to extend it, but had booked another theater group, "Viet Rock" by Meegan Terry, directly after us. It's difficult to describe the audience reactions. People had wept unashamed. Involved and stunned, there was never applause at the conclusion. At that moment in time the work shattered indifference, confronting the weary outrage and hardening of our senses. And yet was transcendent—taking us, audience and performers, through another door of self and community. We were connected to each other through the metaphors enacted. The final night, February 5th, the city received "blizzard warnings"; again there was standing room only.

1966/1977

ROUND HOUSE

July 29 1967 Congress of the Dialectics of Liberation London

> Come to London, I order, beseech, implore, tell, ask, direct command...let the Congress extend itself beyond the space/time of words...Peace News says the Dialectics of Liberation will be the greatest intellectual event of the decade...But the body speaks louder than the word and you understand... what must be done.

This in a February letter from my friend, Dr. Joe Berke—psychiatrist, organizer of the first Free University (NYC), friend of the Fugs, of poets Calvin Hernton, Susan Sherman—by then in London practicing work in Anti-Psychiatry with R.D. Laing, David Cooper, Jules Henry, and later to author a handbook of the '60's, Counter Culture. (And to marry the American writer Roberta Elzy).

A clipping from Peace News (London) came with the letter, and I read this projective evaluation:

> What is required, then, is a long-term project of subversive re-education, backwards to first principles! And this is why the congress of "The Dialectics of Liberation" is so important. All the men involved with the July congress are seeking to "demystify," which is to say, to demonstrate the mutilations which our regimented technological rationality inflicts upon man's apprehension of reality and of himself. They are not so much concerned with providing solutions as with arousing consciousness." (my italics)

Since the featured participants were "some of the most brilliant but unclassifiable thinkers in the world today"—sharing a deep commitment to clarify political consciousness, risking professional stability for a radical, reconstructive vision—since that was true—was it also possible that many of them would resent the participation of a woman, in particular a young woman, whose contribution would be a sort of "unclassifiable" physical extension, a sensory equivalence to energies explored/released in the course of the congress? The quotation, now ten years past, clarifies the bias underlying the actual hostility, ostracism, and sabotage which my work received. A few years ago, when I lived in London, I met another of the psychiatrists who organized the congress. He told me:

> I always felt we owed you an apology...but the disillusioning fact seems to have been that we didn't welcome a woman taking an equal space among ourselves, we distrusted a theatrical form, and we certainly didn't want a very young woman putting on a performance which incorporated our own words with a countering physicality...

INSTITUTE OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDIES

Congress

DIALECTICS OF LIBERATION

London July 15 – July 30, 1967

Participants include:

Gregory Bateson	**Paul Goodman**
David Cooper	**Jules Henry**
Mircea Eliade	**Ronald Laing**
John Gerassi	**Jacov Lind**
Allen Ginsberg	**Ernest Mandel**
Erving Goffman	**Herbert Marcuse**
Lucien Goldmann	**Paul Sweezy**

Further details on request

Programme furnished on enrolment

Ten Plenary Sessions : Daily Seminars

Registration Fee : $45 £15-15-0 or equivalent currency

Cheques or money orders, before 1st March 1967* to

INSTITUTE OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDIES

65a Belsize Park Gardens, London, N.W.3.

*late registration accepted if openings remain.

THE DIALECTICS OF LIBERATION

ALL men are in chains. There is the bondage of poverty and starvation: the bondage of lust for power, status, possessions.

A REIGN of terror is now perpetrated and perpetuated on a global scale.

IN the affluent societies, it is masked. There, children are conditioned by violence called love to assume their position as the would-be inheritors of the fruits of the earth. But, in the process, they are reduced to little more than hypothetical points on a dehumanised co-ordinate system.

FOR the rest, terror is not masked. It is torture, cold, starvation, death.

THE whole world is now an irreducible whole.

THE properties of this whole world system force us to submit to the fatality of Vietnam, the starvation of the third world, etc.

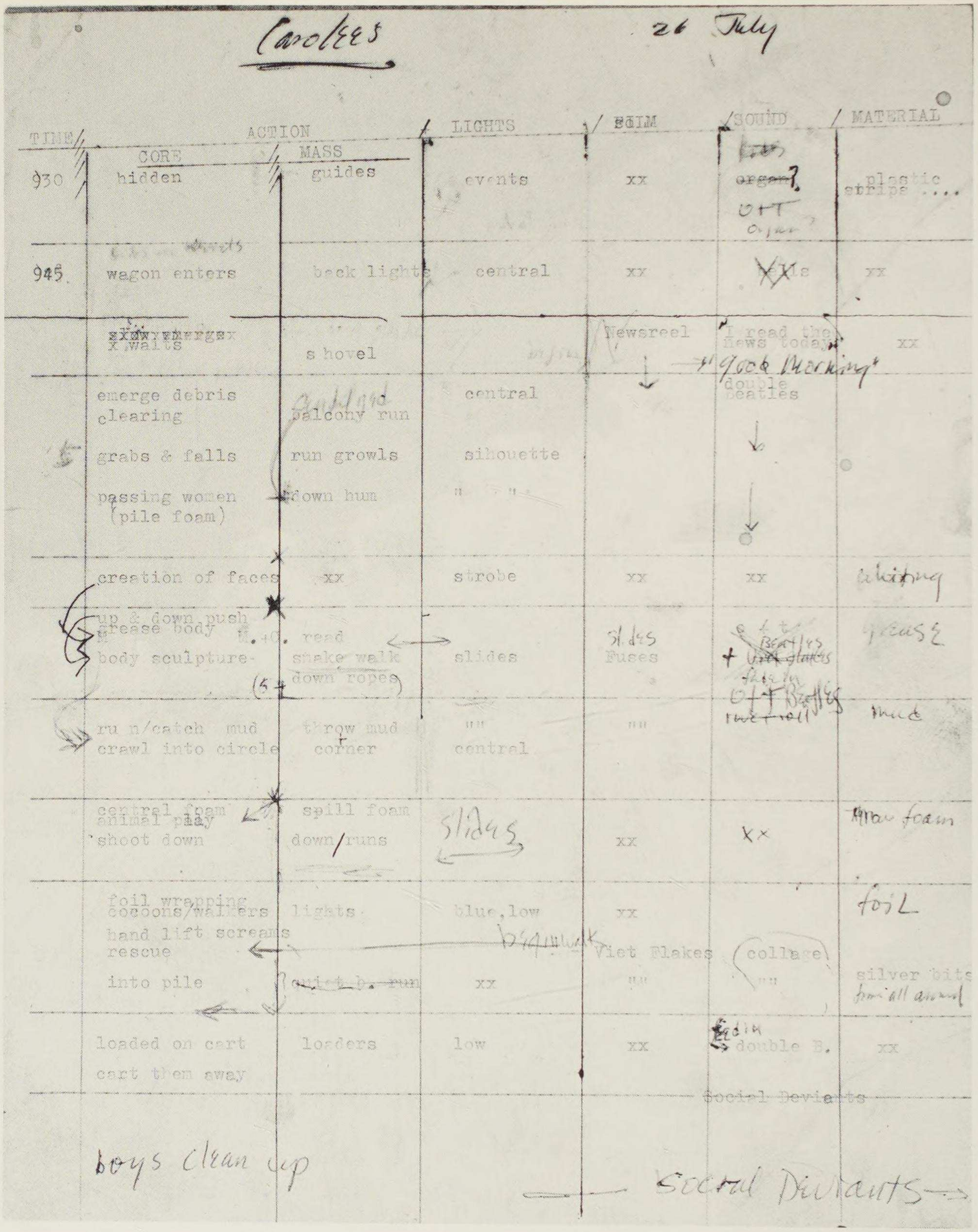
IN total context, culture is against us, education enslaves us, technology kills us.

WE must confront this. We must destroy our vested illusions as to who, what, where we are. We must combat our self-pretended ignorance as to what goes on and our consequent non-reaction to what we refuse to know.

WE experience what is and what is being done through the filter of our socially approved lies. But what is, is not the limit of what is possible.

WE shall meet in London on the basis of a wide range of expert knowledge.

THE dialectics of liberation begin with the clarification of our present condition.



Nevertheless, Joe Berke, organizing secretary for the congress at the Institute of Phenomenological Studies, put through an official invitation with airfare, board, performance date, and a miniscule budget for materials, (though he couldn't manage to have my name included among the others).

The invited guests were to raise topics, present papers, deliver lectures each morning followed by discussion seminars; and there would be evening and weekend events of poetry readings and workshops continuously for two weeks.

On opening day there was a gathering in the vast Round House, to welcome and introduce the invited guests to those attending. Amid a blur of auspicious culture heros my turn came and I was introduced by Dr. Burke. I described the idea for a closing night performance work which would be developed in the coming days, incorporating dominant issues and elements of the congress, and asked for participants from those attending. I would work with a core group of eight or ten people: workshops in movement, physical exploration of the Round house, sensitization, improvisation, etc. An additional group of twenty or thirty people would function like a "Greek chorus" enlarging aspects of movement and text.

Paul Goodman sprang up from among the audience and announced that he objected to this event, that it would be intrusive and "we weren't consulted about inviting her. . .why in the world would we want her to do this sort of thing?"

The following night there was a welcoming dinner for the invited guests. From my diary:

> July 16. Excluded from the dinner party; told to arrive after the dinner at East Elsham Street—hour away in a workers' district; party at West Elsham. . .once there, no one speaks to me. . .deadly, impenetrable atmosphere. . .the men in huddles passing wine to each other. One other woman there. Finally Joe arrives; David Cooper and Mason are friendly. Talk with Jules Henry and Bateson about animals. . .

The overwhelming work of evolving a ritual performance form in two weeks for a vast space (originally a Victorian railroad turn-about station) with sixty participants, kept me from most of the lectures and discussions I wanted to attend. But those I did observe consistently described the malaise of "Western Man" in the

Performers:
Bob Harrison Neil Hornick Michael Kustow Henry Martin Brenda Dixon Mary Hanna Jean Michaelson C.S./
Mass group: Conrad Clark Tony Woodward David Cronin Adrian Harman David Triesman Peter Davey Bill Schliffer Roger Gottlieb Martin Siegel Seymour King Jim Lesch Elizabeth Robinson Shamey Maxwell Hugh King Susan Triesman Peter Payne Anna Kohela Mary Armstrong Steven Allyn Thomasina Bodker/
Assisted by: Craig Gibsone David Gibsone David Jeffrey Brian Kahin Bernard Mathieu Ron Geesin Steve Dwoskin Eve Turner Craig Nichols Tom Bushnell Peter Stowell Hugh Cutler Steve Levinsky Alex Stowell/
Roustabouts: Danny Hewoy Tony Slingsby Ian Barr Michael Campbell Jimmy Bartlett

Michael Broome

exclusive masculine gender. The splits and fissures of male/female, culture/nature, spirit/body, rationality/passion were grammatically inculcated, sustaining the proscriptive assumptions and patriarchal perogatives which characterized the dis-ease of cultural and social forms supposedly being "de-mystified." I was a participant among men who validated each other's work—each other's transgressions of established culture and myth—but who at the same time implicitly mythicized the female as auxiliary, adjacent. That is, woman was included under a set of standards and concerns auxiliary to or in implicit conflict with her own experience.

Just as men buried the immediacy of certain emotions (especially their vulnerabilities) and forced them to be transformed into disproportionate, distorted, or formidable channels (editing/censorship of self), they expressed a philosophical plaint against the exploitation of nature, of creative resources. Art, nature, the body, sensuality, became tropes for the missing women, the active female powers. And while they suffered this fragmentation, the inclusion of actual, contributing, "de-mystifying" women remained an exceptional consideration. The men who helped and furthered my work often did so at the expense of an uncomplicated relationship with the other men.

The rehearsals with the performers were constantly impaired by a group of students who felt that what I was doing was "Imperialistic," "individualistic"; that no particular group had a right to define itself within the congress. They stormed through the area where we meditated, stole our props, banged on tin cans while we struggled to concentrate on sensitized movement and contact improvisations. The paradoxes would not be unraveled, only experienced head on. Among the performers were economists, Trotskyites, Marxists, social workers, doctors, artists, an heiress escaping her family. The only actual working-class participants from the neighborhood of Camden Town were five young boys who became our "roustabouts". I had a room in a private house on Abbey Road with a garden full of roses—shared with an English writer, a Swedish sociologist, and a political exile from Greece. The separation from Jim was especially painful; the daily work and density of people and issues at the conference was chaotic.

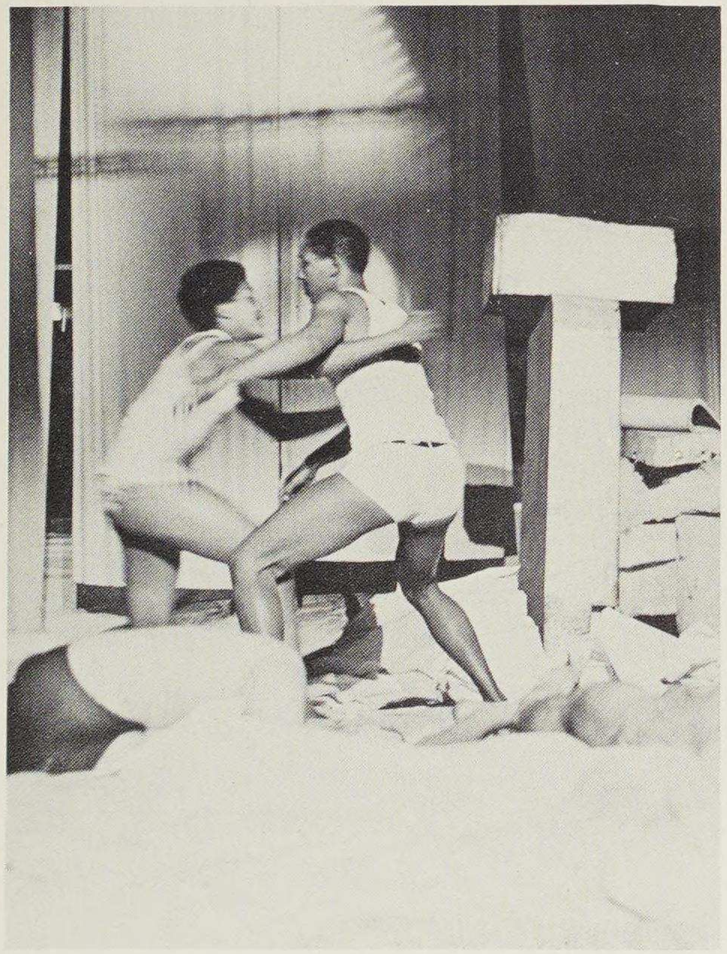
I was able to function and proceed with this impossible work because the subtle and unanalysed exclusions sparked some instinct that I did need to be present and active, that subsuming my role was a way to elevate its relevance. And I was

Michael Broome

WILL YOU JUST LET ME FINISH?...I'M NOT FINISHED... YOU'RE NOT LISTENING...CAN YOU HEAR ME?... YOU'RE NOT LISTENING.....

IS IT POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP A SEPARATE SYSTEM IN WHICH WE CAN LIVE OUR LIVES COMPLETELY OUTSIDE OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM?.....IS IT POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP A SEPARATE SYSTEM COMPLETELY OUTSIDE OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM?.....

John Haynes



Michael Broome

fascinted with the space, with the conference issues, with the extended sort of movement and reactions required. The core group working intensively together was a vivid contrast to many of the congress discussions, which broke down into shouting matches. And there was the last minute arrival of Stokley Carmichael, pinpointing the alienation of London's black community from the congress itself. Since at this time there were no "feminist issues" as such, my very participation was something of a vague anomaly. The conventions of intellectual address presume a man's point of view. I would not presume to the contrary to present "a woman's point of view." Rather, a personal view. My inclusion in the congress as a woman only meant my experience must be exceptional—but the fact of its particularity and disparity served to illustrate and define the constructs and expectations of male culture admitting a female exception. The performance participants became aware of this.

As **Round House** progressed I decided to show "Fuses" within the context of the performance. Joe Berke, Ronnie Laing, and the lawyer for the congress called a sudden meeting with me outside by the railroad tracks. The lawyer said I could show the film, they did not want to prevent it. . .but they could not come to my defense, that I must be prepared to go to jail! Joe and Michael Kustow thought of a way around this: entrance would be by "membership," tickets would have to be purchased in advance. A dozen people had to run around London penciling in this addenda to the posters. Even after this ploy the lawyer repeated his advice.

There was no reason why the film which I considered a sorely needed reference to dismantling the structures of rationalized power—"de-mystified" or not—in a clear imaging of erotic intimacy—the farthest point from pornography—should be offered at the risk of my ending up in a London prison. But I decided it was a silly and unlikely issue, that I would simply project the film as part of the visual media with no further discussion.

During these weeks Michael Kustow and Joe Berke were unstinting in their help and efforts. Michael was in the core group; a writer, theater director, and editor of a theater journal, he was able to work on publicity, find technical help, and actively gather textual material from the seminars and discussions. Friends of the participants arrived to help with locating and hauling materials; the composer Ron Geesin, filmmaker Steve Dwoskin, Barbara and John Lathem, poet Bob Cobbing, photographer Jennifer Pike, all provided special help. Susan Sherman and

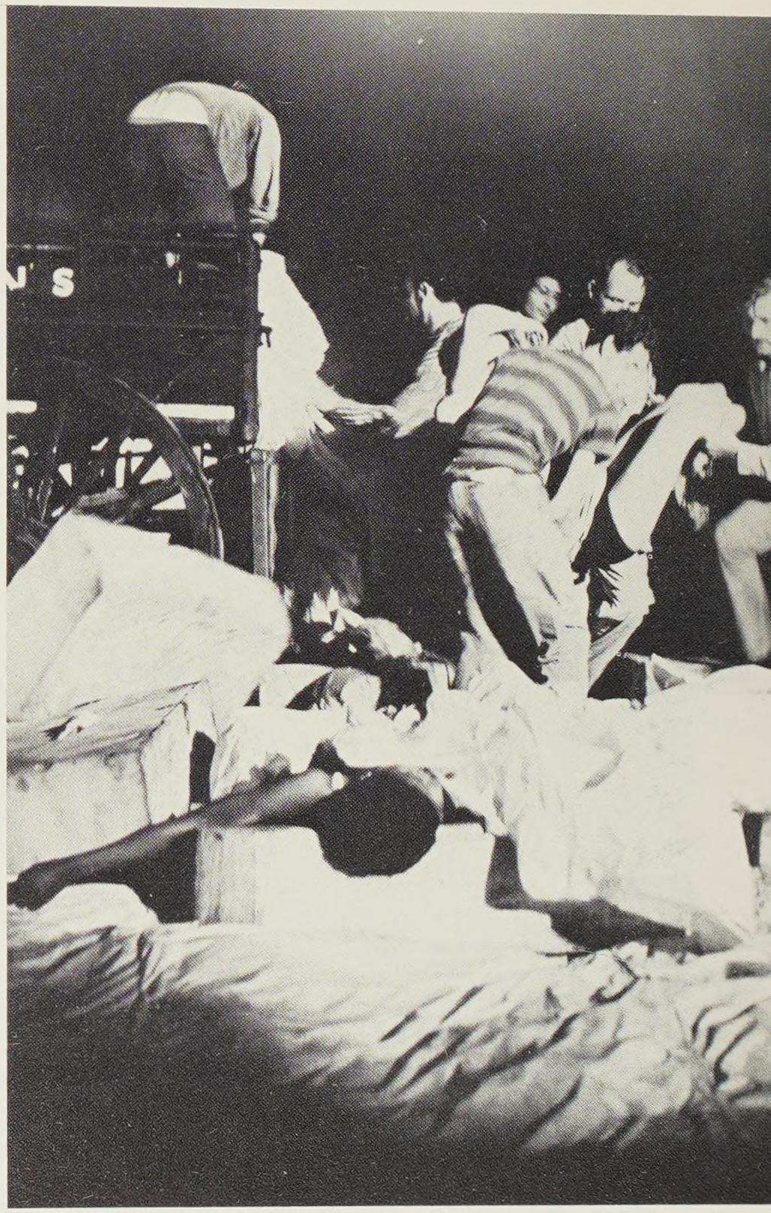
Jerry Rothenberg arrived at the congress to give poetry readings, and their appreciation kept me on keel as well.

The core group's developing closeness spread into the actions of the mass group. We were evolving not simply a "performance," but a microcosm of creative inter-relations. Despite harassment and shortness of time, we were discovering a concrete clarification of the actual social situation, and a full self-identity within a group process.

The night of the performance a rainstorm made it necessary to cut out "the rope journey" (leading the audience in by small units). Five hundred people settled themselves in a huge semi-circle; the atmosphere was testy, aggressive, or passive during **Round House.** Our final "rescue" by the mass group—piling us into the cart—was a relief from heckling and catcalls. As we were trundled away in a heap Jean muttered through the refuse: "Carolee, I'm glad you had the foresight to get us out of here." . . . The band, The Social Deviants, plugged in their amplifiers and began to play; finally the audience got up and danced in the debris.

The events at the Round House were indeed an impetus to shift directions. The next works would turn the environment and movement relations directly over to the audience. Later, in 1970, while directing another work here my intentions would be altered, when my final audience-activated work would be swept away in a sabotage of Acid punch.*

The Round House itself sits high on its hill at the edges intersecting three vivid districts of London: the northern end of Camden Town's narrow row houses—a working class section; the bottom reach of Hampstead Hill, leading up to tree-lined streets and Georgian houses long associated with its history of scholars, artists, and "liberals"; and the forked bridge leading west to Primrose Hill, mystically imbued, the highest point in London. In 1967 Arnold Wesker had taken on this abandoned space as a home for his theater group, and oversaw a restaurant, a bar, a gallery of sorts, community events and incredible rock concerts, all approved by the London Council, saving the Round House from ruin.



Michael Broome

*See: "Play Power in London," Cott, Jonathan, Rolling Stone, March 19, 1970.

Shunk-Kender

NIGHT CRAWLERS

September 8 1967 Expo 67 Pavillon de la Jeunesse, Montreal

When I lived in Vermont we crossed recrossed the vague borders for nights of square dancing in Canada. Vermont and Quebec met at the edges of farm land where international borders are chewed over by grazing cows. A fish from the northern estuary may be hooked on a line by wriggling rampants de la nuit, or three miles along succumb with a night crawler in its mouth. Frame houses, trailers down the road—perhaps the vestigal territory of native americans who hang out a notice "Worms." Now we were to cross the border as performers invited to the Pavillon de la Jeunesse—organized by young French artists as an alternative to theater and media presented by official governments at Expo '67. La Jeunesse staff advised me that every bit of material transported for the performance must be recorded by them in advance to provide official papers to customs officers and border police searching for draft resisters and political stuff. We looked suspicious enough: Jim Tenney, Mitsou Naslednikov, myself in the old station wagon stuffed with six bales of polyurethene foam, films, tapes, ropes, food, bedding, our cat Kitch hidden under the front seat, and a three foot mound of pink foam rising from the top of the '52 Plymouth.

SCORE

In the darkened circular performance area Mitsou and I, dressed in ungainly overalls, move through the audience making physical contact with each person. We crawl across laps, stand balanced on shoulders, slip down knees; they are immediately engaged in helping or resisting us, watching their neighbor, wondering what contact we might make with them next. The pockets of our overalls are stuffed with candies, gum and fruit—everyone is offered a little something to eat. Because the audience is bilingual we speak to them and to each other in both French and English: May I stand on you? Would you pass this fruit? ...Help me across. They quickly respond to us in French and English.

Black out.

Mitsou and I appear in front of a large screen of white paper in the light of the film "Red News." We attack the flashing images with brushes loaded with red and white paint. (The movement is based on part of **Ghost Rev.**) She strokes vertical forms and I circular ones of the film imagery. The screen is composed of multiple layers and we rip them open, continuing to paint, moving back and forth in front of the screen.

"Red News" concludes with a speedway race, sudden collisions in which cars burst into flames and rocket off the track. As this imagery occurs the tremendous noise of an automobile engine is heard and Jim drives a Volkswagon directly into the performance area. Mitsou rips the painted layers of screen down to a clear surface. The film "Viet-Flakes" begins with its sound collage. Jim emerges from the car, climbs onto the roof which is covered with large thick sheets of pink polyurethene foam. I come to the front of

Notes from then and now:

to make contact through us may contact themselves not telling audience what to do but where openings can be taken in on and beyond the event (shift the dangerous blocking) from where imagery evocation makes concrete link to actions breaking into certain barriers putting that sudden awareness into actual time an inevitable expression of communality reorganize rage violence guilt not atomized moving together towards unknown qualities undefined unproscribed why the responses could be so full not agress the audience some other performance groups put me off even their sensitivity exercises competitive foolish idealization loses the track we were crazy and shrewd the craziness worth attention of government "research" middle class fodder identified with the victims this time enough anxiety to the right clawing in our mail slipping through our telephones and formal requests for notification of our "performances" (government stationery) realizing the direction my work was going

implication of another dimension to share the privilege and practical physical knowledge "Night Crawlers"/"Rampants de la Nuit" ironic title in Canada the refuge for thousands of draft resisters "Rampants de la Nuit" and "Thames Crawling" titles about displacement relocating combining complete break the disillusionment of prolonged war student strikes of '69 200 colleges close down Bruce saying a contact of a shaping nature juxtaposed to the institutionalization of information sensuality and cruelty simultaneously in film of atrocities and the movement of Jim and me produced a crisis of identification participation of the audience a covenent sensitivity to be enacted first of the series merging perceptual field fulfillment of a direction implicit in previous work now expored two years human body/object equivalence human body/environment equivalence insistence on organic quality car expands breathes with bodies (contrast to Vostell's hard objects in confrontation material aspect to material aspect or Yvonne's body-as-object concern for objectness of the body) life requiring action our passivity enforced to realize parameters of the action psychological and physical response direction the work or event has to go interior dynamic releases itself functional statement any art work will be interpreted believability is invited physical experience sensory permission discoveries made between performers extended to include the audience.

1967-77

the car and climb up to join him. Mitsou moves to the side of the car and begins to pull out bales and bales of polyurethene foam; she continues unstuffing the car and filling the performance space as Jim and I develop contact improvisation on the body of the car.

Standing on top of the car, he unhooks my overalls and pulls them down. We begin a series of contact exchanges, balancing on the surfaces of the automobile illuminated within the shifting Vietnam atrocity images: turning, pushing, holding, shifting our weight in a continual series of embraces and separations. Our motions edge us down over the front of the car, finally sinking into the floor in the foam.

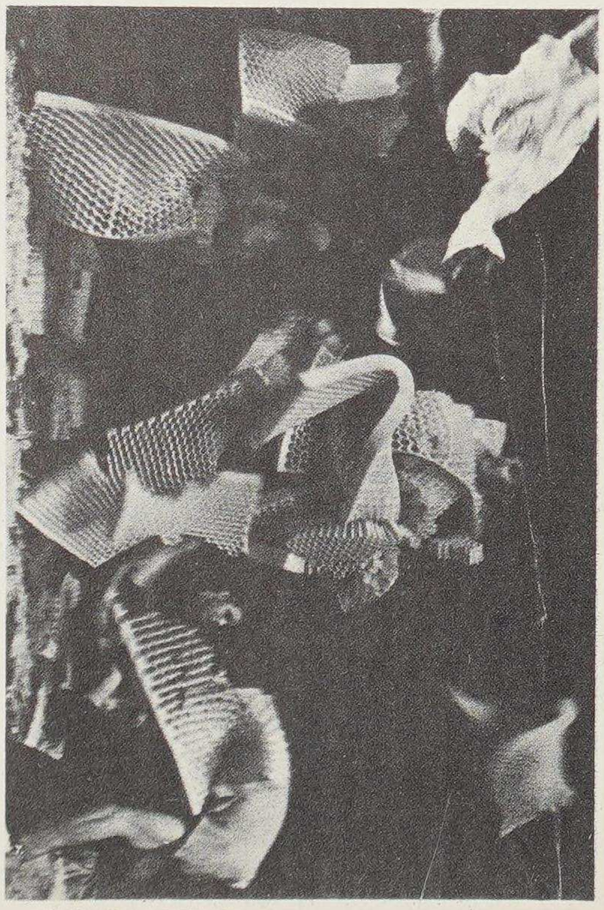
At the conclusion of the film we lie exhausted on the floor. The overhead lights are raised dimly and flicker. Five friends in the audience have exited and return carrying pink cotton candy sticks from the fair ground. Mitsou, Jim and I go to the audience and choose a person to carry into the central spread of foam. We ask each person in French and English, "May I carry you?" Sometimes Mitsou and I crawl with our arms around a man too heavy to lift. When the first people are brought to the center we then ask them to go and bring another person back with them. In this way an unbroken relay unfolds. People who at first may have refused to leave their seats now consent to join the others. The distribution of cotton candy continues to the audience in the foam. A tape collage of animal sounds is mixed with the Viet-Flakes tape; the lights continue to flicker dimly. The participants now begin to spontaneously construct and arrange the foam piles.

Jim drives the car out of the room and the three of us go into the sound and lighting booth; the participants discover the elements in the room which were not used in performance. There are three levels of rope pulleys on which foam sheets may be rigged to fill overhead space with moving shapes. There are cans of paints and brushes in front of the paper screens. When the first screen is painted and torn down they discover another with the word **PROCEED** painted there. They "proceed" through about a dozen layers of papers, groups painting cooperatively or singly.

In the sound and lighting booth we can modulate the scale of audience activity: when someone gets out of control, rolling, leaping in the foam, tossing other people over, we create a black out, increase the volume of the tapes. When a group begins to build and construct in the space we increase available light. Our performance began at nine p.m.; at ten-thirty we were ready to leave.

Mitsou and I jump into a fountain and swim until the police call us out. At midnight we return to the Pavillon: the "audience" remains! Some are asleep in each other's arms, others have built and rebuilt mounds and structures on the pulleys. The walls are painted in arabesques, with figures and animals, poems and slogans. The following day the Expo staff tells us people stayed through the night. We see lumps of the pink foam high on a flag pole, floating in a moat, stuffed in corners of the Media pavilion, circling the shoulders of a monumental female statue from Poland...

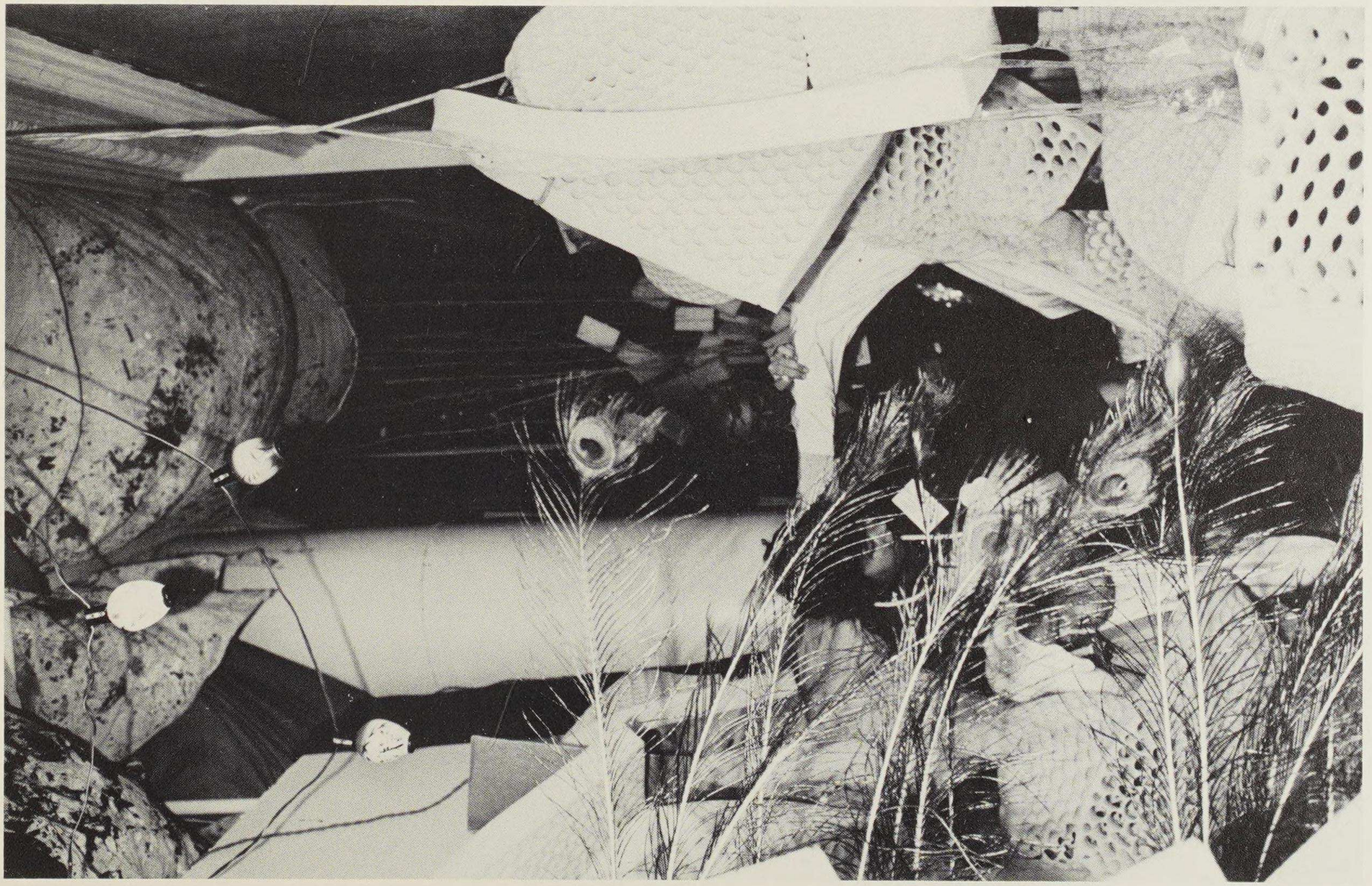
Shunk-Kender



Shunk-Kender

Shunk-Kender

Peter Moore



Peter Moore

TWO ENVIRONMENTS

1.ORDEALS

29 August 1967 Judson Church NY

An environmental work, **Ordeals** took its labyrinthian form after a conference of architects asked Al Carmines and Lawrence Kornfeld if they would present information on new environmental ideas in the arts. The "idea" became an individual and collaborative event which would activate all the very unexpected and complex areas of Judson Church itself. For a long time I had harbored a plan for a "journey" piece through the Church. Carmines, Bici Hendricks (Forbes), and Kornfeld took various sections of the church, altogether involving seventy-two collaborators and performers. My environmental areas were two: the basement gym (where the first Judson concerts had been given before we overran the sanctuary) and a far aisle running the length of the meeting hall. It was a friendly and frantic cooperation in which we all helped one another with materials, sequences, and assistants. Unfortunately, in the welter of efforts to organize my environment I never saw the other events to which my audience was also subjected.

Vietnam was our theme and I remember that Bici had organized a hospital, that I received my participants sometimes bandaged and heavily painted with mercurochrome, and that on leaving my foam area they had to obtain a medical certificate in a dressing room near the final exit door.

Upstairs I constructed a torture tunnel into which each architect was pushed as they exited from the previous "ordeal" area. The tunnel was covered in black cloth; behind these cloths were electric fans blowing through slits in the fabric onto lines of wet sponges which slapped at intervals on the person walking through. Long feathers tapped their faces and bodies; it was utterly dark and boards at various angles obstructed their passage. As they advanced down the tunnel blue lights flashed around them; ahead were huge illuminated slides of Vietnam atrocity images. Old raw fish hung overhead.

When they started down the stairs to the gym, blinding lights were flashed into their eyes. Assistants grabbed them, carrying the women, dragging the men, into the dark sea of polyurethene foam. In the face of the implied violence and spatial disorientation, the participants became extremely sensitive to the tactile material around them and began to touch and handle one another. Others struggled for footing or to sense bodies already moving in the foam (or asleep—one architect was found wrapped in foam and snoring after the church had closed).

2. DIVISIONS AND RUBBLE

October 19 1967 Judson Gallery NY

12 EVENINGS OF MANIPULATIONS
JUDSON GALLERY
239 THOMPSON STREET
4-7 P.M.

THURS. OCT. 5 RALPH ORTIZ (DESTRUCTION ROOM)
FRI. OCT. 6 BICI HENDRICKS (DETERIORATIONS)
SAT. OCT 7 JEAN TOCHE (ART EXPERIMENTS IN SENSORY DEPRIVATION)
SUN. OCT 8 ALLAN KAPROW (REARRANGEMENT)
THURS. OCT 12 AL HANSEN ( )
FRI. OCT. 13 GEOFFREY HENDRICKS (SKY/CHANGE)
SAT. OCT. 14 MALCOLM GOLDSTEIN (STATE OF THE NATION)
SUN. OCT. 15 STEVE ROSE (ART DEMONSTRATION; HEAVY YOGA)
THURS. OCT. 19 CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN (DIVISIONS & RUBBLE)
FRI. OCT. 20 LIL PICARD (CONSTRUCTION-DESTRUCTION-CONSTRUCTION)
SAT. OCT. 21 KATE MILLETT (NO)
SUN. OCT. 22 PHILIP CORNER
FRED LIEBERMAN
CHARLOTTE MOORMAN
YOKO ONO
NAM JUNE PAIK (SOFT TRANSFORMATIONS)
THOMAS SCHMIT
KEN WARNER.

Basic image: An environment which people will have to destroy to enter, to move in it: means of action altering action / means of perception altering perception. An exposed process. . . . Any materials left from previous manipulations could be incorporated. A discomforting labyrinth, cubicles, closures all through it, of paper or fabric which participants would first have to cut and tear their way through. Grim, dark and dirty. At first points of entrance, flashing slides seen through networks of remaining cloth/paper enclosures. Focus becoming clearer as subsequent cloths are torn away. A turn to a group of false doors, pushed, banged open. Those three words I wanted, thought well that's a start (or an end?), let's not forget "by their garbage you shall know them"...not having a prescribed beginning it would have no defined end—that appealed to me. I was hoping for an undefined irritable sort of destructiveness enacting/transforming the environment by its own nature, but the people were thoughtful, quiet, slowly cutting, carefully pushing, avoiding the floor switch which shot off the photos (finally plugged the fans in directly), tapes of crying cats.

BODY COLLAGE

December 20 1967 NY

A rehearsal or movement event from which I hoped to discover an image to carry the central visual metaphor of **Illinois Central.**

I invited Gideon Bachmann to film the sequence in 16mm, and Peter Moore, Michael Benedikt, and Fred McDarrah to shoot stills. They would "document" the event in exchange for prints of the image I hoped to find.

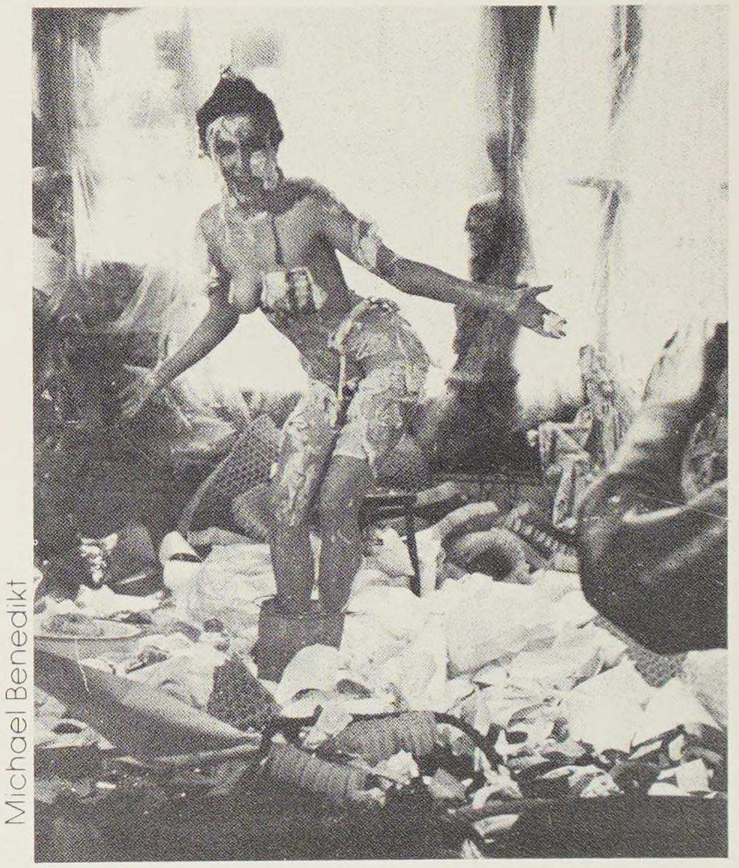
I shredded a roll of white printer's paper and filled a bucket with wall paper paste and molasses. My intention was not simply to collage my body (as an object), but to enact movement so that the collage image would be active, found, not pre-determined or posed. When I had covered myself with glue I ran back and forth around the pile of papers until the momentum of the runs provoked a fall into it. Once there I rolled heavily to attach the papers to my body in random shape and proportion.

Standing up led to an impulse to fly. I stood on three iron steps leading from the loft to the fire-escape, my arms moving up and down like wings until I "took off" in a flying-run down the steps. The figure poised on the steps, the sense of elevation and lightly attached papers produced a propulsion, an alighting.

Six years later I was searching in a high library shelf for stillife reproductions. An old Art News Annual (1960) toppled down, falling open to an image of "Cretan Toreador." The **Illinois Central** running image is a double to this figure.

Michael Benedikt

Michael Benedikt



Michael Benedikt

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
presents
ILLINOIS CENTRAL
Kinetic Theater by
CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

Chicago, Illinois
Friday, January 26
Saturday, January 27
Sunday, January 28
9 p.m. 1968
wear comfortable clothes

tickets may be purchased at the museum
237 East Ontario Street
members $2.00
non-members $3.00
students $1.50

"Body Collage" photo by Fred W. McDarrah courtesy of The Village Voice

Montage by C.S.

Midwest Landscape #34 photo by Art Sinsabaugh Collection Museum of Modern Art

I think of this work as an exploded canvas, units of rapidly changing clusters. A flow of energy which makes an active audience inevitable and necessary—not to mimic the performance but to absorb relations within the space and between one another—to be correspondent to the materials and imagery, grasping a conscious and realizable wish to replace the performers with themselves.

The central imagery of this work is The Tree; the absence of the tree as characteristic of Mid West landscape and the transformation of the tree into paper. Our paper environment is in material contrast to the photographic landscape environment (landscape as dream territory (skin) meanders into view holds still we measure distances what is seen a scene wrapped around the body).

From the prairies Native Americans had been driven West; the high buffalo grass gradually cleared for roads, homesteads, farming. Tree planting became a measure of domestic and agricultural order: shelterbelts, wind barriers, water retention, erosion protection. Decades later the agri-business expanded acres of corn, soy beans and wheat; the trees once marking the boundaries of small farms were cut down as if an effluvium, inviting soil erosion, floods, destroying natural cover, the ecology of wild life. The destruction of the intensive, traditional farming in Vietnam meant the ruin of a coherent agricultural system, defoliation, the diabolical intention of "paving over the jungle with concrete."

The intimate and at times violent imagery is anchored in a tension of contrasting focal planes linking the exposed Illinois landscape to the devastation of Vietnam. If there was a mythic association between human body and tree, there was as well a tactile and sensory extension of flesh into paper—maleable, expressive, sculptural. The scrap paper we used in Chicago was bales of cancelled bank checks—Illinois trade representing millions of dollars—completely shredded. The absence of a dominant foreground, a landscape of frontal physical expanse (which is where I decided in 1960 that "painting is dead"), the openness an implication of visual paradox.

Because of the metaphoric political content—overriding language, polemic, propaganda, abstraction—I could never determine whether the difficulties in producing this work, and its reception, were random or somehow inevitable, coming at a time when even the length of people's hair was taken as evidence of their politics. The difficulties were extraordinary, though **Illinois Central** was the

ILLINOIS CENTRAL

January 26 27 28 1968 Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Illinois Central Transposed
February 20 1968 SUNY Stony Brook L.I.

March 8 1968 Brooklyn Academy of Music

March 16 1968 SUNY Rochester

March 18 1968 SUNY Buffalo, Spring Arts Festival

March 26 1968 SUNY Nasseau L.I.

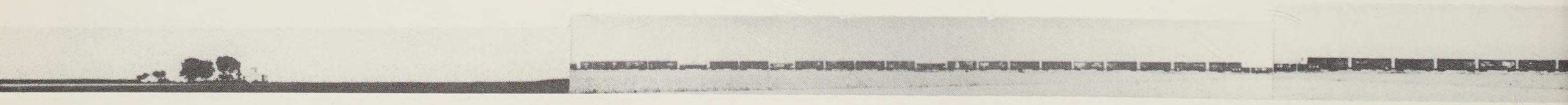
16 March 1969 The Ark Boston

most extensively performed of my theater pieces. In the course of five months it was adapted to six different spaces and realized with six different groups of performers and technicians: originally for the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, then for John Brockman's Intermedia '68 tour.

The sound and visual elements had to do with precise tensions in scale—what they were as sources in themselves, what they meant in juxtaposition, and their triggering effect binding multiple perceptions. Slides were planned in collaboration with Art Sinsabaugh, whose photographs of Illinois horizons and prairies had introduced a previously ignored scale, one which in series suggested a continuous image. I envisioned a wrap-around span of touching horizon lines formed by multiple slides of landscape—an unbroken line which could shift the landscape details to include distanced visual minutiae which characterize the open Mid West horizon—trains, isolated farms, silos. Sinsabaugh's slide environment was projected along two walls half-surrounding the audience uninterrupted across 160°. He programmed five second slide projections so a moving panorama would be created with varying rhythms, according to the density of detail coordinated in the recurrent and simultaneous slides. To the left on the central area, at intervals, a single tree was projected—an image I'd specified to cue movement sequences.

Art Sinsabaugh

The film "Viet-Flakes" intermittently projected onto the slide panorama; a tape of the Illinois Hog Market report; the rapid vertical movements of the performers cutting into the huge open performance space: these were the essential and divergent units. And finally the complete exposure of the body, being naked*, being covered in glue, collaged with paper, remnant of tree, becoming ourselves "tree."

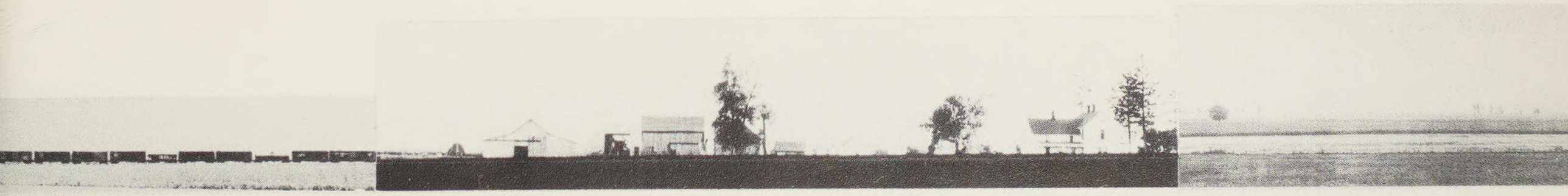


The sound tapes and the slides are not auxilary to the movement; the performance movement is an extension of the media and its associative range, taken from specific, actual Illinois environments. The Hog Market Report, for example was recorded from the Illinois Farm Hour; broadcast daily at noon, it is of vital importance to the farming communities, reflecting investment structures which ultimately regulate agricultural practice. That distinctive—and initially incomprehensible—rapid droning market reporter's voice recurrs in one's daily life in the Mid West, an aural motif in the luncheonette, gas station, grocery store, bank. The speed, musicality and nasal twang of the voice is marvelous as it chants the rise and fall of commodities, stocks, liquid assets, and the survival or decimation of the small farm families I knew listening to the radio in their kitchens.

In Chicago there were several false starts in locating a performance space. The Museum flew me out in advance for several days and I began work in an open area in conjunction with an exhibit of paper products; I began choreographing movement lines, designing a lighting and sound system. When I returned later in January with one week to find and train performers, gather materials and props, construct in the space, I found the paper corporation representatives had seen

---

*The clothing we wore was comfortable: yellow and orange dyed underwear and the oversize striped overalls. Had we performed Illinois Central naked it would have seemed peculiarly erotic—inhabitants of an Ingres Turkish bath fleeing a paper hurricane. (In Meat Joy nudity was appropriate for some rehearsals, and was my intention for the performance, but the audience's perception of the overall rhythms and interrelations would have been diverted in natural fascination for each body's particularity. They were seated as close as possible to us.) The law at this time stated that persons could appear on stage naked without moving—that is, if they become statues. Movement or physical contact between nude persons was criminal. At the Brooklyn Academy of Music when the glueing began audience agents provocateurs started yelling "strip! take it off!" Other audience members yelled to us that police were at the doors, and shouted "Plant, plant! Show your behind or your badge!"



Art Sinsabaugh

Performers

Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art
Crista Adesanya Ann Clark Vaughn Kurtz Billy Mack Mark Pierce C.S.

Brooklyn Academy of Music
Joan Adler Tom Bissinger Richard Gosselin Carol Grossberg Denys Irving Gary Maxwell Daryl Ries C.S. (and David O'Neill Larry Warshaw Fob)

Intermedia Touring Troupe
Tom Bissinger Ella Bogval June Ekman Cameron Hudson Gary Maxwell Tom Molholm Mitsou Naslednikov Ellen Weber Veden C.S.

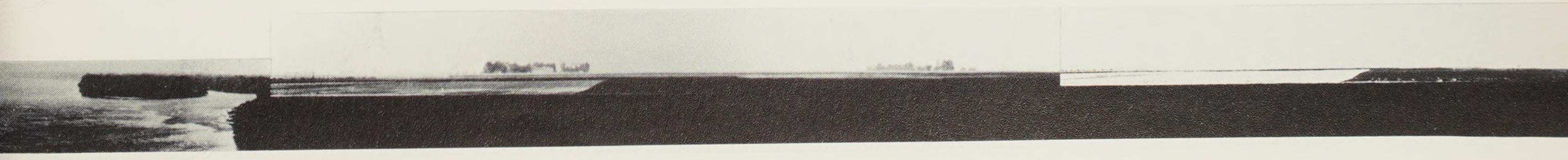
preparatory **Body Collage** photographs in the Village Voice and wanted nothing to do with my metaphors enacted in their space with their paper products. Jan van der Marck and David Katzive of the Museum managed to secure the use of an immense filthy abandoned loft—formerly a bakery centrally located on Wells St. By herculean effort this space was cleared, cleaned in two days; lighting, sound, projection equipment was brought in and organized as simultaneously I found and began to rehearse with performers and technicians. After one ecstatic performance we were invaded by a contingent of Chicago Fire Marshals and forced to close down as the audience assembled at the door. Two nights later we managed to perform in a remote and clinical T.V. studio.

At Nasseau College, male students in the audience went berserk over the physical contact between the men (performing): they screamed obscenities, threw basketballs and cups of water at us. Rochester University was less contentious; there a student packed his bags, walking out of his life and into our van to continue the tour with us. Boston was buried under a foot of snow, disasters occurred. We were woken the first morning by a desperate call from New York to one of the performers; the woman he lived with had been raped, their apartment robbed, he had to return immediately. Rushing out to locate a new performer we discovered the tires on our rented van had been slashed. Next day at the Ark, the ten foot lighting/sound/projection deck collapsed, injuring an assistant and ruining several projectors. And there were hectic meetings with Legal Aid, since once again we were advised that plainclothes police would be present to arrest us if there was any nudity. At the Buffalo Arts Festival the audience went wild, carrying their participation in the glue and shredded paper environment through the Commons building.

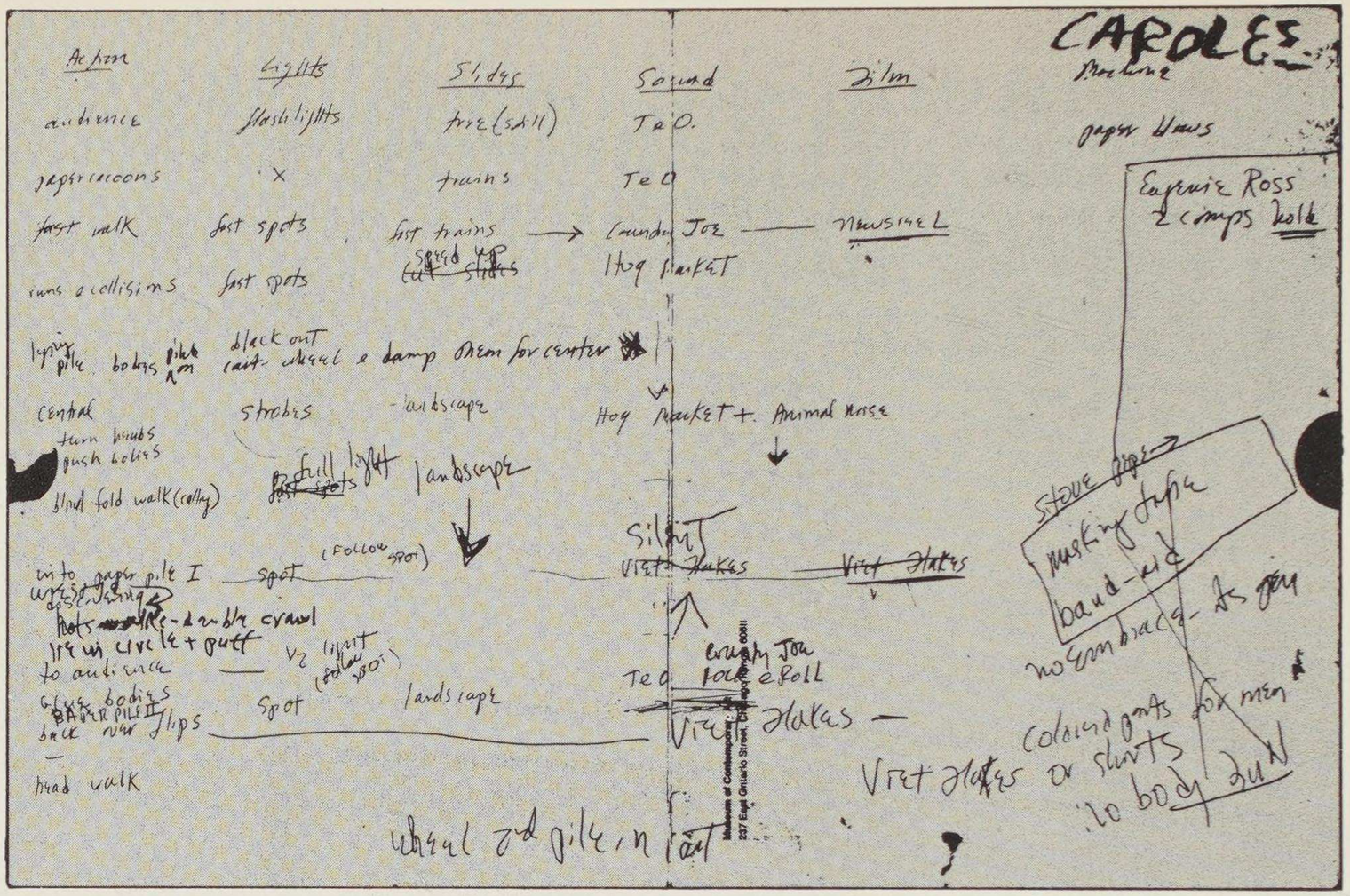
The devotion, dedication and flexibility of each performance group made it possible to continue, to persist in taking the work fully into its own dimension. And we also had wonderful times. One of the premises of our touring was that we stay together as a group and have time with the people who had invited us. Hotel rooms were refused and we bedded down on sleeping bags and mattresses in the homes of people who wanted to house us. We brought assorted food for the various dietary inclinations of the troup, we cooked and cleaned for our hosts. A network of people helping in each performance situation was built out from this unofficial and personal base. They found rehearsal spaces, located materials, assisted with the complexities of setting up for each performance, and shared their own work and concerns.

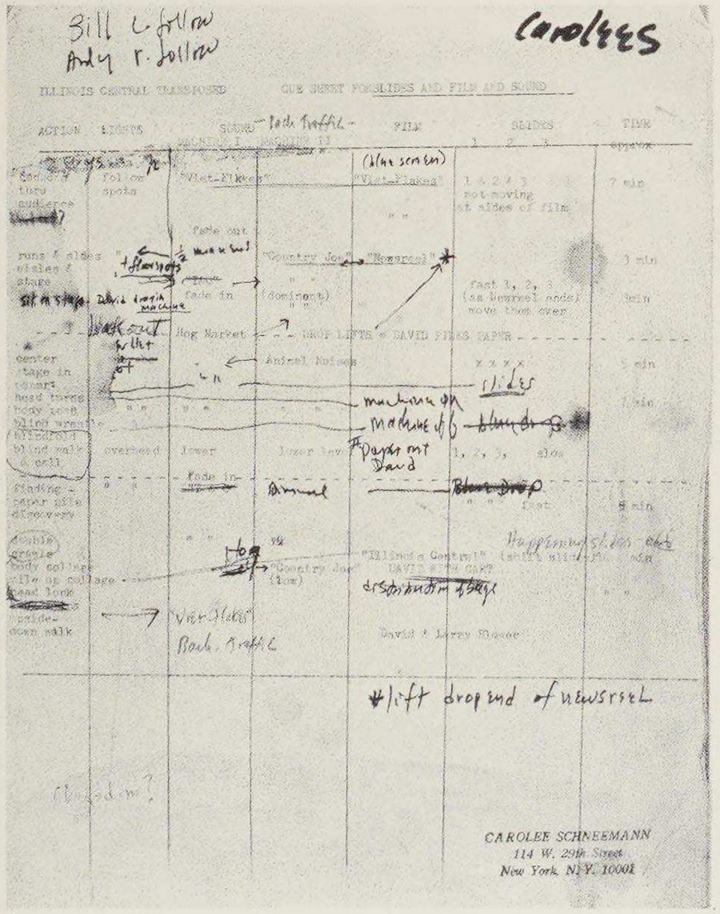
For each performance the surrounding walls were collaged with large strips of torn white paper, with layers of crumpled paper piled at the base of the walls, so that the entire area was texturally active and a complete projection surface. As the audience entered a single slide of the bare tree in the snow was visible (there were 2 tree slides 5 1/2 feet high). The sound tape "Trains and Orgasm" was amplified through the speakers, resonating in the space. (The trains are of Illinois Central cars shunting at the Champagne-Urbana station; recorded at 4 a.m. one winter morning, 1960. The "Orgasm" tapes were made in 1964 when I began filming "Fuses" and kept a tape recorder by the bed. "Fuses" of course remained a silent film).

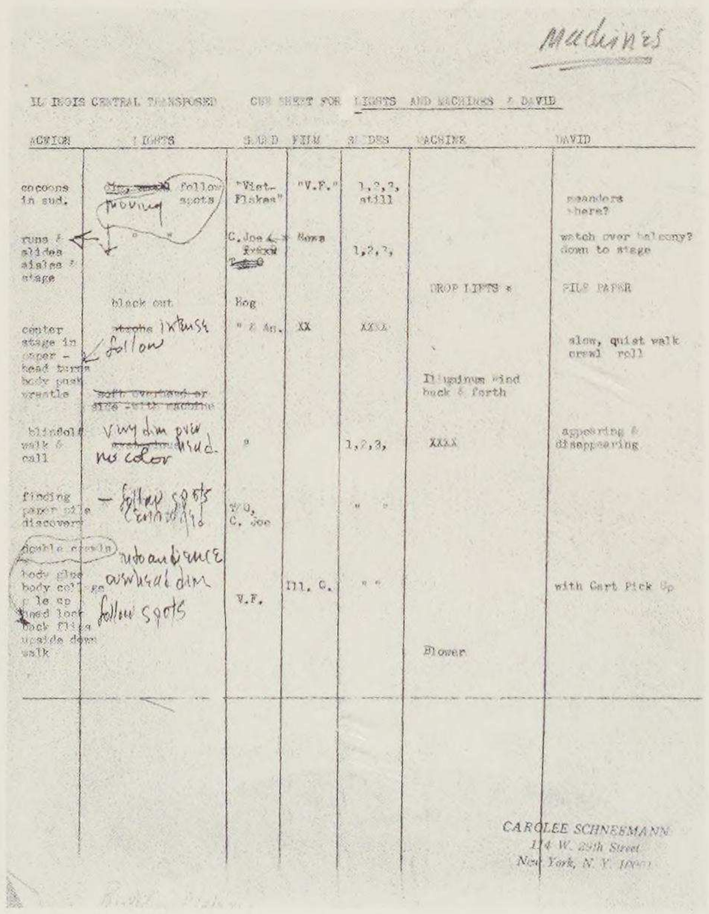
Charlotte Victoria

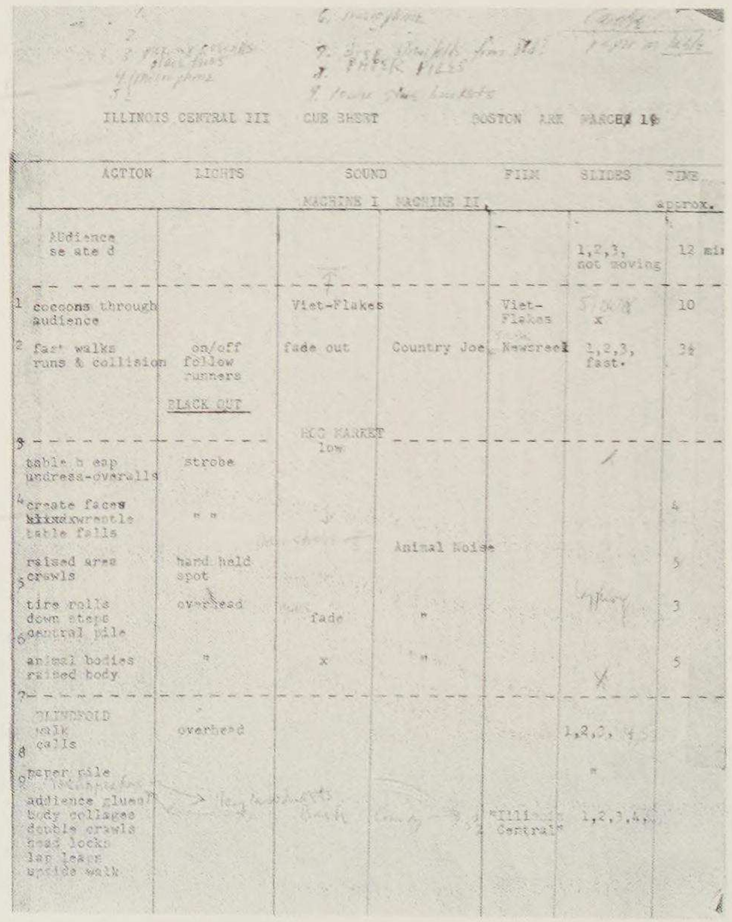


Art Sinsabaugh


CAROLEES
Machine
paper leaves
Eugenie Ross
2 comps hold
Action
Lights
Slides
Sound
Film
audience
Flash lights
free (shill)
T & O.
paper racoons
X
trains
T & O
fast walk
fast spots
fast trains
Country Joe
Newsreel
runs & collisions
fast spots
Hog Market
lights pile
bodies pile
black out
Central
strobes
landscape
Hog Market + Animal noise
blind fold walk (calling)
full light
landscape
into paper pile I
spot
(follow spot)
Silent
Viet Flakes
Viet Flakes
to audience
spot
landscape
Viet Flakes
Steve tape
Viet Flakes
Colored pants for men
to body paint


Carolees
ILLINOIS CENTRAL TRANSPOSED
CUE SHEET FOR SLIDES AND FILM AND SOUND
ACTION
LIGHTS
SOUND
FILM
SLIDES
TIME
Hog Market
Animal Noises
DROP LIFTS & DAVID PICKS PAPER
Viet-Flakes
Back Traffic
lift drop end of newsreel
CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN
114 W. 29th Street
New York, N.Y. 10001


Machines
IL INOIS CENTRAL TRANSPOSED
CUE SHEET FOR LIGHTS AND MACHINES & DAVID
ACTION
LIGHTS
SOUND
FILM
SLIDES
MACHINE
DAVID
coccons in aud.
"Viet-Flakes"
"V.F."
1,2,3, still
runs & slides & stage
C. Joe & Exxx
News
1,2,3,
black out
Hog
center stage in paper - head turns body push wrestle
" & Au.
XX
XXXX
DROP LIFTS &
FILP PAPER
blindfold walk & call
"
1,2,3,
XXXX
finding paper pile discovery
V/O, C. Joe
" "
double crawls
body slips body collages pile up tuned look back flips upside down walk
V.F.
Ill. C.
" "
Flower
with Cart Pick Up
CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN
114 W. 29th Street
New York, N.Y. 10001

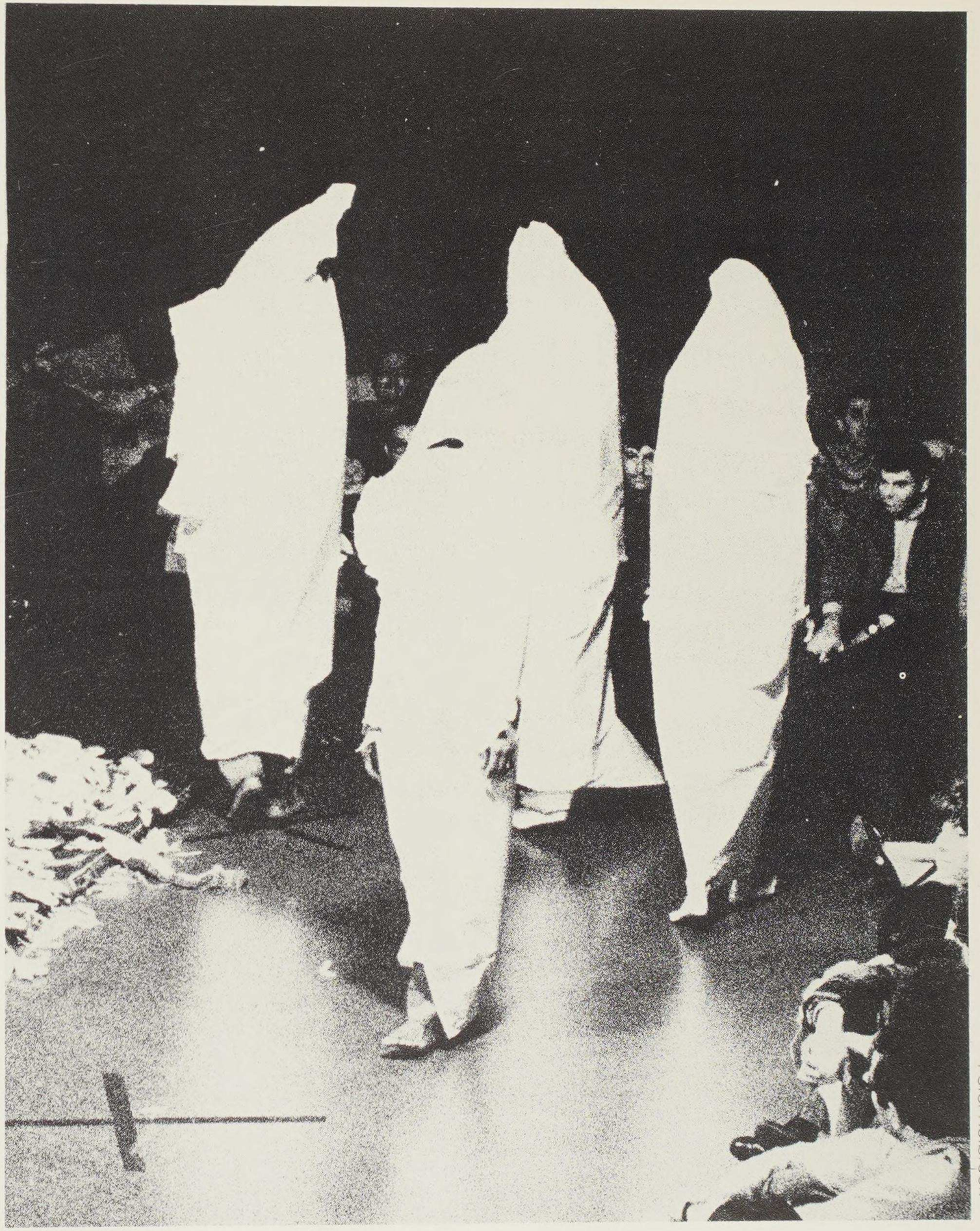

ILLINOIS CENTRAL III
CUE SHEET
BOSTON ARK MARCH 19
ACTION
LIGHTS
SOUND
MACHINE I
MACHINE II
FILM
SLIDES
TIME
approx.
Audience seated
1,2,3, not moving
12 min
1 coccons through audience
Viet-Flakes
Viet-Flakes
10
2 fast walks runs & collision
on/off follow runners
BLACK OUT
fade out
Country Joe
Newsreel
1,2,3, fast.
3½
3
HOG MARKET low
bable & cap undress-overalls
strobe
4 create faces wrestle table falls
" "
4
Animal Noise
raised arms crawls
hard hald spot
5
5 tire rolls down steps central pile
overhead
fade
"
3
6 animal bodies raised body
"
x
"
5
7 BLINDFOLD walk calls
overhead
1,2,3, 4
8
9 paper pile
audience glues body collages double crawls head locks leg leaps upside walk
"
"Illi... Central"
1,2,3,4,

SCORE

There is an evident relay of inter-relation and response between the media and performers' actions. Certain parameters of sound, film, slides are subject to improvisatory decisions by technicians responding to actions of the performers, who in turn take sequence cues from changes in the media.

In the darkness the cocoons spread out slowly among the audience. The paper wrappings are tight around the body, with holes only for the eyes and the hands. Frontal vision is limited and the exposed hands function like whiskers, touching the audience, informing us of obstacles as we move in small steps. At some moment each cocoon traverses the light of the projector, centering the tree image on its column of white wrapping.

Technicians simultaneously begin: fast relay with overhead spotlights, the 160 degree span of slides of trains on the horizon of the Illinois plains, the film "Red News", and the sound of Country Joe and the Fish's "Viet-nam Rag"...the cocoons break into a very fast walk, exploding our wrappings. The walking corresponds to geometrical patterns of the overhead lights—determined for all participants by our various beginning positions when the fastwalk is cued. As each moves from directly under a light to directly under another light, that light is activated from "off" to "on." If necessary in the relay of lights, a performer will



Peter Holbrook

raise an arm to signal the lighting response. The fast, fluid walks back and forth across the open space are punctuated by these vertical gestures and the "on"/"off" of the lights. The train slides are rapidly changing on the surrounding wall, and as they accelerate, the tape of the Illinois Hog Market Report fades in. The performers break into full speed runs (much like those developed in **Lateral Splay**). We collide with each other, fall together, rise up, shift direction, run at full speed, collide, fall and rise up—until, at the conclusion of the Hog Market Report, there is a black out.

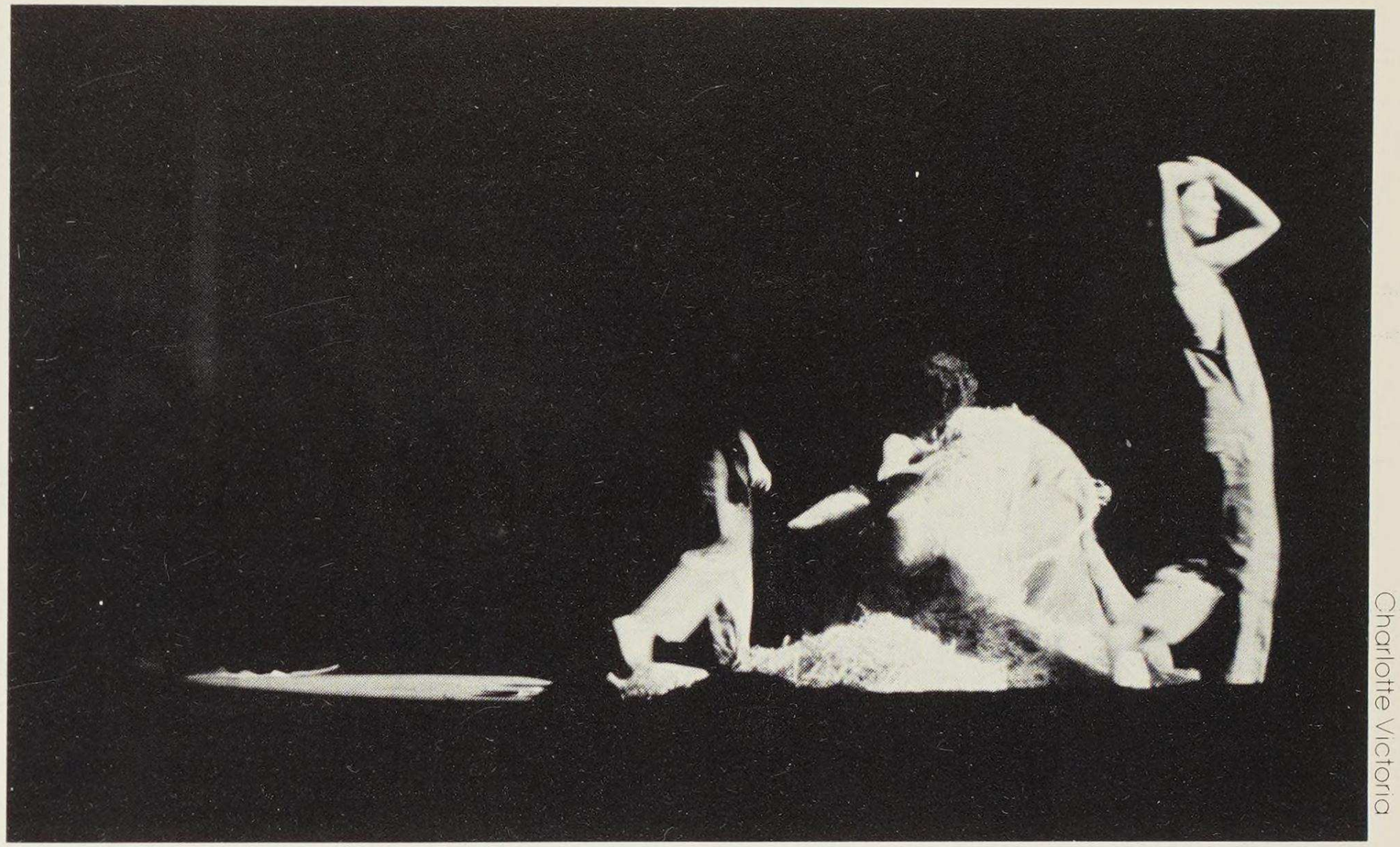
The performers shed their overalls during the black out. We fall into a heap where we rest on top of one another. Roustabouts—also in striped overalls—wheel in a low cart, shooting flashlight rays over the audience: they drag the performers onto the cart; we stand facing one another, arms encircled, and are wheeled back and forth before the wall of continuous landscape slides. The Hog Market Report fades in, double tracked with animal noises recorded at the Chicago Zoo. The cart is wheeled to the center where strobe lights flash on the circle of performers as they begin a slow exchange of touching and turning each other's body. By exchanges of pushing, turning, yielding, performers gradually slip off the platform onto the floor. The cart is pulled away. We blindfold each other. As each person is blindfolded, she or he stands and slowly walks into the open area, hands extended, turning (to become disoriented).

Peter Holbrook

Sound out. Full overhead lights on. Performers listen intently as we move through the open space or audience area, concentrating on finding the edge, the far walls. The figures randomly pass in and out of the landscape of slides. One of us eventually calls the name of another. The one called responds with the name of the person calling. By this sole vocal cue we move blindly towards each other. Other pairs continue to exchange names, until all eight of us are moving in uncertain paths towards one another. When the partners reach each other they move to locate the central pile of paper.

The landscape slides continue in programmed rhythms. A spot light centers on the performers seated in the pile of papers as we remove blindfolds from each other. From touching each other's face in removing the blindfold, sequences of contact improvisation begin: an exchange of turning, tipping one another's heads; holding one another's shoulders in a gradual slow wrestling in which each turns from one partner to another (from left to right), letting the push taken rebound slowly into a push given, rising finally onto our knees, back and forth. Balance becomes elastic—vulnerable to falling over into the paper, into the audience.

Once in physical contact with one or more persons of the audience, each performer turns to look among them, asking for a volunteer to join us in the center where the roustabouts are un-



Charlotte Victoria

Ted Wester

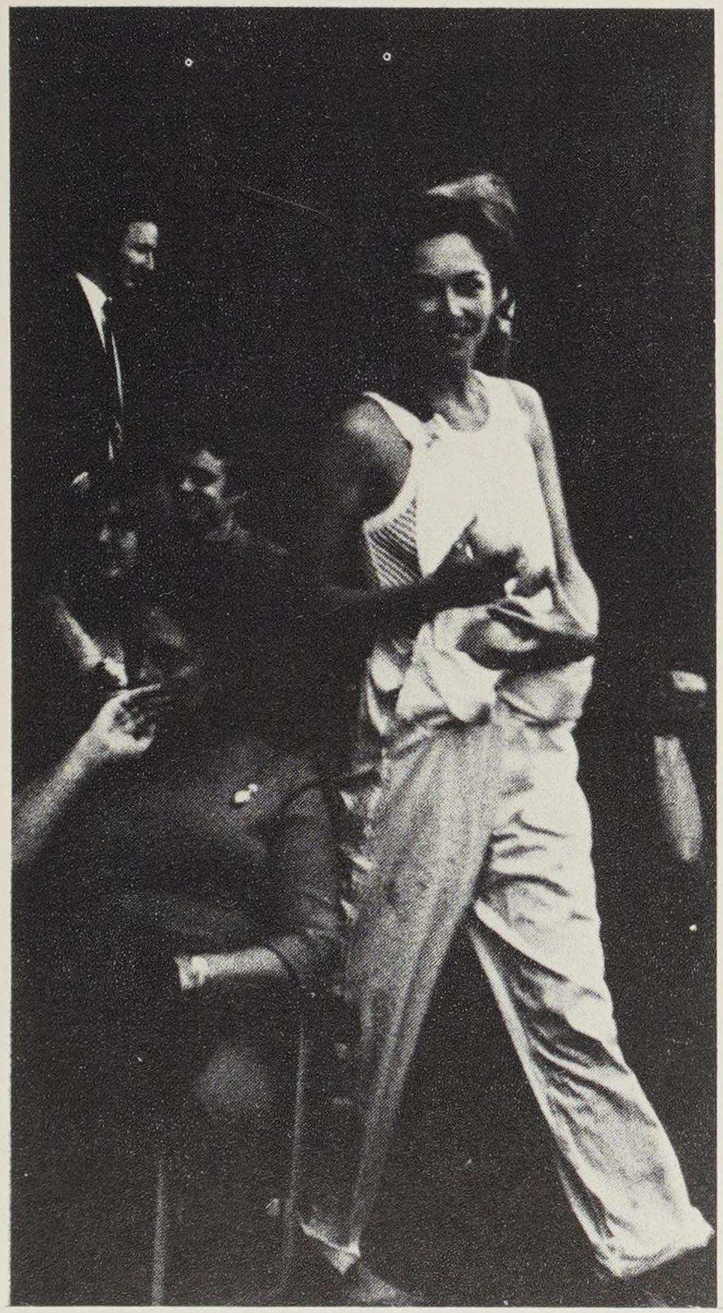
loading bales of shredded paper and positioning glue buckets and brushes. Willing audience members become our partners, taking up glue bucket and brush; we encourage them to glue our bodies with as much vigor and velocity as they wish. Once we are drenched in sticky paste the audience volunteers retreat and we slip and slide back onto the cart, turning in circles against one another until we slip or leap off into the bales of shredded paper. We flip in the papers—becoming "collaged"—backflips, sit-ups, which toss up clouds of paper. We grapple towards a partner and position ourselves into the upside-down walk, silhouetted against the landscape slides and the walls of collaged paper. The film and tape "Viet-Flakes" begins on the central wall as we exit in zig-zagging upside-down walks. The audience begins to move into the shredded paper piles...

Charlotte Victoria

Herbert Migdoll

NAKED ACTION LECTURE

June 27 1968 Institute of Contemporary Art London



Naked Action Lecture was arranged by the director of the London Institute of Contemporary Art, Michael Kustow. I lecture on my visual works and their relations to antecedents in painting while both dressed and undressed, dressing and undressing.

Naked Action Lecture asked the questions: can an artist be an art istorian? Can an art istorian be a naked woman? Does a woman have intellectual authority? Can she have public authority while naked and speaking? Was the content of the lecture less appreciable when she was naked? What multiple levels of uneasiness, pleasure, curiosity, erotic fascination, acceptance or rejection were activated in an audience? (This work also prefigured **Schlaget Auf.**)

When the audience was seated I walked among them describing the sets of slides to be shown; I wore the string undershirt and oversize overalls from which I distributed a quantity of oranges. When all oranges were passed out, the lights dimmed for the beginning of the slides and I went to the front of the room and began my lecture. In the course of the thirty minute lecture I undressed and dressed and walked back and forth with a pointer, discussing aspects of perception and spatial organization. I took questions from the audience if they related directly to the content of the lecture. I continued dressing and undressing for the duration of the lecture and questions. At the conclusion of the slides I went on to the stage and asked for volunteers from the audience to join me in demonstrating a principle of collage; we would all undress, cover each other with paste and leap off the stage into the mound of shredded papers. Two volunteers came forward, young men, strangers. We undressed each other in the light of the slide projector, liberally applied the glue to one another, did a few practice jumps in place and finally lept—one after the other into the mound of papers, twisting and turning. We regained the stage and I finished my lecture with a few points about collage process and gestalt patterns now made clear by the three examples.

A black out. We left the stage for the showers upstairs. "Fuses" began.

3 slide carousels:

a) slides of my paintings, constructions—an istory
projected on left abutting wall

b) slides of Kinetic Theater works
projected on right abutting wall

c) slides of collage light boxes alternating with performance slides, to demonstrate rhythmic organization within the frame, gesture, texture, light sources, color saturations: relation to Cezanne, Monet, Morisot, Velasquez, Ryder, Marin, de Kooning, Joan Mitchell.

1 16mm film projector
("Fuses" to be projected at conclusion of lecture)

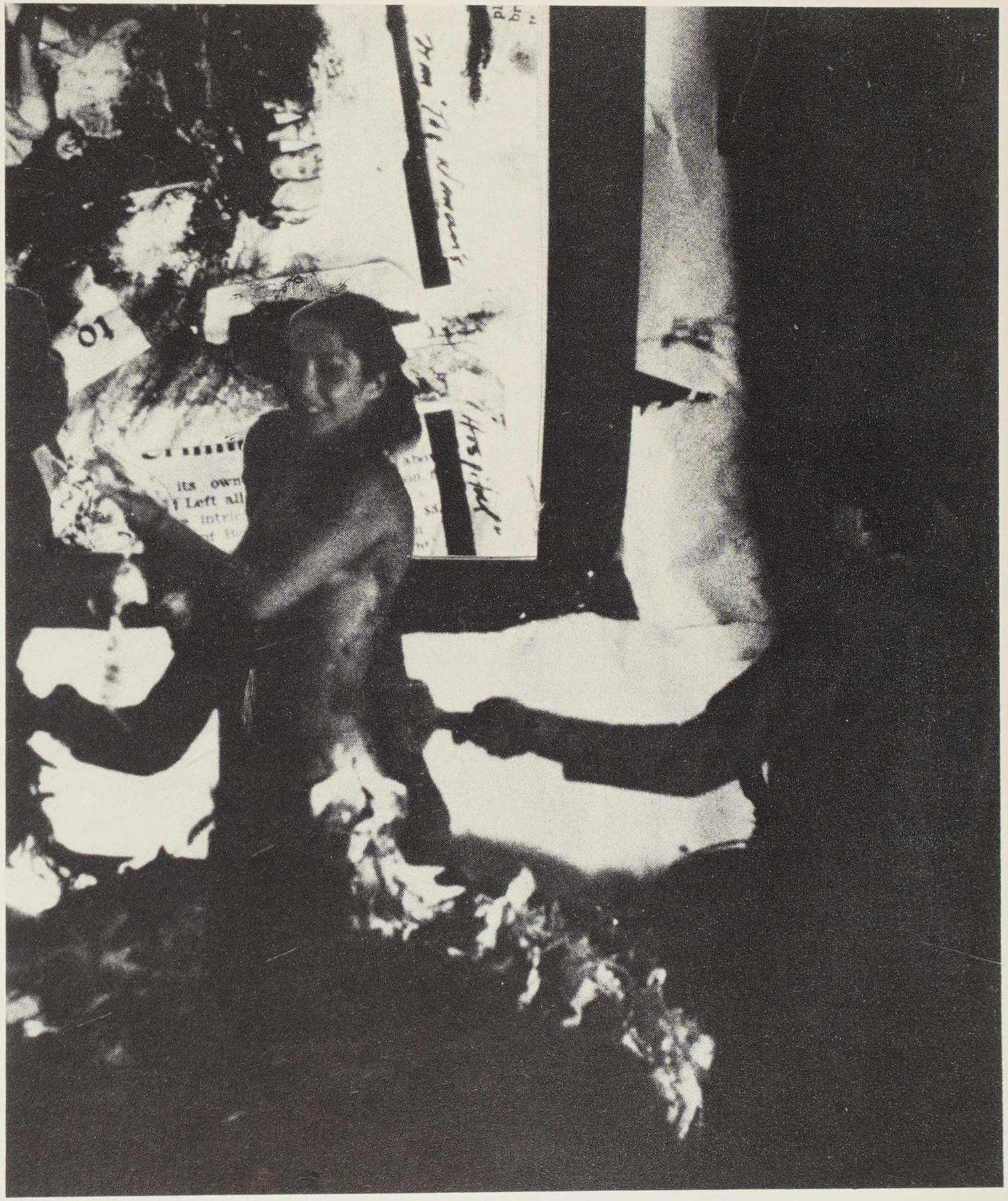
2 bales of shredded white paper

3 buckets of wall paper paste & 3 large paint brushes

1 pointer

two dozen oranges

oversize white overalls, (man's) string undershirt

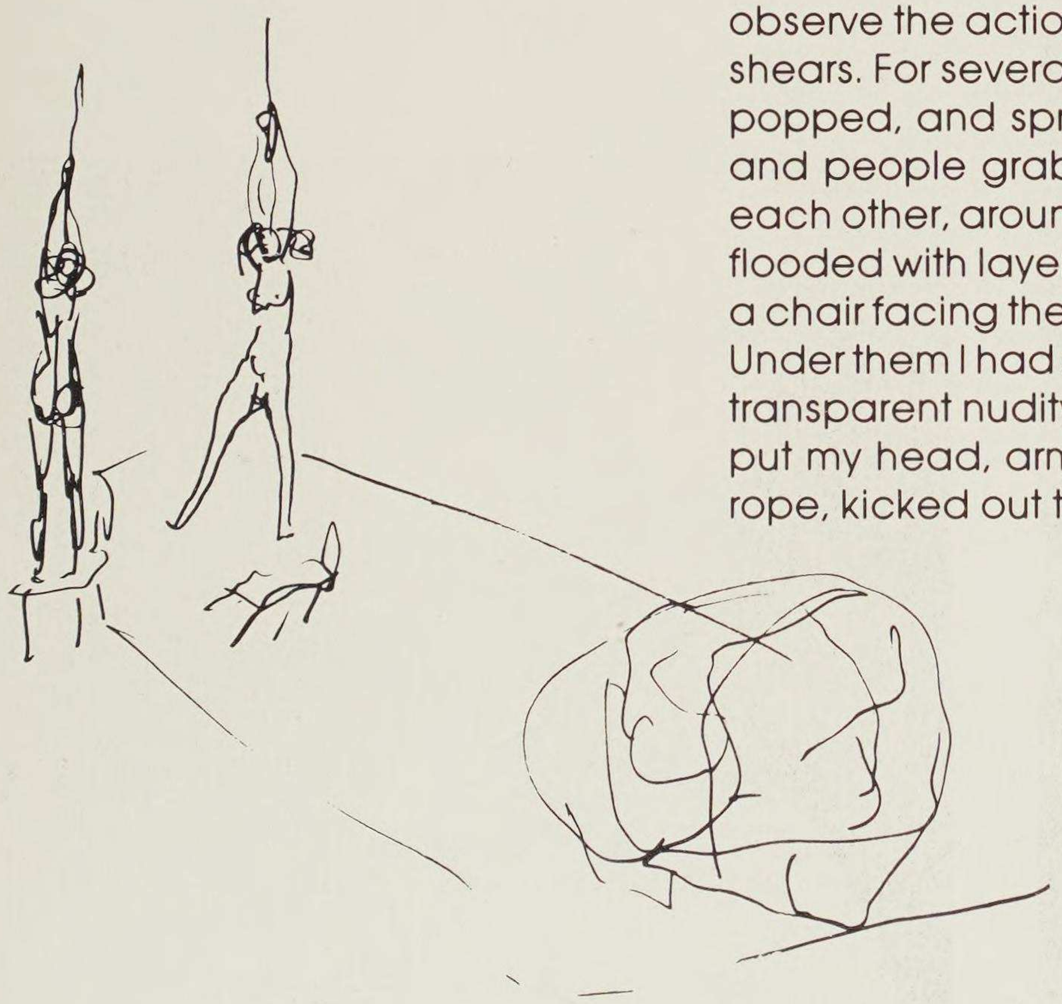


EXPANSIONS

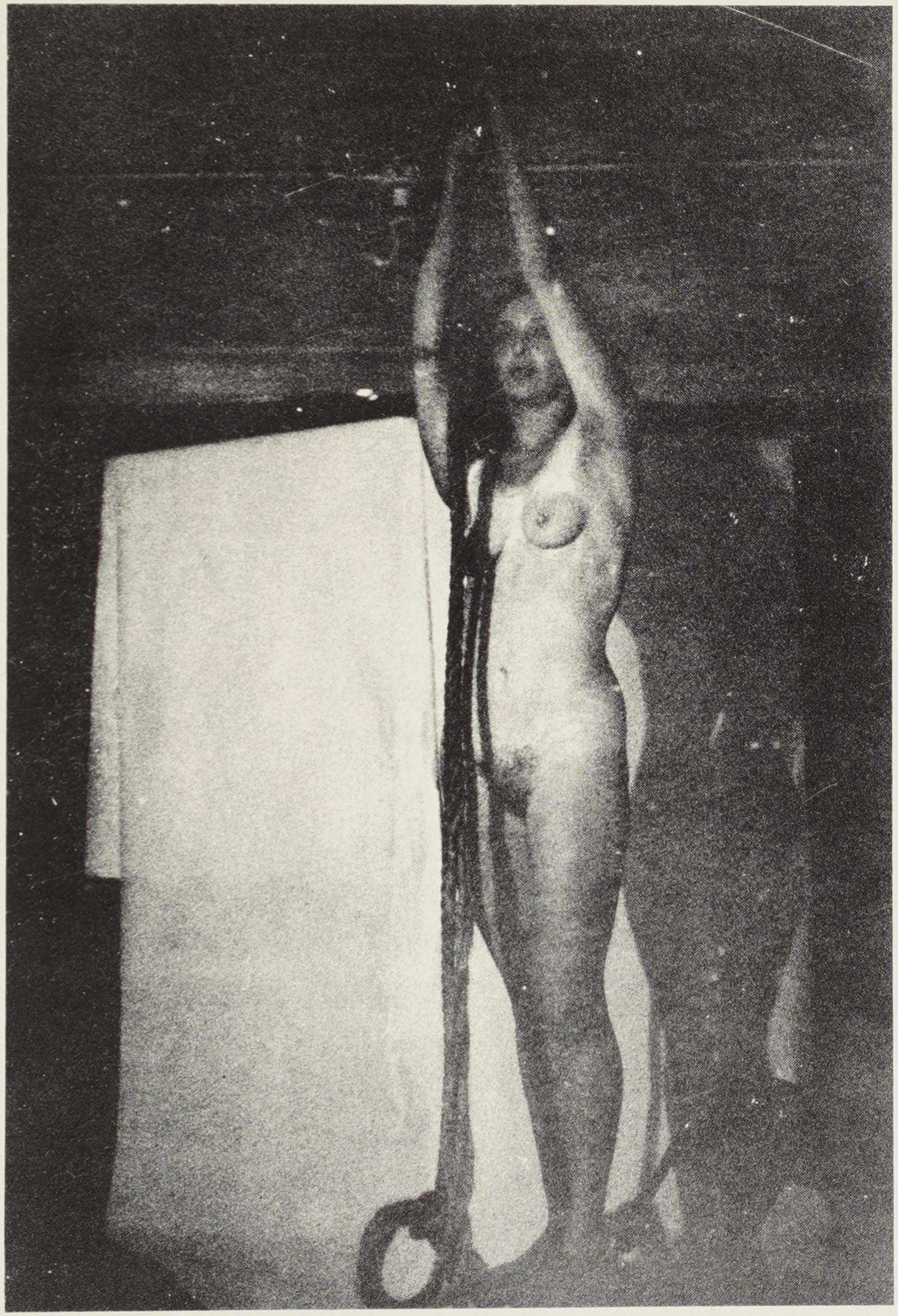
April 24 1969 New Poets Theater NY

I'm surprised by a smiling photograph taken at the time. I was falling into the long slide of disorientation and despair. In a few days I was leaving NY for France; a friend had bought me a plane ticket to Cannes after finding a letter in my unopened mail detailing the selection of "Fuses" for a special jury presentation. I had no idea of where I would go, how I would support myself after the film festival. I could grasp only one day at a time, with difficulty. **Expansions** was made for Joachim Neugroschel's "poetry and events" given in a small performance loft on West 22nd St. (ironically next door to the loft where I had begun filming "Plumb Line").

I had this image for a symbolic hanging; "hanging up" the old self publicity...to inspire a transformation, to demonstrate a "hang-up"? The sense of this action was ambiguous, tragi-comic. **Expansions** was based on demonstrating the properties of certain soft materials. Two bales of compressed, pink polyurethene foam lozenges were carried in front of the audience. Dressed in shapeless overalls, I told the audience I was preparing an exorcism and that we would first observe the action of the foam. I formally cut the metal bands containing it with shears. For several minutes we watched as the lozenges slowly expanded, rose, popped, and spread themselves around our feet. They were inviting to touch and people grabbed handfulls and distributed them in various directions on each other, around the room. The second bale was cut open, and the room was flooded with layers of the pink foam. With a broom I swept large mounds around a chair facing the audience. I climbed onto the chair and dropped the overalls. Under them I had sponged whiting on my body in the exact shape of a leotard. A transparent nudity. A noose hung from the ceiling above the chair. A spot light. I put my head, arms, upper torso through the noose, let my weight fall onto the rope, kicked out the chair. For an instant I swung there. The lights went out.



1. stage lights center
   roll in the bale + place it
   cut it open
   I stand in darkness
2. Ellen sets projector on screens
   bale expands (Ellen prod it?)
   kick over chair
   rope hang
   fall - projector off



Sidney B. Zamochnick

A NEW POETS' THEATER
at the Unit Theater
(157 West 22 St)

Arrabal →
Bob B. 10:00
Whitney
Frank
Sigmorelli
Movements + Sound

ALEPH-70 a live magazine of performing poetry

Directed by Joachim Neugroschel

Issue #2: OBJECT LESSONS

April 24, 1969 (Thursday) 8:30 & 10:00 p.m.

Ronald Gross	Fold-out poems
Vito Hannibal Acconci	Untitled
Gary Dubosen	Graphics
Marvin Cohen	Object Dialogues
Tom Wasmuth	TAG DISTRIBUTION
Schuldt	LA POÉSIE CONCRÈTE VAINCRA
Dick Higgins	IT'S A POEM
Carolee Schneemann	EXPANSIONS

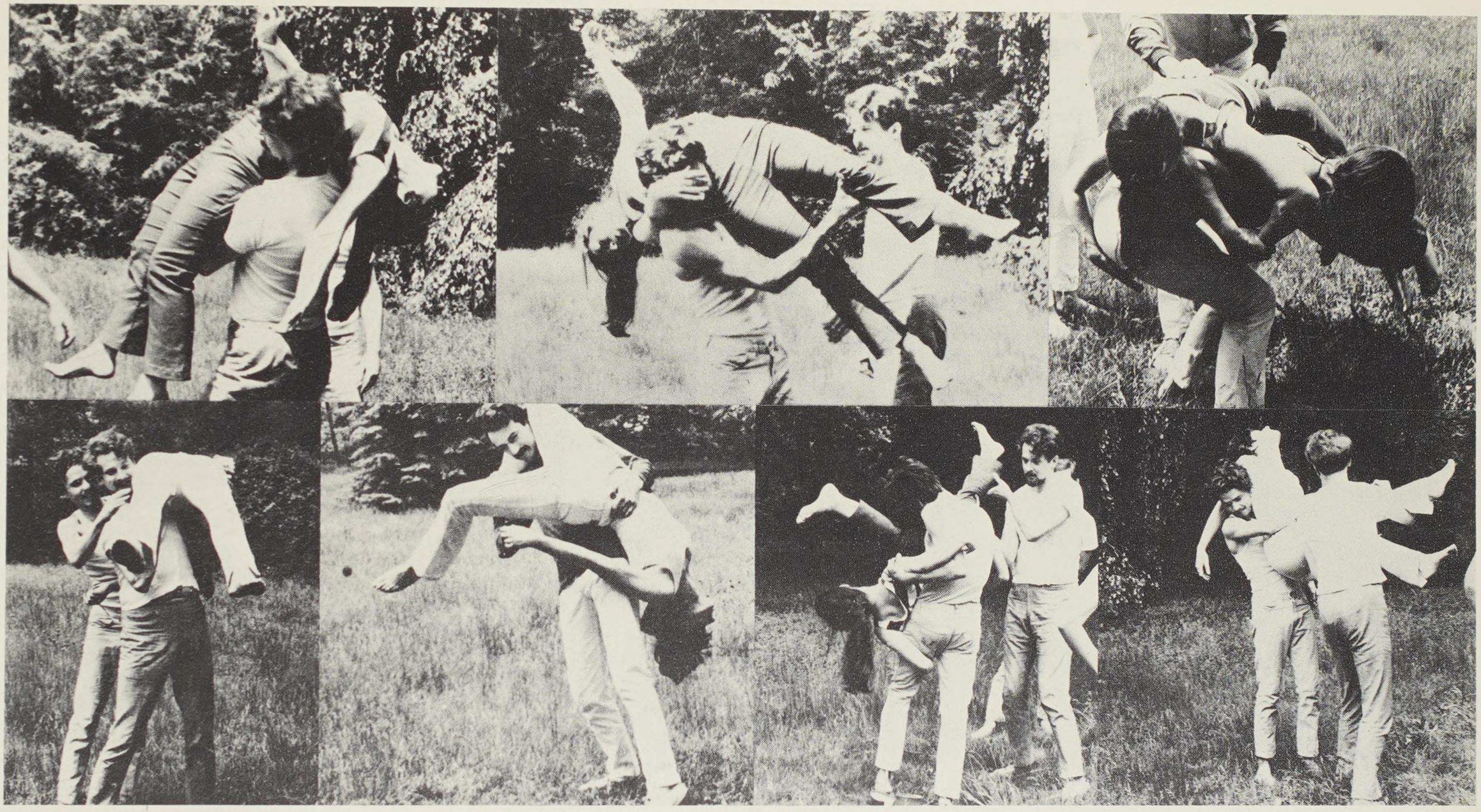
Sidney B. Zamochnick

ON 'PERFORMANCE'

The character of the group works had so much to do with the spontaneous creation of movement and gesture by the performers that it would have been impossible to fully score them in advance. While I avoided stylized or exemplary movement, each particular work took a great deal of training for us to reach a fluid physical inter-relation, one that isn't inherently part of our culture. In order to discover a unitary function we had to experience personal transformations in terms of the group process. The thoroughness of our mutual awareness and the degree to which that heightened an "ordinary self," enabled us to move publicly with the real pleasure we evolved in rehearsals. I developed exercises on contact improvisation for each session—the imagery I sought becoming centered on the qualities of each person in the group. Out of these exercises the freedom of the group and the vitality of the work meshed.

Thames Crawling was my last group performance work.

Max Waldman



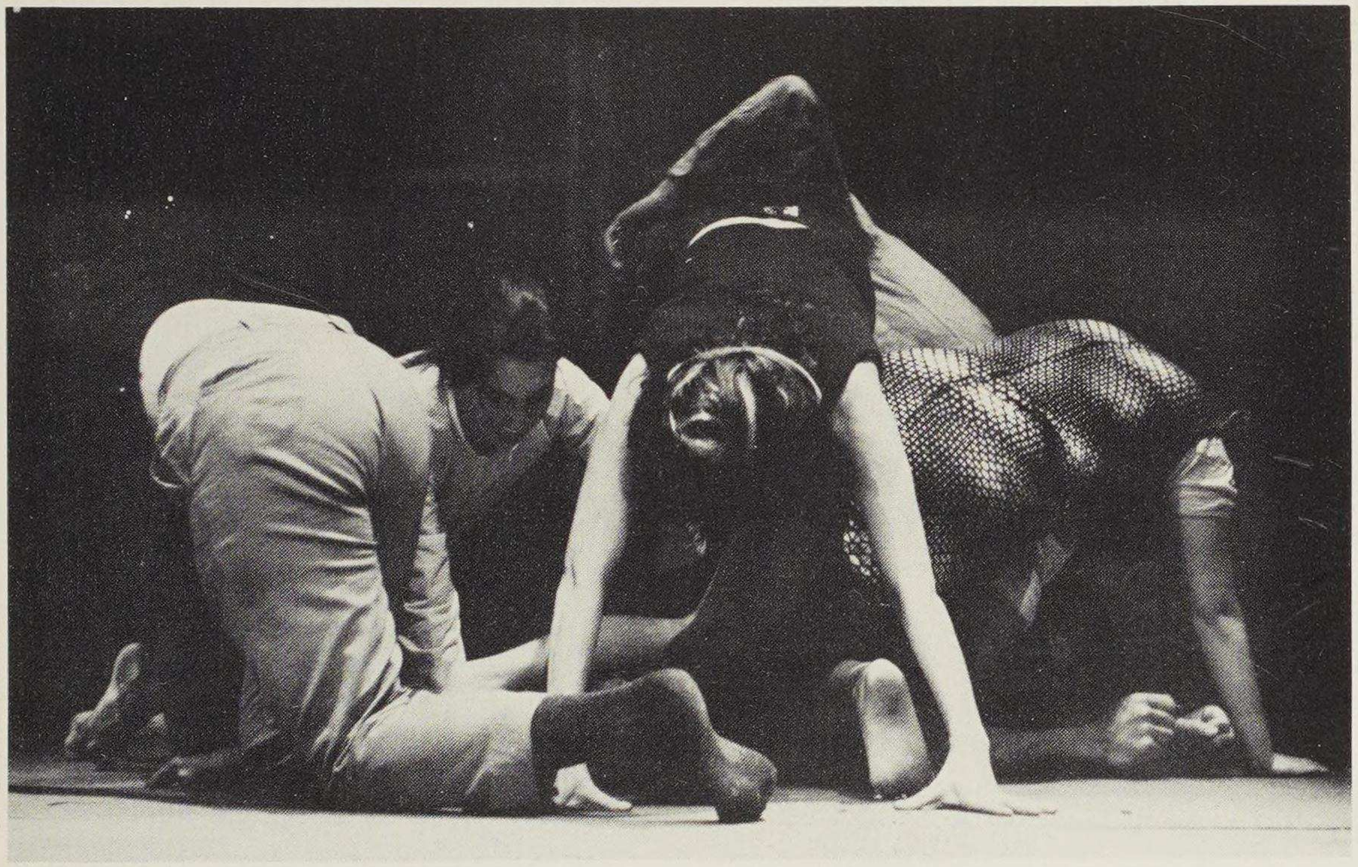
Charlotte Victoria

From Notes of Motion 1966-68

. . .Physical Action is an assertion of coherent function of place time commitment of gesture posture coordination. . .posture itself a total envelope statement of the organism. . .gesture is a biological istorical compendium of intention. . . an involuntary confession intention to communicate. . .we tell everything essential to our natures by stance posture gesture. . .we pretend we've forgotten how "to read" the information to allow masks social confrontations. . .to establish counter-gestures protective acceptable ones illusory wishful but to realize gesture perception is to free your intuition for what IS. . .responses to presence to present animal swift appraisal a natural thing

. . .equity

recent question as to the sexual differentiation in certain actions; the holds and carries for instance in which the women were lifted and carried by one man and passed to the arms of another—it would take two women to lift and carry one man, although we performed this action as well,it was less frequent. Why emphasize the muscular disparity, use, movement, in which the women seemed "passive", the men "active"? The experience is unitary; the person carried becomes the complement to the one carrying; her yielding, trust and relaxed body is an active response to the muscular effort of taking her weight onto his own. The carrier participates in the act of the carrier, just as the carrier absorbs the essential experience of being carried in doing so. We used all the variations between us in strength, duration, balance, quickness of reaction. In rehearsals all the actions of partners were exchanged; for instance the crawl and carry was relatively simple for the men on men, women on men, men on women, women on women in quick relays in which the weight was given in developing awareness of how it was to receive



Charlotte Victoria

Charlotte Victoria

Charlotte Victoria

the weight and continue the movement. If a man in a sudden relay found he was in line to go onto the back of a woman, and that his weight would impede or make her movement forward impossible, he would take just enough of his own onto his feet or hands so that they could advance as a unit. The point was adaptability, adjustments which made the action possible.

To watch a person carrying another is to participate in both situations simultaneously; empathically, to be both the carrier and the one carried.

Then there are exercises which seem to be pure fun, but they serve other purposes. For instance everyone lines up flat on the floor, in a tight row, shoulder to shoulder. The person at the end starts to roll over everyone, followed immediately by the next person, rolling over all the bodies. The rollers may be afraid of hurting the prone bodies, the rolled-on people afraid of the weight and that much direct physical contact . . . everyone flat out . . . so that your breasts and pussey and cock and balls are all momentarily in contact. But you don't know who is who—its personal but generalized; it goes very fast and everyone has the same experience and makes instantaneous shifts so they don't get hurt . . .

Olfactory aspects of contact improvisation were important once we had full body contact. People in close contact are most uncomfortable about smells (particularly their own): mouth, feet, cunt, cock, ass, underarms. The smell taboo in our culture is particularly internalized. So there are exercises in which we seem to be doing one thing about movement but it is really about breaking down olfactory taboos. For instance the "body ball" where we have to crawl through one another's arms, legs, under the belly, around the head, concentrating on keeping a unitary shape

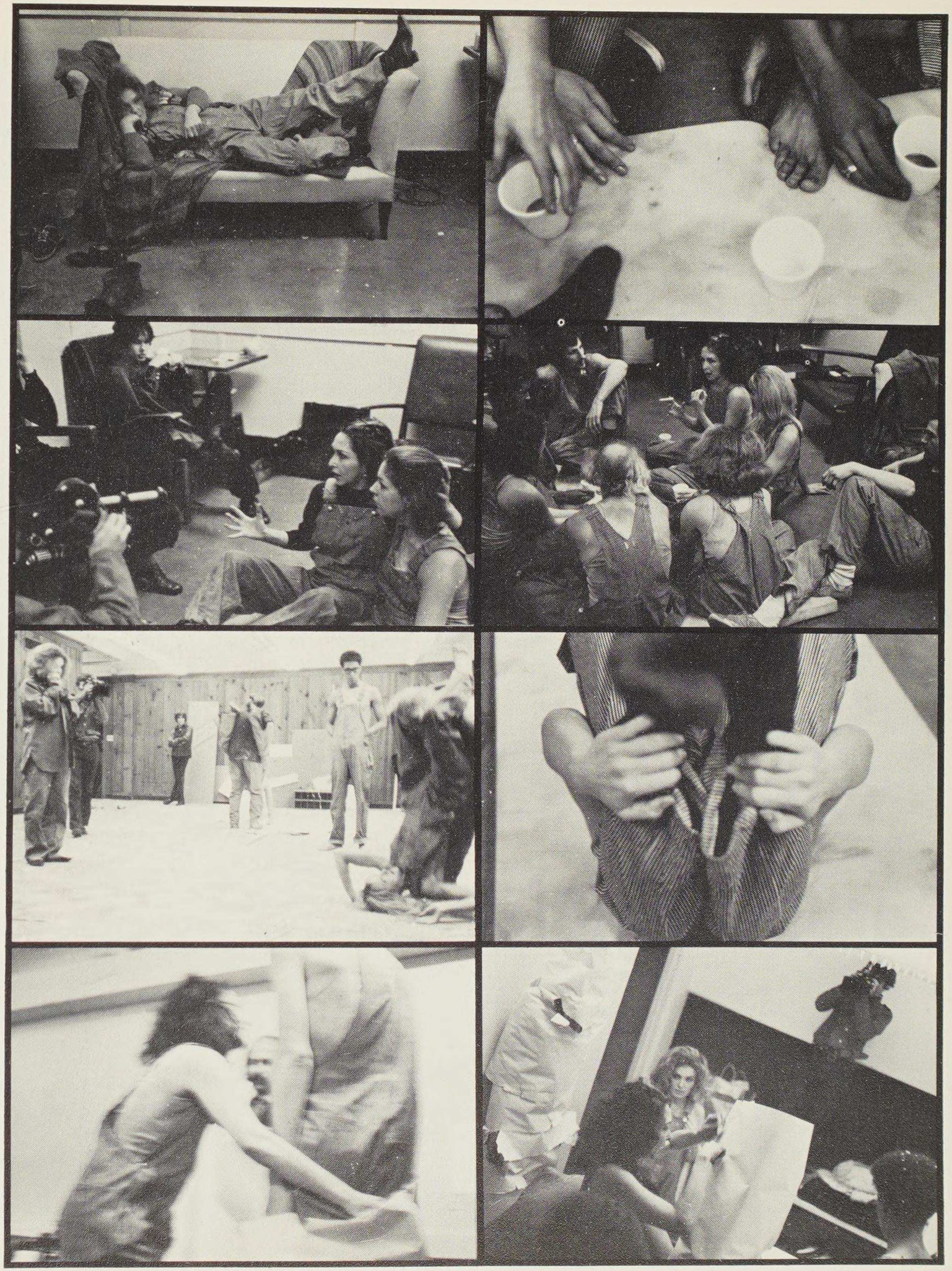
in constant, smooth motion. If anyone had any resistance the entire shape loses its flow, you fall get crushed or stuck. But the unitary feeling of the motion is so pleasurable and mutually interdependent that the physical intimacy is absorbed into the larger action. Without ever mentioning an olfactory taboo people would eventually express their relief in jokes, "you really washed for this session!", "whose feet was I stuck on?"

. . .initially simple exercises done in partners. . . you would pick someone who seemed attractive or not threatening. . .it could be a woman with a woman, a man with a man. You begin to learn something about mutality of rhythms, timing, responsibility for one another's motion. We might start on the floor with contact of hands (not taboo), then contact of back to back, pulling one another over and upright, back and forth. . .so that in effect you are giving whatever you are receiving, then exchanging. Partners would be switched. . .suddenly a small woman would be pulling over the man who looked like he'd crush her. . .she's instantaneously adapting and so is he.

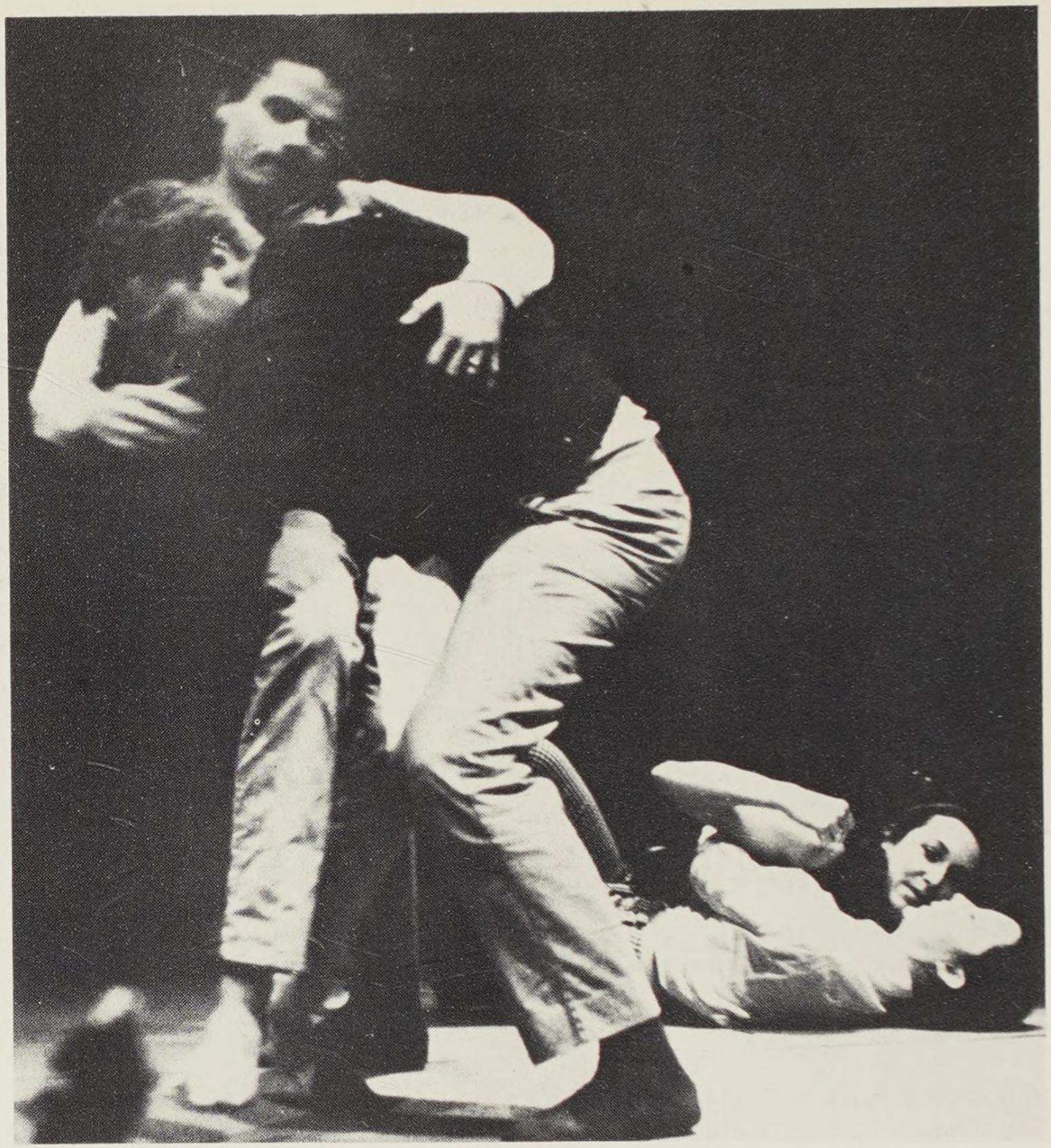
. . .P. came to me and said she was afraid of doing grabs and falls with D.; he was not only the tallest person in the group and muscular but she felt so much tension in his body she was fearfull of being hurt. He saw himself as being hurtful to others (and expected to get hurt in return.) In this instance, with a minimum of discussion, we all agreed that those who felt willing would begin a series of grabs, falls, tackles with Denys. His defensive expectations dissolved in the repeated falls and collisions once he found no one got hurt, that he could both yield and take responsibility for impact.

. . .The symbolic act "don't depend on me" might be enacted by dropping a partner; the fear of being "let down" might be enacted by falling out of lifting arms—we learned to fall like a cat and to hang on to imbalanced weight. Adjustments in trust and risk were exposed and communally experienced as an essential relatedness.

. . .Our need for non-sexual physical contact. . .



Charlotte Victoria



Charlotte Victoria

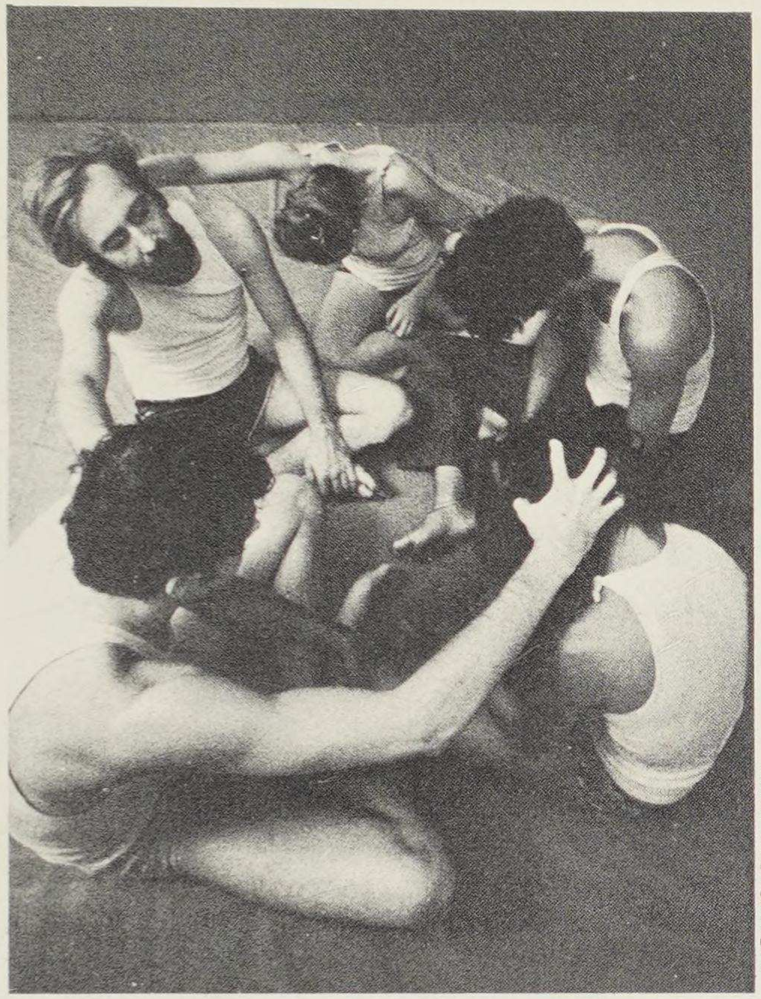
the confusion between sensual contact and sexual contact in reactions of audiences . . . we were asked if the intensive physical contact during performance resulted in "having to" make love. (The sensual satisfactions of contact confused with sexual desire.) Sensual contact as enacted by us became a form of privilege, a vicarious enrichment which had something to do with my turning later performances over to the audience. Their identification with us enabled them to put themselves in our place . . .

. . . taking risks—distinguished from agression as power/imposition/fear/constraints—exercises of agression and assertion had to unravel emotional conditionings which would interfere with our muscular coordinations . . .

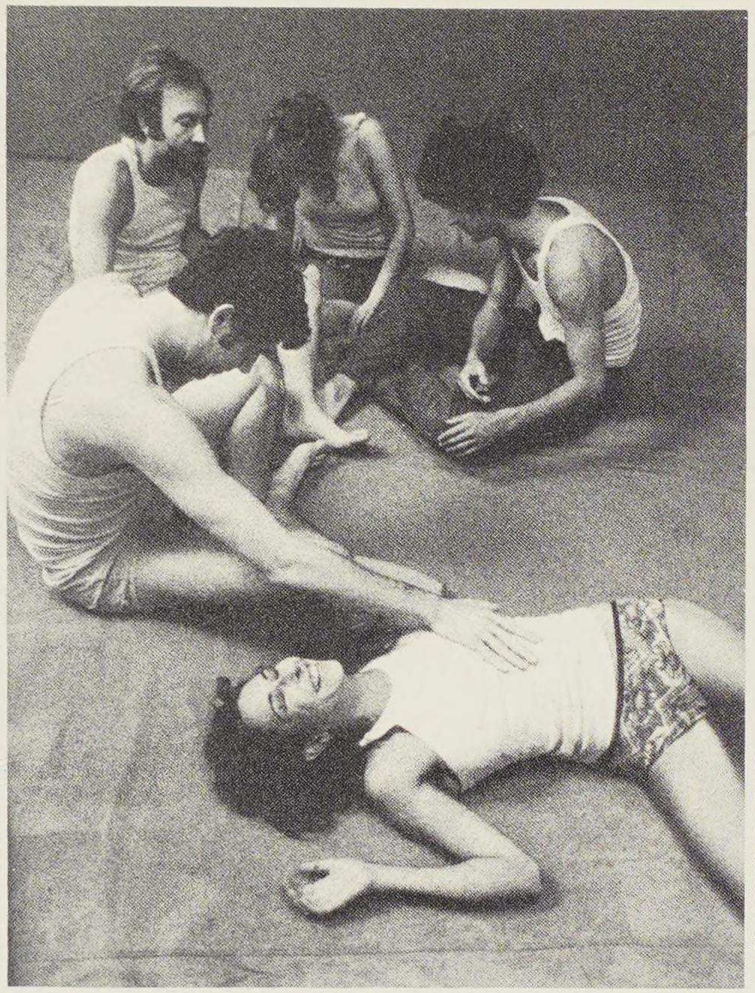
. . . the individual asserts responsibility appropriately . . . the information was in our bodies in a positive form . . . being aware of and responsive to one another did not restrict or inhibit our own explorations . . . . . .

. . . the insufficiency of our abilities to move cooperatively, instinctively to protect one another (and self) was vividly apparent in the charge of rigid police flanks against the Grand Central Station Yippie celebrants . . . (and at the Pentagon) . . . our responses were helplessness, confusion, victimization . . . . the cultural symptoms of frustration and anger over the Vietnam war increased as we confronted the unsuitability of our own behavior to the conditions affecting us . . . in '67, '68 I did a series of public workshops with the expectation that what we learned in theater could be of use in mass actions . . . . . .

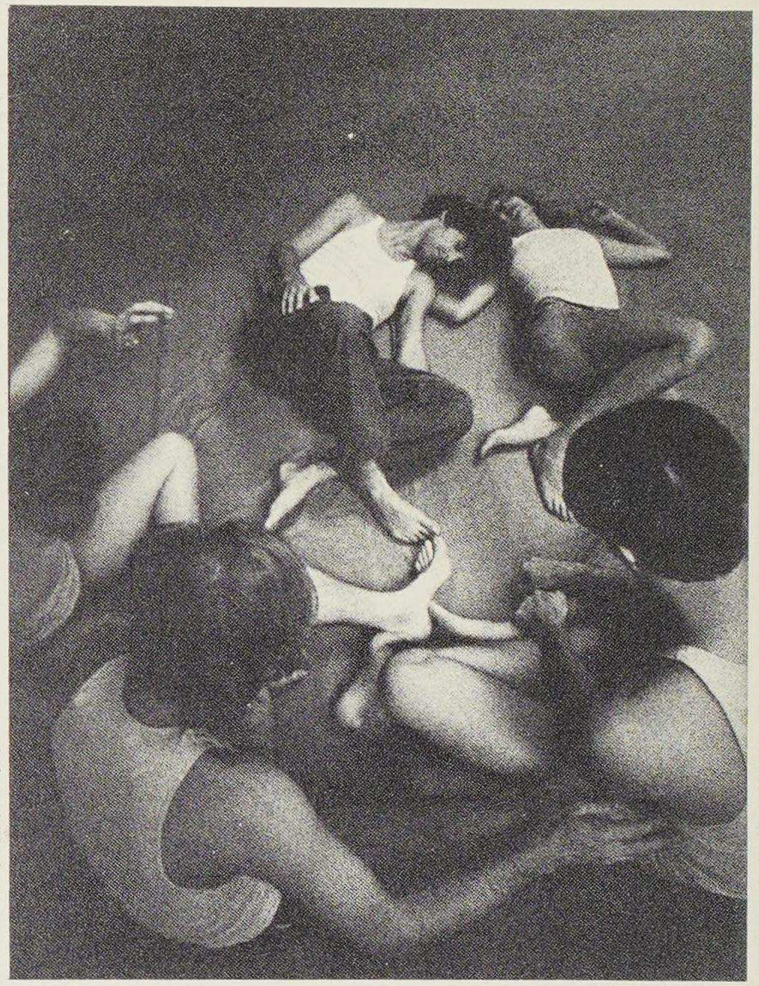
. . . I rejected standards of perfection, excellence, endurance exemplified by a leader or principle. My performers could develop quixotic and individual aspects within a work so long as that sensi-



Max Waldman



Max Waldman



Max Waldman

tive and mutually accepting tissue was overtly there between us . . . for instance Tommy O'Donnell at moments had the tendency to bite! Not hurtfully or agressively, but unconsciously furthering the physical bonding he felt as bodies were embraced, held, and adjusted their motions to one another . . . . . or S. going limp during carries . . . or in my own case often being so absorbed in a sequence that I had no idea what happened next . . . . .

. . . being individually irreplaceable and as well interchangeable . . . the devotion and value we felt for one another had to do with this acceptance of particularity—each became a complement and extension of any other . . . . secure in how we were who we were . . . .

. . . if Mark and Joe were comfortable on the highest ropes this was not a standard to be imposed on others who were not facile on the high ropes . . . . the fact that some of us could work there satisfied the physical potentiality of the use of the environment and left the others free for those actions which were most natural and available to them . . . .

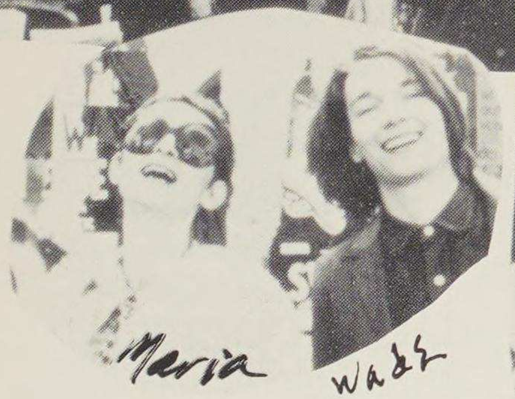
. . . centering and breathing . . . being able to move with a full breath lightens and energizes the body . . . but I wouldn't teach it directly . . . each one could discover this in themselves,

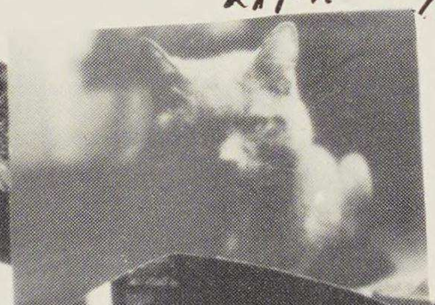
. . . Concentrating on tactile material as a conveyance of our energies—projective, physical, sustained in time as work must be . . . and taking time for each to find their particular way into the shared efforts . . . "efforts" not in the sense of being effortful, but of application to a study which strengthens . . . to trust the exploration and exposure of neglected capacities of the self which a communal situation can bring to the fore . . . .

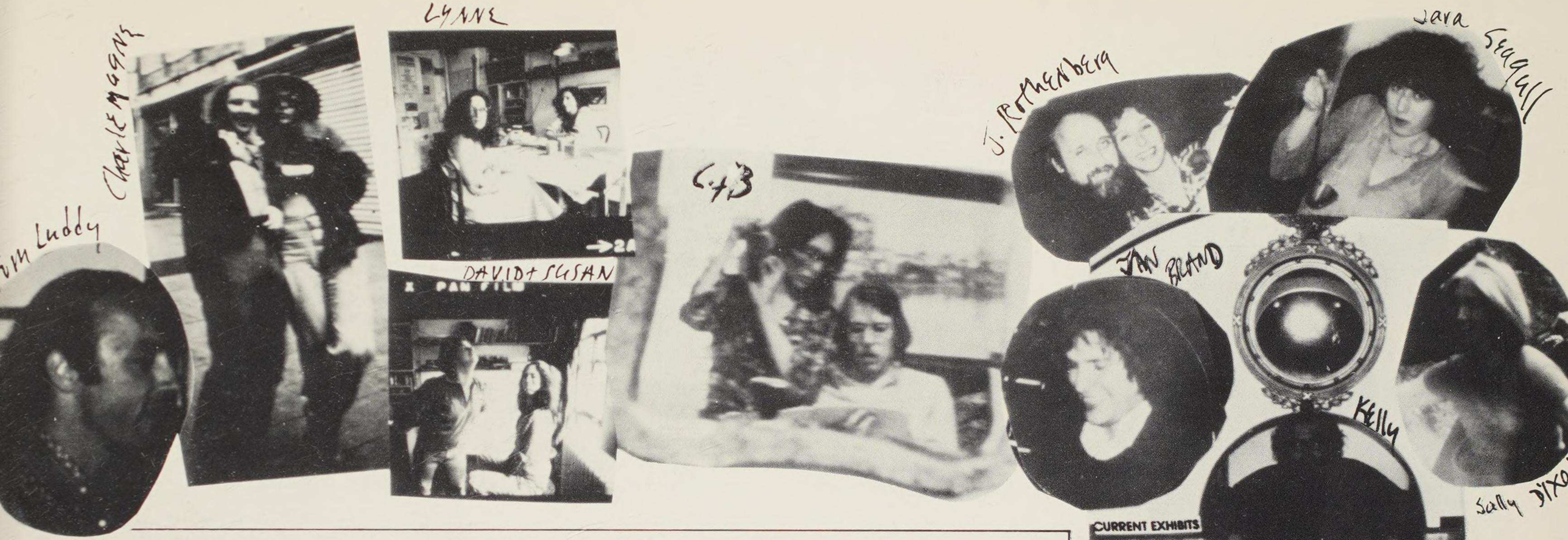
. . . each work exists in its own right but contains a method or potentiality that is then taken by others in different directions . . . I let it go . . . many of the performers used this interchange and discovery as a touchstone for themselves and took steps to alter their own lives. I didn't want to keep a constant troupe together but to let each move on with what we had explored . . . . . it wasn't like a school, a company, a fixed practice . . . . it was in its particularity that it had its vitality, its richness, and the fact that Kinetic Theater could keep changing, letting people go on, and absorbing disasters and mistakes . . . . . .

. . . reorganizing patterns of times and space . . . when you shift the predictable perceptual base, you begin to unlock structures in the social and political spheres as well . . . . . it might be through something very obvious that simply hasn't been done before . . . . .

from The Notebooks
1969-1977







One of the ironies of being advised (by Simone Forti) to expose the anger—that it may be of benefit to other women artists—is my realization that the expression of anger requires a base of strength, self-confidence and validated achievement; that is, anger again must be structured and referential to a certain cultural consequence. The more secure I feel in my work and personal life, the more directed and value-bearing the examination of anger can be. At my weakest most despairing moments, anger is merged in a hopeless stew of guilt, self-blame, enclosure.....it is important to remind myself that I *was* flipped out for several years—and if this is a representation for the implosion of my generation at a certain time ('69, '70), I still alone had to struggle to fight back into relevance, coherence, the unities of functional behavior. And that the total loss of a functional self has not only to do with the excesses of social and estethic determinations—the materials and energies of the sixties—but of the individual who faces, endures, an hourly state of dis-location, dis-orientation, fears, ineptitudes and a sinister transformation of all ordinary things, objects and actions. If it takes an hour to get out of bed, and putting on socks has the confusing complexity of launching a battle cruiser, constructive anger and political insight are no longer available tools.

It was symptomatic that in our atomized social relations one had to find a special guide or personal aid—a psychiatrist—and pay them for healing, when a group with a collective awareness is the obvious solution to, and avoidance of the beleaguered self.

1977

ISTORY OF A GIRL PORNOGRAPHER

On the poster for the van de Bovenkamp exhibit, "Objects by Five": the usually "dignified" artists appear naked—four women, one man; hands on their knees as if poised for a skirmish (the image I had clearly envisioned, to which the other artists gradually became committed as well. The woman on the left holds a sign across her body inviting you to the opening, because her husband had insisted her naked body—only ink on paper—not pass into public domain.) *(1965)*

Exactly one of the motivating factors in my determination to integrate the nude body in all my work: performance, Kinetic Theater, film, paintings, photo-collage, events. The others:

1. To confront the paradox that we deal with created images—painted, sculpted, performed—as "reality." As if paint, plaster, celluloid, stone, paper, exist to convince us of a life force as vital as our own flesh and blood . . . . and *subject to our social moralities!* This is as child-like as spanking our dolls for making imaginary pee-pee; and shelters an unconscious, debased primitivism—surrounding, endowing inanimate objects with projections of our repressed vitality.

[*"Istory" has been my solution to the History/Herstory tug and pull. Whenever possible I use a neutral noun or pronoun instead of a specific gender. A few years ago Clayton Eshleman asked about my use of "Istory": did I know Olsen's reference to "Istorin" in the Greek as "the root of history?" Eshleman explained an ancient conflict: Thucydides defined Istorin as "history as facts"; Herodotus defined Istorin as "the personal search for the real."*]

2. To bridge the conventionally public/private areas of experience.

3. For a painter no part of the body should have been considered taboo, relegated to a sub-physical "actuality"! As a student I painted self-portraits using my entire body as one which stood for all/or any human shape from which I would learn. I was free to study, perceive my own genital shape and form—as well as my ears and elbows.

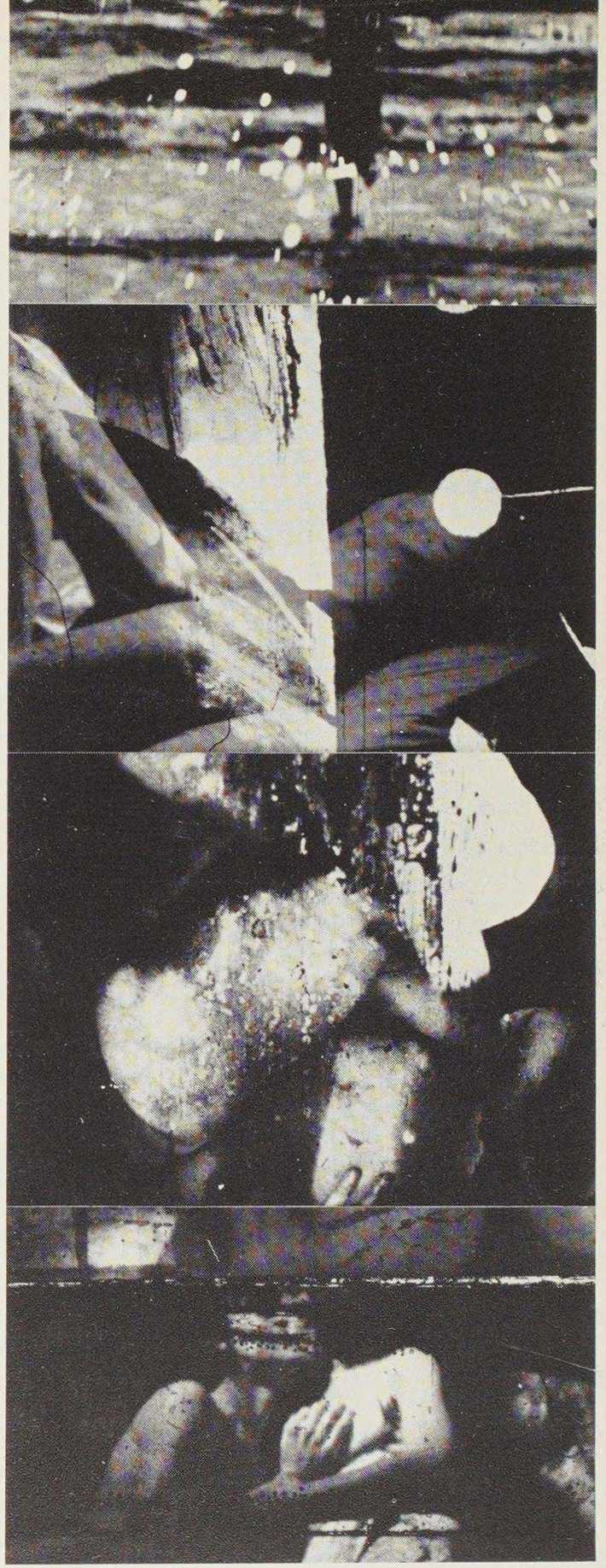
My art professor told other students this study was narcissistic. I was dumbfounded. I thought I had "objectified" my own fragile, but concrete reality in a stream of istoric image-making. Further, this small co-ed liberal arts college did not have live models for its art students. The male students doing their endless self-portrait studies were not considered "narcissistic." But then they did leave out their bodies!

4. In the early sixties when I came to N.Y., a few artists were introducing real and literal materials to an extended canvas (or picture plane). I had been making constructions, light boxes, collages. In 1962 I began a room environment built of huge panels interlocked with rhythmic color units, glass, mirrors, lights, moving umbrellas and other motorized parts. I worked with my whole body, the scale of the panels incorporating my own physical scale. I decided to be combined with the work as an additional "material"—real & physical. To let my body be a further dimension of the tactile, plastic character of the construction. I did this by treating myself in a series of "inclusions"; with paint, sand, powder, flour, grease, glue, rope, fur, crayons etc. I concentrated on moving as an extended part of the structure. These movements were then photographed to become a variation of the environment itself, *Eye Body*.

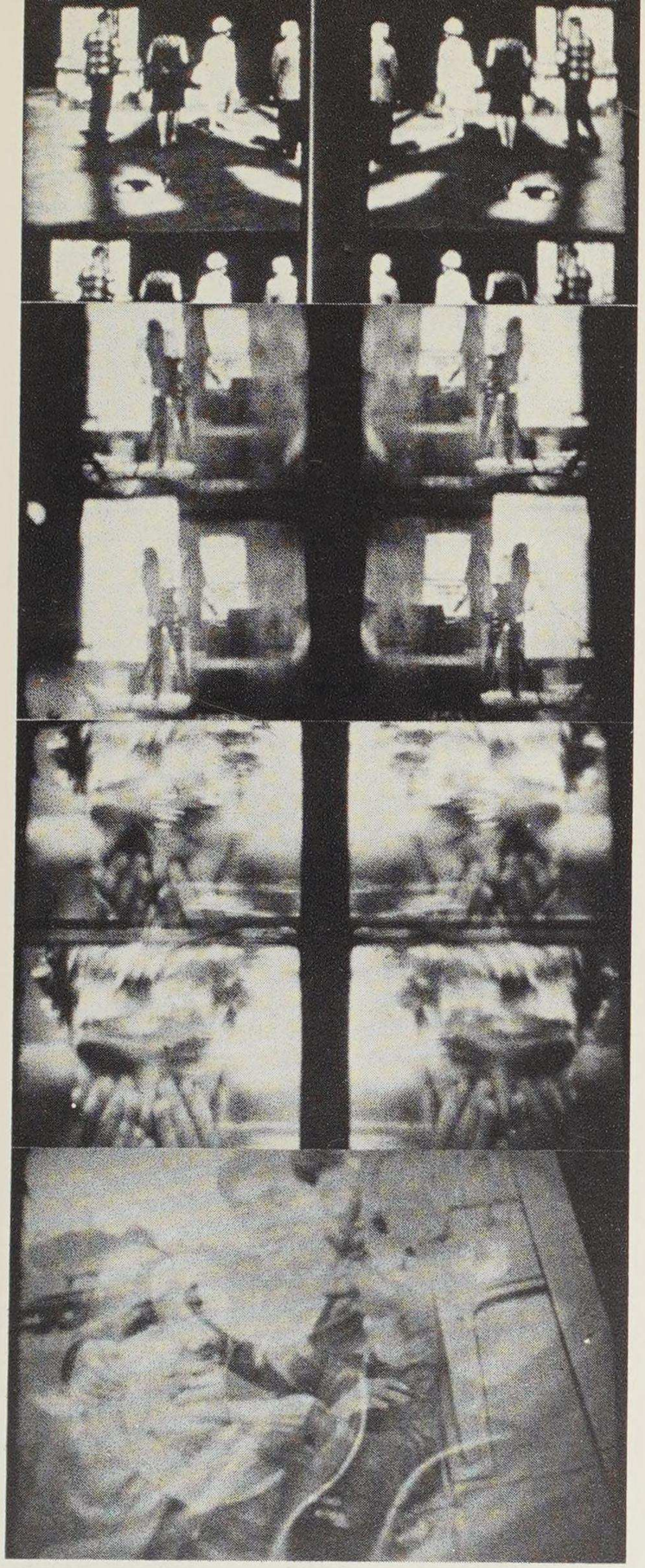
Throughout college I was receiving the message: "of course you can/don't you dare." My family were interested to know if I had "dates," not that I was working in a lost encaustic process. My teacher said: "You're terrific kid, you could really go far, but don't set your heart on art, you're only a girl." Did all this have any connection with my English teacher insisting I not do a thesis on Virginia Woolf—"trivial and obscure" (but not to me!), but Proust would do instead? Or my philosophy teacher objecting when I wanted to do a paper on DeBeauvoir, advising me that Sartre was where my attention should be instead?

Not only were my creative energies constantly under question, subject to issues which contradicted everything the learning situation and my own abilities should have supported, encouraged to flourish, but my "right" to excel was in doubt.

Somehow the tremendously repressive culture around me had not effected a separation between my creative energies and my erotic energies. It came as a great shock when during my second year review, my painting and drawing were given highest honors but a committee told me to leave school for a year, that I had committed "morally



Stills from *Fuses*, 1964-1967.



Stills from *Plumbline*, 1968-1971.

offensive acts": someone accused me of making love with my boyfriend under a tree! (He was not asked to leave, nor did we ever remember such an incident...) I was on full scholarship, this banishment created an uproar—one of the first that I would unwittingly generate throughout the years.

In the early sixties I felt quite alone in my insistence on the integrity of my own sexuality and creativity. There were many reasons for my use of the naked body in my Kinetic Theater works: to break into the taboos against the vitality of the naked body in movement, to eroticise my guilt-ridden culture and further to confound this culture's sexual rigidities—that the life of the body is more *variously* expressive than a sex-negative society can admit. I didn't stand naked in front of 300 people because I wanted to be fucked; but because my sex and work were harmoniously experienced I could have the audacity, or courage, to show the body as a source of varying emotive power: poignant, funny beautiful, functional, plastic, concrete, "abstract"; the key to related perceptions of our own nature as well as the organic and constructed worlds with which we surround ourselves. Alienation from our physical joys, constrictions in the scope of our own physical natures, meant endless disasters, acts against our own deepest needs.

In some sense I made a gift of my body to other women: *giving our bodies back to ourselves.* The haunting images of the Cretean bull dancers—joyful, free, bare-breasted, skilled women leaping precisely from danger to ascendancy, guided my imagination.

The use of my own body as integral to my work was confusing to many people. I WAS PERMITTED TO BE AN IMAGE/BUT NOT AN IMAGE-MAKER CREATING HER OWN SELF-IMAGE. If I had only been dancing, acting, I would have maintained forms of feminine expression acceptable to the culture: "be the image we want." But I was directing troupes of performers, technicians; creating lights, sound, electronic systems, environments, costumes—every aspect of production, and then physically moving in what I had created. Some people wanted to constrain our actions as seductive, provocative, obscene, but the tenderness, boldness, spontaneity and pleasure which the performers communicated forced them to question their own attitudes. After a time the audience stopped yelling: "Is this art? Is this sex? Is this some religion?"

Still, I was astounded when in the midst of ***Meat Joy*** a man came out of the audience and began to strangle me. Steeped in the writings of Wilhelm Reich I understood what had affected him but not how to break his hold on my neck! And I was terrified that the audience closest to us would think it part of the performance. No one made a move. Even if I could have squalked the din of the continuing performance was overwhelming. I was saved by three middle-aged women, who may have had no previous experience of the excesses of the avant-garde; they simply *felt* I *was* being assaulted apart from the often violent performance. They threw themselves as one onto the man & dragged him off me.

Again I had a shock when the Institute of Contemporary Art in London invited me to screen *Fuses* and talk about how it was made. The space was comfortable, the projection smooth. But the audience sat stony, rigid, as if commonly subject to deadly paralysis. At the conclusion of the film there was silence, no rise of conversation, applause. In the front row, a huge, red-faced man in the uniform of a Colonel, clutched a walking stick in one hand, a portly woman with the other, and BOOMED "Come My Dear! Away from what only a Deranged Frigid Nymphomaniac could make." So much for the questions & answers session. A young critic (close to my own age) rushed up to me and snarled: "Madam you have assaulted my sexuality." The critic from the more liberal paper shook my hand saying "I'm afraid we deserved that film."

1974

---

from an unsent letter to Allan Kaprow, June 1974

Dear Allan:

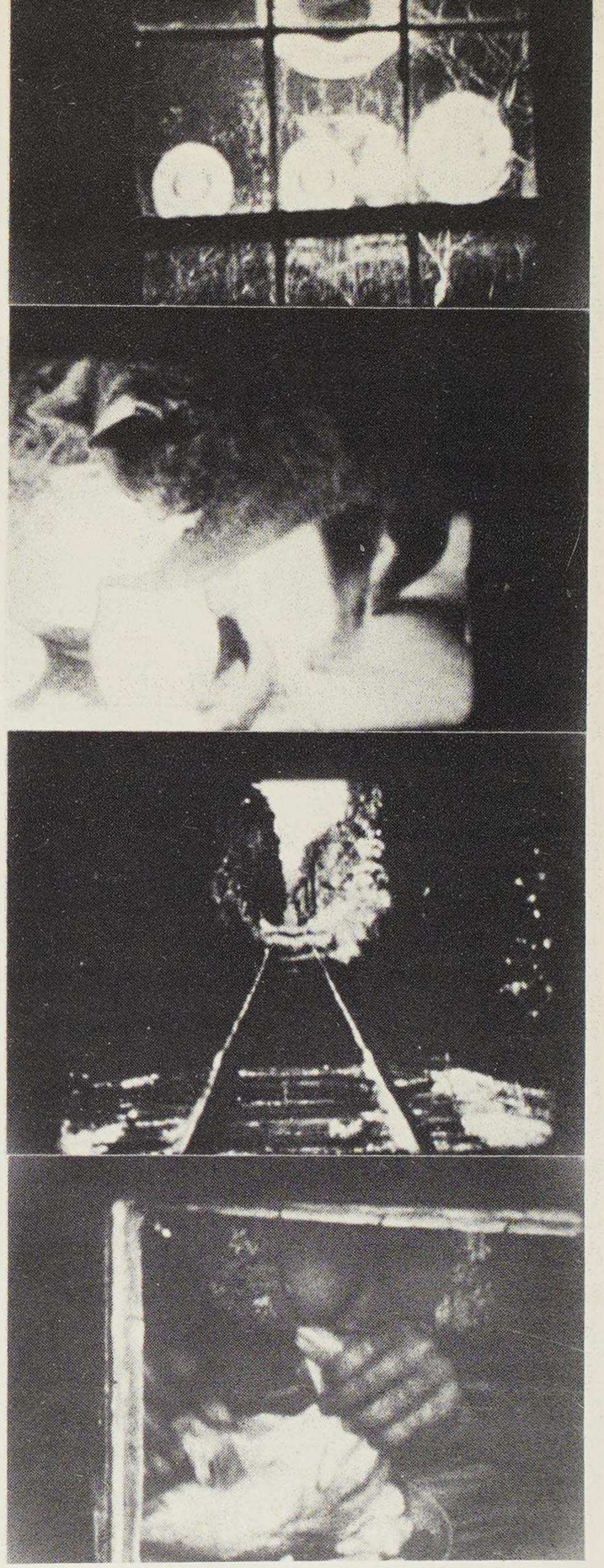
you have written me three letters recently—one of welcome back from England and an appreciation of *Fuses;* the other in regard to my coming West, perhaps to perform, show films or teach. I've decided it is interesting to try to say (to myself and you) why your letters, whose tone is of one contemporary—one associate—to another, are so peculiar

essentially I have stood alone for too long, having been methodically *repulsed* by those with whom I felt affinity

at the time when our gang was getting recognition & help in the 60's I received recognition, and poportionately no help whatsoever. You see I understand *men helping me to sustain what I had but not to enlarge its scope or join them in their world.*

The clearest example is not so far past. At Cologne*, Vostell assured me a publisher was coming who could save the day. I was penniless—unable to get myself and my collaborator back to London. I had understood we would have a living stipend once in Koln; but Szeemann reminded me that any stipend I had had was included in funds already spent on materials for my exhibit-process.

*Happening and Fluxus Retrospective at the Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne. November 1971.



Stills from *Kitch's Last Meal,* 1973-1977.