Art | *Theory* | *Criticism* | *Politics*

OCTOBER

HUMANITIES
LIBRARY

JAN 0 4 1982

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY AT CARBONDALE

4

Dolf Sternberger — *Panorama of the 19th Century*

Craig Owens — Einstein on the Beach: *The Primacy of Metaphor*

Amy Taubin — *Doubled Visions*

Michael Snow — *Notes for* Rameau's Nephew

Rosalind Krauss — *Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America (Part 2)*

Keith Cohen — *Feast*

Richard Sennett — *Narcissism and Modern Culture*

Robert Whitman — *Light Touch*

Fall 1977

$3.00

OCTOBER

editors
Rosalind Krauss
Annette Michelson

editorial associate
Douglas Crimp

production and design
Charles Read

OCTOBER is published quarterly by the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, and distributed by Jaap Rietman, 167 Spring St., New York, 10012.
Subscriptions: $10 for one year, $18 for two years.
Foreign subscriptions, including Canada: $12.60 for one year, $23.00 for two years.
Address subscriptions to OCTOBER, c/o Jaap Rietman, at the above address.
Excerpts from Dolf Sternberger's *Panorama of the 19th Century* are published with the kind permission of Urizen Books, Inc., New York.
© 1977 by OCTOBER
Manuscripts, accompanied by stamped, addressed envelopes, should be sent to OCTOBER, 8 West 40th St., New York 10018.
No responsibility is assumed for loss or injury of manuscripts.
OCTOBER is set in Baskerville and printed by Wickersham Printing Company, Inc.
OCTOBER does not reflect the views of the IAUS.
OCTOBER is the property of its editors, who are wholly responsible for its contents.

ER

4

Dolf Sternberger	*Panorama of the 19th Century*	3
Craig Owens	Einstein on the Beach: *The Primacy of Metaphor*	21
Amy Taubin	*Doubled Visions*	33
Michael Snow	*Notes for* Rameau's Nephew	43
Rosalind Krauss	*Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America (Part 2)*	58
Keith Cohen	*Feast*	68
Richard Sennett	*Narcissism and Modern Culture*	70
Robert Whitman	*Light Touch*	80

Bf/Hu57J25RD

KEITH COHEN teaches English at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

CRAIG OWENS is a dance critic and is currently studying art history at the Graduate Center of C.U.N.Y.

RICHARD SENNETT is Professor of Sociology and the Director of the Center for Humanistic Studies at New York University. His most recent book is *The Fall of Public Man*.

MICHAEL SNOW is the Canadian filmmaker whose work of the past decade has profoundly influenced advanced cinematic theory and practice in America and Europe, and in Japan. *Rameau's Nephew*, a systematic exploration of the relationships of sound to image, was completed in 1974.

DOLF STERNBERGER, formerly an editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, is the author of a study of Heine and of *The Philosophy of the State*. He is also coauthor of *Aus dem Wörterbuch des Unmenschen*, an analysis of fascist language. *Panorama of the 19th Century*, from which excerpts are presented in this issue, was originally published in 1936, and its English translation by JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL, poet and coeditor of *Extensions*, is scheduled to appear through Urizen Books this autumn.

AMY TAUBIN performs work of her own making and teaches film at the School of Visual Arts and Pratt Institute.

ROBERT WHITMAN, who has been presenting theater works in New York and elsewhere for almost twenty years, was a founder and director of Experiments in Art and Technology. *Light Touch* was presented as the final performance of the retrospective series of his works in New York during April and May, 1976. An illustrated volume of scripts and other texts is planned for publication by the Dia Foundation.

Errata to *October* 3

The contributor's note for Jean Epstein should read: The selection of his theoretical writings published here brackets the period in which he was producing his major films.

Footnote 2, p. 11, should read: Georges Sadoul has suggested that Epstein is here referring to film images stylized in the manner of picture postcards (*cf. Histoire Generale du Cinêma*, vol. 5, Paris, Denoël, 1975, p. 135). Epstein may also be referring to the practice of early film companies who inscribed their trademark emblem onto theatrical sets or inserted placards bearing such emblems into shots taken outdoors to prevent pirating of their prints.

Panorama of the 19th Century

DOLF STERNBERGER

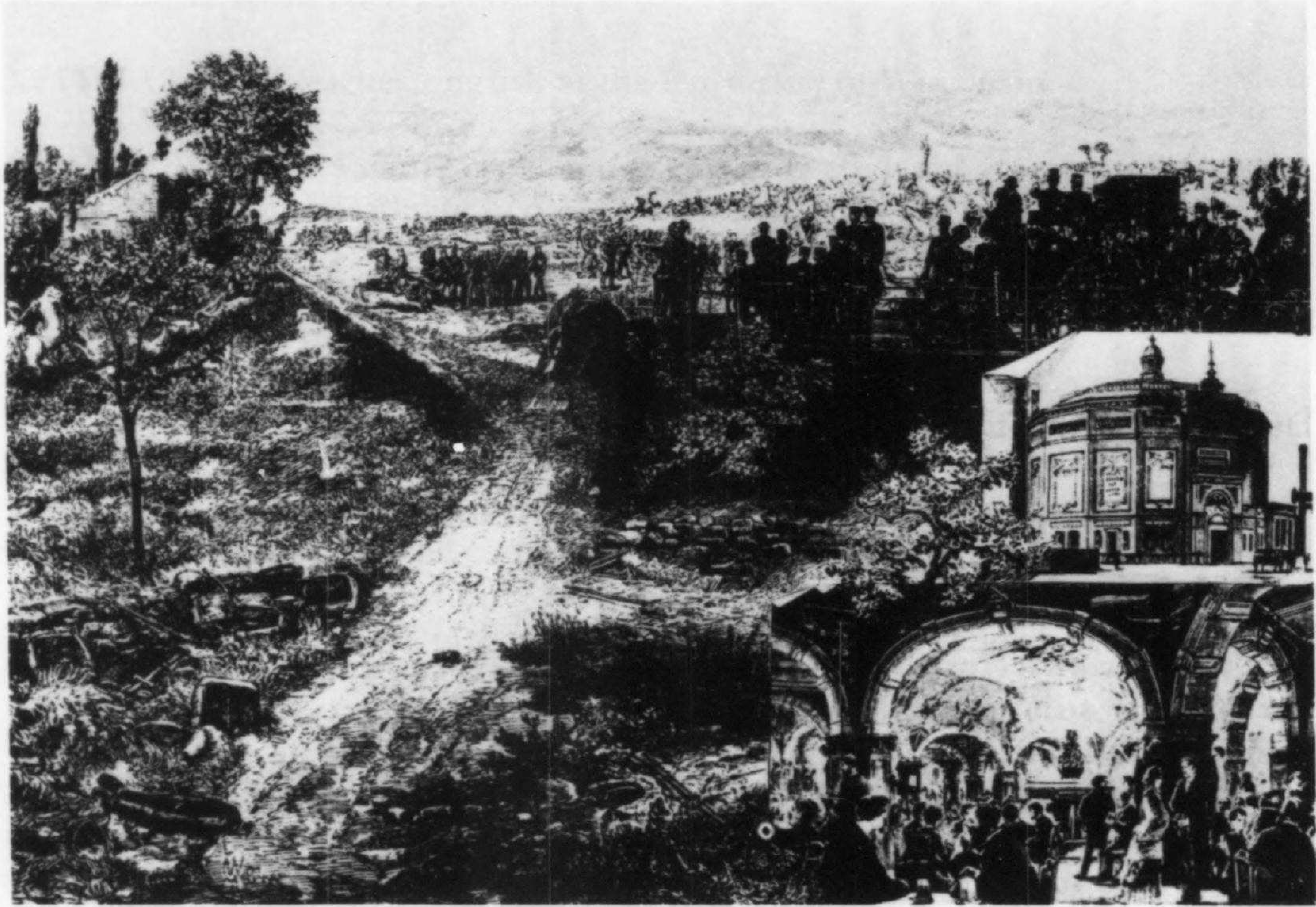
TRANSLATED BY JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL

A Panorama

Anton von Werner, of whose vast oeuvre only the *Imperial Proclamation at Versailles* is still generally known today, rendered an account of panorama painting in his memoirs, an account inestimable in its theoretical and practical, *i.e.*, historical, value. It was he who designed, led the execution of, and partially painted the most famous and important panorama during the era of the new German Kaiserdom: the *Battle of Sedan*, ceremoniously unveiled in Berlin, on September 1, 1883, in the presence of the Kaiser.

"The cyclorama" (according to a contemporary description selling at the entrance for a few pfennigs) "shows that moment in the Battle of Sedan during the afternoon of September 1, 1870, between 1:30 and 2:00, when the French Army, namely the VIIth French Corps . . . enveloped by the left flank of the German army and pushed back to the Plateau of Floing-Illy, is making its last desperate attempt to smash through the Prussian lines and gain an avenue of retreat." This straightforward data sharply focuses the expectant viewer's attention on a highly specific historic situation precisely delimited to, if not the minute, then at least the half hour. The compulsion for utter illusion becomes all the more obvious in the next few sentences: "Upon stepping out on the platform, the spectator gazes far over the delightful Valley of the Maas; in the depth below him lies the hamlet of Floing, which has been totally occupied by the Germans since 12:30 p.m. In front of the church, the 2nd Comp. of the 82nd Inf. is emerging from the depths. Ibidem: Captain Bödicker, Commander of the 5th Rifle Battallion, whose 4th company is stationed on reserve in the village."

Thus carried away (if not beyond space and time, then from everyday life to a time thirteen years ago and a place several hundred kilometers away), the visitor is almost casually changed from a passerby to an eyewitness of highly significant events; he finds himself surrounded by none other than "the delightful Valley of the Maas" and the military operations unfolding therein. The Kaiser had a special treat on opening day, a small heightening of the platform, which, on request, would slowly revolve, "affording the spectator, with no effort required on his part, a view in the round of the panorama," a circumstance more likely to ensure his



Anton von Werner. Evening at Sedan, September 1, 1870. *Diorama. (From: Anton von Werner,* Erlebnisse und Eindrücke 1870–1890. *Illustration courtesy Urizen Books.)*

being carried away, or rather detached, from himself. That same goal dictates the technique of this painting. "Nothing can be done here . . . with the subordination, sketchiness, or suggestiveness of detail permitted in easel pictures," says Anton von Werner. And what a strange blend of real, measurable, spatial distances and their depiction in the pictorial surface; of the imperfections in the human eye and an objective structure in the things it perceives! What a strange blend that is in the panoramist's expectation of an observer who, as though standing on the generals' promontory, scours the scene with a telescope. Werner reports that Eugen Bracht, his chief collaborator, felt obligated to paint a huge nut tree leaf by leaf in the foreground and to take utmost pains with the slate roofs of Floing. Werner himself, at maneuvers, which he often had permission to attend and where he, the artist, was so amiably assisted by the general-staff officers, studied quite specific phenomena such as the size and extension of the powder smoke from the guns. In order to arrange the countless figures in the exact perspective size, he used a strategic map, accurately measuring the distances between the various fighting areas and his own standpoint, which would after all be that of the panorama viewer.

While such topographic and chronometric reconstruction claimed full attention from the painters involved, Werner's account does contain a single,

almost miniscule point feebly recalling higher illusionary arts and their goals. Not satisfied by the traditional rendering of light and shadow with the black-and-white palette, Werner hit upon the idea of sculpturally modelling the lights—especially the weapons and musical instruments flashing in the sun—and then adding silver or gold. Such scattered brilliance in a space otherwise filled with uniform studio light is a faint reminiscence of the admittedly more powerful lighting effects at which the older art of panoramas and dioramas had excelled. The panorama, dating back to the late 18th century, was actually refined with a certain illumination technique by Daguerre, the inventor of photography. Daguerre had first gained renown with his *Diorama* in Paris, an opus that his contemporaries so meaningfully dubbed the *Salle de Miracle*, a genuine home of the wondrous. The pictures on exhibit—Edinburgh in the ghastly glow of a conflagration or Napoleon's tomb transfigured by the natural aureole of a blood-red sunset—flickered with the more brilliantly Bengal, supernatural lighting that had once accompanied an Assumption, a Crucifixion, or the dawn of Judgment Day. Such a waning but still blood-curdling sign language of light, which, after the decline of the spiritual theater of Baroque church decorations, found a more fleeting refuge in those Miracle Rooms, is now fully wrested from heaven, here in Werner's demiraculized illusionism, and attached to the trumpets and drawn sabers of the glorious Prussian batallions. But still, it is a vestige of transfiguration, of which precisely the military band continued to partake. The same motif recurs in the band's most famous glorification, Liliencron's poem *Clingaling boom boom*, although here it may be construed quite differently, as impressionistic joy in the play of light, or as the poet's shimmering merriment. "Bengal" crops up again here quite literally: "Is the Persian shah triumphant?" And in a playful simile, a memory comes drifting by, almost casually in this unexpected place, recalling the violent omens of supernatural, eschatological events:

> And round the corner, bursting, boom!
> Like tubas on the Day of Doom.

In the painted panorama, however, Nature was preponderant. An enclosing artificial Nature, whose relentless illusionistic unity forbade even the faintest hint of a frame and required negating the pictorial character in any way whatsoever as well as reducing or bridging the viewing distance, which was usually taken for granted. So it seems quite consistent for the painted surface to have things added to it, sculptural components in the foreground or actual pieces of nature transported there, stones, bushes, even tools. Daguerre had already enhanced the impression of Swiss scenery, to the total enchantment of visitors, by constructing the façade of an Alpine house in front of the backdrop and distributing rustic implements nearby, a chopping-block, an ax, and some hewn wood. Furthermore, one could hear the bleating of a goat in the stable and the melodious jingling of herds in the distance. "It was," wrote a German traveler after viewing the diorama,

"as if our unannounced arrival had frightened away the timid dwellers." Anton von Werner, too, made use of this tradition, at least in the three huge scenic pictures, which he installed in other rooms of the building where the painting-in-the-round was being shown. Those pictures portrayed "the three great historic moments following one another at five-hour intervals, like the final three acts of a drama, after the decisive end of the battle at 2:00 p.m.: at 7:00 in the evening, the handing of Napoleon's letter to Kaiser Wilhelm; at 12:00 midnight, the surrender negotiations between Moltke and Wimpffen; at 5:00 in the morning, the meeting between Bismarck and Napoleon." The dioramas were erected in such a way as to be brightly illuminated from overhead while the viewer stood in an absolutely darkened room, at the exact horizon level of the paintings. This arrangement achieved a startling effect of light, even though immediate nimbuses or annihilating fires were no longer aimed at, and it seemed worth concentrating artistic ambition on a highly natural portrayal of evening light in the open country, a misty midnight room lit by kerosene, and a bleak dawn. The nocturnal picture in particular, according to Werner's report, produced an illusion no less effective than Daguerre's magic room of fifty years earlier and was described in an amazingly similar way to those masterpieces of deception and entrancement. "The lamp on the table really shone, and its reflections on the weapons and uniform buttons of the officers flashed towards the spectator with deceptive authencitity. When an international jury gathered here in 1891 for the International Art Exhibition, its members, including Alma Tadema, E. La Chaise, Juliaan de Vriendt and others, visited the Sedan panorama, and it was only by climbing into the pictorial space and touching the canvas that they convinced themselves the lamp was simply painted and its effect not due to artificial devices, transparency, light, or anything of that sort."

There is one point, however, that crucially distinguishes this account from that of the German traveler who had visited the *Salle de Miracle*. Daguerre's sorcery carried the viewer away to Switzerland, the land of yearning, and the effect was so perfect that a sentimental Englishwoman, for instance, believed she had reached the valley of Chamonix, the destination of her consolatory escape from the metropolis—or at least she owned to being truly enchanted. In Berlin, on the other hand, a few practiced experts and acknowledged authorities on the craft (which is described more like a black art or superior legerdemain than a fine art) climbed into the roped-off area, backstage as it were, to fathom the machinery and ferret out the secret. It was the simplicity of the devices used—the lamp being merely painted and no "artificial" additions heightening the effect—that elicited their admiration, and they were far from even surreptitously wishing really to fall prey to the illusion itself. In a word, illusionistic virtuosity became fully self-sufficient here. In all passages of his memoirs dealing with the panorama, Anton von Werner never once quotes the voice of naiveté, never once cites any evidence that visitors were really deceived and felt transported to the place of battle, or even alleged having been deceived—and this circumstance characterizes the painter's

"objective" aim and the expectation of contemporaries. Instead, Werner compiled a mass of testimonials by domestic and foreign colleagues, all of them very impressively confirming that this art of deception was done for its own sake and not . . . to deceive.

The rejection of "artificial" aids for the lighting did not go so far as to make Werner's ideal a total confinement to paints and brushes and thus a return to "pure" painting albeit in the service of illusion. ". . . The natural, sculptural foreground of grass, earth, rocks, weapons and the like, imperceptibly blending into the painted foreground, achieved a pretense of reality in a fashion unattainable for paintings in exhibits and other environments."

The elucidator of another panorama—the *Crucifixion* of Altötting, which is still shown today at that Bavarian shrine—goes even further. At a certain point in the tour, the guide urges his audience to note a stone stairway where the artist did a wonderful job of imperceptibly blending art and reality. "The first three steps," this man used to say more or less, "are reality, the others are art." Here concepts and meanings are confused. What the Altöttinger guide unthinkingly termed "reality" was what Anton von Werner more subtly or professionally distinguished as "natural, sculptural elements," thereby of course linking nature and art in one breath. In the diorama, however, stones, grass, and weapons do not form a smooth transition to the surrounding reality. Because such a surrounding reality is abolished to the ultimate possible degree, shrouded in darkness, annihilated, virtually withdrawn or cut away. The spectator's eyes have no purchase on anything familiar. They are drawn solely to the illuminated scene in front of them. The situation thus resembles a theater or a peepshow more than pictures in a studio or a museum.

Integrating pieces of nature in artworks has a long and involved history—recall certain Baroque buildings such as Munich's *Johanneskirche*, Church of St. John, by the Asam Brothers, with its façade that starts below with small hills of natural rocks; or those paintings in Weltenburg's monastic church, where, not so very differently from the panoramas, the painted crag continues into the space of the church with "real" sculptural rocks. This history alone should prevent our understanding such "naturalism" all too directly, neglecting the programs and intentions of the panorama artists because of the strange sight of their works, or taking at face value the "reality" they attempted to produce or imitate. No indeed; Werner's peepshows are so far from being a "mock-up of nature" that they actually exerted a magic of their own, inherent in neither nature nor art. Such magic persists today in the peculiar chill that sometimes overcomes us at the sight of these arrangements. The aesthetic question of whether this is really art yields no approach to such painting, for the aesthetician, after answering no with good reasons, has to get down to more serious business, and the panorama is null and void for him. Werner, to justify his life's work against later aesthetic detractors, merely cites his industry, output, technical skill and care, all of which makes him more of a virtuoso performer than an artist. Indeed, the products of his industry

and care are quite outside the history of modern art, although now and then, alien and irritating, they haunt it. What Werner practiced was nothing but a black art or alchemy. An art of mixing and combining natural and artificial elements—and its goal is not art nor even beauty and enjoyment of beauty, but a new and different, a man-made Nature. A mirage of Nature, admittedly, for everyone, the industrious creator like the admiring observer, is from the very outset aware of, and agreeable to, being deceived. Again, such deception is not meant to deceive (Werner says that painting a panorama requires utmost veracity and honesty) but to exist for its own sake, and it is content to amaze the viewer. For this black art has become modest.

Seduced by the mirage, those international authorities groped along the canvas to track down the light of the diorama lamp. In vain! No other ray illuminated the scene but the painted one, the natural/artificial ray caught in the scene.

Meanwhile, we have learned the ways of this alchemy. We know the elements assembled in this kitchen: topographical surveys and the system of perspective proportions; eyewitness accounts; "true-to-life" portraits of the individual participants, made from models or photographs and then integrated; studies of uniforms and sketches of landscapes; and finally rocks, grass, and earth. All these things were melted and mixed. Really and truly, a wealth of sedulous preparations, whose purpose was as self-evident to the people involved as its essence was obscure to them. Aside from his closest collaborator Professor Eugen Bracht, who together with the painter Schirm did the landscapes for two of the dioramas, there were, according to Werner, no less than nine young academics helping with "the details of weapons and the like" for the great battle panorama itself, while Werner personally just supervised the overall execution. Thanks to this division of labor, which subjectively illustrates the character of the alchemical compound, the grand panorama could be completed in the brief period from late January to August 18, 1883. However, the shiny new element emerging from these crucibles was . . . the captured historic moment.

This mirage of the moment was not useless, for the moment was renowned. Granted, the renown and the name, *The Battle of Sedan*, were lost in the carefully enumerated detail of a particular strategic situation, whose drama could be evoked only by explaining the before and after, since the moment per se, with its semblance made visible, cannot have anything dramatic in it. But nevertheless, this industrious wizardry did enjoy the good graces of rulers and commanders because it immortalized not so much their deeds as precisely those tiny, the tiniest of, circumstances, "the way it really had been," and also because it promoted Fatherland feelings. Werner tells about a second visit by the Kaiser to the panorama, and this clarifies the characteristic contrast between the attitude of the sublime patron, who now appeared in twofold guise, and the attitude of the audience itself, who at times seemed dissatisfied with the spareness of the mere moment: "Even though the public had been denied admission for half an hour, the platform was fairly crowded with visitors, who were rather delighted at this

unexpected opportunity of viewing not just the painted, but also the actual glory-crowned hero of the historic drama, and being so charmingly greeted by His Majesty. The Kaiser once again had a detailed conversation with me about his experiences and impressions on that memorable day. I remarked to His Majesty that, among other things, the public had not been finding enough battle turmoil and butchery in the picture, to which the Kaiser replied that it was well-nigh more than enough and true. Most of all he surveyed and followed, as at the opening of the panorama, the ride he had taken with his retinue during the afternoon of September 2, for five hours, from Donchery across the battlefield. Again he was particularly amused by the flashing of the weapons, musical instruments, cuirasses, etc., and asked in what manner these effects had been achieved." Incidentally, Bismarck also paid a visit to the panorama, having a comprehensive talk with Werner about the third diorama in particular, which depicted his meeting with Napoleon III. He felt, for instance, that his mount, "good old Rosa," was finely captured. "She was a big-boned creature, only she was a mare—her head is somewhat masculine here—she just died last year," the chancelor of the *Reich* added softly by way of correction. There were other instances of his memory not quite tallying with the picture in single minute points, each of which must have been of major importance to the artist. Napoleon's barouche, according to the chancelor, had stood on the highway, facing Sedan, so that Bismarck had ridden up from the back. On the painting, however, the vehicle was turned the other way, and Anton von Werner, to justify this, follows the account of the conversation with a rather detailed discussion of conjectured reasons for this "conspicuous circumstance": the early morning hour no doubt induced the coachman to move his horses back and forth, and Emperor Napoleon, no doubt because of his bladder trouble, left the wagon, freezing—a swarm of disparate facts quite graphically demonstrating the drudgery of reconstructing a moment.

The might of princes also protected these new alchemists, who certainly did not have to wait as long for the success of their efforts as the old adepts.

The actual exhibitors of such mirages were not the princes appearing in them nor the painters enjoying an admittedly short-lived glory, but rather the entrepreneurs of the panorama—in the case of the Sedan battle as doubtless in most others, a stock corporation. The Board of Directors, in plain mufti, attended the opening-day celebration, receiving some best wishes from the smiling Kaiser for the "material reward." This entrepreneurial manner chimed with the style of the presentation, which, modelled after the great industrial expositions, included a restaurant on the ground floor and all kinds of roaring and radiating accessories, as described in the official printed cicerone. The mezzanine sported an orchestrion, and for the evenings the guidebook promised "electric incandescent illumination" and "an electro-fountain with an arc lamp." The magic of both electricity and mechanical music thus helped considerably to intensify the enchantment of the visitor and the quality of the panorama as mirage.

Poignantly, Anton von Werner laments the destruction of the panorama

paintings, a good portion of which he counted as the most important creations of their artists. "All these works, spatially and artistically powerful, vanished after the sight-seers had seen their fill—and the stockholders had no further prospects of high dividends. I wonder if some future book on art history will mention any of them as a characteristic phenomenon of the last third of the 19th century?" I cannot say whether any rolled-up remnants of those unbridled paintings-in-the-round will ever be unearthed in a cellar somewhere. The panoramas still shown in Europe today can be counted on the fingers of one hand. We may forgive the artist's melancholy at this destruction, for he did not realize what handiwork he was serving. Nevertheless, the transience of this vanishing is quite different from the kind we usually bewail when viewing the ruins of past glory and grandeur. The mirage has the peculiar trait of vanishing the way it came.

O'er Land and Sea

Engines, especially trains and steamers, rails, and the other daring constructions that smoothed their paths—tunnels, bridges, viaducts—did not just alter the face of the landscape. In a new and novel fashion, they opened the world, the lands, and the seas. The history of these triumphs is well-known. The first railway boom in Great Britain occurred during the 1840s, whereas the expansion of the continental network followed in the decades after mid-century, reaching its highpoint in the seventies, the very era known in Germany as the *Gründerzeit*, the period of promoterism. From 1890 into the new century, the non-European countries (America kept a fair pace with Europe) were opened and occupied by and for the railroad.

The railroad elaborated the new world of experience, the countries and oceans, into a panorama. It not only connected previously remote places with one another by freeing the vanquished route of all resistance, disparity, and adventure; but, more important, since traveling became so comfortable and universal, it turned the eyes of travelers outward, offering them a rich diet of changing tableaux, the only possible experience during a trip.

Everything already within, or gradually drawing into, the realm of such traffic was soon an effortless part of the sphere and procession of tableaux; but as a result, the world, known in this way and yet unfamiliar, lost its colors, the charms of foreign places grew interchangeable, and the lands of dreams and yearings, the actual homelands, moved further and further away, to the impassable Alpine peaks, the Orient, or the Nile. The railroad made hope a fugitive.

Ever driven on in quest of the incessantly approaching distance, more and more painters and writers (plus explorers and industrial colonizers, of course) headed for a South that was no longer the home of models and rules like classical

Italy, but rather an inexhaustible and steadily increasing storehouse of colors and passions. The "South," hitherto represented only by Italy, the land of art, now widened unforeseeably and fused in every way with the Orient, whose exploitation (we can speak of both artistic and industrial exploitation) retroactively sent the taste for Italy in a new direction. Europe became gray, and exoticism radiant.

Freedom in the Desert

Delacroix had gone on ahead, guided and promoted by the colonial expansion of France. In 1830, Algiers had become French. Just two years later, the painter went to Morocco with a French delegation, and, amid endless, fiery yellow desert sands that swirled around the Arab horsemen in their fluttering white burnooses, he captured freedom itself, a hectic, gaudy freedom, in his paintings, or made it into paintings, helping willy-nilly, as the illustrator of expansion, to curtail this freedom in the political reality. Freedom here was nothing else than liberty of passion, ardor, savagery, heroism, as well as fanaticism and cruelty, jealousy and sensuality. For Delacroix and his more subdued descendants, tigers and Arab stallions were just as good subjects, bearers, vessels of such freedom as the Moroccan horsemen themselves with their long, thin, silver-studded flintlocks. And in the wealth of glistening African color, the Frenchman, strangely, found the simple outline of Antiquity, the Homeric era, the same ancient world that was kept in rigorous custody in the halls and cabinets of the Academy of Paris. The same? A friend of the port director of Algiers, who had got the painter Delacroix a long-desired admission to the arcana of a harem, reports that this man of passion, upon viewing the voluptuous inmates in their gold-brocaded silks, kept exclaiming over and over again: "It's lovely! It's like the days of Homer! The woman in the gynaeceum taking care of her children, spinning wool or embroidering marvelous cloths. That is woman as I understand her!"* What he gazed at here was not an Antiquity of white, frozen ideality, but an Antiquity of relaxed living—an Oriental Antiquity, the same one uttering itself in the tensed strength of his tigers' bodies and the hot savagery of fighting Arab horses. He spoke about them to his biographer Silvestre: "They get embroiled in one another like tigers, and nothing can pull them apart, their raucous and burning breath that tears out of their scarlet nostrils, their thin, blood-matted hair, their wild jealousies, their mortal grudges; everything about them, their bearing and characters, reeks of the heroism of primitive nature."** Heroism of primitive nature, intensity of instinct, *férocité* and *verve*; those are the categories of this Orient. On the streets, writes Delacroix in a letter from Tangiers, you can see the sublime running about alive, and it strikes you dead with all its reality—"et vous assassine de la réalité. . . ."

* "C'est beau! C'est comme au temps d'Homère! La femme dans le gynécée s'occupant de ses enfants, filant la laine ou brodant de merveileux tissus. C'est la femme comme je la comprends!"

** "Ils se prennent à belles dents comme des tigres et rien ne peut les séparer; les souffles rauques et enflammés qui sortent de leurs naseaux écarlates, leurs crins épars ou empâtes de sang, leurs jalousies féroces, leurs rancunes mortelles; tout en eux, attitude et caractère, sen Théroism de la nature primitive."

Here, African Romanticism, with political usurpation hard on its heels, far outraced the railroad, the first Algerian line not being put in service until 1862. But Delacroix remained an early forerunner, and the great procession of painters, especially Germans, to Africa and the Near East, only started after the mid-century. It was as if the railroad, the visible seal of industrial conquest, had driven along these seekers and quick capturers of the exotic subjects that rather peculiarly became the epitome of a rich life violently striven for; it was as if the railroad both caused and helped and outstripped their flight.

In 1856, the very first African railroad was opened, the Alexandria-Cairo line. That same year, the rich, beautiful, and eccentric young Dutchwoman Alexandrine Tinne took her first trip to the Near Eastern Orient and Egypt, but with the scientific rather than aesthetic goal of finding the sources of the Nile. Nevertheless, while undertaking the most perilous and yet scientifically profitable expeditions to Upper Egypt, this woman, with unparalleled persistance and determination, took the Orient seriously as the homeland of passion. She lived in Cairo surrounded by Arab servants and Black slaves in a dilapidated Egyptian house, wearing Oriental garb and fully resolved never to return to Europe. During her third expedition, she was killed by the Tuaregs accompanying her, on the edge of the Sahara, her death ratifying her metamorphosis.

In the sixties and seventies, Cairo, and Egypt in general, became the pre-eminent goal of painters voyaging from faraway Germany. One of the first was Wilhelm Gentz, a Berliner, who likewise sought out Nubia, Asia Minor, and Turkey, eventually using his experiences to supply illustrations for Egyptological novels by Ebers. Later, around 1870, came Leopold Müller, painting camels and camel markets; after 1870, when the rail network had grown considerably, Adolf Seel from Wiesbaden, who explored the harems from the inside, providing them with decorations; and finally, in winter 1875–6, Lenbach and Makart together with Müller. Makart was not so interested in the country itself; he actually appropriated the authentic prospect, in front of which Cleopatra, awaiting Marc Anthony, was to be arranged with her retinue. The painting, displayed in Munich right after his return in 1876, does show the "ancient cruise down the Nile" combined with a crocodile fight that fills out the foreground. What was hitherto a locale of liberty is now a backdrop hurriedly brought home. The courage and headiness of the first thrust had already been caught up with . . . by the railroad.

The colonizers entrenched themselves, and the freedom of passion shrunk or dried up into an ascertainable, albeit continually and willingly noted, ethnographic peculiarity; and at the same rate, the bewildering and overwhelming colors previously discovered in the African scenery, the colors that were at home in such an Africa, fully belonging to, expressive of, and inherent in, that passion—these colors passed into the craft and technical skill of each painter representing the profession of Orient painting. Splendid color and glowing light became stereotypical features of this professional art rather than of the world in which this painting eagerly and assiduously bestirred itself, ever intent on precise observation

and newsy information about manners and mores.

In 1871, the exhibition at the Academy of Berlin included a picture by the Orient painter Wilhelm Gentz, showing a storyteller at the gates of Cairo. The reviewer from the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* wrote: "A simply wonderful, one may say thrilling, painting was his *Storyteller near Cairo*. The motley listening company at the city gate, the fantastic and vividly reciting rhapsodist, the color blaze of the costumes and of the ardent evening light: everything joined together to even further transfigure the poetry of the East, despite the quite tangible manifestation. Gentz has most likely never produced anything so perfect. . . ." Color and desert light adhere densely enough to the scene, which, however, is frozen, a snapshot from a train compartment, though meticulously accoutered by a man who, for this very purpose, got out of the train and settled down here to study, and who arranged those many figures, all "interesting" at least for their costumes, in a horizontal plane, while the gaze yearning for primitive savagery and Homeric existence cannot infer any depth, and no freedom of even full color springs from the depth. Here everything seems attached and fettered to the spot, "at the city gates of Cairo." This Orient releases neither light nor color, but both are squeezed into it, and there they shall remain.

It is merely a confirmation of that, when "color blaze" and "ardent evening light" in the critic's sentences seem for an instant almost like maneuvers of the knowledgeable painter, useful "to even further transfigure the poetry of the East." This scarcely emerges with any verve from the locale itself, so that the painter has to coat a ready-made glaze of transfiguration over the "quite tangible manifestation." The "ardor" in both senses, of color and of light, thus becomes and remains long through the 19th century the abstract seal of an Orient that was brought back and made available; wherever there is ardor, the Orient is involved.

Nine years after that write-up, the same reviewer praised another picture by the same painter, and now he was fully outspoken about what had earlier been hinted at: the picture strikes him as a "thrust into the hustle and bustle of the life of Algerian people." Only those who have been totally subjugated can be made into the object of study, nay, inventory as now described: "With the keen characterization peculiar only to him among the Orient painters, Gentz has lent each of the countless figures an individual life, an interesting physiognomy. What a wealth of observations and studies . . . must have preceded this! What a spiritual energy that can penetrate the soul of the people with such understanding! Far from offering us a shiny photograph of nature, the artist, by having the sunlight pour its vast floods over the motley scenery, has introduced that fantastic and poetic element that wraps the perfectly realistic depiction of folk types in, as it were, an ideal aura."

The subjugation of the free Orient could apparently not be driven any further than here, where its most intrinsic element, light, has been volatilized into an "ideal aura", which the artist has in stock, so to speak, for coating his actually "realistic", *i.e.*, obviously gray or certainly lightless, at best just motley scene. The

Oriental or African mood has now become an attribute, fully passing into the capturing, coating, transfiguring, illuminating power and glory of the artist. In the following years, "a wealth of types" and "a lush brilliance of colors bursting with energy" were the critical judgments passed on the Orient paintings that Gentz exhibited, and finally it was settled that Gentz's pictures once and for all "radiated a replete brilliance of colors." No longer, as in the past (during his youth in Paris, Gentz copied Delacroix's *Algerian Women*), does the painting hunger and thirst for freedom; no longer, as in the past, is it full of lust; truly "replete", it now radiates a preserved heat, a coloring lent by the painter and even applied with energy.

The Boredom of Savagery

The hot and yellow "South", thus expanded, was not the only climate where savage life was sought and ultimately subdued. For instance, a Munich artist, Theodor Horschelt, who together with two colleagues had followed in Delacroix's footsteps by "choosing" (as a contemporary account accurately put it) Spain and Algiers "for his locales," later preferred the Caucasus, greedy for adventures, of which there was no shortage during the Crimean War. Horschelt remained there for five years, 1855 to 1860, and his pen-and-ink drawings, *Memory Leaves from the Caucasus*, were awarded the big gold medal at the Paris World's Fair of 1867. "Whosoever wishes to make the acquaintance of the Russians or their savage, fanatic foes," wrote Pecht (the historian of Munich painting in that century) about the Crimean War paintings, "must study these pictures, which will tell him more than any books." A few lines below, however, the same author goes on to say (and I quote him because of this judgment, printed in 1888): "Unfortunately, they [the Caucasian sketches], no more than the works of others, can disguise the monotony required for depicting such savage peoples, who possess no spiritual life or only one that inspires our repugnance. None of the Orient painters has ever managed to get past this stumbling block of rapid boredom."

Astonishingly blunt words, and all the more astonishing after the foregoing praise: the interest in foreign savagery has paled, or is at least overriden and overlaid by the national *Kultur* pride of a man who feels attached to, and subservient to, the might of the German Empire. He puts Adolf Menzel above any other painter, and not for his artistic qualities, but for his ardent patriotism; for this and no other reason, Menzel means more to him than "all those artists whose painterly concern is more important to them than anything else, and who depict Circassians today, Bedoins tomorrow, and their foes the day after, with the same peace of mind with which they would paint flocks of sheep." What is here labeled "painterly concern" was that urge previously spurred by colonial expansion and paradoxically encouraged by the railroad, that urge for another, still unoccupied, untamed world. But now that Circassians and Bedoins are no longer the bearers of a color-blazing freedom, no longer the nomadic dwellers of a dream homeland without settledness or security, all "savage peoples" are lumped together. In this

point, the painters do not differ in the slightest from industrial entrepreneurs: Siemens, in his memoirs, calls it a "bizarre coincidence" that in the same Crimean War, whose painterly results induced Pecht's remark, "the two hostile camps in Sevastopol and Balaclava employed [telegraphic] apparatuses from Berlin with successive serial numbers."

In short, the views from European windows have lost their depth, becoming part and parcel of the same panorama world surrounding them and constituting a painted surface everywhere. That was why Friedrich Pecht, who quickly threw the whole bunch of Orient painters in one pot and reproached them for boredom, needed another value, precisely Patriotism, to take a new and superior position. Nonetheless, it is as if the ardor, hunted for such a long time and found in the Sahara and elsewhere, has passed into this patriotism, so that he can term it "ardent."

Although no doubt, in metaphoric, linguistic, and emotional usage, the "ardor" is given a more lasting location, a more solid nest here than anywhere else, that passage into patriotism is not just figurative. It takes place literally and palpably wherever Orient painting, that is to say, both the painting and the Orient, enter the service of the Fatherland: in depicting scenes from German colonizing. The politics of colonization had a whole pavillion for itself, the so-called Kaiser diorama, at the Jubilee Exhibition of the Berlin Academy of the Arts, in 1886, around the same time that Pecht wrote those scornful lines about the whole Orient "profession." The diorama building, aping an Egyptian temple in form and decoration, solidly erected in plastered brick, iron, and sheet metal, concealed in its interior (two naves with a long row of columns straight down the center) a different shrine from the one in the original temple. One aisle contained five big diorama pictures, separated by crosswise hanging carpets to ensure an enclosed effect for each picture; visitors wandered through the other aisle. The first picture, *Stanley's Arrival at the Congo Cataracts* had been painstakingly prepared with detail studies by a painter whose journey to Central Africa had been generously financed by the corporation; Gentz and his son (baptized with the desert name of Ismael) had done the figures, "Stanley and his muscular, brown companions"; and a third painter had done the landscape. Nachtigal's corpse on the gunboat *Möwe*; an elephant hunt on the Congo River by François's expedition; the blood brotherhood between Dr. Peters and the sultan of Nguru, amid utterly picturesque rock formations and a luxuriant wealth of tropical vegetation. And last but not least, the naval demonstration at Zanzibar, a focus of universal applause, according to the reviewer from the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*. "The surface of the sea," he describes the painting, "which the German men-of-war are plowing, is alive with tropical solar ardor flashing in a thousand lights, and the watery vapor, the picturesque city in the background, and the imposing display of might by our Fatherland's fleet—all these things are depicted with a virtuosity that knows no hindrances, no difficulties." The entire tropical landscape is the setting; and likewise, the ardent light, covering this scene with its "ideal aura," is merely

the transfiguring attribute of patriotic power display. The poetic lights of the subjugated Orient play around the armored turrets of the war vessels.

Travel Bureaus

In the sphere of the newly won world, it wasn't just the painters who had started out early to travel and look afresh at the changing images. In November 1864, five years after the first ground was broken for the Suez Canal, Louis Stangen, together with seventeen other people, conducted the first of his popular tours to the Orient, traveling through Corfu to Alexandria and Cairo, from where they went on the often-described outing to the Pyramids of Gizeh. The sphinx had been discovered long ago, but fully excavated only in 1886. And in 1876, when Stangen, this inventive beneficiary of the railway, published his *Life Sketch*, his brother Carl led the twenty-eighth tour to the Orient. The usual Egyptian route ("there stood the cradle of spiritually developing Mankind," he wrote) had meanwhile been expanded "with a journey through Palestine, from Jerusalem to Damascus." That was the same year that the financial bankruptcy of the Khedive of Egypt and thus the end of the independent realm of the Orient became obvious: Stangen no longer sent his parties to an oasis of liberty, but to a country at the mercy of the European powers; even though this crucial change did not yet dim the view of caravans, camel markets, and pyramids, of yellow sand and blood-red sunsets.

Louis by now was specializing in Italy, *i.e.*, the old South, which, presented as new and more comfortable, maintained its position next to the more lavish Orient. A good notion of the arranging skill deployed by this panorama entrepreneur is offered in the following self-assured passage from his memoirs: "The Venetians still have not forgotten the great Stangen corso cruises down the *canale grande* in 1864, a trip that took place in gondolas and barques adorned with gaudy lanterns in a moonlit night, and that left the Hotel Bauer to the accompaniment of music and singing, and lured myriad Venetians, men and women, to the narrow banks of the canal and the Ponte di Rialto to watch those eager travelers, the *Prussiani*, amusing themselves in the Queen of the Lagoons and enjoying the far-sounding barcaroles of the Italian choral group." In this way, Stangen showed not just his Germans, but also the Venetians themselves, what a real Venice is.

In Civil Life and Travel is the title of a section in that life sketch of the former railroad official, implying that he himself did not reckon "travel" as part of civil life. Actually, travel in one form or another was not always such a generous and expensive affair as for Stangen's clients, but, usually leading out and into a prepared foreign world, it was simply a not-to-be-foregone pendant to, and accessory of, bourgeois life in this epoch. In Germany, Louis Stangen was the missionary of this perfectly circular road to salvation, this trodden path of untroddenness.

The perfection of the rail network over the earth robbed travel, at least in its methods, of the sting of adventure. Werner von Siemens, a man who had played an outstanding part in linking countries and forming the world panorama, who not

only drew his wires over the mainland but also laid cables through seas, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, thus tying continents to one another—this man, looking backward at the age of seventy-four, bade farewell (what an odd paradox) to travel, which he had so greatly promoted. During the sixties, he had twice visited the Caucasus, where he owned a copper mine in Kedabeg, and, in his memoirs, he writes: "With these two Caucasian journeys, I regard my actual travel days as terminated, for today's European travels in comfortable train compartments or stagecoaches can only be called pleasure rides. And the third voyage to Kedabeg, for which I gird myself in order to take leave of the Caucasus for the rest of my life, will scarcely be anything else." That was written in the year 1890. Transportation had put an end to traveling.

The brief outline of travel, with a few dates serving as markers, is meant to explain that and how the world of lands and seas opened and closed at the same time. This very phenomenon is identified by the name panorama. The case of the Orient, the "greater South", was not just a random example, but of huge historic importance, since the Orient, both outside and inside (of homes and people), held a major rank in the 19th century.

The Tableau of Passion

That passion, for which the Orient when it was first opened had been the embodiment, also began (while the locale turned into a panorama surface) to withdraw from this image or at least to oscillate peculiarly between the image and its viewers. The contemplation of the ardent-hued painting was bound up with their own desires; and as Oriental "luxuriance" was brought into European rooms and studios, as the objective color and the veritable desert light were left to the painter's transfiguring technique as a coloring and an ideal aura, the intrinsic savage wealth of life vanished from the African or Egyptian-Nubian setting, and there remained scenes or figures, which were really alluring objects of desire rather than powerful manifestations of a free and savage realm of nature. Far from amassing passion in themselves as its original home and then radiating that passion out again, the scenes of the Oriental panorama become the goal and food of a roaming lust that hoped to find indemnity for what was denied by a bleak Europe with its system of inhibitions. All those myriad Egyptian slave girls, Turkish songstresses, dark and frivolous Venetians, dreamy and passive Spaniards, defiant Gypsies, painted and exhibited in Munich, Düsseldorf, Berlin, and everywhere else, whether as props for a Southern countryside and architecture, or as fateful coquettes or seductive sufferers in genre dramas—these females were just so many dream-objects of a "free" love, that procured itself both a field of action and an alibi in the so willingly and so frequently emphasized ideality of art. Erotic and exotic became quasi-synonyms.

Gypsydom, too, the *Bohême*, is in part a special case of such an Orient—a case that we moderns so well remember personally. With a certain characteristic infatuation, people peered over at that unsettled, roving, and generally insecure

life, every last detail of which seemed opposed to a bourgeoisie that, in property and security, was locked up against all chance: the Gypsy world was a nomadic paradise, in which one could sense paradisal feelings, intact, untainted by any commercial corruption. At the already mentioned Berlin Jubilee Exhibition of 1886, a painting of *Captured Gypsies* (a small procession of noble, defiant men, ardent-eyed women, and weeping children, spitefully eyed by grumpy burghers) was commented on by Ludwig Pietsch in the great catalog: "Things that are an abomination to the authorities watching over public order and security in our modern, well-policed European states tend to offer the artist subjects of keenest interest and a treasure trove of the best motifs. If artists had their way, the wandering Gypsy bands would have to come much more frequently and in much greater numbers into our bleak, sober, formless, colorless, unpicturesque modern existence, and they would have to be cordially invited, rather than intimidated, persecuted, tormented, hindered in their living habits and even jailed and penalized." This is doubtless a quite average and popular (incidentally rather late) utterance, characteristic of the most noncommittal variety of cultural criticism, which the bourgeois, capitalist society can only file under "bleakness and sobriety," and whose alluring counter-picture is hardly a picture any more, but merely the general picture-hungry and motif-craving notion of the "picturesque" as itself a totally reified lump sum of color sensations.

That, of course, is how this very casual and not very earnest critical remark on behalf of artists scarcely differs from later comments made with more pomp and circumstance. Playing a mythical, spiritual picture-world against a modern existence, that is ruled by murderous abstraction and at the mercy of mechanical technology, has never managed until today to really invoke mythical motifs again—just as that hunt for the "picturesque" could never wangle any more from its motifs than a basically powerless decoration of the bleak Europe on which it was meant to bear. Any sharpness of opposition, moreover, is blunted in those lines by Ludwig Pietsch, the interpreter of artists. He gazes amicably at his protégés, gladly allowing them the harmless freedom of feuding with police opinion.

Here, as I have already said, only a very summary concept of the picturesque catches the joy in a vagabond Orient, a pleasure long since pertaining as well to the existence of the motif addicts themselves, the painters of the picturesque, the world of artists and studios, the earlier relationship having been essentially more intense, and more dangerous too. Sensuality, sucking hard on the picture of the Gypsy girl (and Oriental woman in general), emerges perhaps most solidly in Spielhagen's *Problematical Natures.* Here, the "brown countess" roams through the Brandenberg forests and domains with her boy Cziko, who, as an illusionistic child of nature, knows how to imitate the voices of birds, and who is actually a girl in disguise, the natural issue of the Gypsy and the odd landowner Count Oldenburg, who scorns society. The hero of the novel, a private tutor, has dozed off in a forest meadow, his street clothes dusty, his hat hanging from a branch, the

entire scene forming a somewhat frugal tourist idyll. And when he awakes after a brief nap, he finds himself in a completely transformed scenery, an Orient of nature: with red cloths and garments, the brown countess has set up her camp on the outskirts of the woods, and from afar we can make out the birdcalls of Cziko, the unseen boy-girl. Here, the picturesque is in full flower, and the colors conceal the mysteries of sensuality. The Oriental girl has stepped out of a painting, and the viewer of the panorama, in this case Count Oldenburg, has sired a child with her, under the patronage of all the ardor of the Orient painters. That was how the novel managed to get these merely painted figures into motion, to make the otherwise aesthetic voluptuousness *pro*creative.

Genre

The instant in which the Oriental woman presented herself here was quite literally fruitful. At bottom, however, all the women smiling from countless paintings with gestures frozen in the act, all such "instants" seem to be awaiting some kind of fulfillment. The target of this expectancy is not in the picture—it is the viewer. The painting and fiction of the later nineteenth century, whether claiming to be as "realistic" or "idealistic", or "purely poetic", whether operating with models or products of the imagination, had no more universal or more characteristic peculiarity than this very need for an arranged, expectant scene—in short, genre. Everything is filled with it—not just the exhibits, periodicals, novels, and verse, but also the most ordinary, workaday bourgeois life. The power exerted by genre on the thoughts and feelings of this age can scarcely be overestimated: that is to say, genre not in the sense of a special branch of art or learning, but as a form of viewing, a form of human conditions, of life itself.

The arrested moment was, after all, the subject and object of the Sedan panorama—here it was a historic instant, the afternoon of September 1, 1870 between one-thirty and two o'clock. Everyone coming to view the panorama could, and had to be expected to visualize the situation and supplement or complement it backwards or forwards in time. Actually, there was nothing to see, of course, but a field and a village, fighting soldiers, powder smoke, and glittering musical instruments. The view of the frozen moment was composed of all those things, but as a whole it was itself merely a slice of time and of the historic process, and the artistry had consisted in picking out the piecework in such a way that the viewer would be able to eke it out in any direction. For the panorama could not get along without that.

Apart from such a reconstructed historic moment, the instants in need of completion, the genre pictures, are mostly quite different. They are instantaneous pictures of beauty, childlike innocence, scenes of vice, lushness and lust, cold cruelty, poignant compassion, and pure goodness. Hence, "living pictures",

tableaux vivants, not allegories, but human models playing allegories. Or else allegories admitted into, locked up inside, human figures and scenes. Earlier, say, Baroque personifications of Beauty, Vice, and Virtue had an inherent permanence that cut straight across all time, remaining independent of human change and occurrence, and it was only such permanence that made the figures at all allegorical. This permanence is lost in the "living pictures"; it could not be retrieved by these wandering, seemingly live phantoms. They strove all the harder towards the instant, the ephemeral, transitory instant, to replace their lost rigorous validity with the most vivid appeal to the spectator. Halted in mid-motion, these figures and scenes absolutely beg the viewer to add to them.

Nor is any delight without interest here. Quite the opposite. In the genre, the interest of the viewer, of the reader, of the thinking, touched, indignant, lustful third party is everywhere at work. Just as the frozen scene, the living picture, requires supplementing, so too this interested spectator is eager to supplement, and keen on activating his feeling in order to fill the gaps with the challenged lusts or tears and close the breaches in the patchwork of the picture.

All that is human has disintegrated into such scenes. The world of human relationships in the late bourgeois 19th century is like a hubbub of genre scenes. Goodness and nastiness, beauty and inner suffering, innocence and cruelty can be found galore just about anywhere, wept for, sighed over, and cursed at. No one was capable of thinking, say, "mother love", without envisioning the mother about to shield her baby from some brutal attack or being torn away by hard fists from her child's cradle and sending back a last, doleful glimpse. Ideas and experience knuckle under to such a mania, slip into the element of genre. It is also the form in which "human values" are negotiated, in which good and evil lead their confused imitation of life. The outstretched little arms of that infant and the doleful gaze of the mother do not aspire to one another so much as to the ever-present onlooker. His commiseration, which needs the imagined cruelty in order to start functioning, and his interest are what must heal these wounds. Also and above all, the wound of time, gaping here as a frozen instant.

Einstein on the Beach: The Primacy of Metaphor

CRAIG OWENS

> If, as is frequently and strikingly attested everywhere today, boldness in theater proclaims, rightly or wrongly, its fidelity to Artaud, the question of the theater of cruelty, of its present nonexistence and ineluctable necessity, has the force of an *historical* question. Historical not in its possible inscription within what we know as the history of theater, not because it would mark a stage in the development of theatrical forms or because of its place in the succession of models of theatrical representation. The question is historical in a sense that is both radical and absolute. It declares the limit of representation.
>
> Jacques Derrida, "The Limit of Representation,"
> from *L'écriture et la différence.*

Across those differences which segregate the dominant attitudes towards performance in our century into either expressionistic or analytic modes,[1] there appears a single commitment which may be associated with neither: a challenge to the structure of representation which has been identical with that of theater ever since Aristotle characterized dramatic poetry as mimetic. This identification of tragedy with the imitation, rather than the immediate presentation, of action posits a fundamental dualism at the heart of the theater. Performance and text, representer and represented, are (it seems irrevocably) split. Theatrical representation establishes itself in that rift which it alone creates between the tangible physical *presence* of the performer and that *absence* which is necessarily implicated in any concept of imitation or signification. The imitated action (the theatrical signified) is situated outside of the closed circuit established by the copresence of performer and spectator. Thus what is represented is always an "elsewhere." As a result, while the performer is in fact both a presence and a

1. "There are, in the contemporary renewal of performance modes, two basic and diverging impulses which shape and animate its major innovations. The first, grounded in the idealist extensions of a Christian past, is mythopoeic in its aspirations, eclectic in its forms, and constantly traversed by the dominant and polymorphic style which constitutes the most tenacious vestige of that past: expressionism. . . . The second, consistently secular in its commitment to objectification, proceeds from Cubism and Constructivism; its modes are analytic. . . ." Annette Michelson, "Yvonne Rainer, Part One: The Dancer and the Dance," *Artforum*, XII (January 1974), 57.

signifier (for an absence), we always regard him as the latter, as a representative for something else—the actor as perpetual stand-in.

The major innovations in performance of the last fifty years have been addressed to this rift, either to exaggerate it (Brecht) or to annihilate it (Artaud). Both strategies shift from *re*presentation to *present*ation. Since the presence of the performer is anterior to, and a necessary condition for, any theatrical representation, the impulse which animates that shift might be characterized as modernist, a reduction to that which is unique and absolutely fundamental to the theatrical situation. Modernist performance abandons representation by establishing identity between representer and represented. The performer no longer stands for anything other than himself. (The resurgence of interest in dance at the beginning of this century was a manifestation of the same impulse. According to Yeats' formula, dance has always eluded any such dualism.)

Since the structure of representation is identical with that of verbal language—a system of signs which always substitute for nonpresence—the ambition to overturn an entrenched theatrical representationalism has frequently manifested itself in programs which would radically alter, if not eliminate, the use of speech on stage. The nonverbal spectacle is its offspring. Yet the overthrow of representation cannot be restricted to nonverbal modes, since an identical impulse has also animated the poetic theater of our century. Thus, modes traditionally conceived as antithetical become complementary. In Artaud's polemical writings on theater, it is the conjunction of the nonverbal and the poetic that constitutes the very possibility for the revivification of theater.

While Artaud's modernism is apparent in his move to disestablish the author—"the theater, an independent and autonomous art, must, in order to revive or simply to live, realize what differentiates it from text, pure speech, literature, and all other fixed and written means"[2]—it does not follow that he meant to eliminate speech from the stage altogether. If the theater was to be reconstituted outside of verbal language, the author to be replaced by the director and the stage to become the locus of research into alternative languages of gesture and scenography which would "always express [thought] more adequately than the precise localized meanings of words,"[3] it was simply that the *authority* of the spoken word was to be undermined. Artaud advocated the overthrow of all hierarchical rankings of theatrical languages, which had assigned speech a position of preeminence, and reduced the *mise en scène* to a subsidiary role. The theater of cruelty was to be characterized by a plurality of equipollent voices: spoken, musical, gestural, scenographic. If in the spectacles he envisioned "the spoken and written portions will be spoken and written in a new sense,"[4] still, the sensuous, physical side of language—everything which characterizes its poetic use—was to be retained:

2. Antonin Artaud, "Letters on Language," *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. M.C. Richards, New York, Grove, 1958, p. 106.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

> But let there be the least return to the active, plastic, respiratory sources of language, let words be joined again to the physical motions that gave them birth, and let the discursive, logical aspect of speech disappear beneath its affective, physical side, i.e., let words be heard in their sonority rather than be exclusively taken for what they mean grammatically, let them be perceived as movements, and let these movements themselves turn into other simple, direct movements as occurs in all the circumstances of life but not sufficiently with actors on the stage, and behold! the language of literature is reconstituted, revivified, and furthermore—as in the canvasses of certain painters of the past—objects themselves begin to speak.[5]

Artaud's ambition was thus more than the revivification of theater; it was nothing less than the complete reanimation of poetic language. Or rather, one necessarily implicated the other.[6] This poetic aspect of his enterprise extended to his instructions for the manipulation of scenic elements:

> The language of the theater aims then at encompassing and utilizing extension, that is to say space, and by utilizing it, to make it speak: I deal with objects—the data of extension—like images, like words, bringing them together and making them respond to each other according to laws of symbolism and living analogies: external laws, those of all poetry and all viable language, and, among other things, of Chinese ideograms and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.[7]

That Artaud's prescriptions for the stage should constitute an *ars poetica* suggests a historical filiation with a number of modern poets who also identified the stage as an appropriate locus for research into intensifying the purely physical, *i.e.* sonorous, movements of language. Mallarmé wrote *Igitur* for the stage. Eliot identified the poetic moments of tragedy as those at which the language reflects back into itself, becomes aware of itself as a theatrical presence. Further, in a passage reminiscent of Artaud's proposal that words be perceived as movements, he suggested that if verse drama were to be given new life, it might look to nonverbal modes of performance such as the Mass and the ballet for paradigms. Both poet and *metteur en scène* would transform language into an entirely material event. And Valéry, describing his own work for the stage as a concatenation of music and architecture, called the resultant genre "melodrama": "I found no other term to describe this work, which is certainly neither an opera, nor a ballet, nor an oratorio." Like Eliot, he drew a parallel with religious liturgy: "To my mind, it must and does bear some resemblance to a ceremony of a religious

5. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
6. Susan Sontag has stressed the importance of this strategy for Artaud: "The function that Artaud gives the theater is to heal the split between language and flesh. . . . Artaud's writings on the theater may be read as a psychological manual on the reunification of mind and body." *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1976, pp. xxxv–vi.
7. Artaud, pp. 110–1.

nature." Yet he reiterated its poetic nature: "The action, limited and slight as it is, must be further subordinated to the meaning and poetic substance of each of its moments."[8]

Like Valéry's "melodrama" (which it resembled in several respects), Robert Wilson's recent spectacle *Einstein on the Beach* (in collaboration with composer Philip Glass) resists assimilation to any of the conventional genres of performance. Although *Einstein* was identified as an "opera", and while its score might be anatomized accordingly into arias, duets, choral passages, and ballets, the production lacked the correlation between music and dramatic action that defines that genre. Glass occasionally incorporated concrete aural references to the visual subject of a scene into his score, but his insistence on structure and logical progression only emphasized the independence of music from action. One was reminded of that disjunctiveness between sound and image which Cunningham brought to the dance. Action exhibited a similar autonomy: *Einstein* progressed as a sequence of highly allusive visual images that appeared to succeed one another according to an internal logic of association. They centered on the figure of Einstein. Habits of his dress and personality; mathematical and scientific models and instruments; the products of technological progress, such as trains, spaceships, and atomic explosions, coalesced to form a complex portrait by association. From scene to scene, the spectator's sense of both scale and duration was altered, perhaps in demonstration of the central hypothesis of Einstein's thinking (that dimension and velocity are interdependent). Because of the frequent arbitrariness of the selection of the images, no detail being too insignificant for inclusion, as well as the freedom with which associations were made—organization was neither chronological nor thematic—Wilson's work has been compared with dreams. If the space evoked in *Einstein* was dream-like, one important difference must be noted. Wilson's images, unlike those of dreams, are not open to interpretation. Dream-images are the *mediated* representations of dream-thoughts; hence, their interpretability. Wilson's images are, on the contrary, immediate, presentational, resistant to analysis. This is supported by the subsidiary function assigned to speech and spoken texts in all of his works. For language is, above all, the medium of interpretation.

With *Einstein*, Wilson carries ambivalence towards language one step further. Even the published "text" for the production is nonverbal, a series of 113 charcoal sketches made by Wilson himself and reproduced in a book which assembles musical scores, spoken texts, and choreographic diagrams. Arranged as a sequence of cinematic stills, these atmospheric drawings chart *Einstein*'s division into four acts, nine scenes and five *intermezzi* (hinges or "knee-plays") and describe three basic scenic motifs: a train, a courtroom, and a field of dancers over which a spaceship passes. This pictographic text proceeds from and extends

8. Paul Valéry, "History of *Amphion*," trans. Haskell Block, *Collected Works*, New York, Pantheon, 1960, vol. 3, p. 220.

Wilson's ambition to mount a spectacle which cannot be contained within verbal language:

> Wilson shuns recipes and this is why to write about him, who is always so loath to express judgement [sic] or opinions, is to risk incapsulating him in one of those airtight wrappers of culture towards which the whole of his work is directed, if not as an accusation at least as an alternative. To translate into words its expressive complexity means, in a way, to prevaricate on both the author's and the public's emotive participation. To single out a particular linear development or a new definition of theatre in his work is to misrepresent its underlying premise, *the attempt to reconstruct on the stage everything which life systematically shatters.* [italics added][9]

Wilson's theater does not intend to provoke articulate response; rather, it argues the poverty of those systems through which such a response might be formed—primarily language, but also all processes of logical thought according to which we parse, analyze, literally come to terms with experience. The ambition to stage a semblance of the unanalyzed, amorphous continuum of sensory data which is subsequently segmented by the formative action of language ("everything which life systematically shatters") involves an implicit argument that the activity of language upon that continuum is a violation of its integrity. Language inevitably produces an endless string of synecdoches which, in spite of their intention to signify, will never reproduce the original unity which is prior to all analysis, all logical thought.

This argument about the synecdochic character of language is hardly new, yet it seems to have exhausted little of its authority. While it has both psychological and philosophical ramifications—Merleau-Ponty, for example, has written that speech "tears out or tears apart meanings in the undivided whole of the nameable"—it also underpinned the revolution in linguistics which dates from the beginning of this century. Saussure's now-famous discussion in his *Cours* of the arbitrariness of the sign was rooted in the distinction between "form" and "substance"; the latter was considered a nebulous continuum anterior to language:

> Without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language. . . . Phonic substance is neither more fixed nor more rigid than thought; it is not a mold into which thought must of necessity fit but a plastic substance divided in turn into distinct parts to furnish the signifiers needed by thought. The linguistic fact can therefore be

9. Vicky Alliata, *Einstein on the Beach*, New York, E.O.S. Enterprises, 1976. This attitude, so clearly hostile to the enterprise of criticism, has infected those who have written about the production: nearly all of the published accounts of *Einstein* to date have been content with simple description. For such description, which is not attempted here, see in particular, Barbara Baracks in *Artforum*, XV (March 1977), 30-6; and Susan Flakes in *The Drama Review*, 20 (December 1976), 69-82.

> pictured in its totality—i.e. language—as a series of contiguous subdivisions marked off on both the indefinite plane of jumbled ideas . . . and the equally vague plane of sounds. . . . Language works out its unity while taking shape between two shapeless masses. . . . *Their combination produces a form not a substance.*[10]

While Saussure's intention was simply to restrict linguistics to the analysis of form, and despite his recognition of the fundamental unintelligibility of the prelinguistic, the effect of his formulation is nonetheless to uphold a traditional distinction between what is thought and what is expressed in language.

Saussure's notion of substance as a shapeless mass was interpreted by the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev as purport: an unformed mass of physical or psychical data which, while common to all languages, is nevertheless schematized differently by each.

> It is like one and the same handful of sand that is formed in quite different patterns, or like the cloud in the heavens that changes shape in Hamlet's view from minute to minute. Just as the same sand can be put into different molds, and the same cloud take on ever new shapes, so also the same purport is formed or structured differently in different languages.[11]

Hjelmslev cites as an example of purport the color spectrum, a mass of objective, physically measurable data which is segmented differently by different languages:

> Behind the paradigms that are furnished in the various languages by the designations of color, we can, by subtracting the differences, disclose such an amorphous continuum, the color spectrum, on which each language arbitrarily sets its boundaries. While formations in this zone of purport are for the most part approximately the same in the most widespread European languages, we need not go far to find formations that are incongruent with them.[12]

If thought is conceived as a shapeless mass, just as on the (pre-) phonological level sounds form an indistinct continuum, then both the plane of content (the signified) and that of expression (the signifier) will require, according to Hjelmslev, description in terms of both form and substance. While the analysis of form belongs in both instances to linguistics, that of substance lies outside its domain: "The description of purport . . . may in all essentials be thought of as belonging partly to the sphere of *physics* and partly to that of (social) *anthropology*. . . . Consequently, for both planes both a physical and a phenomenological descrip-

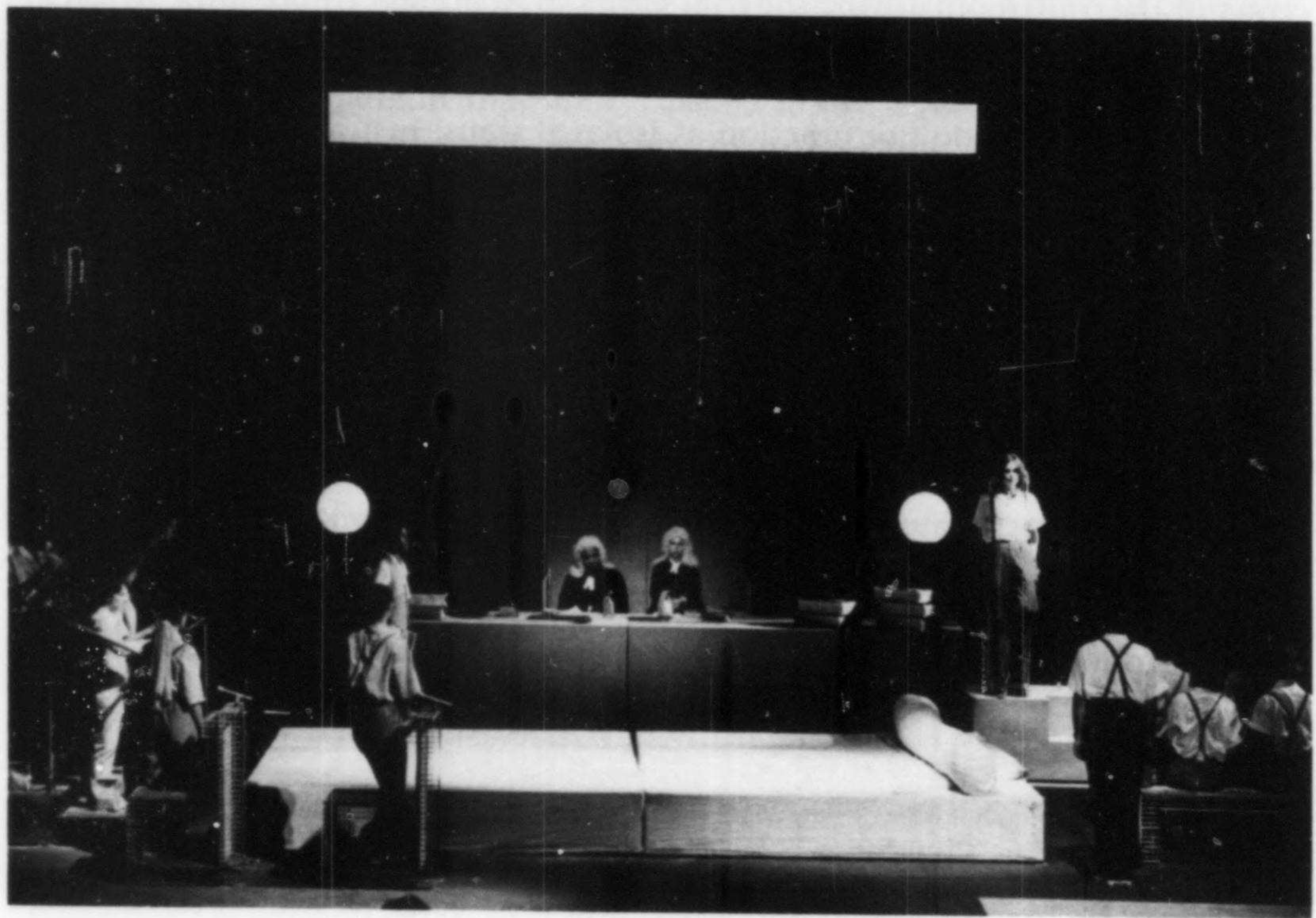
10. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, New York, McGraw Hill, 1966, pp. 112–3.
11. Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, trans. F.J. Whitfield, Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1963, p. 52.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

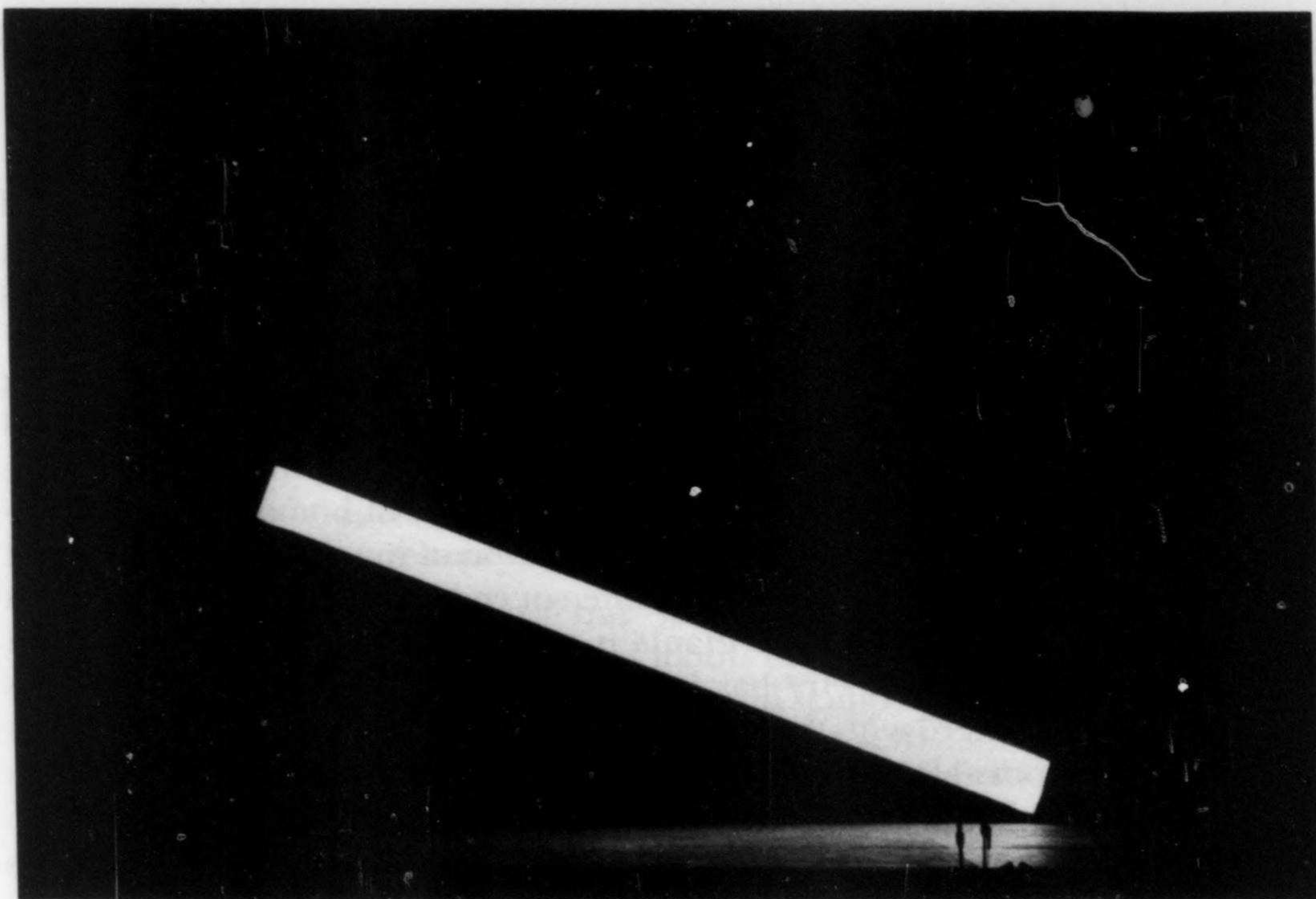
tion of the purport should be required."[13]

Wilson undertakes such a description in *Einstein on the Beach.* A phenomenological description of purport would presumably aim to recover that unity which underlies the constantly changing appearances of things (including linguistic objects) as they surface in experience. In Husserl, that unity is understood to be a function of (synthetic) consciousness, of a transcendental subject. *Einstein* implies both that aim and that understanding. Each of three motifs (train, trial, and field) is broken up into a set of images which, since homologous, may be reintegrated. The locus of this process of reintegration is the consciousness of the individual spectator. Structure is thus inborn, that is, emerges while the work is performed as the spectator spontaneously apprehends the relations obtaining among images. Thus, coherence is not a result of any logical sequence of images (the series train-trial-field repeated three times) as program notes suggest, but resides in intuitively grasped similarities among images derived from a common motif. This is clearly demonstrated in Wilson's text. The train, as it appears in Act II, its observation deck receding into the night, reappears as a building in Act IV. This relationship, rather than the individual images in isolation, is the subject of these two scenes and makes them a unit. Similarly, the sharply delineated triangle of light projected by the locomotive's headlight in the opening scene is congruent with that which streams from an elevator shaft in the final scene—a visual linking of end with beginning. And the fluorescent bed in the center of the courtroom during the trial scenes in Acts I and III becomes, in Act IV, a column of light which slowly ascends into the flies and which, in turn, is reminiscent of the strip of light which painted itself down the backdrop in the first scene. These images do not function as isolated signs; instead their conjunction reveals patterns of interrelationship which make *Einstein* a complex, resonant experiential unit, or gestalt.

To the extent that Wilson generates a unified field through visual means, his theater is nonverbal. Nevertheless, the techniques according to which his imagery is manipulated can only be described as poetic. Here poetic does not mean evocative or allusive, but indicates a particular process of establishing relationships between images. Wilson's manipulation of images is primarily analogical, that is, metaphoric. Metaphor, based exclusively on purely material or sensuous features, has been isolated by the linguist Roman Jakobson as the fundamental structure of all poetic texts. If the two poles of language are selection and combination, the first based on equivalence (metaphor), the second upon contiguity (metonomy),[14] Jakobson characterizes poetry as the transference of equivalence from the pole of selection to that of combination.[15] In poetic language,

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–8.
14. On this twofold character of language, see Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," *Fundamentals of Language*, The Hague, Mouton, 1971, pp. 90–6.
15. Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," *Style in Language*, ed. T.A. Sebeok, Cambridge, M.I.T., 1960, pp. 358 ff.





Robert Wilson. Einstein on the Beach, *1976. Act I, scene 1; Act I, scene 2; Act IV, scene 2. (Photos: Babette Mangolte.)*

words are combined into rhythmic, alliterative, or rhymic sequences because of their equivalence as pure sound. In this way, new semantic relationships are established—or lost ones restored—on the basis of purely physical parallelisms.

It follows from Jakobson's characterization of metaphor that the poetic image must of necessity transcend the constraints of the signifying chain (what one might call the metonymic force) in its movement toward meaning. Metaphors are never context-sensitive. They do not reach out to other, contiguous elements of the chain that might determine their meanings. Two images standing in a metaphoric relationship are unaffected by those pressures from without which would have us perceive them as somehow absolutely different because of their different positions in a linear, *i.e.* horizontal, sequence. Rather, the proper direction of the metaphor is vertical, each metaphor appropriately located in a set of equivalent images. The principle of equivalence or congruence that characterizes that set and confers significance on each of its members becomes a kind of transcendent center toward which each metaphor gravitates.

If *Einstein on the Beach* describes a linear time span (roughly the lifetime of Albert Einstein), it nevertheless remains a resolutely nonlinear work. Events do not preceed or follow one another according to any (temporal) logic. As a result of their metaphorical aspect, Wilson's images resist falling into any meaningful linear sequence. The imposition of a logical scheme (train-trial-field-train-trial-field, etc.) only emphasizes the arbitrariness of *Einstein*'s temporal structure. The circularity activated by that formula effectively checks any linear development. In an analogous way, a recursive treatment of spoken texts works to neutralize the

ordinary directionality of spoken language. A single text is repeated again and again, its final word being nothing more than a cue to the speaker to begin again, until that linear time in which all narrative and all spoken discourse operate is effectively suspended.

Since metaphor works to suspend the temporalizing effects of the signifying chain (its syntactic or syntagmatic dimension), it has frequently been associated with a corresponding motive. Metaphor reveals an atemporal principle of similarity (be it a result of divergence or convergence, that is, of homology or isomorphism) that constitutes the possibility of any relation of images whatsoever. That principle has, in varying contexts and to different ends, been identified as a law, a form, an essence; yet whether one grants it regulatory or ontological status, it remains that with which poetry has been principally concerned. The poet has been continually charged with the responsibility of uncovering that which renders all relationship possible. It is thus, through its metaphoric base and not its thematic content, that poetry participates in the investigations of metaphysics.

Yet this motive is operative only within a particular attitude towards language, the primary characteristics of which have been identified and analyzed by Jacques Derrida:

> *To concern oneself with metaphor—a particular figure—is . . . to presuppose a symbolist position.* It is above all to concern oneself with the nonsyntactic, nonsystematic pole, with semantic "depth," with the magnetizing effect of similarity rather than with positional combination, call it "metonymous," in the sense defined by Jakobson, who rightly underlines the affinity between symbolism (not only as a linguistic notion, but also, we should claim, as a literary school), Romanticism (with a more historical—that is, historicist—orientation, and more directed towards interpretation), and the prevalence of metaphor. [italics added][16]

Certainly the arguments that everyday language is essentially synecdochic and therefore in need of rehabilitation, and that it is the function of poetic metaphor to restore language to its supposedly primary nature, may be traced to a specific body of theory articulated at the end of the 19th Century: the poetic of the French Symbolists, particularly as enunciated in the critical and theoretical writings of Stéphane Mallarmé. According to Mallarmé, the revolution in poetry, which he dated to Verlaine, was involved in a return to "certain primitive resources in language."[17] Fascinated with speculations concerning the primal symbolization processes of mankind, he sketched a theory of the suggestiveness of words rooted in "a belief that a primitive language, half-forgotten, half-living, exists in each man. It is a language possessing extraordinary affinities with music and

16. Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology," trans. F.C.T. Moore, *New Literary History*, VI (Autumn 1974), 13.
17. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Selected Prose*, trans. Bradford Cook, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1956, p. 35.

dreams."[18] This primitive language was conceived as a pictographic idiom of hieroglyphs which was the predecessor of the more abstract medium, verbal language, with which philosophic and scientific systems have been erected and which corresponded to a particular state of the world which preceded the deployment of time.[19]

For Mallarmé, the poet's task was to recover that data of pre-history. Poetry sprang from an impulse to restore to objects their original resonance or complication which logic and language had stripped from them. And metaphor (rhythm, rhyme, etc.) made that restoration possible:

> The poetic act consists of our sudden realization that an idea is naturally fractionized into several motifs of equal value which must be assembled. They *rhyme*; and their outward stamp of authenticity is that *common meter* which the final stress establishes.[20]

This conception of language remains tacitly operative in the texts of phenomenology and gestalt psychology (in which the task of reassembly and reintegration remains primary). It also persists in at least one other contemporary discipline—the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Whereas phenomenology would dispense with the identification of that data with prehistory (each of us has access to it in the raw material of perception), Lévi-Strauss emphasizes its link with the primitive. His descriptions of *la pensée sauvage* center upon metaphor, which is isolated as the primary vehicle of myth:

> The effectiveness of symbols would consist precisely in this "inductive property," by which formally homologous structures, built out of different materials at different levels of life—organic processes, unconscious mind, rational thought—are related to one another. Poetic metaphor provides a familiar example of this inductive process.[21]
>
> Thanks to the myths, we discover that metaphors are based on an intuitive sense of the logical relations between one realm and other realms; metaphor reintegrates the first realm with the totality of the others, in spite of the fact that reflective thought struggles to separate

18. Wallace Fowlie, *Mallarmé*, Chicago, Phoenix, 1962, p. 264.
19. The neo-Platonic base of this theory of language has been discussed by Gilles Deleuze in his writing on Proust, which embeds the novelist within a decidedly Symbolist tradition: "Certain neo-Platonists used a profound word to designate the original state which precedes any development, any deployment, any 'explication': *complication*, which envelops the many in the One and affirms the unity of the multiple. Eternity did not seem to them the absence of change, nor even the extension of a limitless existence, but the complicated state of time itself (*uno ictu mutationes tuas complectitur*). The Word, *omnia complicans*, and containing all essences, was defined as the supreme complication, the complication of contraries, the unstable opposition. From this they derived the notion of an essentially expressive universe, organized according to degrees of immanent complications and following an order of descending explications." Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard, New York, Braziller, 1972, pp. 44–5.
20. Mallarmé, p. 39.
21. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Jacobson Schoepf, New York, Basic Books, 1963, pp. 201–2.

> them. Metaphor, far from being a decoration that is added to language, purifies it and restores it to its original nature, through momentarily obliterating one of the innumerable synecdoches that make up speech.[22]

If, as Lévi-Strauss claims, the poetic and the mythic are essentially analogous functions, then they themselves stand in a metaphoric relation and must be conceived as a single function. If the techniques according to which myth reproduces an original, pre-discursive unity or totality are primarily poetic—*i.e.* intuitive rather than logical and rooted in metaphor—then it follows reciprocally that the "purpose" of poetry will be to create myths. Here, Lévi-Strauss rearticulates the operation prescribed in all of the great texts of literary Symbolism: those of Mallarmé, Valéry, and Eliot, and certainly of Artaud.[23] And the word which best describes that operation, *mythopoesis,* becomes profoundly tautological.

Einstein on the Beach, an essentially metaphoric structure, cannot be isolated from this poetic motive. Because Wilson participates in this mythopoeic impulse, his attitude towards language may be ascribed to a particular linguistic and poetic position and his formal strategies assimilated to a specific performance tradition, itself identified by its argument about language. Elsewhere, he has been quoted to the effect that Einstein was chosen as central figure because he exhibited characteristics of both thinker (physicist, mathemetician, representative of the analytic) and dreamer (musician, visionary, representative of the idealistic).[24] Accordingly, Wilson's desire was to synthesize those divergent modes of performance (analytic, expressionistic) noted at the beginning of this essay. Hence, his collaboration with composer Philip Glass and choreographer Lucinda Childs, both of whom have previously worked in an analytic mode. Still, this synthetic ambition is profoundly mythopoeic, an inductive reintegration of previously distinct orders; and Wilson's desire to transcend the polarity of contemporary performance modes remained wholly contained within one of its terms. As a result, the profoundly intuitive character of the frame provided for the work of Glass and Childs qualified and at times subverted the objective nature of their styles. (At the same time, the strength of Wilson's images seemed diluted by the presence of antithetical material.) Had *Einstein* achieved encyclopaedic status the claims that have been made for it would be justified. As it is, Wilson's work, which has so frequently been hailed as totally innovative and without precedent, remains enmeshed in a particular tradition, the coordinates of which have already been mapped.

22. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked,* trans. J. and D. Weightman, New York, Harper & Row, 1969, p. 339.
23. "The true purpose of the theater is to create myths." Artaud, p. 116.
24. "According to Wilson . . . what triggered the fusion was the subject itself, Albert Einstein, a mathematician, but at the same time a dreamer. . . . It is the contradiction, the interplay, and the harmony of dreams and mathematics that form the central tension of this work." Flakes, p. 70.

AMY TAUBIN

Ten photographic pieces by Michael Snow were shown at the Museum of Modern Art in the winter-spring of 1976. It is disturbing that this complex and moving work by a major artist, produced during roughly the same period, 1967–76, as his historically significant work in film, received almost no critical attention in New York. Like the films, this work is intelligent, speculative, and seductively elegant. These pieces share certain concerns with the films: an intensive exploration of particular functions of the photographic process; the relativity and instability of the photographic image grounded in the mechanics of the camera and in conditions of light; the reverberation of that relativity with (human) sight and memory.

There is, however, a paradoxical difference between the concerns evidenced in the photographic works and the films. The distension, repetition, and aggressive use of movement and intensity of sound in the films is an attempt to force discursive and analytic functions from the mind, thus creating a timelessness within a temporal structure, or more exactly, a temporality grounded in the perception of space rather than in narrative. (The most radical exercise of this sort is the coda of superimpositions in ←→.) The photographic works, however, create an oscillation between two poles: an instantaneous comprehension of the work, supported by the visual reverberation of the multiple rectangular frames within it; and a narrative perception which occurs when we realize that the photographs are a recording of consecutive stages in a work which they both generate and are generated by, and that we can decode that work by tracing back in time the sequence of their making.

To restate the paradox: the films are concerned with creating a timeless state through a temporal medium; the photographs, normally moments out of time, operate in a dialectical relation to the work of which they are a part, opening within it a temporal structure.

Michael Snow began his career as a painter and musician. He subsequently made sculpture, films, and photographs. As Annette Michelson has noted in her essay "Toward Snow,"[1] the body of Snow's work from the early 1950s to the

1. Annette Michelson, "Toward Snow," *Artforum*, IX (June 1971), 30–7.

present shows a working and reworking of a limited number of concerns in a variety of media and forms. Some of these concerns may be described roughly as follows: framing; tri-dimensional illusion versus real tri-dimensionality; temporal and atemporal strategies such as those noted above; the relation of representation to memory; the strategies by which a work is made an index, not only of the represented object but of the functions of the tools with which it is made; the relation between sound (sometimes language) and image.

Snow has chosen to explore these problems rather than to work exhaustively within any one form. He seems impelled to work simultaneously in temporal and atemporal forms. First these were music and painting, then filmmaking and sculpture, then filmmaking and photography, and currently, music and photography.

Of the ten works in the MOMA show, only two were photographic prints. The others were mixed-media works in which the photograph, or photographs, is pivotal and generative. Immediately striking as one entered the room was the rich diversity of sizes, colors, textures, and materials. Closer examination revealed that within this diversity, Snow was exploring a limited territory. He was proposing emblems of the relation of the photographic image to the real, and their interest developed from this: that the two were as interpenetrated in these objects as they are in the modern world. The production of images changed the "real" and this change was mirrored in subsequent images, and so on.

Located at this meeting point of real object and of photographic image is that most problematic concept introduced by Walter Benjamin in the constantly cited essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction": the "aura." Benjamin defined the aura as "the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be."[2] This distance is measured in time as well as in space. The aura of a landscape is a function of its distance from us in space. The aura of an art object is a function of its history.

> If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch. This image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura. It rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to the increasing significance of the masses in contemporary life. Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction.
>
> . . . With the advent of the first truly revolutionary means of reproduction, photography, simultaneously with the rise of socialism, art sensed the approaching crisis which has become evident a century

2. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, New York, Schocken Books, 1969, p. 222.

> later. At the time, art reacted with the doctrine of *l'art pour l'art*, that is, with a theology of art. This gave rise to what might be called a negative theology in the form of the idea of "pure" art, which not only denied any social function of art but also any categorizing by subject matter.[3]

In Benjamin's terms then, Snow is using photography, not in the service of "the decay of the aura," but paradoxically, to affirm its presence. He refuses to use photography to "bring things closer spatially." With few exceptions, the iconography of these photographs is limited to stages in the making of works of which they are parts. ("I am working to use photography in a very enclosed way, so there is nothing outside the work itself that is used in the photography.")[4] The photographs are records of, situated within and conditioning, each work; they record their own history. As history, they are reenforcements of the aura. With two exceptions, these works are not reproducible because they are not simply photographic prints.

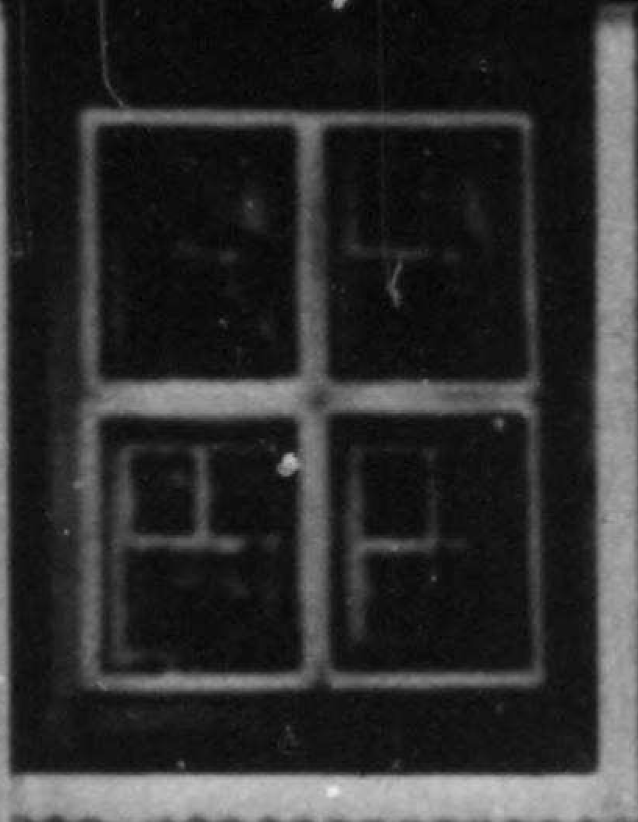
What Snow has done is to relocate photography within "pure art", which, for Benjamin, arose in reaction to photography itself. These works cannot be categorized by subject matter. (For example, the work *Midnight Blue*, which contains a photograph of a candle, would not be categorized as a photo of a candle.) The manner in which "pure art denies any social function" is not at issue here. We can, however, say that the function of these works is similar to that of most pure art: it leads us to an investigation of consciousness. Snow's photographic pieces, these objects which are in part covered, obscured, and doubled with photographs of themselves, are modern totems, to be used in a meditation on the merging of image and reality.

One further point will serve to clarify the descriptions to follow: Benjamin mentions in passing that the titles of paintings have a different character from the captions used for photographs. The titles of Snow's photo pieces are, as those of many of his other works, verbal puns. They call attention to the punning strategies of these visual works: the doubling of image and reality, the simultaneities of time and space, a merging which still allows the parts to be separated and identified. I now offer a description of the pieces in the exhibition under consideration.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-4. Note the similarities between this text and the following two bits of dialogue from Snow's most recent film *Rameau's Nephew*: "There is no doubt that technology is expressing and answering a human desire by working toward systems of greater and greater illusionism. It is easy to project this to arrive at stages of representation of absolutely convincing illusion till eventually the difference between subject and facsimile may be eradicated." And later: "What I think we're doing is taking everything that's here and gradually mixing it all. Feeding a palette into a blender. The parts are still visible but what all life will become is one mid-gray, changeless substance. The globe will be a ball of dead, durable sameness."

Snow and Benjamin share an ambivalence toward mechanical reproduction, but it is grounded somewhat differently. Snow is pessimistic about the "desire of the contemporary masses" while Benjamin's later writing, including this text, is an attempt at a historical materialist reading towards the goal of a Marxist revolution.

4. All quotations of Michael Snow are from personal correspondence with the author.



Authorization, black-and-white Polaroid photos, adhesive cloth tape, mirror and metal, 21½ × 17½″. To make this self-portrait, Snow pasted a tape frame, large enough to contain four Polaroid photos, on the mirror. He then photographed himself in the mirror, pasted that photo in the upper left corner of the tape frame, took a second photo, pasted that in the upper right, and proceeded through the third and fourth in the same manner. The fourth photo shows the first three and Snow's reflection just visible in the lower right corner of the frame. With that in place, he took a fifth photo which shows the first four completely obscuring his own reflection and that of the camera. This photo is placed in the upper left corner of the mirror frame.

The photographs have a double function, oddly disquieting in the manner of a fetishistic object. They serve to obliterate the reflection of the artist and then to conceal its absence. If we peeled away the photographs, we would find the reflection of Michael Snow in his function as maker of this work and as proceeding through this function in time to self-obliteration, *i.e.*, towards death. Snow has said of his serial works in both audiotape and photography that "each tape/photo is a separate memory." In *Authorization*, since the camera is focused on Snow's reflection and not on the surface of the mirror, as more of the surface is covered with photographs, more of each successive photograph is out of focus. The photographs within photographs not only become smaller, they become less clear. They take on the defused quality of memory, contrasting with the sharp reflection of oneself in the edges of the mirror on which they are mounted and in which they are shot. The work pulls us between past and present, between disappearance and re-presentation, between photographed-memory-fetish and the narcissistic fascination of our own reflection, now present in the work. The punning strategy referred to in the first section of this essay operates around all of these and around the identity of maker and viewer, both *authorized* simultaneously in the glass.

A Wooden Look, Of a Ladder, and *Glares* are all concerned with the optical bend which is recorded when the lens of the camera is placed in any position other than exactly parallel to the object photographed, and of the relationship between this new photographic object and the object as it exists.

Glares is the strongest of the three because the visually complex meshing of the original structure with its photographic reproduction makes them almost inseparable. A large black rectangular frame, 58¾ × 39½″, was divided into nine rows of nine rectangles each. A light was mounted at the top and directed at the surface, hitting most strongly at the top and falling off towards the bottom. Snow then photographed separately, with the camera tilting from a fixed base and with a fixed exposure, each of the small rectangles. He then mounted them, each in its own rectangle. The light remains in position in the finished work. Of course, the amount of surrounding area (*i.e.*, surrounding rectangles) included in each shot varies with the distance from each rectangle of the fixed camera. The result is a strikingly powerful superimposition of grids, light at the top and dark at the bottom.

Michael Snow, Authorization, *1969*.

S

L

a
c
e
f
c

c
t
a
l
k
p

I
p
r

I
a

I
t
t
I

Micha

In *Glares,* as in *A Wooden Look,* we have an object which is fragmented in advance, shaped by a knowledge of its image. Further, since the light source in the object (the lamp at the top of the grid) was also the light source at the time of exposure, the light is identical and doubled. The light of the past is inseparable from the light of the present; the light in the photographs is fused with the light on the object.

Snow says that what we see in *Of a Ladder* is "not a ladder, but how the camera sees a ladder under certain conditions," in this instance with the camera tilted from a fixed base and with the light source at the top. The photographs are arranged so that their formation suggests a ladder in negative, the strips of white left between each photograph lined vertically up the wall become the rungs. "It's a kind of gray scale as well as an optical reconstruction of climbing a ladder." Each photograph is of a segment of the original ladder.

Of a Ladder is a variation on *Glares* and *A Wooden Look* in that the original ladder is not present in the work. Since ladders are everyday objects, the ladder is present in the room as part of our experience. We see this *photographed* ladder in relation to that other kind of object. Another variation on the doubling.

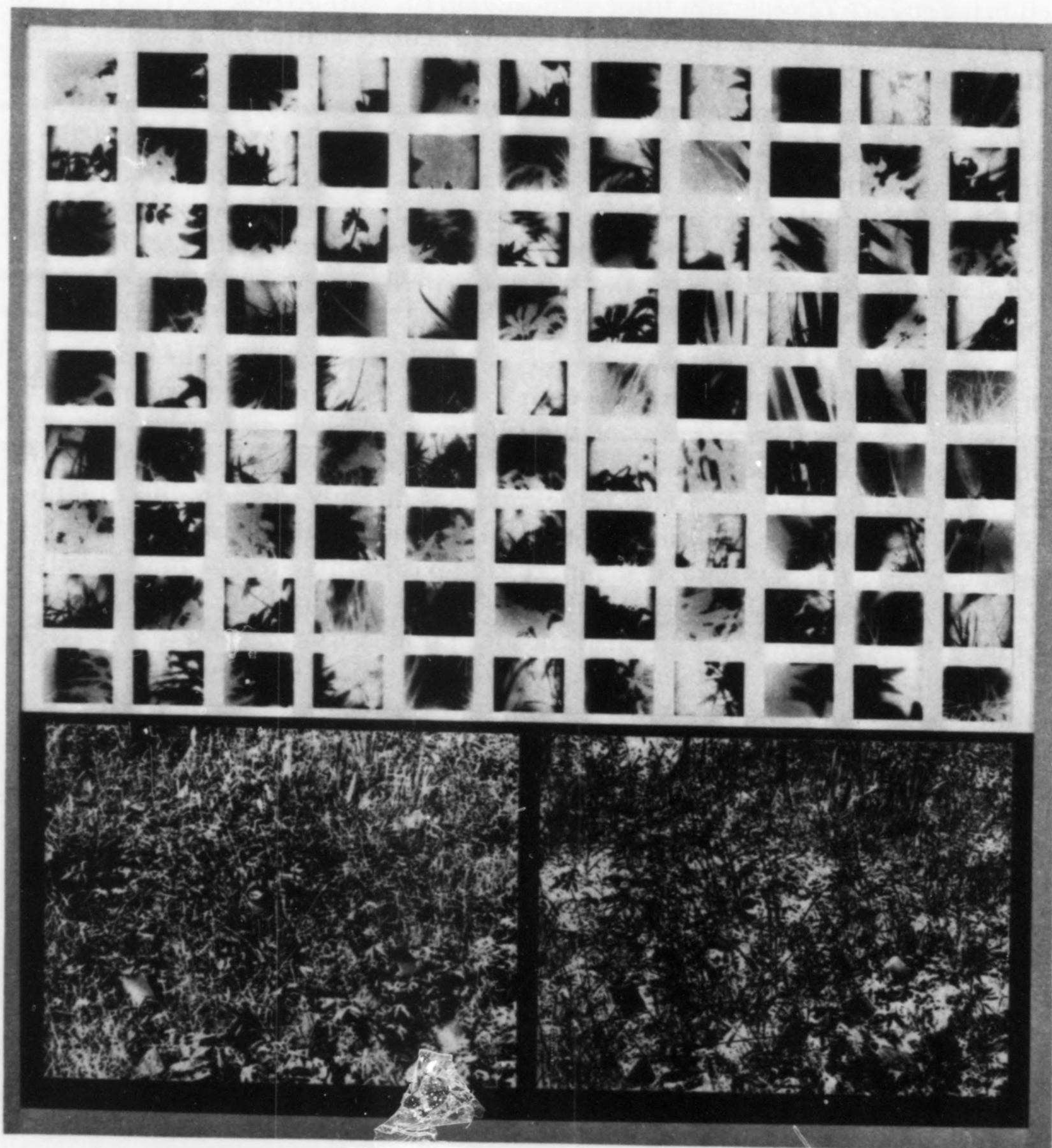
Three of the photographic works in color, *Light Blues, Midnight Blue,* and *Red*[5], explore color in the same way that those in black and white explore camera angle and light source.

Midnight Blue, boards, wax, acrylic, color photo, 38 × 26″. The surface is of rough boards, attached horizontally, with a narrow ledge placed at a right angle at the bottom. Snow painted most of the surface a lush blue, leaving a frame of unpainted wood around the top and sides. He placed a candle on the ledge and photographed the blue surface with the candle as the only source of illumination. He made a print of the resulting photograph (of candle on blue surface) which is the same size as the photographed surface, and pasted this over the blue boards so that the candle in the photograph is in the same position as the original. Since the painted area was slightly larger than the area photographed, it frames it on three sides so that we see three concentric unevenly edged rectangles: natural board, painted board, and photo, allowing a comparison between the color of paint in daylight and the darker color of the reproduction conditioned by its candle light source. As in *Authorization,* the work annuls and re-presents. The photograph and the remains of the wax candle on the ledge below form a double index of the light in the photograph itself, testifying to the history of the candle, its existence, the light shed by it and extinguished in the work's composition. The title is a pun on the color of the photograph and a particular mood at a particular time.

In *Light Blues,* Snow placed a spotlight directly facing the lefthand section of a long blue rectangle and made eight photographs, each with a different colored gel over the light. He printed each photograph twice and lined them up on the original surface in four rows of four photos each. The order of colors in the top two rows is reversed left to right in the lower two rows. In the finished work, the spotlight remains in its original position covered by a blue gel which alters the

Michael Snow, Glares, *1973.*

Michael Snow, Field, *1973–4.*



color of the photographs in the left half, just as they have been altered by the gels in the originals.

Red 5 is a variation on the sequential structure of *Authorization*. A red paper rectangle lit from the top (from an invisible source) was photographed, the photograph was placed on the surface, and a second photograph was taken, also placed on the surface, and so on. In between the taking of each photograph, the positions of the earlier ones were slightly altered. We are able to read this because the placement of the light source has caused the original field, and thus each photograph, to be lighter at the top than the bottom; we thus have a reference by which we can mark their rotation. Here, light is an index of spatial relations. It is appropriate that, in this work, where the only material is photographs and photographic paper, where the only object is a photographic one, Snow carried his sequence one step farther. The work in its final form is a photographic print showing the red ground with four small photos placed on it.

Field, photographs, 67 × 63″. Snow placed fifty pieces of photogram paper in a field of grass and shrubs. He photographed the papers *in situ* and made two prints, negative and positive. These are the two large photographs framed in black at the bottom of the work. Above them, arranged in nine rows of eleven each, are the photograms, each printed in negative and positive pairs except for a single odd one. They are framed by the white paper background and the entire work is framed in gray. It is a stunningly complex structure of figure-ground, positive-negative, part-whole, containment of part in whole relationships. The photogram is the most extreme close-up. It is an index of light recorded by touch. The long shots can record the photograms themselves but not their detail. Here again is an echo of Benjamin. The aura of a landscape is a function of its distance from us. In this work, which is made only of reproductions, of reproductions within reproductions, the issue of the aura is raised very sharply.

Morning in Holland differs from the rest of the work under consideration in that it was made by uncovering rather than obliterating. Snow mounted sixteen small rectangular frames, red, blue, yellow, and green, in four rows of four each, the order of the colors differing in each row. He covered the whole with black paper. He then began to cut away the paper, revealing the rectangles one at a time and taking a color photo of the whole at each of the sixteen stages of uncovering. The photographs were then mounted so that within each rectangular frame there is a photograph of the entire work at the point in time at which that particular rectangle was uncovered. The relationships of the parts in space are temporally determined. And again, a structure has been made specifically to accept the fragmentation of the photographic process. The piece is asymmetrical within its original grid, an obvious tribute to the painter obliquely referred to in the title.

Imposition was the most recently completed work to be shown; it is also the most problematic. Formally, it explores the possibilities of color mixing through superimposition. Four large color photographs have been superimposed to make one print. The first print is of an interior: walls, molding, floor. In the second, a

couch and other furniture was added. The third is of a naked couple seated on the couch, and the fourth is of the same couple in the same position fully dressed. The superimposed print is hung on its side so that the floor in the photograph is perpendicular to the floor of the gallery. At first glance the layers are hardly apparent. Then we begin to see through them as if by X-ray vision. Tilting our heads to see better, we notice that the position of the heads of the couple in the photograph mirrors our own. They are looking at a rectangular object which they hold in their hands, revealing only its white underside to the camera. With amusement, we realize the work is turned on its side so as to give us the clue from which we deduce that the couple in the photograph are looking at the same photograph as we are. Snow uses the same strategy in his book *Cover to Cover*;[5] three-quarters of the way through, he is shown picking up a copy of the book *Cover to Cover* which exists within itself, complete, before its completion. The photograph, which fragments the time of reality, no longer merely conditions or merges with it. It reverses the sequence so that image now precedes object.

We have noted that while the original ladder is not present in *Of a Ladder*, the work does evoke a tension between image and object, since "ladder" is part of our everyday experience. In *Imposition* we are faced with the photograph(s) of two specific persons in a specific room, two persons who have an existence outside the work to which we have no access except through the work itself. This most recent piece is therefore no longer self-enclosed and this is new in Snow's work. It also raises some questions, similar to new questions raised by the new film *Rameau's Nephew*: why a photograph of a specifically middle-class living room? why a couple? why a heterosexual couple? . . . The separation of the photograph's subject from its formal strategies (superimposition and temporal sequence) elicits these questions, leaving them unanswered.

Benjamin distinguishes in his essay between those works which we are absorbed by and those which we absorb or appropriate. What is appropriated from a work is its description. What is missing from the above descriptions of Michael Snow's photographic works is their power to absorb us into themselves; and to allow us, within them, a various and shiftingly complex meditation on real ⟷ image.

5. Michael Snow, *Cover to Cover*, Halifax, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975.

Michael Snow at Montreux. (Photo: Babette Mangolte.)

Notes for *Rameau's Nephew**

MICHAEL SNOW

To me it's a true "talking picture". It delves into the implications of that description and derives structures that can generate contents that are proper to the mode. It derives its form and the nature of its possible effects from its being built from the inside, as it were, with the actual units of such a film, *i.e.*, the frame and the recorded syllable. Thus its dramatic development derives not only from a representation of what may involve us generally in life but from considerations of the nature of recorded speech in relation to moving light-images of people. Thus it can become an event in life, not just a report of it.

Echoes reverberate to "language", to "representation" in general, to representation in the sound cinema, to "culture", to "civilization". Via the eyes and ears it is a composition aimed at exciting the two halves of the brain into recognition.

* The full title of the film is given as *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen*. The selection of notes offered here is followed by the shooting script of one sequence of the film. We are indebted to Anthology Film Archive for assistance in this publication.

A clear use of ambiguity.
Can you extrapolate from *"not being able to understand"*
(in terms of intelligibility of parts of the separate segments) to
"not being able to understand" the whole?
"Understand"—Two shades of meaning.
LAUGHTER AND ORGASM: relation?
Style is a way of saying. Styles of different sections. Ways of
saying several things at once.
DIFFERENT MEANINGS AT DIFFERENT READINGS connecting
different "strata".

*

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	SOUND
Appearance/disappearance	Focus	Appearance/disappearance
Substitution	Color	Substitution
Metamorphosis	Light intensity (F stop)	other voice,
Auto-motion	fade in/out	other sound, etc.
Changes of light	exposure—	Pitch change
intensity	over/under	Timbre change
color	Opticals	room-tone,
position	wipes	echo, fuzz
Repetition	fold-overs	Volume (loud to 0)
Normal movement	Superimpositions	spatial position
	Repetition (printed)	Repetition
	Camera position	"distortion"
	Camera movement	
	Camera speed	
	Screen shape	
	The other external is the actual film strip. Editing.	

CROSS CAUSES AND EFFECTS
Cause: action "in" picture. Effect: "external" change (image color, focus, etc.)
Cause: action "in" picture. Effect:

"Entering the image": **TOUCH:** caress, feel, eat, fuck, smash.
Verbal description, "journalism". Dialogue sexual.
Eventually, the camera enters the image by fast changes of position, hand held stuff, wild cuts, dollies, etc.

*

List all possible manipulables.
Computer/cross-index all the permutations, combinations.
Use this as a script.

5	6	1	2	3	4	action	
6	5	2	1	4	3	reaction	Superimpose
5	6	2	1	4	3	action	several locations
2	1	5	6	4	3	reaction	or sets or backdrops
4	3	2	1	5	6		
1	2	4	5	6	3		Trees by a river *NO*
3	2	1	4	5	6		New Orleans Street
5	2	1	4	6	3		Babylonian (ancient) scene

Do film in four or five tempi.
medium (long) 40 minutes
slow (medium) 15 minutes
fast (medium) 20 minutes
slow (short) 5 minutes
Control of WAVES OF "COHERENCE" necessary.
Rhythm continues but certain elements become more sequential then become more varied again.

e.g. dialogue
becomes more sequential
"normal"
then starts
fragmenting again.

COMEDY *Commedia dell'Arte* Comedy of Art
Same characters exchange positions but original voices are still heard.
Characters are replaced but original voices are still heard.
Characters are replaced but new voices are heard.
Characters change spatial position but sound continues.

FRAMES: The *Fact:* Everything can be changed between frames.
Film absolutely not videotape.
CUTTING—Disjunctive.
ABSOLUTELY non-sequential patterns.
No proportionate modulations, glissandos, fades.

Must be
staccato,
not
legato

But: 6 2 1 9 3 8 4

All this applies to sound, too: it can be changed "between frames". Needn't be sequential, needn't be sentences, needn't be a story. *Words* interchangeable.

*

Internal reactions to *external* causes.

During fade-out people say "what's happening to the light?"
Over-exposure; people cover their eyes.
Flood of color—they watch it rise.
They comment on changes that happen to the sound,
e.g., a bit of music is substituted for a phrase of dialogue.
Another person says "That's by J.S. Bach, isn't it?"
A superimposition of a group of people is imitated by the people in the scene.
A person reacts *within* the scene to other people's reactions to an external cause.

A SERIES OF JOKES: crude enough that some will survive dismemberment.

A man got on the elevator in his apartment building. There was a woman in the car and she was completely nude. He was a little taken aback but he said, "My wife has an outfit just like that." (Aunt Rhoda's joke.)

MOVE CAMERA SLIGHTLY (on tripod) ON EACH FRAME OF S.F. REAL-TIME SHOOTING-JITTER.
DON'T FORGET: This thing is *absolutely* SOUND←→IMAGE RELATIONSHIPS

OK plan to studio re-record some things with changes.
Have sound man change *something* on every image,
change treble, bass, or volume.

A bit where sound disappears
when something is held in front of the camera.
Something opaque?

The entire film an "example" of the difficulty (impossibility)
of the essentializing-symbolizing reduction involved in the
(Platonic) nature of words in relation to experience (object) etc.
discussed. The *difference* between the reduction absolutely necessary
to discuss or even describe the experience and the experience.
Each is "real" but each is different.

*

INTERNAL REACTION: People in the shot notice, see, pay attention
to a manipulation: e.g., a bottle appears, reappears (8 frames,
4 frames, 2 frames).
They watch this, continuing to talk about
something else. They screen their eyes during over-exposure.

Change camera position in mid-conversation
(continue in the middle of a word).
Should especially concern itself with the people.
Lots of medium shots, close-ups. (2 or 4 heads, etc.)

All-woman cast?

*

PSALMANAZAR: Georges Psalmanazar (1679–1763), assumed name of
a Frenchman who represented himself as a pagan from Formosa and
invented a language, "Formosan" and a religious system; he later
repented of the imposture, which is described in his memoir, and
became a serious scholar, a friend of Dr. Johnson.

Each sequence made like a spoken word—like an actual word?—
so each has a distinct character.
No, it's the language of film.

Introduce "relativity" into the use of speech:
contextual nature of nuances of meaning.
Words common but everybody having nuances. My uses to make *this*
work of art.
Words as *material* (recorded).

"A picture is worth a thousand words." The picture is the words.
Some way of making visual sentences.
Someone opens mouth and things change.
"The unexpected happens when you least expect it."

LOGOMANIA: a pathological state of volubility,
or incoherent wordiness.
LOGOPATHY: a speech disorder of any kind.
LOGORRHEA: pathological form of volubility.

REBUS: The rebus introduces the subject of the accuracy of
recording, verisimilitude, absolute realism in a context where
the nuances (means) of the medium are the elements of the reality
of the experience of the representation.

Philosophical Comedy
"Gags"
"Routines" exemplify philosophical statements
problems
proposals
Use books, e.g. Wittgenstein
to write joke-dialogue.

To end a scene: e.g. four people talking.
Take out voices, one by one, until the scene is silent,
then remove the people one by one, then remove the set to white screen.

SOURCE OF SOUND
Sequence with playing of record, turning on T.V.
and (perhaps off screen) tape playing plus talking.

Someone points to loudspeaker and facing audience
says (or off-screen tape says) without moving mouth,
"This is where it came from."
T.V. sound is turned on, then turned off,
and tape of *just previously recorded* conversation is
played with T.V. picture. People comment.
Someone points to an object as a voice speaks about to play a
record. While putting it on sound *starts* via off-screen tape;
they then play simultaneously for a while.

ANARTHRIA: loss of power of articulate speech.
A. Language as a "tautology". We already know what can be said.

B. Not only are there many words you have never heard, but there are many combinations of them and the ones and combinations that you already know which have never been made which you've never heard.
Originality then with words is?
Language is Thought's body.
Speech is thought; they are not generally two separate activities.

*

Wrong or invented sounds for things that happen on screen.
Man drops a cup, it shatters, sound is thunder and rain. Rain sound continues till woman covers her eyes. Man cleans up broken cup, sound is hammering. Hammering cuts simultaneously with cutting to "now", same cup in place of fragments. Woman lights cigarette, sound is a ball or chime. She blows out smoke and as she blows, cup (is pulled) slides along table over to edge. Either it cuts at edge and a second later, sound of breaking glass, or it falls off and sound is of car screeching around a corner. She knocks ash off cigarette, sound is splashing water, puffs on cigarette, sound is the spoken word "money." Simultaneously, man pulls letter from his pocket, sound is a bird sound till he unfolds letter. As he unfolds letter, sound is a siren and also she starts to speak: "Harvey, I just don't know what to say." He reads letter and sound is footsteps. She speaks again: "So much time has passed since we first met that it seems like it was only yesterday. The first time I saw you was in winter. I saw you walking down the street, you were wearing a very long black overcoat. You looked very strange and very interesting and I hoped that I could meet you. Isn't it strange? Some two weeks later I did." During "the first time" she gets up from chair and walks out of room. Her voice continues with absolutely no change in volume, etc. It ought to be in perfect lip sync before that. Next, man turns off a lamp which is on table. Sound is of breaking glass and image over-exposed. Man leaves everything on table on its side. At first leaving, sound of rain again. At the last, sound cuts and camera swivels till scene is sideways with objects right side up, short hold and cut.

The last part as a separate scene in itself or part of another.
Someone leaves everything on their sides, then the camera swivels.

A section shot right but shown backwards including sound.
A sequence: camera swivels as above but scene *continues,* talking, etc. Cut to scene upside down with sound somehow effected by that. SOUND UPSIDE DOWN? Cut to backwards scene.

Backwards scene could be shot with some action *done backwards* so they'd be "correct" though screened wrong.

*

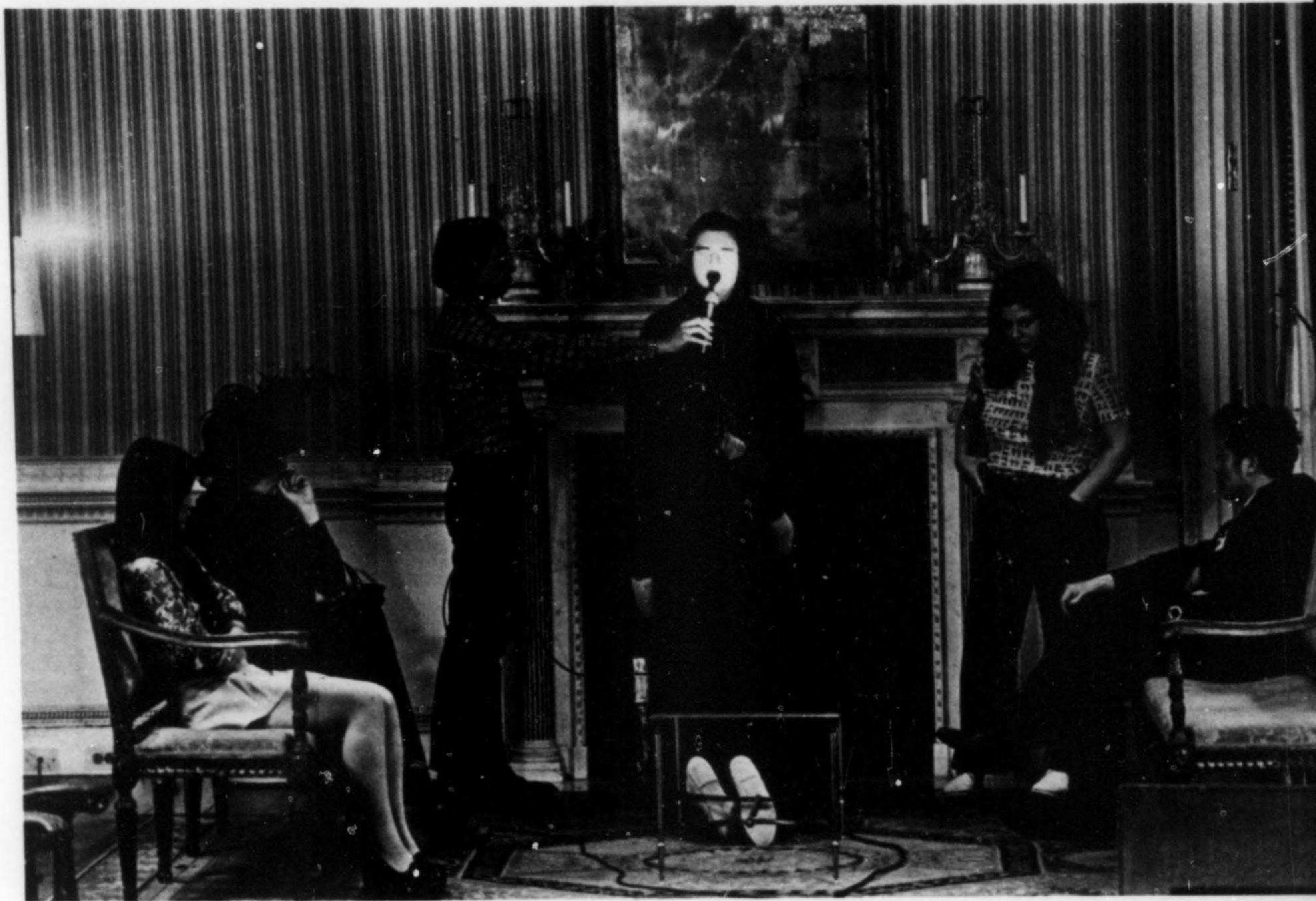
THE ART OF MODULATING TIME
RECORDING
The "concretion" of music, its materiality "increases" with radio, records.

Music is now in the situation of literature after the invention of printing. Recording is mapping of time into space. Like drawing or painting.
Consonants equivalent to attack or percussion.
(Staccati, pizzicati)
P.K.D.T.B.

Lenses: shoot something changing lenses. Per word, perhaps. Various focal lengths. Wide screen lens, anamorphic, multiple image. Diopter, split field lens. Super wide angle, 5.7 mm., etc.

VISUAL	SOUND
One sequence of lenses	volume and
zoom	distortion
pan	changes
camera position	Use
focus changes	electronic
	filter?

What is it like not to be able to read or write?



Michael Snow, Rameau's Nephew, *1974.*

Hotel

Scene 11. Same as 10A, 10B. Camera tripod. Fixed. If possible shoot through a door showing a bit of door frame at each side. Table in foreground. Optical flip. Memorize.
J: What's hard to believe?
S: Does anybody want something to drink?
J, *Dracula accent (throughout scene), facing camera:* How about some OXO?
Cut to J lying on floor parrallel to frame facing camera.
J: OXO
Cut to J standing on head. Others can hold his legs up. Facing camera.
J: OXO
Cut to J lying on side facing right.
J: OXO
Cut.
R, *to camera:* Have you noticed how the unexpected happens when you least expect it.
S, *to everybody:* Do you want to smoke some dope?
J: I'm afraid to smoke dope on the screen. It's like smoking in bed, the screen might catch fire.
L: Or the screen might get arrested.
S: The picture's trying to get away right now! *She looks "at picture".*
J: Hey wait for me!
A: It can't go anywhere without us. *(Another accent)*
S: Anyway do you want some firewater?
J: Oh yes, please, I'm feeling a bit dizzy.
S walks off towards camera
E, *looking out:* Gee, I wonder if I'm in the audience tonight?
A: Impossible.
E: Well, if I am . . . "Hello me!" Gosh, what's wrong with my eyes, I can't see straight.
J: Where the hell's that table gone? It was here a minute ago.
Cut. End of optical flip.

Scene 12. Just tape record. No image.
S walks a little. Clinking ice in glass.
Drop glass. It breaks.
S: Here's your drink.
J, *still Dracula:* Whoops, I'm sorry it went out like a light.
E: It did not.

J: There's another side to every story.
J or Ray, preferably Ray starts to casually in background play violin.
S: I'll get you another drink. *Walks a bit.*
A: Looking back is depressing.
L: I suppose you think there's a bed there.
J: Who?
E: Of course there's a bed there. Watch this. *Walks noisily for a few seconds. Stops. Says:* What the hell? *Walks some more, stops, says:* Well, anyway I found the table. Here it is. *Taps on table.*
L: Keep your eye on it.
J: Pull up a chair, Ray.
S walks in, clink, clink, ice in glass.
S: Here's another drink for you, Jacques.
J: Don't put it on that table.
S: What table?
R: This is kind of relaxing.
L: When are we supposed to be back on?

Scene 13. Optical flip. Picture comes around other side (left). People regrouped as they might be after the last scene. No glass though. Same camera position. Memorize.
R plays violin in background like practicing.
J: Aphasia, have you seen this entire film?
A: How could I, Jacques, it isn't over yet . . . I'm just looking at the part I'm in.
E: These are pretty bad seats.
L: Yeah, this is really hard on the eyes.
S: Ouch! These corners are sharp!
J: Make sure that table gets around. *Push it a bit back and forth but end up leaving it in same place.*
A: It doesn't need any help to get around.
L: I'd miss the bed more than that table.
A: Have you been in any good movies lately, Ray?
J: Have you been in any good movies lately, Ray? *Turns aside to say this.*
R, *stops playing:* One question at a time.
E, *glancing to her left:* Just another few feet to go.
S, *looking same way:* There.
Everybody looks that way.
Cut. R, *facing camera still holding violin:* Wow!
Cut. R, *back to camera:* Wow!
Close door if shot is through door. Could be slammed.
Cut.

Scene 14. Camera same. Everybody grouped same except for J and R, who are seated at the table. Underexpose. This shot will be supered. Fade in. Memorize.
A: Back in the picture. *Said like a title.*
J, *to R:* Well, did you like the lovemaking scene in Nadia Jerkoffski's new film "Fuck and Suck"?
R: Oh, it was beautiful.
J: Wasn't "Sally," the little Danish girl with the long blonde hair, exquisite?
R: Mmm, yes, she was so beautiful, so voluptuous . . . what a lovely ass!
J: When she rolled over into the bed and opened her legs by first sliding one against the other . . . wasn't that beautiful? . . . Her lips were pink and moist as her luscious thighs revealed them . . . in that great close-up her curly blonde cunt hairs were all dewy too.
R: Her big brown eyes were lovely too; she really seemed to be feeling it when the German guy, Carl, slid his long cock into her . . . you could read in her eyes how good it felt moving in.
J: She moved her breasts in a way that . . . just seemed to tell a story. And what breasts and shoulders and arms! . . . When she turned over, her big breasts and the pink nipples on top just slid to the side with such . . . what's the word? . . . comfort.
R: Oh yeah, I wanted to touch them and in the movie lucky Gunja, the Pakistani guy, did caress them, kissed them, sucked them, licked them.
J: And she made such a beautiful sound of pleasure too.
E: What was her role in the film?
R: She was a mathematician who discovered the Rondo effect which revolutionized space travel. She had written several books, spoke ten languages, taught at York University and was the Director of the Mathematical Research Center which employed 10,000 people.
E: Quite a well-rounded woman.
J, *said like a title to camera:* A figure of speech.
Fade out to black.

Scene 15. Same length shot of room (shoot maybe a foot more). Underexposed. To super.

Scene 16. New tripod shot centered on bed. Fade in.
L, *said like a title to camera:* Seeing is believing.

E: That's what they say.
Fade out to black.

Scene 17. Same shot but bed only. Against black. To be supered. Shoot 2 minutes.

Scene 18. Same camera and position marked. Bed off. To be supered on scene 17. Memorize. Fade in.
J: Seeing is necessarily a belief, an act of faith, but to me the phrase should really be "Touching is believing." I'll demonstrate what I mean.
L, *butts in, feeling hands:* Gee, my hands are dry. I've been washing clothes all day. Sara, have you got any of that cream hand stuff?
S: Yes, I've got some right here. *Takes it out of purse and squirts in his hand.* Try this.
L rubs hands together. Everybody watches.
J, *a bit peeved:* OK, you demonstrated what I meant but I'd like to show you my way . . . I suppose we all believe that there's a bed there *(points)* and that it actually exists.
E: Of course, I slept there last night and had wonderful dreams.
J: Alright then, watch this, all of you. *J walks to where the bed is supposed to be and lies down on floor as if bed were there (so his feet will stick out but when bed is put back). The others gape. Everybody try to hold same position. Except E, who goes off but near a mike.*
Cut. Scene 19. Put bed back in same place over J.
Fade in.
E, *speaks off screen:* Well, that proved that this was a dream and that that's a comfortable bed.
A, *looks startled, looks around:* Who said that?!
J, *comes out from under bed, looking disgruntled and says:* Well, we usually use a table to demonstrate reality.
E: That's because a table is more real than a bed at dinner time.
J: What time is it?
S: Time for bed. *Said like a title to camera.*
Fade out.

Scene 20/21. Shot twice. Tripod. New camera position. Note where it is, tape-mark, etc., framing, etc. It must be returned to for last shot (scene 20).
Mark position of table. Shoot just it against black. Fade in. Shoot one minute. Hold.

Scene 22. Table off. People grouped around where table should be, looking at it. Chalk or tape mark where everybody is placed so that we can return to those positions for final (table smashing) scene. Plates, cup, saucer should be handy to J. He should note what the height of table is.
Fade in.
R, *squints angrily at "table":* But doesn't THIS table look familiar?!
S: What table?
E: Where's the hammer?
J: Maybe it's a multiplication table.
A: If it's a vege-table, we can prove that "eating is believing" which is what I believe.
J: I'll set the table. *Takes plate, cup, saucer, knife, fork, spoon and "sets" where he thinks table is. Drop cup first, then plate, saucer, cutlery so they break.*
Cut.

Scene 23. Table back on. People in same places but clean up debris. Camera same. Fade in.
J: I give up. I don't believe in anything.
A: I'm hungry.
L: I'm hungry.
Cut.

Scene 24. New scene. Camera tripod. Everybody off. S in bed with clothes on. E standing at side of frame like on stage.
E, *to camera with hand gesture to S in bed:* And now . . . "Lying In Bed" *She walks off.*
S, *when she's off, to camera:* I AM NOT IN BED. *Emphatic.*
Cut.

Scene 25. Different camera position. Tripod. S in bed clothed same as last scene. Everybody else back on sitting all around edges. J has beard on. L standing. Memorize.
L, *to Sara:* Sara, hearing you lie in bed like that makes me even hornier. *Pause. Then speaking to others:* I suppose all of you don't think there's a bed there.
A: Of course, I slept there last night and had wonderful dreams. Which reminds me: I woke last night thinking that my watch was gone.
J: Was it?

A: No, but it was going.
L, *flatly:* Ha ha. Alright now watch this all of you.
Goes to bed and starts to make love to S. Takes off her top and bra and feels her breasts. Says to others: Gee, my hands feel soft now.
They fall to the bed kissing.
Cut.

Michael Snow and Babette Mangolte during filming of Rameau's Nephew. *(Photo: Annette Michelson.)*

Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America Part 2

ROSALIND KRAUSS

Nothing could seem further apart than photography and abstract painting, the one wholly dependent upon the world for the source of its imagery, the other shunning that world and the images it might provide. Yet now, in the '70s, over large stretches of the abstract art that is being produced, the conditions of photography have an implacable hold. If we could say of several generations of painters in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that the conscious aspiration for their work was that it attain to the condition of music, we have now to deal with an utterly different claim. As paradoxical as it might seem, photography has increasingly become the operative model for abstraction.

I am not so much concerned here with the genesis of this condition within the arts, its historical process, as I am with its internal structure as one now confronts it in a variety of work. That photography should be the model for abstraction involves an extraordinary mutation, the logic of which is, I think, important to grasp.

In trying to demonstrate how this is at work I wish to begin with an example drawn not from painting or sculpture, but rather from dance. The instance concerns a performance that Deborah Hay gave last fall in which she explained to her audience that instead of dancing, she wished to talk. For well over an hour Hay directed a quiet but insistent monologue at her spectators, the substance of which was that she was there, presenting herself to them, but not through the routines of movement, because these were routines for which she could no longer find any particular justification. The aspiration for dance to which she had come, she said, was to be in touch with the movement of every cell in her body; that, and the one her audience was witnessing: as a dancer, to have recourse to speech.

The event I am describing divides into three components. The first is a refusal to dance, or what might be characterized more generally as a flight from the terms of aesthetic convention. The second is a fantasy of total self-presence: to be in touch with the movement of every cell in one's body. The third is a verbal discourse through which the subject repeats the simple fact that she is present—thereby duplicating through speech the content of the second component. If it is interesting or important to list the features of the Hay performance, it is because

there seems to be a logical relationship between them, and further, that logic seems to be operative in a great deal of the art that is being produced at present. This logic involves the reduction of the conventional sign to a trace, which then produces the need for a supplemental discourse.

Within the convention of dance, signs are produced by movement. Through the space of the dance these signs are able to be coded both with relation to one another, and in correlation to a tradition of other possible signs. But once movement is understood as something the body does not produce and is, instead, a circumstance that is registered on it (or, invisibly, within it), there is a fundamental alteration in the nature of the sign. Movement ceases to function symbolically, and takes on the character of an index. By index I mean that type of sign which arises as the physical manifestation of a cause, of which traces, imprints, and clues are examples. The movement to which Hay turns—a kind of Brownian motion of the self—has about it this quality of trace. It speaks of a literal manifestation of presence in a way that is like a weather vane's registration of the wind. But unlike the weather vane, which acts culturally to code a natural phenomenon, this cellular motion of which Hay speaks is specifically uncoded. It is out of reach of the dance convention that might provide a code. And thus, although there is a message which can be read or inferred from this trace of the body's life—a message that translates into the statement "I am here"—this message is disengaged from the codes of dance. In the context of Hay's performance it is, then, a message without a code. And because it is uncoded—or rather uncodable—it must be supplemented by a spoken text, one that repeats the message of pure presence in an articulated language.

If I am using the term "message without a code" to describe the nature of Hay's physical performance, I do so in order to make a connection between the features of that event and the inherent features of the photograph. The phrase "*message sans code*" is drawn from an essay in which Roland Barthes points to the fundamentally uncoded nature of the photographic image. "What this [photographic] message specifies," he writes, "is, in effect, that the relation of signified and signifier is quasi-tautological. Undoubtedly the photograph implies a certain displacement of the scene (cropping, reduction, flattening), but this passage is not a *transformation* (as an encoding must be). Here there is a loss of equivalency (proper to true sign systems) and the imposition of a quasi-identity. Put another way, the sign of this message is no longer drawn from an institutional reserve; it is not coded. And one is dealing here with the paradox of a message without a code."[1]

It is the order of the natural world that imprints itself on the photographic emulsion and subsequently on the photographic print. This quality of transfer or trace gives to the photograph its documentary status, its undeniable veracity. But at the same time this veracity is beyond the reach of those possible internal

1. Roland Barthes, "Rhetorique de l'image," [my translation], *Communications*, no. 4 (1964), 42.

adjustments which are the necessary property of language. The connective tissue binding the objects contained by the photograph is that of the world itself, rather than that of a cultural system.

In the photograph's distance from what could be called syntax one finds the mute presence of an uncoded event. And it is this kind of presence that abstract artists now seek to employ.[2]

Several examples are in order. I take them all from an exhibition last year at P. S. 1,[3] an exhibition that had the effect of surveying much of the work that is being produced by the current generation of artists. Each of the cases I have in mind belongs to the genre of installation piece and each exploited the derelict condition of the building itself: its rotting floors, its peeling paint, its crumbling plaster. The work by Gordon Matta-Clark was produced by cutting away the floorboards and ceiling from around the joists of three successive stories of the building, thereby threading an open, vertical shaft through the fabric of the revealed structure. In *East/West Wall Memory Relocated,* Michelle Stuart took rubbings of sections of opposing sides of a corridor, imprinting on floor-to-ceiling sheets of paper the traces of wainscotting, cracked plaster, and blackboard frames, and then installing each sheet on the wall facing its actual origin. Or, in the work by Lucio Pozzi, a series of two-color, painted panels were dispersed throughout the building, occuring where, for institutional reasons, the walls of the school had been designated as separate areas by an abrupt change in the color of the paint. The small panels that Pozzi affixed to these walls aligned themselves with this phenomenon, bridging across the line of change, and at the same time replicating it. The color of each half of a given panel matched the color of the underlying wall; the line of change between colors reiterated the discontinuity of the original field.

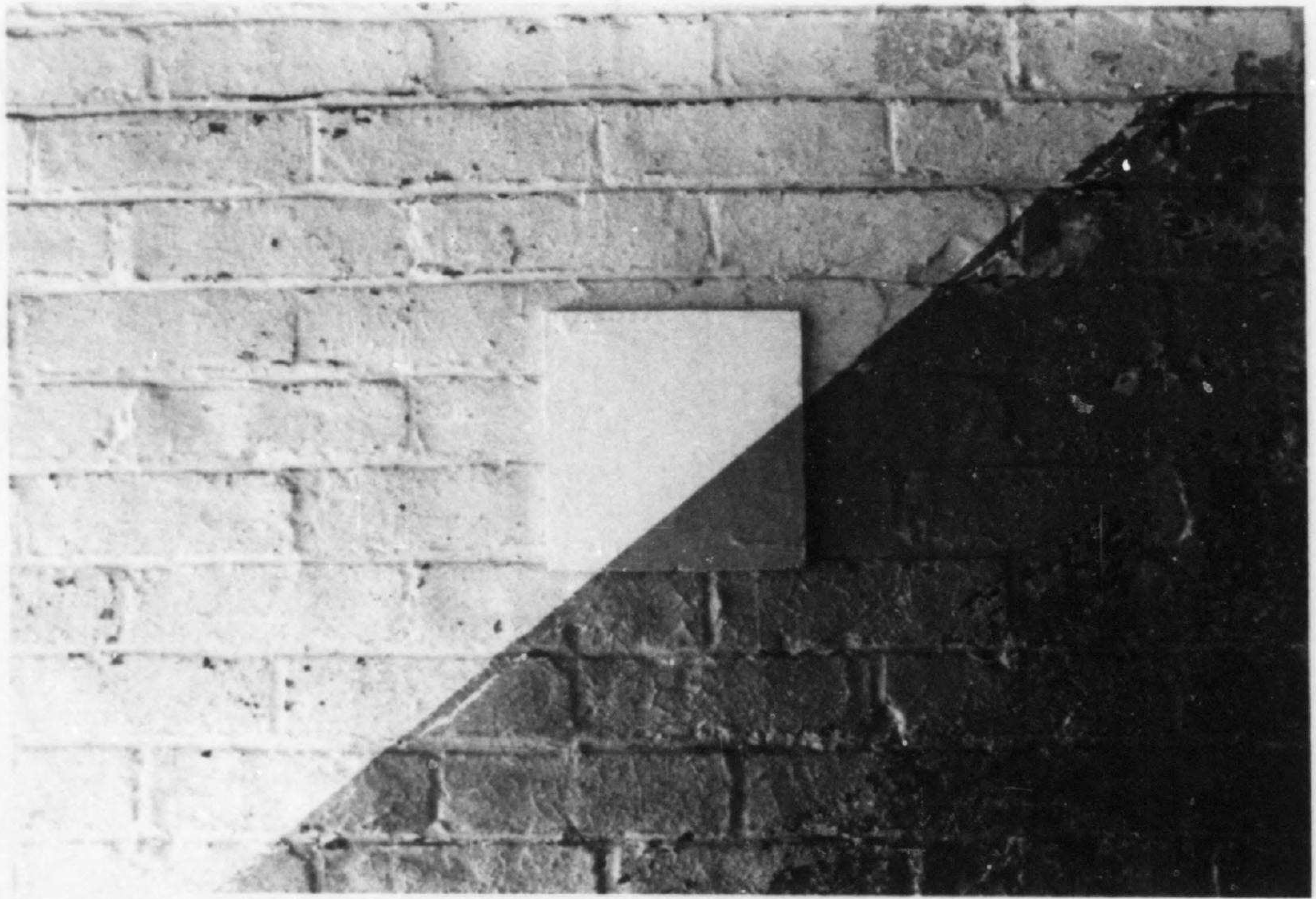
In this set of works by Pozzi one experiences that quasi-tautological relationship between signifier and signified with which Barthes characterizes the photograph. The painting's colors, the internal division between those colors, are occasioned by a situation in the world which they merely register. The passage of the features of the school wall onto the plane of the panel is analogous to those of the photographic process: cropping, reduction, and self-evident flattening. The effect of the work is that its relation to its subject is that of the index, the

2. The pressure to use indexical signs as a means of establishing presence begins in Abstract-Expressionism with deposits of paint expressed as imprints and traces. During the 1960s, this concern was continued although changed in its import in, for example, the work of Jasper Johns and Robert Ryman. This development forms a historical background for the phenomenon I am describing as belonging to 1970s art. However, it must be understood that there is a decisive break between earlier attitudes towards the index and those at present, a break that has to do with the role played by the photographic, rather than the pictorial, as a model.

3. P.S.1 is a public school building in Long Island City which has been leased to the Institute for Art and Urban Resources for use as artists' studios and exhibition spaces. The exhibition in question was called "Rooms." Mounted in late May, 1976, it was the inaugural show of the building. A catalogue documenting the entire exhibition was issued in Summer 1977, and is available through the Institute.

Gordon Matta-Clark. Doors, Floors, Doors. *1976. Removal of floor through 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors.*

p. 62:
Lucio Pozzi. P.S.1 Paint. *1976. Acrylic on wood panel.*



impression, the trace. The painting is thus a sign connected to a referent along a purely physical axis. And this indexical quality is precisely the one of photography. In theorizing about the differences among the sign-types—symbol, icon, and index—C. S. Peirce distinguishes photographs from icons even though icons (signs which establish meaning through the effect of resemblance) form a class to which we would suppose the photograph to belong. "Photographs," Peirce says, "especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know that they are in certain respects exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature. In that aspect, then, they belong to the second class of signs [indices], those by physical connection."[4]

I am claiming, then, that Pozzi is reducing the abstract pictorial object to the status of a mould or impression or trace. And it seems rather clear that the nature of this reduction is formally distinct from other types of reduction that have operated within the history of recent abstract art. We could, for example, compare this work by Pozzi with a two-color painting by Ellsworth Kelly where, as in the case of the Pozzi panels, two planes of highly saturated color abut one another, without any internal inflection of the color within those planes, and where this unmodulated color simply runs to the edges of the work's physical support. Yet whatever the similarities in format the most obvious difference between the two is that Kelly's work is detached from its surroundings. Both visually and conceptually it is free from any specific locale. Therefore whatever occurs within the perimeters of Kelly's painting must be accounted for with reference to some kind of internal logic of the work. This is unlike the Pozzi, where color and the line of separation between colors are strictly accountable to the wall within which they are visually embedded and whose features they replicate.

In the kind of Kelly I have in mind, the demands of an internal logic are met by the use of joined panels, so that the seam between the two color fields marks an actual physical rift within the fabric of the work as a whole. The field becomes a conjunction of discrete parts, and any drawing (lines of division) that occurs within that field is coextensive with the real boundaries of each part. Forcing "drawn" edge to coincide with the real edge of an object (a given panel), Kelly accounts for the occurance of drawing by literalizing it. If the painting has two visual parts, that is because it has two real parts. The message imparted by the drawing is therefore one of discontinuity, a message that is repeated on two levels of the work: the imagistic (the split between color fields) and the actual (the split between panels). Yet what we must realize is that this message—"discontinuity"—is suspended within a particular field: that of painting, painting understood conventionally as a continuous, bounded, detachable, flat surface. So that if we wish to interpret the message of the work ("discontinuity") we do so by reading it

4. C.S. Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," *Philosophic Writings of Peirce*, New York, Dover Publications, 1955, p. 106.

against the ground within which it occurs. *Painting* in this sense is like a noun for which *discontinuous* is understood as a modifier, and the coherence of Kelly's work depends on one's seeing the logic of that connection. What this logic sets out is that unlike the continuum of the real world, painting is a field of articulations or divisions. It is only by disrupting its physical surface and creating discontinuous units that it can produce a system of signs, and through those signs, meaning. An analogy we could make here is to the color spectrum which language arbitrarily divides up into a set of discontinuous terms—the names of hues. In order for a language to exist, the natural order must be segmented into mutually exclusive units. And Kelly's work is about defining the pictorial convention as a process of arbitrary rupture of the field (a canvas surface) into the discontinuous units that are the necessary constituents of signs.

One could say, then, that the reduction that occurs in Kelly's painting results in a certain schematization of the pictorial codes. It is a demonstration of the internal necessity of segmentation in order for a natural continuum to be divided into the most elementary units of meaning. However we may feel about the visual results of that schematic—that it yields sensuous beauty coupled with the pleasure of intellectual economy, or that it is boringly minimal—it is one that takes the process of pictorial meaning as its subject.

Now, in the '70s, there is of course a tremendous disaffection with the kind of analytic produced by the art of the 1960s, of which Kelly's work is one of many possible instances. In place of that analytic there is recourse to the alternative set of operations exemplified by the work of Pozzi. If the surface of one of his panels is divided, that partition can only be understood as a transfer or impression of the features of a natural continuum onto the surface of the painting. The painting as a whole functions to point to the natural continuum, the way the word *this* accompanied by a pointing gesture isolates a piece of the real world and fills itself with a meaning by becoming, for that moment, the transitory label of a natural event. Painting is not taken to be a signified to which individual paintings might meaningfully refer—as in the case of Kelly. Paintings are understood, instead, as shifters, empty signs (like the word *this*) that are filled with meaning only when physically juxtapposed with an external referent, or object.

The operations one finds in Pozzi's work are the operations of the index, which seem to act systematically to transmute each of the terms of the pictorial convention. Internal division (drawing) is converted from its formal status of encoding reality to one of imprinting it. The edge of the work is redirected from its condition as closure (the establishment of a limit in response to the internal meaning of the work) and given the role of selection (gathering a visually intelligible sample of the underlying continuum). The flatness of the support is deprived of its various formal functions (as the constraint against which illusion is established and tested; as the source of conventional coherence) and is used instead as the repository of evidence. (Since this is no longer a matter of convention but

merely of convenience, the support for the index could obviously take any configuration, two- or three-dimensional.) Each of these transformations operates in the direction of photography as a functional model. The photograph's status as a trace or index, its dependence on selection from the natural array by means of cropping, its indifference to the terms of its support (holography constituting a three-dimensionalization of that support), are all to be found in Pozzi's efforts at P.S. 1. And of course, not in his alone. The work by Michelle Stuart—a rubbing—is even more nakedly involved in the procedures of the trace, while the Matta-Clark cut through the building's interior becomes an instance of cropping, in order that the void created by the cut be literally filled by a natural ground.

In each of these works it is the building itself that is taken to be a message which can be presented but not coded. The ambition of the works is to capture the presence of the building, to find strategies to force it to surface into the field of the work. Yet even as that presence surfaces, it fills the work with an extraordinary sense of time-past. Though they are produced by a physical cause, the trace, the impression, the clue, are vestiges of that cause which is itself no longer present in the given sign. Like traces, the works I have been describing represent the building through the paradox of being physically present but temporally remote. This sense is made explicit in the title of the Stuart work where the artist speaks of relocation as a form of memory. In the piece by Matta-Clark the cut is able to signify the building—to point to it—only through a process of removal or cutting away. The procedure of excavation succeeds therefore in bringing the building into the consciousness of the viewer in the form of a ghost. For Pozzi, the act of taking an impression submits to the logic of effacement. The painted wall is signified by the work as something which was there but has now been covered over.

Like the other features of these works, this one of temporal distance is a striking aspect of the photographic message. Pointing to this paradox of a presence seen as past, Barthes says of the photograph:

> The type of perception it implies is truly without precedent. Photography set up, in effect, not a perception of the *being-there* of an object (which all copies are able to provoke, but a perception of its *having-been-there*. It is a question therefore of a new category of space-time: spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority. Photography produces an illogical conjunction of the *here* and the *formerly*. It is thus at the level of the denotated message or message without code that one can plainly understand the *real unreality* of the photograph. Its unreality is that of the here, since the photograph is never experienced as an illusion; it is nothing but a *presence* (one must continually keep in mind the magical character of the photographic image). Its reality is that of a *having-been-there*, because in all photographs there is the constantly amazing evidence: *this took place in this way*. We possess, then, as a kind of

precious miracle, a reality from which we are ourselves sheltered.[5]

This condition of the having-been-there satisfies questions of verifiability at the level of the document. Truth is understood as a matter of evidence, rather than a function of logic. In the 1960s, abstract art, particularly painting, had aspired to a kind of logical investigation, attempting to tie the event of the work to what could be truly stated about the internal relations posited by the pictorial code. In so doing, this art tied itself to the convention of painting (or sculpture) as that continuous present which both sustained the work conceptually and was understood as its content.

In the work at P. S. 1, we are obviously dealing with a jettisonning of convention, or more precisely the conversion of the pictorial and sculptural codes into that of the photographic message without a code. In order to do this, the abstract artist adapts his work to the formal character of the indexical sign. These procedures comply with two of the components of the Hay performance described at the beginning of this discussion. The third feature of that performance—the addition of an articulated discourse, or text, to the otherwise mute index—was, I claimed, a necessary outcome of the first two. This need to link text and image has been remarked upon in the literature of semiology whenever the photograph is mentioned. Thus Barthes, in speaking of those images which resist internal divisibility, says, "this is probably the reason for which these systems are almost always duplicated by articulated speech (such as the caption of a photograph) which endows them with the discontinuous aspect which they do not have."[6]

Indeed, an overt use of captioning is nearly always to be found in that portion of contemporary art which employs photography directly. Story art, body art, some of conceptual art, certain types of earthworks, mount photographs as a type of evidence and join to this assembly a written text or caption.[7] But in the work I have been discussing—the abstract wing of this art of the index—we do not find a written text appended to the object-trace. There are, however, other kinds of texts for photographs besides written ones, as Walter Benjamin points out when he speaks of the history of the relation of caption to photographic image. "The directive which the captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines," he writes, "soon become even more explicit and more imperative in the film where the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of all preceding ones."[8] In film each image appears from within a succession that operates to internalize the caption, as narrative.

At P. S. 1 the works I have been describing all utilize succession. Pozzi's panels occur at various points along the corridors and stairwells of the building.

5. Barthes, "Rhetorique de l'image," p. 47.
6. Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967, p. 64.
7. See Part I of this essay, *October*, 3 (Spring 1977), 82.
8. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, New York, Schocken Books, 1969, p. 226.

Stuart's rubbings are relocated across the facing planes of a hallway. The Matta-Clark cut involves the viewer in a sequence of floors. The "text" that accompanies the work is, then, the unfolding of the building's space which the successive parts of the works in question articulate into a kind of cinematic narrative; and that narrative in turn becomes an explanatory supplement to the works.

In the first part of this essay I suggested that the index must be seen as something that shapes the sensibility of a large number of contemporary artists; that whether they are conscious of it or not, many of them assimilate their work (in part if not wholly) to the logic of the index. So, for example, at P. S. 1 Marcia Hafif used one of the former classrooms as an arena in which to juxtapose painting and writing. On the walls above the original blackboards Hafif executed abstract paintings of repetitive colored strokes while on the writing surfaces themselves she chalked a detailed, first-person account of sexual intercourse. Insofar as the narrative did not stand in relation to the images as an explanation, this text by Hafif was not a true caption. But its visual and formal effect was that of captioning: of bowing to the implied necessity to add a surfeit of written information to the depleted power of the painted sign.

Marcia Hafif. Untitled. *1976. Paint and chalk on walls and blackboards.*

KEITH COHEN

"C'était l'explosion du nouvel an. . . ."
Baudelaire

This is the explosion of a distant fete. Unseen devices sprinkle their wares over the hills, treetops light up. (A statement is made.) Crepuscular blue jays, drawing streamers through the sparkling air, spoil each attempt at celestial configuration. At last their loops are all tied up, and the projector stops. The fluttering bow lands on the nape of a nodding virgin, who then descends the marble steps. For each color in the marble there is a corresponding color in the sky: lavender, pink, salmon, pink, lavender, pink, seaweed. But the sky colors burst and vanish (such is the fate of anthropolanterns), and the marble steps remain unaltered, except for the passing, glancing impression of the virgin's naked foot.

Is it really the same day all over the world? Late that evening, in the midst of the usual cartoon, we were given the word. In a matter of minutes they were dumping us from vans at the edge of a darkened village near Cam Ranh Bay. We scattered, then instantly fell into primordial formation. It was always a word we were waiting for—a word of confession or complicity from the villagers, a word to move out or in, a word to hurl. We hurled. The word was to hurl, since no word had come from the village.

At first giant flashes lit up the tiny huts. The tenuous wooden joints, anchored with fired clay, sagged momentarily in the whistling wind, before huge puffs of smoke hid their simultaneous crackling and collapse. Irregular pink and orange flames leaped two and three times the height of the huts. Then the lines of flames evened out, leaving only an imprint of ancient structures that glowed against the low smoky night.

In the impromptu observatory tower, one uniform leaned to another and said, "Oh say, can you see by the dawn's early light?"

People gather. They have been gathering for some time. They were driven together with stunning effectiveness. Here they linger and lounge with the idea that each celestial dwindling will give rise to a lasting peace. (It never does.) But

each new burst is as short-lived as the next; astonishment immolates itself like the surrounding foliage. A woman fiddles with her change purse. A man smacks his asses to quiet them down. Others shift lightly from one foot to the other, groping about in the dark to find their friends. Now, in retrospect, it may have been just a reconnaissance mission—nothing to transfigure topography, despite the present drift of hearsay.

It is for this reason that now, though in the very raiments that Your stars have lit, I quit Your holy marble altar, Lord God and Father Almighty. I do not want Your crown. I cannot wear Your raiments. These green and purple marble steps revive the soles of my feet that have burned too long in holy ecstasy. And I know a spring, sacred to another god, whose waters are cooler than the highest night skies. (Behold those skies: glitter without light, vast depthlessness.) I shall go now. Let Jesus Christ come from another's womb, let his glory sound some other way and somewhere else. Let his good torture another soul. Mine is soon at peace. Let his word bend another ear. Mine is soon distracted. I shall return now: never let me be hailed as Yours. I shall go down to the river and I shall cleanse myself of the thickest and holiest of perfumes. I shall be loved, and not intact. I shall go now. Let go their soul. Mine is soon at rest.

Then all falls down. The discourse and the text to boot. A super-architect was wanted on the spot. Neighbors fished through the rumored debris, the director placed the flood-lights, and the female lead stepped down. The ablution of this grim pastoral required nothing short of a universal falling into step: a second bungling to trip up the syndrome of salvation. Feasts of every order and ceremonies in every size will have been razed on high. Serene mortality on the backs of buzzards will have detonated the time bomb, and the green and purple marble will have never had the chance to grow lukewarm. A flashback father will supply the word: "Feast, then, and on flesh."

Narcissism and Modern Culture*

RICHARD SENNETT

The clinical data upon which classical psychoanalysis was built have in part disappeared. In their place has arisen a kind of psychic distress among the urban bourgeoisie unforeseen fifty years ago. The question I want to explore is what a dramatic change like this means: have changes in the society brought new kinds of psychological problems to the fore? has progress in the science of psychology made us able to recognize symptoms which were unremarked formerly? or need we reexamine the very concept of the psyche in light of the historical, social production of neurosis? This change in clinical data obviously poses basic questions about the relationship of psychoanalysis and society.

This discussion is in three parts. I shall offer a description of this change in the patterns of neurosis. I shall then describe how one school of psychoanalytic thought has coped with the change by inventing a new language of psychic cause. Finally, I shall criticize this language of psychic causes, and try to suggest how the historical production of neurosis can be understood by a different kind of discourse.

The doctors of Freud's day often had to treat problems of hysteria, manifested in tangible, concrete behavior: uncontrollable laughing at inappropriate moments; gushes of anger during moments of danger which a person, and that person alone, perceived; panic reactions inaugurated by trivial events—for example, homosexual panic when a man was brushed accidentally by another man walking on the street. When such concrete symptoms were allied to somatic changes in the patient, Victorian medicine called the problems complaints and labelled them by colors: the "green complaint" for women who vomited compulsively in the middle of the night (usually after intercourse), the "white complaint" for women who were afraid of being seen in daylight or strong night-light, and whose skin took on a wan color.

Such symptomatology makes the act of constructing a psychological theory forthright, if not easy. The doctor is presented with the involuntary expression of

* This essay was originally delivered as a lecture to the Faculty of Social and Political Science of Cambridge University in November 1976.

feeling, a demon breaking through the surface of polite order, and this naturally suggests a duality or two levels or a peculiar set of connections between what is evident and what is hidden in the mind. The doctor is presented with incidents rather than permanent states of tone like Renaissance melancholia; the patient signals the doctor through sharp little eruptions. I do not say the absurd, that Freud had only to be sensible in order to deduce the theory of the unconscious and the mechanism of selective repression; but it was sensible of him to do so. And Freud being, as it were, in a comfortable position for praxis, for interweaving theory and therapy, he was able to take the much more daring steps of connecting neurotic mentation to mental activity as a whole, to create a geography of the unconscious, and ultimately to derive ethical principles from these theoretical leaps.

Today we are not in such a comfortable position for praxis because these tangible symptoms of distress, especially the hysteria-related symptoms, appear in the clinics less and less frequently. Indeed, the whole medical model of disease signals is being challenged by the ever-increasing occurrence of people who evince no concrete, betraying symptom of distress, but rather report on malaise endemic to their character states: an inability to feel or to become aroused; a persistent sense of illegitimacy which is at its strongest when one is being rewarded as legitimate; a sense of being dead to the world. Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* is a far more apt depiction of this state than Freud's *Dora*.

Doctors, being paid to give pains names, call this condition a character disorder. In the last few years, however, a group of psychoanalysts working in both Chicago and New York have taken this label seriously; they have sought to develop a whole new theory of selfhood based on these new clinical symptoms, a theory which turns on the relationship between narcissism and character formation.

It may seem strange to associate the term narcissism with the plight of someone who reports an inability to feel, for we commonly associate narcissism with excessively strong feelings of self-love and self-esteem. That is, we equate narcissism with egotism. But consider the following sort of distress: A person comes for help because every time he gets close to another person, he gets scared and has to run away. His feelings for the other are not strong enough to overcome his terror, or, he reports, he "goes blank" at a certain point in his relations with the other person. Furthermore, the feelings do not express themselves sexually in inability to have an erection or to ejaculate. Instead, while making love he feels empty, bored. The manifest content of such a distress is "I cannot feel"; the latent content, however, is that the Other, the other person or the outside world, is failing to arouse me. The statement of inadequacy is double-edged. I am inadequate; those who care about me, by their very caring become inadequate for my needs and not really the "right ones." As a result of this double-edged formula, the person caught in this bind feels that those who try to get close to him are violating him, giving him no room to breathe; and so he flees, on to the next person who is

idealized as perfect until he or she begins to care.

This is what clinical narcissism is about. It is egoism rather than egotism, but egoism of a special kind. The world is a mirror of the self, a surface on which one's own needs are projected, needs one genuinely yearns to have fulfilled. But when another image is reflected back, outside oneself but reaching to oneself, that whole ability to desire, to imagine and to body forth one's desire is threatened, as if when two images are reflected on the mirror, the mirror itself will break.

It is to this situation that the myth of Narcissus speaks. True, he is in love with his own beauty, but the myth would still make sense if he were in love with his own unhappiness. He leans to the water's edge, indifferent to the voice which calls him back; he wants to get closer and closer to the image of himself reflected on the water's surface; at the moment of this union with himself, he drowns. The emotional structure of the myth is that, when one cannot distinguish between self and other and treats reality as a projection of self, one is in danger. That danger is caught by the metaphor of Narcissus' death: he leans so close to the water mirror, his sense of outside is so taken up by reflections of himself that the self disappears; it is destroyed. In ordinary life, after the fall into the water, as it were, the clinical profile the patient presents is of feeling dead inside, feeling that one is worth nothing and seeing nothing worthwhile outside.

The increase of such psychic distress has led the group of analysts who are commonly and disparagingly referred to as the Chicago Narcissists, to a new theoretical effort. It is, I think, a failure, but an interesting and instructive one.

The leader of this Chicago school is a Viennese-born psychoanalyst, Heinz Kohut, now professor of psychiatry at the University of Chicago Medical School. My remarks concern his major work, *The Analysis of the Self*,[1] although a more technical work by Otto Kernberg, *Pathological Narcissism*,[2] would also be of interest to anyone concerned with psychoanalysis.

Kohut has used the appearance of this new distress to form a new image of the psyche. It is an image in which the major psychological work that goes on in one's life is achieving a stable set of distinctions between self and other. And *achievement* is the proper word: these distinctions are firmly entrenched rather late in the life cycle in the late adolescent period. Kohut sees his work as related to that of Jean Piaget—rather oddly, it may seem, as Piaget has done so much to illuminate the very early birth of self/other, subject/object distinctions in cognitive development. But Kohut claims that he and Piaget are in accord in seeing a delayed reaction, a long lapse, between the period when these powers of distinction emerge as cognitive activities and that in which they become affective activities. The great drama of childhood is the struggle to orient and eventually to apply the cognitive apparatus to affect, and so to build a self. It is Kohut's thesis

1. Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self; A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders*, New York, International Universities Press, 1971.
2. Otto F. Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism*, New York, J. Aronson, 1975.

that no image will reflect in the mirror, as it were, until two images can be reflected in it, that the work of achieving a self proceeds principally by a Hegelian negation, learning what the self is *not*.

In the psychoanalytic framework, Kohut's work is distinctive for two reasons. First, the principle events of the classic analytic scenario disappear as necessities for psychic development: Oedipal traumas, the pubescent resolution of sexual polymorphism, and the like, are banished, not as experiences, but as plotted events. No longer is the psyche a scenario with a plot. Now it is only a process with a teleology, the relative achievement or failure of selfhood, with a variety of event-series as means to that end. Secondly, the work of therapy shifts from the composing of a life history to a much more present-centered activity in which the analyst plays a very active role. He encourages the patient to project as much as the patient can upon the therapist, to treat the therapist as though he had the very same reactions as the patient; then the therapist begins to confront the patient with the fact that he doesn't feel the same. What therapy does that ordinary experience cannot is make it safe for a person to feel angry and hopeless when another person does not share his feelings. As long as the patient pays the therapist's fees, the therapist will continue the work of confrontation and distinction. In this way, what is called a mirror transference is worked through, or, in the imagery I prefer, the mirror of projection gradually comes to show double reflections.

I ought to say something about how those in the psychoanalytic field regard this effort, in terms of the literature on the subject. While it is widely praised as constituting an attempt to grapple with a new clinical problem, it is also widely suspect as little more than a new version of libido theory, no more advanced than Freud's 1914 essay *On Narcissism*. The grandeur of Freud's metapsychology is abandoned, however; the connection of neurotic mentation with cognition *per se* is also reduced to a single dimension. Most seriously, the willingness of Freud and such dissenting disciples as Jung and Reich to face the intractable fact of human unhappiness and pain is lost. Instead, the self/other distinction becomes the analyst's ethical discourse.

Just as these criticisms may be, they are slightly misplaced; they are based on a view of psychoanalysis as a literature which refers only to itself and its own assumptions. The peculiar thing about psychoanalysis is that it is both a literature and a practice: the practice has to deal with problems which occur outside the terms of the literature; one cannot refuse to treat someone because, from the point of view of the literature, he has an unresponsive disease. The Chicago Narcissists justify their undoubted reductionism in the name of praxis: while the classical language could easily label these narcissistic character disorders, people speaking that language failed to cure or ameliorate the psychic distress. Indeed, the classical analytic mode, in which all the initiatory work of transference was done by the patient, meant that people with this character disorder often became so depressed by the very process of treatment, so much more propelled into the deadening

obsession with selfhood, that they ended their therapies prematurely. From the point of view of a literature, the description of an outcome as premature or of the patient as having failed to be a suitable analytic candidate are perhaps admissable; but from the point of view of analytic praxis, of the committment to intervene in the life of another person, these terms are signs of the very failure of classical analytic language to accomplish the task of psychoanalysis.

This, then is the problem of narcissism in modern culture: how does one go about thinking about it in such a way that one can change it? This question is not quite so simple as the normal problem in the social sciences of how to construct theoretical models which can accomodate changes in surface phenomena or data. The issue is not whether a particular theory may give an adequate account of different data profiles, but whether it can give an account such that the data itself can be radically changed, tampered with, destroyed. This is the major connection, in my view, between the discourse of psychoanalysis and that of Marxism; just as the discourse of analysis, derived from reports of neurosis, is an attempt to dull neurotic pain, so the discourse about class seeks to end the existence of classes themselves.

On these terms, the Chicago Narcissists adopted a strategy close to that of the Yugoslavian Marxists around the magazine *Praxis*. These psychoanalysts decided that, to the extent that a new therapy was required, a new theory of the psyche itself was required. To be more precise: the implication of emotional intervention (like the implication of social action) for theory concerns the model of the production of symptoms requiring treatment. To be more abstract: the activity of transforming a phenomenon reveals the mode of production of that phenomenon up to the point when the transformation began.

The assumption here is that each phenomenon is produced by a distinctive mode of production, just as we may deduce what kinds of tools a sculptor uses by examining the marks he has made on the wood. I do not think the concerns of this new group are epistemological, but for that very reason the problems of this kind of thinking are clearer in the current theory of narcissism than they are in writers who are, in that respect, more sophisticated.

The immediate problem of this discourse, from a social point of view, is that every time a new set of symptoms appears in a culture's profile, a new image of the psyche of man would have to be invented to account for it. I have, for example, an intuition that the next starring attraction in the theater of bourgeois culture is going to be sado-masochism. Sado-masochism is easily diagnosed and labeled by the terms of both the Viennese and Chicago schools, but treated by both with difficulty. Will we then need a whole new architecture of the psyche to account for the infliction of pain as a central mode of expression?

Since the discovery, every thirty years or so, of a new phenomenon called man offends common sense, a purely sociological account of the problem of narcissism may seem better than this model of a tie between psychic distress and a distinctive mode of production. What happens if we discard the notion of a

procreative psyche altogether and look at the production of neurosis as a social matter, the neuroses changing over time as society does?

This view has one very great advantage and one equally great disadvantage. The advantage is that one can take into account the epidemiological character of neuroses and psychoses, their differential distribution in different social and economic groups of society. As Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss insisted, the single most important social quality of emotional expression is epidemiology, what they called the capacity of emotions to take on the characteristics of populations. This is true in time as well as in space. As the profile of the urban bourgeoisie has changed from the syndrome of hysteria seventy years ago to that of narcissistic disconnections today, it will, if my intuition is right, be characterized by a large number of cases of sado-masochism twenty years hence. The explanation of the shift would be in terms of social conditions that bring now one, now another class of distress to the fore. We might, following Engels, say that the pressures of privatization in modern capitalism make it logical that over time people move from the hysterical betrayal of private feeling in public to the narcissistic condition in which private feeling constitutes the whole of one's affective reality, so that the very concept of an impersonal public disappears.

This is the advantage of a purely social account of neurosis: it explains epidemiology; but it is limited by that explanation. It tells us why the number of cases of a given distress should be great or small, and it instructs us of this distribution over time. Principles of distribution are not, however, principles of value, neither in economics, as Keynes taught us, nor in psychology. A particular and problematic instance of this is evident in the case of social workers dealing with black adolescents in New York, who began, about ten or twelve years ago, a very vulgar form of this sociological discourse about neurosis. They took seriously the idea that blacks were infected with a sociological disease and began preaching that the only way for black youth to rid themselves of feelings of shame and rage was to organize in the street and fight the system; in short, that collective action was a cure for the miseries of self-doubt. The therapy was, for the social workers, a logical consequence of reading studies such as a 1962 analysis of TAT[3] responses, graded according to their distribution among races and classes. In these studies shame appears as a sociological artifact because the distribution of shame responses is strongly controlled by social categories.

The trouble was that this counsel of social action intensified feelings of shame and hostility to the social workers. When told that the source of the trouble was external, a collective phenomenon, these children felt that even the reality of their feelings was being denied them, that not even their pain was within their own control. One may say that these black children simply internalized the shaming symbols of the larger culture, and guarded their wounds, as it were, as

3. TAT (Thematic Apperception Test) is a projective technique used in clinical psychology to make diagnostic assessments of dominant needs or motivations based on stories told by a subject about each of a series of pictures.—ed.

symbols of self. But this will not do. Analytically, the process of internalization becomes one of mechanical replication of external values inside; why internalization mechanisms are replicative, and the results valued, is not explained. The seriousness, the gravity of finding in one's wounds a conviction of selfhood is avoided. Moreover, by the peculiar canons of psychoanalytic discourse, the social production of neurosis on these terms fails to mean much because the result of thinking in this way is not an alleviation of the symptoms, not a change in the data, but rather an entrenchment of them. Whereas the old-style analyst could drive his patients to despair, the hip social worker can drive them to ever-greater feelings of worthlessness.

If we consider internalization a little more closely, however, we can derive from it a set of ideas for analytic discourse which avoids some of the problems of both psychic and social production models—models which define symptomatology by defining the conditions of motivation which produce the symptoms. As I approach the final, and problematic part of this essay I want to suggest that, by understanding processes of internalization, analysis can and should move from discourse about motivation to discourse about repression. And lest this language of repression seem to be only an extension of the social-artifact idea, I will claim that this shift from a language of motives to language about another sort of psychic process is the only way the idea of a trans-historical, trans-social psyche can be kept intact.

I begin with an apparent paradox. A symptom is a pain which does not explain itself. It requires an act of decoding, of reading. The process of involuntarily vomiting did not reveal to the Victorian doctor why the vomiting began. He had to penetrate the mystery by discovering the times and circumstances surrounding this physiological event, until he discovered that it was preceded by sexual intercourse during which the woman may have had an orgasm. The doctor was then in a position to understand that this involuntary vomiting was a revulsion, often a blind, irrational attempt to expel the sperm from the body. Nor could the women tell the doctor why she was vomiting; the symptom appeared instead of speech—speech which was, as we say, repressed. Symptoms are the language of repression: they are a hermeneutic system. In a narcissistic disorder, the language of repression is at an extreme because even the concretization of symptoms breaks down; everything is hidden in amorphous feeling tones, so that, for example, one feels bored during sexual intercourse. As objectification is reduced the reasons become more obscure.

The appearance of any symptom, then, is a signal that a process of repression is at work. Not repression of instinct, of drive, of need, necessarily; not internalization of norms, roles, or values, necessarily: we need not specify the universe of motivations in order to specify what is the work of repression. As long as non-self-referencing signals, *i.e.*, symptoms, appear, psychic work is being done to create a within, a foreground screening a background, a surface and a beneath. The action of creating a hermeneutic system in need of decoding is the psyche. *Psyche* is

properly a verb rather than a noun; psyche is not a thing. It is the action of creating a sign system in which the affect is so painful or conflict-ridden that the sign in time deconstructs.

The idea advanced here is an application of the principle proposed by Aristotle in *De Anima* that psyche is a principle of motion, of animation. As long as there is any need to do the work of repression, psychic activity occurs; the content of this activity is the creation of hermeneutic categories. The principle of psyche transcends its categorizations. Therefore, in psychology the existence of the symptom as hermeneutic is the guarantor of a certain kind of philosophic idealism, of psyche as an ideal activity.

I am formulating here what practicing therapists put more concretely and effectively: finding out what is repressed is not a therapeutic act, whereas finding out that it is repressed is therapeutic. Plato's idea of the healing lie has some validity; one may tell any story about one's life so long as the telling of it removes or reduces the feeling that one's life is intolerable. True, Freud believed the most tolerable story would eventually be the most factually accurate. Sullivan, Jung, and other analysts more alive to the healing powers of myths cared, on the contrary, more about the erosion of a patient's conflicts as he told an ever-changing story during the course of his analysis.

If psychoanalysis is a discourse about repression rather than motivation, the term *psyche* acquires a particular intellectual integrity. Rather than a thing or a storage tank of needs and drives, it becomes an activity with a definite form, in time; it constructs foregrounds and backgrounds, insides and outsides, superstructures and infrastructures, and then deconstructs them. The reasons for, and the material of, this rhythm derive, again, not from a psychic storage tank of instincts, but from the character of social relations.

Psychic activity is necessary insofar as social relations create conflicts between people which can be tolerated only by initial acts of mystification. My belief is that these conflicts involve domination and subordination, and that domination rules any human association. To mystify social relations of domination means something rather different in analytic terms than it does, say, in the first volume of *Capital*. Mystification as a way of tolerating domination requires not only throwing a veil over the relationship itself, but transmuting the structure of the situation into a symbol which gives a meaning to that constructed inside called the self. This is not internalization or replication in a mechanical sense, as though our processes of self-awareness were miniatures of our social relations. Let us take as an example a common emblem of domination like "the stronger person has a bigger body." As the structure passes inward, the character of the symbol becomes dissonant and internally contradictory. "How big and strong am I?" is a question which the child can only answer by comparison to other children. But now inside, bigness and strongness are states that have another reality, as belonging to the child *sui generis*, of being mysterious and secret insofar as they apply to the inside, even as the terms *bigger* and *stronger* are viable linguistically

to the child when he compares himself to others. This domain of the hidden, the inside, the beneath is a coping mechanism because the management of bigness and strength seems to be under one's control, because it has disappeared within. It has become one's own as it becomes nonparametric.

The costs of internalizing domination are very difficult to write off: the internalizing of dominance structures produces, between the inside and the outside, an almost perfect cognitive dissonance. Outside is a specifiable architecture of relationship; inside are the traces of this relationship, but in becoming one's own, the tools of measuring distance and weight are lost, since inside is nonrelational. At this point, in an effort to deal with the dissonance one has created, responsive attempts at deconstruction, decoding, demystification are made, modes we ordinarily call objectification. *Objectification* is indeed a good word to use, if it is taken to mean the effort to regain the use of those tools of measurement which we use in establishing the dimensions of our social relations. We are always at work, then, upon the elementary condition of social relationships—domination—but the nature of this work moves from making it safe and secret, as we construct a within, to making it open and less dissonant as we think of ourselves in relation to others. This dialectic of mystification and objectification goes forward unendingly through our lives because, at every moment of objectification and cleansing, one is vulnerable to his world again. If the act of demystification has not greatly changed that world, or if the contradictions in it are simply too great to be dealt with, the whole cycle based on the conversion of social structures into nonrelational symbols of self begins again.

I do not wish to claim the refocusing of psychoanalysis upon the necessities of repression as a unique personal concern. In the current work of Jürgen Habermas and in that of the neglected American psychoanalyst Roy Schafer, whose book *A New Language for Psychoanalysis* is extremely important, there are similar emphases.[4] If this approach has value it lies in according to the social facts of domination a central importance in psychoanalytical work, without denying psyche as an independent category of its own. The rhythm I have described depends, for its form, entirely on the facts of domination, but this rhythmic work will go forward no matter what those facts are.

An approach of this sort leads us to an ethic in regard to the major therapeutic problem of our time which is different from that of Kohut and his followers. They focus on creating a sense of self/other distinctions so that one may develop a sense of self. The fruit of this distinction process is, in terms of affect, consistent libidinal cathexis. I consider this vision of therapy to be unworthy of the patient and inconsistent with the seriousness of narcissism.

If we take seriously the notion of psychic activity as hermeneutic construction and deconstruction, the attempts to create firm categories of self/other in order to clarify and cathect seem pointless. This ethic of therapy is permeated by

4. Roy Schafer, *A New Language for Psychoanalysis*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1976.

puritanical denial of the reality and even of the aesthetic power of unfulfilled narcissistic longing. The greatness of Freud's original therapeutic ideal was that he did not try to sanitize the self. He believed throughout his life that one must accept the puzzles of one's selfhood, that this acceptance is the very meaning of a cure, that one must accept a lack of fulfillment as a consequence of longing to be fulfilled, accept the hermeneutic processes of the psyche with a kind of resignation. Resignation is not despair. Giving up the attempt to clarify the self, one can enter into the social relationships available to one with almost a sense of relief. To put it differently, the civilized possibilities of social life lie not in the utopian dream that social domination will end, but rather in the providing of a domain that offers some escape from the curse that is psychic activity.

The ethical consequence of psychoanalysis can therefore be conceived as political in the best sense of the word; the ethics of a therapy is to instill that peculiar form of resignation about solving the puzzles of one's own selfhood or resolving one's feelings, which will release one into the world. I know that the tone of Freud's own work in his old age suggests that world-weariness is the fruit of psychoanalytic self-understanding. But there is also, as Phillip Rieff puts it, a dialogue in Freud between resignation about oneself and commitment to others, and it is this ethical insight which I believe represents the best in the psychoanalytic tradition. The discourse of psychoanalysis is an antipsychology.

ROBERT WHITMAN

This was the first performance of this work.* When we began to think about the series, I began with notes, ideas, and some kind of loose form. Most of these ideas had to be left floating until a space could be found. The making of the piece in its final form had to take place while working in the space. Because the nature of the space would determine exactly how and what would be done, the only work that we could do ahead of time was shooting film, which we began in February.

When the space was finally found in mid-March, the floating ideas had to either float on out or form themselves into the work.

Most of my pieces are reactions to specific times and spaces. They get off the ground when I see the space and work in the space. They function in a social reality in a time in my life. They are not abstract.

The performers, props, films, and the things that happen in the space function as the intermediary or medium between the audience and the street. The life of the street—trucks and cars passing, people walking by—works the same way. These are the translators, guides to the way in and the way back.

The kind of image, the time, color, rhythm, shapes . . . have to do with the particular poetry specific to the work, its own nature, that part of the city which is being seen.

Real performers with real things, with image things—boxes with spinning rocks, burning bags in them, etc.—change in scale of objects, movement of these objects through the space by the film on things, produce a flexibility of mind to prepare for the progression of the work at the end, the movement of the audience's mind from the inside to the outside and back, to the deeper inside.

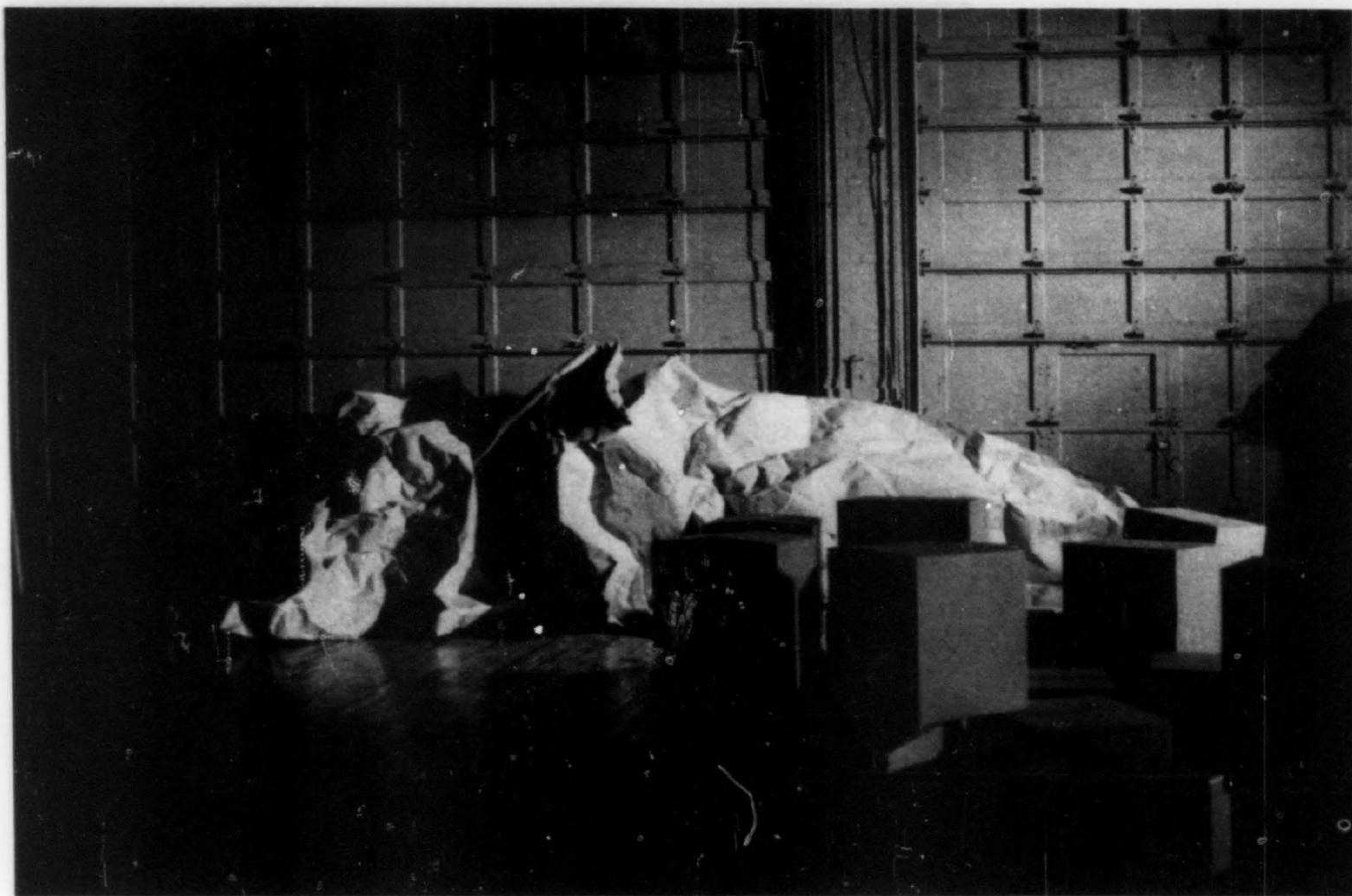
The real street becomes an image street as plastically the street is moved into the space. The way the street is lit, against the darkness of the inside space brings the flattened-out planes and lines of it into the space.

The audience enters into the street, not in its physical sense but as an image of the real.

The main action of the work is the movement of the mind of the audience through the performance area out into the street and back. It is the passage of the mind through the physical to the image, through the image to the real, and returning to itself with the real.

In this case, the real is the street revealed by the piece. When it is viewed in the focus created by the work, it takes on the aura of the real, it becomes some kind of a physical representation of basic, fundamental forms . . . that is the real I mean to be experienced and remembered.

* In spring 1976 a retrospective of Whitman's theater works was mounted in New York. Seven works were presented, spanning a period in Whitman's career from 1960 to 1976. *Light Touch* was created for that occasion. The accompanying photographs are by Babette Mangolte.



The performance takes place in a trucking terminal. The audience is seated on the loading dock, facing the large doors that are used to admit large cargo vans. The neighborhood is a trucking/pier/warehouse/freight forwarding area. The street outside is one of the most ordinary in the U.S.A. The street lights are of sodium type, having an orangish light.

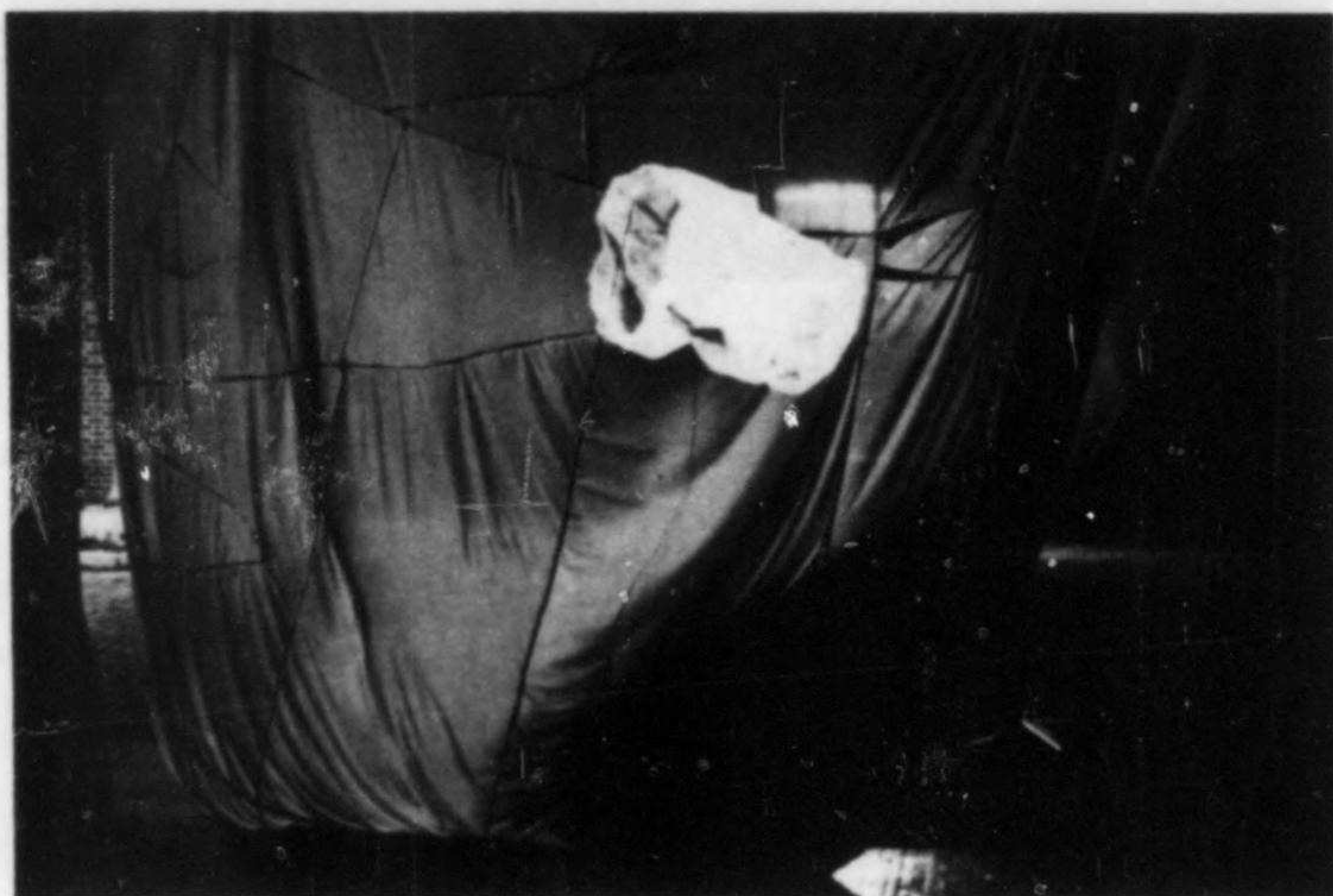
The audience looks out onto several piles of cardboard boxes haphazardly arranged across the floor. The inside of the place is painted brick red. A 30 foot long, 9 foot high piece of bright red paper is attached to the doors in the center of the space.

The lights go out. It is quiet. Some idea may enter people's minds about where they are; street noises, etc. The lights come on. The large red paper starts to move. It detaches itself from the wall and slowly bunches itself up. It crumples itself into other shapes having the same kind of evocative quality as cloud shapes.

This red thing crinkles itself all the way it can go to the left.

It stops and is quiet.

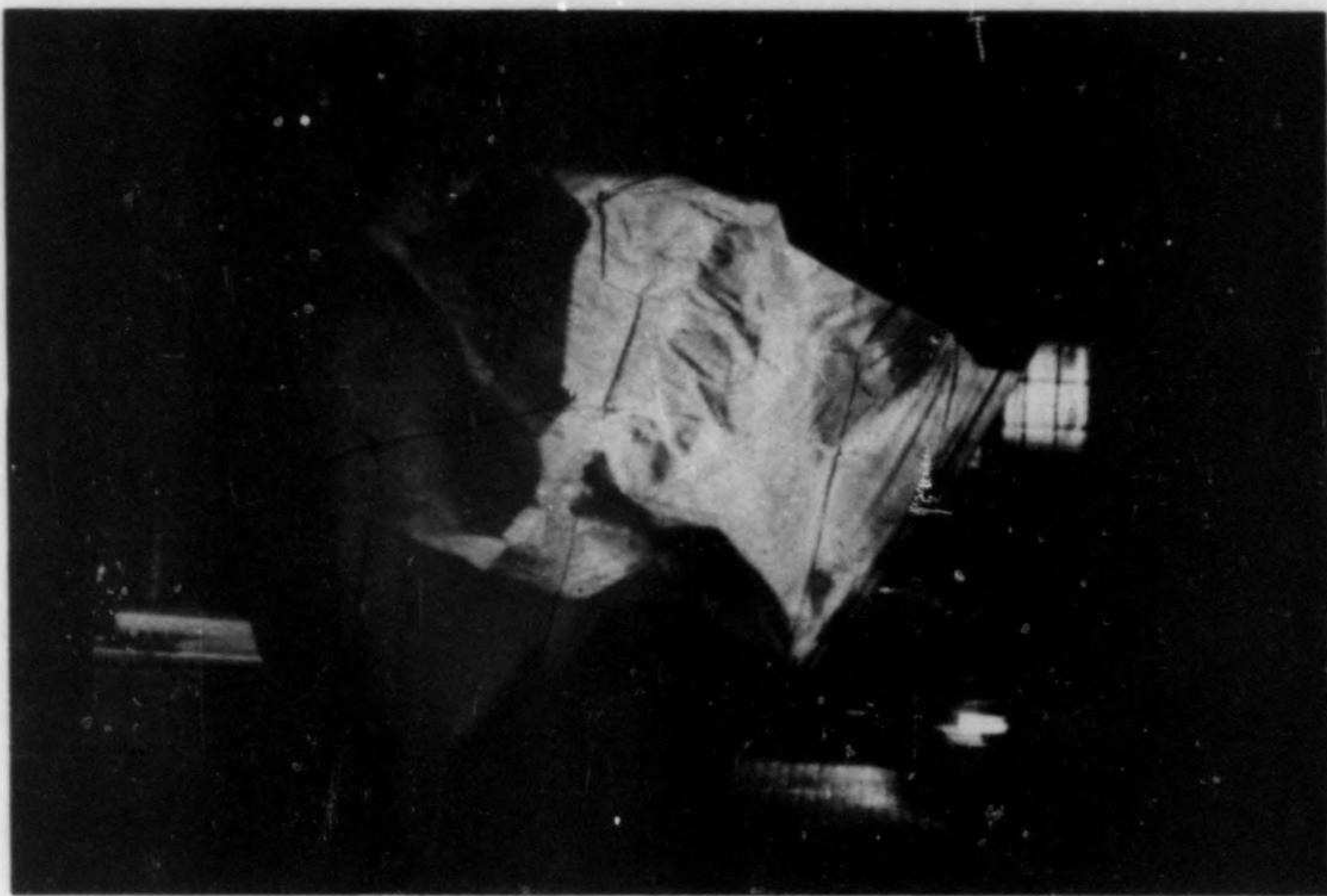
The light goes out.



In the darkness, someone walks across the space to the controls for the large overhead doors. One door is raised. As the door goes up, it raises with it a large thin white sheet. Light from the street outside shows through and the audience can see lighted windows of buildings, traffic going by, etc.

The sheet is blown about by the wind.

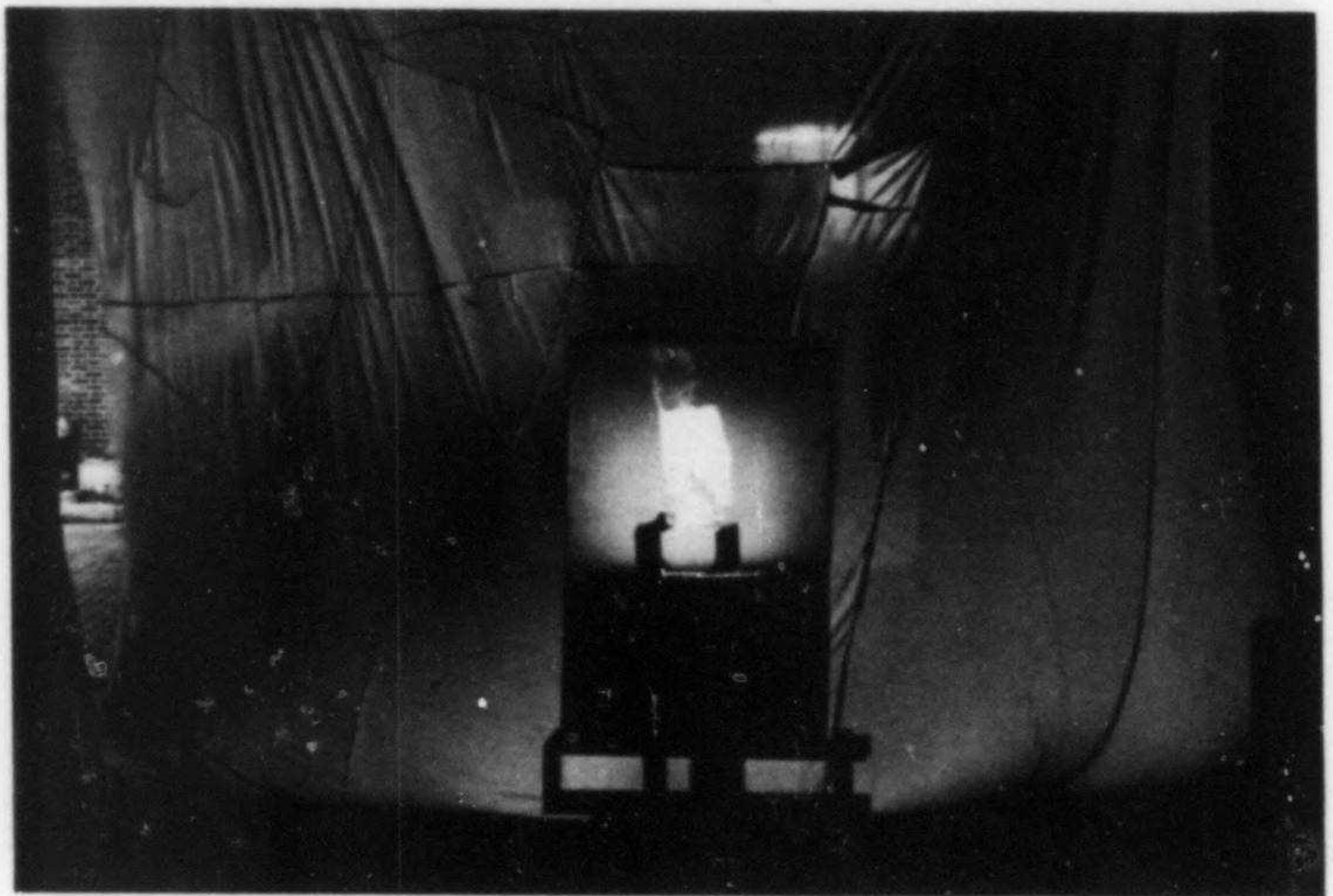
After about thirty seconds, the street light goes out and a film is projected on the sheet.

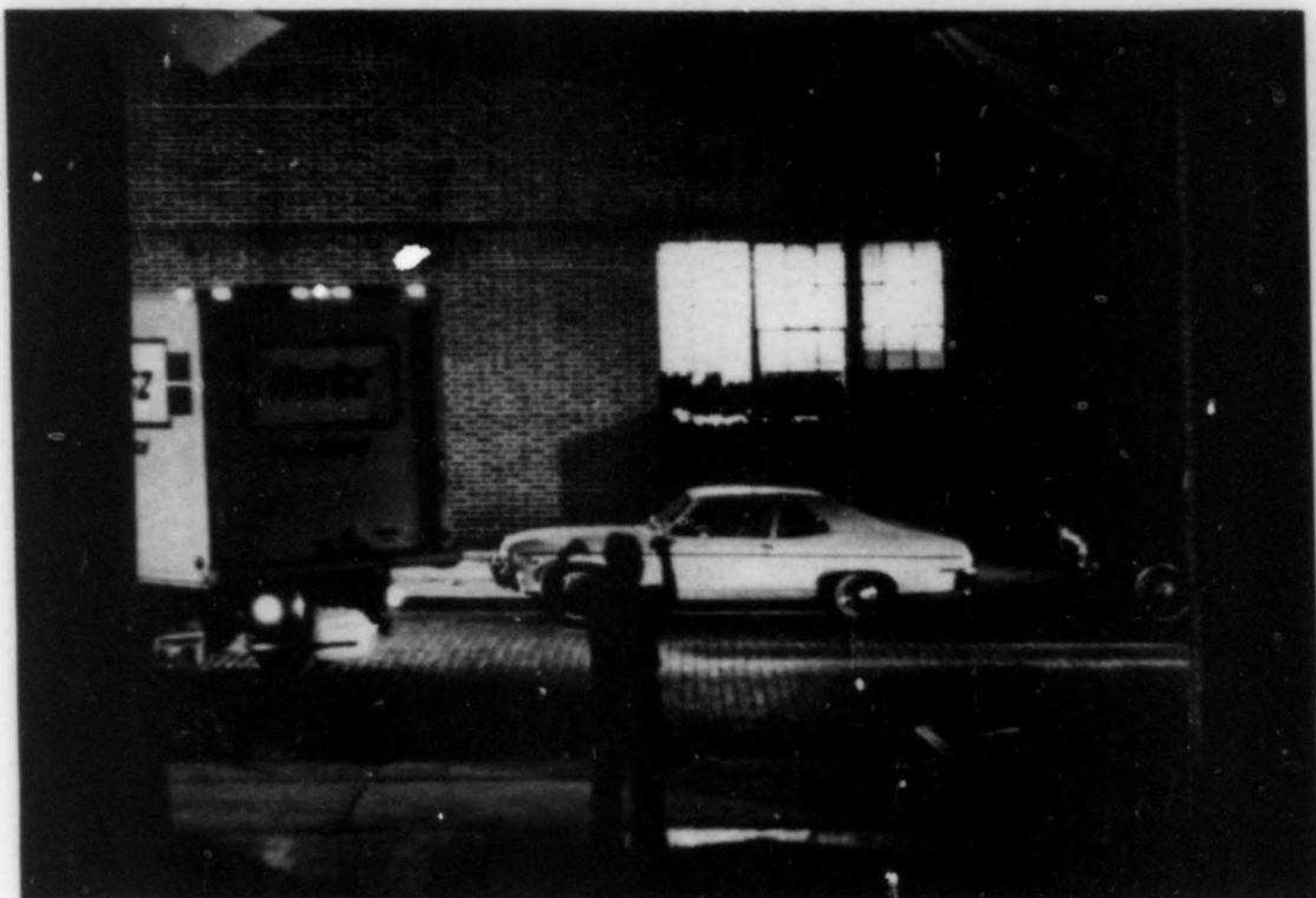


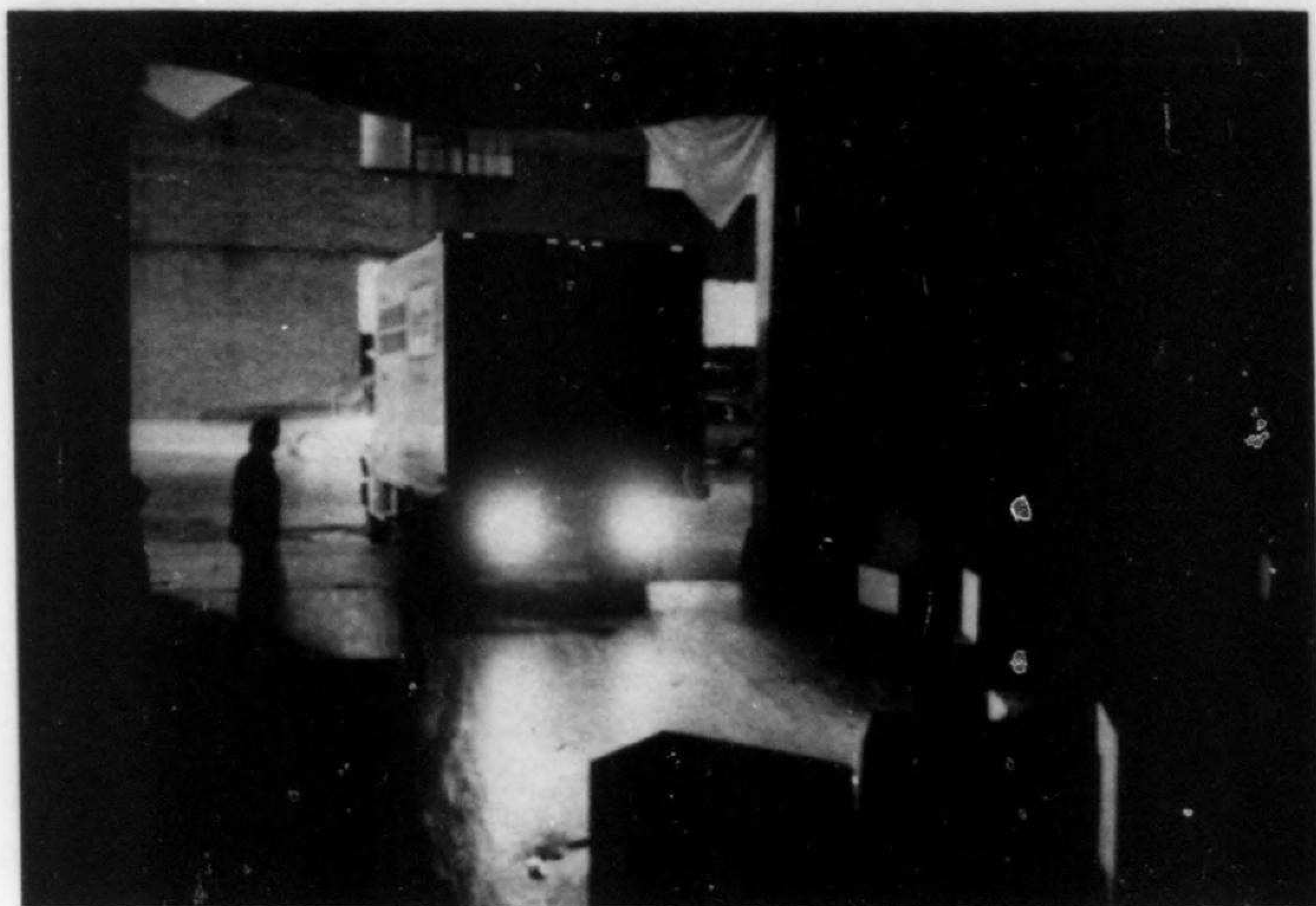
It is a paper bag. It starts out so small that it is not recognizable, then it grows to fill the whole sheet.

A man wheels out a stand with a paper bag on it, then a white thing in back of the bag. The bag is lit on fire. People see something on the bag as it is burning, which they slowly realize is a film of a burnt bag reconstructing itself. When the physical bag has burnt up, it is reconstructed in the film.

The stand is wheeled away. The white cloth covering the doorway is pulled up and the street is revealed. Traffic goes by. People walk by. In the darkness they cannot see into the space.

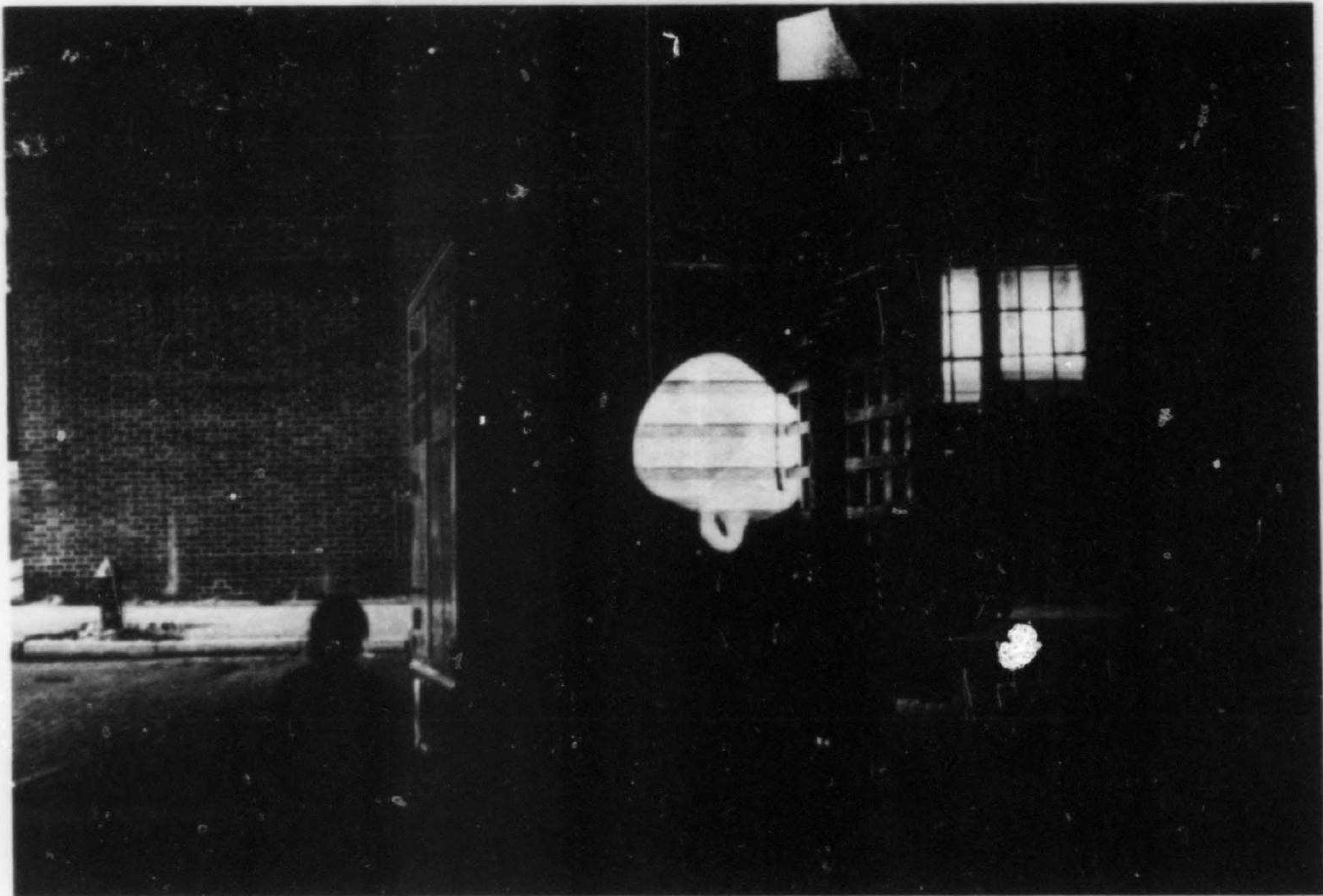






A truck pulls up in front of the building and backs into the space.

The driver parks the truck, gets out, and opens the back of the truck. He covers the brake lights with his jacket and sweater.

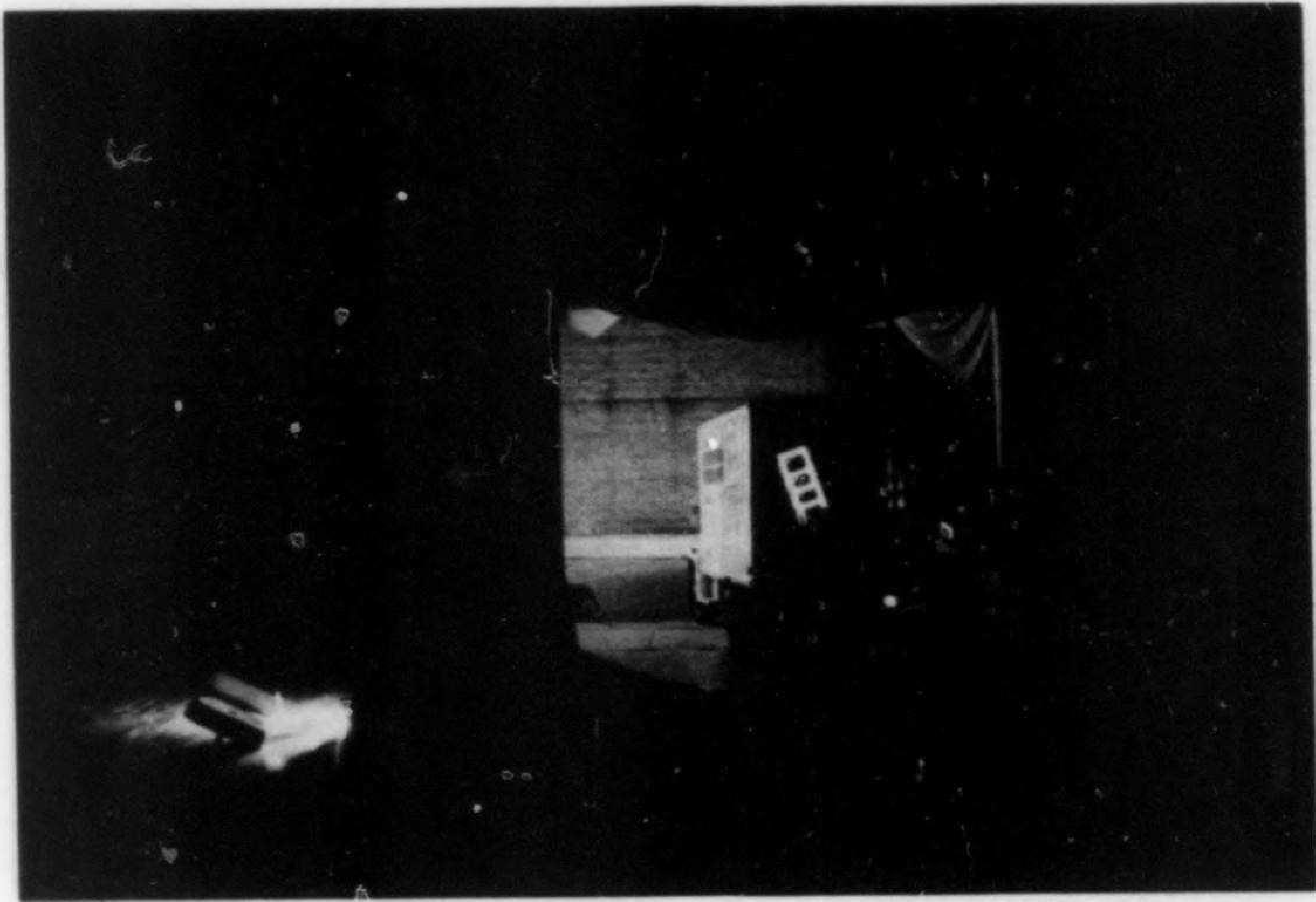


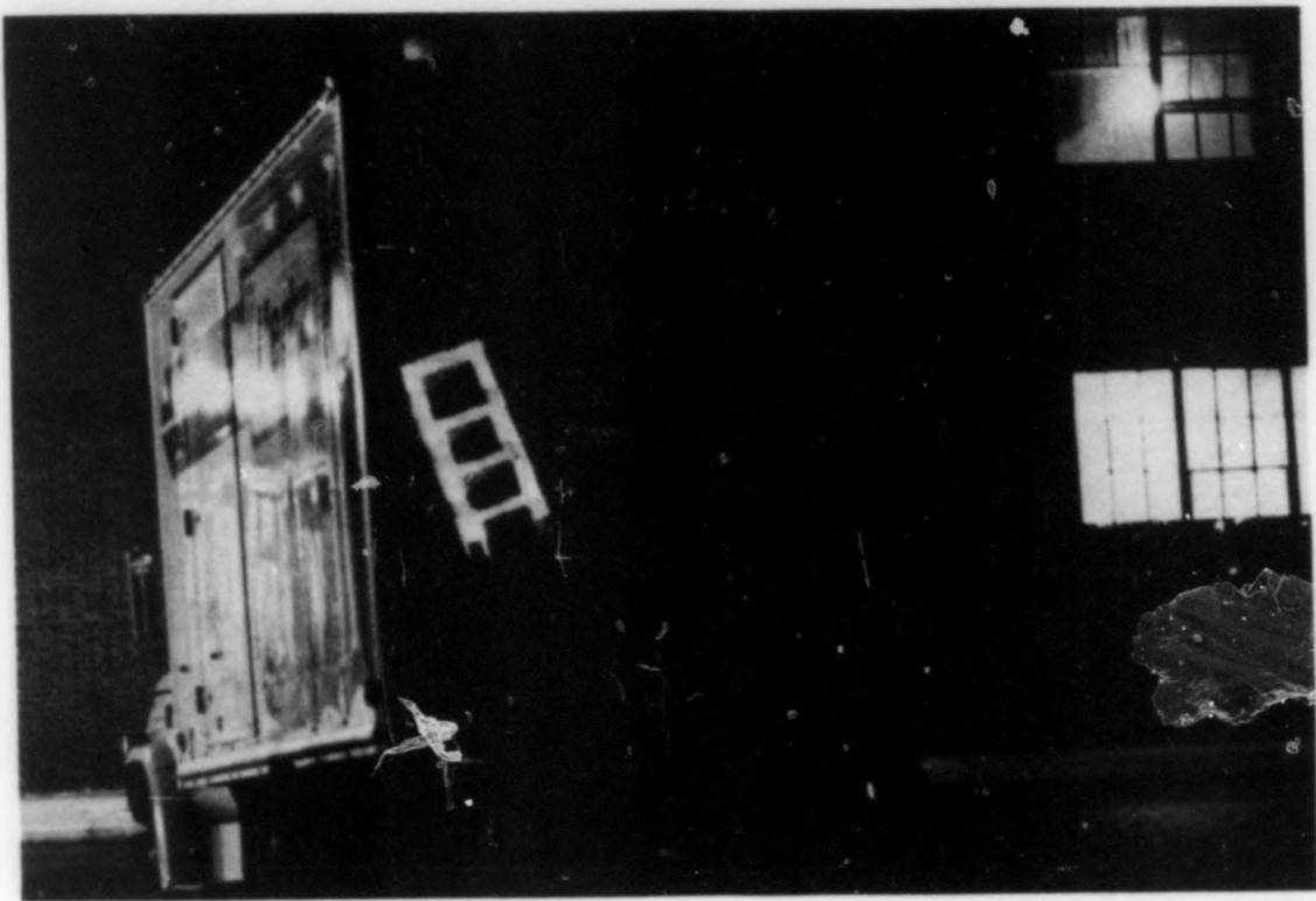
An image is projected into the back of the truck. It is a basin which gets bigger until it fills the whole back of the truck. During this shot, a real basin is taken from the truck and put on a loading platform to the left.

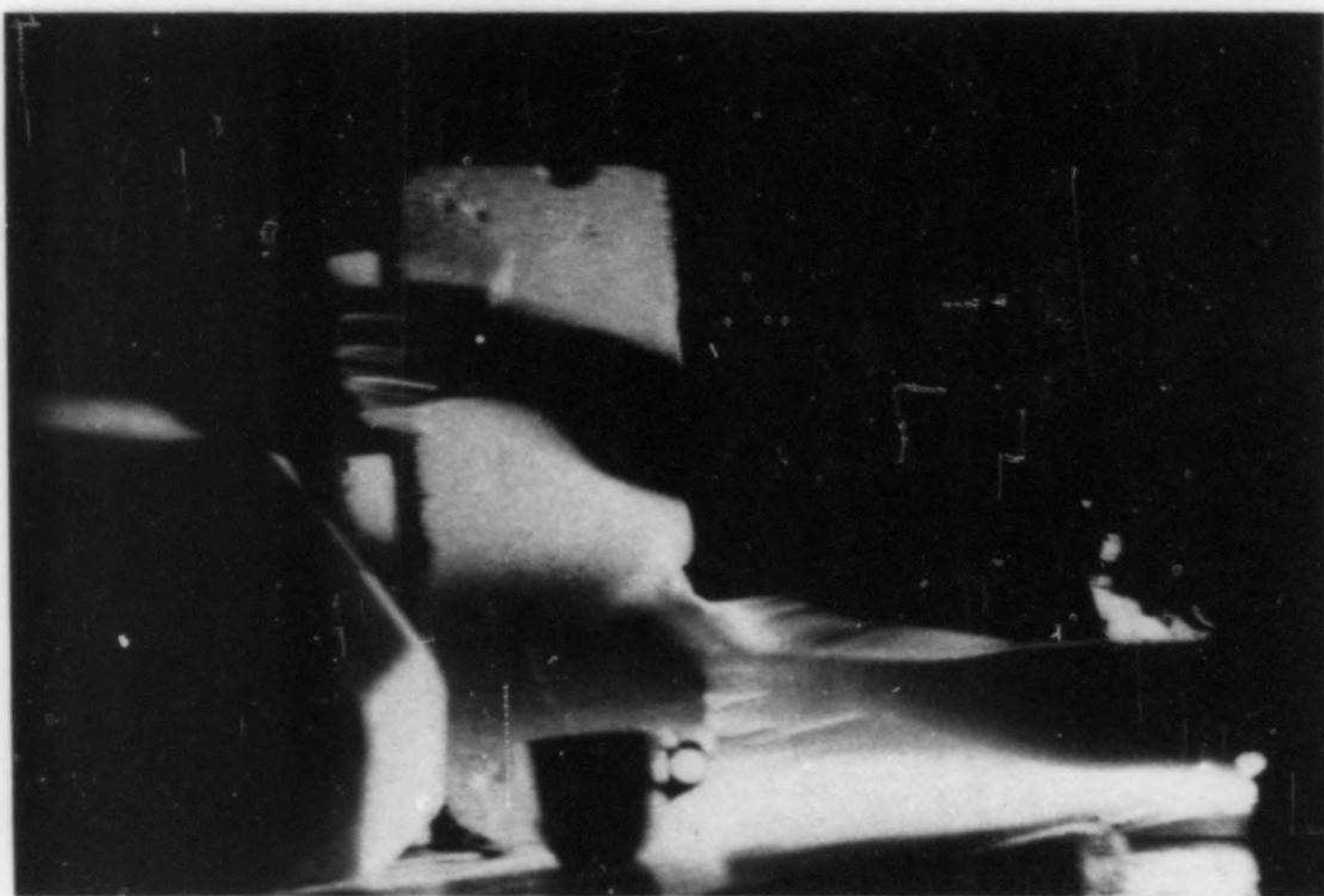
The large door to the right is raised and brings up with it a black cloth. When the image of the basin is finished in the truck, an image of the basin is projected on the black screen. It seems to float around in space against the black screen.

Next, an image of a cup is projected into the truck. It grows until it fills the truck. It has the appearance of floating in the truck. A real cup is taken out of the back of the truck. A cup is projected on the black screen at the same time.

This sequence is repeated with a cinder block. The image on the black screen is started shortly after the one in the truck.

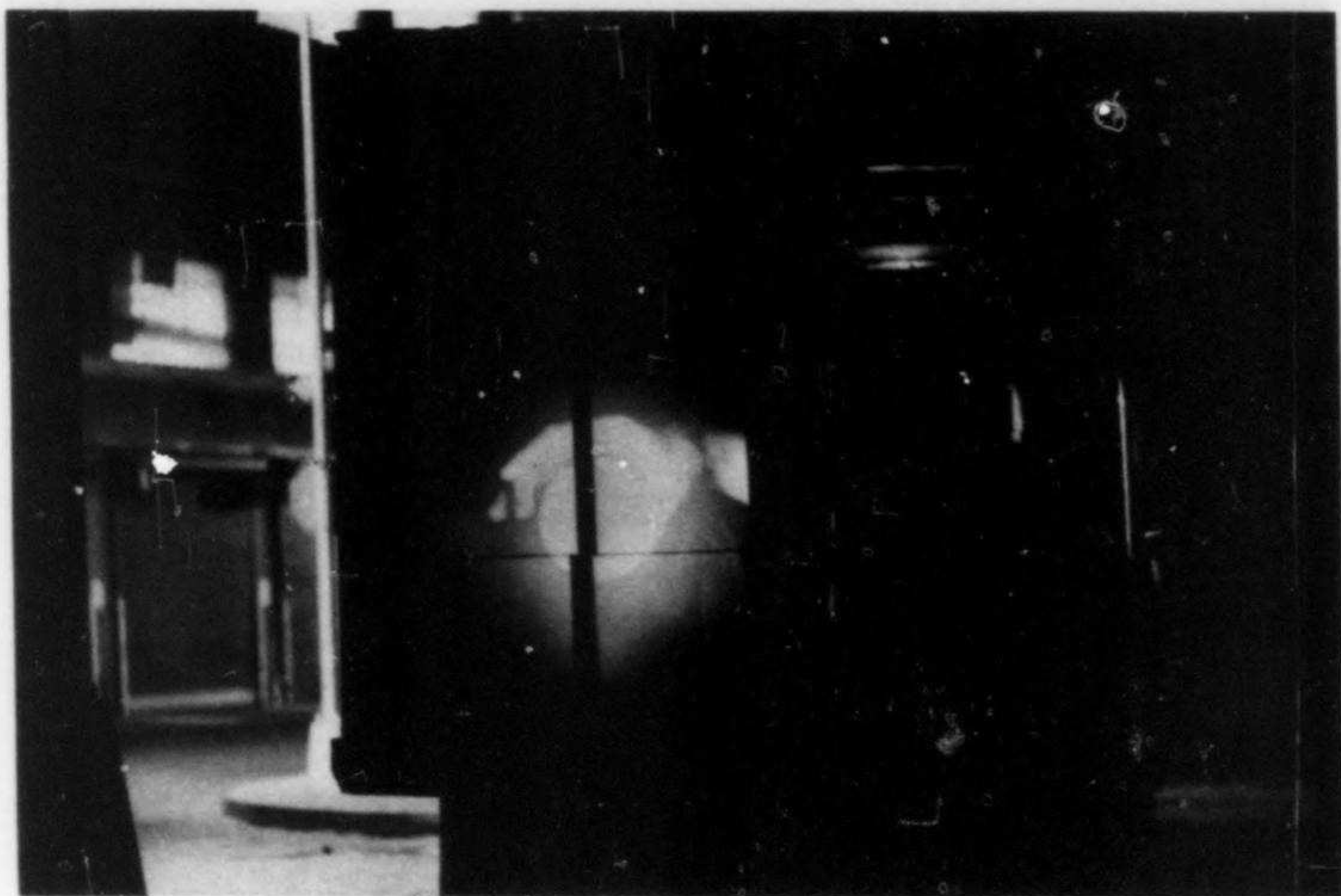


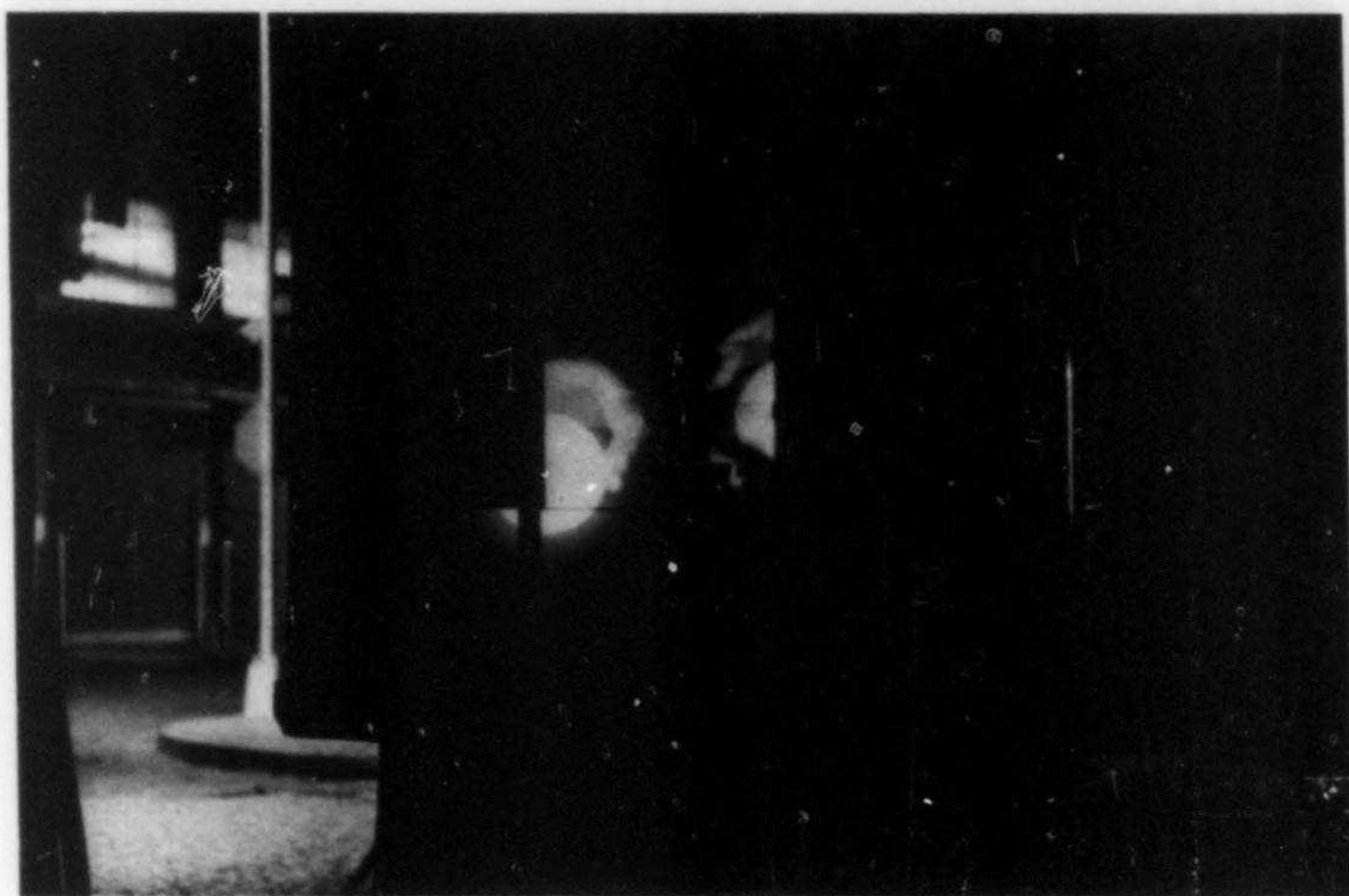




After the cinder block, images of a hand, pear, and pepper are projected into the truck. These are fairly short shots following each other. Then a longer shot of an apple. Forty seconds or so after the apple shot starts, a long shot of a piece of crumpled paper appears on the black screen. This image starts about a foot in diameter and grows to about 15 feet. During this image, noises are heard of a garage door opening and a vehicle starting. Its lights go on, it backs out and the door closes. This is in another space adjacent to the performing space, so the perceptions of these events are slightly distant.

Next is an abstract sort of shot: a black shape lit from behind is projected into the truck. The men load boxes into the truck. After three minutes there is a pause. Everything stops. The presence of the location, the place, the street is felt.

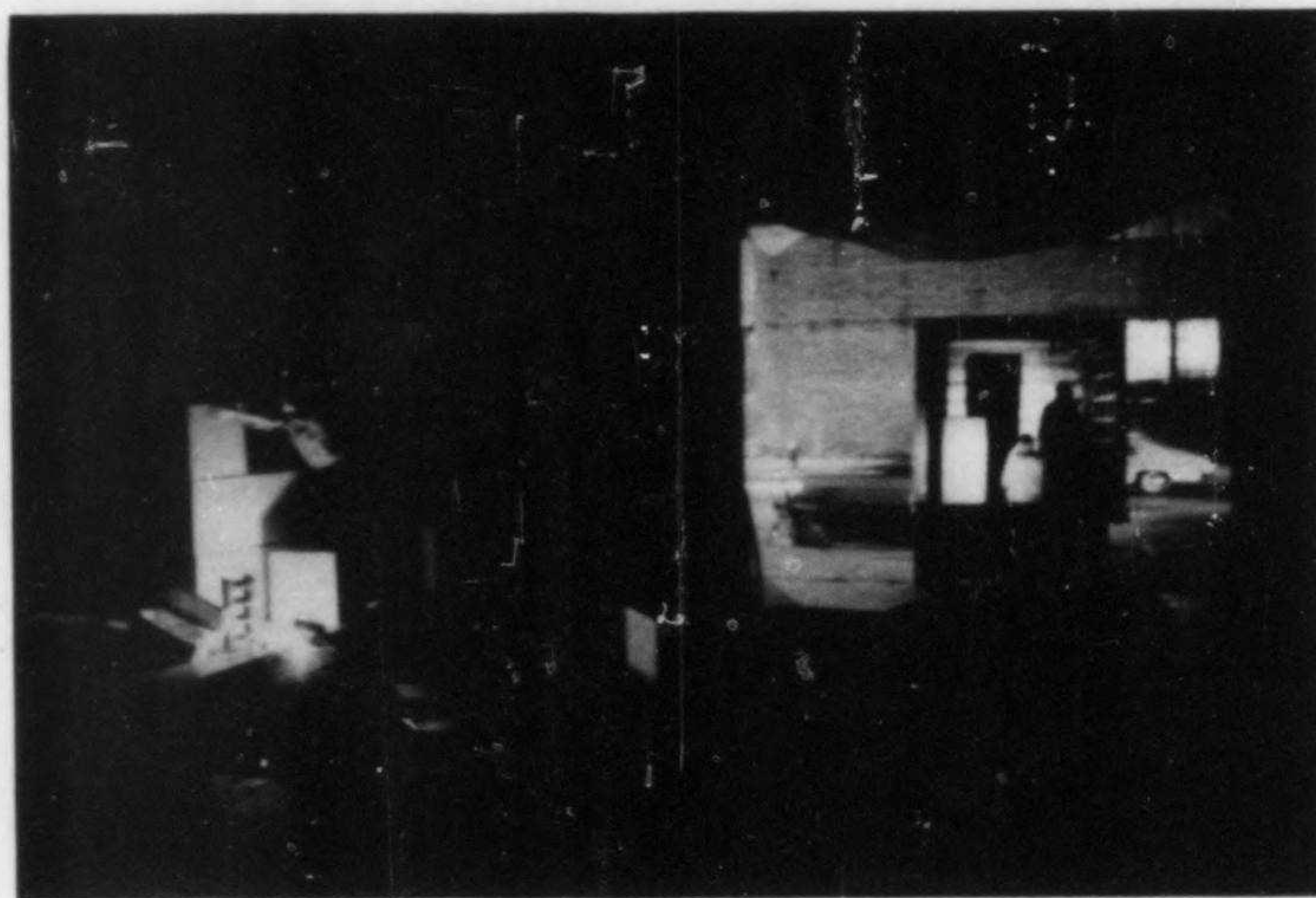


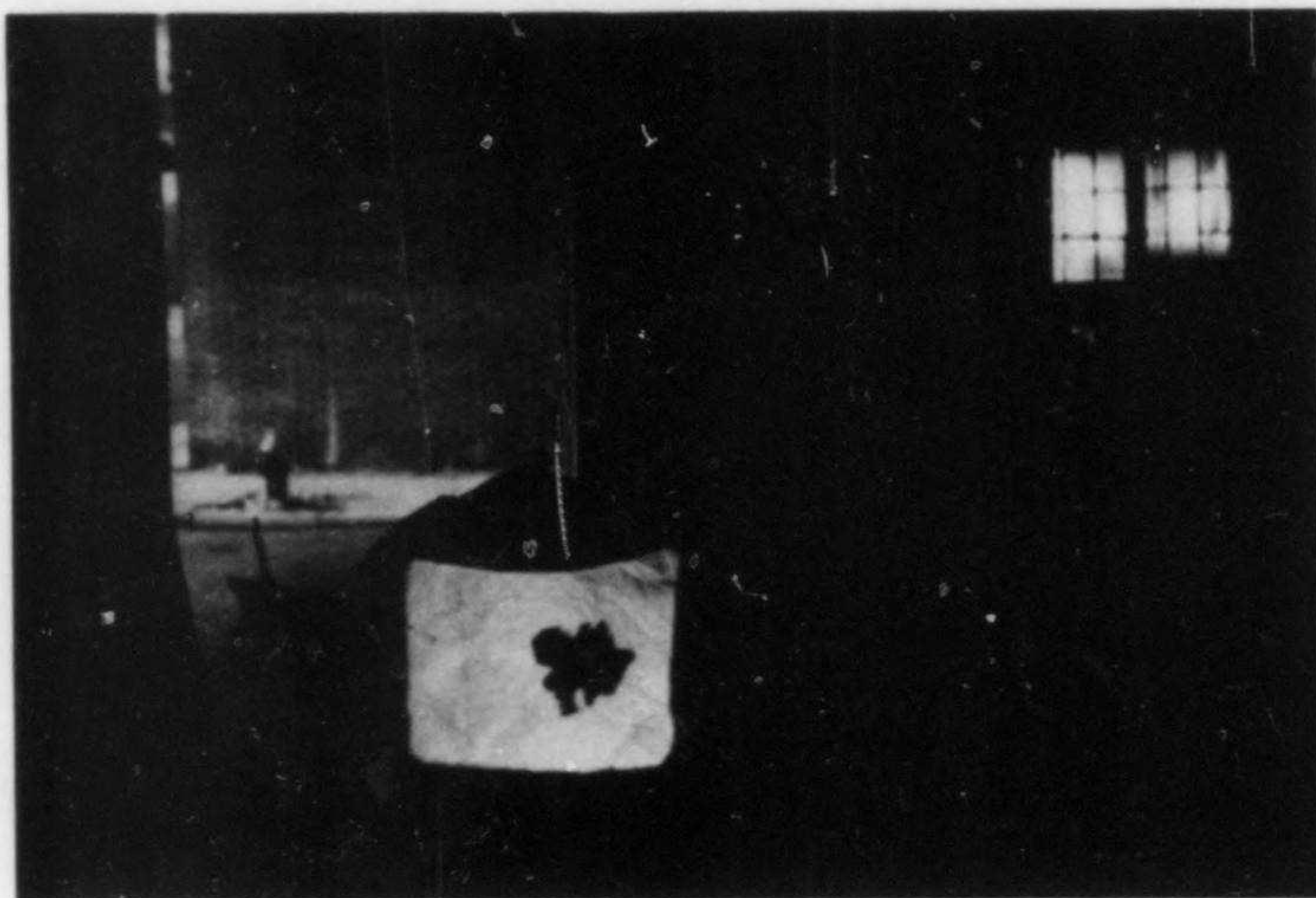


Another shot into the back of the truck. This time the men unload the truck and put the boxes on the loading dock to the left, forming a wall behind the other objects that have been put there.

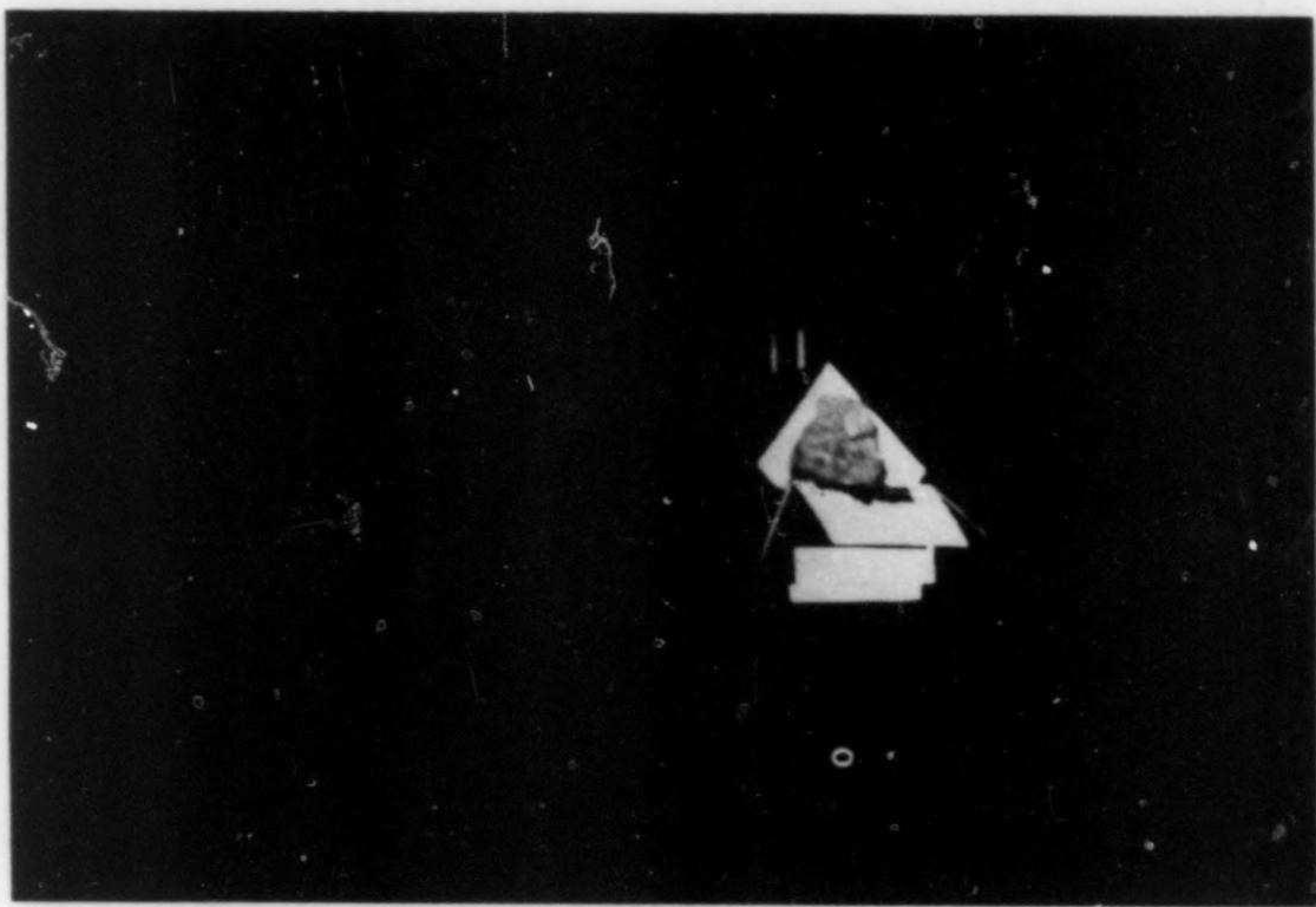
An image of a paper bag is projected into one of the boxes. When the bag starts to burn, the box is loaded into the truck. The same film has been projected backwards against the black screen: a ghost-like reconstruction of the buring bag.

An image of a floating paper bag over a blue field is projected against brown kraft paper, about 6 feet by 4 feet, which is carried across the space to the wall of boxes where it floats off of the paper and goes behind the wall.





A few seconds later a green thing appears on the wall of boxes which is taken up on the brown paper by the men. This is carried back across the space past the truck.



An image of a spinning, floating rocky thing appears on the top box of a pile of boxes to the right.

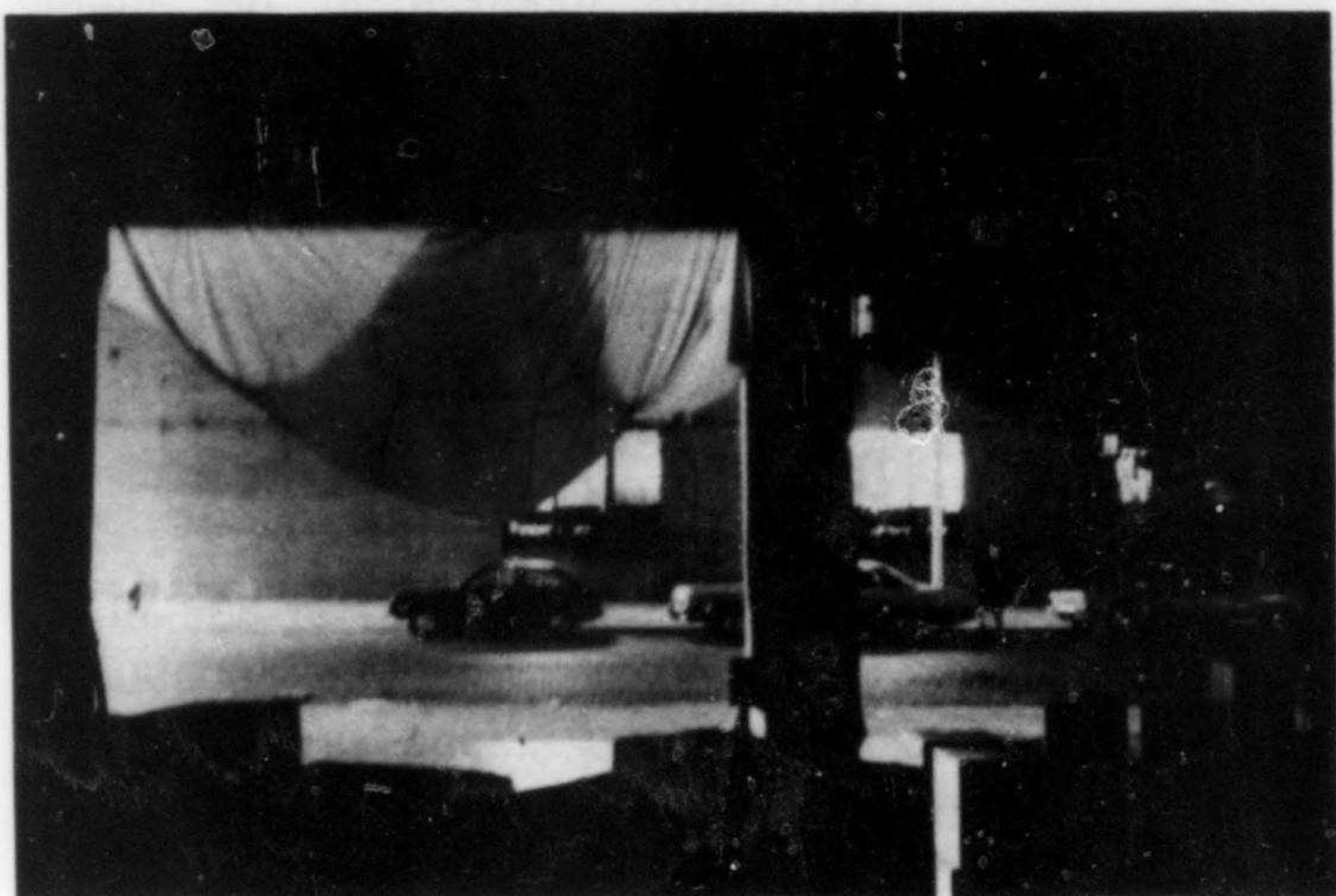
A spinning, floating rock appears in another box. It's carried across and loaded into the truck.

Then a big rock is carried over to the truck on the brown paper.

Then a shot onto the black screen like the one illustrated, starting out dark (or light) and getting light (or dark), then back again. All these shots on the black screen have a ghost-like quality.

Then an image of a floating, spinning thing is picked up by the men with the brown paper and carried across to the truck and loaded into the truck through a side door which is opened and closed.

Then a projection back on the pile of boxes where the black spinning thing appears, this time with a hand moving away from it.



The truck is closed, starts up, and drives off. The sheet over the doorway is lowered. Then a light appears on it and wanders about, finally resolving itself into an image of a light and a hand which gets brighter and brighter, filling the screen with light. Then it's over.

Both the black and white screens are raised. Just the street. The street light has been turned on and starts to get brighter.

After a while, the doors are lowered and there is darkness. The lights come up and the performance is ended.

URIZEN BOOKS

The Civilizing Process
by Norbert Elias

"This classic work appears for the first time in English. Its importance consists not only in its subject but also in its method for here is an integration of history, theory and psychoanalysis. Elias is one of the very few to have fulfilled the need for a comprehensive analysis of the development of culture in a brilliant and unique way."

Richard Sennett

$15.00 cloth

Panorama of the 19th Century
by Dolf Sternberger

"One of the most remarkable, most accomplished and most productive essayists of German . . . a master essayist writing with felicitous urbanity . . . This epoch has provoked some of Sternberger's most penetrating observations and elegant prose."

From the Introduction by Erich Heller

$15.00 cloth
photographs

Society Against the State: The Leader as Servant Among the Indians of the Americas
by Pierre Clastres

Using the American Indians as his example, Clastres shows how a society can structure its power relationships so as to have leadership without the abuse of power, and anarchy without disorder.

"A book that does for power what Schumacher's Small is Beautiful does for energy."

$12.95 cloth

Story of the Eye
by Georges Bataille

"The book which obliges us to confront the idea of pornography as a serious literary genre."

Susan Sontag

$5.95 cloth

The Inconvenience of Living and other acts of folly
by Marvin Cohen

". . . a joy in language, and an eye, at once innocent and shrewd, for the paradoxes inherent in the human condition . . . a tour de force of seriocomedy."

New York Times Book Review

$8.95 cloth / $4.95 paper

Detour
by Michael Brodsky

A novel about coming of age in the seventies. Every sentence contains a shock of something previously unknown or unsaid in this fashion.

$8.95 cloth

About Chinese Women
by Julia Kristeva

"A brilliant attempt to differentiate the religious roots of the Chinese society's attitudes toward sex from the occidental attitudes."

Germaine Brée

". . . innocent of clichés and because of its purity, its political point of view is all the more powerful."

Richard Sennett

$8.95 cloth

At your local bookstore or make checks payable to:

URIZEN BOOKS, INC. 66 West Broadway New York 10007

macula

Jean-Claude Lebensztejn **En blanc et noir (sur Alexander Cozens)**
Wladyslaw Strzemiński **L'Unisme en peinture (1928)**
Yve-Alain Bois **Malevitch, le carré, le degré zéro**
Guy Brett **Terre fertile. Champ, agriculture, décoration**
Raymonde Hébraud-Carasco **Dialectique Eisenstein : « Filmer le Capital »**
Piet Mondrian **Le jazz et le néo-plasticisme (1927)**
HENRI MATISSE **INTERVIEWS INEDITS**
présentés par Dominique Fourcade

1

130 pp., 37 b+w ill., 8 1/4" × 11 3/4" $ 7,50

macula

Jurgis Baltrusaitis **Un musée des miroirs**
Hubert Damisch **Huit thèses pour (ou contre ?) une sémiologie de la peinture**
Jean Louis Schefer **Sur l'objet de la figuration**
Mondrian, Vantongerloo, Torrès-Garcia, Bill, etc... **Lettres à Jean Gorin**
Jean Clay **Le dispositif Martin Barré (1) : l'œil onglé**
Jacques Guillerme **Cryptiques (sur un cénotaphe de Labrouste)**
Christian V. Bonnefoi **La fonction albers**

Dossier **Jackson Pollock**

2

156 pp., 112 b+w ill., 8 1/4" × 11 3/4" $ 8,95

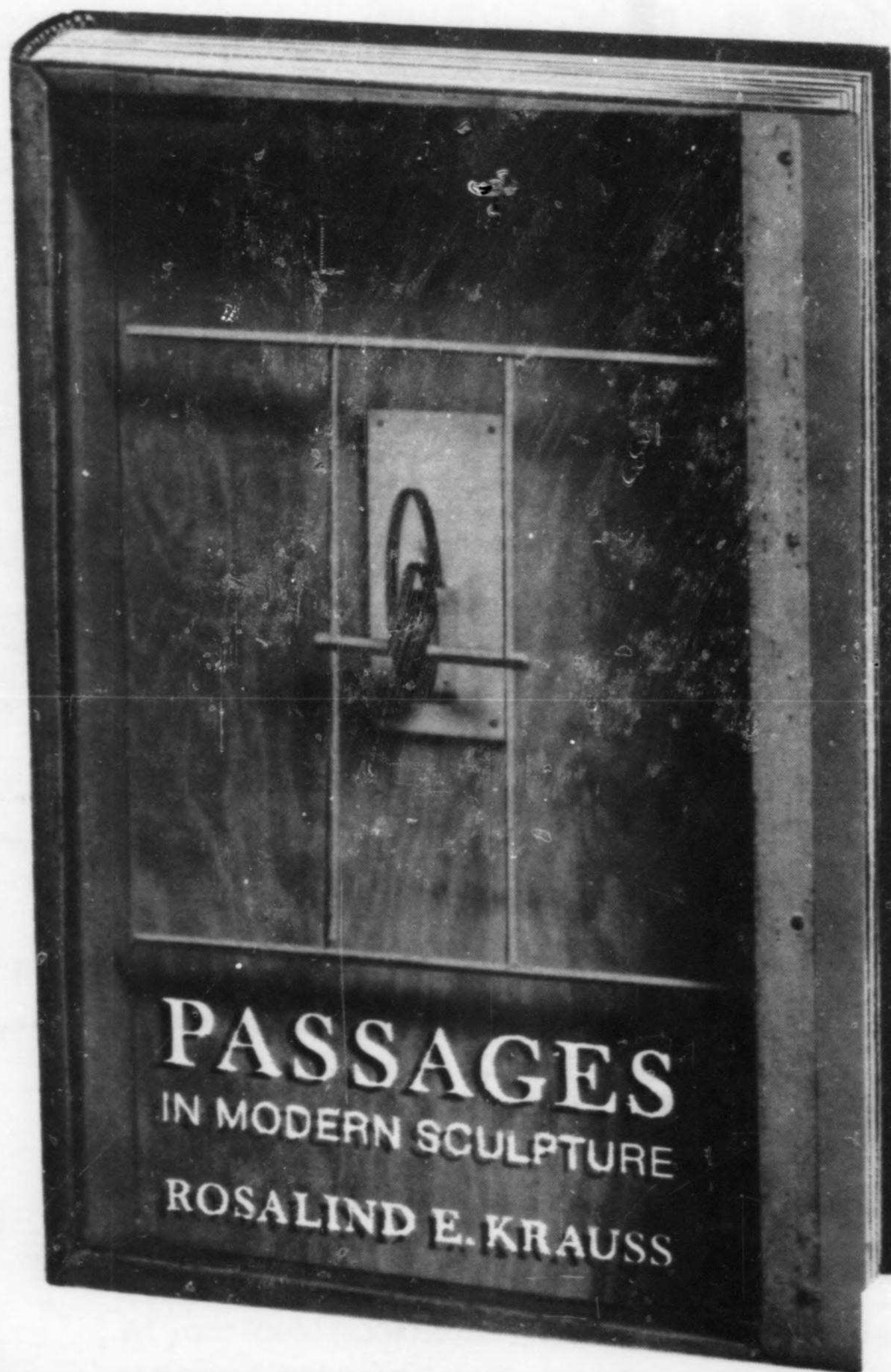
Single copies at : Jaap Rietman, Inc.
167 Spring Street
New York, N.Y. 10012

Subscriptions : 4 issues (postage free) $ 35 to :
Pierre Brochet
313 rue Lecourbe
75015 Paris

"One of the most penetrating demonstrations of critical insight in recent literature on art." —James Ackerman, Professor of Fine Arts, Harvard University

"Rosalind Krauss brings to the debate on modern sculpture a high culture, deep insights, wide sympathy—her book is scholarly, passionate, lucid, and altogether splendid."

—Thomas B. Hess



With 212 photographs.
$18.95

THE VIKING PRESS

JAAP RIETMAN, INC.
art books

back in print

THE BRIDE STRIPPED BARE BY HER BACHELORS, EVEN

a typographic version by Richard Hamilton
of MARCEL DUCHAMP'S Green Box
translated by George Heard Hamilton

cloth $7.95*

*(when ordering please add sales tax where applicable and 75¢ for shipping & handling)

167 spring street (corner west broadway) new york, n.y. 10012, tel. (212) 966-7044

the center for twentieth century studies and coda press inc
announce the publication of a series of books starting in December, 1977:

Theories of Contemporary Culture

General Editor: Michel Benamou, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The objective of the series is to advance an on-going interpretation of contemporary culture by providing an interdisciplinary consideration of nodal areas of thought and activity: 1) Minority Culture/Ethnopoetics; 2) Planetary Culture/Technology; 3) Avant-garde Arts/Performance; 4) Mass Media/Film Theory

The series, in its present planning, will feature each year at least one volume of original essays focusing on one of the above areas.

VOLUME ONE (December 1977):

PERFORMANCE IN POSTMODERN CULTURE

Edited by Michel Benamou and Charles Caramello

Ihab Hassan — Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?
Campbell Tatham — Mythotherapy and Postmodern Fictions: Magic is Afoot
Richard Palmer — Toward a Postmodern Hermeneutics of Performance
Edmond Jabès — The Book or The Four Phases of a Birth
Raymond Federman — Federman: Voices within Voices
Jean-François Lyotard — The Unconscious as Mise-en-scène
Régis Durand — The Disposition of the Voice
Herbert Blau — Letting Be Be Finale of Seem: The Future of an Illusion
Daniel Charles — New Music: Utopia AND Oblivion
Cheryl Bernstein — Performance as News: Notes on an Intermedia Guerilla Art Group
Victor Turner — Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality
Jerome Rothenberg — New Models, New Visions: Some Notes Toward a Poetics of Performance

To order PERFORMANCE IN POSTMODERN CULTURE ($5.00), please write to:
Coda Press, Inc., 700 West Badger Road, Suite 101, Madison, WI. 53713

OCTOBER 5 & 6

Octavio Armand	*Robert Morris: Mirage, Reflection*
Alfred H. Barr, Jr.	*Moscow Diary*
Noel Carroll	*"The General"*
Douglas Crimp	*Pictures*
Hollis Frampton	*Seven Short Fictions*
Julia Kristeva, Marcelin Pleynet, and Philippe Sollers	*The U.S. Now: A Conversation*
Dziga Vertov	*"The Fact Factory" and Other Writings*

Two essays on Duchamp by:
Jean Clair
Hubert Damisch

ngs