

Everybody

the riverside artists group magazine

Number 2

Free

September 1992

listings

September

Accademia Italiana
24 Rutland Gate, London SW7,
tel 071-225 3474

FIAR - International Painting Award
Young artists (under 30) from France, England,
America and Italy.
9 Sept - 20 Sept.
Igor Mitoraj, Sculptures.
25 Sept - 14 Oct.
Daily 10.00am - 6.00pm. Wed until 8.00pm.

Anthony D'O'By
9,21,23 Dering Street, London W1
tel 071-499 4100

'Strange Developments'. Young European and
American artists.
also *Andy Warhol*.
10 Sept - 16 Oct.
Mon - Fri 10.00am - 5.30pm,
Sat 10.00 - 1.00pm.

BBC White City
201 Wood Lane, London W12
David Ross, Paintings
Until 15 September
Exhibition is open to visitors and workers of
the BBC.

**arts as object**

An exhibition of paintings by
four artists:

Meena Jaffery, Terry Miles, E.Lynne Beel,
Masgan Safa

5 October to 9 October

arts as activity

A display and presentation of artwork
by local people with disabilities.

5 October to 9 October

Turtle Key Art Centre

74a Farm lane London SW6. Tel: 081-741 7548.
Level access, disabled toilets, induction loops.

Benjamin Rhodes
4 New Burlington Place, London W1
tel 071-434 1768

Eileen Cooper. 'New Drawings'.
9 Sept - 10 Oct.

Central Space Gallery
23 - 29 Faroe Road,
Tel: 071-603 3039

Closed until September, then:
'11 Print Makers',
16 Oct - 4 Nov.
Tues - Sun 10.00am - 6.00pm.

Centre 181 Gallery
181 King Street, Hammersmith London W6
tel 081-748 3020 x3532

Matisse. Illustrations to Pierre de Ronsard.
Lithographs illustrating the poems of the 16th
century poet.
Until 13 Sept.
Jessica Shamash, Video Installation.
14 Sept - 16 Oct.
10.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Commonwealth Institute
Kensington High Street London W8
tel 071-603 4535

'The Art of Celebration in Bini, Nigeria'.
Poetry and sculpture in the Today Gallery by
Tony O'gogo, 'Images of Bini'. *Bose Ogbona*
'Symbolism in Textiles' in the Bhowmagree
Gallery. Until 11 Oct.

Courtauld Institute
Somerset House, Strand, London WC2
tel 071-872 0220

'Kokoschka in the Princesgate Collection'
9 Sept - 28 Oct.

Karsten Schubert
85 Charlotte St, London W1
tel 071-63110031

Abigail Lane
8 Sept - 10 Oct
Mon - Fri 10.00am - 6.00pm,
Sat 10.00am - 2.00pm.

Laure Genillard
13a Foley St, London W1
tel 071-436 2300

Gladstone Thompson
from 10 Sept.
Tue - Fri 11.00am - 6.00pm,
Sat 11.00 am - 3.00pm.

(continued on page 11)

editorial

"I DO WHAT I WANT. BUT I DO WHAT I'M TOLD". Non-attributable.

Artists, like cuckolded lovers, are invariably the last to know. Artists respond to agendas set in other quarters - their autonomy is always within a context.

In the field of public arts the words which define their actions usually find their genesis in the pages of a particular policy document.

Words like "outrage" and the emphasis on community arts in the 70s arose out of the last Labour government's document "The Arts and the People", a document which suggested that artist intervention in society would have a beneficial effect on the community. With the change in government (all those years ago) and the subsequent diminution of local authority power, the agenda shifted toward capital projects, and the buzz words changed, fed from above by documents like "An Urban Renaissance" (Arts Council). The belief that art can help bring order to a disordered society persists. Now that an illusory boom has given way to bust and many of the boom buildings are closed, we are left with a spunking new playground for time-based, site-specific art in under-utilized areas of the new London. It is essential that artists ask who pays for their fun and why, ask what new words are currently being formed in the air which will guide and define their practice in the future.

One organisation that has seen all these

changes and thrived is ACAVA. In the second of our series 'Strategies' we talk to its co-founder Duncan Smith. Toler brings news back from the Documenta in Kassel, and we asked West London sculptor Almut Hargreaves to bring us Part One of the account of her professorship in the Stroganoff Institute in Moscow. Russian painter and HyperMan Alexey Politov sends us a message in the first of his occasional series, Pangloss fast-forwards through post-modernism and we have more reviews by artists.

Thanks to all for their encouragement following the first issue of **everything**, from people who are glad to see the arts covered from the perspective of artists. The editors are only too aware of the main point made, namely that it could be thicker. This is something we are working hard on. [E]

The everything editorial collective.

Everything is compiled and edited by Keith Ball and Steve Rushton and produced by the Riverside Artists Group, Crap Road, London W6. Financially assisted by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. © Copyright Riverside Artists Group.

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Cover: Where is your conflict? Keith Ball, 1992.

Toler: "Tip of an Iceberg"

Celia Toler
in Kassel



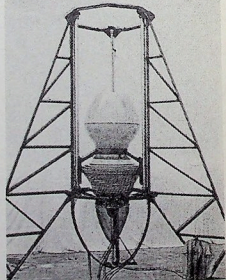
Celia Toler

DOCUMENTA IX (13 JUNE - 20TH SEPT)
Hot and sunny, swinging down the crowded autobahns to Kassel in Germany where Documenta has taken place every four or five years since 1955. This time round the selectors started with "Collective Memory" as a theme but spent most of their time restricting that to the tower of the Friedericianum Museum. The outside of the tower was made up like a house of playing cards mixed in with another piece of work. Over two days, three Russian gezzers were looking increasingly conspiratorial with a wheelbarrow on the pavement ready to collect the drips from a tap that didn't drip. Friederichsplatz is the main square edged by a terrace, temporary eating places going round past the permanent cafe to the information office, ticket and catalogue booths. From the craft stalls going down into the park - jewellery, sculpted toilet seats in pastel shades, a man flattening teaspoons, also an amazing chrome coffee machine - to the logo-stamped sugars that came within the coffee at the cafe, and T-shirts of course everywhere, there's plenty of consumerism to wade through. Even so all the people walking about the square could look up at Joseph Borofsky's man walking purposefully up a pole, going where *no person had gone before*. What a fair, what a fun fair, but more was in store in the museums themselves. Nine different sites apart from the sculptures dotting the park. In the park, shacks began to bug the edge of the Kleine Fulda, a large flowing stream, spilling over into a shanty town. Tadashi Kawamata had not realised his good fortune of the Kleine Fulda flooding so that debris wrapped itself round the shacks, or the drowned rats which had beached on the grass and were rotting, suppurating, wasps digging into the flesh, making his shanty town the true graveyard that it was. Here the collective memory worked and I've not seen so many solemn-faced speculators in a long time.

Up early the next morning we headed for the recently built Documenta-Halle. Win Delvoe from Belgium, had made a ceramic tiled floor with a pattern, a traditional Delft one, of dog turds. This was not fenced off so we all happily put our feet in it. Suddenly a room of darkness engulfed me and a floor to ceiling video installation by Bill Viola, of a man floating in liquid upside down, appeared, giving me feelings of being in the womb, when, in a rush of bubbles, he disappeared upwards, feet first. Over in the Neue Galerie there was a permanent Beuys' collection and downstairs past Documenta was were documented. Upstairs was a wooden wall with a small door to open and look through into the conventional gallery behind. Surprised faces turned round to look at one. Hurdy-gurdy music was following me around like music in a supermarket only it wasn't that sort. I tracked it down to the Israeli artist, Philip Rantzer, who had destroyed a sofa or perhaps I should say, redeveloped it, since objects sprang out of the horse-hair, including a globe which revolved round and round with the music.

In the Aue-Pavilions, a cupboard tilted forward, doors open, with a small child's red woollen sweater spread sally vulnerable on the floor (Mariusz Kruk, Poland). The Australian painter, Tim Johnson, had used aboriginal dots to make narrative pictures that hinted at Japan and India. The Indian artist, Bhupen Khaknar, had solid bodied, untraditional, figurative paintings. Pat Sisti's waterfalls left me cold and the next day was the day for the big museum, the Friedericianum, bombed out in 1945 but looking pretty good now. First echo of everything was Bruce Nauman's haunting video installation. "Help me" cried the shaven head, turning continuously on two sets of monitors, upright and upside down, and projected large onto the walls. His voice followed me through the maze-like spaces of that building where work appeared in custom-made spaces, odd corners, nestled against each other, up the stairs, out on the window sills, and where the smell of wine seeped down from black barrels like the corpses of bulls into Louise Bourgeois' large vat of precious liquids. Of course, there was much, *much* more. Well it's only two-and-a-half days for an art reporter, the selectors took three years and the artists. ? The score? A bit disappointing for Britain, only seven represented. Still there were a lot more below us and even more countries that didn't get a mention at all. The score at the end is: USA - 41; Germany - 29; Italy - 14; Belgium - 10; France - 9; Austria - 7; Great Britain - 7; Canada - 6; Israel - 6; Brazil - 5; Japan - 5; Switzerland - 5; Poland - 4; Australia - 3; Netherlands - 3; Russia - 3; Spain - 3; Czechoslovakia - 2; Denmark - 2; Finland - 2; Greece - 2; Hungary - 2; Romania - 2; Yugoslavia - 2; Argentina 1; Chile - 1; Ireland - 1; India - 1; Korea - 1; Norway - 1; Panama - 1; Philippines - 1; Senegal - 1; South Africa - 1; Sweden - 1. [E]

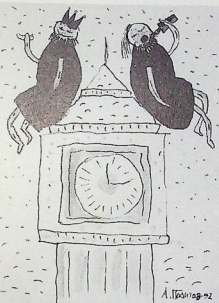
© Celia Toler



Ulf Rollof, Sweden.

THE GHOST OF KING HAROLD

was flying over the City of London on his way back to his abbey. He was carrying out his flight unshaved and furious. In his pocket he had a piece of the Yorkshire pudding. The ghost was spitting at the passers-by while spreading around obscene verbal atrocities. But who knows maybe the old man had an overdose of the Scotch whiskey the day before or perhaps he was tired of his bothersome and illusory existence.



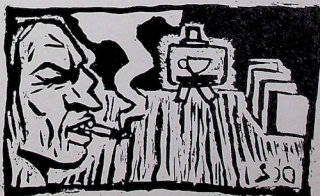
At the same time from the Gallery 181 situated in Hammersmith a HyperMan was flying over. In his head he heard the dogs barking, in his mouth there was a monkey sitting inside, in his pocket he was carrying a pickled cucumber partly bitten off and half a bottle of Russian Vodka. The HyperMan had left the good old England heading for the eternally young revolutionary Russia. The HyperMan was muttering a sad song continuously spitting at the passybyng strangers. On flying over the Westminster the HyperMan came across Harold. "Hi, Harold!" said the HyperMan, "Shall we not

drink to our meeting?" he further suggested. "Why not?" - agreed the king. They got themselves sitting upon the Big Ben and emptied half the bottle of vodka nipping from the bottle-neck. The HyperMan offered a cucumber to Harold, patting on his shoulder, and then said: "London - good!" Harold in his turn patted the HyperMan upon the shoulder, giving him a piece of Yorkshire pudding and said: "Moscow - good!" "Me, I am not loved by English women," - did the HyperMan complain. "As for me, I have died hundreds of years ago," - complained the king in his turn. "Lindevic has tremendously changed as compared with the days of my youth," - he went on. "And in Moscow there's capitalism now," - said the HyperMan. Both kept silent for a while and then heavily sighed. "In London I like pubs much more than museums, I'm fond of London rather than of Paris," - uttered the HyperMan.

"Just like me," agreed the king. The moment of separation finally came. "Bye, Harold, do not hesitate to fly in to Moscow. You'll be a guest living in Lenin Mausoleum in the Red Square. We'll place Lenin somewhere in London, let us say, in the Waltham Abbey, bringing him closer to Karl Marx. Being together they might be more joyful and better off." "Thank you, HyperMan, I'll think it over," - was the king's answer. Friends exchanged embraces and flew off, each heading his way. "Bye, Harold," - thought the HyperMan, flying away.

"Good-bye, Big Ben and the Scotch whiskey, and old towers, son-kings and princess, and the queen. Good-bye, Guinness, pubs stinking of tobacco, the Lord's, parks with their grass cut and soldiers with high caps on their heads. Good-bye, you English ladies, and the bacon, and the pudding from Yorkshire. Good-bye, friends. Good-bye, you good old England..." Way down low, Shermeyes target lights were twinkling and the HyperMan kept on saying: "Good-bye, Harold. - Good-bye, London. [E] © Alexey Politov 1992.

Today Deep Colin visited my studio and said: "If work is a tax on existence... Do I?"



Politov Goodbye King Harold



Alexey Politov

Alexey Politov,
Russian artist,
writes to Everything
on his return
to Moscow
following his first
exhibition in the UK.

strategies

ACAVA -
Association for
the Cultural
Advancement
of the Visual
Arts

Photo Keith Ball

The Central Space
GalleryEVERYTHING TALKS TO DUNCAN SMITH,
CO-FOUNDER OF ACAVA.

☛ Could you tell us about ACAVA's origins - when and how was it established?

DS It has a history which precedes ACAVA's establishment in its present form: it started in the early 70s when I and several other artists in this area had no space to work. We contacted the then arts officer and suggested that some of the empty property around the Borough should be used for artists' studios. That pressure from us coincided with ACME making a similar approach. The suggestion was made that ACME take over this building (The Central Space, 23-29 Faroe Road) and also Heley Road. Tony Beers and myself took on the lease for almost the whole of the building and then for the next six years or so artists came and went, organised by me. At that time it was primarily a place to work in. The fabric of the building was in really bad shape, the Central Space had trees growing out through the broken roof - everything was dry rot.

☛ What was The Central Space's previous use?

DS It was a school, and just before we took it over it was a school meals kitchen, there were loads of gas meters and old cookers and it looked like the lower part of a ship with pipes everywhere. We removed all of that and patched it up. Then, for the following six years we used it as a studio, as I said - although there were events happening here. In the late 70s there were a series of performances - those were the first public events in the building. We had seasons of 70s performer artists...

☛ Men in boiler suits?



DS Boiler suits or with no clothes. The usual... doing various things. At the end of the 70s, early 80s, the local authority changed from being Labour controlled to being Tory controlled. This coincided with the decision that artists were not appropriate tenants for the building. They tried to move us out. There then follows a long and intricate chapter in which we got local support putting forward petitions to the council, from a number of local Labour Party politicians and the SDP, I think it was called. It

happened that the balance of power was held by the Liberals, so we were able to prevent the Tories steamrolling their plans through because of support from the SDP who were in alliance with the Libs.

☛ What was the alternative use the Tories had in mind?

DS To sell it off - the same use they had for the public toilets.

☛ So the suitable tenant is money. What happened next?

DS That takes us through the very early 80s. The outcome of that was that they would look into providing artists studios in the Borough - we then had a lengthy period talking to architects about what requirements we had for the studio - we talked about north lights and paladins for rubbish - they drew up some plans. The council passed on to the GLC who asked: "What's wrong with the building you're in now?"

We said: "Nothing - but the council want to move us out and these proposals are part of the way we are dealing with it." The GLC suggested that they buy it from the local authority and sell it to ACAVA. That is the point when ACAVA started to exist in the form it is in now. Through the negotiations with the GLC we were talking about not just providing artists with studios but providing more public access to art, and the elements of ACAVA's community projects were formulated. The GLC bought the building, restructured it for use as artists' studios and sold it to ACAVA for a sum corresponding to the rate at which we could afford to repay the bank loan. They also gave us a large grant to mend the rotten timber and put up a new roof. We became a registered charity at that time.

☛ Do you think it would be possible in the current climate to do a similar thing?

DS No, clearly not. It was a recognition by a London-wide body of the importance of providing facilities to artists and of the benefits artists can have to a community, this was something that required the sort of vision that the GLC had about how communities function and the resources they have.

☛ The name ACAVA stands for the Association for the Cultural Advancement of Visual Art, that's a pretty tall order. How are you going to achieve that aim?

DS First I would say that the philosophy arose from what I and others thought artists should be doing - not just seeking to gain public support but reassessing their function as artists. Looking for alternative ways of functioning apart from sitting round trying to be artists and waiting for the man with the big cigar to turn up. The name itself came about because of the peculiarities of the charity commission. We wanted to call ourselves something like "Art Attack" but were told that that was unlikely to go down well if we were to get charity status.

☛ Could you outline the sort of areas you are involved with in community arts?

DS We were from the outset clear that we wanted to take art out into other spaces beyond the white wall

space, and engage with other people in whatever ways presented themselves. That has evolved through the provision of classes and workshops which grew out of our perceptions of the needs of the people in the immediate locality: kids' art classes, workshops. Another strand has been the development of our work with the statutory education sector, in the early days we wrote to schools introducing ourselves and saying we would like to be of use to them. Some schools responded and signed up for workshops to the point where now schools contact us because they are looking for workshops with a particular group of kids, for input into particular activities, for inservice training for teachers and sometimes if they have particular requirements they feel an artist might be able to help with.

For example, a current programme is extensions to bannisters in a school for autistic kids to prevent kids falling over and hurting themselves. In this instance the school contacted us to ask if we could find someone to resolve this security problem in an artistic way.

We also work with a number of other providers of community services such as the Amenity Trust, the Urban Studies Centre.

☛ You get artists who work on community projects producing work that bears no relation to the staff they do in their studio. Given that community art and white gallery art are still to a large extent mutually exclusive, do you see a means of unifying the two areas?

DS I think things have actually changed in the 15 years or so we've been talking about. From the beginning it was important that ACAVA encompassed the whole range of artistic activities including artists who had no interest in anything other than getting on with studio work. Others saw a kind of opportunities which we sought to open up - working in a different context than the gallery, as an opportunity to develop those elements into their personal work.

In the initial stages there was some tension. These days there is much more tolerance and mutual respect between those orientations. I think it's a part of a general phenomenon that the division between community artists and white gallery artists that existed in the 70s and was always resisted by ACAVA has to some extent faded. Also white gallery artists are much more prepared to work in public places.

☛ There has been a big shift in the agenda within the area of public arts in general over the past 10 years or so, from local government subsidy for community projects to support for capital projects, and in particular building projects under the percent for arts schemes.

DS That is happening. When ACAVA started, a lot of money was going into community art from GLA, the GLC and other bodies. Nowadays there's far more money going into art from planners and developers. ACAVA would want to encompass those initiatives whether they are supported by

developers or not. As well as trying to sustain the more grass roots oriented work.

☛ It would be sad to see a future where artists are used to turn-up decaying and badly conceived environments, essentially as decorators.

DS We as artists have never felt that we are regarded by society as highly as we could be. I think that ACAVA's education programme is an attempt to deal with the attitudes of our community. I hope that one of the outcomes of our work with schools will be a greater regard for art. In the short term I think we must engage ourselves in as many areas as we can.

☛ Could you outline the philosophy which underpins your education programme?

DS I think it is very closely related in my mind to the sense of the right to make statements, specifically visual statements, interventions in the world, to have views.

The education programme that we are doing tries to address that whole range of questions related to what artists actually do and are, as opposed to lawyers and politicians.

☛ ACAVA has been taking on more studio space recently, to what extent is this a result of the recession and are the arrangements temporary?

DS ACAVA has had a long waiting list of artists needing studios for years, because it has recently been very difficult to find premises at affordable rents in west London. Now, with the recession and the reduction of the rate payable by charities, one of the few benefits of the poll tax fiasco, we have been able to provide studios for 50 additional artists. The leases range from six months to four years. We now have to try to ensure that at the end of those periods we have somewhere else those artists to go.

☛ To what extent is the agenda of the Central Space Gallery different to the agendas of the white galleries?

DS Our goals are not primarily economic and therefore we don't show work just because we think it will sell. The policy of the Gallery has been largely to show commissioned installation work which we believe is accessible to a non-art-going public. Much of the work that is shown is quite avant garde - the issues however are not simply about art world obsessions, not just formal problems.

Alongside that is the programme of getting people along and getting them to engage with the work as part of our education programme. It is also an aspect of gallery policy to put on works that have a specific local reference and are by local people. For instance the current exhibition is by local people who happen to be restricted to a very small area of Wormwood Scrubs.

strategies



Duncan Smith

Hargreaves

Day One in the Third Visit of Almut Hargreaves to Moscow



Photo: Stephen Williams

Almut Hargreaves

STROGANOVSKOYE INSTITUTE, MOSCOW, MAY 1992.
I'm almost crushed by the fierce backswing of the doors whose springs could easily support a car. I have a lucky escape and enter the front hall of the Stroganovskoye Institute, a seat of traditional

classical teaching of the arts with approximately 600 students. I can't immediately make out my surroundings - it is quite dark: there is a porter's lodge to my right and a cloakroom with rows and rows of empty clothes racks to the left. Dark wooden panels divide this space from the main hall where a grubby plaster cast of Michelangelo's David looms in the ochre, brown, grey dunes. Serious looking students behind easels are copying the statue onto paper. Two faded Soviet realist workers scenes, painted in pastel earth colours, lean against the walls, at least 6 metres high. The floor tiles are cracked, sunken in places and patched.

We turn into a very dark, long corridor - the diffused daylight at the other end falls on a badly broken reclining nude, possibly a Burgunov. A little way into this passage is the tiny office of the sculpture department where some professors in grey suits and two secretaries with magenta lips are huddled behind desks. Empty tea plants with brown sediments are dotted about. Burgunov introduces me as the visiting professor from London. The grey suits present a united hostile front. "Does she speak Russian?" they want to know. Burgunov tells them that I don't and they turn their backs, resuming a conversation. Burgunov looks at me, frustration and apology in his eyes, a smile further down the face. It had been his idea to invite me to teach for a term at the Institute in Moscow. His colleagues apparently do not share his enthusiasm for cultural exchanges. Burgunov sighs, then confronts the desks one more suggesting a tour around the studios. One ancient professor finally casts loose from the desk and prepares to accompany us. His gout is so debilitating that he asks us to go ahead and follows in his own painful time.

We enter the first sculpture studio where a heavily made-up, undressed model poses for eight or nine male students who are barricaded behind easels, working on reliefs in slabs of clay. The emphasis is on competence and copying realistically. Igor (Burgunov's son) had added a Greek column with leafy scrolls in the style of his Papa. I ask why, and he says with an expansive gesture that "it's for the composition".

Next door are the wood carvers. Streamlined, demure Madonnas with pin heads and thin babies, bashed out of logs, stand ready for inspection. Here the old professor catches up with us and he expects capacious praise on the 3rd year students. The old professor looks triumphantly up to me, "I'm happy to say something. But what? "Nice wood" I say. Burgunov translates. The old professor nods and is pleased. I bet Burgunov said something else.

Up a stairwell, down another very dark corridor, which is almost blocked at one end by a massive plaster head with goat's beard and mean eyes.

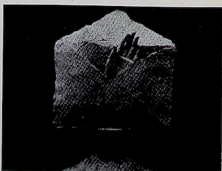
"Former chief of KGB" Burgunov laughs with a shrug. Into the second year bronze casting studios. One student is working on the stomach of a woman who is lying on her side. It seems to be oozing out of her onto the floor. "Poor woman" I say. "It's from her nature" says the student with a hard grin. The old professor inspects closely and is delighted. Justice has been done in the name of realism.

Very slowly we make our way to the canteen where a small tuckshop filled with sour cream and another with sweet coffee refresh us. There is also dark bread on the menu. Beautiful and gentle Marina joins us fresh from the examinations room. She is the daughter of Professor Burgunov and hence gained a teaching post at the Institute after she graduated there, but she's the system. Marina is dressed in grey business-like pin-stripe with a mid-calf length skirt and looks totally quite official. This is what the Rektor likes, I'm told. She holds a bag with colourfully wrapped sweets which unfortunately have an unpleasant taste and cloying texture. I take another one, thank her very much and lose it in my bag. "For later" she decides to peel the first one off the roof of my mouth when I am alone.

Olga, the interpreter, takes me to the school's museum. She points out that there are some important items in this collection. The display in the large room at the top of the school building looks as if an auction sale were about to begin. The chairs are set out in long lines, the centre space is paved with the tables. Cupboards and wardrobes line the walls. Ceramics and glass pieces fill vitrines which are wedged behind the rows of chairs. The suspicious woman behind the desk insists that I don't sit on any of the chairs or touch anything. Olga calms her down. There are some beautiful objects but also some dreadful ones, heavy handed, all quite carefully put together.

Marina escorts me back to her Papa's atelier where I am staying. I am a little concerned that this may interfere with her teaching commitments. She dismisses this instantly and firmly. "Teachers earn so little that they can only be expected to work for an hour once or twice a week". I am looking forward to a pleasant stroll through Moscow and pier Marina away from the Metro station. "Please let's go by Metro" she asks, "my shoes are worn and I must make them last a bit longer." [C]

© Almut Hargreaves 1992.



Alexander Burgunov

"ART IS EVERYWHERE, since artifice is at the very heart of reality. And so art is dead, not because its critical transcendence has gone, but because reality itself, entirely impregnated by an aesthetic which is inseparable from its own structure, has become confused with its own image". Baudrillard "Simulations".

To tell you the truth, I felt a bit of a gooseberry. I was in the pub with Deep Colin and a painter friend of his. The painter leaned over toward Deep Colin and asked "Deep Colin, what's Post-Modernism?". Deep Colin slid down the leather sofa and said "God is dead, Marxism is in crisis and I don't feel too good myself". He slowly clambered back to his usual slouch, and reaching for his tabacco began to elucidate. "It's not a thing, it's a time - we live in postmodern times. It's in the air we breathe, the things we say and the food we eat. It is the virus of late capitalism". He paused and began to brighten slightly. "However, like a virus it is possible to describe its symptoms".

"And they are?" We both asked in unison.
In a nutshell this is what Deep Colin said. He kicked off with an allegory.

"Imagine that we are all rats in our own experiment and that the experiment is all we know."

"There are three phases of capitalism," said Deep Colin. "1 - Market Capitalism. 2 - Monopoly Capitalism, 3 - Late Capitalism. According to classic Marxist theory you could see Art as in opposition to or in dialogue with a particular form of capitalism. We got the idea, during the monopoly phase, of the artist as outsider who battles with an alienation brought about by the contradictions within society; your Munchs, Van Goghs and your Jackson Pollocks. In the later stage of capitalism, the possibility of standing outside of it became more problematic. Images of the outsider and of the individual became part of the game and were absorbed into the whole and fed back through society as consumables. Under Late Capitalism, the alienation of people as well as to, so that we all become consumer items becomes to consumers. If you buy a designer suit for instance, you identify with the label. Your identity becomes in part product, just so with received ideas, ideologies and images, your identity is created by simulated elements.

Followers of Baudrillard would say that these days all cultural products are simulations. By that he means cultural products which are inventions of notions of the authentic, and produce a nostalgia for the authentic.

In a culture of simulation, Genuine Art is art that looks like art. It is because the times in which we live have created a current through which these ideas can flow that we see about us the veneration of the banal. Banality is one honest response to a system of simulation where everything becomes an image of itself. To invent a work with content would be both dishonest and disingenuous. Late Capitalism extracts meaning and replaces it with image. Another response is to use the language of

simulation to question its own premise."
"So, how did we get here?"
"Roland Barthes was a writer who talked about normal everyday things as manifestations of culture. In the same way and with the same devotion and attention that he would analyse a novel or a painting. He gave us the liberating idea that normal things give off important signs, signs that tell us what values, desires and prejudices we hold. He put forward the idea that we are as much made up of works of art as the authors themselves, because we bring to suitcase full of preconceptions to the things we look at. He created a system with which to read these signs.

During the Modernist phase, art was dominated by ideas of authority. Artworks were seen in the humanist tradition as signposts in the big story called history (or in the feminist version his/story) and behind these works were fictitious, constructed authors (or works) which were seen to be penetrating history in order to perfect and realize themselves. The author was pronounced to be bogus, clouding our reading of culture with what Derrida called "the metaphysics of presence". The idea of authorship made us feel cosy, providing us with illusory role models, but at the same time held up a power structure which served to alienate us. We became spectators of history instead of active participants in its invention and interpretation.

The idea of the death of the author threw the light of the real world back into the gallery and meant that the power relations and the heroics of Modernism could be challenged into question. The other advantage was that people with degrees could read comic books without feeling guilty. These ideas widened the definition of art and led to its democratisation, and popularised the notion that all cultural manifestations are a form of art, are a text with no biographical centre through which we can chart our own and society's desires, fears and aspirations. High art and low art were brought to the same level. Notions of quality inevitably became less relevant and increasingly untenable.

"But how did we get here?"
"The Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein had said "A proposition is only understandable insofar as it is understood." He believed that all we understand in terms of language, through language we make models of reality.

"In the area of aesthetics, however, Wittgenstein thought that it was possible to appreciate the unsayable. That we can show our appreciation through a series of actions which he called 'family resemblances'. Perhaps non-verbal twitches, ticks and grunts. He was opposed to any science of aesthetics and said: "It is not only difficult to describe what appreciation consists of, but impossible. To describe what it consists of would have to describe the whole environment."

So we asked Deep Colin what he thought of all this. He took a drag on his roly and leaned forward. "I understand music and I don't know the first thing about music, notation and stuff but when I listen to his music I understand it." [C]

Pangloss Bogus



Barthes: Image/Music/Text and Selected Writings

Baudrillard: Simulations

Wittgenstein: Philosophical Grammar

Wakelord: Postmodernism; the Twilight of the Real

Monk: Ludwig Wittgenstein - The Duty of Genius

reviews

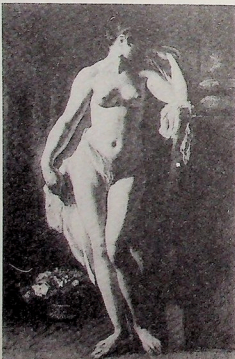
The Painted Nude. From Etty to Auerbach.

Tate Gallery, until 7 December.

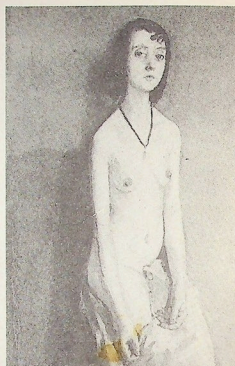
HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU.

In Britain nudity has traditionally been the occupation of stoics rather than libertines. The vagaries of the British climate mean that at best nudity has to be a matter of principle. The Tate blurb tells us that the British came so late to the depiction of the nude form because of something to do with Puritanism. Many of the artists exhibited in this show spent some time in the more relaxed atmosphere of France but a moral reticence is still apparent. In Britain we like to see our painters engaged in an endeavour rather than indulging themselves in a seduction of paint and flesh, so this is not the exhibition where you will find anything approaching the rakish abandon of a Courbet. In England, remember, we go to the coast to eat our sandwiches in the car. It starts promisingly and salaciously enough with two alabaster nudes by William Etty and one by Edward Calvert. The first uses the prurient device of showing us a cheeky scene of Gyges peering at the naked form of Candaules' wife. She sees him looking which means Gyges has to either accept death or kill Candaules and take his wife as his own, (a difficult choice for anyone to make). Gyges chooses the latter option. This painting follows the Venetian tradition of the proxy. You see it in paintings by Titian for instance, someone else is looking at the nude on your behalf to save your blushes and save any sense of voyeurism with a bullish moral.

Who is looking at whom becomes an issue in this exhibition, and the difficulties attendant with the issues of sexuality, ownership and prurience are dealt with in a very British fashion.



William Etty. Standing female nude c. 1835-40.



Gwen John, Nude Girl, 1909-10

Etty presents us with an ideal Lydian vision but the exotic soon falls away and as the exhibition progresses the figures become increasingly utilitarian and studio-based. We see a series of women (only one male nude here) sitting or lying on a selection of what looks like your grandmother's old furniture.

Every good Victorian girl was taught never to look a man in the eye. Sickert gets over any embarrassment by emitting the picture after a prostitute from a story by Balzac. This puts the nature of the picture more into the realm of narrative and skirts around the problem of the Artist's and viewer's relationship with the person depicted.

Of the 25 paintings exhibited, only two are looking the viewer straight in the eye, the first by Adrian Stokes and more notably a profound picture by Gwen John entitled *Nude Girl*.

In this picture there is an ambiguity in the model's stare. She is perched unsteadily on a high chair, she seems unsure where to put her hands, she is uncomfortable with the situation and she lets us know it, she is defiant and, despite the indignity, composed. When she turns her eyes to us we are confronting a relationship, the identity of the other person, the voyeur, shifts from the viewer of the picture to its painter and back across time. The figure becomes more than a beautifully painted pro or a channel for some idealized allegory. She becomes simply a person. It is more than a record of a time but is a work of art which remains psychologically active. © Rushton 1992

Long Gallery

Gunnersbury Park Museum, London W3 tel 081-992 1612

'Battel of Brentford 1642'

An exhibition about Brentford in the Civil War.

26 Sept - 18 April 1993.

Daily 1.00pm - 4.00pm.

October Gallery

24 Old Gloucester St, London WC1

tel 071-242 7367

'Contemporary Art from Trinidad and Tobago',

LeRoy Clarke, Isiah Boodhoo, Kenwyn

Crichlow and Enbah.

10 Sept - 10 Oct.

tues - Sat 12.30pm - 5.30pm.

Photographers Gallery

5 & 8 Gt Newport St, London WC2

tel 071-831 1772

'Desires and Disguises'. Contemporary Art

from Latin America. Until 10 Oct.

Callum Angus Mackay, 'In the Print Room',

until 9 Oct; Julio Etcharr, 'until 30 Oct; Toby

Glanville, until 19 Sept.

Tues - Sat 11.00am - 7.00pm.

Rebecca Hossack at St James

197 Piccadilly, London W1

tel 071-409 3599

Masmai Teraoka,

12 Sept - 12 Oct.

Phone for times.

Riverside Studios

Crisp Road, Hammersmith, London W6 9RL

tel 081-741 2251

The gallery is working in conjunction with the Community Education Department and is using the space for workshops etc. during September and October.

Phone for details.

Maggie Roberts. Photograph-based installation

in the foyer and alcove spaces.

23 Sept - 1 Nov

Foyer daily 10.00am - 11.00pm.

Serpentine Gallery

Kensington Gardens, London W2 3XA

tel 071-723 643/402

'Flora Graphica'.

Masterpieces of flower photographs.

Until 20 Sept. Then closed until Oct.

10.00am - 6.00pm daily.

Small Mansion Art Centre

Gunnersbury Park, Popes Lane,

London W3 8LQ

tel 081-993 8312

'New Ceramics'. Seven leading potters explore

form and surface. *Svend Bayer, Peter Beard,*

Jack Doherty, Juka Fischer, Jane Perryman,

Phil Rogers and Tina Vlassopoulos.

1 Sept - 4 Oct.

1.00pm - 5.00pm Tues - Sun.

Zelda Chontle

8 Cecil Court, London WC2

tel 071-836 0506

Argus McBean. Photographs of Marika and

Rivena. 14 Sept - 12 Oct.

Phone for times.

Deadline for October listings: 15 September

To: Everything Listings, Small Mansion Art

Centre, Gunnersbury Park, Popes Lane,

London W3 8LQ.

Press releases, B/W photos appreciated.

Listings are carried free of charge.

Box adverts (as below): text only £25; with images £55.

listings

(cont)

Matisse

Illustrations to Pierre de Ronsard. Lithographs illustrating the poems of the 16th century poet.

Centre 181 Gallery

181 King Street London W6

until 13 Sept

**in order to
get to the
cathedral**

**you must
first go
through the
car park**