

CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE NOW AND THEN

is a series of lectures and performances that illustrates the diverse concerns and approaches of performance artists working in California over the last decade. The series is co-sponsored by the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago. It includes lectures by Carl Loeffler, Suzanne Lacy, and Moira Roth, who have written and lectured extensively on all aspects of West Coast performance. Each of the speakers was asked to choose an artist currently working in California to do a performance. They selected, respectively, Tom Marioni, Barbara Smith and Nancy Buchanan, three artists who differ greatly in their approaches to performance. Tom Marioni does conceptual and sound "actions"; Barbara Smith creates works that are ritualistic and invite participation of the audience; Nancy Buchanan structures multi-media theatrical works.

Supplementing the lectures and performances is an exhibition at the MCA of photographs and text that document significant works by more than 35 artists. Selections were drawn from "A Decade of Women's Performance," the exhibition by Moira Roth and Mary Jane Jacob held at the Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans, and other material primarily from the recently published **PERFORMANCE ANTHOLOGY** by Carl Loeffler. Video tapes of performances and audio tapes prepared for Close Radio on KPFK in Los Angeles will also be featured during regular Museum hours. **CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE NOW AND THEN** was organized by Alene Valkanas, MCA Program Director.

All lectures and performances are presented both at the MCA and the Renaissance Society, and are supported in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Museum of Contemporary Art
January 16, 1981
Friday, 6:00 pm

Renaissance Society
January 17, 1981
Saturday, 2:00 pm

Carl Loeffler *California Performance Review*

Carl Loeffler is Director of La Mamelle, Inc., an artists' space founded in San Francisco in 1975. The primary activity of La Mamelle, Inc., is art publishing in a variety of formats--books, magazines, video, audio, microfiche, and rubber stamps.

Loeffler has been the guiding force behind La Mamelle's extensive gathering and disseminating of information. He is also the editor of *PERFORMANCE ANTHOLOGY, A SOURCE BOOK FOR A DECADE OF CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE* (1980), a valuable addition to a previously limited body of literature on performance. This 500-page volume, two years in preparation, contains essays by prominent writers on performance, over 300 original photographs, and an annotated bibliography, as well as excerpts from major books, essays, reviews, and electronic works.

Tom Marioni *Studio*

Tom Marioni has set out to remove the distinctions between art and life: to make art that is as close as possible to real life. Thus, his art includes work as curator, editor, lecturer, as well as activities he terms "art actions."

Marioni's art actions express both a private and public self. His first large-scale public work was MOCA, the Museum of Conceptual Art, which he founded in San Francisco in 1970. It was here that many of California's early conceptual artists held numerous events. What remains today at MOCA is documentation, the "relics" of those activities.

One of the richest was "Cafe Society," conversations at Breen's Bar, the "Saloon of MOCA." Here artists gathered to drink and talk about art. The most celebrated of the public works was "The Art of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art," (Oakland Art Museum, 1970). More recently Marioni and the Crown Point Press arranged a journey to Ponape, a South Sea island, that brought together prominent artists to live and make art. The documentation of this odyssey was entitled "Word of Mouth."

Marioni's private works are sound pieces influenced by jazz and Catholic ritual. In many of these pieces he examines life systems, synchronizing his movements with heartbeats and breathing. Of *STUDIO*, the artist says:

This work is an art action and situation that recreates the look and feel of my studio where the audience can witness the fact of making an art work-- the equal marriage of sound with a visual image. I will create a self-portrait and vanish into the work.

(A demonstration will be given at the Renaissance Society)

Museum of Contemporary Art
January 21, 1981
Wednesday, 6:00 pm

Renaissance Society
January 22, 1981
Thursday, 7:00 pm

**Suzanne Lacy *History of Feminist
Performance in California***

Since the early 1970's Suzanne Lacy has been creating a feminist art directed toward personal and political change. Chief among her concerns has been the widespread violence against women. In two massive public works, involving people from outside the art community, she created images of women's strength to combat the fear and sense of victimization that prevailed in the mass media's treatment of assaults against women. "Three Weeks in May" (1977) involved cooperation with government officials and community organizers to stage a series of events that exposed and protested the high number of crimes in Los Angeles. "In Mourning and In Rage" (1977), a collaboration with artist Leslie Labowitz, was a powerful response to the Hillside Strangler murders. Both works employed carefully designed media strategies to bring the image of women's strength and outrage to a large television audience.

At the 1980 Women's Caucus in New Orleans, she turned the convention into a performance. The goal the passage of the ERA and the establishment of a strong women's support network.

Lacy has also been involved with women performers in Los Angeles, first collaborating with Judy Chicago and others in a piece called "Ablutions" (1972). Her role within this community gives her special insight into feminist performance art.

Museum of Contemporary Art
January 23, 1981
Friday, 6:00 pm

Renaissance Society
January 24, 1981
Saturday, 2:00 pm

Barbara Smith *The Perpetual Napkin*

The art of Barbara Smith, one of the first California performance artists, is characterized by personal revelation, ritual, and community involvement.

Food and feeding have been the content and the metaphor of many of her performances. Works such as "White Meal" (1969), "Surgical Meal" (1969), and "Mass Meal" (1969), provided a re-examination of the cultural, spiritual, and creative implications in the acts of preparing and eating food. In a now-classic work "Feed Me" (1973), Smith sat naked from dusk to dawn in a room filled with candles, food flowers, books, records, and other objects. Visitors entered the room one at a time and heard her voice on a tape repeatedly saying "feed me." The work challenged both the artist and the visitor, providing for many new understandings of male/female relationships. In "Perpetual Napkin" Smith continues the food metaphor. She writes:

We have all been annihilated, we have all been consumed. We eat food and we are eaten. We are one in our Permeability.

There is no fundamental difference between body and soul, matter and energy. The trick is not to escape the body but to transform it at deeper and deeper levels of energizing awareness.

Museum of Contemporary Art
January 28, 1981
Wednesday, 6:00 pm

Renaissance Society
January 29, 1981
Thursday, 7:00 pm

Moira Roth Coming of Age in 1980

With the publication of "Toward a History of California Performance" (ARTS MAGAZINE, Feb., June, 1978), Moira Roth made the first important effort at presenting a descriptive chronology of a decade of performance work. To prepare for this essay she spoke to artists all over the West Coast, attempting to reconstruct undocumented works. Her investigation revealed vital information about early performance. Roth continues to contribute on this subject to both art and drama journals. Some of her recent articles are "A Star is Born," (PERFORMING ARTS JOURNAL, No. 12, 1980) and "Visions and Revisions" (ARTFORUM, November, 1980.)

In her lecture, Roth will explore current work including that of young artists whose pieces are more theatrical in form and draw on new wave music. Roth is an associate professor in the Art History Department at the University of California, San Diego.

Museum of Contemporary Art
January 30, 1981
Friday, 6:00 pm

Renaissance Society
January 31, 1981
Saturday, 2:00 pm

***Nancy Buchanan If I Could Only Tell You How
Much I Really Love You***

Nancy Buchanan deals with women's issues and other political subjects. Her pieces, often presented in tightly scripted theatrical form, interweave live-action narrative with film and other media. Buchanan's interest in literature can be seen in her poetic use of language and myth.

In Buchanan's first performance "Hair Transplant" (1972), she shaved the moustache and body hair from a male participant and replaced it with her own. This was the first of many pieces to explore the character of male and female identities, roles, and relationships.

She recently extended her examination of violence to include the political and industrial systems that control our lives. These concerns are found in the current piece, which the artist calls a "sort of musical comedy." She is joined by staff and students of the School of the Art Institute and California artist Stuart Bender.

Video

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| Eleanor Antin | ADVENTURES OF A NURSE (Parts I & II) (1976) |
| Chris Burden | SELECTED WORKS (1971-74) |
| Terry Fox | TURGESCENT SEX (1971) |
| Howard Fried | CONDOM (1979-80) |
| Allan Kaprow | COMMON SENSES (1977) PRIVATE PARTS (1977) |
| The Kipper Kids | ROLL 'EM No. 59 (1979) |
| Paul Kos | LIGHTNING (1977) RILEY, ROILY RIVER (1977) |
| Tom Marioni | 1979 STUDIO (1980) |
| Paul McCarthy | SAUCE (1974) |
| Linda Montano | MITCHELL'S DEATH (1977) |
| Bruce Nauman | SLOW ANGLE WALK (1968) |
| Videozines 1,3,5,6 | Anthologies of performance and other work published by La Mamelle, Inc. |

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