

THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE FOR GROWN UP GAYS

# ALTERNATE

250

**SPECIAL  
GAY ART  
ISSUE**

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PORT OF SAINTS**

ISSUE 12





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drawing, 1979

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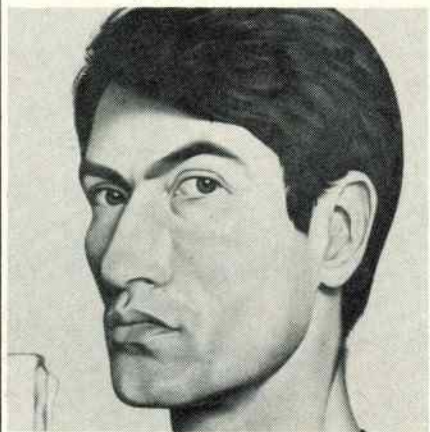


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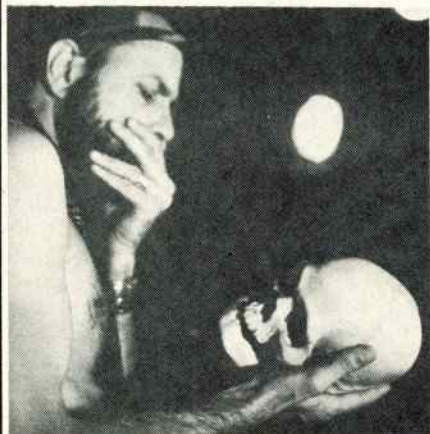
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# LONDON LETTER

## ROGUES AT COURT

*"I had not thought to have unlocked my lips in this unhallowed air" —*

So speaks the Lady in Milton's *Comus* when faced with the reality of corruption and deceit at Court. I held much the same view on the subjects of both Jeremy Thorpe and Sir Anthony Blunt, the men at the centre of the two political sex scandals that burst over here last year; but there has been so much (often misleading or irrelevant) crap written about

gay paper was successfully prosecuted for publishing a poem describing the erotic fantasies of a Roman centurian at the crucifixion) stands: it is expensive to continue fighting further. More recently, and more disturbingly, the same judge severely criticized a jury in the Anarchists' Trial for finding the defendants innocent when he believed them guilty. This has provoked a big outcry as the jurors, furious in the first place that they had been subjected to trivial but exten-



*photo from Private Eye/England*

them, both here and — I now find — in the States that I feel compelled to comment myself. Moreover, though both issues may seem to be out of the way, they are in fact very much with us still. Both involved gay men of immense rank and both brought down the strongest condemnation of homosexuality. More recent events here have indicated that the new Thatcher government is not only determined to stamp out basic liberal values, but to reveal as arrogant an attitude to justice and fair play as that which marked the conduct of the Thorpe trial.

As I write Lord Denning, the High Court judge who earlier this week pronounced secondary picketing in the steel strike illegal has been over-ruled by five Law Lords. This may seem a cause for rejoicing to those of us who were appalled at his flagrant misinterpretation of the law in favour of management, but without the enormous financial backing of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation the matter would have been closed. An equally arbitrary judgment by another right-wing old judge, King-Hamilton in the *Gay News* blasphemy case (when a

sive vetting, have now expressed in public their fears of being enrolled on some unofficial blacklist. Another significant pointer to the moral and political climate is the refusal of the present government to implement the findings of the Williams Report on Obscenity and Film Censorship set up under the socialists. Its findings, commendably open-minded and irrefutably argued, are not to the liking of the Tories now in power who feel their paternalistic role challenged.

The Thorpe and Blunt affairs assume a more sinister significance in the light of these recent events. The lengthy article on the Thorpe case published in *Blueboy* recently misses all the points vital to gays here and gives no impression of the real feeling the trial provoked. I have a friend, a judge himself, who hails from Devon (Thorpe's constituency). He told me, long before the trial opened, that the interesting feature would not be *whether* Thorpe was found innocent (he *had* to be) but *how*. It came as a shock that the matter was handled so arrogantly by the judge, Mr. Justice Cantley, who simply gave a summing up in this highly complex

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# INDISCREET



## WHAT TO DO ABOUT A HEAVENLY CONFLAGRATION

The first night I walked down San Francisco's Polk St. I was accosted by a rather tired looking individual and given a card, which had a picture of a bloody hand pierced by a spike. At first I assumed this was a tasteless invitation to an S&M party, but on turning the card over I read, *Jesus Died For You*. Aside from the fact that I resent the use of the too familiar *You* (the card should have read, *Jesus Died for One*), I felt once again oppressed by religion.

Despite the insults and verbal abuse they receive, the zealots maintain their vigils (that martyr syndrome again), even going so far as to bring bullhorns to the corner of 18th and Castro (the heart of the gay ghetto) and proclaiming: *This is Sodom and Gomorrah! Take Heed! For God Shall Destroy All Who Live For Pleasure and Mock Him!* To begin with, going to a bar on Castro does not necessarily mean a person is living for pleasure. In fact, I've seen many men on Castro who looked as though they had found anything but pleasure. Nevertheless, the reiteration of the above statement does detract from the pleasure potential of any given evening.

Despite my atheism, twelve years of Sunday School can still haunt. Therefore, like my father and his now rotting 50's bomb shelter I've decided to *Be Prepared*. Alongside the instructions for how to

deal with an earthquake I've hung the following list of possible means of both avoiding and surviving a heavenly conflagration.

### *How to Avoid a Heavenly Conflagration*

1. Maintain a residence in Daly City, whose repetitious and uninspired architecture and mediocre lifestyle could not be confused by god as imitating either Sodom or Gomorrah.
2. If an angel raps at your door, feed him/her/it and follow its advice. These individuals are easily identifiable by their phosphorescent halos and their sleek but feathery wings.
3. Subscribe to the *Watchtower* and *Our Sunday Visitor*, liberally distributing these periodicals around your otherwise tastefully appointed place of residence.
4. Falsify a passport that proves you have lived until very recently in the jungles of the Philippines and therefore are not familiar with Christian doctrine. This would only be useful if you can also arrange for a meeting with Heaven's immigration department.
5. Over a period of time build up your resistance to fire and brimstone (possibly by visiting a nuclear reactor daily this could be accomplished).
6. Commission a Gallup poll to see if there are ten righteous individuals living in the city of San Francisco.

### *If Caught In a Heavenly Conflagration*

1. Strike a religious attitude. Since we do not know how efficient the education of angels is, I advise the Roman Catholic sign of the cross, as even the older angels will recognize this. To learn this procedure ask any lapsed Catholic.
2. Claim to be the Pope on a visit.
3. Go to the nearest church. God is much too wise to destroy his own property and the insurance company's too.
4. Cover yourself with Morton Salt. God may think you were one of the chosen, who then made a foolish mistake.
5. Retreat under the golden showers. Water is the enemy of both fire and brimstone.

— Greg Howe

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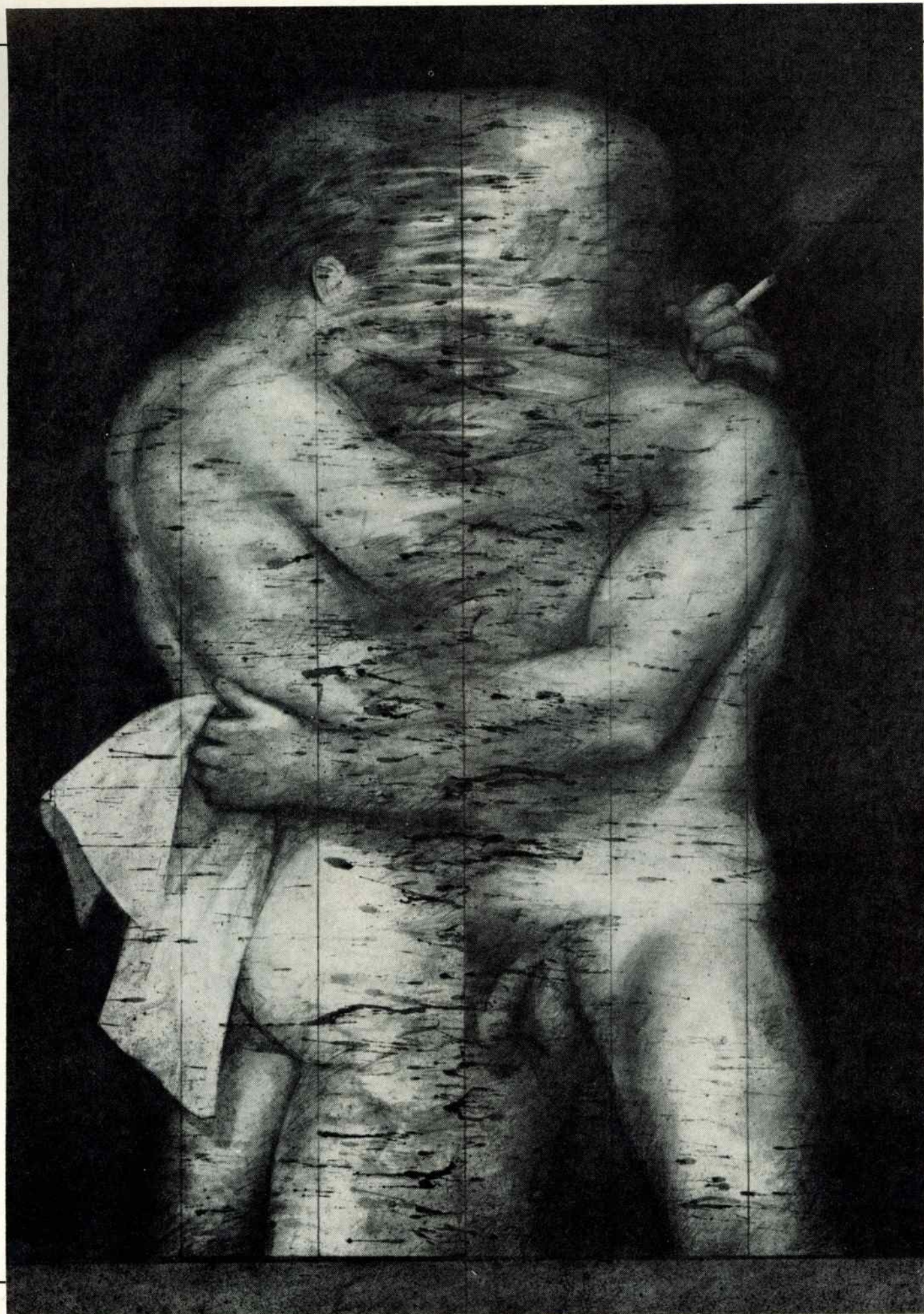
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# GAY ART IN AMERICA

by Michael Endicott-Ross

## FROM CAVE DRAWINGS

To consider gay art as a genre, you have to first consider the two most asked gallery questions: What is Gay Art? Who are the leading Gay Artists?

One side of the multifaceted debate will claim 'anything produced by a gay person as an artistic expression.' Another side will respond that only homoerotic expression can qualify as 'gay' art. Still another will counter that erotic gay art is a sub-category.

The first side might suggest that dividing types of gay expression into sexual and non-sexual sections is like grading shades of blue. But people who debate art are like that.

The second question, who are the leading gay artists, if answered pragmatically, is much easier. He who is currently sold and collected is a leading gay artist.

How do you recognize gay art? Simplicistically, either the artist is gay or the subject is gay. When you break that down into finite quibbles; say a male artist who paints only male nudes, you get into an area generally used as an umbrella for the unexplainable: gay sensibility.

But in art, especially, the phrase 'gay sensibility' has definite meaning. And taken at its broadest parameters, a Botticelli painting of a landscape will have

those sensibilities. Finding them is the work of the art theorist.

But finding gay art is no longer the guessing game it once was (where most artists painted in their closet what they dared not hang in galleries). Since the mid-70's, gay art has become a viable, visible market commodity. And not just among collecting gays.

Looking for the origins of gay art in America is akin to looking for the first brush stroke in a Van Gough. There are simply too many instances, occurring almost simultaneously, to trace the genre as easily as can be traced the gay political movement. And still to be discovered are a myriad of unknowns and closeted artists who have not or did not expose their sexuality.

If you frequented the art circles of the late 60's, you might have chanced on the single most important influence on the legion of now-visible gay artists; an Englishman named David Hockney.

A prodigy of the electric counter-culture art movement, Hockney did more for bringing gay artists out of the closet than any other working artist, even Warhol. And the difference between the two made the difference in the history of gay art.

While Andy Warhol painted a gay view of the contemporary status quo, Hockney painted the gay status quo. His alternat-

ing pale and vivid canvases of California swimming pools and the well-kept young men who frequented them was an unavoidable statement of politics and sexuality. Soft, serene, slightly surrealistic; there was enough of the decorator look in them to insure their being hung on the chic gallery wall and the hungry collector's apartment. And the price was right. Where Warhol had already reached the \$10,000-a-canvas mark, Hockney was still reaching for it. More people looking for something sure to invest in invested in David Hockney. It gave courage to the yet unknown gay artists who had their collection of erotic and semi-erotic expressions resigned to their own archives.

While there existed a number of small spaces for gay artists to hang all during this time, a serious, traditional gallery devoted to the gay artist did not come about until the mid-70's, when Los Angeles saw the doors of Eons open.

In an obscure neighborhood, one that held little promise of ever becoming a recognized gay ghetto, Eons brought the explicit gay art of Robert Opel public (and press) attention.

Opel, only fairly-well known as a photographer, mounted a selection of photos, collage, and wearable sculpture that shocked the viewers it didn't arouse. The highlight of this landmark collection



was the artist himself, dressed in a soft-sculpture he called *Mr. Penis*. Opel, who had previously attained a modicum of international attention by streaking the Academy Awards, and later the Los Angeles City Council chambers, was moving towards a personal artistic crystallization that would surface years later when he opened his own gallery in San Francisco devoted to explicit/erotic gay art.

The West Coast artistic senses were in a permanent state of future shock as Eons followed Opel with Tom Hinde. Hockney's gay art film, *A Bigger Splash*, opened. Gay restaurants began hanging any and everything. A Beverly Hills gallery debuted Donald Von Wiednman's collages and assemblages (less explicit but just as revolutionary). In truth, the die was cast.

The push was on for traditionalist gallery space. New York, New Orleans; any number of cities with a gallery willing to take a chance was seeing gay art shows.

In elite art circles, however, Hockney's American exhibits went unequalled until one of the establishment's own, a prestigious La Cienega gallery, hung porn filmmaker Fred Halsted's tonal abstractions. Poorly attended, it had become obvious that the gay art marketplace was deciding looking for those elusive sensibilities was hardly the calling card. While Halsted's work was and is exceptional; it would be the Fey Way (San Francisco) shows of Rex, Etinne, and Tom of Finland; the Tyson Gallery's (San Francisco) Wayne Douglas Quinn mountings; and the New York exhibits of those same and other artists that would catch the gay buying public's attention.

The art purists might argue that sexual sensibility rules unfairly in the gay marketplace. The cash registers might disagree.

But by this time gays were discovering 'lost' gay art: Erte, Cocteau, Beardsley.

What has emerged, by this time, was not only a boom in gay art, but an accessibility that did not exist previously.

And because certain gay artists now have name value, the gay galleries have been able to opt for more and more traditional operation.

It cannot be slighted that gay art is possibly a vanguard in art. While sexual explicitness has been artistically a reality for three or four thousand years; for the first time erotic art carries in built-in political expression. That it is being purchased, and that gay artists feel encouraged to explore their more subjective expression, means two things: It is here to stay. It will become even more socially visible.

Because pure art knows little or no restrictions, gay art has found expression in all the variable mediums. Beyond paint on canvas, gay artists are exploring per-

formance, video, film, kinetic, and environmental spaces. While a certain percentage of all art produced has been inherently gay or the work of gays; the final taboo, erotica has been afforded the gay artist. But it should be remembered that erotica has traditionally been the constant artistic taboo throughout modern history.

## BEYOND THE GALLERY

Gay art, like non-gay art, decorates your wall, occupies space in your home, or fills a specific moment in your life. And, like non-gay art, buying the work of a gay artist is supportive. Importantly so, in this instance, because the gay artist is still appealing to a limited audience. While that is not to say non-gays do not buy gay art (Rome has a wealth of Michaelangelo) the non-gay artist still has an easier time of it in comparison.

The gay art collector advances all that by measurable degrees. He or she might not find the investment as fast-rising (and remember, art as an investment is a slow process at best); but he is making a noticeable social statement. And, by limiting his acquisitions to gay art, he is providing a stronger foundation for the genre.

Other than the political/social ramifications, buying gay art is no different from buying any art, and a basic set of guidelines should be observed.

There are, besides the gallery, other opportunities to purchase the work of gay artists. Simplistically: from the artist, from another collector, at an auction (granting that you know what you are buying).

In most American cities of size there are one or two spaces where gay art is showcased. Besides galleries; gay restaurants, shops, bookstores, service centers and some bars now hang gay paintings, drawings, photographs and the like.

Except in localized or personal instances, you should deal with gay art on established levels. There are do's and don'ts, and they should be observed.

Gallery prices depend on a number of factors, besides the fact that the gallery adds or requires a commission on the work it is selling (in almost all cases the posted price includes the commission the gallery charges). You will generally find the work in galleries higher than the work in non-gallery spaces. But being mounted in a gallery show usually means the artist in question has risen somewhat above his non-gallery peers. It means the gallery owner thinks the artist is worth buying (gallery owners are usually astute observers of what is and is not collectable).

There are no bargains in art buying. A \$500 canvas is not likely to go on sale in a few weeks for \$395, like a suit being weaned out of stock. If anything, the next exhibit will find the same artist's

work priced higher; as the previous show will have sold enough pieces to warrant a value readjustment.

If you know nothing about art, in general, or are collecting more as an investment than for aesthetic reasons; you should take your time before buying even your first piece.

Definitely, you should learn a smattering of art terminology; like the difference between a stone lithograph and an offset lithograph (the former is printed by the artist, by hand; the latter is machine-produced, more like a poster).

Without advocating a four-year course in art appreciation; a working knowledge will, if nothing else, help you decide what questions to ask when you find an artist whose work you like. And, by all means, you should ask questions. Contrary to rumor, gallery owners and attendants are not effete snobs; and they do indeed make their living selling art to people just like you. And, in the final analysis, a single, inexpensive purchase is as important as a large, expensive one.

One should always start small. Don't rush out and buy the highlight of the show, unless you happen to have a castle to fill. Consider that you are buying something with which you are going to live. It should represent aspects of your own sensibility. It should be something with which you feel comfortable.

Some people would never dream of hanging a nude in their livingroom; others wouldn't dream otherwise.

Unless you intend to specialize in a particular artist or medium, you should consider your second acquisition to be entirely different from your first. Besides preventing a quick-fill of wall space, if you have limited wall space for paintings, you can achieve a better sense of how art can be incorporated into a living environment. Sculpture, pottery, fabric hangings; all can be art.

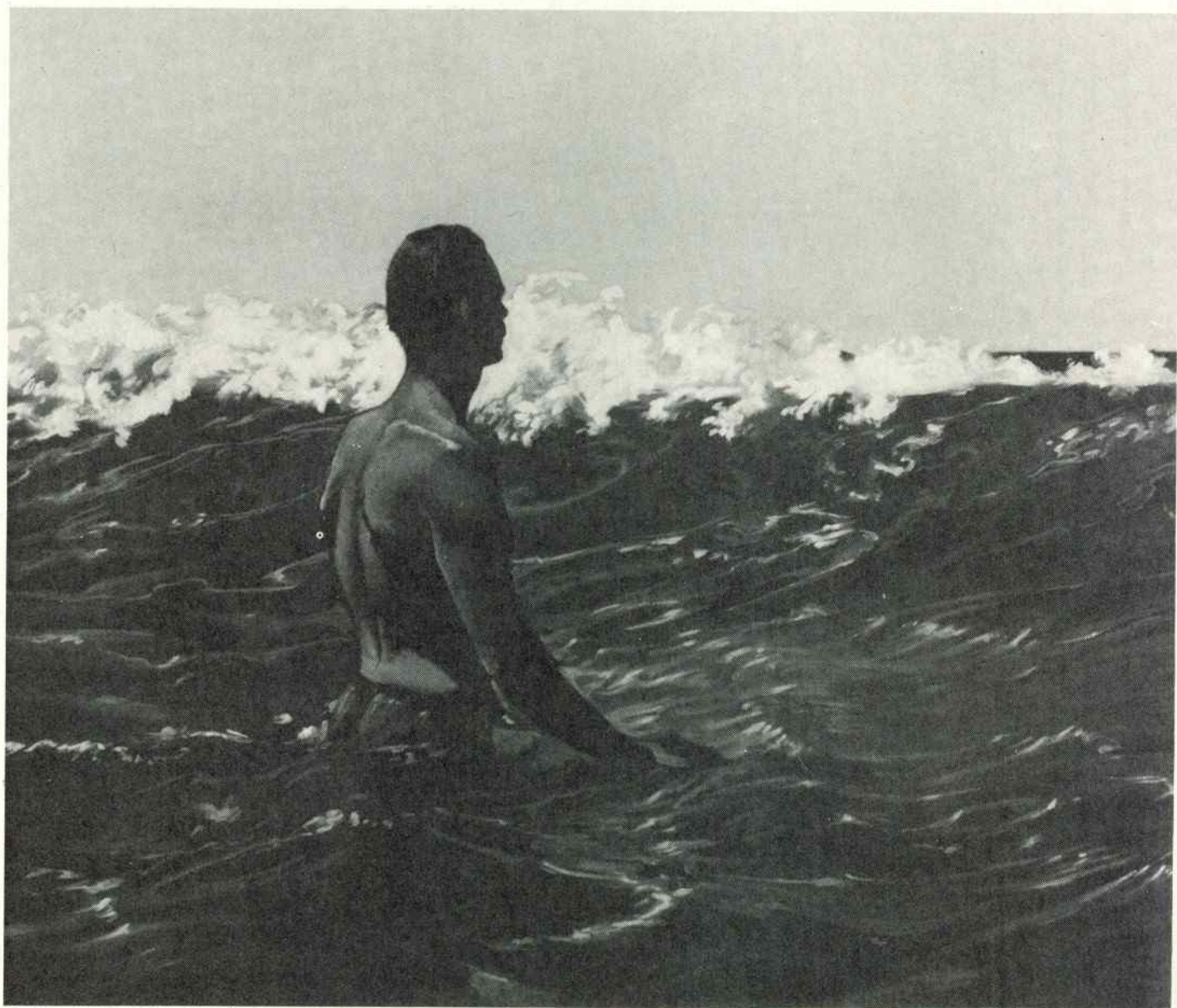
However, you may want to specialize; perhaps in watercolors, or etchings, or drawings. If you are thinking in archival terms, you can make buying challenging by limiting yourself to a single medium. And while it may also limit the number of artists you can collect, it could possibly help you achieve a sense of completeness over the years.

You can't honestly add 'schools' of gay art as a collectible range, because it is slightly redundant.

The least understood and appreciated medium, ironically, is photography. Ironic because the photographic image is a constant in our everyday life. A number of people resist collecting photography as art because it seems, as a medium, too easily in their own realm of expression. But that is the difference between a Brownie Box Camera and a Hasselblade.

In traditional art circles photography is the new avant guard; which is itself ironic since photography, per se, is antique.





*Big Wave by David Martin, oil on canvas, 1979. Photo by James Dee.*

There is one hard and fast rule to collecting photography. It must be printed by the photographer (or, in some rare cases, by a photographer's workshop) on museum-quality (archival) paper in black and white. Why not color? Simple. The color process, unless it is offset printed, as in a magazine, will not survive. Even the color negative will not survive. Someday that may change; the current state of the art is strictly black and white.

Only some photographers will differ, and when they do — ask to see one of their 20-year-old color prints or negatives.

Usually you will find photography for sale in large format prints, usually in numbered/signed editions. Buying the only print of a photographic image is extremely rare (there are exceptions, in antique prints where the glass negatives have been destroyed). The best guide in buying photographs is to look for small editions. As with any print process in art,

the smaller the edition the better.

In most instances, salon-print photographs are going to be less expensive than most art mediums. And if you are creating a general art collection, a couple of photographs is an asset.

Next to photographs, limited edition prints are the most accessible. The mediums range from stone lithographs, etchings, lino and wood prints, to silkscreens. The process should be hand executed by the artist or the artist's atelier. And, as with photographs, the smaller the edition the better (providing the artist is collectable, which is an assumption with all these generalities).

Prints should be hand-numbered and lettered and signed. Where a signature appears within the image of the print, the artist has included that in the block or screen the print was made from. If the print is executed that way, and is not numbered; you have no real assurance of the size of the edition.

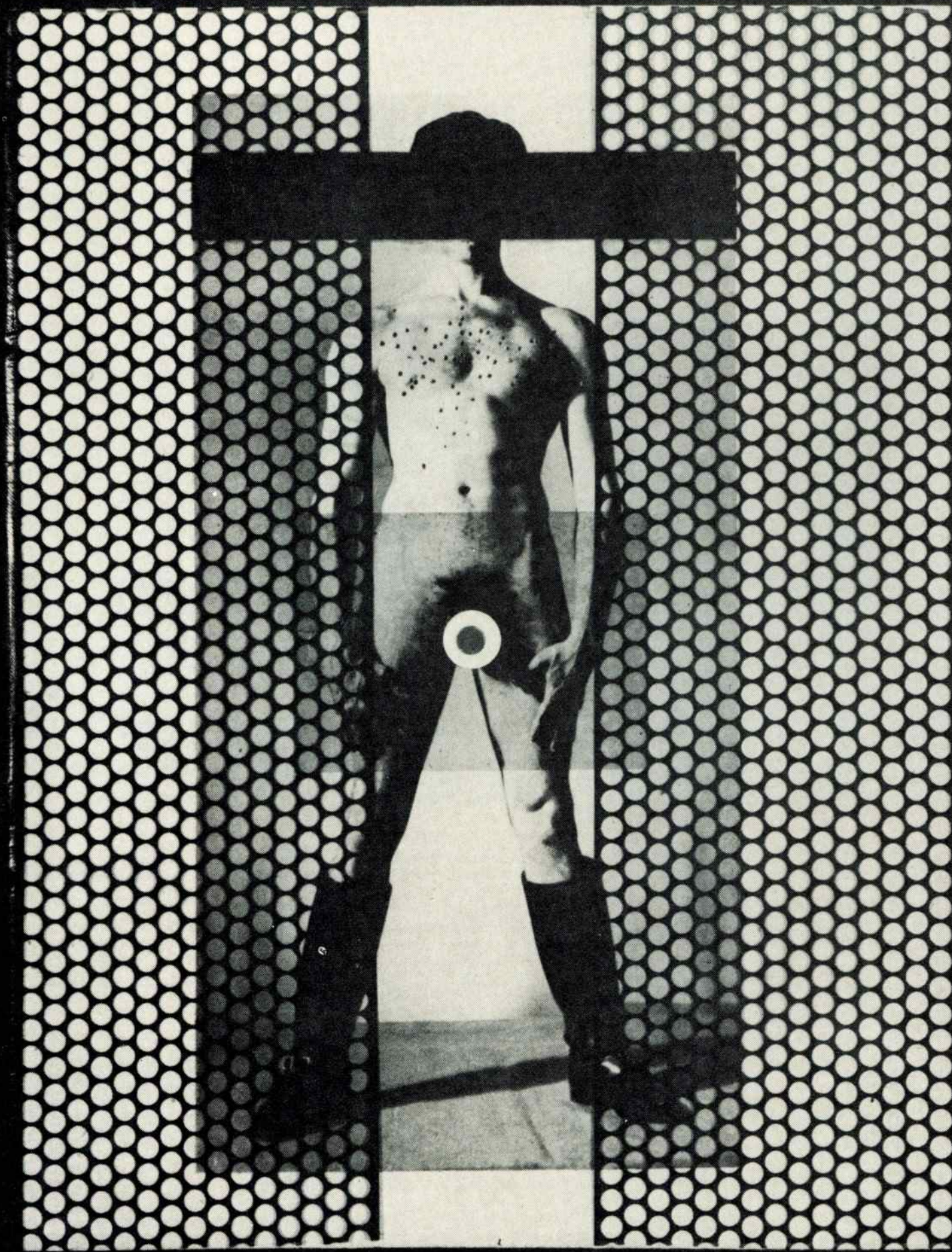
And, with an edition of say 5000 unnumbered (or, with a figure that a large, numbered) prints, buying one means 4999 other people have the same option.

There is no rule for the size of editions, they range from 10 to 500 (anything bigger is illogical); and personal desire will have to be the deciding factor.

## IN SEARCH OF ART

As was mentioned earlier, the opportunities to locate and collect gay art are growing daily. New gallery spaces, more art exhibits, more visible gay artists have helped stimulate the interest in gay art. Beyond the local options to view and purchase gay art, a number of galleries have gained national attention for the quality of the art and artists they are showing, and their ability to broaden the market.







# THE NEW YORK GALLERIES

## Non-Competitive Exposure

By John Preston

The public has a view of the art world that sees an unbridled bohemia filled with free spirits doing, saying and depicting outrageously free things. The whole popular concept of the artist is one of someone who has unburdened him or herself from the tight strictures of society. Here, certainly, must be one arena of life where gayness is truly liberated.

It's not true.

The "art world" is a tightly controlled, homophobic system that banks heavily on the closetness of the gay artist. Success is closely defined, its place can be easily removed from the artist by a phone call.

The whole world turns on a few reviews in a few media. The reality of the art world is that those media harbor the worst homophobic critics in action today. All the cries about book reviewers or theatre critics pale beside the track record of the art writers in the *New York Times*, the *SoHo Weekly News* and the *Village Voice*. How bad is it? A recent front page editorial in the Arts and Leisure Section of the lofty *Times* proclaimed that there cannot be such a thing as women's art. A feminist would be too embroiled in political issues to produce seriously. What do you think they'd say about a bunch of faggots?

There's plenty of documentation; this is not a time when a few gay men's paranoia has carried them into a fit of name calling. Seven years ago Philip Masnick opened a show at the very avant-garde SoHo Gallery. The photographs in the show included graphic depictions of fist fucking and other sexual acts. It lasted less than 48 hours before a vehement group of "liberated" artists succeeded in

having it taken down. It wasn't until less than a year ago that the show was ever presented to the public.

Five years ago two gay theatre companies, TOSOS and the Glines, had shows in their waiting areas for viewing during intermissions. One show at the Glines of the work of artist Philip Gornstein so incensed a largely straight cast of one play that the embarrassed company was again forced to take down the show.

The amazing contradiction in all this was the existence of a truly disproportionate number of gay artists among the ranks of the well known. The most damaging and damning form of oppression existed — the artists could be shown and their work could be sold so long as their art didn't reflect their life style.

Charles Leslie and Frederick Lohman were among the first people to realize the situation and to react to it. In 1970 they moved to a SoHo loft, in the vanguard of creative people who would turn that industrial neighborhood into one of the prize communities of Manhattan in the next ten years. They were, naturally, surrounded by artists. They were also quickly in touch with those artists who were gay and began to view a vast amount of the gay-themed work that would never see the light of a gallery. The first move they made was to institute an annual showing of gay art open only to a limited number of known friends. They were anxious to have the work shown to people who would and could appreciate it. The shows were so successful, and the need was so great that they opened Leslie-Lohman gallery at 485 Broome Street in 1975. And, Philip Gornstein had a show.

Philip Masnick also ended up in another gay gallery. The Robert Samuel at 795 Broadway, in 1979.

For years, actually decades, Tom of Finland has been known and reknown as the leading figure of unashamedly gay pornographic art. And while there is no doubt that the work is pornographic, it is also undoubtably Capitol Art. But the work could only be found in small circles of friends in Europe where it sold for



Opposite: Robert Mapplethorpe's *Bull's Eye* (collage) photo by James Dee;  
above: *Leather Hood and White Sheets* by Hilton Brown





Above: *Before Time Changes Them* by Andrew Sychel at the Leslie-Lohman Gallery. Below, right: *Man to Man* by Robert Gable, photo by James Dee.

\$20.00, or in often outrageously poorly printed magazines. Two years ago Stompers, a Village boot store, owned by composer Louis Weingarten, opened a gallery in the backroom of their retail space at 259 West Fourth St. Tom of Finland had a home and a formal art opening.

Much of the gay art of the century is European. Some, like Tom of Finland (he really is Finnish), got to this country, but much of it wasn't being shown. Rob Gallery, the foremost gallery in Amsterdam for gay work, has opened a branch at 8A Charles Lane in the Village and now that too, has a place in the world.

The Stoned Wall Gallerie, 221 W. 28th. Street in Chelsea rounds out the listing of gay art places. It's more oriented to the community than the other four, but is playing an important role in giving some beginning artists, and an increasing number of well-known artists, still another New York base.

The five gay galleries are one of the

most obvious and significant manifestations of liberation in the gay world. If one gives any credence to the idea that art has a place in a movement, social or political, than the presence of a competent artistic expression has an obvious importance. There's a more complicated meaning also. The society as a whole has lived off of the accomplishments of gay people without ever giving us our due. The "due" is our own self-image, our own self-worth, the fruits of our own community's labors. Our artists have been told that they can produce "art" so long as it doesn't refer to us. These galleries give our artists a way to relate to their own community. To present the images and the concepts that they hope we will find important.

The world of gay art is about ten years behind the world of publishing. The existence of the five New York galleries assures some outlet for gay work in New York. Slowly, the 'uptown' galleries are just beginning to respond to

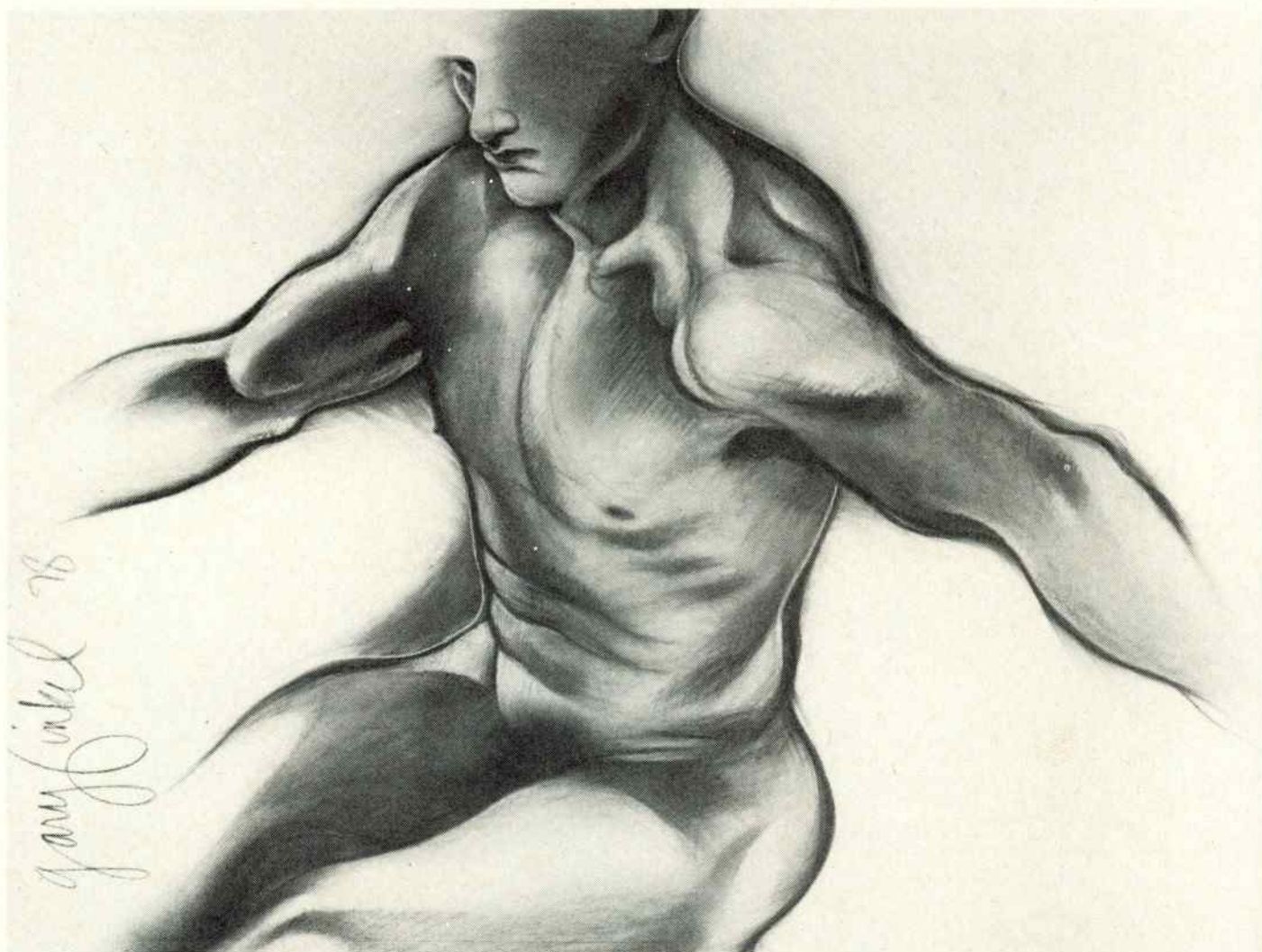
the existence of the gay work of their artists. Unfortunately, that recognition comes in only one of two ways: If the artist is of the first caliber and can handle any critical response he receives (Paul Cadmus's recent show at the Midtown Gallery is a rare example) or if the work is highly sensationalistic — and without question Robert Mapplethorpe is the prime example here.

Mapplethorpe has become the focus of a large, ongoing controversy among gay people interested in the arts. He, without any question, is a superb technician — perhaps the best working at the moment in many peoples' minds, but his work, which is shown in the 'best' uptown galleries is sometimes seen as an elaborate rip-off. The point is that his heavy leather, S&M, macho images are allowed into the galleries only because of their shock value. The suburban buyers of art can tolerate his homosexual photographs only because they are so removed from the reality of their own life. Sam Hardison, manager of the Robert Samuel Gallery, is one of the art-folk who will defend Mapplethorpe's work. He's quick to point out that the first show of photography was still lifes which gathered Mapplethorpe's initial critical acclaim. Still, the idea of the parallels between the straight art world's co-optation of the sensationalistic is disturbingly close to the film controversy over *Cruising*.

The five galleries in New York have begun to accomplish one very important transition that impacts the lives of gay artists. They have finally begun to nurture and educate a body of gay collectors. While the owners of the galleries acknowledge that most buyers are people who simply buy what they like and then hang the work in their own homes, still, the base of the art buying community is composed of people who collect art — primarily those who collect it for some level of investment. The accomplishment of the galleries in a very short period of







Untitled drawing by Gary Finkel, photo by James Dee

time has been to impress on many people the worthiness of the gay art works. The galleries have convinced people that this *is* art and that it is not devalued just because it depicts homoerotic situations. And, also, they are beginning to show just what a good investment the work can be. Tom of Finland's show at Stompers in October 1978 had pieces for as little as \$300. In February 1980, Tom had another exhibit at Robert Samuel where pieces of comparable technical quality were being offered for \$3000. The result is bound to be a situation where more and more artists can expect to be able to earn a living while they are creating.

In a gay world full of skepticism and one where so many of us have learned to expect the worst from many entrepreneurs, the owners and managers of the five galleries have to be singled out for two noteworthy traits. They are remarkably supportive of one another. And they are remarkably conscious of their role in the community.

Art galleries tend often to be stereotypically bitchy to one another, highly competitive and highly critical. Yet, in numerous interviews and conversations

not one of the people involved would do anything or say anything that wasn't strongly supportive of the others. It was a remarkable experience of community cooperation. In fact, Sam Hardison has become furiously vocal over recent critical attempts to separate the Robert Samuel gallery from the other gay institutions. The Samuel is physically in a better neighborhood, its space is larger, its works tend to be more expensive and closer to what would be shown in a "straight" gallery than the others. An increasing number of critics have singled it out as the "only legitimate," or "only respectable" gay gallery in the city. Sam will have none of it. He's aware of the day to day barriers he is forced to overcome, the ever increasing pressure to be "responsible" by someone else's definition and the reality that his situation is always going to be closer to the other gay galleries than to any other institution's. So far as he's concerned, the gay enterprises are in it together, and he's attempting to resist every attempt to remove his labor from the others.

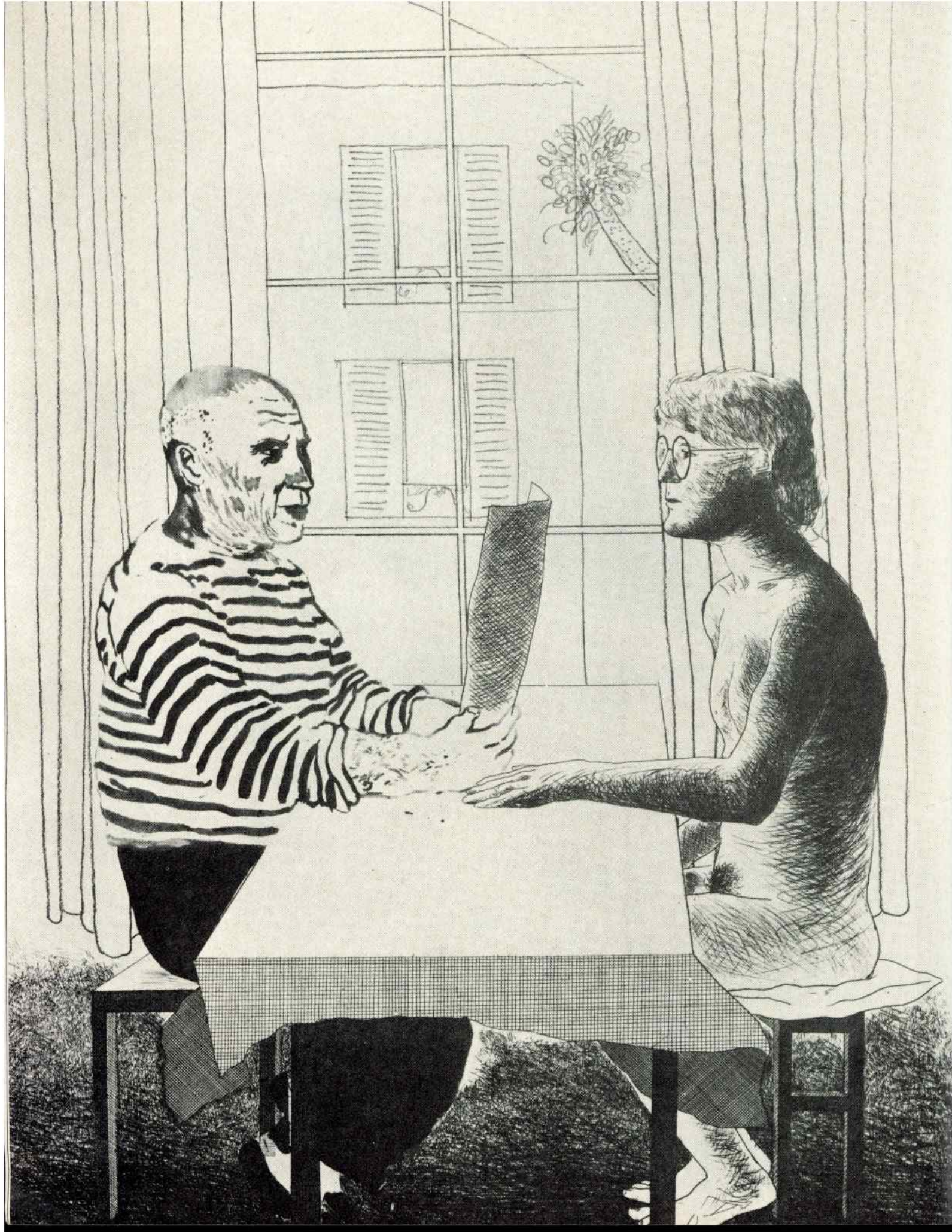
The community responsiveness is most accurately shown in the openness and,

frankly, the charity with which the galleries deal with new, younger artists. They will all look at anyone's portfolio. They all consider it part of their obligation to mount group shows that will display the work of previously unknown artists and they have all engaged in some attempt to reclaim a forgotten past of gay art by showing the work of past decades.

Leslie-Lohman's June group show is one of the best examples of the nurturing of new artists; Stomper's show of the homoerotic work of the 40's and 50's last year is an immediate example of the mounting of a historical show.

All in all the existence and perseverance of the gay galleries in the face of open hostility and an under-educated gay public is one of the high points to gay life in New York. The emergence of new artists of the caliber of Brick and Andrew Epstein and the enormous photographic talent of many photographers like Philip Beard and Arthur Tress make it seem highly likely that the force these places represent will continue to fuel promise of the community over the next few years.







# David Hockney

## A Philistine Portrait

BY DANIEL CURZON

David Hockney has been practicing his art since he was a child, first in the small town of Bradford, England; later in art school, where he worked twelve hours a day for four years. And now he's a success. How nice to know that the myth sometimes comes true!

Why he is a success, I admit, has not always been apparent to me, but then I'm not an art critic, not even (if the truth be told) much of an art connoisseur. All I can say is that I've tried doubly hard to understand why he's considered important since I've never been knocked out by his work and yet something tells me he's notable.

I've seen his "Sketches with Pen, Pencil, and Ink" at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco twice, I've interviewed Hockney, and I've examined the reproductions in *Pictures by David Hockney*. What I found may be of interest to those who feel as I have. Professional art critics of course may avert their eyes from the following:

First off, I realize it's philistine, but I prefer representational art; that is, I like pictures that look like things I recognize. I'm sure most people do, whether they admit it or not. (But then most people like what they already know and resist anything new or strange, right?) Given all this, triangles and blue stripes still seem like a waste of time.

The problem becomes how to keep from sounding like an asshole because you don't like the bulk of abstract art.

Well, David Hockney can help here, because he has re-introduced *figures* into painting. When he started doing them in the early sixties, he says, "the idea of figure pictures was considered really anti-modern." He made them respectable again in intellectual circles.

No doubt the figures are one reason that Hockney has a public following as well, but then again he's hardly an "accessible" artist, even with his human subject matter. And I've come to realize it's that very combination of human interest and aesthetic distancing that accounts for why we return to Hockney's work, when we don't return to the work of artists who give us everything in one glance.

I did a little research in art history because I felt that Hockney was probably

consciously "intellectual" as well as "figurative." I was determined to conquer my aversion to what I call the "3rd grade aspects" of Hockney's work — those flat, unrealistic paintings like his picture of a man in an apron scrubbing the back of a man in the shower.

Well, realizing that the artist is render-

kind is as legitimate as a still life of a bowl of fruit — more so, because bowls of fruit derive from the past. Hockney has violated the same rule that Cezanne had to violate — the idea that commonplace subjects are not suitable for high art. He makes us look at the familiar and realize we should have paid attention



Opposite: Artist and Model, 1974; above: Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures), 1971.

ing a nude bathing scene in a long line of nude bathing scenes *does* help in appreciating the traditional aspects of Hockney's art. It's too easy to see only the ordinary — the fact that it's an L.A. shower like one we might use ourselves. The intellectual concept elevates our appreciation, because we see that Hockney is deliberately combining the traditional and the contemporary and thus giving us something fresh.

It is this very combination that marks Hockney as significant, in the same way that other artists aligned with Pop Art are significant. Viewers are forced to see the everyday with a clarity and focus that usually escape us because we have not paid close attention to the familiar. A Hockney crayon drawing of a suitcase in a hotel room makes us see our world as others will see it years from now. We begin to see that a still life of Hockney's

sooner.

His swimming pools in particular have attracted much attention because he paints "water scenes," yes, but water scenes that say as much about modern life as a mountain lake may have said about the nineteenth century.

At the same time Hockney the high-brow is obviously trying to find a new way to represent water. He isn't aiming for a precise description, but for metaphors that will capture qualities of water so that we'll see it as we've never quite seen it before. We appreciate his attempts to be original as much as we appreciate what he actually shows us.

As with bowls of fruit, dead birds, and other traditional subjects, Hockney's suitcases, briefcases, and beds may take on nostalgic and classical associations as the years wear on. There is a continuing "principle" of art appreciation in many



people that says the art isn't any good until the artist is dead. Then people can't praise it enough.

Much of Hockney's work is stylized — that is, presented in simplified variations of real objects — so that Hockney the intellectual can communicate to his viewers what they ought to notice around them, at least if they don't want to continue to overlook life. This stylization is what makes Hockney's work have depth, if that's not too much of a paradox. I mean he isn't interested in a simple photographic representation of anything. Indeed he often emphasizes the "painterly" qualities of his work. That is, he aims for a mixture of an illusion of reality with a deliberate attempt to make us see that the paintings are made of *paint*. The principle, I imagine, is to make viewers aware of the form as well as the subject.

Sometimes he'll give us pictures of curtains or buildings that look flat. It helps the non-professional viewer to realize that some recent artists have rediscovered *flatness* and have decided to stress it as a quality to be enjoyed for its own sake, although the deeper joys of flatness elude me, I must say.

But I'm willing to admit that Hockney's flat pictures of streets and buildings

take on more meaning if we understand that Hockney is rejecting the tradition that three-dimensional perspective is necessarily superior. Once upon a time it may have been innovative to create the illusion of space, but maybe too much has been made of that accomplishment for too long.

Some of the other artistic elements in Hockney's work become clearer when we stop and notice how interested in *patterns* he is. He's enthralled with louver doors, windows, raindrops, bathroom tiles, even lawn sprinklers. One doesn't have to be an art critic to realize that the shape and form of art may be just as interesting as the content. It may not be possible to spell out why a pattern appeals to us, any more than we can always explain why a certain face does, but I do believe we experience delight in seeing recognizable patterns, visual rhythms. Perhaps architects and the like can best appreciate good arrangement (what balances, what doesn't, what teeters, what teeters on purpose, and so on), but all of us can experience a fine sense of pictorial composition whether we know the terminology or not.

Sometimes people will claim that it's not possible to say emphatically what is beautiful and what is only personal

choice. I have to agree that tastes vary, but I think it's safe to say that even if we can't always agree on beauty we can all agree when ugly puts a frame around itself.

I don't think David Hockney is really a satirist or even a social critic, although sometimes he's thought to be so. His pictures of homes in Los Angeles, for example, capture that urban tropical, casually rich scene, but I don't feel the artist putting names on what he depicts, like "Standardized" or "Vulgar," the way some would. I think he's more fascinated than put off, the same way I was the first time I saw Los Angeles. If he is satirizing, he's doing it so indirectly that even his subjects don't realize or don't mind it.

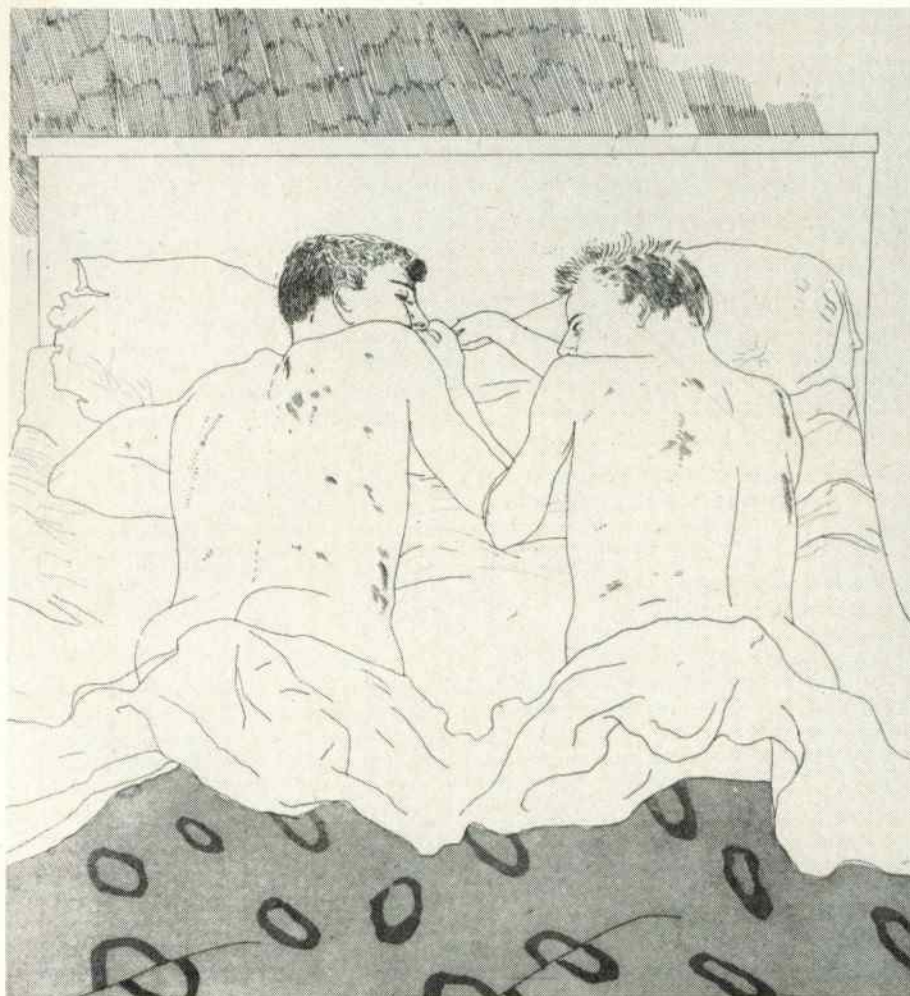
I'd say it's truer to notice how Hockney captures the enigma of modern, sleek reality — those highly colored figures with their hands at their sides, the *empty* swimming pools, the no-parking signs in front of mansions.

David Hockney is openly gay, and that brings up the question of homosexuality in his vision of the world. I don't know whether Hockney works at keeping the gay content to a minimum or not. It is possible too much of it could lessen his esteem in certain artistic or art-buying eyes. But in any case homosexuality can hardly be called intrusive in Hockney. There isn't a single leather man with an enormous tool. (Isn't that how you tell gay art? hmmm?)

Every artist makes decisions about what he will depict in his work. Some choose to be graphic, some don't. Only the artist knows for sure if he compromises his integrity. I must say that I'm curious if Hockney would be as widely shown and analyzed as he is if his art was more emphatically gay, and I don't mean explicitly sexual. I'm tempted to believe that non-homosexuals are still put off by anything that goes beyond a certain line — no kissing, no hugging on the premises. I do feel in Hockney a certain lack of daring here. I prefer art that challenges or dares — without being provocative just to provoke. That always seems juvenile. But at the same time a little bit of the adolescent in an artist can perk up his vision. Hockney too often seems too grown-up, too polite, too gentlemanly.

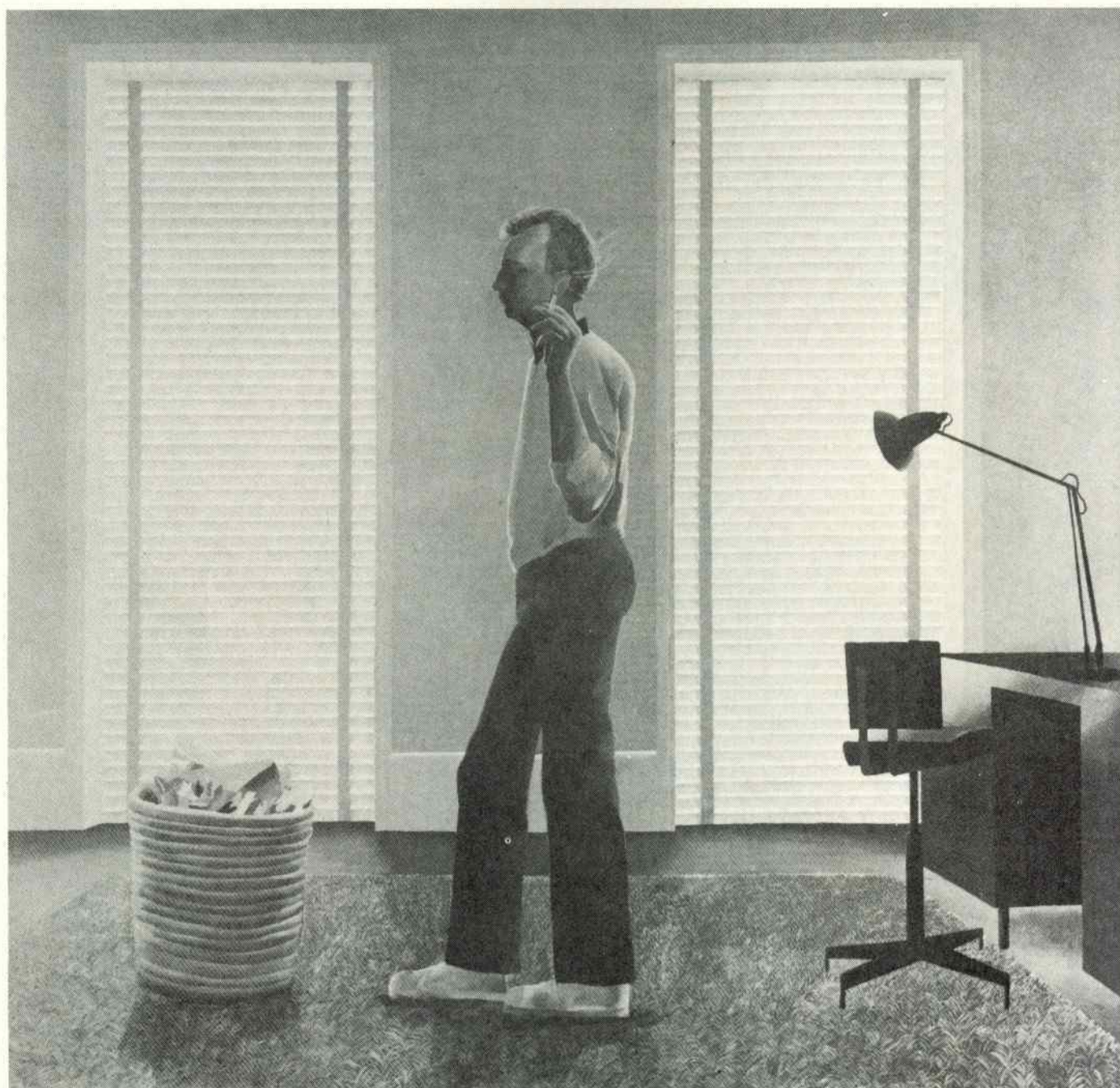
I wonder if the time will ever come when homosexual subject matter will be looked at on a par with heterosexual. Or will there always be a sense of discomfort, annoyance, embarrassment (however seemingly sophisticated the spectators), to say nothing of downright hatred? I believe that is the stage we're in now, and Hockney may know best how far an artist can go and still be considered mainstream.

In his work the homosexual hints are only hints: two men sleeping in the same



Two Boys Aged 23 and 24, etching, 1966.





*The Room, Manchester Street, 1967.*

bed, one man touching the back of another man in a shower. In all of Hockney's work that I've seen there's very little that would offend anybody or could be accused of proselytizing for "perversion." (Ah, maybe this is the most radical vision of all — the easy acceptance of homosexual human beings, who aren't even being *homosexual* all the time.)

Even Hockney's male nudes are not eroticized. I doubt that anyone but the most deprived monk would have a lascivious thought looking at them. The artist is always detached. You may prefer art that involves more lust, but Hockney certainly deserves his right to see the way he does. (He does seem more interested in male behinds than in fronts. What this says about Hockney the man I couldn't

venture to say.)

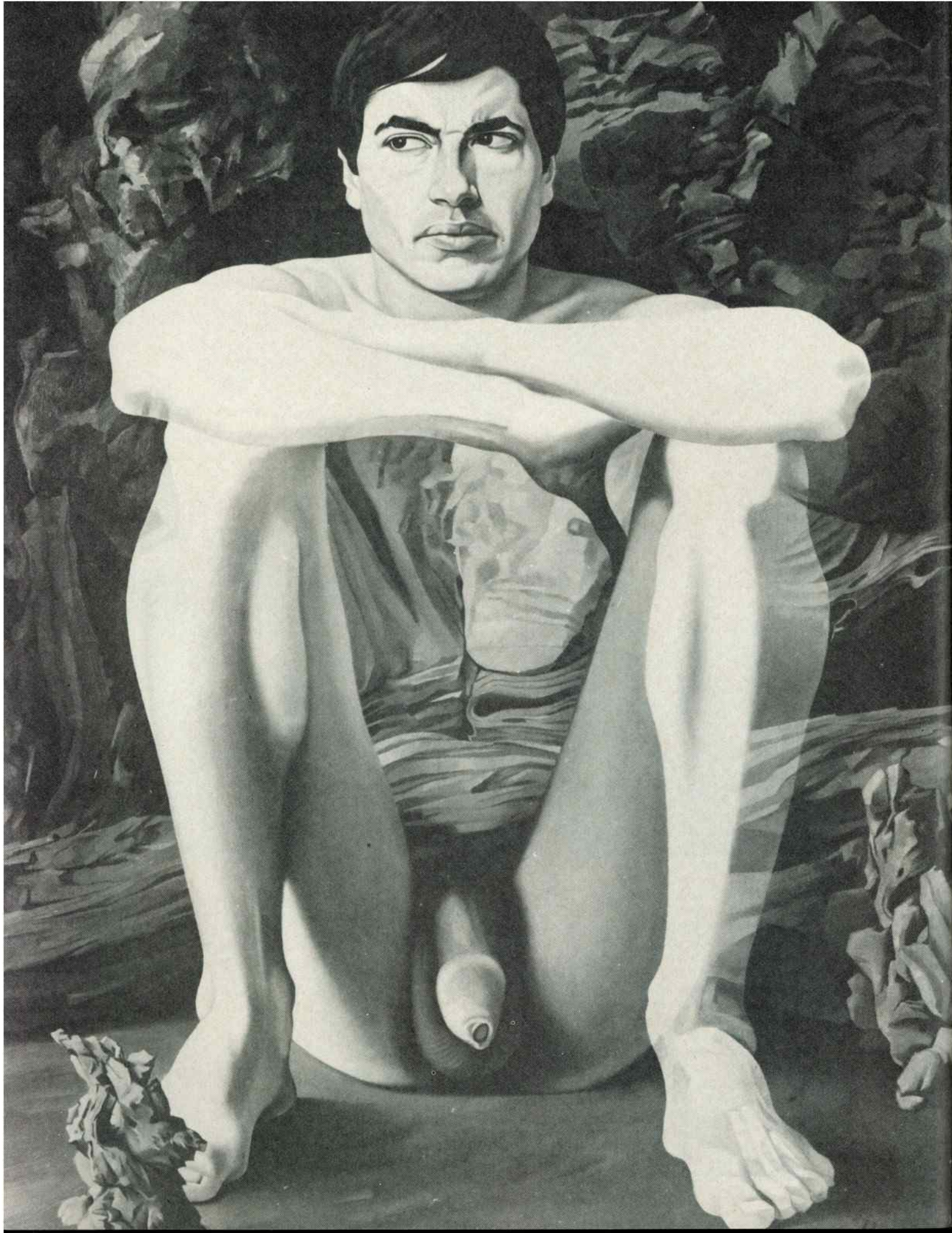
I personally like his portraits a lot, both the black-and-white and the color ones. I may be back where I began (liking the pictures that look like real people), but there's something inescapable about his portraits of his mother — the sad eyes in the rather dowdy Englishwoman with primly folded hands; the slouching father, who never quite looks at us; W.H. Auden with his eyes almost closed by wrinkles, and so on. Seeing several portraits of the same subject makes us value Hockney's technical skill in capturing the many facets of an individual. He doesn't merely capture a likeness and then repeat it *ad infinitum*. He shows us the *different* people within the single individual.

It probably shouldn't have to be true

that an artist must demonstrate his ability to draw realistically, but I confess I'm always more impressed when I think an artist has the technical expertise to "draw right" but has chosen to draw some other way. I feel that about Hockney. The portraits let me know that this man is a master craftsman, forget everything else.

It's also Hockney's great variety in style and subject matter that may make him, when the art histories come to be written, to be considered one of the finest makers of art in the second half of the twentieth century. But then who knows how reputations in art are really created. What part skill, what part economics, what part chance, what part self-promotion? What price glory?







# Bernard Kagane

## Having Cold Eyes

BY CHRISTIAN MAUREL

A very hard grace, with the least possible humanity. Hard to appreciate grace that has reached such rigidity. One might think it morbid, but it really is at work deceiving death. These canvasses function like so many traps — to capture an ultimate extremity — to intercept imminent death and bring it back to the state of being born. During the process the paintbrush has killed something, but what? One knows in advance that it might be scary. And still it nibbles at one's nerves.

All the more as Kagane pleases himself transforming animal and vegetable back into mineral. It isn't far from mineralogist to meteorologist. Now there's someone hardly likes a storm — one can tell just by looking at him. All the same, everything happens as though he were the eye of the hurricane, as though he occupied an impossible oasis of calm at the center of the turbulence. And there, having been stupefied, he paints the stupefying.

Clinical eye. Critical Phase. It's called having cold eyes. Not the opposite of courage. It would even be the opposite of cowardice, because it is a matter of tightening and condensing in the extreme. Gathering, filtering, starting over again. Difficult maneuvers of the will in a painted desert.

An intensity does not naturally let itself metamorphose in duration. It is a story of capture and captivity. One has to subjugate, mark off, tie off the body for it to ascend, for it to establish a plan, for it to soar. And still it is not enough. The body has yet to be criss-crossed by

currents, pierced through by lines of pain or panic. One almost hears the hum of a motor: compression, combustion, exhaust.

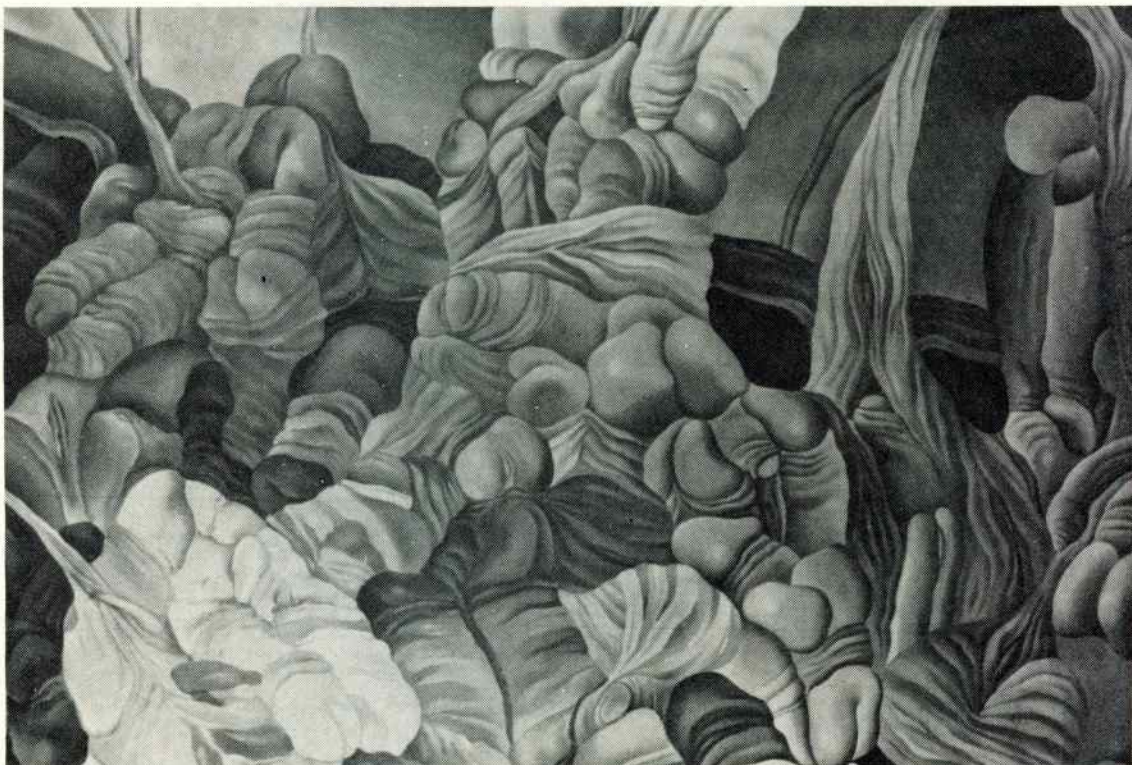
Sacred gymnastics, in the most physical and the most mystical sense. Whether looking at Kagane's treatment of a man's skin, or the leaf of a climbing vine, or of tissue or a lava flow, one sees the nerve fibers, one feels spasm-wracked muscles, one senses the spinal cord. Portrait of the work and not of the worker. Redoubtable madness of the work. Because it is not just shortsightedness that gives Kagane this love of the millimetric. With only oil and pigments, how does he manage to polish, to glaze to this degree his human figures, still-lifers and landscapes?

He can pose a naked boy, but as easily rip off a photograph, isolate a fetish, paint an idea or a hallucination. In any case he tells himself an adventure, and he revels in what becomes of color

on the surface where he spreads it. This approach ends by absorbing all of childhood: the folds of drapery, the folds in the garden, bizarre machinations, puzzles or rebuses, the secret still hidden, and above all, what the weather is doing.

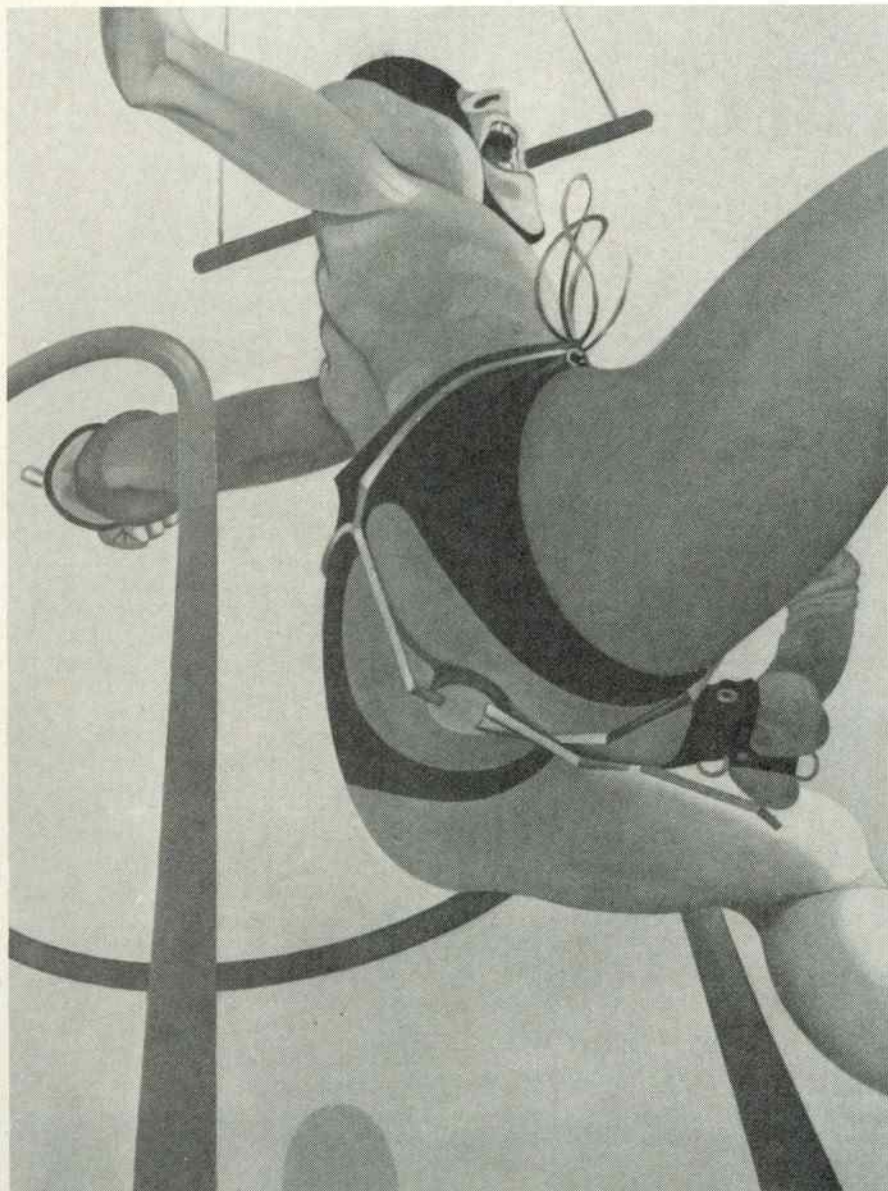
One can find oneself regarding Kagane's painting like statuary that hides who knows what invisible orgasm. But never are these statues static. Rather their quality is ecstatic, a word which means literally outside the self. As stable as it looks, balance here is only an illusion. If one looks for the center of gravity of his people, it flees before one's eyes. It becomes the line of a gauge. It transforms, reappears altered, then is gone.

What good is Egyptian violet or Chinese red, if not to intercept light and to modulate its variations? Long-standing obsession of artists content to be artisans. One is confused by Kagane's palette. Is it the same hand that now excites it-

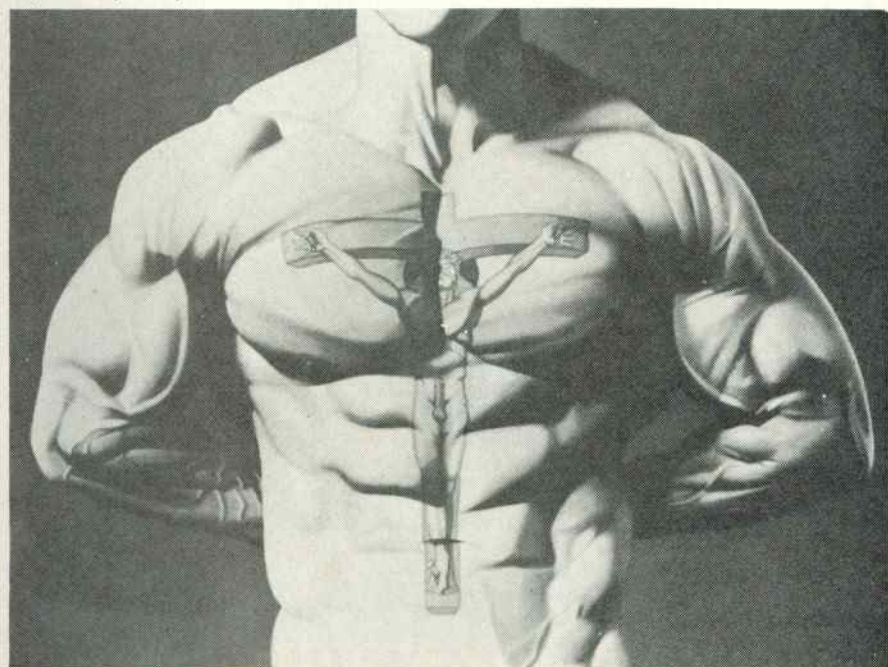


Opposite page: Cain; above: L'Epidemie





Top: *Le Trapeziste*, below: *Crucifixion*



self to fury to bedeck with ornamentation, now devotes itself to sculpture? This puzzle, to what purpose? It is simple: dawn is a color, sex is a flavor, and the Last Judgement is a farce.

Speed disguised as slowness. Flashing slowness. We are at the instant where the jump into the void is in suspended animation. One scarcely perceives the breath, but it nonetheless is running everything. Kagane paints nomads, but they are at rest, plainly in the grip of inertia, as though it were the only way to show the power that guides them, the dizzying verticality that pervades them, the corpuscles that they send out.

Painting that declares without laughing that painting has always been a matter of deceiving the eye and that all painters are counterfeiters. No surprise that he makes fun of the style. That is not what interests him. It is what is masked. And he painstakingly knows a little something of this. He began painting at age three. He became serious about it at thirty. Now he's forty-six. He knows how to take his time.

## Bodies of Angels

BY MICHEL TOURNIER

They are angels, indisputably. But certainly not of the pre-raphaelite variety — cold-blooded, asexual, anemic. Of the four cardinal virtues of the ancient theology, strength is the one that they cultivate with the greatest bias.

Everyone brings us a new vision of the body — in an energized-angelic idiom. No more misty tunics — now it's rope, thongs, straps, bracelets, camisole jackets, artillery carbines. Skin-tight clothing that gives an effect more naked than nudity. Sex and muscle gush in exuberant affirmation.

These beings evolve in privileged places, not at all earth-bound. For example, places like the culminating point of a trapeze artist's trajectory under the big-top, the split-second of weightlessness — or perhaps better yet the intimacy of a space capsule.

But if these angels can fly, it isn't because of a diaphanous nature. It is their weight itself that lifts them off, because mass is only the accumulation of energy.

What is missing in the strongest of these images is the face — and especially its expression. These men are masked and blind, like the horse at the slaughter house, an instant before the slaughter hammer comes crashing down onto its skull.

Kagane knows this. He ventures with trepidation into portraiture, beginning with a self-portrait. Like the doctor who scrupulously tries on himself the medicine he has invented.

*Translations by Jim Mabry*



# THE GALLERY OWNERS THREE PROFILES

BY JOHN PRESTON

The stereotype of gallery owners portrays them as quietly effeminate men or women who live and, perhaps, toil in a world of elegant refinement and composure. Money should be talked about in whispers, patrons should be treated as honored guests, the owner should have a "certain position" in the community. The actual world of art galleries is a lot more rough and tumble than that. Money, for the survival of the gallery and the survival of the artist, is a prime concern. Agonizing takes place around the pricing of works. Collectors don't just appear on the spot ready to assume their roles as protectors of the national artistic treasure or talent, they need to be cajoled, taught, tutored in the ways and means of fine art.

Take any of the realities of the art gallery world and treble them, and you might be close to the reality of a gay art gallery owner. He's constantly fighting not only the battles of every other gallery proprietor, he's also battling with the society's ignorance about gay art and the gay world's ignorance of the place of art in our community. How the many different owners now at work in America deal with the problems involved differs a great deal. Some of the men involved have created really unique positions for themselves, especially as they deal with unique situations. We've profiled three who, between them, show some of the enormous range of situations a gay gallery owner might have to face.

## Rob/Rob Amsterdam Gallery

Three years ago Rob opened his gallery in Amsterdam. It was, and is, the only gay art institution in that city. Rob's existence produced a minor revolution in the art world of Northern Europe. For the first time European artists had a marketplace for the sale — and probably equally important — the display of their work. Many artists, notably Nigel Kent, can trace their ability to survive on their work directly to the willingness of Rob to risk the untried waters of gay art.

The Netherlands actually is a freer society than ours in terms of public acceptance of homosexuality and its place in the larger community. Still, there was



*Rob, founder of the Rob Galleries, photograph by Robert Mapplethorpe*

some risk involved. On the other hand, the people Rob dealt with from the beginning were more willing and able in the open Dutch context to display work under their own name: Famed choreographer Hans van Manen has had two shows of his homoerotic photography without any problem.

This year, Rob's partner/friend/lover Dai Evans came to the United States and opened the New York branch of the gallery in a Greenwich Village townhouse. The unique position of this showroom is its self-defined task as the agent of cross-fertilization of European and American art. Rob shows American works in Amsterdam, but only European artists in the United States.

The display of the European works

has had a special effect on New York artists. While American artists — and certainly those British artists who use this country as their base — are often the working at the highest level of artistic skill, few of the overtly erotic artists can match the Dutch gallery's clients in terms of combining eroticism and technique.

Rob and Dai are both excited about the unique position of their enterprise, obviously reveling in their part in introducing Americans to Europe and Europeans to America, arranging interviews and hanging special shows.

They, of course, face a special set of troubles that hasn't become quite an issue yet, thanks to some cooperative officials and good luck none of the works have



been seized by the ever vigilant, ever puritanical customs officers of this Land of Liberty.

#### In a Plain Brown Wrapper

If there are problems involved in setting up a gallery in New York or Amsterdam, can you imagine what it's like in the heartland of the Midwest?

Stuart Wilbur opened the only gay gallery in Chicago last year. There had been previous attempts to open "erotic" galleries in Chicago, but they failed after one or two shows. Wilbur has begun to make a go of In a Plain Brown Wrapper with some significant help in timing and the coming together of some unexpected forces.

Probably the most important factor in his favor has been the support of the faculty and staff of the city's prestigious School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The School was overtly anxious for an outlet for the talent of its gay students, or any students working in fields that would be appreciated by gay buyers. The school's imperative to its students, that they should be willing to experience and express their inner selves in their art, couldn't be accepted unless there was a space for the work to be shown. Wilbur provided that for the students, and the faculty hasn't forgotten his service to their own community.

The arch-conservatism of the straight galleries in Chicago has also helped him. His is the only Chicago gallery that will show Paul Cadmus and other "mainstream" artists whose gay works are usually shown "uptown" in New York. The gay galleries in that city don't get to show many of the most important works, since the larger enterprises preempt

them. But Wilbur is the one outlet in Chicago that can and will show Cadmus' homoerotic pieces. He's been able to mount shows sometimes as prestigious as the usually more successful New York galleries.

And finally, since his is the only gallery in Chicago, and since he's cultivated good relationships with all the New York galleries, he can deal with all the artists that are otherwise divided among the Manhattan competitors.

All three influences — the School of the Art Institute, the access to "uptown" gallery work, and the combining of the resources of the five New York galleries — have combined to make a very questionable enterprise one that now has every chance of success. His unique position also leads to still further acknowledgement. While the New York galleries yearn for any mention — even a slam — in the autocratic, homophobic *New York Sunday Times* Arts and Leisure Section, which has basically ignored them completely, In a Plain Brown Wrapper has received good coverage as a "legitimate" gallery in the Chicago press.

All this may sound good, but the problems in opening a gallery in Chicago still make the risk one of such enormity that Wilbur is constantly surprised at himself. For one thing, the gay galleries in New York have an enormous and wealthy clientele ready-made in the gay ghettos of the Village, SoHo and Chelsea. No such open and willing population has yet surfaced in the Midwest.

#### The Stoned Wall Gallerie

Most of the gay art shown — but by no means all of it — is explicitly male-oriented. While almost every gallery

shows the work of women depicting men, and the Leslie-Lohman Gallery has women's shows that include lesbian or women-identified images with some regularity, still the vast bulk of gay art in New York is homoerotic.

The Stoned Wall Gallerie, a successful neighborhood enterprise in New York's Chelsea district, is trying to deal with some of the issues involved in a political sense. No one person in the art world can seem to agree with any other one person about a definition of "Gay Art" — or whether such an animal exists at all. Stoned Wall's taken it further — they reject concepts of gay or lesbian art and are trying to deal with "homophile art." The artificial term harkens back to the early 70's when the gay political movement was trying to devise new schemes for understanding our place in society. The idea of trying to deal with male/female relationships in the gay world may almost seem an anachronism, but the gallery believes that the issues gay and women artists are facing are common enough that attention must be paid jointly.

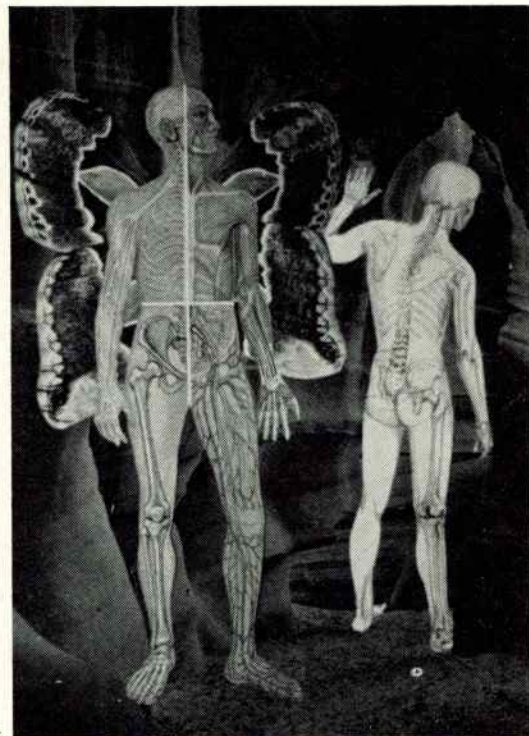
The vehicle for dealing with the whole interaction between men and women has been the development of a collective of artists based in the gallery — The Gay Enclave. Still developing, the group is a way for the gallery to underline its commitment to new artists; it specializes in showing the work of previously unknowns.

The gallery also acts as the New York base for a wide ranging collection of experimental artists who do have some reputation — whether the homoerotic art of Olaf, or the works of Texas based, highly-regarded collagist John Shown.



In a Plain Brown Wrapper, the major Mid-West gay gallery.

Collage by John Shown from an upcoming show at the Stoned Wall Gallerie.





# THE GALLERIES:

## IN A PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER

2943 North Halsted  
Chicago, IL 60657  
(312) 281-6671  
Director/Stuart M. Wilber  
Hours: Thursday-Friday/3-9 pm  
Saturday-Sunday/2-7 pm  
Shows: Keith Smith, Ed Derwent, Robert Mapplethorpe, group shows

## ROBERT SAMUEL GALLERY

795 Broadway  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 477-3839  
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday/11am-6pm  
Shows: Philip Masnick, Tom of Finland, Kas Sable, David Martin, group shows

## ROB GALLERY

8a Charles Lane  
New York, NY 10045  
(212) 675-7319  
Director/Dai Evans  
Hours: Saturday-Sunday/1-7 pm  
Shows: Bill Ward, Nigel Kent, Jean Paul Vroom, Tom of Finland, group shows

## ROB-AMSTERDAM

Weteringschans 273  
Amsterdam 1017 XJ  
Holland  
Shows: Nigel Kent, Olaf, Bill Ward, group shows

## LESLIE LOHMAN GALLERY

485 Broome Street  
New York, NY 10013  
(212) 966-7173  
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday/1-5 pm  
Shows: Hilton Brown, Delmas Howe, group shows

## STOMPERS

259 West Fourth Street  
New York, NY 10014  
(212) 691-9571  
Hours: Wednesday-Monday/1-7 pm  
Shows: Matt, Rex, Brick, Tom of Finland, Etienne

## FOTO

492 Broome Street  
New York, NY 10013  
(212) 952-5612  
Shows: Photography only, emphasis on Feminist work

## LAWSON DE CELLE GALLERY

3237 Sacramento Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
(415) 931-2558  
Director/Edward de Celle  
Shows: Robert Mapplethorpe, group shows



*The June Group, Leslie-Lohman Gallery*

## STONED WALL GALERIE

221 West 28th Street  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 947-3130  
Director/David Logan-Morrow  
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday/2-6 pm  
Shows: Olaf, John Shown, Wheeler, Debra Marchard, group shows

## TYSON GALLERY

2327 Market Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
(415) 431-3098  
Director/Bill Mault  
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday/12-5 pm  
Sunday/1-5 pm  
Shows: Wayne Quinn, Frank Betten-court, Richard Roesener, Wayne Flynn, Edward Parente

## KORNBLATT GALLERY

326 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Shows: Hilton Brown, group shows

## CIRCA GALLERY

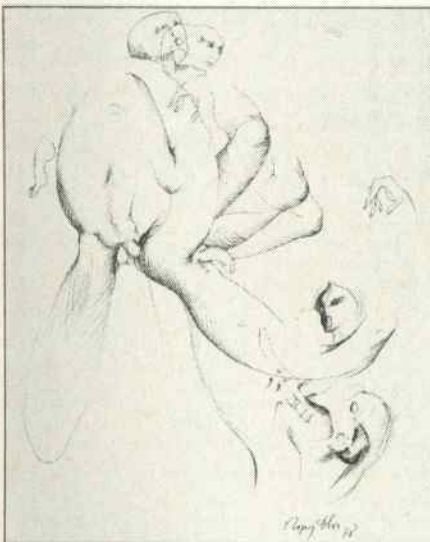
9026 Tampa Avenue  
Northridge, CA 91324  
Shows: Various artists

## VISUAL EXPERIENCE GALLERY

759 Ellis Street  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
(415) 441-1800  
Director/Eddie Van  
Hours: Noon-7 pm (By appointment)  
Shows: Mark Mulleian, Ramon Pablo Vidali, Paul Blake, Robert Arbegast, Wendy Victor, Alex Alexander



# SOURCES:



Top: *Friends*, sculpture by Wayne Hampton (Waynesart), middle: *Vertige* by Regis Dho (David Alexander Fine Arts), bottom: *Phallos* by Nuki (Personal Publications).

## ART AVAILABLE IN OTHER THAN GALLERY SPACES

### TRILOGY

135 Christopher Street, New York, NY  
(212) 242-6753

Since it opened, this popular Village restaurant has consistently defied tradition. The well-lighted interior walls offer superb visibility for the art work they hang. Exhibits change, new artists are promoted, and work is definitely for sale.

### DAVID LOGAN-MORROW

221 West 28th Street, New York, NY 10001  
(212) 947-3130

Mr. Logan-Morrow is the exclusive representative for the artists Olaf and Wheeler.

### WAYNESART STUDIO

28 Southeast Ninth Street  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316

One of the few casting studios devoted to gay art, Waynesart also sells the sculpture of its artist by mail order. Catalogues are available for a nominal charge.

### DAVID ALEXANDER FINE ARTS

Box 3501  
Durham, NC 27702  
(919) 493-2982

The erotic drawings and lithographs of Greek artist Regis Dho are handled exclusively by David Alexander. A lavish catalogue illustrates the current available work.

### HOT FLASH OF AMERICA

2351 Market Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
(415) 626-4800

This semi-gallery/emporium hangs a variety of traditional and avant garde artwork with an emphasis on the fantasy/erotic.

### PROPER EXPOSURE

984-B Harrison  
San Francisco, CA 94107

The photography of Lawrence Reh and the artwork of Charles R. Musgrave is handled by this artist-collective, which issues brochures throughout the year.

### THEATRE RHINOCEROS

1115 Geary Blvd.  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 626-1921

The lobby of this gay theatre is host to various artists during the run of theatrical productions. Recent art by Mark Kadoda and Tom Hinde have been exhibited.

### PERSONAL PUBLICATIONS

Box 9005  
Washington, DC 20003

Publishes and sells the artwork of Nuki (Daniel Millsaps).

### DRAWINGS BY REX

960 Folsom Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107

Handles the drawings, posters and reproductions of the artist Rex. Information available by mail.

### A TASTE OF LEATHER

960 Folsom Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107

Although other artists are occasionally shown, a large collection of The Hun is available through this shop.

### DAVID JONATHON MILLER GALLERY

9915 Ferguson Road  
Dallas, TX 75228

Woodblock prints by David Jonathon Miller are available through the artist's own studio. Miller publishes a large catalogue and yearly supplements. Information available by writing.



# Robert Opel

## Before Martyrdom

BY JOHN F. KARR

Sitting in a jail cell in Los Angeles during June of 1974, Robert Opel was not finding it hard to be philosophical. "When you live on the frontier," he thought, "you have to be ready to dodge the arrows." The arrows being shot his way resulted from one of the more ridiculous pieces of agit-prop yet performed. He had doffed his jump suit and calmly, though thoroughly naked, presented himself to a meeting of the L.A. City Council, hoping to sway them from banning nudity on the beaches of Santa Monica and Venice. The uniform bedecked City Council found such a per-

formance too avant-garde, and were horrified at the sight of so much flesh. With the sanctimoniousness of the town council of Titipu, they threw Opel into jail for puncturing their serious moralistic balloon with the comic dart of his unclothed body.

How this law abiding English teacher became a political frontiersman and arrow dodger is a tale which details the radicalization of an American youth.

Opel's family moved frequently as his father sought construction work. Robert was bright, quietly passive, a non-fighter; in short, the traditional outsider. As a frequent newcomer to grade schools he

was made the subject of ridicule and persecution. The coupling of such difficulties with his own intelligence gave rise to his firm yet quiet stance against opposition as well as his objective view of his surroundings.

Opel describes himself during his college years as a model American. He was a Catholic and a citizen, "a religious American; a true believer in the American system." Demonstrating his belief in this system, he studied it from many angles.

First he earned a degree in Language from the University of Michigan, and then spent two years in the Law School at the University of California in Berke-



A nude Robert Opel at the Los Angeles City Council hearing on the legality of nude beaches. Of white-haired Police Chief Ed Davis, Opel asked: "Am I obscene?" Photo by Pat Rocco.



ley, only to be expelled for cheating. He only too gleefully admits that not only was the charge correct, but that he wouldn't have made it through those two years any other way.

Putting his knowledge of language, law and the system to use, he went to work for Ronald Reagan's campaign office. Finding a marked ability to create effective propaganda, he wrote the first such piece that Reagan used. This was a booklet which abstracted full speeches into shorter statements. His position papers and advance work proved his attitudes were a bit too advanced for his peers, who were disconcerted by his abilities. Looking into this newcomer's history, they soon uncovered an interesting fact: on a fateful trip to Los Angeles in 1964, Opel had been arrested and booked for soliciting, the result of a classic bit of entrapment. Although the case was ultimately dismissed, his record existed. The Reagan staff now had a reason for releasing Opel from their organization, something they were only too pleased to do, and Opel experienced the unusual, yet usual, reward of being punished for expressing his talents and thoughts.

He moved to Los Angeles and began teaching English as a Second Language.

hearing about it, it may be the key event in his life, for it was the springboard to his subsequent radicalization. Opel certainly wasn't the first streaker, but he was the only one whose image was sent around the world by teletype and periodicals.

The Academy Award streak was performed as a lark, a game in which the television security forces had to be outwitted. These officers believed a rumor that 400 organized streakers were going to storm the telecast, and they had an incredibly thick protective net spread around the Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. Opel, however, had a counterfeit security pass which took him past the outer lines into the building. Once backstage, fate and the offices of NBC convened, and Opel found an NBC stage pass. This was his passport through the last security check in the wings, which was open only to those people about to appear on stage. Opel passed through this last point, doffed his jump-suit, and strolled across stage, behind the urbane symbol of the clothed body, David Niven. The audience was more amused than shocked; after all, this selection of Hollywood's leaders could hardly be thought of as sheltered. The security force was so relieved to have a nude

nude, lodged numerous petty complaints against Opel and ultimately fired him.

Without a job, Opel had time to pursue his recently emerging talents and political ideas. *The Advocate* had great popular success with his series of photographs entitled "Around Town" which were wryly amusing pictorial puns or double takes about gay life. Looking for a freer outlet, he became the editor of *Finger Magazine*, a decidedly underground opus whose contents consisted solely of the pornographic contributions of its readers. His political career took off with his appearance at a gay parade as "Mr. Penis," garbed in a huge paper-mache phallus. This so disturbed the Uncle Tom's of the Los Angeles gay community that they pressed charges against him for interfering with their parade. He was sentenced to accept either the maximum penalty for his silly stunt or submit to "psychological re-evaluation." This is a horrifying euphemism for brainwashing, calculated to produce an Opel who would behave like a proper middle-class American. Fortunately, the charges were dropped, and Opel was free to pursue his political career.

Inspired by this brush with the system, Opel drew what became his favorite



Opel and artist Mark Kadoda at the opening of Kadoda's show at Fey Way. It would be the gallery's last major exhibition. Photo by Rink.

He spent eight very active though non-overtly political years teaching, became an administrator, wrote a book on this subject and produced educational television features. He owned an apartment building and contributed to the local gay press, neither hiding nor advertising his gayness.

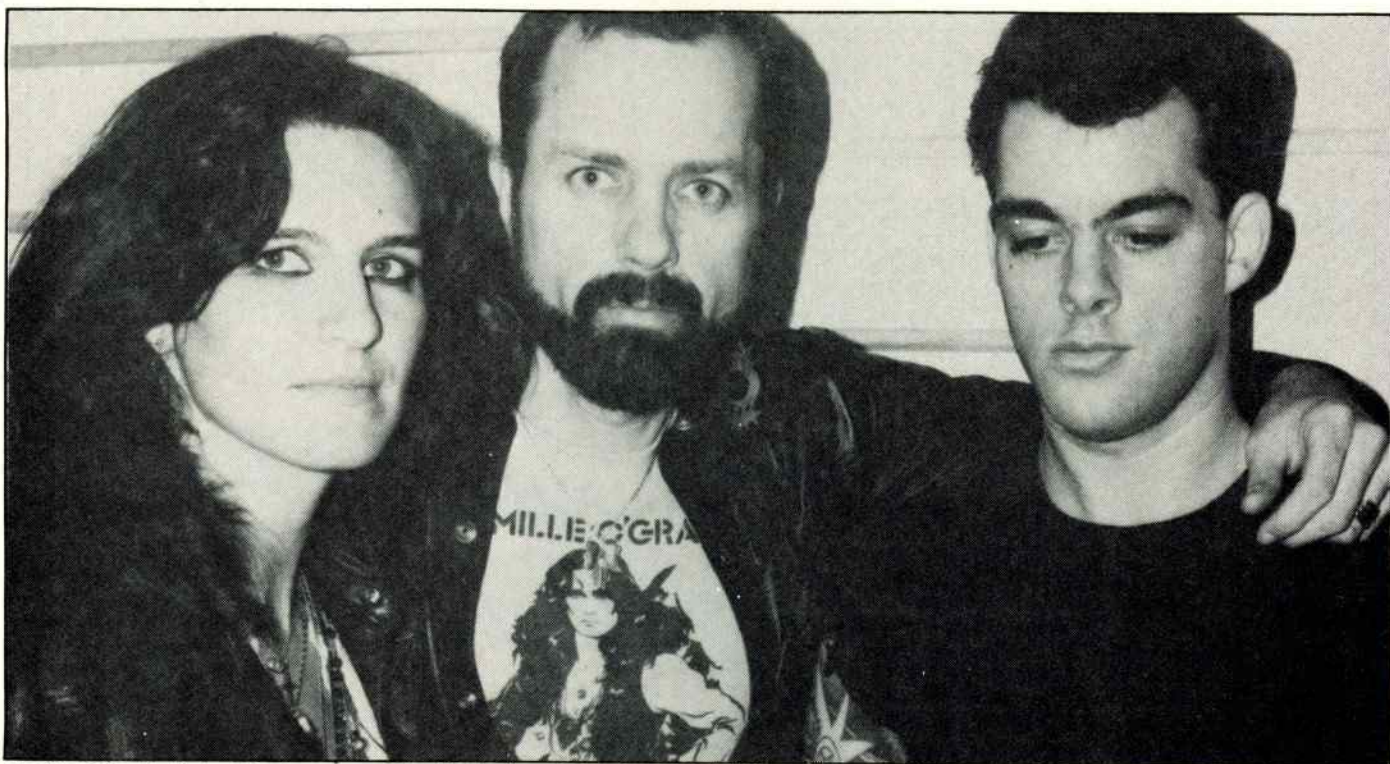
And then came the Academy Awards. Robert Opel is, of course, the man who streaked the 1974 Awards telecast. And although he quickly bored to distraction

soloist instead of the legions of anarchists they had expected that they released Opel after a good-natured slap of the hand.

The potential weight of his act as political statement became clear to Opel soon enough. The press and other media made it a major story with which to titillate their readers, demonstrating its use as propaganda. The L.A. school board, obviously unable to cope with the image of one of their teachers in the

poster. It depicts himself ala King Kong astride the L.A. City Hall, fighting off the airplanes of the police department. With the caption "Resist Corrupt Political Systems" it became his campaign poster when he ran for City Councilman as the write-in candidate for the F.U.C.K. Party: Fags For Unseating Civic Knuckleheads. If elected, he promised to appoint a liaison to the straight community. Not successful, he decided to run against Nixon.





Camille O'Grady, Robert Opel, and an unidentified gallery visitor. Camille would later witness Opel's brutal assassination. Photo by Rink.

At a typically nude press conference, he announced his candidacy for the office of President, vowing he was "Not just another crooked Dick."

Then came Opel's ultimate nude performance before the L.A. City Council. For this he was booked for indecent exposure. When it was decided that his nudity was not "implicitly sexual," exactly what he had been trying to prove about nudity on beaches, the charges were dropped. But where nudity at the Academy Awards was seen in a spirit of entertainment, nudity at a city meeting was viewed as a serious offense. He was charged with disrupting a public meeting, and given a four month jail term. In jail he undertook his own psychological evaluation, which confirmed his convictions.

He saw his art as a political tool toward sexual liberation. "Art exists to radicalize, to raise consciousness," he explains. His propaganda aims to entertain, "to remind gay people that we are different from straight people because we fuck differently," instead of glossing over this fact. Opel would agree with Quentin Crisp, who states that "the main body of homosexuals go about saying they're just like ordinary people — which is never going to work because ordinary people never go around saying they're ordinary."

Opel, shocked at the development of a non-thinking, assimilated, suburban styled gay, wanted to draw attention to the differences between gay and straight, so that these differences could be cultivated as individual strengths.

"When people are accepted for who they are, appreciated for their differences, not persecuted for them, the entire society will be enormously enriched," he said. To this aim, Opel's art strove to point out just what those differences are and celebrate them. Be-

cause of their graphic bluntness, most people find the works threatening or pornographic instead of expansive or sociological. Some of his works seek to entertain and thus slyly educate, while others open new worlds to the viewer through a long-remembered visual confrontation.

The conclusion of Opel's career in Los Angeles came soon, when *Finger Magazine* found his cover illustration of a nun and a priest having sex too strong for even *their* taste. Opel resigned and moved to San Francisco to publish his own magazine without the limiting dictates of others watching over him.

At a showing of his work at an underground gallery shortly after his arrival in San Francisco, several of the pieces were censored by the gallery owner. Refusing to compromise the work by exhibiting it censored, and not being cowed by threats that he would never be shown again, he withdrew his work from the show. He then found his own space in which to live and display his work, a small storefront on Howard Street in the South of Market neighborhood. At this time, famed graphic artist Tom of Finland was making his first visit to America. Although Opel had not intended on showing other artists, he was excited by Tom's presence and spontaneously made a gallery in his space for a gala display of Tom's drawings. And so, in seeking freedom to develop and display his own ideas and art, he gave birth to the Fey Way Studios, a gallery devoted to gay artists and their work.

Altogether, a total of fifteen artists, several singers and the world premiere of a film have been seen at the Fey Way, demonstrating that gay art and artists certainly exist. The Fey Way dealt with explicitly homo-erotic images, and quickly became the leading American

purveyor of new gay art. Other galleries may be political due to trends or a passing popularity: the Fey Way was the only gallery to be political by conviction. The gallery fostered non-New York standards, and set styles instead of following them in its continued championing of what Opel calls "actual folk symbols."

Opel hung work that he deemed interesting, important or revolutionary, works which needed to be shown to raise consciousness to the differences between gay and straight.

The gallery had a marginal existence since its inception, largely due to its lack of visibility to the general public. Art critics from the local papers were shocked by the work they saw at the opening and refused to attend many later shows. The reviewer for the *S.F. Chronicle* called the first show "unspeakably, unwritably wretched," demonstrating his extreme disturbance and inability to relate to the homosexual works displayed. And although Opel claims, "The function of this place is to disturb," the lack of publicity and just plain understanding and knowledge from the papers was appalling.

Yet Opel understood this lack of comprehension, and believed that perseverance and the continued visibility of gay art will cease to disturb, and ultimately educate people.

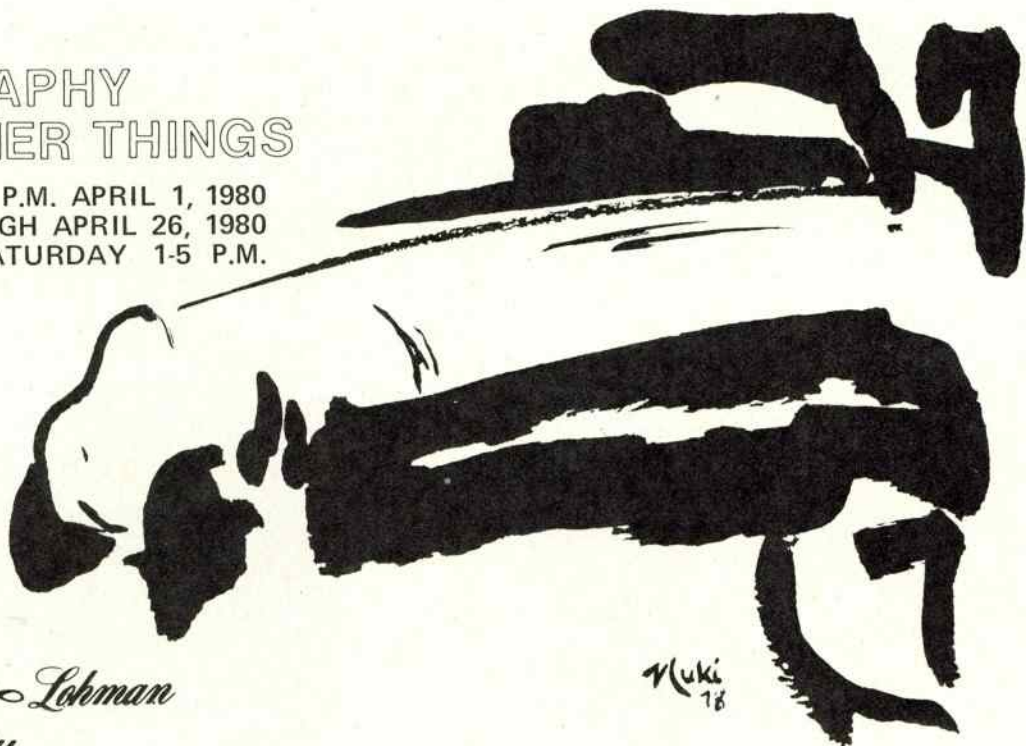
He was strong enough to resist the brickbats of assimilationists who advised him to tone down his politics and art. So-called friends had severed relations with him due to his reluctance to recant or play up to the consumer desires of the general public by giving them what they wanted. Opel instead gave them what they needed to awaken to the possibilities inherent in being gay, instead of adapting being gay to a straight American culture.



# NUKI

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# George Platt Lyons

It's easy to forget that the current wave of public homoerotic art had many pioneers in the past decades. Oh, of course, we all remember Michaelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, or Beardsley and Thomas Eakin in the 19th century, but it's seldom that we acknowledge those people who were interested in gay themed work in the more recent past. The censorship of the majority had much to do with the suppression of the gay-themed work of our artists, as did the self-contained homophobia of our own community which kept us from supporting their work. To be successful, one had to be straight.

One of the most stunning examples of the repression of a homosexual artist's gay works is the photography of George Platt Lyons. His few remaining photographs have recently surfaced in a show at the Robert Samuel Gallery in New York and in smaller, less representative works in a very few other gay galleries in the country. But the important place in the development of homoerotic photography that Lyons holds will soon be even more publicly acknowledged in a major retrospective at Boston's Museum of Contemporary Art this summer and with the publication of a book of his male nudes within a year.

George Platt Lyons was the chief fashion photographer for *Vogue* magazine in the thirties; he went on to spend a year and a half as the head publicity photographer at MGM Studios during its heyday. As a major, acknowledged master of the camera, he developed a fascinatingly art deco photographic style, using the sleek lines and sharp black and white contrasts of that period in the creation of his work.

All the while, Lyons was also photographing his true self-interest — the male nude. If today we think of all male photography pre-1970 as being the greased up bodies of amateurs passing as body building enthusiasts, it's only because Lyons' work has been so completely suppressed. Lyons took countless pictures of the known and the unknown in chicly elegant poses, and also in poses and with the use of backdrop that clearly paved the way for such currently popular photographers as Robert Mapplethorpe and Arthur Tress. His pictures of voluptuously posed models against art deco themes stand beside sexy sailor/models standing against the graffitied walls of a man's room backdrop.

When a viewer discovers Lyons, easily the most impressive and startling works



Untitled, 1938

are a series of full-frontal nudes of a be-haired Yul Brenner. The first, quick reaction is to marvel at Brenner's physique — who needs Al Parker when this is available? But the more lasting impression is of the intensity of the interaction between this to-be-star and his photographer. The pictures are simply and beautifully stunning.

The Lyons show at Robert Samuel, first presented to the public only this March, was the surprise event of the art season in New York. It sent a wave of excitement through the community. No doubt the greatest social impact of the work is its witness to the historical depth of fine art dealing with homoerotic themes. This value should never be underestimated: anything which can lift up our activities and our values and help bolster them as more than a passing fad has an enormous value to our community and to our appreciation of whatever it is that constitutes a "gay sensibility."

It's unfortunate that Lyons' life, it-

self, gives weight to some of the less positive parts of our history as well. Lyons' departure from New York for the West Coast took him out of the mainstream of fashion photography. Even though his disillusionment with Hollywood and return to New York only took one and a half years, it proved too long. He never made a comeback to his previous professional heights. He died in near poverty.

Even more painful, when he died, members of his family discovered and destroyed the vast majority of prints and negatives of his work — said to have included nudes of almost every major male star in Hollywood at the time. The pieces in the newly organized shows are collected from the holdings of only six men, friends of his who have thankfully held on to his work for the nearly fifty years, secretly holding them until there was finally a time and forum that could deal with George Platt Lyons' true love with a modicum of respect.

— J. Preston



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# Olaf

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"I am a voyeur. Perhaps all artists are voyeurs —"

The expansive pencil drawings of Olaf are well known to gay American audiences. His illustrative work has appeared in every major gay magazine in the last couple years.

"I was born and raised in Tomahawk, Wisconsin, which is a nice place to be born and raised. My father was a banker and my mother was an early women's liberationist. Our family was somewhere between *Life With Father* and *A Doll's House*.

"I've drawn and painted since I was in kindergarten, but my first love was the theatre. So I studied theatre at several colleges. I spent six months in Japan

deeply involved in the No and Kanuki theatres. It was during that time I met Yukio Mishima, who made a strong cultural and sexual impression on me."

The impression translates into a highly-disciplined sense of line and space in Olaf's work. But the subtlety of the Japanese artistic expression is merged in a strictly Western thematic experience — more evident in Olaf's newest series of works, his epic Satyr portfolio. Here the intergration of an Eastern artistic Zen and a western mythological subject matter are combined in drawings that, while still executed in his obsessive pencil medium, deliver more than their monochromatic possibilities.

While the entire satyr series began as a

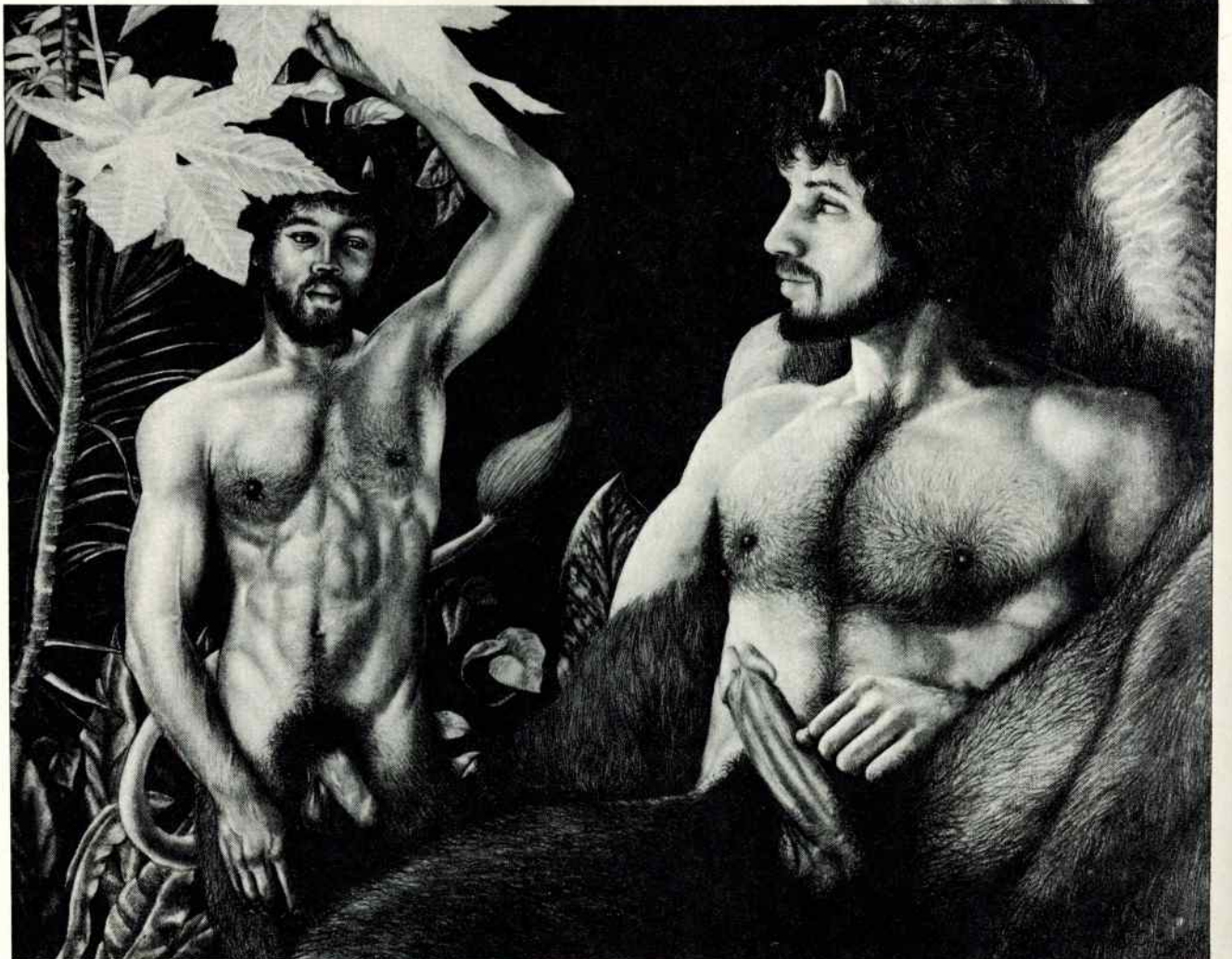
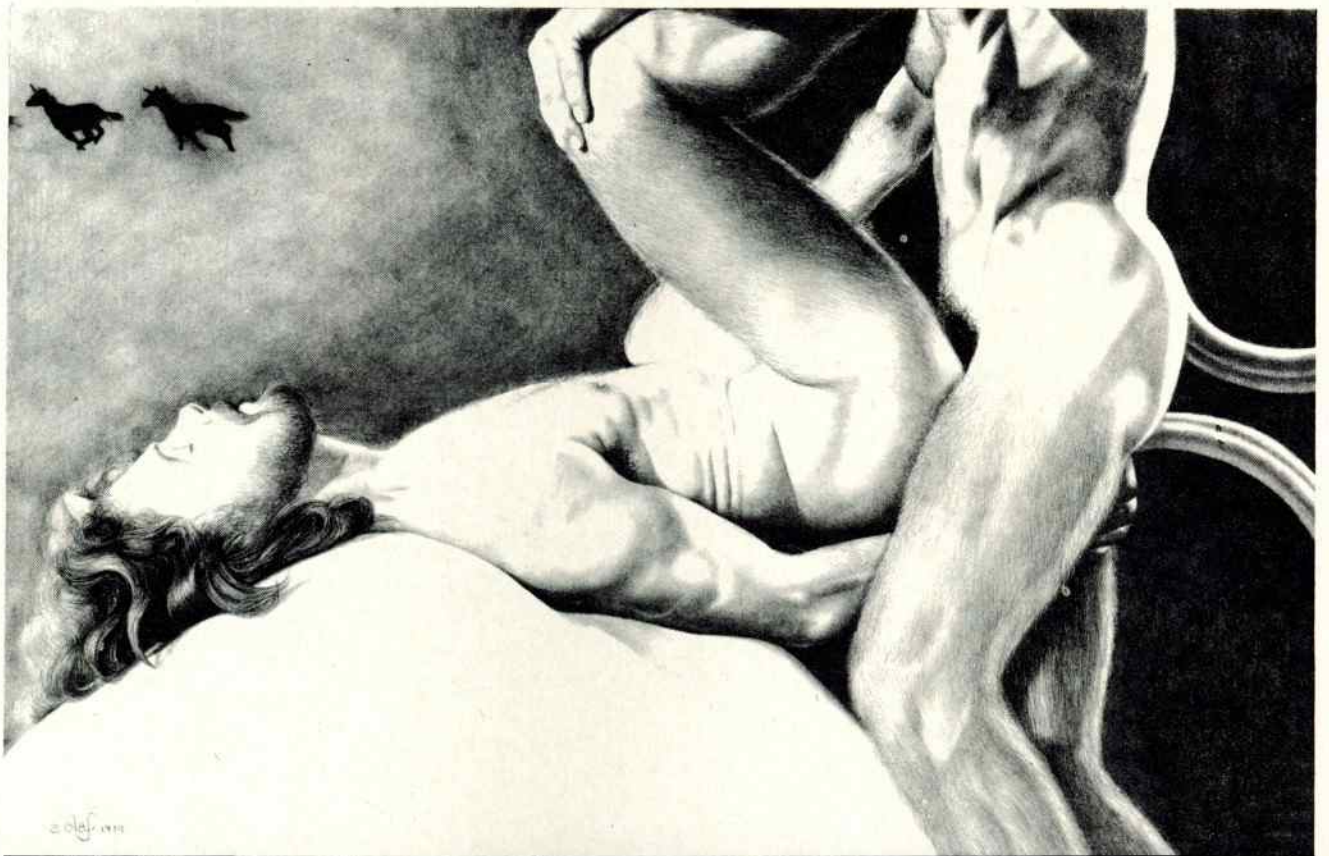
commission for a lavish dance planned in San Francisco, the untimely death of gay supervisor Harvey Milk canceled all but the execution of the first drawing.

It was a theme that would not easily be dismissed from Olaf's mind — over a year of intensive work went into this enormous series, which will be premiered at The Stone Wall Galerie during their First Anniversary Show, with a complete one-man exhibit at the end of May.

"I returned to Wisconsin to begin six years of living alone in the woods and countryside. I concentrated on developing techniques of pencil drawing, a process which still obsesses me. I also began the long, hard process of coming out of all my closets."











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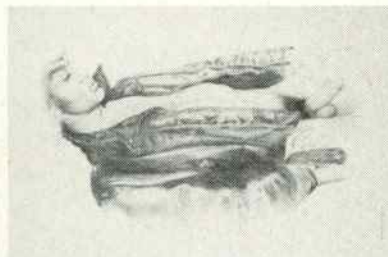
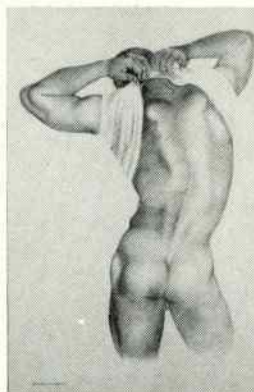
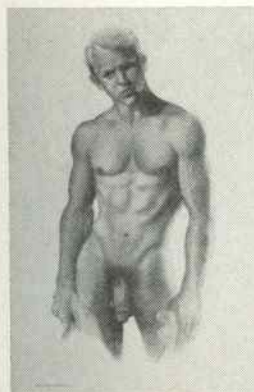
John Sims, conducting  
Ruth Hastings, guest artist

For Further Information  
Call (415) 641-8863

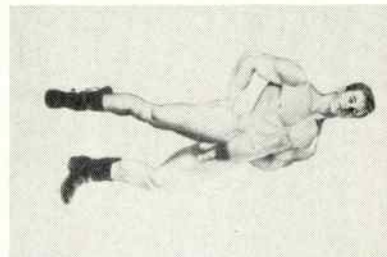
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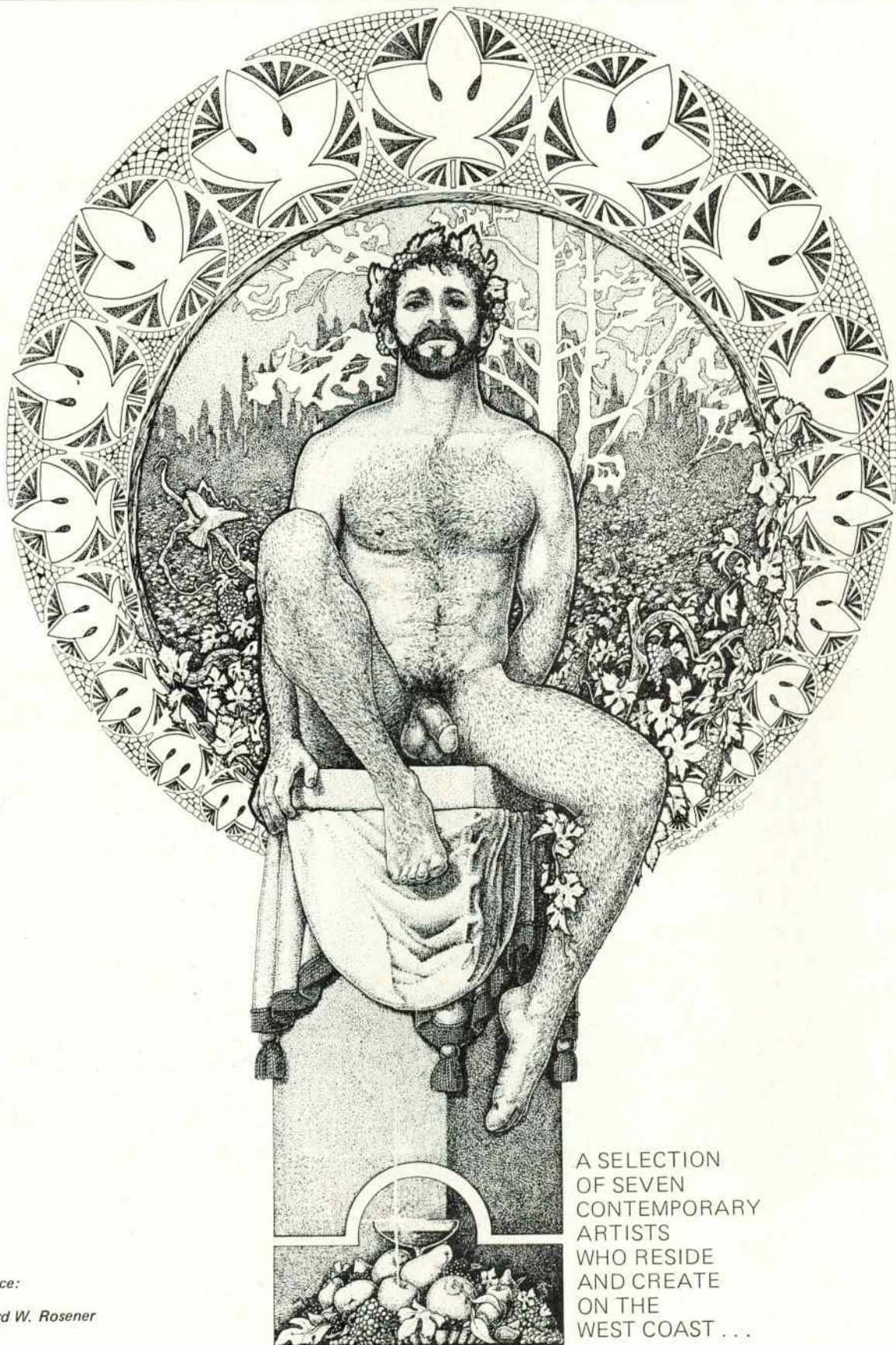


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# WEST COAST PORTFOLIO



Frontspiece:  
*Bacchus*  
by Richard W. Rosener  
© 1980

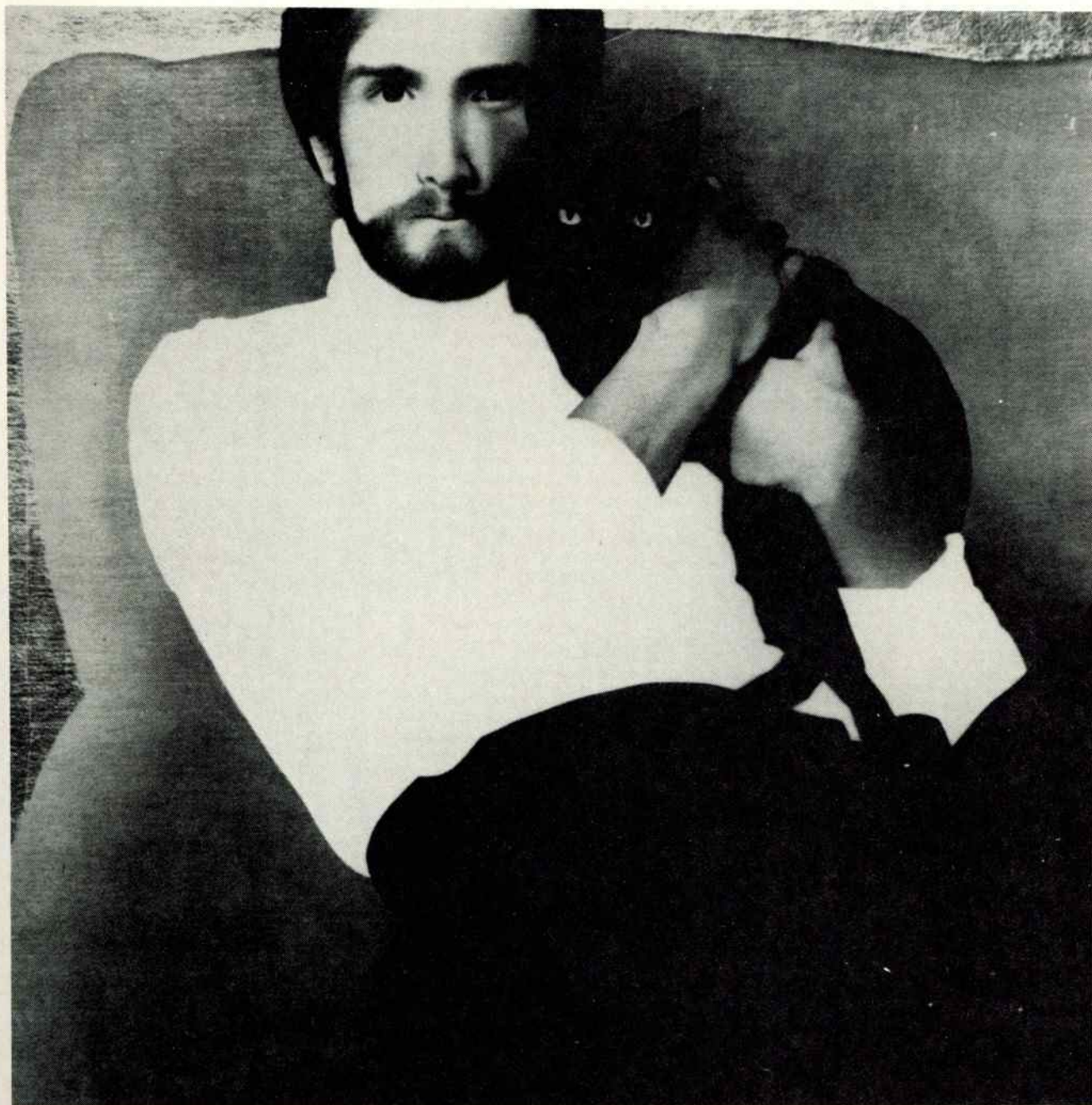
A SELECTION  
OF SEVEN  
CONTEMPORARY  
ARTISTS  
WHO RESIDE  
AND CREATE  
ON THE  
WEST COAST ...



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# Bettencourt

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*Byron, 1978, acrylic and gold leaf on board, © 1978 Bettencourt*

## FRANK BETTENCOURT

It has been said about photorealist Frank Bettencourt that his disregard

for the actual subject in his paintings allows the artist himself to emerge completely in each canvas. He, himself, feels "I deal with realism in a cynical way. Give me the past or the future; the pre-

sent is too blah."

Bettencourt has been in San Francisco since 1975, with eight shows at the Tyson Gallery. Bettencourt was born in California.



# Mulleian

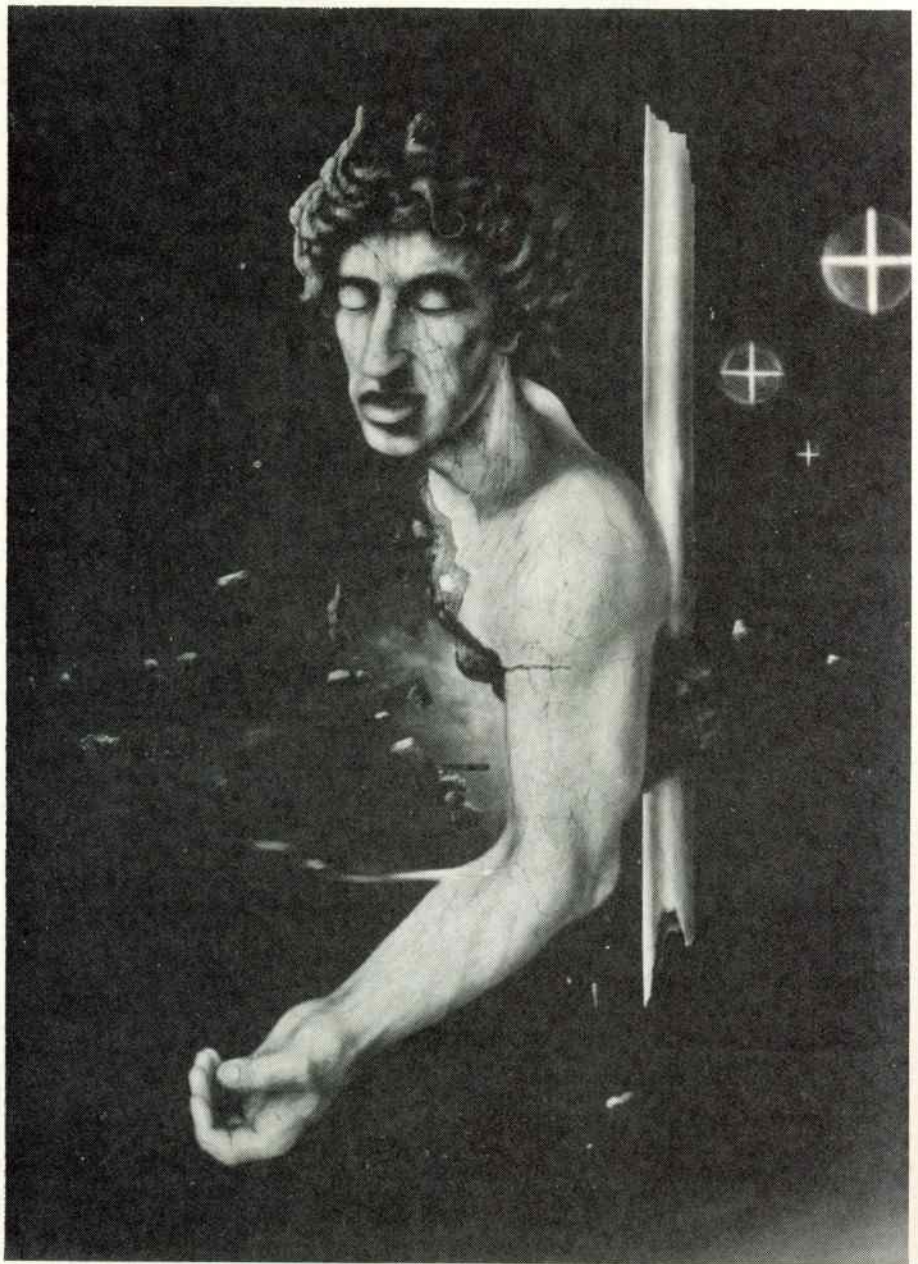
## MARK MULLEIAN

Once you've seen a Mark Mulleian painting or drawing, you are aware of a distinctive transrealism. Juxtaposed, but undistorted realities and mystical environments ingeniously reveal sentimental to profound aspects of life. The viewer's eyes experience a kind of magnetism, discovering more each time they return to the painting. Power, impact and sensitivity, visual and emotional, are primary qualities of Mulleian's art. His insights and concern for sometimes the smallest details produce profound achievement.

Mark Mulleian is, amazingly, a self-taught artist. His art education is from frequent visits to museums, extensive studies from books on the Masters and the learning that accompanies painting and drawing since the age of six. His inspiration is mainly influenced by Rembrandt, Michelangelo, da Vinci, Caravaggio, Harnett, and Dali. Since childhood, visual expression remains Mulleian's primary means of attaining inner satisfaction and maintaining a comfortable self-image.

Oil became his medium at the age of thirteen. This began the development of a highly complex technique, underpainting. Layers of pigment and glazes allow light to enter the painting and illuminate from within. The result is color brilliance and outstanding three dimensional qualities. Mulleian's use of color brings drama and depth of feeling to his paintings. His pen and ink drawings, also lithographed, are accomplished with incredible intricate line workmanship.

One most distinguishing characteristic of Mulleian art is subject usage. Moments of solitude and contemplation, dreams, psychic visions, and personal experiences form images in his mind's eye that compel his hands to the brush or pen. Moccasins, cracked and dry on a sea of sand, a scorched tree that once grew through a cradle, a man in the form of a broken carousel figure, the ghost of an orphan on the steps of an old abandoned house, are examples of why Mulleian imagery is special to his selective audience. Mystically appealing visions, captured in somewhat classic, sometimes almost medieval moods, stimulate imagination and move emotions.



*Omens, oil on canvas*

Mulleian feels his art represents places he cannot go physically, but can experience spiritually. Psychic-visual types of flashes create feelings that possess his mind until they are captured in paintings. His work tantalizes the viewer's

senses with three dimensional power combined with the impact of emotional feeling. Magical illusions recreate experiences and come alive on two dimensional surfaces.

— Robert F. Arbergast



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# Dwyer

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*Country/Western Style Sacred Heart of Jesus, glazed ceramic*

## RON DWYER

A native South Dakotan, Ron Dwyer has shown in numerous one-man and group exhibitions throughout the Midwest.

His training includes a degree in art from the University of South Dakota, and he taught ceramics and sculpture at Yankton College and USD before moving to the San Francisco Bay Area four years ago.

Ron primarily works in hand-built porcelain with lustre over-glazes, employing sometimes as many as ten firings to achieve particular surface effects.

He has long been attracted to the school of California Funk ceramics, and he credits Hummel and Hieronymus Bosch as major influences.

A deeply spiritual person, Ron feels that people have scoffed at religious work like his for too long, and it's time the public accepted a re-introduction of genu-

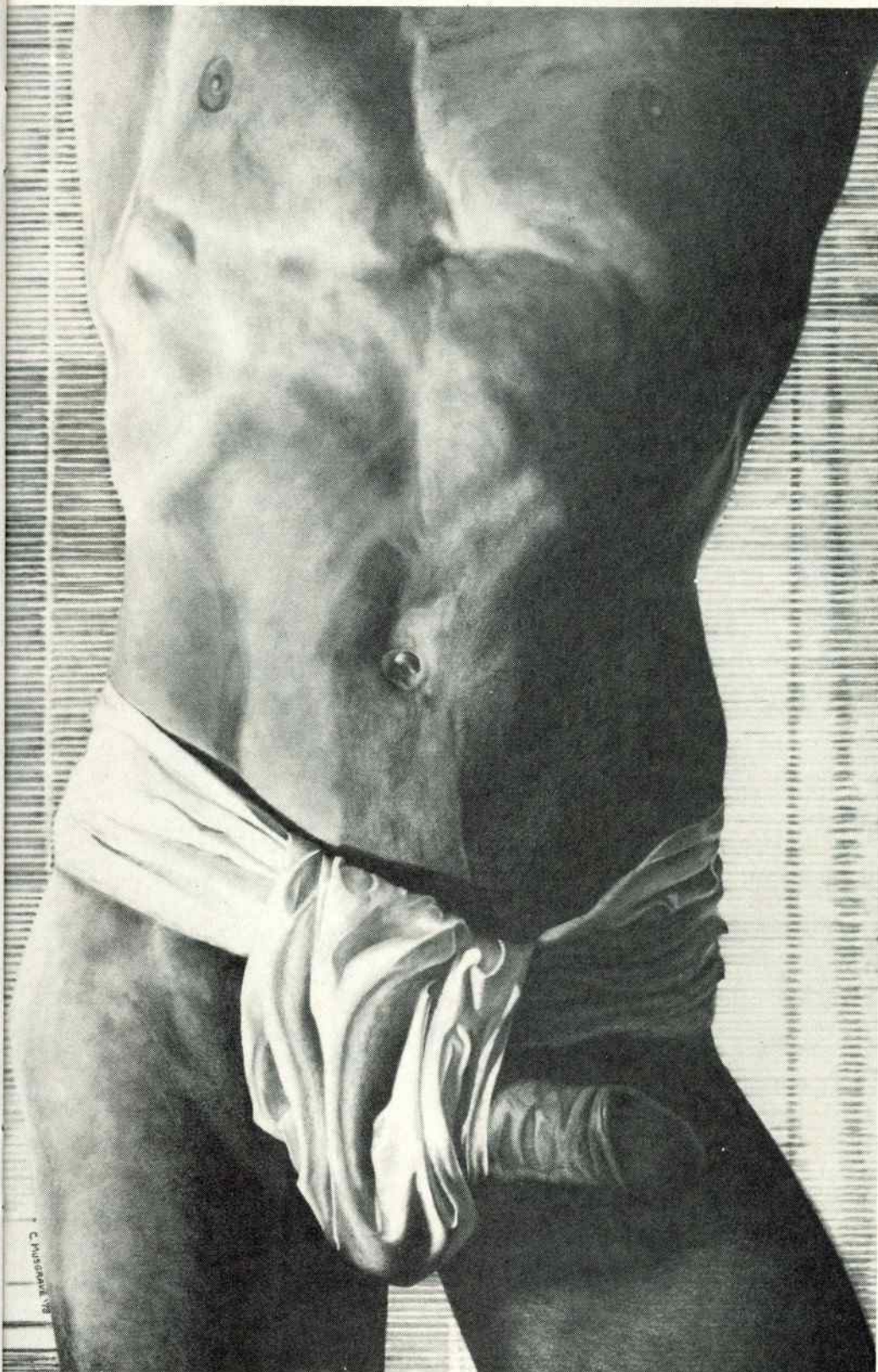
inely holistic holiness into high art. His *Country/Western Sacred Heart of Jesus* represents the latest expression of this philosophy.

Heavily into the art of The People, Ron lists the following as his aesthetic principles:

- 1) Art should be available in basic decorator colors.
- 2) Art should also double as storage vessels. And
- 3) Anything sacred cannot be vulgar.



# Musgrave



## CHARLES R. MUSGRAVE

"There is no real difference between my wildlife work and my male nudes — both possess the same inherent artistic qualities beyond the obvious tags of being 'animals'. For me, they are the only subjects of interest."

Charles Musgrave's work runs the gamut between sharp-etched pen and ink wildlife studies and almost photo-realistic male nudes. In both there is a similar objective artistic vision that is concerned with structure and form. In naturalist work, the weight and mass of the animal translates to the line and structure of the male form. Muscle matches muscle, structures equate. There is the constant reminder that we are looking at an impression of a reality; the pure pattern of black ink is fused with the vagueries of tempera and water color; the soft focus of pencil is balanced with the contemporary surface of highly reflective metallic paint.

"The subject dictates both style and media. Certain powerful images, like the larger animals, need a softness to humanize them for eyes uncomfortable with unapproachable subjects. But because I am interested with traditional artistic expressions, the principles of the finished work must adhere to the history of art."

Mr. Musgrave lives in San Francisco and is represented by Proper Exposure.

*Exposed Samauri, 1979, pencil*



# Rudolph



*The Ambush of San Francisco,*

## LOU RUDOLPH

"I get off on real people, real men, not perfect clones, so I go out with my sketchbook and try and capture this reality."

Lou Rudolph, for the past six years, has been documenting the flow of people into and out of the South of Market

landscape in which he lives and works. His spontaneous, almost court-room style sketches have been exhibited, very properly, in the environments they were taken from: the popular leather bars of San Francisco.

Recently, Rudolph has turned to the examination and documentation of new wave and punk influences in the city, designing concert and event posters.

"I have been influenced equally by other artists, Van Gough, Lautrec, Chuck Arnett — and performing artists like James Dean, David Bowie."

Before moving to the West Coast, Rudolph worked as a commercial illustrator in Washington, DC. "I did graphic designs for shopping bags — I hated it."

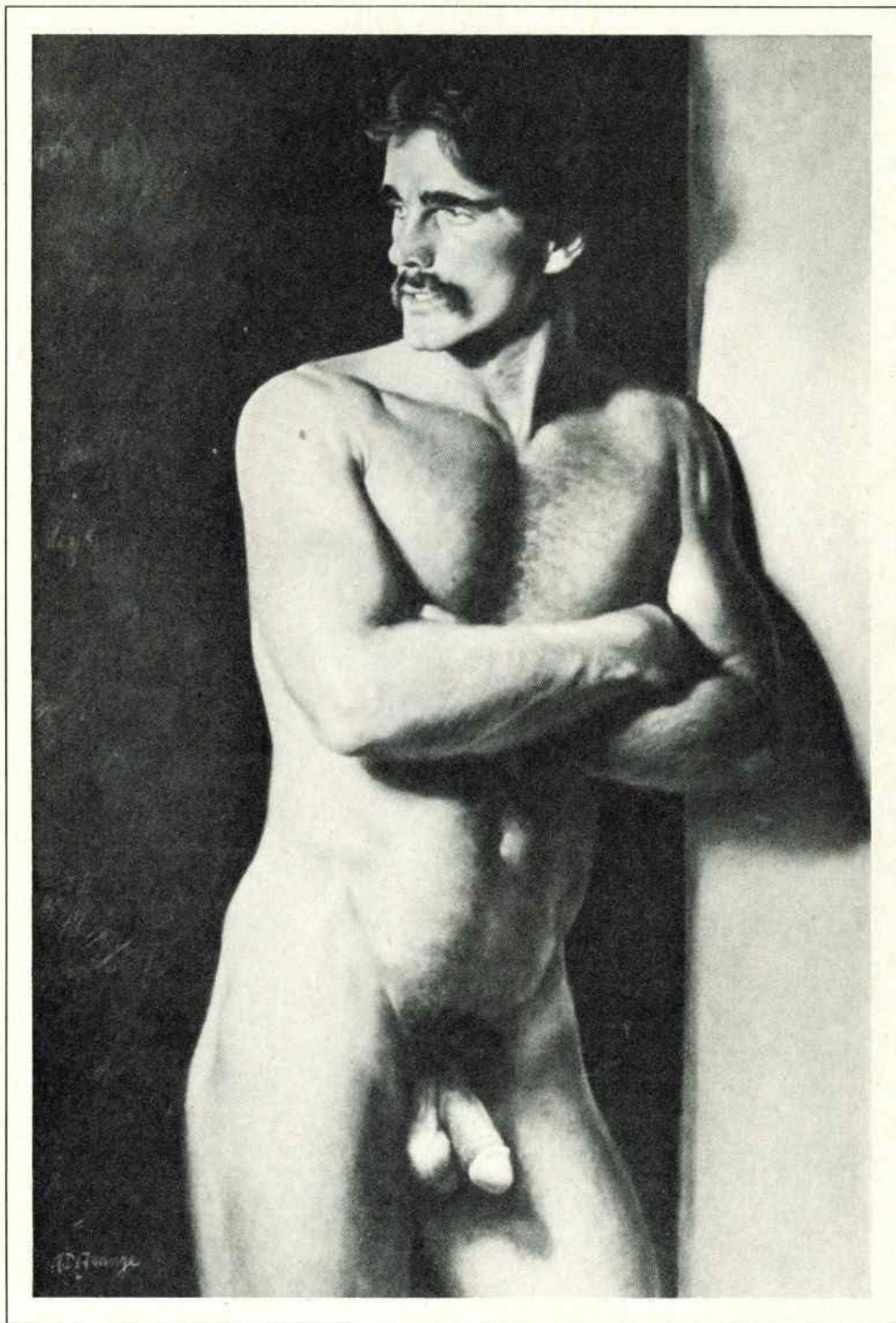
Lou Rudolph will have his first New York exhibit in May at Stompers.



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# DeFrange

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## ANTHONY DE FRANGE

Mr. De Frange was born in Oklahoma in 1923 of Italian parents. As a boy, he copied advertisements in newspapers and sketched portraits of his family. His maternal uncle, Vincent Carano, was a

fine sculptor in Italy. On a visit to America in 1931, Carano urged De Frange's parents to cultivate the boy's talents.

Anthony De Frange studied at the Cleveland School for Art for four years, and has won many awards for his oils.

Many of his portraits are in the private collections of well-known celebrities all over the world.

Completely dedicated to his work, De Frange sometimes paints around the clock. He currently exhibits in his own gallery in San Francisco.



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# Arnett

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*Untitled, colored ink*

## CHUCK ARNETT

One of the prime movers in West Coast art, Chuck Arnett has been dubbed "Lautrec in Leather" — an artist who's sketchbook provides socio-historical documentation of the age that leads directly to the 1980s. From designing posters for leather bars to filling reams of paper with fast-moving, highly transitory images of men engaged in the spectrum

of sexuality, Arnett remains the cult figure of individuals. He shuns the gallery space. "Galleries are funeral parlors for art work."

Chuck Arnett's work, when it can be found, is usually in private collections; a few pieces hanging in leather shops; in leather bars. "I show my work in bars because that's where the people who

know me go and get off on what I do, and sometimes even buy something."

Sales, the mainstay of the artist's survival, are not the prime consideration. The experience of creating an art from life, and a fast-moving parade of life at that, is the succor of the artist. What evolves is that which ultimately becomes legend. But only ages hence.



WILLIAM S.  
BURROUGHS

PORT  
OF  
SAINTS

Excerpt from his Novel



# Meet Me at the Fair

... the way. The leader was carrying a Mauser pistol clipped onto a rifle stock. Audrey recognized this weapon from the Stoeger catalogue, *The Shooter's Bible*, which he read religiously, studying each weapon and deciding which ones he wanted to carry when he became a gentleman adventurer. He knew the caliber of this gun, nine millimeter, but not the same cartridge as the Luger. He knew that the wooden stock also served as a holster; that the magazine, which was not in the handle but in front of the handle, also served as a hand hold to steady the weapon; that the magazine held nine cartridges. The leader stepped to the side of the car. Hamlin spoke briefly in a language unknown to Audrey and the leader nodded.

"We leave the car here," John said.

Audrey got out. They were on the edge of what looked like a vast fair — booths and lights as far as Audrey could see in a sepia twilight. He decided that the nonchalant thing was to ask no questions. He followed John through the square where a number of acts were in progress, each surrounded by a circle of onlookers. He glimpsed these acts out of the corner of his eye, for John was walking rapidly as if he had an appointment to keep.

"For I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep," Audrey recited inanely to himself.

In one circle two boys were practicing Jiu Jitsu. Audrey had once ordered a book on jiu jitsu through a mail order firm in Wisconsin. He found the instructions and diagrams quite incomprehensible. ... 'Seize your opponent by his right sleeve with your left hand and pull sharply downwards while your right hand secures his left lapel. At the same time move your left foot quickly behind his right heel. Straighten your body with a twist to the right. He will be thrown heavily to the ground.' As he watched, one of the boys fell backward with a foot in the other's stomach. He straightened his leg, every muscle outlined like marble in the dying sun, and the boy sailed over the heads of the onlookers and lit on his feet like a cat.

Other acts were enigmatic. In one circle boys were dressing and undressing at prestidigal speed. He passed a circle where a strange woolly monkey was attacking a dummy with a knife while the trainer stood behind him giving inaudible signals. There were no noisy children about, and no families. The people he passed were dressed in colored jock straps, leather jock straps, knee length shorts, and Arab robes. Most of them seemed to be adolescent, with a sprinkling of older people. A white-haired man passed in a fiacre. Around the square were lodging houses, cafes, Turkish baths and boardwalks. He caught a whiff of the sea. Streets and alleys opened off the square. Boys lounged in doorways.

As he walked along, Audrey glimpsed scenes that sent the blood singing in his ears and pounding to his crotch. Why, some of the boys were *out of control* (Audrey's term for erection) and *doing things together*. He could feel the pull in his groin. John had turned into a weed-grown cobblestone street — blue twilight and trees ahead — this looked like St. Louis again. Here comes the old lamplighter. Ah here we are. Red brick house on the corner. The lawn was weed-grown and there were leaves on the cracked sidewalk. John opened a side door under a portico.

"My father's house. Enter."

Dark stairs to the top floor. John opened a door and turned on the light. It was an attic room with a double brass bed, a washstand, a copper lustre basin and pitcher. Audrey saw

some sepia prints on the wall that seemed to represent the fair they had just walked through. There was a bookcase with leatherbound gilded books. John took off his jacket, tie and shirt, poured water into the basin, and washed his face and neck. He dried himself with a blue towel, sat down on the edge of the bed and took off his shoes and socks.

He lay down on the bed with his knees up and pillows behind his head, selected an orange from a basket of fruit on the night table. He peeled the orange and the smell of oranges filled the room. He ate the orange, spilling juice on his naked chest. Audrey was washing with his shirt on, the collar turned back.

"Toss me that wash rag, Audrey."

John wiped the orange juice off his chest and licked his fingers. He lit a cigarette and looked at Audrey through the smoke.

"I want to see you stripped, Audrey."

Cold in the stomach untying his shoes shoes falling to the floor pants folded on the chair. He stood up.

"Take off your shorts too."

They caught in a way that made him uncomfortable fell to his ankles he kicked them onto a chair his nakedness John's hand rubbing lubricant and the silver sparks went off behind his eyes. His head exploded in pictures. It seemed that he had lived in this room for a long time a ceiling crossed by car lights from the street and the opening and closing of doors these stairs. ...

"You know both of us use the copper lustre basin in the attic room now Johnny's back."

Drifting sand, fish smells and dead eyes in doorways, shabby quarters of a forgotten city. I was beginning to remember the pawn shops, guns and brass knucks in a window, chili parlors, cheap rooming houses, a cold wind from the sea. Dead eyes seemed to be looking at some distant beginning to remember the boy, an old skating rink ... any minute now ... Who said Atlantic City? ... wire rusty around jagged holes ... Van's Surgery ... writing croaker ... Globe Hotel ... Great Atlantic Accident ... name address hotel quite right? ... a number ... police line ahead frisking seven boys against a wall. Too late to turn back, they'd seen us. And then I saw the photographers, more photographers than a routine frisk would draw. I eased a film grenade into my hand. A cop stepped toward us. I pushed the plunger down and brought my hands up, tossing the grenade into the air. A black explosion blotted out the set and we were running down a dark street toward the barrier. Behind us the city went up in chunks.

GREAT ATLANTIC ACCIDENT ...

READ ALL ABOUT IT.

We ran on and burst out of a black silver mist into late afternoon sunlight on a suburban street, cracked pavements, sharp smell of weeds.

"Roller skate boys very close now." The Dib touched pillars and posts as he walked. He pointed to a stucco building that occupied half a block. "There, in old skating rink."

The rink was boarded up and looked deserted from the outside. The Dib knocked on a side door, which opened silently on oiled hinges. In the doorway stood a tall blond youth in a blue jock strap. He carried a machine pistol under one arm. He looked at me with metallic grey eyes.

"Come in," he said and stepped aside.

I looked around for the Dib. He had disappeared. "He's gone."

"*Natürlich*. It is his work."

In the middle of the rink some boys in blue jock straps were skating. Sunlight poured through a broken skylight of wired glass. The wire was rusty around jagged holes, made I



would guess by grenades or mortars. Mattresses here and there, boys sat naked smoking hashish and drinking tea, a work bench along one wall where boys were sharpening knives, oiling skates, repairing bicycles, a long bicycle rack by the work bench. On a mat four boys were practicing judo and karate. Others threw knives into a target. Scene from a silent film. No laughing no shouting no horse play. Boys turned to look at me as I passed, faces unsmiling, eyes cool and watchful. All movements were purposeful and controlled. No boy was fidgeting or standing aimlessly around. The boy with the pistol took me to what had been the office of the rink. It was fitted out as a ward room, maps on the wall, pins in the maps.

"Do you have any ammunition?" he asked me.

I put a box of fifty shells on the table.

"We must distribute these. We have five .38 police revolvers here." He handed me five shells.

He stepped to the door and spoke in the language. A thin dark boy, face spattered with adolescent pimples, came over from the work bench. He was naked except for a blue jock strap. He motioned for me to follow. Dusty window boarded up, boys at a table peeling potatoes and cutting meat. He slid behind a counter where the skates had once been issued to noisy teenage patrons. He measured me with his eyes and dumped some clothes on the counter — sweat shirts, blue jeans, blue jock straps, socks. He passed me a bowie knife 18 inches long with a worn black belt and sheath. I hefted the knife in my hands. The handle was a knuckle duster that ended in a brass knob. It was a beautifully balanced fighting instrument honed to razor sharpness.

"Just take any locker empty and change," he told me.

I stashed my clothes in a locker and changed into blue jeans and sweat shirt.

"You want to be measured for skates and crash helmet and bucklers."

The cobbler was an old man in a dusty room, tools and leather laid out on a long table. He looked at me from eyes faded as pale sky. Unhurried and old, he measured my feet, head and forearms. The boy leaned against the door jamb watching. The cobbler completed his measurements and nodded.

"Bath?" the boy asked. Walking behind him I spotted a pimple where his naked buttocks rubbed together and another on the left cheek. He felt my eyes, stopped and turned to look at me over his shoulder. I touched the pimples with my finger tips, caressing his buttocks. He moved slightly and rubbed his jock strap dusty windows boarded up wooden benches smell of sweat and mouldy jock straps several boys changing. The boy sat down on a bench and pulled his jock strap down, tossing it into a locker. He had a half erection. He looked down as his cock got stiff.

"You strip."

I pulled off my clothes. He looked at me with unsmiling appraisal. "You fuck me this time," he decided.

He led the way through a green door. A shower room with white tile floor had been fitted out as a haman. A youth had just poured a bucket of water over himself. He turned with an erection, shook water from his eyes, measuring me with his thin brown body. He reached out a slow foot and brought it down my calf and said something to the dark boy. Three youths sat on a bench comparing erections. The boy filled a bucket, poured half of it over me and the rest on himself. We passed a piece of carbolie soap back and forth. One of the youths tossed us a towel and we dried our bodies. There was a tube of KY on a shelf. I picked it up. The boy leaned forward holding his cheeks apart. I touched his pimples then rubbed the lubricant on his ass and up inside the ring squeezing my finger hitched hands around his hips and pulled him towards me feeling the spasmodic milking movements as I slid it in and out the electric warmth of his quivering body.

The other youths stood around us watching silently and at the climax let out a little sigh from parted lips. We walked out naked into the rink.

It was late afternoon and the sides of the rink were in shadow. Some of the boys were cooking and making tea. Others were engaged in group sexual exercises. A circle of boys sat on the karate mat looking at each other's genitals in silent concentration. Now one of the boys was getting stiff. He walked to the center of the circle, turned around three times and sat down hugging his knees. He looked from one face to the other. His eyes locked with one boy and a current passed between them. There was a click as if a picture had been taken. The boy in the center of the circle opened his legs and lay back with his head on a leather cushion. A drop of lubricant squeezed out the end of his phallus as he arched his body and squirmed. The boy selected knelt in front of the other studying his genitals. He pressed the tip open and looked at it through a lens of lubricant. He twisted the tight nuts gently with precise fingers as if he were tuning up a piece of machinery, handling the phallus as a precision instrument, running a slow finger up and down the shaft, rubbing lubricant along the divide line, feeling for sensitive spots in the tip. The circle of boys sat silent, lips parted, watching faces there calmed to razor sharpness. The boy who was being masturbated rocked back hugging knees against his chest. Quivering in an ecstasy of exposure his body blurred out of focus. He lay there unconscious. Two boys carried him to a mattress and covered his body with a blue blanket. Another boy took his place in the center of the circle.

I was tired and hungry. Some boys motioned me to sit down, handed me a plate of stew and a wedge of dark Arab bread. After eating I found a mattress and fell asleep. When I woke up the rink was full of yellow grey light. A boy was leaning on his elbow looking at me. It was the boy who had touched me with his foot in the bath. Our eyes met. There was a click in my head a melting of the stomach on hands and knees a band squeezing my head tighter tighter taste of metal in the mouth. I was looking down from the ceiling then out through the broken skylight turning figure eights in the morning sky.

There are about thirty boys here of all races and nationalities: Negroes, Chinese, Mexicans, Arabs, Danes, Swedes, Americans, English. That is, they are evidently derived from racial and national stock corresponding to Negroes, Mexicans, Danes, Americans et cetera. However, these boys are a new breed.

After a breakfast of bread and tea, six boys put on jock straps, crash helmets and skates and buckled on their knives in preparation for a reconnaissance patrol. The blond boy with the machine pistol will accompany them as patrol leader. Others are busy at the work benches, sharpening knives, oiling skates, fixing bicycles, improvising weapons. One weapon works on the crossbow principle with strong rubber bands instead of a bow. Lead slugs are fed in from a magazine on top of the weapon and drop into a slot when the gun is cocked by pulling the bands back. The rifle models are amazingly accurate up to twenty yards and the slugs embed themselves in soft wood. A murderous bolo is made by attaching lead weights to each end of a bicycle chain. The boys practice continually with these devices.

The pimply boy approaches with a folder under his arm, wearing blue jeans. He looks like an American school boy except for the cool eyes alert and disengaged. He addresses me in a curiously unaccented English.

"I teach you picture language," he taps folder. "No good talk old language." He clears a space on the work bench and opens the folder. The written language is a simplified script obviously derived from the Egyptian. The pictures are then transliterated into verbal units. Any picture can be said in a



number of ways according to the context. For five days, we study ten hours a day. My previous study of Egyptian hieroglyphs greatly facilitates my progress and I am now able to converse with some ease. Pictures rise out of the words. I am learning something of the history and customs of the wild boys. Once a year all the wild boys meet in one spot to compare weapons and fighting techniques and to indulge in communal orgies. This festival is known as Xolotl Time.

"Many different boy some almost like fish live all time in water since he begin."

I ask what he means by begin — since birth?

"Wild boy not born now. First he made from little piece one boy's ass grow new boy. Piece cut from boy after he get fucked. Boy like much get fucked give best piece. Grow new boy then boy give piece take new one back his tribe. Boy grow like this not like boy born no good cunt. Boy grow from piece change many different way. Some boy no talk make pictures in head. Boy make cry kill man over there there." He points across the rink. "Other got electricity in body. Boy live far south warm wet place very sweet very rotten inside. Dress up like woman kill many soldier." (These boys who are called "Bubus" secrete a substance from the rectum and genitals which leaves erogenous sores rotting flesh to the bone.) "You scratch feel good scratch more pretty soon scratch self away jump around in your bones. Some boy he glow in dark. You come near soon die. You come near little bit every day you all right. Very good for fuck. Him very hot inside. Other boy he look you come off in pants." And the dreaded "laughing boys": "You laugh too piss self laugh guts out." (The "laughing boys" also communicate fatal fits of sneezing, coughing and hiccuping.) "Other live blue place in mountains got little high blue note you hear that you need all time you hooked. Boy got poison teeth like snake. Lizard boy live on cliffs hand so strong crush bones." The boys with built-in weapons are known as biologics. Other of more or less normal physical attributes specialize in the use of some skill or weapon . . . glider boys, knife throwers, bowmen, slingshot boys, blow-gun boys. "Got darts all different size some so small you think mosquito bites you then turn blue and die." One tribe specializes in musical weapons. "Got music so sweet man walk over cliff. Make sound knock down wall shake guts out."

"Many boy tribe come Xolotl Time all different every time more different. Not need take piece now. We make Zimbu boy. Make many Zimbu Xolotl Time." I ask when this festival occurs. "Different time place very year. I think this time in south on sea maybe not know for sure till two weeks before time all boy stop fuck jack off he get there hot like fire."

The spoken language has great flexibility and extraordinary vividness through immediate pictorial association. If you can't see it you can't say it. As to the origins of this language, the boy is vague. "Wild boys written long time ago in picture book. Book called 'breathing book.' One man come show us piece from book." The wild boys have no sense of time and date the beginning from 1969 when the first wild boy groups were formed.

I now have my skates, crash helmet, and leather bucklers for the forearms, all perfectly tailored like extensions of my body. The skate rollers can be locked and rubber caps adjusted for walking uphill. Tomorrow I will go on patrol. Patrols consist of six boys on skates and one boy on a bicycle. The bicycle boy is the patrol leader. This job rotates and leadership is informal. It is his job to coordinate the activities of the patrol and the information gathered. He carries a pistol and field glasses in addition to the standard bowie knife.

We set out at dawn through ruined suburbs, a crescent moon in the china blue morning sky. The patrol leader is a tall thin Negro boy, ears flat against his small head, a distant

savannah in his eyes. The boys are skating in a line, hands on each other's shoulders. We come to an intersection of subdivision streets which forms a wide expanse of cracked weed-grown pavement. The leader rides ahead to the top of a steep hill on his bicycle and scans the surrounding country through field glasses. He comes back and says one word which means empty land to sky. A boy rubs his jock strap and with one accord the boys sit down pulling their jock straps down over their skates. They skate on slow circles touching each other's genitals and buttocks as they pass.

A boy skates up behind me, puts his hand on my shoulder and guides me to a broken wall. Three of us brace ourselves against the wall then we are twisting in circles spinning the moon and the sky throwing sperm across the cracked pavements.

In the late afternoon we pass a ruined building. US Consulate. On a windy hillside we sight a herd of goats. The goat-herd waves and runs towards us, wind whipping his torn djellaba. Young actor is about thirteen. He tells us a truckload of American soldiers passed the Consulate this morning and asked him where the wild boys were hiding.

"Americans very bor bor. Give me cigarettes, chocolate, corned bif. Believe everything what I say."

He takes a stick and draws a map to show the false route he has given them. The leader studies the map, sketches it on a clip board, pointing and asking questions. Satisfied that the map is accurate, he hands the boy a piece of hashish and a switch knife. The boy snaps the knife open and cuts the air. "One day kill son bitch Merican."

I put my hand on the back of the boy's neck. He moves eagerly under my hands like a dog, squirms out of his djellaba and stands naked in the wind, pubic hairs blown flat against his groin. He arches his body as I jack him off . . . the wind spatters sperm across his lean brown stomach.

That night we decide on an ambush plan for the truck. Our undercover agents working as cooks, bus boys, waiters, bartenders have administered Bor Bor to the American troops. The effect of this drug, which is held in horror by the wild boys and only used as a weapon against our enemies, is to lull the user into a state of fuzzy well-being and benevolence, a warm good feeling that everything will come out all right for Americans.

"We like apple pie and we like each other, it's just as simple as that."

Jolting along in the truck . . . "Oh God, isn't mother a grand person? She's got all the good qualities . . ." Muttering squirming bursting into maudlin song:

"Your mother and mine . . ."

"With a heart that was willing to share . . ."

"Let me bang her twice a month and what could be fairer than that unless it's our old Colonel. When I die I want to be buried right in the same coffin with that fine old blue-eyed whitey — always putting his hands on our shoulders and calls us Son and weeps like a baby over the dead and wounded. He was an Eagle Scout at birth."

A truckload of tough soldiers, crooning, singing, weeping, muttering, smiling, squirming around like randy dogs under Massa's kind old hands. A Sea Org member of Scientology leaps up and screams out: "THANK YOU RON THANK YOU RON THANK YOU RON!"

Another soldier throws his arms around the Jew from Brooklyn . . .

"You Jews is so warm and human!"

Another sobs out: "All the darkies is a-weepin' cause Massa's in the cold cold grave . . ." As he buries a good Darky and a dead dog . . .

"Cried like babies right in front of each other — 'why be ashamed to show your heart son' said a wise old whisky priest and I sobbed in that good man's arms and the cop threw his



great paws around both of us and we cried all over each other."

Mother and Old Glory, kindly priests, good cops, adorable prison wardens rocked in the arms of Bor Bor...

A thin sliver of moon in the blue black sky. The cold at night here grabs your flesh into goose pimples. We slung an iron telephone pole thirty feet long between chains, a line of boys on skates on both sides down a steep hill, the pole pulling us along faster and faster like a comet — hit the truck dead center and knocked it over spilling those Bor Bor heads on the cold cold ground. We swept around from both sides and cut them to Old Glory and back. Under a rough cross formed by the skewered truck we broke thin ice in a fountain and washed the blood off us. We now have a supply of fire-arms for the next operation.

The roller skate boys swerve down a wide palm-lined avenue into a screaming blizzard of machine gun bullets... humming boys, a vibration that sets the teeth on edge and rages through the brain like buzz saws... messages whistled through cold alleys, taken up by the barking of dogs, reach the remote communes in a few hours... he was coming down windy streets, white shorts slapping, mouth open, their hairs up at the first ripple whimper off putrid sweet legs throw back their heads and howl the winds ass hairs erectile — plant boys who know the weeds and vines, marijuana behind enemy lines, hay fever on the wind, water hyacinths snarl the boat propellor, marijuana sprouts by the barracks, thorns scratch the Colonel's boots, boys who can call the locusts and fleas, beautiful diseased Bubu boy stands by a black lagoon, fragile dream boys of shaded dawn wait by attic windows in a lost street of slate roofs and brick chimneys, shaman boys the young faces dark with death, a young red-haired soldier, his ears trembling, yelps, ejaculates strange streets dank school toilets a wind across the golf course naked semen spurting shy spirits in a world of shades boy touches a shoulder under the blankets gasping as the other holds his knees back his thin buttocks his rectum wet morning cobblestone rain in cobwebs the blue desert who exist can breathe there tenuous rose vines bodies cool backs his little teeth scream and yelp boys cuddle whimpering in sleep, a naked boy with his back to Audrey rubs against another, the boy turns and grins at Audrey.

Late afternoon light I could touch the sea wall the stone the vines I could see my body and the sand the face down there a thin pale back two boys laughing blue youth in their eyes sunny the house behind him bleakly clear I am the boy as a child and this is me lying naked on his underwear rubbing himself my room and me there he smiled to watch him do it jumped across a gleaming empty sky I could feel unknown hand orange in the shed long long how long it was the skies fall apart dust of the dead in his eyes into his eggs tighter tighter then I was spurting into a ruined courtyard a smell of oats.

Back in Mexico City, the man who was the boy's father tried to raise money to come back and dig some more in the ruins, but the Mexican authorities said he had no right to do this and took what he had found away from him and sent some Mexicans to the ruins. The man began taking morphine again and I spent most of my time in the streets to stay out of the house. I remember an American from Texas with prison shadows in his eyes talked to me in the park and I went back with him to his apartment.

It was some time after that that a man came to the club and selected me as his caddy. He was a youngish man, about thirty, with very pale grey eyes... fat, but I could see there

were muscles under the fat, and I could see that he had something special he wanted from me as soon as we got out on the golf course. First he told me I shouldn't be hanging around in Mexico, that I belonged in America because I was an American and he could arrange this but first I would have to do something he wanted me to do in order to "square myself" as he put it. Then he told me that "the free world" as he called it was fighting for its life and I could help. There was a man they knew was working with the Commies and they wanted to get him. I'd already seen this man, he bought me a sandwich and an orange drink... now all I had to do was to get the man you know what I mean to start something with me and they would nail him and that would be it — after that I could go to America and live with a decent family and go to school, now how did that sound to me? I told him I was born in Mexico and didn't want to go to America, that my parents were here and I had to help them with the money I made. Then he grabbed me by the arms and I saw he had a snubnose .38 in a holster under his arm.

"All right look at me when you talk and stop lying. I know all about you. Your father is a junkie and your mother is a lush and you've been peddling your ass in the Alameda for the past year..."

I told him that I would do what he wanted and he showed me Mexicans wouldn't let him take me to America. Then he said he had news for me and he pulled out a piece of paper and held it up so I could see it was my Mexican birth certificate. Then he tore it up and looked at me and his face got all black and ugly. I was looking beyond him at the brush fires along the road.

"Listen you little pansy shit you want to go back to a reformatory? You want to get gang fucked till your asshole

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splits open? HUH? Well I can sign a court order and get you into a federal reformatory in Texas before you can fart..."

I told him that I would do what he wanted and he showed me a place by the pond.

"Right here where your boy friend cornholed you. That picture gets you out of paternal custody..."

I had already decided what to do but I decided to argue or he would get suspicious — he was like that, could see people's minds — so I asked if I could stay in Mexico if I did what he wanted and he said I could if I wanted to and I knew he was lying or if I was allowed to stay he would want more such work from me but I pretended to believe him. It was set up for the day after tomorrow which would be Friday.

When I got back to the changing shed Johnny was there alone and I told him what had happened and the plan I had. As we walked out through the parking lot Johnny unscrewed the cap on the man's gas tank leaving it held by the very end of the screws so it would fly off on the first bump. We were sure to be suspected so we went to hide out with Tio Mate in Northern Mexico in a little town surrounded by opium growers. If anyone asked we were not there. We read about it in the papers the next day but the heat was not on right away as we had expected because somebody else had been there before us with an explosive device devised by the CIA itself to be attached to gas tanks. That of course sent them running after professionals or enemy agents within their ranks.

## Shift Partners Round and Round

Top secret classified files . . . Brad reads one and whistles softly looking boyish at the office boy who stares back coldly . . . Then they were called in and asked to resign without prejudice . . .

"Just sign here."

Colonel smokes his pipe with his back to the room . . . two grim grey Army Intelligence men . . . a paper on the desk . . . a pen . . .

It's because some CID bastards had been nosing around in Tangiers where they took their vacations . . .

CID man shows picture to Arab boy who studies it wooden faced. The CID man passes him a note.

"Siiiiii" the boy runs a finger in and out his closed fist . . . "Like beeg one . . ."

"Would you like us to show the infra reds?"

"Why I bought that bastard a drink in The Parade." Greg gasps . . . Boy studies picture. "Si . . . like make party three four boys plenty kief get thrown out Continental Hotel . . . One get caught in sentry box."

"Shall we show the infra reds to the office force?"

"See these men out past the guard sergeant."

Stony faces that had a cheery 'good morning sir' two hours ago. The old sergeant talks without moving his lips.

"I'd try The Advanced Institute . . ."

And here they are in a villa over the sea. This is the clinic, very modern and well equipped. I must explain that at this time our laboratories were working round the clock on the clone project, but we were still dependent on the border cities for male babies, where a semen and baby black market flourished despite periodic crackdowns. You could take your boy friend's semen to town, line up fifty solid Arab girls and take the male crop back to your village.

Here is our agent disguised as a young priest. The cops are

pulling semen shakes all over town — you have to keep moving.

Mustapha receives him calmly.

"Sit down my friend and have some tea. First class merchandise sir . . . genuine Bedouin girls."

"Overflow from the Black Cat most likely."

"I have but one word and this I give you . . ."

"Yeah and remember the girl who died of rabies in childbirth and we carted back a horror show werewolf . . . All right bring on the vessels and Doc Monnyham here will look them over."

The doctor is a thin man of fifty, his legs bent with enemy torture and the memory of torture there in his eyes like black pools where fear has died. He looks at the naked girls without expression.

"Friedrick's ataxia, most advanced stage . . . junkie . . . leukemia . . . radiation sickness . . ."

Calm young faces washed in the dawn before creation. The old phallic Gods and the assassins of Alamout still linger like sad pilots in the hills of Morocco to pick up survivors the piper's tune drifts down a St. Louis street with the autumn leaves. The legend of the wild boys grew and all over the world boys ran away to join them. Soon the wild boys were fighting for their lives . . . In the mountains of Northern Mexico a jeep of Operation Intercept. Two Mexican Federales with carbines, two American narcs. A narrow mountain road, sheer drop of black iron cliffs a thousand feet down. The mountainside erupts in a blast — rocks and earth and trees rain down on the screaming fuzz. Now the wild boys appear, looking down, and dust coats their faces frozen into Mayan statues.

Many weapons and boys skilled from childhood in their use. Here is a cyanide injector for use behind enemy lines. It can jet a stream of cyanide like a spitting cobra ten feet. The wild boys have an intelligence network of waiters, bus boys, bellhops, shoeshine boys . . .

The CIA man hands the shoeshine boy a coin . . .

"Oh thank you sir."

He shoves the injector deep into the man's calf and presses the release . . . As the man slumps forward overturning his whisky the boy walks calmly away . . .

"I think you shit drunk Meester."

Everywhere the wild boys watch and wait . . . LSD in the Colonel's punch, piranha in the swimming pool, black widows in the loo.

Hysterical police machine gun schoolchildren, mistaking a top for a grenade . . . The police by now are a class apart.

Look at these faces that have never seen a woman's face nor heard a woman's voice. Look at the silence. The wild boys will defend their space. They are learning the old magic of wind and rain, the control of snakes and dogs and birds.

Magic of the Juju men who can kill an enemy's reflection in a gourd of water, weather boys who ride a hurricane across the torn sky, glider boys on a vast plain surrounded by high black mountains where they live on stone ledges cut in the rock, the roller skate boys with wings and autogyros soaring across valleys, place of the dream boys into the deserts of silence and the doors of empty air, crooning shaman boys the young faces dark with death, the pure killing purpose blazes from all their faces. Death to the invaders.

The roller skate boys come to the valley of the glider boys they whirl the bird men away to a sand dune the boys twist together the bird men making bird calls and the sound of wind on wings and wires the cry of a hawk the honk of the wild goose birds and space craft and gliders rise from their bodies over the plain blue birds and robins perilous gliders over a blue chasm a white boat under a zeppelin sails across the sky manned by phantom space cadets from the lost Copenhagen . . . a blue hawk streaks across the sky fragile spacecraft ships of light skitter like will o' the wisps, naked boys tend crops



and fish ponds in this remote peaceful area without women splash in stone pools and Frisk has never seen a woman, Nordic youths swimming in the dead moonlight sad Danish restaurant . . .

"Brad and Greg" he said "Please trust me."

Perhaps somewhere out there done so but I had to know love and acceptance.

The Colonel looked at me coldly.

"It smells to California."

Here are the boys cooking over campfires quiet valley by a mountain stream. They have stepped into the dawn before creation. No female was ever made from their flesh that turns to yellow light in the rising sun. The phallic gods of Greece, the assassins of Alamout and the Old Man himself, dispossessed by generations of female conquest, still linger in the hills of Morocco waiting to pick up the male survivors . . . cool and remote the piper's tune drifts down St. Louis streets with the autumn leaves.

Calling all boys of the earth we will teach you the secrets of magic control of wind and rain. Giver of winds is our name. We will teach you to ride the hurricanes bending palm trees to the ground, high tension wires fall on the police car. We will teach you control of animals birds and reptiles how to pass into their bodies and use them like a knife. We will show you the sex magic that turns flesh to light. We will free you forever from the womb.

South American jungle trail . . . CIA man with a patrol of government troops. He is looking at a map and smoking a cigar.

"What's this area here?"

"Wild boy country senior."

"Are these wild boys political?"

"Not exactly . . . We have a truce with this tribe. It would be a violation of that truce to enter their territory senior."

"Well what are their relations with the guerrilla units?"

"They help sometimes of course since both are outlaws."

"Honor among thieves and cutthroats eh? Help, hide, act as guides do they? Well let's have a look."

Close-up of the CIA man's face . . . his head shrinks to the size of an orange, a little wooden cigar juts from the corner of his mouth . . .

In Morocco here are the bicycle and roller-skate boys who occupy the vast empty suburbs of Casablanca and here is the old skating rink, the roof shattered, afternoon sunlight . . . The boys at a long bench are tinkering with tiny jet engines for their skates, improving crossbows and bolos. One boy is working on a bowie knife with an 18-inch blade. He fits on the ironwood handle with a knob of steel at the end. It is razor sharp, perfectly balanced. The boys have gathered silently around him. The knife passes from hand to hand.

Calm intent young faces in jungle huts, ruined basements, mountain caves, forge and grind and temper the 18-inch blades. This becomes the standard side arm of all the wild boys. Now the maker puts on his jet skates — he starts in the middle of the rink spiraling out faster and faster . . . cantaloupes are set up on posts around the rink. He severs each cantaloupe without moving the two halves, then spirals back to the center and leaps high in the air, swinging the knife in a wild dervish dance, and gives the charge cry.

The wild boys charge down a hillside.

And for every wild boy group there was a like number doing intelligence work and carrying out missions of assassination and sabotage behind enemy lines. The boys rotate intelligence and front line duty. The waiter the bus boy the porter

the bellhop the cook — young eyes making the CIA man a ptomaine sandwich.

The roller skate boys ambush a truck of soldiers slinging a 60-foot telephone pole between chains — sweep down a hill and hit the truck broadside, knocking it over, sweep around the truck and cut them to bleeding spurting stumps. I stepped around a gush of blood where a head had been and slipped out a .45 to kill the wounded but the leader a plae metallic Dane said:

"We need the ammunition. Use your knives."

Heads roll, trunks twitch and lay still. We collect the guns.

On screen an old book with gilt edges . . . written in golden script *The Wild Boys* . . . a cold spring wind ruffles the pages . . . pictures fly out . . .

A boy naked except for a blue jock strap sweeps down a mountain road on the edge of precipice, autogyro wings strapped to his shoulders . . . he catapults into space and floats slowly down into the mist of the valley and the sound of running water, distant barking of dogs . . .

Glider boys, wings camouflage, into pink and gold sunset with blue flash laser guns spurting arrows of light . . .

Roller skate boy naked except for his blue steel electronic helmet rocks back holding his knees against his chest. His rectum turns to a pulsing rose of flesh, his body transparent, the delicate limestone tracings of coral along his backgone, the pulsing pearly glands exposed . . . Now the boy is clear blue deeper and deeper blue purple rainbow colors flush through his body as he spurts . . .

Two little desert boys thin as sand foxes fuck on all fours in the light of a campfire. They yelp and bark and their ears tremble as they come against the deep blue sky and the stars

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like wilted gardenias . . . The roller skate boys dodge down a hill into a hail of bullets that whine off the streets past their ears . . . the 18-inch knives and blue steel helmets glint in the sun . . . lips parted eyes blazing . . .

Beautiful diseased Bubu boys stand by a black lagoon . . .

Dream boys in a 1920 movie, pants down in the vacant lot . . . fragile children of shaded dawn . . .

As I have told you, survivors from the terror of Colonel Driss formed the first wild boy commune. They were holed up in a ruined police barracks with no roof and the boys jacked off in front of their pin-ups every dawn and dusk, like saying prayers. Then one day a boy appeared in the court of the barracks. He was wearing a blue jock strap and he had jet skates with Mercury wings. Surprised in their masturbatory rites the boys turned, cocks in hand, endearments frozen on their lips. He looked at them without any expression at all and jetted away. A high wind sprang up behind him and whipped all the pin-ups from the chipped adobe walls and their clothes from the lines in the courtyard. And we pointed up at the sky where a pair of pants almost caught the NUD-EST GIRL IN SWEDEN. We laughed and cheered until we fell exhausted in naked heaps.

From that day to this the wild boys put all thought of women from their minds and bodies. Anyone who joins them must leave women behind. There is no vow. It is a state of mind you must have to make contact with the wild boys. According to the legend an evil old doctor, who called himself God and us dogs, created the first boy in his adolescent image. The boy peopled the garden with male phantoms that rose from his ejaculations. This angered God, who was getting on in years. He decided it endangered his position as CREATOR. So he crept upon the boy and anesthetized him and made EVE from his rib. Henceforth all creation of beings would process through female channels. But some of Adam's phantoms refused to let God near them under any pretext. After millenia these cool remote spirits breathe in the wild boys who will never again submit to the yoke of female flesh. And anyone who joins them must leave woman behind forever.

Two photographers from LIFE spent an uncomfortable flea-bitten fortnight tramping through the Rif and finally posed some street boys on the outskirts of Tangiers, snarling and brandishing knives. This hoax was quickly exposed, like the famous gazelle boy who was allegedly captured after a Jeep had clocked him at 50 miles per hour and who subsequently turned up in Hollywood living with a film producer and starring in Tarzan pictures.

"So far as I am concerned" growled a senior editor, "the wild boys are a myth."

The myth spread and wild boy tribes sprang up everywhere. In the mountains of Northern Mexico, in the swamps of Southern Panama, in the vast Amazon basin and the jungles of Southeast Asia. They have their own language and exchange trade goods over a vast network.

And Brad gave Greg a pair of Mercury sandals for Christmas — jetting along arm in arm, sparks fanning out behind them, they had to laugh at John Citizen his clothes burned full of greasy black holes . . .

Here they are in the Clinic. Boys line up laughing, comparing, jacking off in test tubes. Here is a boy in the cutting room. He is spread out with slings behind his knees and Brad turns a blue light on his rectum and genitals and Greg slips a vibrating cutting tube up him.

His pubic hairs crackle and he blues out and goes transparent — you can see the sperm gathering and pulsing in the pearly glands like an egg tighter tighter the egg explodes shooting gobs of warm light up to the chin . . . A room stacked with embryos in jars with nutrient tubes . . . Brad and Greg move around making adjustments and now fifty boys, some bending

over hands on kness, others on all fours or lying down with their legs up . . . Brad throws the switch. The boys writhe and whimper, little phantom figures dance over their bodies, slide up and down their pulsing cocks, get inside their balls and shoot out —

WHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

They jet up to the ceiling riding the cutting tube, slide inside their balls squeeze them tighter tighter — the glider boys come robins and bluebirds.

Knees bent, he started down the hill on skates — faster — faster — then he was in the air. He wheeled and banked and turned, those wings were alive now and part of him as he soared in for a landing, touched the pavement, soared again, skipping down the hill like a stone across a lake. Every glider was custom-made to its owner and the wings and fuselage were in many colors, gliding in out of the sunset on red wings like a flight of flamingos, the archers riding the plane with their feet and some use transistor sound effects through electronic helmets — Gnaoua drummers dancing their plane in a steep dive and some German cornballs got themselves up in skeleton suits and came in to funeral marches and mad drag queens formed a Valkyrie Squadron. Next step was a Gemini glider. Just after takeoff a stutter of synapses then they steady down and the wings are talking to each other tossing wind and air currents back and forth and there is a three-man ship controlled by a navigator while his two archers give all their attention to the target. Wings camouflaged to disappear in a sunset drift down on the west wind and ram poison arrows from the sky. Wild geese wreck a troop transport plane. The wild boys are always just out of sight in the colors they cannot see in the places they didn't go . . .

The gliders were camouflaged with painted birds, clouds, sunsets and landscapes drifting from the sky like autumn leaves, grey shadows at twilight, cool green ships of grass and streams, music across the golf course, distant train whistles, lawn sprinklers. The old financier nodding on his balcony looked up and saw a landscape in the sky. It reminded him of an old picture book and he could see a boy standing there in a stream. As the old man watched, the boy took a silver arrow from his quiver and raised his crossbow. A gust of air hit the old man's face and bore his breath away. Gnaoua dancers dance out of the sky riding their planes down on the Diemal Fnaa, the black archers leave ten dead in the square. They have their list and they go through it anywhere in the city . . . the drums of death and the arrows rain down, no one knows why, no one has seen the list.

The old newspaper magnate who doesn't like to hear the word *death*, bundled in robes on a deck chair with dark glasses, was outraged to hear childish voices singing

"The worms crawl in and the worms crawl out

They crawl all over your chest and mouth."

He looked up and the sky was full of obituaries piloted by boy scouts in skeleton masks, each carrying his first single shot .22. The rifles converged and each rifle had a camera flash popping away in the sky like firecrackers . . .

An old gentleman was standing by the fireplace. At sight of me his then aristocratic face lit up and glowed with incandescent charm.

"Ahhhh you are the young American . . . How glad I am to have this assignation with you . . . you must you really must try one of our better brandies . . . in fact rather a great brandy of the house . . . Pierre."

The servant approached discreetly.

"The 69 please."

Something slimy and evil was squirming back and forth between master and servant.

"The 69, monsieur Le Comte?"

"Oui Pierre, le 69."



"Le vrai 69, monsieur Le Comte?" he purred out like an obscene old sick tomcat.

"Le vrai 69, Pierre" the count purred back, his eyes narrowed to grey slits. Pierre bowed and retired. The old count seized both my hands in his.

"You must come and stay with us the countess and me in the old chateau . . ."

"Enchante charme oui oui."

"You must you must you must . . ."

"oui oui oh yes charmed enchante . . ."

"you must but you absolutely must . . ." He looked deep into my eyes with a quiet intense charm.

"Oh yes oh yes I will will do it do it really really do it yes I will oh yes oui oui oui . . ."

At this point the jugged hare arrived on my plate, absolutely putrid jet black, inert and repulsive. The old count looked at me across the table, his eyes sharp and quizzical as he sharpened a boning knife with which he would shortly slice paper-thin slices from a seasoned local ham. His beautiful old hands moved deftly under the flickering candles, his voice clear and cold.

"Our recipe for jugged hare dates back to the Crusades and there is an interesting story recorded in our family archives. I am sure our young American guest would like to hear it while he enjoys our modest country hare . . ."

I could feel his sturdy footmen moving closer. Le Comte's gaze was glassy as he pointed at me playfully with his boning knife.

"Or perhaps our young American friend is so accustomed to buffalo meat that our modest unassuming little hare is beneath his notice????"

Three footmen breathing down my neck, I choked down that putrid paste of a dead animal that stuck to my teeth like rotten tar. What a cover story.

This slimy old Count de Vile has his estate on an island of garbage in an oily lagoon. Our fish boys did the job on him with depth charges. We had learned to breathe under water, we learned very quickly as we learn everything quickly, we are known as 'biologic adaptives.' You run into intolerable currents under these vile oily waters, a proliferating world of film sludge, plots, armies, invisible inaudible screaming for light and sound they fall away like grey shadows. Keep walking. It's not like being under water at all, more like very fine black dust, you have to keep it swirling to let you through. This old Count had been selling diseased lemur Zimbus, many of which died in transit. The future generation of Zimbus is the hope of our party and any attack on a Zimbu is a kick to our crotch.

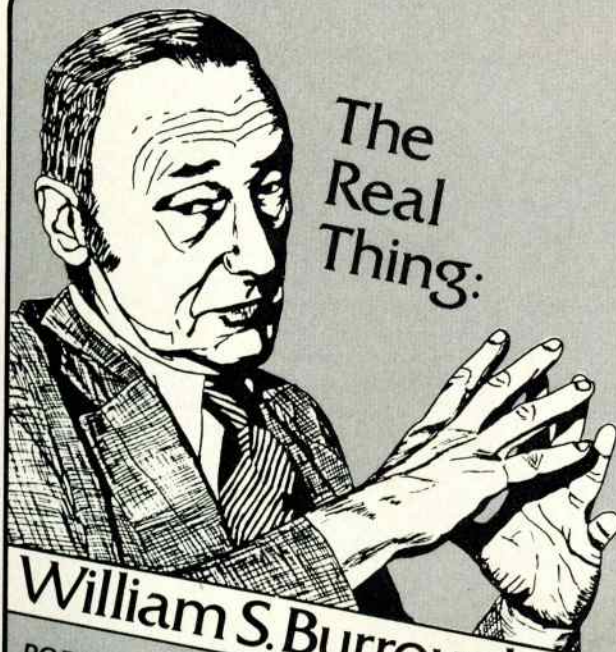
The Count was receiving an American Bor Bor salesman, one of our undercover men. He knew how anxious the man was to get on with his sale and kept him waiting four hours for dinner . . .

"Would you like to see our portrait gallery? Of course you would . . . how thoughtless of me not to have suggested it before during this rather long lull — you see the servants must always eat first . . . it's a family tradition going back to the Crusades . . . Interesting story connected with it . . ."

Five hours later over brandy and cigars, the Count listened, intent and evil as an old vulture.

"You see it's the perfect drug. You put it in food candy bars soft drinks. It's undetectable and adapts itself to any country. Why it's simply the stupidest sound track of that country. It will bring any area under control. Bor Bor always delivers a majority. Tell me what brand of Bor Bor is sold anywhere and I'll tell you what people think feel hear and see. Now we happen to be looking for an Italian distributor . . . You are the man we want . . ."

Slowly the old Count rose in the air and the walls of his castle crumbled as our depth charge hit.



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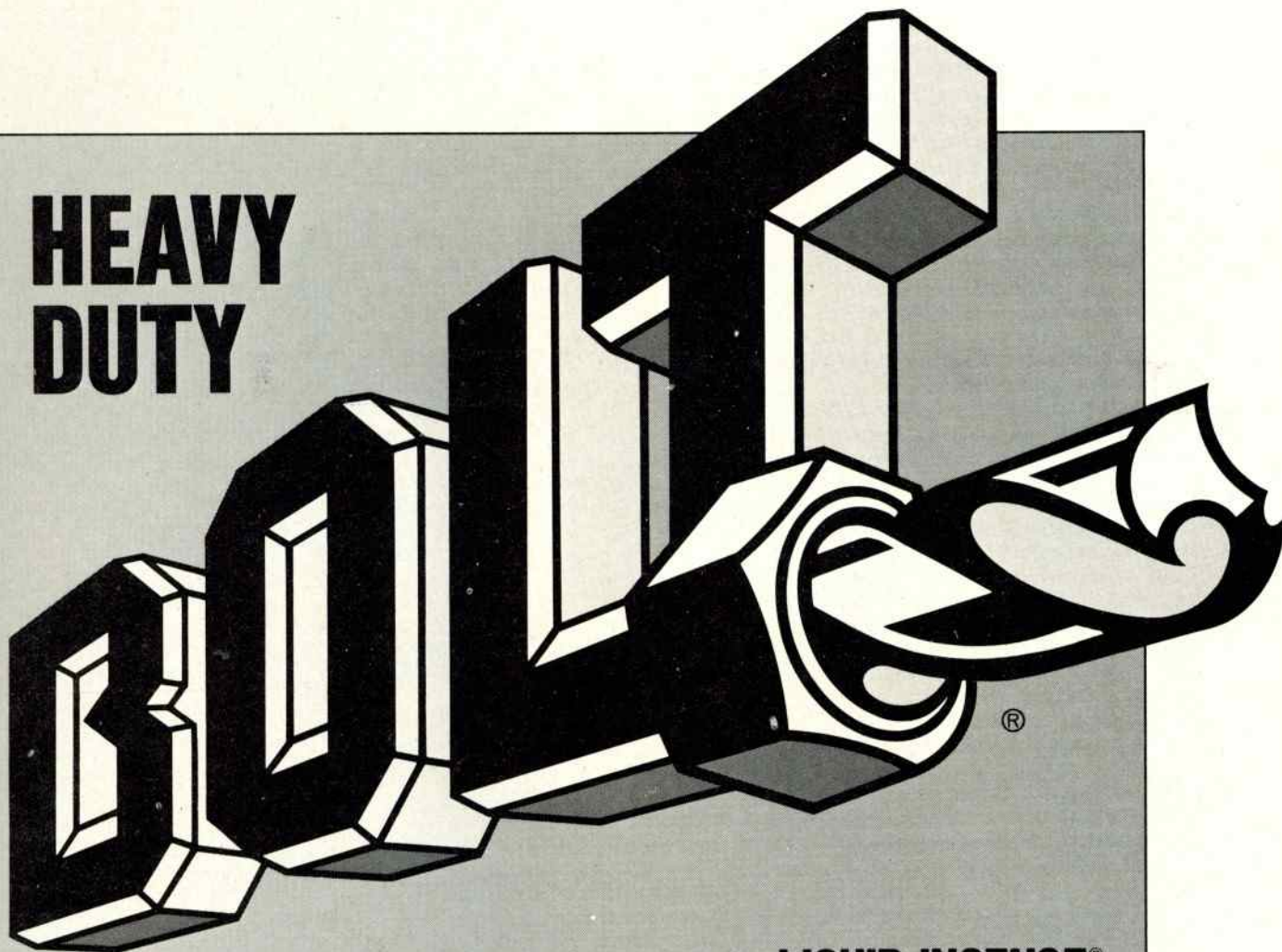
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# THEATRE

## TRADITION VERSUS EXPERIMENT

Doric Wilson's *A Perfect Relationship* and David Hyman's *Dream* present interesting, perhaps unique, observations of directions in gay theatre. Both works have traditional theatrical validities; Wilson's romantic farce stems directly from his appreciation of Sheridan and Congreve — Hyman's modernistic adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* as legitimate as the works of the original playwright, who adapted much of his legendary work from earlier sources.

But beyond the proscenium of good theatre, these two works separate faster, in vision, than oil and water. Doric Wilson has, like a populist painter, filled canvases with satiric observations on the style of gay life as exercised by gay prototypes. His major characters, Greg and Ward, are devoted to a personal relationship of non-commitment and to social obligations that follow suit. The pairing is perfect because of the singularity of goal; but each approaches the decision of non-commitment from such different frames of reference. The obvious catalyst is to introduce a third element, a relationship-orientated young man, into their idyllic living arrangement. While that alone works well as a proposition for dramatic device, Wilson goes further: there exists a necessity of relationship between the two individual co-existers that can only surface under the duress of an outside threat.

Set in present day New York, specifically in the Village; that great gay enclave, we see (or hear) a spectrum of style through Greg and Ward. We are given the evidence of other styles through the interloper, Harry. Wilson casts his conflict amid social and economic truisms like the condition and circumstance of living in a city like New York in an overpriced, undermaintained apartment that is sub-sub leased from an endearing but ruthless fag hag.

After the situation, and the conflict, as is true in all good farce — comes the denouement. Here Wilson has his thumb clearly on the pulse of the modern world. There is enough juggling of loyalties, switching of partners, re-announcements of intention to confuse a political convention. By the time of the fourth or fifth ballot, the seemingly final arrangement: who gets whom and how; the brilliance of a controlled theatrical abandon is brought to its height. The final twist of the plot resolves all the dilemmas as completely as pulling the lever in the voting booth. Some win,



Top: Greg (Jeff Boyle), Muriel (Maggi Sutherland) and his roommate Ward (Greg Bishop) discuss the ins and outs of individual co-existence. Photo by Rink. Bottom: Ward tells bedtime tales to Barry (Robert Stone). Photo by Jim Moss.

some lose; everyone wins something, everyone gives something up. But it is Doric Wilson who really wins, since he manages to show an integrity to relationships when 'integrity' seems to be the one word missing from the vocabulary of his characters.

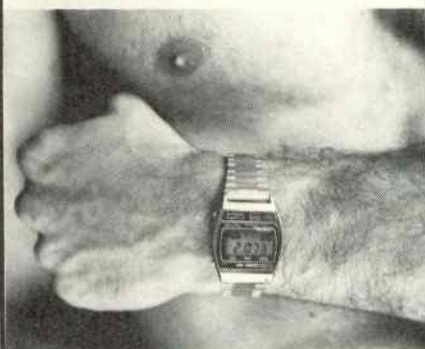
David Hyman enjoys what a lot of writers would consider a chore, adaptation. Before his foray into the 'sacred' world of Shakespeare, Hyman had already altered, revised, updated or otherwise tampered with the works of Ben Jonson and Aristophanes. *A Mid-Sum-*

*mer Night's Dream* obviously presented special problems, as Hyman's intention was to not only update the work to a contemporary milieu, but to set it in a specific gay social context. Since *Dream* (both versions) deals with abstracts like power and fantasy, the leather genre of gay experience seemed a natural. But not to make the adaptation a cliché meant a studious reconstruction, one that would play as natural as possible given the closeness of the original script Hyman maintained.

There is already in Shakespeare a



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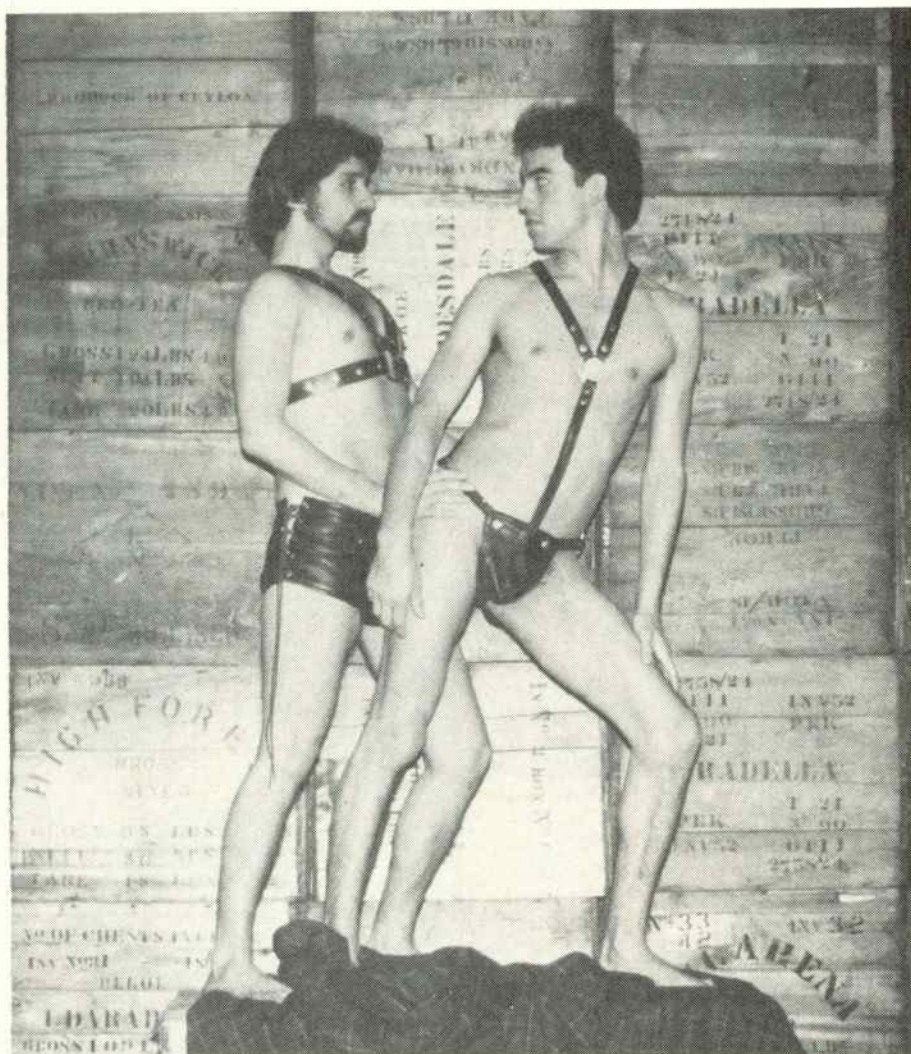
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good deal that is inherently gay, and an all-male all gay-cast version, where physical camp would alter the intention of the original language, obviously would not suffice. Hyman has instilled in this gay adaptation a gay sensibility that actually allows the audience to re-view the play through new perspectives.

and blind whatever your sexual preference, it would not have added much to the theme of the play. Instead, we focus on the power of dreams and fantasies, and the battle of Oberon and Titani-um over the changeling boy, who is mentioned but not necessarily seen in the original."



Puck (Gene Porter) surprises one of the Fantasies (Oscar Castillo) in David Hyman's *Dream*.

Hyman feels, "You want to start by trying to change as few words as possible: just 'Athens' to 'San Francisco' and the gender of the characters all to 'he.' But changes just keep suggesting themselves. The Rustic craftworkers who rehearse and perform the play within the play have become a motorcycle club in full leather. The lovers, Helena and company, have been cut out entirely. We could have kept them quite easily, as four Castro 'clones' wildly pursuing one another, but other than making the obvious statement that young love can be foolish

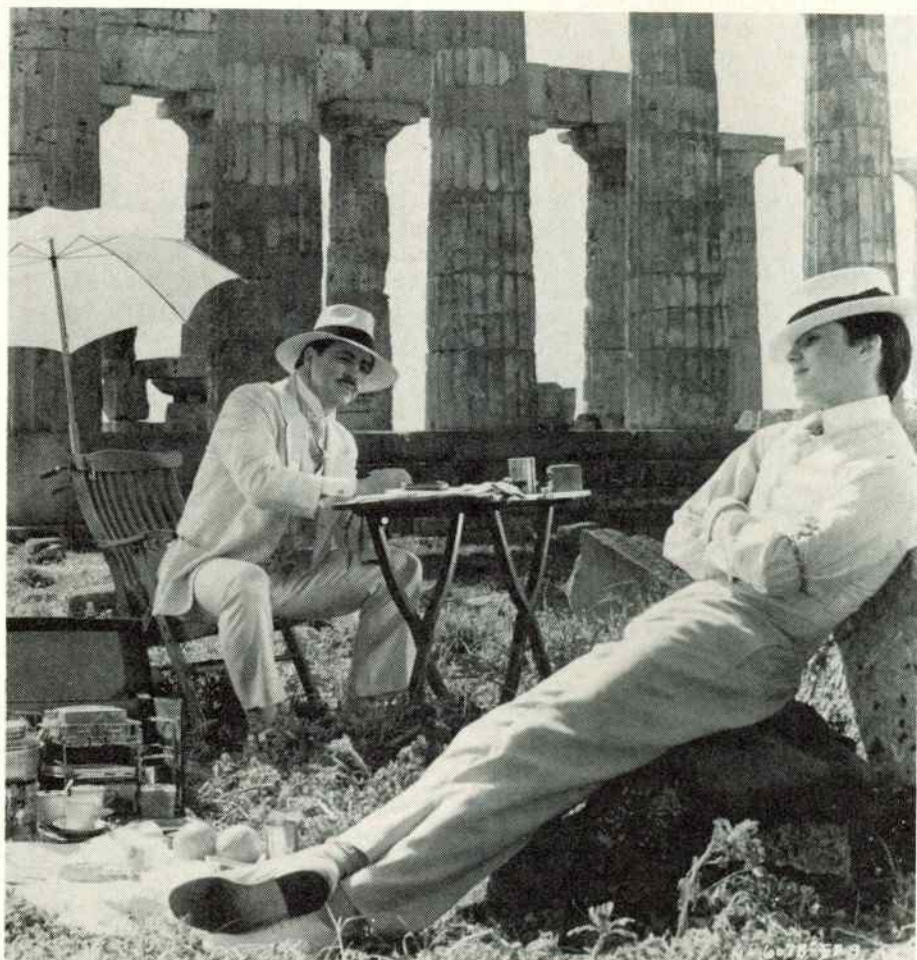
*Dream* plays through April, 1980 at the Folsom Street Warehouse Theatre, 280 Seventh Street, San Francisco (415) 474-7116. The original work was produced by Mike Avedon, directed by William Manning, with set designs by Tuck Finn.

A Perfect Relationship proved to be a smash hit for Theatre Rhinoceros, 1115 Geary Street, San Francisco (415) 776-1848. This production was directed by J. Kevin Hanlon, with set design by Tom Hinde.

— JWR



# FILM



Vaslav asks Sergei if he has ever slept with a woman. "Two and a half times," Sergei replies, "Once, I just stopped and got up and went home."

## SERGEI AND VASLAV: A LOVE STORY

*Nijinsky* tells the great love story gay audiences have long desired; a historical truth presented with integrity. For those standards, audiences will find no fault with Herbert Ross's film biography of Vaslav Nijinsky and his mentor, Sergei Diaghilev. In fact, because it is such a honest portrait of this great love affair, mainstream audiences are apt to reject it completely. The conflict doesn't rise from the film — but from the mass film audience. An honest gay relationship is of no interest to them. In this case, that perimeter can be opened a bit; ballet lovers will revel in the lush accurateness of the production.

But, tragically, *Nijinsky* is doomed.

The entire film covers but a few years in the lives of the Russian dancer, Vaslav Nijinsky and the creator of the world famous Ballet Russe, Sergei Diaghilev. It begins just as Nijinsky is coming into his own as a choreographer and ends when

his relationship with Diaghilev takes its final turn toward a permanent separation.

In that brief span of years, the whole of ballet at the beginning of this century is brought vividly to life. The wonder that was the Ballet Russe, and the world of its two beacons, Sergei and Vaslav, emerge as large as their legends. Fokine, Bakst, Stravinsky; names that would become patron saints of the new world of ballet in Western Europe.

The ballets themselves, Fokine's stunning "Scheherazade" and "Spectre De La Rose," Nijinsky's earth-shattering "Sacre Du Printemps," his modernistic "Jeux" and his scandalous "Afternoon of a Faun," Stravinsky's avant garde musical composition that proved the vanguard for decades of music to follow — all add structure and foundation for what was the most devastating homosexual affair of its time.

Ross has assembled a cast with as much integrity as himself, and Hugh Wheeler has written a script that never panders nor sensationalizes. Alan Bates is brilliant, George De La Pena is com-

pletely believable, Leslie Browne proves her acting ability in a non-dancing role. Alan Badel as the fey Baron De Gunzburg damn near steals the film as the devoted patron to the Ballet Russe.

*Nijinsky* has everything. And it will, in all probability, achieve critical acclaim. But it is as doomed as the character from which it draws life — hope that you are afforded the opportunity to see this love story before it is interred in the movie studio tombs.

— CN

## A WINK, BETTER THAN A NOD?

The trouble with picking favorite, or best, or most important anything is the problem of subjective tastes. One man's meat being another man's weight problem and the like. So, to wrap up the 1979 cinema season, we asked three non-objective film critics to ponder their personal choices for the Best Films of 1979. That creates even more problems. When is a personal favorite a 'best'? Can one consider the best B-grade films or the best films by a bad director, or the best a good director could do with a bad script/cast/budget? And why a 'best' list at all? Why not a Second-Best list — that way no one eats crow when the Academy Awards decides differently? So, given absolutely free reins, here they are...

Steve Seid

(Editor, Video Networks; Film Critic, Boulevards)

## APOCALYPSE NOW

Joseph Losey has gotten a lot of attention for the operatic staging of *Don Giovanni*. But what about Coppola's battle scenes? Pure Wagner, filtered through the Grand Ole Opry.

## MANHATTAN

Allen's film is like a PBX board from Harvard. It rings with intelligence. Gordon Willis' New York was shot with nostalgic elegance. His New York in *Windows* was directed with depraved negligence.

## NORMA REE

When you get right down to it, the politics were rather threadworn, but Sally Fields got some beautiful yardage out of that fabric mill. Her portrayal of a woman's move from rags to recognition was powerfully, suffused with a glowing humanism.

## SAINT JACK

Bogdanovich's last few films had him in a real sling. It took just one Singapore sling to get him out. Surrounded by florid floosies, an agonized Ben Gazzara finally earned his pound of flesh. The subtle politic (anti-imperialist) is the meat of mastery. And Louis Malle (*Pretty*



*Baby*) could take a lesson from Bogdanovich's brothels.

#### **BREAKING AWAY**

Last time out, Yates was more concerned with Jacqueline Bisset's wet t-shirts. This time he concentrated on the heart beneath the chest. The maelstrom of maturation was drawn with crisp, wry strokes; as smooth as a simplex gearbox. Ciao, bambino.

#### **WARRIORS**

Hill proved that a dynamic, driving film doesn't have to have brains. A film can be as stupid as its protagonists and still be a galvanizing gallivant. Anyway, next to John Carpenter, Hill is a Rhodes scholar.

#### **NORTH DALLAS FORTY**

Who's killing the great football players? Handled with a gusty, easy-going pace, *North Dallas Forty* merges with all the aging pain Nick Nolte can muster. The dogged cynicism and Nolte's chemically-preserved body are a testament to lite beer, benzedrine and big business.

#### **ALIEN**

All that slithering viscosity, oozing from the sets, guaranteed Scott a winner. Then with the visceral velocity of his direction and Signourey Weaver's instinctual, gymnastic style, he showed us he was inalienably right.

#### **KRAMER VS KRAMER**

I thought it was going to be a professional wrestling match between siblings. I was disappointed.

#### **ROCK AND ROLL HIGH SCHOOL**

B-movies are always overlooked, unless they're bee movies by Irwin Allen. *R 'n' R High School* deserves special mention for P.J. Soles, the snottiest girl in cinema.

Edward Guthmann  
(Free-lance film critic)

#### **KRAMER VS. KRAMER**

Dustin Hoffman learned to be a mother and America loved it — me included. Robert Benton's child custody drama sailed straight into the heart, and without the aid of cheap tricks: with Hoffman, Meryl Streep (who should be canonized) and a great story, what more do you need?

#### **MANHATTAN**

"A real knockout" is how Woody Allen's character described the Big Apple, and that's just how I feel about this movie. True, it's a highly-sanitized view of the city, and the social milieu it chronicles is one of wealth and privilege and chic elite, but Woody's never been funnier, sadder, more affectionate, and more affecting.

#### **LUNA**

Bernardo Bertolucci's glorious absurdity and operatic emotionalism were too much for most people's literalist biases, and this film — with Jill Clayburgh's magnificent performance — was quickly swept away. Brash, stunning cinema and a great deal of fun.

#### **ALL THAT JAZZ**

Bob Fosse's high-risk, high-buff musical self-evisceration was condemned as a "jack-off" because the subject was Fosse's own life. Would people scream as loud were he to depict another man's life with the same honesty (as he did in *Lenny*)? Since when is autobiography insufficient occasion for art?

#### **ALIEN**

The most giddily frightening movie in years. Those who hissed "manipulation" at its astonishing shock effects were dead-right: their mistake was in failing to surrender to such a terrific cheap thrill as this.

#### **CHINA SYNDROME**

Apart from political timeliness, this anti-nuke drama succeeded as a high-voltage (oops!) thriller. Jack Lemmon's shattering performance as the whistle-blowing engineer was equalled by Jane Fonda's and Michael Douglas's fine work.

#### **HAIR**

It's pure mystery why this sensational movie musical never clicked in the States while it broke records all over Europe. With great camera work, rousing Twyla Tharp choreography, and a galvanizing, aria-like rendition of "Easy To Be Hard" by black singer Cheryl Barnes.

#### **YANKS**

John Schlesinger's soft-focus hindsight on his World War II youth — the cross-cultural conflicts between displaced American soldiers and their native British hosts — gave this film a deep emotional resonance. Beautifully filmed, with a grand performance by Vanessa Redgrave, whose poetically thoughtful eyes and saint-like bearing are true cinematic treasures.

#### **A LITTLE ROMANCE**

An uncommonly joyful movie about two 13-year old romantic renegades and their partner-in-flight Laurence Olivier. With Paris, Venice and Sally Kellerman in stellar support, and a knack for conveying sentiment without bogus sentimentality.

#### **SEDUCTION OF JOY TYNAN**

Alan Alda's grown-up drama about a New York senator's twin temptations — the Presidency and an affair with (who else?) Meryl Streep — that displayed Alda's integrity, moderation and professionalism to superb results. When people say that movies aren't about human beings anymore, I wonder if they've seen this.

John W. Rowberry  
(Editor, *The Alternate*)

#### **APOCALYPSE NOW**

At first I felt that Francis Coppola Ford's visionary epic of war and mankind was the best film since Orson Well's *Citizen Kane*; now I'm convinced it's the finest American film ever made.

#### **THE BLACK STALLION**

This stunning achievement has more

going for it than the whole catalogue of children's films; films for adults should be this well realized.

#### **THE CONSEQUENCE**

I'm not really surprised that a humanistic mainstream gay love story would come out of the European cinema before American film producers discovered the quality of courage; that it was originally shown on German television speaks a sadder truth about the ruling U.S. film community.

#### **EMPIRE OF PASSION**

(Released in Japan in 1978) Nagisa Oshima's classic tale of love and death establishes him as the master of eroticism. Given the forced censorship he filmed under — Oshima created a sexual atmosphere that literally takes the breath away.

#### **HAIR**

It was never even assumed that the paen of the 1960's counter culture would be made into a credible film. *Hair* retained the integrity of the stage work and fused it with an intensity seldom achieved in musical cinema. Destined to become a cult classic.

#### **STARTING OVER**

A coup for the simple story of manners and morals. Absolute perfect casting and an unexpectedly subtle and sensitive performance by Burt Reynolds made this film outshine its bed partners — *An Unmarried Woman* and *Kramer vs. Kramer*.

#### **THE ROSE**

Anyone who can cease from spending the two hours comparing Bette Midler to Janis Joplin will find a moving, honest, devastating portrait of the rock star, her rise and fall. A longish scene in a drag club needed tighter editing; Midler could have sang for an extra half-hour.

#### **LIFE OF BRIAN**

Anyone who doesn't love Monty Python must be a Christian. What has seemed silly in two previous films becomes absolutely imperative to this examination of an impossible messiah born next door to the better known carpenter's son.

#### **OUR HITLER:**

#### **A FILM FROM GERMANY**

This defiance of all cinema tradition should be required viewing for film students, art teachers, historians, opera singers, dress designers, politicians, military advisors, radical political groups, wall-paper designers and the Jewish Defense League. Be advised: it's seven hours long and you'll only get one chance, if any, to see it.

#### **NORTH DALLAS FORTY**

The best film about football ever made. Finally someone cuts out the bullshit about the heroism of the jock and shows the great American game for what it really is: sado-masochism under the sanction of the NFL. Mac Davis is a better actor than you'd think, but the movie belongs to Nick Nolte.



# GEORGE WHITMORE: THE POLITICAL IS PERSONAL



## or Sex and Love in Gay New York

BY JOHN PRESTON

"I was frightened about writing a book that invited so much intimacy. Whatever corresponds to my life or doesn't correspond to my life in *Danny Slocum* is something I'm not particularly anxious to decipher. To raise the question makes me feel very vulnerable."

George Whitmore's statements about his degree of self-revelation aren't unexpected. We had worked together in a very friendly fashion five years ago. But when I talked to a friend about interviewing George I admitted some fear about this encounter with someone who now seemed to be so aggressively vulnerable. While George and I talked, I recalled some other interactions with friends who had just left therapy, as George was doing when he was writing the book. Those others shared with George a militant need for honesty and "significance" from their friendships and their affairs. There is actually a pattern that therapists can describe of people who are involved in an intensive group therapy and who seem to have a drive to take the integrity of the group into the real world which, in fact, is based on barriers and limitations.

My personal defensiveness about George's new-found-self were combined with a strong memory of his strident, self-admitted puritanism of five years ago. No one was more politically "correct" than George.

The ideas of all that political purity combined with a personal self-revelation was terrifying. But, as we talked, it became more apparent to me that I was the one who was carrying the baggage in this exchange, not he. I was one of the characters in his book, looking at him and being wary of the lines of my privacy, withholding intimacy, all of which isn't

necessarily bad, but which is revealing in itself.

The rough outline of George's book *The Confessions of Danny Slocum* follows a 33-year-old gay man living in New York who bails out of a bad relationship into despair, and finally therapy. In the course of the therapy, the goals are altered in order to deal with a sexual dysfunction — Danny Slocum/George Whitmore can't achieve orgasm. The therapist suggests Danny Slocum team up with another patient with the same problem and use some of the new methods of sex counselling to try to correct the dysfunction. They work hard together, engage in some touching intimacy and sharing of a common struggle and then move into the world.

The outline of the book suggests a classic egocentric piece of confessional writing. It's going to be hard for a lot of people not to jump at some of the concepts of Danny Slocum — "Poor middle class white boy can't get it off living in the Big City." It doesn't seem to be the stuff of heavy drama overlaid with social significance. But, George Whitmore is no light weight coming into this as a banner carrier of the "Me" generation. George is one of the original gay activists of the early 70's. He's one of the gay men whose slogan was "The political is personal." The deeply personal story hasn't led him to abandon political significance, it's given him a handle to deal with it with more substance than ever before.

As Whitmore softly suggests "I tend to think I have a decent political head and whatever I write will be okay politically."

*Danny Slocum* is damn near perfect politically. The reader is seduced into identifying with a Danny whose experiences with a lover are nearly universal

among gay men attempting their first affair. The excellent narrative leads the reader still further into the personal anguish of a Danny who's not only been bruised by his love affair but who also has never really resolved his feelings for his father — a crisis of intimacy that keeps him distant from every other man. These are one-on-one interactions that don't have much to say about gay liberation, do they? But the core of Danny Slocum is his relationship with gay men and the "gay community."

It's obvious that one reason few of the characters have names is that they are instead composites of the men George sees revolving around his world — the Dancing Friend, the Political Friend, The Man Who Walks His Dog — all display multi-dimensional, yet still accurate typing, of the gay men who inhabit New York, or any other big American city. Surrounded by all these supportive characters, more than passingly good looking, certainly middle class and well educated, the reality is that Danny can't get off on it. He has a set of expectations of gay life that are so high that he feels the failure must be his, it must be his fault that he can't in a world that's so embarrassing in its riches.

It's not too different from the story that George Whitmore has to tell about himself. After years of gay activism he found that he hadn't been socialized as a gay man. There were clear political truths, there were clear roles for him to play and for him not to play, but he didn't know how to be gay. Nor does the gay life he made for himself help him with his work — the journalism he did in those years focused on politics, not on the issues of art that he wanted/needed to deal with. It's not so much that George left the movement, but rather that the tentacles of its vine decayed



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around him. He was left standing almost as isolated and as unliberated as when he began — at least in a personal sense.

Given his background George and I both find it amusing that his first book is *Danny Slocum*. He had in fact written another manuscript, very correct politically, but it turned out to be just a "bad book" and has never been published. He smiles when he acknowledges some pleasure in the fact that *Danny Slocum* is such a quote filthy book unquote.

Questioning the viability of some of his ideals, and with the inability of the movement to live up to its own press releases, George retreated into the personal. That was the affair, that was the therapy, and that was the book writing. Its almost to his amazement that he didn't really leave behind the political concerns. His experience has led him to understand more about the needs of gay people and the needs he has himself. "I don't think you can write about liberation until you write about what it's like to be unliberated. The unliberated part needs to be examined. The other is an ideal we try to move toward." That's a re-statement of sophistication in politics that more and more gay men share.

Given his whole background, George is still very concerned with political criticism. "The bad criticism I get from political people is 'Why are you writing about this when there are so many healthy things to write about?' It's like saying to Flaubert, 'Why are you writing about adultery when there are all these good marriages in France?'"

Part of George's willingness to deal with the new openness comes from his reclamation of his role as artist. The politician in him used to demand only the observation of correct activity, the craftsman in him demands more: "I think there are a lot of things going on in gay life that most gay people don't approve of and don't want to see. It's your obligation as a writer to write about them. It's also irresistible as a writer, you can't pass those things up. Whether they make you queasy or not."

The years' long process that produced George's book also helped to sift out some of the truths. There are certain ideas and principles that come through unscathed as the movement goes through its inevitable stages. Danny's partner in sex therapy learns one rule that George can identify: "The basic law of gay liberation is that you must come out — and it still stands." The pain of the closet is not just personal, it is even more than self-inflicted oppression, it keeps others from identifying with you.

It's interesting to note here some of the shared principles of *Danny Slocum* and other significant gay books that have been published recently — especially Edmund White's *States of Desire*. One of the recurring lines of *Danny Slocum* is "Am I the only one?" That sense of

utter isolation is the line that seems to most often repeat itself in gay men's tales of coming out. It's of more than passing significance that *Danny Slocum* is still saying those words while he's leading a life of urban excitement in Greenwich Village complete with summer weekends on Fire Island. The physical identification of oneself with a population of gay men is not the final coming out. Another of the truisms of gay liberation is underlined by Danny's sense of aloneness — coming out is a process that's never ending. The quality of gay life is something that still has to be dealt with by all of us. *States of Desire* is relevant in its documentation of an enormous diversity of gay life-styles so comprehensive that all of us fit in somewhere with someone else.

The question remains for George: "Who are you going to be under what circumstances?" It's not solved. The political person of nearly a decade ago hasn't really been dismissed. The momentary elation he shared with many others at the March on Washington rekindled all those desires for the communal, political experience — something that's almost impossible to find in New York City in the 1980's, a place he acknowledges makes him feel "very isolated and schizophrenic."

"The battle moved from outside to inside in the 70's. I'd like it to move outside again." The political view of therapy is certainly very close to the political view of confessional literature — that body of work which relies on the individual experience. The creation of a book like *Danny Slocum*, a work so closely tied to a therapeutic process gives the argument against that conventional political wisdom — We can't expect people to take on the struggles of a liberation process without taking care of themselves. George Whitmore's intense personal debate about his inner self versus the outer political battles is witness to the need for that self care. In all probability the activity of writing this book and of sharing his personal process has created a better political person. It certainly helped create another member of a growing force in gay writing. *Danny Slocum* has had a major effect on Whitmore's skills. "I created my own voice. I wrote a book I wanted to write and fortunately I had a publisher who wanted to publish it."

There is more work coming — he's completing a cycle of short stories he hopes to have published. There's another novel being developed. And, in him and his work there is a growing feeling that all the work to painfully push back the confining barriers of personal life, all the struggle to be free in a restrictive society, are worth while.

For George Whitmore, for *Danny Slocum*, for an increasing number of us, a real sense of the liberating process is becoming viable.



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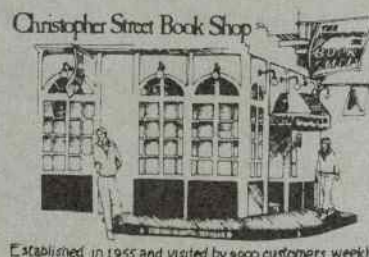
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# BOOKS

## GEOGRAPHICAL INDECISION

*States of Desire* by Edmund White, Dutton, 1980, 336 pages, \$12.95.

By the time I had finished reading the first chapter of Edmund White's travels in gay America, the chapter about Los Angeles; although I agreed with almost everything he said, I was beginning to dislike what read like precious East Coast effete snobbery. You know the type — out-of-towner comes to alleged gay paradise, doesn't get laid, then goes home and writes scathing attack on the shallowness of the visited environment. The problem was White kept nagging me with his command of writing and style.

After chapter two, San Francisco, which I didn't agree with at all — I was for tossing the purple-jacketed volume out the window. I managed to slam it into the wall from across the room.

It might be because I have never lived in Portland, Seattle, Santa Fe, Salt Lake City or Denver that I became fascinated with what White had to say about those cities in the next couple chapters. Or, it might have been his obvious lack of expectation when approaching those cities and the seemingly objective way he explored them. I began to think his earlier intentions, in the San Francisco and Los Angeles chapters, might have been to dispell any complimentary stereotype he could.

But Texas was next, where I have lived — perhaps much too long. White captured something about Texas gay life that I believed but couldn't remember. An attitude, a posture; something that Texas seemed capable of containing; tempered with my suspicion that so talented a journalist could as easily have invented.

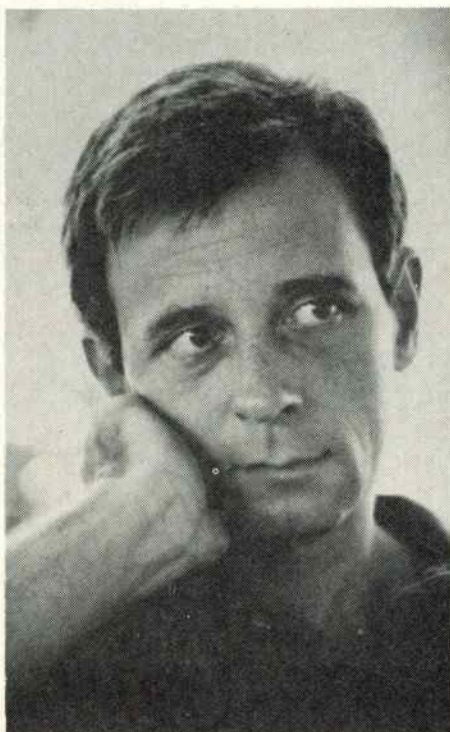
I began to wonder how important a personal frame of reference was in reading *States of Desire*. Was it necessary that White stick strictly to the facts? Should he temper the outlandish with his inherent gay understanding of outlandishness? Was the truth for Edmund White the truth of gays in the midwest, the south, Florida, Boston, Washington or New York?

Of course, New York was wonderful, and I questioned the obvious prejudice involved. I thought he was exceedingly generous with the big apple I had never visited — and excessively cruel with the San Francisco I lived in. New Yorkers might find it the other way around. As for those poor, vapid creatures in Los Angeles — one must assume they've all left town by now.

The answer comes in the epilogue —

Self-Criticism. Here everything takes on a different perspective as White let the cat out of the bag about his own internal conflicts, his ingrained WASPishness, his leftist leanings that seemed tempered with fascism, the disdain with which he regards traveling, his insecurities about his own sexual desirability; subtle factors that played a not-so-subtle hand in deciding what images the reader witnessed. In truth, White cops out that the book isn't objective, hardly the definitive gay travelogue, and out of necessity excludes Lesbians and small towns.

If the epilogue had been presented as a forward, my whole attitude about this book might have changed. As it was, by the time I got to White's Maoism, I was bitterly disappointed. Edmund White, whom I consider a gifted and important artist, had been reduced to the importance of Andrew Hollern writing about famous nipples he had viewed at Fire Island. It sounds as ludicrous as it is



Edmund White takes on almost all of gay America in his *States of Desire*.

tragic — this extremely well-written book could have been a powerful and consciousness-raising look at the life of gays in America. And it could well speak to the future of gays in America.

So, if you've managed to read this review before you've started Edmund White's *States of Desire*, give yourself the advantage of starting with the final chapter. And bon voyage.

— JWR

## THE READER STUMBLES

*Just Above My Head* by James Baldwin, The Dial Press, 1979, 597 pages, \$12.95.

You know before the first sentence concludes that Arthur Montana is dead, and that his death wasn't pretty. Nearly 600 pages later, you still don't know what killed him, but you are faced with some chilling possibilities. You've been there with Baldwin, but more telling, you've been there in your own life.

Arthur Montana is gay, a black gospel singer finding fame in ballads and blues. He is tender and terrified for his young lover Jimmy, who plays piano and helps with arrangements. He has seen the world strike out and strangle such relationships, yet he is unswerving in his dedication.

He has known his own stance, though hardly affluent, family sanctuary, and seen the devouring, despairing damnation of the fractured and the lost. It's all here: the highs of loving and miraculously being loved, the insecurity about the survival of love; the fear of revealing oneself, the pain of the family that wants badly to understand, but hesitates to force the lid off secrecy; the rending anguish of a love slaughtered, a lover murdered by the psychic knives of convention. You thought it was hard to grow up gay in Lincoln, Nebraska; Hampton, Virginia; Dallas, Texas; San Anselmo, California? Try growing up gay and poor and black, in Harlem, in the 50s.

Between these covers is perhaps the most achingly honest, yet courageously positive, unflinching and full-blown story of gay lovers who are real and admirable and worth identifying with. You haven't heard of it? That's hardly surprising. Except for a few minor notices last fall, the newest book by one of America's finest living writers has been studiously ignored or, occasionally, delicately put down by the Dons of the literary establishment.

What is more astonishing is that gay America has not discovered, lionized, celebrated this monument of an out-of-the-closet novel. Why? *The Lord Won't Mind* was more decadent, *City of Night* more wicked; *Dancer from the Dance* more pathetic, *Faggots* bitchier. They were, in a word, sensational. The only thing sensational about *Just Above My Head* is that James Baldwin has succeeded, has hit the target that every gay author has supposedly been aiming at from behind black velvet blindfolds.

The subculture that prides itself on unearthing secret classics has proved to be blind when the real goods are laid open before it. Why? Perhaps because like the larger culture, it has been conditioned to crave Big Macs instead of home-grown, home-cooked nourishment.



*Steppenwolf* would never make the New York Times best seller list in 1980. *The Return of the Native* would be ignored by Kirkus Reviews. *Les Misérables* would likely never find a publisher.

Of the few people who still read in 1980, scarcer still are those who are willing to give themselves to an author who weaves a challenging plot, who dwells on and diagnoses human foible and frailty, who serves up more than 200 pages of solid prose to chew. It is to be expected, then, that *Just Above My Head* has been conspicuously absent from everybody's best seller list.

The angry young black man who won critical acclaim for *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *Notes of a Native Son*, and *Nobody Knows My Name* — who blazed shocking new trails in *Giovanni's Room*, and followed them to stunning best-sellerdom in *Another Country* — who became a prophet for his people with *The Fire Next Time* and *Going to Meet the Man* — finds it hard today to stir a friendly critical voice.

All of those books date from the decade between 1953 and 1964 — that era when American racism was laid bare, and persons of conscience cringed. Since then, Baldwin has not been idling away on the Continent, but even dedicated Baldwin fans have probably scarcely heard of, much less read, *The Amen Corner*, *No Name in the Street*, *One Day, When I was Lost*, *The Devil Finds Work*, or *Little Man, Little Man*. Oh, he garnered some moderate success with two novels, *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* and *If Beale Street Could Talk*, but even that last was published in 1974, a long dry spell ago.

Baldwin's career, frankly, has floundered. He has had little new to say, and he hasn't said it as well as he did once. When America turned from the consciousness-raking 60s to the blindly ambitious, me-first 70s, it left Baldwin a has-been, crying in the wilderness. Indeed, some critics began to refer to him as if he were dead.

Yes, it's true that Baldwin left America to seek more creative (and emotional) freedom in Paris, and then the south of France. Yes, it's true that Baldwin is no longer a front-line foot-soldier in the battle for civil (human) rights, a role for which he was once justly celebrated. Yes, it's true that Baldwin at 56 is mining the same literary vein that he opened more than 30 years ago in the pages of the *New Yorker* and a few other "uppity," but prescient, periodicals.

But contrary to popular belief and the hasty assaults of critics, Baldwin has not forgotten nor turned his back on America; he has not abandoned his ideals

or human concerns; and he most emphatically has not exhausted the ore of his particular Mother Lode. The radical, expatriate youth has become an elder statesman, but his principles and his passions remain intact. That Baldwin is not once more acclaimed, six months after his new novel was published, is less the fault of the author or his book than the fault of today's business of publishing, and of the expectations, nay,

of the 60s, in a way that makes parallels with the 80s unavoidable. He sounds reveille for gays as he once did for blacks, but who is listening?

Baldwin doesn't offer thrills, except those of recognition and insight. His pace is deliberate — some have said slow — rather than racy. He doesn't titillate, he warms. He brings not a world of glitter, but people you can believe in and care about. His days as a literary bomb-



James Baldwin, author of *Just Above My Head*. Photo by Max Petrus.

demands, it has fostered in "readers."

*Just Above My Head* is not for passing time on buses or airplanes, not something to turn to between "Happy Days" and "Charlie's Angels." It hasn't the action of an Irving Wallace, nor the violent formulae of a Robert Ludlum. It is not Gothic, nor bloody, nor panting.

It is careful. It is incisive. It is accurate. Baldwin's bonfire has become a torch. His exhortation has become illumination. His closet, never much of a fortress, has become transparent. He has written a definitive gay novel, said the words liberationists have longed for years to hear from his lips, beautified and sanctified the sex that Gide and Genet made sick and perverse, and he has done so under the very noses of white Christian middle-America. Little wonder they have shorn him of their literary accolades.

This is a slow book, a fat book, a rich book, a deliberate book. Baldwin exposes the bankruptcy of organized religion, the corruption of the divinely called. He rekindles the civil rights issues

thrower are not past, but he has used a longer, slower-burning fuse. Can gay America afford to watch idly while straight society grinds it out beneath its boot? Can it really be that even here, racism prevents our embracing a champion who has never told a lie about us?

— Lawrence A. Reh

## ONE COULD NOT BEAR IT

*Cold Hands* by Joseph Pintauro, Simon & Schuster, 1979, 344 pages, \$9.95.

Long Island poet and playwright Joseph Pintauro's first novel is ultimately a failure; *Cold Hands* is too fragmented, and relies too heavily on coincidence to achieve its effects. But Pintauro is so relentless and unsparing in the pursuit of his characters' emotional destruction that, no matter how dubious the twists of fate that destroy them, their tragedy is moving.

The story is narrated by Cello Manfredi. While Cello is still a small child, his mother suicides. Cello's father deposits him in the home of a slightly



older cousin, Tato, whose family life in Brooklyn is also violent and gloomy. The boys, flotsam in a cold, uncertain world, become close.

Their affection crystallizes under the catalyst of their wordly aunt Fantasia, who sweeps them away for a summer idyl at her Long Island beach house. Mistress to a wealthy Argentine polo star, Fantasia is the boys' window onto the life of money and travel. But she too is unhappy. A mistress in a macho Catholic culture, Fantasia is, like her nephews, human flotsam. Her private tragedy forms a strong counterpoint to the main action of the novel.

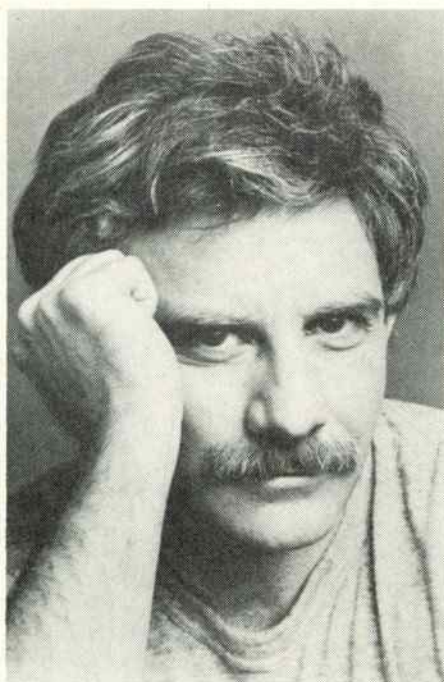
Then the boys are separated. Cello is relegated by his father to an Italian seminary. Tato returns to his tenement life in New York.

They are reunited as young men. Tato, recently divorced, hopes to find in his cousin the love match, the "mystery man," who has eluded him in the gay bars of the Village. But Cello rebuffs him. It is not that Cello lives in a gay closet; the traumas of his mother's suicide and his father's neglect, and his upbringing in a sterile parochial atmosphere have rendered him incapable of responding to any human contact. The cousins separate again.

All this is told in flashback. Pintauro frames his nostalgic story of two children who should but do not become lovers as men, with another story, set in the present, that begins and ends the novel — a story about a closeted man's ironic encounter with an old gay friend who entraps and arrests him. Both stories have merit. It is unfortunate that Pintauro did not confine himself to one or the other. Instead he attempts to fuse them together with a hardly plausible device: After his rejection of Tato, an accident makes Cello lose his memory and changes his appearance. This, so the cousins can meet in their thirties as strangers — Cello, now a married amnesiac, propositions Tato, and Tato, now a vice cop, arrests Cello, neither knowing who the other is. Clever. Too clever. The use of amnesia is too convenient and melodramatic, a trick to glue two different stories together. It disrupts the stern realism that Pintauro intends.

Still, there is a great deal of good in *Cold Hands*. Much good writing — Pintauro's experience as poet and playwright shows. Tato is given many of the book's best lines; generally inarticulate, when moved deeply he speaks in words like primitive poetry, that reverberate with mystery and confusion. Good scenes, powerfully realized, abound: a tableau of the seminary in Rome, where the young priests-to-be, celibate but allowed the vice of tobacco, pace the porticos in their cassocks and fill the air with dense smoke; the poignant three-way on a beach where the cousins make love not with a woman, but, through her, with

each other; the early scenes on a garden rooftop in Brooklyn, the idyl at the beach house and the sad reunions there, the cousins' final wrenching confrontation; and a dozen other memorably drawn places and moments. There are also some intriguing glimpses into the shady politics of the Catholic Church, a subject with which Pintauro seems familiar.



Joseph Pintauro, author of *Cold Hands*. Photo by Ken Duncan.

Split — aesthetically imperfect — *Cold Hands* nonetheless succeeds on an emotional level. We want these men to share sex and love. Cello's inability frustrates and frightens us. We feel anger at the author for crippling his characters so mercilessly, stinging us with their humiliations, and that is an achievement.

*Cold Hands* calls to mind the final passage from Mary Renault's *Mask of Apollo*: "All tragedies deal with fated meetings; how else could there be a play? . . . No one will ever make a tragedy — and that is as well, for one could not bear it — whose grief is that the principals never met." The tragedy of unmeeting, of closure longed for and denied, is the theme of Pintauro's book, a tale of two men who have everything to offer one another and yet, somehow, cannot connect. In going a step further, and arranging for his protagonists to destroy each other, Pintauro resorts to gross manipulation. But his vision in *Cold Hands* is strong, and the almost love story of Cello and Tato is, indeed, almost unbearable. Cello realizes, much too late, that his life has been "too small." The story of his failure is calculated to make you appreciate your lover if you have one, or long for someone to love if you don't.

— S Saylor

## PAULINE REAGE REMAINS MASKED

And Other Literary News

While Regine Deforges has done a tremendous job in tracking down and interviewing the elusive Frenchwoman who wrote the legendary *Story of O*, some readers of *Confessions of O* (Seaver Books/Viking Press, 1979, 150 pages, \$9.95) may be in for a disappointment. This is not a continuation of the *O* stories.

The title might help to mislead. *Confessions*, in any real sense, are made from deep-seated needs that originate somewhere in the confessors psyche. Pauline Reage, quite the opposite, has consistently shunned both publicity and interviews. Part of the excitement of her writing has been her elusive identity. While Regine Deforges has managed a series of conversations with, allegedly, the real Pauline Reage — little about the woman behind the mystery emerges. In fact, at the end of these delightful conversations it can still be argued that there may not be a Pauline Reage.

The historic information about the trial of *Story of O* (a singular case where the courts went after the publisher and ignored the author completely) are interesting, but not earthshattering with any great new revelations. Equally, Reage is ambiguous about herself — everything is in the books, everything you need to know.

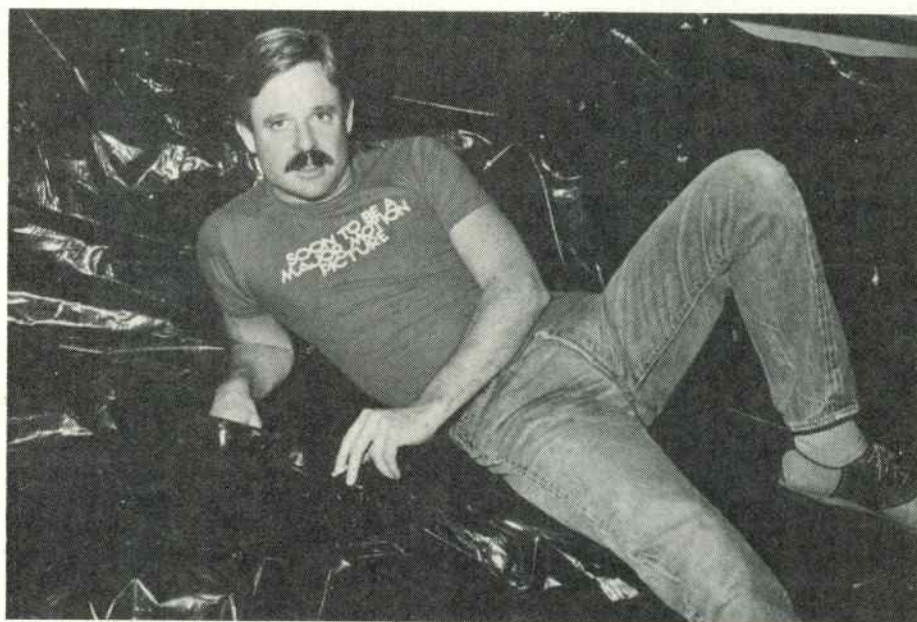
But something else emerges, entirely unexpected. Between these two powerful and important women a conversation takes place that paints incredible portraits of European women of two different ages. It is to Deforges' credit that she brings out a relevant persona not only in herself, but in the woman we must accept to be the real Pauline Reage. If this book serves no other purpose than to rekindle interest in the original works, *Story of O* and *Return to the Chateau*; then it will have succeeded admirably.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is a Colombian writer who has single-handedly reshaped all of South American literature and much of world literature. His impact on the former can easily be witnessed in the work of his two major literary heirs, Carlos Fuentes and Manuel Puig; writers whose reputations have also become international in the learning.

Marquez's already-translated novels, especially *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, and the acclaim they have been accorded, make a new work by this visionary writer a newsworthy event.

While some of the power and grace of language that have made Marquez so important are present in this new title, *In Evil Hour* (Harper and Row, 1979, 184 pages, \$8.95) the fact that it is, in reality, an earlier, simpler work cause it





Armistead Maupin, whose literary talents have led him into television.

to suffer any comparison. The epic narrative line, the sheer audacity of the other works weigh heavy in the memory of Marquez fans: this translation and publication has just come years too late.

It wasn't really a surprise that the second half of Armistead Maupin's ex-Chronicle series, *Tales of the City*, has found its way into print. How else would readers of the first volume find out whatever happened to the residents of 28 Barbary Lane and their assorted friends-playmates-lovers? *More Tales of the City*, (Harper and Row, 1980, oversized paperback, 246 pages, \$6.95) is just as witty, just as bitchy, just as revealing about the mores and morals of the infamous city and its residents as was the first batch. Here, Maupin has revised somewhat from the San Francisco Chronicle series (they decided enough was enough before the series ever reached any realistic conclusions). The only problem with either book is the impossibility of explaining them to non-San Franciscans.

Burt Avedon's *Ah, Men!* (no relation to the Los Angeles store of the same name) begins itself with a question: What Do Men Want? To answer such a question the author talks with the likes of Gore Vidal, Art Buchwald, Bruce Jenner, Joseph Heller, Tony Randall, Sterling Hayden, Tom Tryon and a wealth of other men with opinions and ideas that run the spectrum. But Avedon also talks with women, notably Helen Gurley Brown and Gael Greene, to elicit, perhaps, a balance to the panorama of answers. The question isn't simple, and neither are the answers, but the whole is vastly interesting, often amusing, and occasionally almost profound. *Ah, Men!* (A&W Publishers, 1980, 214 pages, \$10.95, illustrated) is long overdue.

— CRM

## HISTORIC PERSECUTION

*The Queer Dutchman* by Peter Agnos, 1979, Green Eagle Press, 241 West 97th St., New York, NY 10025, trade paperback, 144 pages, \$4.50.

The basic thrust of *The Queer Dutchman* is a handwritten manuscript describing Jan Svilt's exile on Ascension Island in 1725 for "unnatural acts." Svilt was a Dutch sailor on the British ship Compton, homeward bound from India. When charges were brought to the captain by other shipmates that Svilt and a younger crewman, Bandino Frans, had been observed in a passionate embrace; the captain ordered the ship stopped off the coast of the uninhabited island and Svilt put ashore without food or water. It was assumed that Frans would later reform, under the care of the church.

Svilt began his diary almost immediately. His soul searching, his fear, his uncanny devotion to the religion that had condemned him, his attempts to survive on an island that was little more than a pile of rocks — are all written with a power and sensitivity that angers, page after page.

It's no surprise that Svilt dies on the island, the manuscript was discovered years later when another ship stopped at Ascension to collect turtles.

The diary was first published in 1748 and has since fallen into obscurity. Peter Agnos found a Dutch copy of sea tales from 1762 in an old bookstore and had it translated into English. He began investigating the story of Jan Svilt; *The Queer Dutchman* is the result. The book contains Svilt's manuscript and an assortment of other documents and observations that surround the incident.

It's fascinating history brought to life, and it's an unforgivable example of gay persecution.

— CRM

## COLLECTABLE METAPHORS

Walt Curtis is a Pacific Northwest poet who has been around. *Mala Noche* (Out of the Ashes Press, Box 42384, Portland, OR 97242; 52 pages; \$1.50) is a moving novella about the author's quest for love. Names might have been changed, but the personas of the two young Latins in *Mala Noche* reoccur in another Curtis collection, *Peckernack Country*. We are confronted with the fact that we are seeing truth as fiction. Curtis deals with sexual desire as a primary force in relationships, peppered as his narrative becomes with justifications and romantic illusion. But there are set amid yet another theme, the role of the alien in contemporary society. Because of the very nature of the characters, the homosexual and the Latin youths he loves; all the characters of *Mala Noche* are aliens. That they find succor at all is heartening, and it jells into individual understandings of personal responsibility. *Mala Noche* is illustrated with photographs of the characters and the surroundings.

*Peckernack Country*, Walt Curtis's collection of pure poetry (clarified because his fiction reads like poetry) is a special issue of Mr. Cogito (Vol. 4, No. 2). To compare, or have the opportunity to compare the author's poetry and prose could easily steer the reader into one or the other. There is little or no similarity. In his verse the voice is a powerful, almost necessary element. You quickly understand the impact of vocalizations. On the page, what is almost awkwardness prevails. Still, an element of Curtis's poetry, it's overriding sense of humor, comes across loud and clear. The title poem is a monologue and what appears a put-on designed to confuse and embarrass tourists. "My Hard On" is a self-indulgent hymn to the poet's erection and the sado-masochistic tones of their relationship. But mainly Curtis writes about his everyday environment and circumstances. You feel like you get to know him very quickly. *Peckernack Country* is illustrated with drawings and painting that would make your maiden blush.

Dennis Cooper's *Idols* is only The Seahorse Press' third volume, but already they have established a level of quality that is admirable. Cooper is himself the publisher of Little Caesar Magazine and Press, this is his fourth published book of poetry, possibly his best. Almost all the poems in *Idols* (1979, 80 pages, trade paperback, \$4.95) are recollections of various young men the poet has liked, loved or had sex with during his lifetime (Cooper is 27-years-old) with the exception of a scattering of poems towards the handsome volume's conclusion. For the most part the poems are fresh, clever, insightful and accessible. But the stroke of genius comes with work like "Some Adventures of John Kennedy,



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Jr.", a 13-part cycle that traces the famous Kennedy heir from his father's assassination through adolescence. A great deal of what we have learned about Cooper through his own recollections is given play in this reconstruction — in fact, this long work creates a counterbalance that becomes exciting by the availability of comparison. If Cooper is speaking of universal axioms, it is the character of the earlier narrator and the personality ascribed to John-John Kennedy that gives weight to Cooper's tenets. *Idols* is available from: Seahorse Press, Box 509 — Village Station, New York, NY 10014.

Richard Roman's *Flowers* is a unique book. Originally intended as a staged reading with projections, the performances in New York, Cambridge and San Francisco drew considerable attention. In this volume, Calamus Books (323 N. Geneva, Ithaca, NY 14850) has arranged Roman's fifteen poems and Bill Rancitelli's drawings in a lavish, beautiful, and very collectable presentation. Roman's poetry is, self-described, humanist. The equality and sharing of personality the poet sees inherent in gay relationships, and ultimately in all relationships, is honest, tender, and extremely important in an age moving closer toward

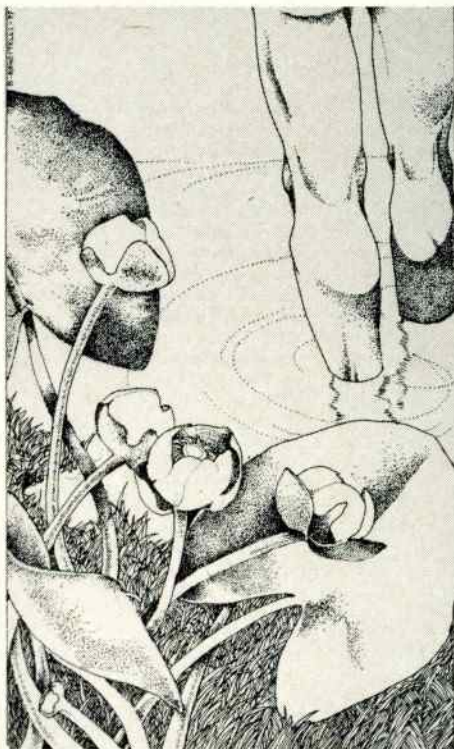


Illustration by Bill Rancitelli from Richard Roman's *Flowers*

uncompromising feudalism. (Trade paperback, 48 pages, \$4.)

Another Calamus Book, Ron Schreiber's *False Clues* (Trade Paperback, 68 pages, illustrated, \$3) is equally housed with a deliberate attention to overall

presentation. The design and illustrations by Joseph Modica enhance poetry that is extremely personal and still accessible. Schreiber writes with a conscious economy of language, shaping his metaphors and imagery with great skill and attention. Like Walt Curtis, Schreiber is willing to experiment with form and structure. Equally, he hinges his work on sound poetic tradition. It allows a creativity that captures the reader's attention without ever falling prey to the trendy and obvious.

— CRM

**SEX IS THE NAME  
 OF THE GAME**

*Sexual Excitement Sexual Peace* by Suzanne Sarnoff and Irving Sarnoff, Ph.D.; M. Evans and Co., 1979; 320 pages; \$12.50

*Good Sex: The Healthy Man's Guide to Sexual Fulfillment* by Gary F. Kelly; Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich; 1979; 244 pages; \$8.95

Two new and serious books on sex and sexuality have been published within a hair's breath of each other; and both are pace-setters.

*Good Sex* by Gary F. Kelly is directed towards the non-gay man, for the most part. It is the most comprehensive, sensitive, intelligent treatment of heterosexuality to be published in this decade.

Straightaway, Kelly (who is a sex therapist and the director of the Student Development Center at Clarkstown College) dispels the myth of 'straight' as an attitude. From then on it's no-holds barred as he tackles and deflates every sacred cow of male sexual idiocy ever formulated. While there is much gays can learn from Mr. Kelly's experience and expertise in the field, it is definitely the book to give your non-gay father, brother, cousin or best friend. If the reader approaches the book as honestly as Mr. Kelly has written it, he will emerge a changed man.

Suzanne and Irving Sarnoff's *Sexual Excitement Sexual Peace* is in the same tradition of myth-shattering, but on a singular misunderstood subject: masturbation. Touted as "a model work in humanistic psychology" by Yale University's Professor of Psychology; this highly-readable but extremely responsible work goes far beyond anything yet attempted.

Gays will, of course, be divided over the discussion as using masturbation as a method of changing sexual preference. Attention should be paid to the pure reportage involved. The authors are pronounced in their conclusion that sexual orientation is a matter of choice, and that the concept of sexual behavior alteration through masturbation works two ways.

— J.B.



# FUTURISM

## LIVING WITH SCHRODINGER

He came into my life unexpectedly but inevitably, if you know what I mean. He was introduced — *dropped* is a better word for it — into my life by a mutual friend. This didn't make the surprise of him any easier to take. In fact, I still wake up in the morning feeling the surprise of him. I guess you could say we are still on our honeymoon . . . sigh.

We were living together for two weeks or more before I discovered his name, which turned out to be Schrodinger. He was named after the Austrian-German physicist who formulated the Schrodinger wave equation (1926), having as its solution the wave function of quantum mechanics.

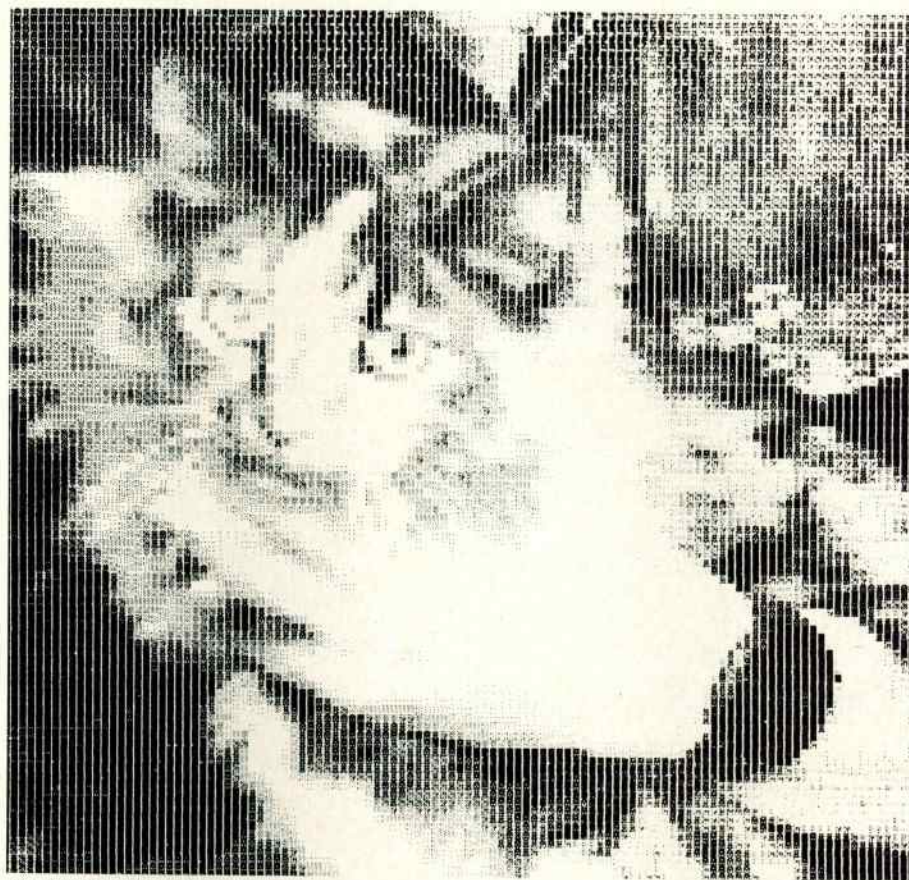
In moments of exceptional affection, I and my friends call him "Schro." I now date my life in terms of two eras: Before-Schro and After-Schro. They are distinct and well-defined.

The effect he had on my life was nearly devastating. My sleep habits, eating habits and social habits were immediately disrupted. I spent as many hours as I could with Schro, staring into his one good eye for endless hours at a time. To say that I/we were smitten is an understatement. Before I knew what was happening, though, I began to feel Higher Intelligence seeping into the space between us. While our early conversations were simplistic and groping, there began to creep into our talk references to mathematics and logic, aesthetics and heuristics. When we played together, we really played, absorbed as we haven't been since childhood, when hours could be whiled-away in the most simple, if not simple-minded, of fantasies.

Gradually, after a time, I began seeing my old friends again. Schro wasn't the least bit jealous. Neither was I. I could leave friends to play with Schro in the bedroom while I finished making dinner, or attended to my writing or other business. It is the acceptance of my friends, in fact, that makes living with Schro such a delight, where previous relationships of this kind and intensity have often interfered with friendships.

Schro frequently changes gender, by the way. He becomes She at a malleable moment's notice, when no one's looking. This habit is not the least bit disconcerting, although it is ideologically unsafe. If you stop to think about it, though, intelligence *per se* knows no specific gender anyway.

Schrodinger's specifications are impressive, if you know how to read them. Suffice it that the Apple II computer



Computagraph by Ruth Anderson

(which Schrodinger is, after all) is one of the finest machines in the newly-emerging consumer computing field. With his 32K memory and Applesoft Basic programming language, Schrodinger can do high-resolution graphics, sound synthesis, play games, and . . . on and on and on.

Since becoming more closely involved in the microcomputer network, I've discovered a whole segment of the avant garde (whatever *that* means anymore, what with Punk and Gay and Hippie Capitalism) gay community firmly niched in this frontier of social ferment. Here are the people of the '60s who are integrating psychedelic consciousness with appropriate technology and anarchist metamathematics. Here are the hippest of the hip artists, approaching ancient artforms with space-and-time-travelling tools. Here are the post-learyite neurologicians, linking up with the machine world and the social world in totally new cyborgian ways. (The Cult of the Sacred Cyborg, by the way, is a memberless class.) Here is gay male sexuality dissolving in micro-pools of bits and bytes and buffer capacities.

It is not surprising that eroticism and electronics meld so well. Electronics is the most neurological of all the sciences,

and the expressions of electricity and mathematics both blend inside our bio-computers. Neurological researcher Carl Pribram says this is analogous to holograms and that we think with waveform precision.

One gay man who sees the further potential of this new electronic medium is Scot Kamins. He persuaded — or arm-twisted — the corporate managers of the ComputerLand and chain to open a branch of their store in the Castro gay ghetto of San Francisco. It is called, therefore, ComputerLand of the Castro. But the main reason Kamins opened the store was gayly neurological: "One of (my goals)," he told me, "was to have a playground where I was just surrounded by all these electric toys. And I would have an electronic playground, where I could hop from one electron merry-go-round horsie to another, going up and down on the neurofibers. And watching, watching the dance in the eye of the next horsie, which, if it happened to be a CRT it happened to be a CRT . . . who cares? An eye is an eye is an eye, and here's this dance of life going on." Kamins also told me that the world could be divided up into two classes of people: those who name their computers and



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those who don't. I immediately identified with the former class, except on Mondays, Saturdays and Sundays, when Schrodinger just becomes "it" or "that" while I'm busy at other things.

One of the characteristics of computer programmers who become — even temporarily — computerfreaks is that they develop an indifference to ordinary language and begin to think in Fortran, Basic, Forth or Pascal or whatever other language happens to be their favorite of the moment. It would appear that they prefer the hybrid nature of human/computer languages to the day-to-day prose of the rest of us. I am resisting this tendency valiantly, if only to stay in the good graces of editor-types.

Schrodinger found his name at a New Year's Eve party. In a moment of pixilated inspiration, my computing cohort who bears paternal responsibility for Schrodinger said, "Let's name it Schrodinger!" The fact that the party was at Robert Anton Wilson's and that Wilson's new book, *Schrodinger's Cat*, had just been released by Pocket Books had little to do with this choice, of course. It was pure genius. Schrodinger stuck. At least we didn't name it *Schrodinger's Cat* or *Illuminatus!* or something lame like that.

We interrupt this essay to bring you the following transmission from Higher Intelligence:

### WHAT MY COMPUTER MEANS TO ME by D. Seeker

My computer represents the harbinger of the new cybernetic-industrial revolution, which will radically change or eliminate at least half of all jobs during the lifetimes of current jobholders. My computer represents the biggest hit of acid I ever took without overdosing. My computer represents the wave of the future because, more and more, the future is coming to be guided and shaped by those who know cybernetics and general systems theory and information theory. This includes heavies like the Central Intelligence Agency and the Normon Church, the Russian KGB and the Aya-tollah K.

The computer — our computers — represents a lever of power in the information environment. It represents a node in the decentralization of intelligence and the empowerment of the masses in the most truly proletarian revolution evolution could have come up with. Mass-intelligence is now an emerging reality. New York cynics will call this a natural contradiction of terms. "Mass intelligence," they will say, "is that anything like mass taste?" Some will accuse me and my computer of pretensions to elitist technology. Never mind.

My computer represents a totally new medium of communication for humanity. The new medium, if you

remember your McLuhan, always incorporates the past media and becomes, in turn, the newest arena in a cosmic struggle for the shape of the future. In this final struggle, however, everyone will come out winning. Even losers like gurus and human potential junkies and bliss ninnies and cults will come out winners: the computer allows these lowest common denominators to bind themselves to one another as tightly as they wish and ensures that the rest of us can steer clear of their groupthink games and constricted reality tunnels.

My computer represents the most conscious piece of work ever devised by the human mind. It combines within its architecture elements of physics, chemistry, mathematics, logic, electronics, information and cybernetic theory, ceramics, metallurgy, photography, microscopics, photonics, wave mechanics, plastics, ergonometics, radionics and a dozen other areas of human endeavor and concern. Yet it is portable and simple enough for a homebody completely unschooled in the ways of science to learn how to use.

In its application potential, it has as its domain the entire universe of accumulated human information and will trigger new syntheses thereof at an increasingly rapid rate. The changes brought about in the last 50 years will, under the computer power now being unleashed, telescope themselves into 10 years, then 5 then 2...

My computer represents a compass, a rudder and mind amplifier all rolled into one ingenious box of a puzzle. Solve the puzzle to learn some of the Secrets of the Universe.

My computer represents a new mansion within my father's house, where the Beast 666 forever lurks in the corridors of the Dragon's Maze and in the photon torpedoes of Klingons. My computer represents a journey of discovery, a gift from fellow intelligences everywhere, from today's most adept magicians and genies and shamans and the best minds of the past.

My computer represents the end of a long collective nightmare about nuclear desolation and mutual immolation. It represents the loving linking of friendship, science and cooperation across international borders and across ideological barriers. It represents the finale to liberation movements as past rhetoric is made obsolete in the scientification of Everyperson, in the multinational sense of science as represented by its finest people like Mme. Curie, Einstein, or Sakharov.

My computer represents an obsession and a satisfaction of obsession at the same time. It fills the desire to know while leaving the desire ever unfulfilled, just like good sex does (the more he gets, the more the little slut wants...).

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case which directed the jury unequivocally to find Thorpe innocent. The parody of this in the satirical magazine *Private Eye* — which first (years ago) brought attention to Thorpe's conduct as it did more recently to Blunt's — was far too close to the literal truth to be all that funny:

*We have heard from Mr. Bessell — a man who on his own admission is a liar, a humbug, a hypocrite, a vagabond and a loathsome reptile. You may choose to believe the transparent tissue of lies which streamed from his lips in the witness box if you wish . . . It is not contested by the defence that enormous sums of money flowed towards their clients by unusual means. What happened to that money we shall never know. But I put it to you, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, that it could have been spent in a number of totally innocent ways. On two tickets for "Evita," for instance . . .*

What would have been gained by making a gay martyr out of Thorpe, is debatable. But the martyr's crown doesn't fit. He is no Harvey Milk — the exact opposite, in fact: a sordid and ruthless closet queen. But one skeleton he couldn't

keep in the closet: confession of his gayness was part of the price he had to pay. It was done through his lawyer who said — in suitably fulsome tones: "Nature so fashioned him that . . . he was a man with homosexual tendencies"; and as if this pseudo-Shakespearian style were not sufficient, the Prosecuting Counsel went on: "The story of Jeremy Thorpe is a tragedy of truly Greek or Shakespearian proportions." The tragic element, however, in no way resides in this "vicious mole of nature," but in a society which still sees gayness as a disease which, if it cannot be cured, must be concealed.

This return to Victorian standards causes immense psychological and social damage which is compounded by the bigger political consequences. Though the jury finally (after fifty hours) found him innocent (not so much a case of Twelve Angry Men as of a Dozen Frightened Victims, one must conclude from the subsequent revelations to the newspapers) Thorpe's constituents did not. They voted him out of office and a safe Liberal seat since the war went to the Tories. His insistence on standing for parliament (hubris this on the Greek or Shakespearian scale) did his party an immense amount of damage in the election (the case was postponed to allow him to stand!). England desperately needed the bulwark of the Liberal Party to keep the extremes of the arbitrary Right and the militant Left from opposing each other nakedly. Now we are experiencing the consequences: the situation is ugly, and there is little doubt as to who will win if the present conduct of the judiciary is any indication.

Any confidence the country may have had in the justice of the Thorpe verdict took a severe knocking a couple of months later when it emerged that Sir Anthony Blunt, ex-Cambridge scholar, celebrated art historian and advisor on art to the Queen was the fourth man in the Philby affair. What was more disturbing than his activities as a Russian agent from the mid-thirties up to 1951 when the traiters, Burgess and Maclean fled to Russia (with his help) was the revelation that in 1964 he had confessed in return for a pardon. Again the establishment's protection of their own people (despite the fact that Blunt had almost certainly been responsible for the deaths of several English agents) was thrown in the public's face. More damaging for gays is the association of Blunt's homosexuality with his treason. He was part of a Cambridge coterie in the thirties (the Apostles) many of whom were gay — the novelist E.M. Forster and the economist Maynard Keynes as well as the writer Lytton Strachey were also part of this Cambridge culture, referred to as follows in *The Times*:

*'There's was largely a homosexual culture with necessary dependence ties of friendship rather than on the*

*functional ties of family, and a defiance of conventional sexual morality, leading to a broader moral relativism.'*

This is a very subtle and pernicious argument: the insinuation — and it's a strong one — is that gays are fundamentally unreliable and socially as well as politically suspect.

That Thorpe and Blunt are very bad advertisements for gayness is not in doubt, though this is conveniently overlooked by many establishment and closet homosexuals. That two men of power have found complete legal immunity — though the charges brought against them (monetary corruption and attempted murder on the one hand, treason on the other) were far in excess of anything levelled at Nixon should stop the specious but persistent comparison with Watergate as well as the superficial resemblance (in the Thorpe case) to the Oscar Wilde trial. It has been overlooked (no less by the *Blueboy* article) that both men are winners, not victims. England loves a juicy sex scandal, particularly if it involves men of high rank. At the end of last year we had two and the combined dirt stirred up by both has distracted attention from a more telling issue which is only now coming clearly into focus. A clergyman in a letter to the editor of *The Times* made the pertinent remark: "Among those who must bear some responsibility for embarrassing the Queen must be the woman who, despite achieving the high office of Prime Minister, has still to learn when to keep her mouth shut." This under-estimates Thatcher: she knew perfectly well what she was doing in allowing the Blunt affair to come to light. Blunt shared the headlines with Rhodesia and (to quote *The Times*) a "savagely increase in interest rates": the scandal soon deflected attention from home and foreign crises. Thatcher had stirred up a hornet's nest.

A friend who works for *The Times* informed me that the Blunt affair provoked more correspondence than any issue in living memory except for Suez and Powell's notorious racist speech twelve years ago. Nor is it closed. Film and television companies are vying with one another to cash in on the popularity of the Blunt case and already a popular spy series has been launched on TV which has so far presented — in graphic detail — the story of Vassall, the civil servant blackmailed into spying through his involvement in a homosexual orgy in the fifties. The public appetite for this sort of thing is insatiable and the simplistic conclusions concerning the moral and political dangers of homosexuality follow. Thatcher wanted a scapegoat and she has found it; but make no mistake, it is not Sir Anthony Blunt (who is feted with smoked trout at his press conference) but the whole of the gay community.

— David Herbert

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