

HALLWALLS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1984

EXHIBITIONS

September 22 - October 27, 1984

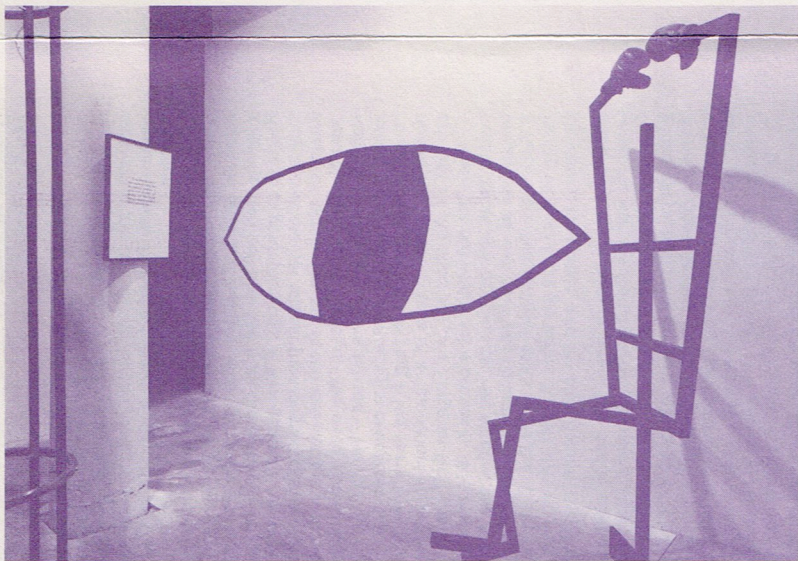
DRAMATIC DIMENSIONS

Valerie Smith Guest Curator

Michael Byron
Robert Hamon

Jon Kessler
Ellen Rumm

Brian Nicholas
Matrix Room



Ellen Rumm, *TRANS* (for Gunnar), 1984 (detail).

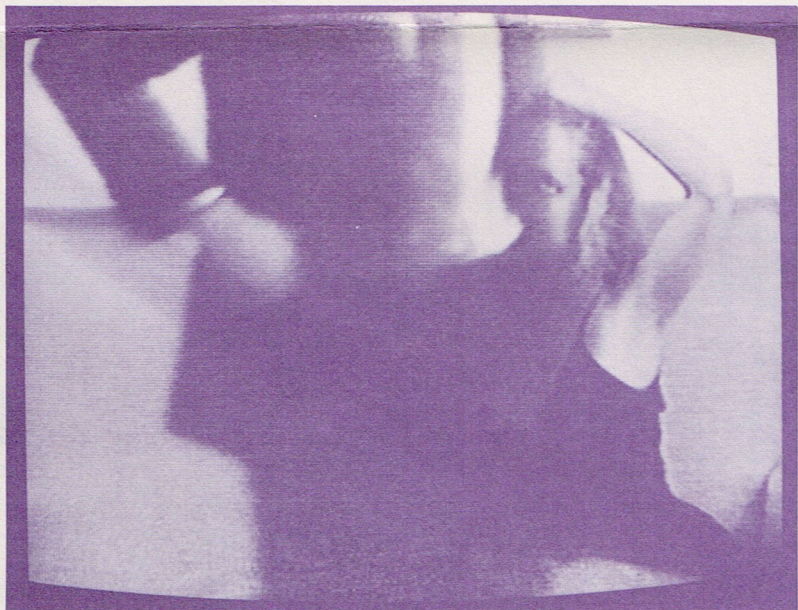
Photo: David Lubarsky.

IRONIC NATURALISM

an exhibition of video, audio, and photography

Barbara Broughel Guest Curator

Margaret Ahwesh
Rob Danielson
Carol Szymanski



Carol Szymanski. From *Persona and/or Text*, a 3-channel video installation.

PERFORMANCE/VIDEO

15 • Monday

8:30 p.m.*

Mark Pauline

will present videotape documentation of his performance work.

FICTION DICTION

23 • Tuesday

8:30 p.m.*

Marianne Hauser

Co-sponsored by the Creative Writing Program, Department of English, State University of New York at Buffalo.

Author of *Dark Dominion* (1947), *The Choir Invisible* (1958), *Prince Ishmael* (1963), & *The Talking Room* (1976)

"... a writer of exceptional style and subtlety." — Anais Nin

Mark Leyner

Author of *I Smell Esther Williams* (1983) & *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist*, a novel in progress.

"The purest prose of the last ten years . . . these pieces unveil a new talent whose accomplishment we will watch into the 21st century." — Steve Katz

MEDIA SCREENINGS & SYMPOSIUM

FILM

24 • Wednesday

8:30 p.m.

Margaret Ahwesh

will present her recent Super-8 films.

VIDEO

25 • Thursday

7:30 p.m.

Carol Szymanski

will present a 3-channel video installation.

CRITICAL ISSUES

25 • Thursday

8:30 p.m. (following the event above)

MEDIA GENRES & TRANSACTIONS I

the first in a series of discussions as opportunities to exercise ideas originating in the making and viewing (reading) of media.

Admission is \$3.00 for a pass for both nights or for each single evening; members free.

FILM

28 • Sunday

Free 2:00 p.m.

Film as Altered/Alternative Reality

the first in a seven-program series.

Program I

Rose Hobart by Joseph Cornell

The Doctor's Dream by Ken Jacobs

Take the 5:10 to Dreamland and *Valse Triste* by Bruce Connor

Last Days of Pompeii by John Jesurun

PERFORMANCE

31 • Wednesday

9:00 p.m.

\$3.00/\$1.00 members

The Performance Program kicks off its season with a monster bash at the

ITALIAN COMMUNITY CENTER

432 Connecticut St. (3 blocks west of Richmond)

Call HALLWALLS for directions.

HA HA HOUDINI: A HALLOWEEN PARTY

featuring

Funk Monster & Woman

George Scherer & Brian Szpakowski

Zodiaque Break Dancers

Film Installation by Steve Gallagher, Catherine Howe & Henry

Jesionka; Costumes by Carl Schultz & Baba

DJ's: Prince Tony & Quick

700 MAIN STREET (between W. Tupper & Chippewa) 4th FLOOR
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202 (716) 854-5828

*ADMISSION TO EVENTS: \$2.00; Members free.

Gallery Hours:

12:00-6:00 p.m. Tues-Fri.; 1:00-6:00 p.m. Sat.;

Other times, please call.

Hallwalls' program of contemporary art is made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., a federal agency; The New York State Council on the Arts; Erie County, N.Y.; The City of Buffalo, N.Y.; and by contributions from corporations, private sources, and individuals.

HALLWALLS STAFF & PROGRAMS

WILLIAM CURRIE Director
CHRISTINE TEBES Development Director
SUSAN PAPANICOLAOU Administrative Assistant
BARBARA LATTANZI Technical Director

PROGRAM DIRECTORS/CURATORS

EDMUND CARDONI Fiction Diction
ROBIN DODDS Exhibitions
STEPHEN GALLAGHER Film/Performance
CHRIS HILL Video
DON METZ Music

SUPPORT HALLWALLS — BECOME A MEMBER!

Categories of Membership

\$15 Participating (two days of volunteer work/year); \$25 Individual; \$35 Family; \$50 Supporting; \$100 Associate

All contributions are tax deductible on both state and federal income tax returns. Make checks payable to Hallwalls, Inc., 700 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

EXHIBITIONS

DRAMATIC DIMENSIONS

Michael Byron, Robert Hamon, Jon Kessler, Ellen Rumm;
Valerie Smith, Guest Curator

September 22 -
October 27, 1984

This show introduces a broad range of ideas and issues in the work of four artists, each of whom holds an idealism which attempts to erode traditional expectations of the "sculptural." In comparison to painting, sculpture has always taken a back seat in the history of art. However, these artists, because of their use of a diversity of styles and materials as well as of a variety of art forms to inform their work (writing, dance, performance, video, film, painting and sculpture), represent a vital mainstream in post-modernist practice.

Michael Byron's work is comprised of two elements in primitive juxtaposition: a wax sculpture or candle on a base in front of an unstretched painted canvas. When lit, the candle performs as guardian angel or agnostic omen; it operates as a totemic reference set apart from its context: the painted backdrop — an abstract landscape, a broodingly romantic tableau.

Jon Kessler also toys with the flat and projected image, but, in difference to Michael Byron, makes use of lights and motion in a vaguely cinematic way. His wall sculptures suggest short narratives: whirlie-gigs and jerryrigged mechanics are watched behind or within a veil of colored glass or plastic, their *modus operandi* figuring importantly as part of Kessler's highly constructed fantasy. The ideas span exotic travelings to oneiric tales of life in motion.

Far from the obfuscated image, Ellen Rumm's work — constructed out of wood, steel, and paint — is direct and concrete. Elements are arranged spacially in relation to one another, the assertiveness of each individual piece psychologically charging the space. The significance of the configuration of their fragmentation emerges as a unifying narrative, confronting the viewer with ideas about institutions, attitudes, customs, and the political relationships between them.

From Michael Byron to Robert Hamon the work in this exhibition becomes progressively fragmented and illusory. In Hamon's work representation seems to slip away, reemerging as eccentric gesture which evades nomenclature. Hamon's process entails a hunting/gathering of disparate materials which are deployed in spontaneous, impulsive, and humorous response to his surroundings. The result: ephemeral idiosyncrasy.

— Valerie Smith

The artists, as well as the guest curator, Valerie Smith (who is Curator at Artists Space, New York), currently live in New York City; Robert Hamon and Ellen Rumm are originally from Canada.

Brian Nicholas

For his installation, Brian Nicholas will utilize natural materials to evoke a romanticized past and to reject references to contemporary society. Nicholas embraces those eras which seemed to possess a more meaningful understanding of human existence, often manifested in religion. The artist, however, contradicts the very ambience of spiritual mysticism and allusion to utopian social order he creates. Thus, sticks, for instance, suggest an undertone of violence — the burning of human lives at the stake.

— R. D.

MATRIX ROOM 1978-1984

Due to gallery renovation, the current Matrix Room will be converted to other uses and the program of presenting Buffalo artists continued in other galleries. Look for more news on changes in the exhibition and performance facilities in the November Calendar.

IRONIC NATURALISM

Barbara Broughel, Guest Curator; Margaret Ahwesh,
Rob Danielson, Carol Szymanski

What happens when the ridicule of everyday life is brought into the sphere of art without the sublimation of the comic? This will be the subject of Hallwalls' first Video Viewing Room presentation of the season, "Ironic Naturalism." The work in the show will include audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, and films as recorded by these three artists.

Although these artworks are representative of a wide range of production approaches, there are certain qualities which they nonetheless share — their ironic relationship to dramatic comedy, their grounding in the aesthetic institutions of Realism, or in, let us say, Realistic methods, and, finally, in their reception as artworks which are preciously aware of the subconscious depths of a sleeping culture.

Numerous artists have rooted their work in the activity of presenting real people and real personalities in their natural predicament, the exposure of which is offered up as a considered act. Traditionally, this naturalistic approach has served artists concerned with depicting the sociolinguistic environment, its communications deficiencies, and the foibles and flatulencies of the human intellect in a wide range of circumstances. Simultaneously, naturalism has served as a protest against the weight of narrative art, against the existence of plot, and against the omniscient narrator who continually does our thinking for us.

As the receptors of this work we are allowed to perform interpretive games with the materials, but we are also expected to take up a large share of the responsibility for circumstances where comic relief cannot always be relied on to neutralize the coarse, aggressive, and amoral sides of ironic spectatorship.

— Barbara Broughel

FICTION DICTION

Marianne Hauser
Mark Leyner

Tuesday, October 23

Born in France in 1910, Marianne Hauser is a novelist and story writer of international reputation. Her career spans over 50 years, from the appearance of her first novel, *Monique*, in 1934, to the forthcoming publication of *The Memoirs of the Late Dr. Ashley: an American Comedy* (Sun & Moon, 1985). Her last novel, *The Talking Room* (Fiction Collective, 1976) has just been reprinted.

Anais Nin, in her important critical work and writer's manifesto, *The Novel of the Future* (Macmillan, 1968), has called Marianne Hauser "a writer of exceptional style and subtlety. When people will tire of noise, crassness, and vulgarity, they will hear the truly contemporary complexities of Marianne Hauser's superimpositions. A new generation trained to imagery by the film may appreciate her offbeat characters and skill in portraying the uncommon." Anais Nin places Hauser in the rare company of such American novelists as John Hawkes, Jerzy Kosinski, "the early Truman Capote, the early Kerouac," Nathanael West, and Djuna Barnes: "We had our new novel at home." Nin writes, in her section on American critical reaction to France's *nouveau roman*, "but utterly neglected." Writing a few years later, Nin compares Hauser's fiction to the "erratic course of an emotional seismograph meticulously recorded, with all the shadings of a Bergman film" (*Rediscoveries*, 1971).

Since the publication of *Monique* in 1934, Hauser has published five novels, about one per decade. Her stories have appeared in numerous magazines as well as in her collection *A Lesson in Music* (1964). She received a Rockefeller Fellowship in 1955, an N.E.A. Grant in 1978, and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1963. She has taught at N.Y.U., Columbia University, Iowa State, and the New School and has travelled extensively.

Mark Leyner was born in Jersey City and educated at Brandeis University where he won the Dorothy Moyer Memorial award for writing, and at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he was a teaching fellow. Leyner's fiction, plays, and criticism have appeared in *The Chicago Review*, *The American Book Review*, and *Rolling Stone*, and in his collection *I Smell Esther Williams*. (Fiction Collective, 1983), which has been called "among the funniest, most innovative fiction around. . . . Leyner's work points confidently toward the future of fiction" (*The American Book Review*).

"In *I Smell Esther Williams* there is an astonishing physicality to the wild rush of language across the page, a constant shock of unexpected confluences and juxtapositions that is forged by an absolutely original sensibility. Rescuing words from their familiar context, Leyner defuses language's banality and reshapes our lingo into the sort of verbal pyrotechnics that haven't lit up our pages since the early Barthelme."

— Larry MacCaffery

Leyner resides in Hoboken where he is at work on his first novel, *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist*, excerpts of which have appeared in *Guest Editor and Fiction International*. He is also co-editing an anthology of contemporary fiction and essays entitled *American Made*, due out in the fall of 1985. He has taught writing at Jersey City State and Brooklyn Colleges, and has recently been nominated for Pushcart Press and CCLM awards for fiction.

FILM

Margaret Ahwesh

Wednesday, October 24

Originally from Pittsburgh, Margaret Ahwesh has produced a number of film "documents" of that city of steel mills, slag dumps and factories, featuring a small group of eccentric friends who play-act to her constantly shifting camera with a sophisticated innocence. Since moving to New York City, she has continued to produce films which are self-consciously *about* the veracity of the filmic record of an event given the status of that event as image, and as such reflect the culture in which she lives.

Ahwesh also will participate in the Video Viewing Room exhibition "Ironic Naturalism" and the "Critical Issues" discussion on October 25th.

Sunday, October 28

FILM AS ALTERED/ALTERNATIVE REALITY

is a seven-program series exploring methods which are used to alter film to represent alternative realities (psychic, religious, "visionary," personal esoteric) or which result in intensified viewing experiences. The goal of this series is to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the strategies which comprise the modernist idiom in filmmaking. Program 1 consists of films which use disjunctive editing to destroy any sense of conventional narrative and which create artificial spatial relationships whose parameters describe a filmic "reality" which has often been employed as a metaphor for the dream state.

PERFORMANCE/VIDEO

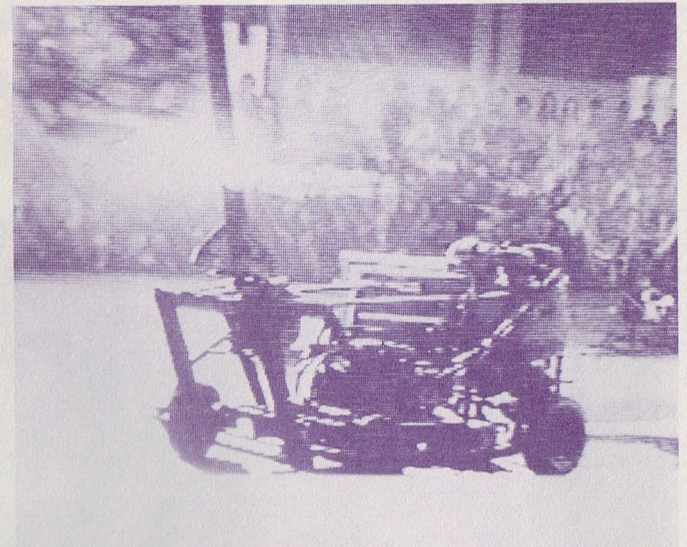
Mark Pauline

Monday, October 15

and his San Francisco based Survival Research Laboratories are leading exponents of machine performance. Since 1979, they have staged a unique series of performance events which feature no human performers but are centered around the violent interactions of menacingly reconstructed industrial equipment, plus a variety of weapons and special-effects devices. In each piece, the artist activates a group of these machines through a central control panel and automatic signal generators to develop various themes of sociopolitical satire.

Pauline will present *A Scenic Harvest from the Kingdom of Pain*, a compilation videotape of documentation of a number of these performances, including

the most recent, *An Epidemic of Fear/The Release of Mass Hysteria through Senseless Jungle Hate*.



PERFORMANCE AT THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY CENTER

Starting with the Halloween Party and continuing through November, the Performance Program will present its events at this new location.

VIDEO

Carol Szymanski

Thursday, October 25

will present a 3-channel video installation *Persona and/or Text*. In the artist's development of the text for this work from initial dialogues between the performers and her subsequent application of these edited dialogues as a script, "reality" becomes separated from itself so that it becomes a formal object within the work. The artist describes the ensuing counterpoint: "Three ongoing but separate dialogues (on three adjacent monitors) which have reference to both the three sets of characters and the physical context (a discontinuous architectural space with fetishistic objects) are continuously interrupted by each other. Images and brief texts, produced as staccato marks, are then inserted. . . . These textual staccatos cast doubt on the validity of the three reflected dialogues." Szymanski currently lives in New York City.

CRITICAL ISSUES Media Genres & Transactions I

Thursday, October 25

Immediately following Carol Szymanski's presentation listed above will be the first in a series of discussions on *Media Genres & Transactions* which offers opportunities to exercise ideas originating in the making and viewing (reading) of media. Participation is encouraged for all who are curious and provoked by work being done in video, film, performance, audio, and photography.

The first discussion will grapple with kinds of orientational strategies makers and viewers encounter with the inevitable and problematic media conceit of realism (a.k.a. naturalism, cinema verite, liveness, verisimilitude), a conceit which both empowers and haunts the aesthetics and communicational territories of recording media. Questions arise: What are various codifications of realism (i.e., genres, semiotic systems applied to media)? How do these "languages" come by their authority? What are the sensibilities and aesthetics that result from the transactions which are negotiated and renegotiated between maker and viewer, maker and dramatis personae, maker and directorial authority?

This discussion, the Video Viewing Room show "Ironic Naturalism," and film and video presentations will comprise the two-day "Media Screenings & Symposium." Barbara Broughel, Margaret Ahwesh, Carol Szymanski and Rob Danielson — the artists and curator participating in the symposium — will be present.

HALLWALLS AND CEPA LIBRARY

Artists' books, magazines, and art documentation in the form of audio and videotapes in this library collection offer more than 'just a look' at the diverse art-making strategies, values, theoretical concerns, and dynamics of post-modern culture. Among the materials you will find here are books by Kathy Acker, John Baldessari, James Casebere, Constance DeJong, Jenny Holzer . . . magazines such as *BOMB*, *Wedge*, *Flash Art*, *October*, *Semiotexte*, *Artforum*, *Heresies* . . . audio and videotape documents of performances and presentations by Eric Bogosian, Yoshiko Chuma and the School of Hard Knocks, Mike Kelley, The Kipper Kids, Ann Magnuson, Cookie Mueller, Peter Nadin, Grace Paley, Potato Wolf, David Van Tieghem, David Wojnarowicz, Emily XYZ . . . and much more. These materials are available during regular gallery hours for in-house use only. For audio and videotape viewing you are encouraged to make an appointment.