

FRONT



MARCH 89

WONG

NEIL

MARS

SAME LOCATION

CYNTHIA SHORT

Feb. 17 - March 25

SOME DETACHED HOUSES

March 29 - April 22

Robin Collyer
Todd Davis
Dan Graham
Amy Jones
Bill Jones
Robert Linsley

Warren Murfitt
Margaret Naylor
Ed Ruscha
Nancy Shaw
Greg Snider

ROSS MUIRHEAD

April 26 - May 6

COLD CITY ARTISTS

May 10 - June 3

JACK JEFFREY

June 9 - July 8

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ART GALLERY**

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SPACE

NEW

WESTERN FRONT CALENDAR

March 1989

FRIDAY MARCH 3, 9 PM

Reception for New York composer/performer, **Wayne Horvitz**.
Artist in Residence.

SUNDAY MARCH 5, 8:30 PM

Soundcheck. Panel on Improvisation.

MARCH 6 - 15

Peggy Gale. Curator in Residence.

FRIDAY MARCH 10, 9 PM

Screening and discussion with **Tanya Mars**, performance artist
and editor of Parallelogramme.

THURSDAY MARCH 16, 5-8 PM

Western Front 16th Birthday. Cocktail Party.

FRIDAY MARCH 17, 9 PM

IDEOPHRENIA with **Art McP** and **Audio McB**

SATURDAY MARCH 18, 10 PM

Hank's Industrial Cabaret

MARCH 24 - APRIL 7

AL NEIL. "Origins: Celtic Series". Exhibition

THURSDAY MARCH

30 FRIDAY MARCH 31

SATURDAY APRIL 1 9 PM

Paul Wong. "Ordinary Shadows, Chinese Shade".
Video Screening.

Western Front Society, 303 East 8th Avenue, Vancouver, British
Columbia, Canada V5T 1S1

Office Hours: Tues-Fri 1-5 PM and anytime by appointment.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 1-5 PM

Telephone: (604)876-9343

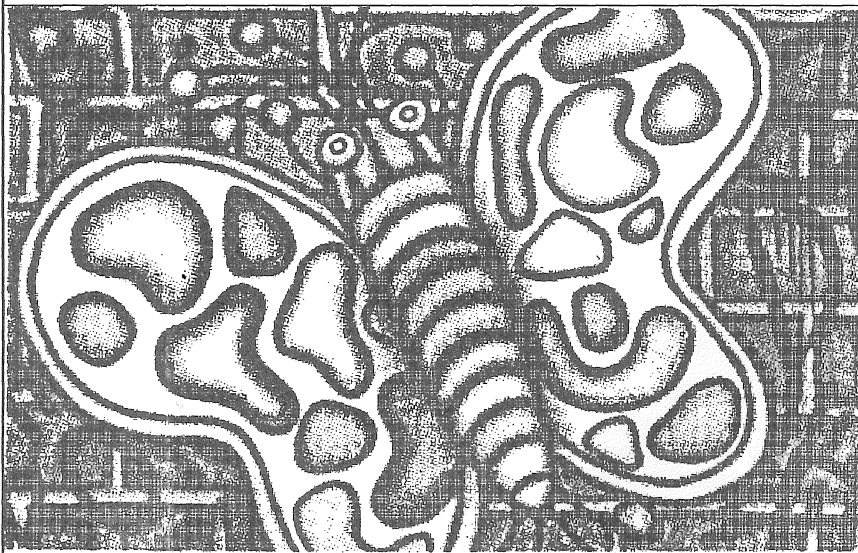
Membership Policy: First time visitors to live events are asked to pay
a \$5 membership fee, included in the price of admission. A
Subscribing Membership costs \$20/year and includes a subscription to
FRONT Magazine, special invitations, free use of print and tape
archives and access to the Artsfund Medical and Dental Plan.

VANCOUVER NEW MUSIC PRESENTS

THE NEW VIRTUOSO

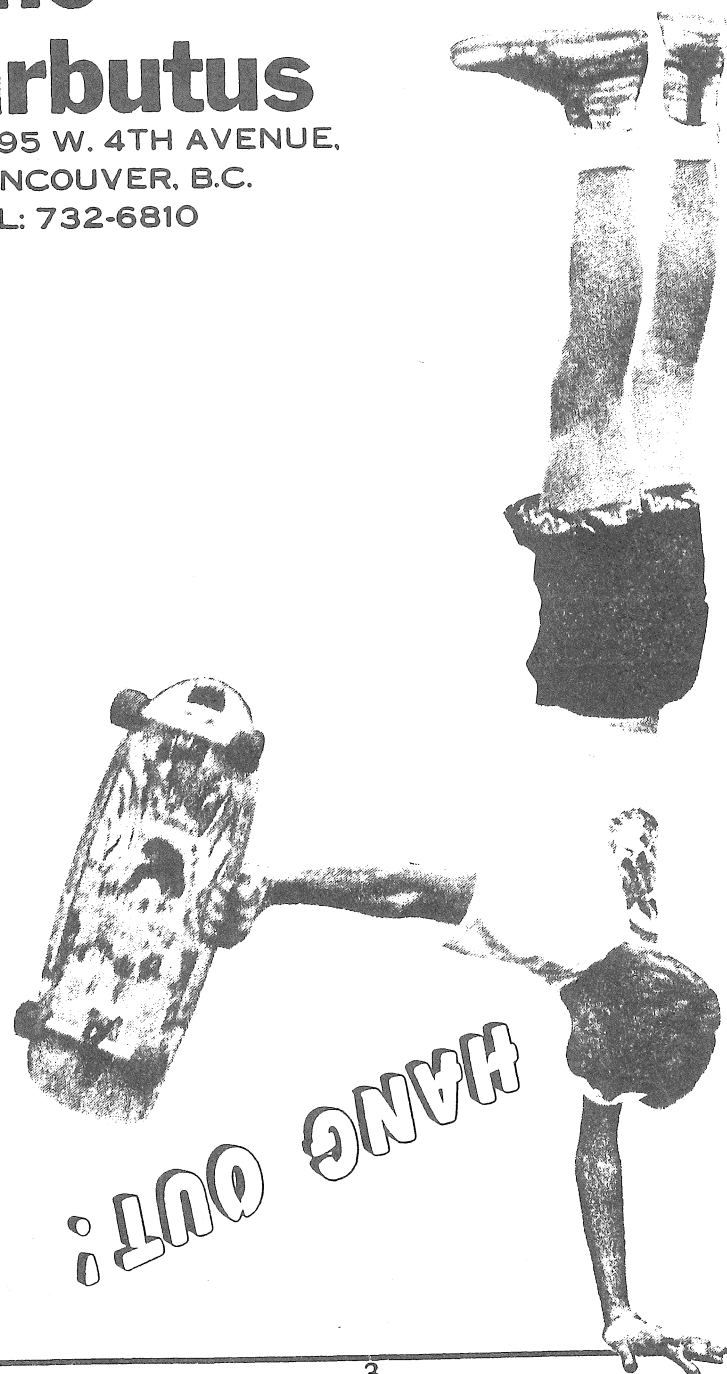
NEW WORKS BY
PETER HANNAN, ALEXINA LOUIE,
GORDON MONAHAN

SUNDAY MARCH 12 • 8PM
VANCOUVER EAST CULTURAL
CENTRE
RESERVATIONS 254-9578



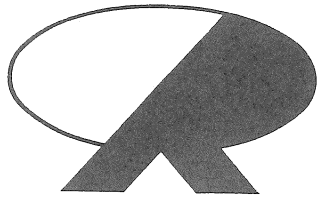
the arbutus

2095 W. 4TH AVENUE,
VANCOUVER, B.C.
TEL: 732-6810



Richard Williams

March 14 - April 1
Opening Tuesday, March 14



OR GALLERY
314 W. HASTINGS, MAIN FLOOR
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GALLERY HOURS: Tuesday to Saturday 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.
Or gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council and the City of Vancouver.
Special thanks to the Vancouver Foundation for their assistance in gallery renovations.

PITT INTERNATIONAL GALLERIES

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exhibitions	february 20 - march 10
performances	THE NEW LANDSCAPE white gallery
march 6 8pm	DAVID ASMODEUS "In The Dark" black gallery
womens cabaret	march 13 - march 31
march 27 8pm	JEAN TRILBY HIGINBOTHAM "On My Meta1" white gallery
grace martini & bent benny "western video shootout"	T.B.A. black gallery
Gallery Hours: Noon - 5pm daily	Opening Night Monday March 13 8pm



VIDEO IN PRESENTS
DELUDING DOCUMENTARY

MARCH 28, 31 APRIL 1, 2 1989

A FOUR DAY SYMPOSIUM WHICH EXPLORES AND EXPLODES THE BOUNDARIES
BETWEEN VIDEO ART AND DOCUMENTARY

MARCH 28	8 pm AIDS IN HISTORY Video Screening
MARCH 31	8 pm NEW DOCUMENTARY STRATEGIES Video Screening
APRIL 1	1 pm NOBODY'S FOOL Artists' Presentations
	4 pm SUBJECTIVE FACTORS Panel
	8 pm DOUBLE DESIRES DOUBLE BILL Film Screening
APRIL 2	1 pm INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES Artists' Presentations
	8 pm IS TRUTH A STRANGER TO FICTION? Panel

With Stuart Marshall (Britain), Claire Aguilar (U.S.), MeeraDewan(India), Robert Morin and Lorraine Dufour, Gary Kibbons, John Greyson (Canada).

All video screenings, panels and artists' presentations at the Video In, \$3/4 day passes
Film event at the Robson Square Media Centre Cinema, \$4/5 double bill

CALL 688-4336 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Curated by Sara Diamond. Funded by the Canada Council Exhibitions and Visiting Foreign Artist Programme.

LAST TANGO ON BROADWAY: AN OPEN VIEW

It takes a lot more than 2 to tango at
Women in Focus! To celebrate Internat'l
Women's Day & before we move to Yaletown
we like to invite everyone to come to our
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- AN OPEN VIEWING of WIF's 15 years' collection of films & videos plus new acquisitions - *free *select your own!
- A GLANCE OF PAST GALLERY ACTIVITIES thru' slides, catalogues & other documentation.

MARCH 8, 9, 10 - 12 noon to 7 pm

#204 - 456 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. 872-2250

Western Front



The Western Front, founded in 1973, is an artist-run centre that focuses on the production and presentation of new art. It offers programs of Exhibition, Performance Art, Video Production, Computer Graphics, Telecommunications, Poetry, Dance and Music (Lorca said it's all poetry, dance and music). Through a unique residency program, local, national and international artists are invited to create new works in this interdisciplinary environment.

Curators

FRONT Gallery: Annette Hurtig
Performance Art: Eric Metcalfe
Video Production: Kate Craig
Music: Alex Varty, Iain Macanulty
Poetry & Ideophrenia: Susi Milne
Computer Graphics: Kye Goodwin
Archives: Brice MacNeil

Staff Administrator:

Karen Henry

Office Manager:

Susi Milne

Technicians:

Iain Macanulty, Rob Kozinuk

Accountant:

Ann Hepper

The Western Front is a non-profit cultural society supported by grants from: The Canada Council, Employment and Immigration Canada, the Government of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture, the City of Vancouver, and special project funding from the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation.

FRONT Magazine is published nine times a year.

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Contributors: Alex Varty, Iain Macanulty, Kate Craig, Susi Milne, Alfred Birnbaum, Karen Henry, Annette Hurtig, Paul Wong, Eric Metcalfe, Margaret Dragu.

Cover: Paul Wong by Chick Rice

COASTAL
**JAZZ
BLUES**
SOCIETY

presents

JAZZ IS at ISADORAS Restaurant, Granville Island

*Five Weekends of Exciting Sounds
by Regional and International Artists*

March 3, 4

George Robert Quartet

• bebop alto saxophonist from
Switzerland with Hugh Fraser.

March 10, 11

Brass Roots

• New Orleans style, with the spice of
Mardi Gras and twist of Lester Bowie

March 17, 18

Denny Goodhew Trio

• unique Seattle saxophonist, with
Clyde Reed and Claude Ranger

March 24, 25

Jay Clayton Quartet

• highly acclaimed vocalist performs
unique renditions of jazz standards.

March 31, April 1

Lunar Adventures

• modern jazz, harmolodic funk,
celtic swing, & calypso collage.

All shows 9 PM - Mid • \$5 at the door
JAZZ HOTLINE: 682-0706

Henry Bull

LUMEN CINERIUM
February 16 to March 4
Opening February 16, 8PM

Alistair MacLennan

"SITE CITE" SPECIFIC
March 10 to 25
Opening March 9, 8PM

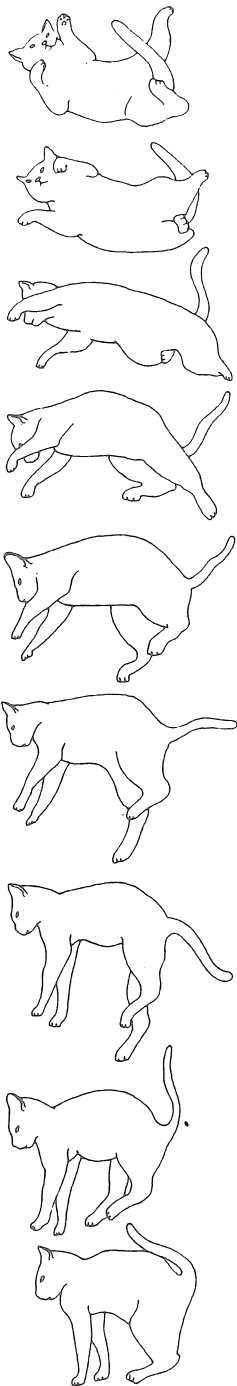
Sol Lewitt

March 31 to April 15
Opening March 30, 8PM

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HOURS
Wednesday
to Saturday
1pm-5pm



SOUND CHECK

Sunday, March 5, 8:30 PM FREE

Improvisation may be described as the invention of music in performance. This definition applies equally to music of widely divergent style and content, including baroque court music, church organ music, chance composition, computer music and jazz of all kinds. It is appropriate to wonder if there is any music at all that could exist without some degree of improvisation.

This month's Soundcheck presents a panel discussion on the role of improvisation in contemporary music. Five musicians of various backgrounds present their perspectives on the issue.

Topics may include the following:
What is the relation between the notion of a composition as a musical entity in itself and the wide variety of interpretations that may result in performance of that composition?

Where does the improviser's "inspiration" come from? Is it related to the composer's "inspiration"?

What is the role of memory and experience in improvising?

What are the socio-political implications inherent in the act of improvising?

What is the meaning of a recorded improvisation?

If computers invent music in performance, are they improvising?

Are some improvisations better than others?

Panelists:

Coat Cook, Wayne Horvitz, Dan Scheidt, Alex Varty, Dona Zapf

Moderator: Iain Macanulty

This presentation is co-sponsored by Vancouver Pro Musica.

WAYNE HORVITZ

March 1 - 11

CONCERT

with Wayne Horvitz, Butch Morris, Bobby Previte and Vancouver Workshop Ensemble
Saturday, March 11, 9PM. \$5.00

Wayne Horvitz is perhaps the living embodiment of the "downtown" Manhattan experimental music network, a loose group of composers and instrumentalists who thrive on change and who leap stylistic barriers with apparent ease. True products of this vast urban conglomerate, these players raid idioms freely, often possess immense knowledge of cultural traditions not necessarily their own, have usually acquired and then transcended virtuosity in the pursuit of an individual voice, and are usually comfortable working in collective situations, either with other musicians or with artists from other disciplines.

Horvitz is first and foremost a pianist, and those who heard him either in his Western Front debut in 1985 or more recently with the Sonny Clarke Memorial Quartet, are fully aware that he is conversant with the whole history of American piano styles, from the hardest blues to the most fluid bop to the free-est of free improvisations. But he has also successfully made the leap from the acoustic keyboard into the

technological world of digital synthesis; on synthesizer he is one of the most convincing improvisational stylists, switching timbres as easily as a saxophonist might vary his attack, while with his "rock" band, The President, he comes on more like a very loose and down-home Joe Zawinul, funky and tuneful and yet given to surprising twists and turns. Horvitz's compositional skills are just now coming to light—the Kronos Quartet recently recorded one of his pieces—and his studio skills are similarly in demand: after recording most of his Nonesuch Records debut in his spare bedroom, he will produce Bill Frisell's next effort for that label. And when he's not writing or recording, Horvitz is in constant demand on the American, European and Japanese new music circuits, touring by himself, in duets with Frisell or with his wife, composer/pianist Robin Holcomb, in an ongoing trio with Butch Morris and Bobby Previte, with the Sonny Clarke group, or as a charter member of John Zorn's eclectic Naked City ensemble.

During his time in Vancouver, Wayne will work with Vancouver musicians on a number of projects, including new recordings and a public performance, March 11, which will feature one set by the Horvitz/Moris/Previte trio, and one with a larger group incorporating some of the best of this area's improvisational players.

The Western Front will host a reception on Friday, March 3 at 9

PM. Feel free to come up and meet the artist. Musicians interested in the workshop/rehearsals should contact the Western Front office or call me directly at 255-2121. This residency is made possible by a grant from the Foreign Visiting Artist Program of the Canada Council.

- Alex Varty

DOWN AMONG THE BABIES WITH THE WELDONETTES

Down Among the Babies
You and Me Make Three
Down Among the Babies
We Fart and Poo and Pee
Down Among the Babies
We Boil Formula in Pots
Down Among the Babies
Hand Laundry Never Stops
Down Among the Babies
We Hold Baby Buddha Tight
Down Among the Babies
Is really quite All Right

Margaret Dragu



Canadian Visiting Artists Program Presents:

TANYA MARS

Tanya Mars is a performance artist from Toronto who is also the editor of *Parallelogramme Magazine* and a strong figure in ANNPAC (the Association of National Non-Profit Artist-run Centres). Her colourful and flamboyant performances garner rave reviews from the art scene. During her week in Vancouver she will make the following presentations:

Monday, March 6, 7:30-10:00 PM.
at the VIDEO INN Video as a tool
in performance art. Friday,
March 10, 9 AM-Noon at

EMILY CARR, Sara Diamond's class. Tanya Mars will discuss her own work and show videotapes. Friday, March 10, 9:00 PM. at WESTERN FRONT. A lecture and screening featuring Tanya's videotapes and an open discussion on ANNPAC, *Parallelogramme* and related issues.

The Vancouver Artists Talks Committee is supported by a grant from the Visual Arts Section of the Canada Council.

All events are free and open to the public.

THE TOKYO EDITION 1988

INFERMENTAL 8

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE ON
VIDEOCASSETTE

North American Premiere:
Sunday, March 12, 1 to 6 PM.
\$5.00 Alfred Birnbaum will be in
attendance. Lunch.

Library viewing: March 13 to 24.

INFERMENTAL is a magazine on
videocassette started in Berlin by
Gabor Bódy in 1980. It has been
travelling between cities and
editors ever since. FERmenting
between INformation and
experiMENTAL, between personal
and mass media, it is an
international network. In 1987, the
Western Front produced
INFERMENTAL 6. INFERMENTAL
8 was produced in Tokyo by
Alfred Birnbaum.

Here we go again. The annual
survey of global video is back
again. This year's compilation
comes bursting with the latest in
Japanese post-design grafix art
and ideas. Called IN THE
AFTERGLOW OF TV LAND, it
delivers the goods on Godzilla,
Infomania, Limboguistics and
Future Fashion. Travelling with
the tapes on their North American
tour is citizen of the world, time
traveller, translator, the producer
of INFERMENTAL 8, how about a
round of applause for Alfred
Birnbaum:

(applause...)

"Thank-you, folks. Bringing
INFERMENTAL to Japan, islands
far removed from the American
and European continents of
previous editions, yet very close
to the global "info-magnetic"
environment, we recognized the
need to bridge a broader span
than ever before. Not just East
West, but from art to more
popular expressions.

"For Japan is nothing if not
popular commercial culture.
Public support for the arts is
non-existent and "the state of the
artist" is static. Which make this
the first edition of INFERMENTAL
to be privately funded, as well as
the first edition to be released on
1/2 inch videocassette to reach a
larger popular viewership. We
knew that the Japanese see
themselves as very much a
television society. We also knew
that television is, if anything,
more international than
video—becoming ever more
planetary through transnational
satellite communications. While
mass programming still glosses a
seamless and seemingly
"objective" no-point perspective,
many exciting new directions are
emerging as more and more
artists and independant
production groups collaborate

with broadcast and cable stations
in different locales the world over.

"Television subcultures are
multiplying; personal viewpoints
on this "most popular medium"
sweep the full waveband. The
reception may still be a little poor
and the picture difficult to tune in.
But beyond the late-late fringe of
any network, this is prime time

INFERMENTAL material. Straight
from everywhere to everywhere."

The North American Premiere of
INFERMENTAL 8 will take place
on Sunday afternoon, March 12.
The five hour show will be
projected on a large screen and
on monitors. Lunch will be
served. Informal atmosphere. The
best way to find out what's
happening TODAY in Tokyo.

V
I
D
E
O

PEGGY GALE

Curator in Residence

March 6 - 15 & April 17 - 27

Peggy Gale is one of Canada's
first and best known
curator/critics of video and
performance art. She will be in
residence to select an exhibition
of Western Front videotapes
under the working title, "Limits of
Performance".

Video exhibitions have tended to
concentrate on specially made
"video art". But for fifteen years,
music, poetry and performance

events have also been recorded
on video. Gale suggests that now
is the time to look at these
documents. Some magic, famous,
ephemeral moments have been
caught on tape. Some of the
artists have died since. Video is
an old enough medium that its
role in the writing of art history
can now be considered.

The residency will take the form
of a tutorial with the participation
of Karen Henry, Annette Hurtig
and Elspeth Sage. For further
information, please contact Kate
Craig at 876-9343.

Western Front

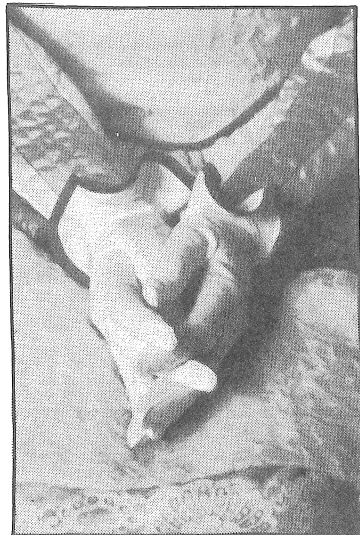
Sixteenth Anniversary

16 TONS



ONLY 16

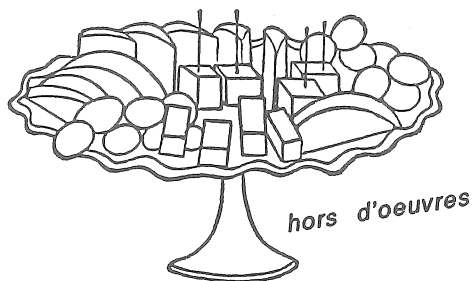
16 CANDLES



SWEET 16

THURSDAY, MARCH 16
5:00 to 8:00 PM

You are cordially invited to come out and help us celebrate our birthday. Take this festive opportunity to renew your membership, introduce a friend or visit the Front for the first time. Champagne and music. Balloons and chocolate cake. Surprises!



ALL HAIL THE MEMBERS

As well as being birthday time, **March is Membership Month.** The Western Front has been active in the cultural life of this city for sixteen years, but we would be nowhere without the support of our membership. This month we salute all our members and make a special effort to attract new ones. Here are the ways in which you can participate as a member:

Participating Member: With your first \$5.00 admission you automatically become a Participating Member. This gives you access to the in-house library, archive and video collection.

Subscribing Member: For \$20.00 a year (\$25.00 for families) you will receive a subscription to 9 issues of FRONT Magazine, with information about all Western Front programs and events, as well as announcements and comment on other cultural events around the city. You will also receive extra mailings, invitations to special events and access to the Artsfund Medical and Dental Plan. Call 876-9343 for details.

Organization Member: This membership is for business and professional associates who have an interest in the Western Front, and for sister organizations who share artistic concerns and receive special services in support of their projects. An Organization Membership costs \$50.00 and includes FRONT Magazine and special mailings, but please note that entrance to events is by individual membership only. (No, you can't

bring your whole staff on one ticket!)

Donors: Friends who can support our activities and concerns with a contribution of \$50.00 or more receive special consideration and copies of all Western Front artists' books and exhibition catalogues. We are particularly grateful to a small but growing number of patrons who have supported us faithfully, some of them for many years. We urge you to join their ranks: Irene Aebi Janice Dillon and David Gibbons Peter Fraser Q.C. Helen Freeze Charlotte Murray, M. Arch, MAIBC Leslie Norris and Dr. Myron MacDonald Dr Lyle Thurston and Stephen French

Corporate and Business Donors: Our thanks to the enterprises who are contributing to the current activities of the Western Front.

For their **continued financial support:** Canfor Corporation

For **donations in kind:** Atari Canada BCTV Custom Plastics General Paint Goethe Institute Hemlock Printers Northstar Mills Strider Computers.

ON EDGE and Western Front present:

PAUL WONG

ORDINARY SHADOWS, CHINESE SHADE

Canadian Premiere

Thursday March 30, Friday March 31 & Saturday April 1
9 PM \$5.00 running time: 90 minutes

Paul Wong has consistently fixed his gaze on difficult topics and tough issues for his projects involving video, photography and performance. His work is a personal odyssey that includes murder, suicide, anger, youth, drugs and the controversial exploration of the sexual terrain. His more recent work reflects a continuing obsession with mass media, popular culture, narcissism and consumer society.

ORDINARY SHADOWS, CHINESE SHADE is a breakthrough. In it, Wong uses his second generation Chinese-Canadian perspective to frame the Chinese here in the new world, Canada, and in the motherland, China. This is an intimate, personal view. Through his own "family network" and several trips to the People's Republic of China, the artist gained access to the everyday, non-exotic world of the Chinese.

A picture emerges of displaced cultures and traditions in transition. The viewer identifies with the artist/cameraman as he bears witness to the unfolding of his own cultural identity. It presents a refreshing and incisive view of China that is missing both from mass media journalism and from the work of Western artists who use exotic cultures as "raw material" their work.

ORDINARY SHADOWS, CHINESE SHADE is neither dramatic, conventional narrative, nor straight documentary. It is a flowing tapestry of seemingly ordinary events and people. The tape is fascinating and startling in its simplicity.

ORDINARY SHADOWS, CHINESE SHADE had its world premiere at the New York Museum of Modern Art last November. This is the Canadian premiere.



普通的影像 中國之色調

AL NEIL

ORIGINS: CELTIC SERIES

March 21 - April 7

Gallery Hours: 1 to 5 PM, Tuesday to Saturday

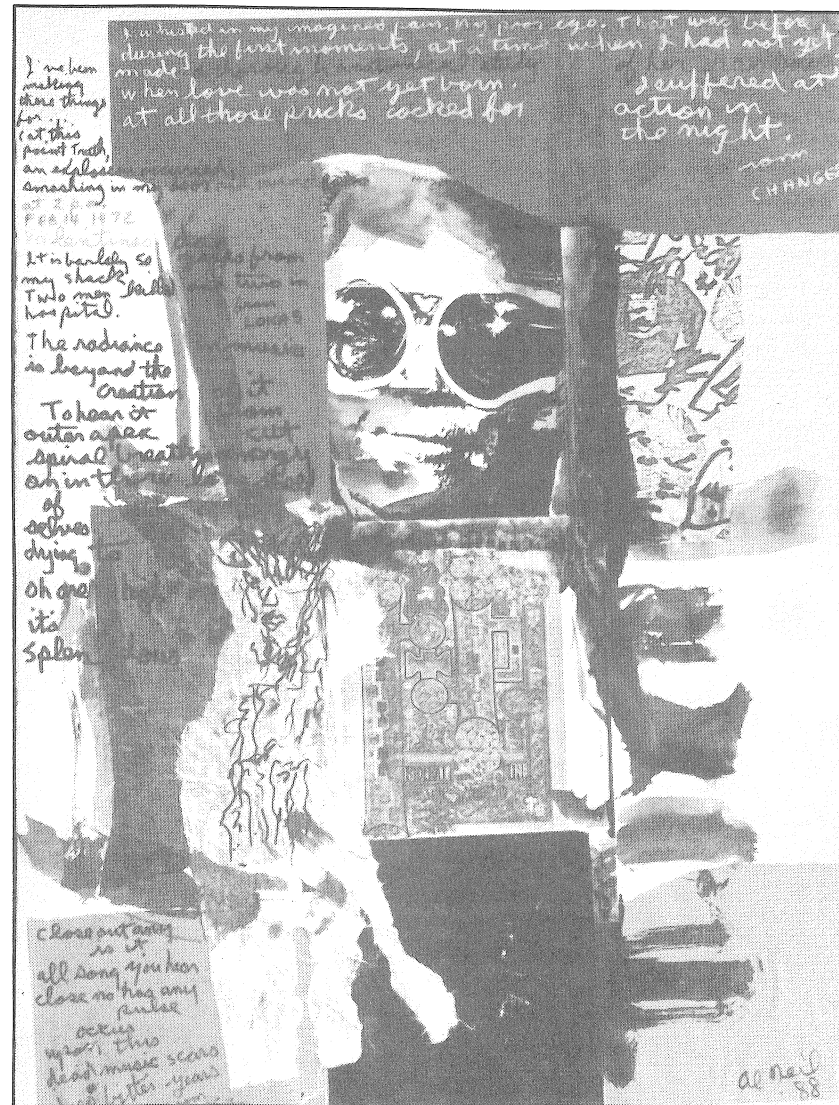
At the artist's request, this exhibition has been scheduled to coincide with his sixty-fifth birthday. Neil explains his request and the Western Front's significance to him by recounting his first "public" performance, when, as a young boy, he wandered into the building at 8th Avenue and Scotia Street, found a piano and played unannounced for the owners, the Vancouver Chapter of the Knights of Pythias.

Neil has become a familiar at this site since its reinception in March, 1973, as the Western Front. His activities here have ranged from solo piano concerts to multi-media collaborative performances, an exhibition, mixed-media "Annual Reports", most recently presented with fellow artist and companion, Carole Itter, and numerous impromptu appearances. Neil views the "Origins: Celtic Series" exhibition as a perpetuation of the cycles that in summation constitute his life to date. It is Front Gallery's intent that this exhibition acknowledge Neil as a progenitor of several strains of current Canadian cultural production.

The exhibition will present approximately twenty four of Neil's "Origins: Celtic Series", collage works on paper. The series is distinguished by two central motifs: each collage entails a portrait of the artist

based on a photo by Carole Itter, transformed through photocopy enlargement, colouration and re-photography; each of the manipulated self-portraits is juxtaposed with a page from the medieval illuminated manuscript, The Book of Kells, which Neil uses as a reference to his Celtic origins and for its mystic sources—its illumination both literal and figurative. These collages are further differentiated by Neil's characteristic calligraphy, painted gestures and excerpts of text from his published writings.

Although virtually all of Neil's diverse oeuvre has an autobiographical aspect, the "Origins" series is overtly so—a compilation of this pioneer's ancestral, theoretical, and philosophic roots, together with mystic and poetic sources. Moreover, it exemplifies Neil's unique means of combining elegant formal precision with the gestural, narrative and metaphoric qualities which distinguish his work, and from which the frequently applied title of "shaman" proceeds. Neil's works encompass the West Coast mythologies, its landscape and ethos, while simultaneously addressing global post-capitalist issues. Personal and cultural elements—his own medical reports, baseball, philosophical treatises—speak to concerns about the human condition. Al



Neil is an exemplar—an artist who dissolves boundaries while assimilating new ideas continuously.

A catalogue accompanies the exhibition. It includes a text by Neil and essays by Scott Watson, Alex Varty and Annette Hurtig, as well as photo documentation of collage works, performances etc. For the financial assistance that

made this publication possible, the Western Front gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council Exhibitions Assistance Program and the Government of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture.

- Annette Hurtig

LETTERS...

MORE ON OSTREM at grunt gallery

As a board member and curator at grunt gallery I read with interest Renee Rodin's review of Ostrem's exhibit (FRONT, Jan. 89). That she opened the review with references to racism in the art community is timely but unfortunately misrepresents Ostrem and his work.

When I first saw *Failure of Judaism* in the curator's studio it took me aback. But Ostrem's work often has a disturbing edge. The painting was part of a triptych that dealt with news stories. The other two, *Christianity and Technology*, took their inspiration from Jimmy Swaggart's fall from grace and the destruction of the Challenger. He was getting at the scandals and contradictions these seemingly decent institutions have been embroiled in at the end of the 80's.

Failure of Judaism was a reaction to a specific news event of Israeli soldiers breaking a Palestinian's hands. The complete title is: *The Failure of Judaism, January 20, 1988—Hymie breaks Yousef's Hands*. The image shows a desert landscape with a building to the far right. In the foreground several soldiers hold down a civilian man while another soldier raises a piece of 2x4 to break his hands.

Jesse Jackson did get into a lot of trouble using the word Hymie but not necessarily because of the word itself. His reference to

New York as "Hymietown" implied that the town was dominated by "the Jews" (read Jewish money) and this ugly and racist assertion was what got him into well deserved trouble. Ostrem is in no way making any of the same assertions. Renee sees "Hymie" only as a racial slur but it is first and foremost a name and it is in this context that Ostrem uses it in the work.

That Ostrem links Judaism with Israel shouldn't be much of a surprise to anybody. Israel was started in the late forties as a Jewish state and still largely is, as the recent elections there surely attest. That all Jews should feel responsible for the excesses of Israel is ridiculous and in the same order of all Christians feeling responsible for Jimmy Swaggart's whoremongering. But he does address this at length in an interview in the catalogue, of which I'll only quote a part.

"I think there's a problem happening in Israel. There's factions there too. There's a pro-peace faction and an anti-arab faction. So I'm not criticizing Judaism, it's more like I'm taking sides, I'm identifying with the peace faction in Israel."

Maybe by labelling the piece "bad art", as Renee does, grunt could have avoided the whole issue. But I feel uncomfortable pulling works off walls. It presupposes a political correctness that is dangerous. I discussed the situation with Ostrem after the first complaint and we agreed that

if there was a body of complaints we would pull the painting. There were two serious complaints over the word Hymie. The postcard was pulled because it was a postcard and we could not be assured it would be taken in context. Many people complained that we were overreacting. Renee felt we didn't go far enough. As an art community that is largely white and anglo-saxon it was and is a very useful discussion to be having. Attacking Ostrem or grunt as being politically regressive does nothing to further this discussion. Standing on political correctness that sees good thoughts as the

RODIN RESPONDS

Talk about "naive"—this issue is a little more important than just being "politically correct". And I didn't think "good thoughts", I reacted!

Both the grunt and the Pitt are galleries which I like and usually support. I'm a member of the Pitt and referred to an incident there to indicate that racism was not just "out there" but all around us. We have all absorbed the racist attitudes of the society we live in. Painful as it is to confront ourselves and others, denial is worse. Generally, we are in the throes of a 1950's morality, complete with its acceptance of prejudice. And Vancouver, right now, is in the midst of a "yellow peril" campaign.

Glenn's reference to my "hill of beans" is really making a mountain out of a molehill. I

way to political change is naive and useless.

I do feel Renee could have done her research before castigating Ostrem. I offered her a copy of the postcard when she told me she wished to write about it and gave her a copy of the catalogue where the interview appeared. That the painting was misrepresented as being "Arabs and Jews fighting over a hill of beans" and that on that basis Ostrem was labelled racist is perhaps the "Failure of Renee Rodin".

- Glenn Alteen,

interpreted the scattered beans as a smart statement on nationalism—though it is no joke that the Palestinians are homeless. Maybe I overestimated Ostrem's subtleties. In the review I quoted Ostrem as as telling me, "hymie was a word kicking around New York..." It was used "first and foremost" in this context. Hymie is an Afro-American putdown of Jews. That Blacks and Jews are at each others throats has served the American establishment well. Hymie, as a name, is Yiddish, the language of many European Jews. In Israel, however, Hebrew (a totally different language), Arabic and English are the predominant languages.

I called the piece "bad art" only because it is misinformed. Ostrem's equation—Hymie (Jew) = anti-Arab is simply not true. Also,

linking all Jews to Israel is like linking all Catholics to Italy.

I did not read Ostrem's catalogue because a written statement might augment, but should not have to explain a visual piece. It should be able to stand on its own.

Some people felt I was advocating censorship. Racism is the worst form of censorship—it traps people in lies. Not allowing reaction to art is another way to censor. If you had an equivalent piece with "sambo" instead of "hymie, would you still have shown it?—Sticks and Stones.

-Renee Rodin

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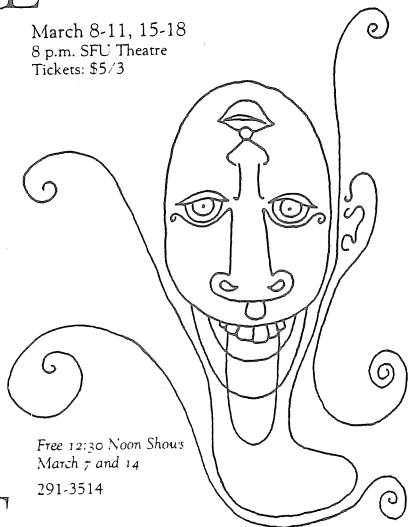
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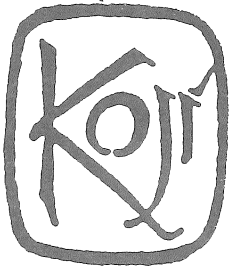
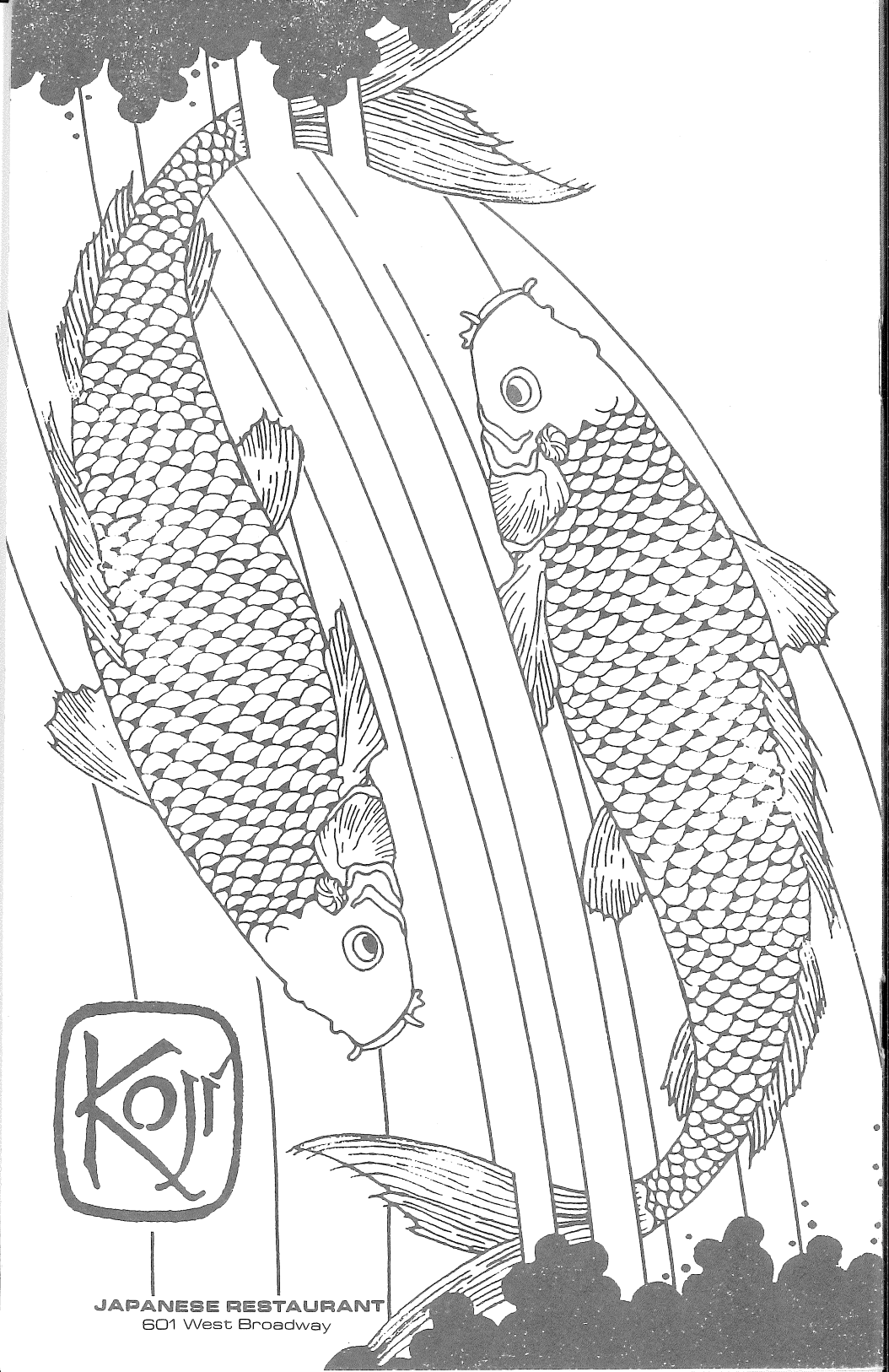
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