MOBIUS (the space) was founded by the members of Mobius Performing Group, as a laboratory for artists experimenting at the boundaries of their disciplines. MOBIUS provides a forum for audiences and artists actively engaged in the development and critique of new genres of art-making.

"In work that is considered experimental or 'avant-garde' because it doesn't fit into traditional categories, one is very likely still to find the values that are at the root of traditional art forms. The playwright Ionesco has commented that "to be avant-garde is not to be 'far out,' but to return to our sources, to reject traditionalism in order to find again a living tradition." This living tradition is rooted in our first breath, in the transformation of childhood and dream, in the acknowledgement of our ancestors and our animal selves. It is this living tradition that new performance addresses."

"The trusting of our own voices, our intuition, is a prerequisite for making performances, perhaps for making any art.... Besides hearing the inner voices, another route of access to the cave of the unconscious is simply learning to see anew or to really see what is around us all the time. Training one's mind to perceive images of external reality is also a way to cultivate the reception of inner images. The epiphanies, the unfamiliar and the wondrous, coexist with the familiarity of what we see everyday. We can experience this if we just pay attention."

-Louise Steinman in The Knowing Body

Throw It in the Fire

March 6-8, 13-15
8:00 PM

Throw It in the Fire is a new performance I am working on with Joan Gale, Mari Novotny-Jones and Julie Rochlin. We will show the piece in a workshop production the first two weeks of March so that we can hear your responses and suggestions for the work at this stage in its development.

We are starting the work by looking at fairy tales, and selecting a set of recurring actions or situations that represent rites of passage or initiation. This series of images will make up the material content of the piece.

How we intend to structure the performance is definitely an experiment. The images will not be presented in a predetermined order. We plan to create a set of rules, a series of triggers or cues, that the performers will use to move themselves from one image to another at any point in the performance.

How the performers play out the images will not be predetermined either. They will be images that are ongoing or repetitive in which the performers can take any attitude or relationship to each other that they wish. We hope that the structure of the piece, and the performance method, will bring out of the moment a complete range of personas within the images.

The result should be a performance of dreamlike or nightmare quality where the relationships keep shifting, so that it is impossible to distinguish between child and adult, aggressor and victim, good and evil.

--Marilyn Arsem
Puppet Hospital Int'l (an existential institution) conceived and directed by Tom Brennan:
--I am examining the absurdity of images we tend to associate with hospitals and puppet life by creating an institution for these absurdities. Hence, Puppet Hospital Int'l, a fictitious existentialism which tends to be only too real in the heart-wrenching gut of the American puppet owners and their close friends.

Scenario: A puppet falls and is delivered by ambulance to the crowded emergency room at PHI. Once processed, the puppet is moved into surgery, washed, shaved, anesthetized, then undergoes an emergency transplant performed by the doctor of surgery. During the dlosing procedures, the puppet dies, leaving a lengthy silence. With respectful deliberation, other puppets filter into the room and take positions of observance. Slowly a mumbling is heard, a low growling funk becomes discernible and the observing puppets begin to move to the attracting rhythms. The dead puppet moves picks up on the beat and sings the funky rap of re-existence, le jus essentiel de puppets.

Also, witness the diagnosis and cure of an undersexed puppet by the lusty puppet interns and enjoy a visit from a puppet who was found talking to his strings along the treeline in a central Alaskan tundra.

The Land of Changing Dreams
A.S.L. Interpreted for the deaf and hearing impaired. Conceived and directed by Jonathan Keezing:
--"All the dreamers rise to navigate this land of changing dreams." This piece was constructed as an exploration of the subjective nature of material reality. The worlds of shadows and of dreams are contrasted with the waking everyday work in what could be seen as a linear collage.

The work is centered on an extended verse which provides the stimulus for both visual images and a rhythmic structure for music and motion. A stream of images which either compliment, contrast, or diver one's attention from the music is seen through a variety of veils. The veils--some light, some dark--color our perception of the piece, as moods color our perceptions of the world. Shadow puppets, dance, sculptural lighting, film and sign language interpretation are employed. Other factors which color our perceptions, ancestry, societal norms and habits are explored through use of archetypal motions, slowly evolving repetitious patterns within dance and musical elements of The Land of changing Dreams.

Jai -- conceived by Harborgroup
Jai reflects a spontaneous, intuitive willingness by the artists involved to integrate their expressive forms. Several themes develop during improvisational rehearsals. From this group of themes we will present 2 or 3 of the more refined explorations.

Medieval Bridge (a theatre-installation) conceived and directed by Tom Brennan:
--Medieval Bridge is an exploration into the medieval mystique of enlightenment via 1) ordered isolation in groups; 2) the metaphors of dark/light; 3) the meditative quality of introspection. This mystique will be subtly contrasted with relevant contemporary images. During rehearsals we will seek to refine our metaphor for the moveable drawbridge which is set within a cloistered landscape and moved under the auspices of four monks of the medieval-future. Their movements are slow and deliberate, making their impact more as timeless background movement for the changing scenes of engagement which involve a character and/or characters crossing the bridge at their proper moment and engaging the other side.
-- Harborgroup

For the spring of 1987, we in Harborgroup are coalescing into small dungeonlike units from which to develop short 20-30 minute stock vignettes, integrated art and theatreworks which can stand effectively on their own, be mobile, and retain our vivid multidisciplinary aesthetic. Following are insights into our spring program:
Mobius sponsors Works-In-Progress 3 times a year. It's an informal situation in which artists of all media can present work in it's formative stages to an audience of their peers and other interested peoples, and in which discussion can be generated and information exchanged. Dates for this W.I.P are Feb. 26-28, Mar. 1 (Thurs-Sun) 8:00 PM...Tickets are $4.00.

Thursday, Feb 26  Friday, Feb 27  Saturday, Feb 28  Sunday, March 1
David Larkin  David Larkin  David Larkin  David Larkin
Mary Flemming  John Damian  THE CORD  Christine Rigsby
Taylor McLean  Mobius  Sherry Steiner  Steve Thomas/Robert Goss
Dennis Downey  Johnny Blood  Rebecca Rosenberg  Steve Le Blanc/RMS.CAFE

A VISUAL CONVERSATION

I call myself a Participatory Artist, because the work I do gives the audience an opportunity to participate in the artistic process. I believe that too many activities today have a sedative effect on our lives, making us mere spectators, set to receive only. Interactive art allows the audience to escape this passive state. It alleviates the monotony of mere reception by giving the audience a voice to speak both to the artist and to the world.

This work comes out of the idea that art is communication. For it to be true communication, information must be transferred from the artist to the viewer and from the viewer to the artist. It allows a two-way exchange of visual ideas. The artist speaks to the audience and the audience answers. I make a visual statement on canvas and the audience, painting in its turn, reacts with its own visual message. The exchange continues as long as interest dictates -- much the way a verbal conversation ebbs and flows. In fact, I call these exchanges "visual conversations."

For the Work-In-Progress program, I will explain the idea of a "visual conversation" to my audience and we will take turns making visual statements on the canvas. If you are interested in participating in this work, I would appreciate it if you brought with you some water-based paint (acrylics, temperas, or house paint.)

I believe interactive art is one way of ending what I see as the alienation of the viewing public from the creation and understanding of art. I believe the involvement of the public in the process of making art will promote the exchange of important visual ideas. The social nature of the exchange will, I hope, benefit art and everyone involved with it.

--David Larkin

String Duet

If it were possible to describe this piece it would not be necessary to perform it. Is it dance, because of its moving bodies? Or sculpture, because of its use of space?

Very simply, we will use our bodies and a rope in an effort to describe moments where mass-in-space and energy-in-time become indistinguishable through the release of the feeling of location. If successful, we will have a reality that is not immediately convertible into real estate. Is that clear?

Prerequisites for Performance

°Fear
°Place
°Space
°Work
°Ground
°Down
°Verticality
°Corruption
°Partnership
°Suspension

This piece will be developed and performed with Nicole Chuang.

--Taylor McLean
When the watchmen on that big, big ship that sank first saw the ice just ahead and off to the right, they had already hit it. That's because when you come upon ice floating in the ocean, most of what you see is underneath. When I think about my own work, I don't like to think about sinking ships and overturned lifeboats and hanging on to broken oars or even grasping at straws, but I do like the picture of an iceberg.

I don't perform very much, and that's a problem because I'm supposed to perform all the time. As I imagine my work, I would talk every night, and each night would be unrehearsed and different, and all the nights' talks would add up to one big same story. In other words, I would be some sort of a talking story man. Right now I am not a talking story man. Instead, I am just sometimes sort of like one. And I am trying to become one.

Some people who try to help me tell me that I should just perform all the time. They think I should speak and speak and speak, and that by necessity I'll get better. This is because when I perform now, I get very nervous and felt pressured, even anxious, and I stutter and rush my story, and sometimes I lose my place and sometimes I lose pieces of my courage. If I performed more, these symptoms would gradually be relieved. But performing all the time doesn't help you "become" a talking story man. You have to "become" something that you are not already, and that work is best done somewhere else, somewhere away from the face that we put on and hold in situations with other people. It is in this sense that I consider a performance to be just the tip of the iceberg. If I tell a story and the story is good, it's because of all the days before the story, when I'm thinking about it, or not thinking about it, collecting it, dreaming it, walking around talking it, letting it float.

It takes time to become something you are not quite yet. I would like to speak and speak and speak. In fact, I dream of it. But right now it is better to wait like a season waits, or like a child waits the years of its childhood. A child collects growth in every direction on a daily basis and at a phenomenal rate. But he still can't drive a car, yet, or rent an apartment, or marry a girl if he likes one.

An orangutang swings from branch by grabbing hold then letting go. Sometimes when you are waiting, people have to watch you hang like an orangutang stuck at one branch. You tell your fingers to let go, but they refuse to move. If you can get one to release and lift it into the air, as soon as you begin to concentrate on a second, the first returns to wrap around the branch. For some reason, something has you stuck there -- something inside you that doesn't want to change. Your work is to continue up and down the row of fingers, working one at a time, prying it loose, loosening it up. And you wait for that miracle that you know is possible: when all your fingers let go at once and the whole hand just drops and you with it.

-- Dennis Downey
1/7/87

TELEPHONE PIECE I

The here. The now. In the moment. Three phrases that have a more encompassing meaning today than before the age of technology. Technology has made information more immediate and far-reaching, thus changing our sense of the here and now. Technology has also improved travel, increasing our mobility. How are we affected by the developments in our personal lives?

Two things that come to mind are the T.V. and the telephone. Both devices allow us to experience an extended moment (any simultaneous fusion of two or more events for people in different locations). For example, we see live coverage of news events in our living rooms. A fusion of two events: our lives with the news media. Or we may decide to call our mother or an old friend in another city, state or country. Hence the fusion of two people in one moment via the telephone. Whereas the T.V. is an external or impersonal extended moment, the telephone is an internal, personal extended moment because it is an act we initiate or engage in ourselves. Through this performance, I would like to explore the distance and immediacy of telephone communication, and the consequences or results of such communication.

-- Mary Fleming (an affiliate member of the Mobius Performing Group, living in St. Thomas)

BY PRODUX

I am currently involved in a work entitled By Produx. Fascinated by the "byproducts" of an artist's creative statements, a leatherworker's remnants, the painter's palette, the sounds of the sculptor's etchings, a dancer's footprints, I wanted to observe, and to the take the sound artist's physical momentum during performance and reflect the energy in some visual way other than by direct photo or video. The sound artist would be used only as a physical generator towards the final visual product.
By Produx has a number of progress series. "Mime-along" is audience participatory and involves a sound artist(s) performing improvisatory sound statements with an audience member(s) reflecting, interpreting these ideas visually with their body(s) movements. The space should be totally dark with the only light source being a neon bracelet, ring, necklace worn by the audience member(s) to produce the visual images. These movements, reflections should be videotaped and viewed without sound, producing a purely visual display, a by-product of the original sound gesture. My work with audience participatory compositions sound as By Produx, the Radio Tune, RubberTellie for Prizes and Passion Variations, works performed here at Mobius over the past few years, are built with the concept of a blending of roles; composer, performer, audience into one. The potential sterilization of rehearsal is mixed also since the audience, also being composer, performer becomes such a vital, integral medium in the compositions.

Performing with me will be Tom Pisek and Jon Voigt, with video by T. Li.

-Jon Damian

**WINTER**

My friend Cathy said recently she didn't like to read poetry except in school where they explain it to you. Many people feel that way about music too. It only sounds good when it's been explained to them. Everyone likes to classify things and Americans in particular like to organize things but that is not music. I was asked what kind of music I play and I said solo electric tuba. Yes but if someone asks you what kind of music you play what do you tell them? Well I don't know since no one has really asked me. I have been playing the tuba since I was a kid and electric tuba in rock & roll bands for a little while now but only recently have begun playing solo electric tuba.

Now I am working on this piece called Winter. It's a work in progress and even when I finish it and start work on something else it will still be a work in progress because what I am working on is this thing the solo electric tuba what is it what does it sound like. I have as I say been playing the tuba since I was a kid and even now I am studying at the Conservatory. I have nothing but respect for classical technique but most of my approach to the instrument comes from the psychedelic music and so-called art rock I grew up listening to. I like that frenetic energy and that heavy metal sound but I like that dark drony stuff too. My ideas about phrasing and sonority come mostly from guitarists and other electric instrumentalists of course that is normal as I am playing an electric instrument myself. In fact I like trying to make my tuba sound like a guitar or an organ or a horn or a bassoon or whatever. Naturally the electronic effects are useful for that but I like doing it just by blowing. I also like to listen to contemporary avant-garde music and I guess that shows too. I like the way electronic music sounds like a collage looks with little fragments blending into one another and I'm trying to produce that feeling live. Of course I could play with a prepared tape but I'm not. This piece is as I said a work in progress called Winter. If I were more honest I would call it Winter 1987 that is to say the music I'm making right now however I thought Winter sounded more New Age and maybe more people would want to hear it. Still I think winter is a nice theme and I am trying to get that dark somber crackling feeling like when you wake up and the sun is coming through the window but it is very cold and you make a cup of coffee and say what am I going to do now. So this is Winter and it is winter now and I hope you like it.

-- Johny Blood

------more works-in-progress...p.6

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Planning for the eleventh annual EVENTWORKS festival of media and performing arts is well underway, with a commitment this year to local artists. EVENTWORKS is funded partially by the Student Government Association at the Massachusetts college of Art, and supported widely in the performing community by such people as those at Mobius, Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, the ICA, and resilient audience members. The festival is produced by students in the Studio for Interrelated Media, and will include The Church of the Subgenius, Jerylann Owens, Underground Voice, Phil Niblock, Harbogroup, and many others.

There will also be a film marathon by Anne Robertson, video/performance with Subterranean Video, two installations by Patty Fran and Chris O'Neill, and an outdoor Mayo de Uno event.

With an informal theme of "everybody comes", we've generated excitement for this eight-week extravaganza of which we've but given you a taste. Please join us for the first date this spring -- The vernal Equinox performance party at the Longwood Theater on March 20. Call 731-2040 for more Information.
THE CORD

THE CORD is a multi-media group attempting to build artwork around something that seems like an agreeable, but as yet undefined cultural movement. We are beginning to make some commitments. Since our aesthetic is still forming I shall only list a few features.

-1—Through a combination of improvisation and conscious decision we try to develop theatre events which emphasize experience of unity and transcendence over representational portrayals of the so-called real world.

-2—We are left with the problem of constructing integrity, participating in its endless formations, searching for those media, languages, symbols, and other processes which bind us to humankind, to the ecosystem, and to all of nature.

-3—In an effort to integrate our work with society, we are trying to create public performances which are a fusion of popular and academic art.

-4—We are attempting to play into the international system of belief generated by science. However, rather than exploiting science's attributes of control and domination (technology), we work with pure science's images and concepts which can be shared by all. In particular, we are interested in biology because of its more immediate relation to the body and personal experience.

-5—Philosophy, in effect, is an extension of the work, as it is an extension of human nature.

Ebon Fisher

Obscured by Light

An experimental projection technique will allow me to move through and around an image of myself dancing. This approach will be used to explore the psychological implications of a divided self.

Rebecca Rosenberg

Back Sliding

Robert and I would like to perform an extract from a piece that we're currently putting together. It employs projected slides of Robert's parents and recorded tapes of my grandmother's reminiscences as raw materials for a layered account of the families we have emerged from.

Robert will manipulate the size and placement of slides by means of his famous rolling slide projector and will use the opportunities it presents to chat with his folks, point out significant detail, sketch in background/foreground information, etc. I plan to work the audio side of the street, using my grandmother's voice as both a source of literal information and as a sonic environment.

It's our hope that the inevitable overlaps, or "leakage," between our families — and our methods of presenting and conversing with them — will lead to a resonant performance piece.

We expect the project to test our capacities as performers and to tell us a lot about the nature of our long friendship.

Robert Goss
Steve Thomas

THE TWELFTH OF APRIL

The Twelfth of April (a song in part) in French and English, was written, composed, and directed by Sherry Steiner and performed by Euphoria Debris.

The text was written during a residency at the Cummington Community of the Arts in Cummington, MA in November 1986. The dream-like music was composed shortly after on the piano and keyboard. The piece is scheduled for a performance April 3rd at the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, MA in "Another Evening of Performance Art" by Sherry Steiner.

The French idioms/words were chosen first for the rhythms, and along with their English translations they were then focused into performance art.

-- Christine Rigsby
The Twelve of April is about being born on the 12th of April. There is a (minimal) storyline, as in most people's lives, yet the sounds and the rhythms of the music and the words are the foundations of the piece. The performer, Euphoria Debris, sings through the French, dimly spotlighted with the words in hand. The music continues as she half talks, half sings through the English translation.

Each time it is performed the live vocal part of the piece will change some since the text and the music was written to allow for movement and spontaneity from the voice. This is what can happen when you are making art that is alive.

-- Sherry Steiner

**J., RED-HAIRED AND SPECKED**

"J." has absolutely nothing to do with several important issues: meaningful relationships in the latter half of the 20th century, nuclear war, presidential colons, performance art, deconstructivist film techniques, sexual dysfunction, the lower east side, Tristan Tzara, former drug crazed celebrities, nudists, people who bare their souls, lesbians who find god, The New York Times, love or death.

"J." has everything to do with very few things: penmanship, arson, the color of your hair, (maybe Molly Ringwald, we're not sure) and, of course, J., the true voyeur of her neighborhood, and the only one who means something.

Love? Home movies? Who can say. Beth shows movies. Steve tells a few stories. Maybe there will be a rug to sit on, just like at home. Oh yeah, Quick! Who is the thin William of your desire?

-- The P.M.S. Cafe

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(ED. note: From time to time the Mobius Newsletter receives contributions made to us by our readers in the nature of artist's statements, manifestoes, general critical remarks and the like. We want to thank Malgosia Askanas for the material below. We welcome reactions to it sent to us by other readers, as well as your own statements of thought, concern, or passion.)

Dear Editor,

Contemporary American art does much to reject and root out the elitism which has been the heritage of European art since the 19th century. In performance art, this anti-elitist quest almost seems to be the strongest underlying preoccupation of artists and their work. In fact, it alone is giving rise to an entire performance-art aesthetic, with rules as formal and strict as those of any self-respecting academic art movement in the past. Enclosed is my attempt at formulating some of these rules, which I thought might amuse the readers of the Mobius Newsletter.

**THE EGOALITARIAN PRINCIPLES OF PERFORMANCE ART**

1. All human and animal actions are equally interesting, as are all feelings, experiences and thoughts. Each repetition of an action, feeling, experience, or thought is equally interesting.

2. The purpose of a performance is to share one's actions, feelings, experiences and thoughts with the audience. A performance should be like one of those xeroxed yearly "How we have been" sheets with which some people like to grace their friends.

3. An artist must not display any unique skill, ability or force of judgement. A performance should appear as an equal-opportunity forum, where every action and thought are given an equal chance, and any audience member could successfully take the place of the artist.

4. If a performance voices a concern about some spiritual quality of American everyday life (such as boredom, lack of content, excess of meaningless information, etc.) it must itself fully exemplify this quality. There should be no suggestion that the artist might be capable of distancing him/herself from the quality under consideration.

5. A performance should only address:
   a. things which the artist has personally experienced
   b. things everybody in the audience knows
   c. facts that can easily be checked in books and documents
   d. the lives and experiences of social groups generally known to be disadvantaged and much worse off than anybody present at the performance.

6. All "performance-valid" objects in the performance space must be used during the performance. Each object must be given the same degree of usage, and appear neither better nor worse than any other object. If the artist performs any action involving an object, and the space contains other objects of the same kind, then the artist must perform the same action with each of these other objects.

----- Malgosia Askanas
Have you always wanted to step off the sidewalk and join a parade? Did you dream of being Robert Preston, leading 76 trombones? Then Les Misérables Brass Band wants you. Les Misérables Brass Band, a 9 piece brass band is looking for performance artists and visual artists to join efforts in developing and performing an outdoor multi-media piece based on the aesthetic of parades.

"We call this idea a 'micro-parade,'" says Charlie Berg, member of Les Misérables. "We want to cram the pomp, the flash, and the noise of the 4th of July and the circus coming to town into a moveable, manageable performance piece."

Les Misérables Brass Band is a 9 piece brass and percussion group that performs new music, and festival brass music from around the world. The Java just completed a 3 month tour as the music group for Robert Wilson's and David Byrne's "The Knee Plays."

If interested, please call Charlie Berg at 524-3742.

Les Misérables is funded in part by: the National Endowment for the Arts, the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, a state agency, by grants from the Boston Arts Lottery Council, the Polaroid Foundation, the Boston Globe Foundation, the Eugene F. Fay Trust of the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company, and generous private support.
Meanwhile, A Comedy in Several Media:

"Guess what? Joe asked for it and he got it!"

1/2 off with this flyer

The Performance Place
Elizabeth Peabody House
277 Broadway, Somerville

The Performance Place is halfway between Davis Square and Sullivan Station (on the Orange Line), 2 blocks west of McGrath Highway.

Feb. 26-March 14
Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays
Performances 8pm
$8/$4 Students
Reservations 623-5510

Tickets at Out of Town Tickets (Harvard Square), and BOSTIX.

Supported in part by funds granted to Theatre S. by the Massachusetts Arts Lottery, as administered by the Somerville Arts Council. Cultural programs at The Performance Place are supported by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities (a state agency), and the Massachusetts Arts Lottery, as administered by the Somerville Arts Council.

Supported in part by the Polaroid Corporation.
mobius performing group presents
a workshop production of a new performance being developed by marilyn arsem
with performers joan gale, mari novotny-jones and julie rochlin
friday-sunday at 8 pm
march 6-8 & 13-16
tickets $5.00
at mobius
354 congress
boston
542-7416

THROW IT IN THE FIRE

Mobius, Inc. is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts,
Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, Boston Arts Lottery
Council, Polaroid Foundation, Boston Globe Foundation, and its audiences.
**WORKS-IN-PROGRESS**

**FEB 26 - MAR 1**

(THURS-SUN)

8:00 PM $4.00

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**THROW IT IN THE FIRE**

*a ritual of passage*

Mobius Performing Group

MARCH 6-8, 13-15 (FRI-SUN)

8:00 PM $5.00

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**SPRINGWORK**

NEW WORKS by Harborgroup

PUPPET HOSPITAL INT'L,

THE LAND OF CHANGING DREAMS

JAI, MEDIEVAL BRIDGE

MARCH 20-22 (FRI-SUN)

8:00 PM $6.00

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Fri. Feb. 27

David Larkin

John Damian

Marilyn Arsem/MPG

Johnny Blood

---

Thurs. Feb. 26

David Larkin

Mary Flemming

Taylor McLean

Dennis Downey

---

Sat. Feb. 28

David Larkin

THE CORD

Sherry Steiner

Rebecca rosenberg

---

Sun. Mar. 1

David Larkin

Christine Rigsby

Steve Thomas/Robert Goss

P.M.S. Cafe

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