MOBIUS NEWSLETTER

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.

This season brings new projects to Mobius. October 13th begins a series of panel discussions on new art. This first one is on performance art, where we hope you will join us in a discussion on the aesthetics of this medium. We are also planning to transcribe, edit and print the discussion.

Meanwhile, there will be plenty of opportunities to see new original in performance, dance, new music, sound art, and the visual arts. In fact, the schedule is getting so full that we're beginning to program some events in mid-week as well as on the weekends. So read the newsletter sooner rather than later, so you don't miss what you want to see. We have THOUGHTFULLY designed a pull-out calendar, suitable for refrigerator posting (sorry, magnets are not included!). See you here...

WORKS-IN-PROGRESS #23
Presented by Mobius Performing Group
October 9

Since the Mobius Performing Group began presenting Works-in-Progress in 1980, it's proven to be a popular and productive way for artists who are either striking out in new directions, or refining (redefining) performance/media work that's proven fruitful for them. As with our programs over the years, our 23rd Works-in-Progress program will feature introductions by the artists, a chance for your responses afterwards, an informal atmosphere, and coffee that won't make you roll over and play dead. (How did that get in there? -- Ed.) Come join us!

Fame: Can You Handle It?
The Mobius circle of artists is very smart: they don't sit up nights worrying about getting their PBS special before turning 40. They know Fame attracts; sure, it attracts work, it attracts invitations, it attracts grants. However, it also attracts reporters, it attracts the evil clinging-ons who destroy privacy, it attracts greed, and worst of all, it attracts fans. Fans who send their work for your appraisal, fans who ask for autographs, fans who interrupt your meals, fans who come visit and steal your memorabilia. Before you were famous you didn't have time to answer 6 friends' letters a year; now you get a hundred letters a week. Can you handle it?

-- Thomas E. Janzen
"Other than 'cognitcentric' modes of education with an emphasis on interpretive and experiential variety/liminality including comparative noetics (pratice in states of consciousness), interpersonal and interspsychic authenticity, radically dialogical learning, development of living/learning centers with intergenerational, intercultural & transdisciplinary orientations & integrating personal with intellectual/academic paths...."

Classic Academic Gobbledy/Gook from recent academic paper

ARTIFICIAL STUPIDITY
PSYCHO - ISOMETRICS
High-tech Mental Fitness
Aerobatics

Throughout the industrial age, the only exercises that we needed to keep our thinking processes in shape were the yawn and the eye-cross, and an occasional thump to the head. These instinctual acts are genetically innate and found in all cultures, apparently evolving in the late paleolithic period around the same time as the flint soup spoon.

Although these are still valuable strategies for primary-thought processes, as well as real estate sales in eastern Mass., a new class of goofy moves and mind/body configurations is needed to address the peculiarities of complexity/noetics &/or abstraction-symbolics of thinking today.

Frivolous? New Esalin? Perhaps not. The political pundits are various Duke contractors are trying to give credit for Massachusetts' high-tech miracle to the MIT presence, to Prop. 2y, and to DOD contracts, completely overlooking the obvious reason -- that this high-tech utopia has 3.5 the number of licensed shrinks per capita than the general population. The correlation is 'non-trivial' and states a strong case for the A.S. paradigm.

* * *

I've been developing this piece in a few directions at once -- video, photo-composite scenes, wild poems, and a power script -- and have enough now to do a good try-out.

The philosophers of A.I. talk a lot about the mind/body issue (Can you have a mind without a body?) -- a problem which may become the habeas corpus of machine intelligence. Hopefully, the old body can still show the mind a few tricks.

Totally out of context, I will show a few new slides of my "Tall Buildings Year 2000 Bimillenial Celebration".

(Note: This idea came from a bit, then called emotional-isometrics, that I did in stand-up routines at open poetry readings at the Sword & Stone Coffeehouse in the mid-seventies.)

Eric Hughes

Free Will: the knee-jerk reflex A.S.-style

Second Nature

The decision to include projected slides in Second Nature was a major piece-shaping factor, because I was immediately faced with practical considerations.

A basic consideration was deciding what the slides would be projected onto. Since I wanted as much freedom as possible in having the screen flexible, I decided to cut it up in five sections and place these around the performing space to add a sense of depth (see illustration).

I then spent about two weeks experimenting with different materials to see what worked best for my sectional screen. I knew I wanted some texture and a translucent quality in a shade range of white to tan.

I finally settled on cheesecloth because it is the most flexible in allowing slides to be projected on and through it. (And it's cheap.) This allows the focal point of the slides to change, i.e. sometimes focussed across the back so the columns are fuzzy and sometimes reversed.

At the first rehearsal with the cheesecloth columns, I realized that their presence was a stronger force than I had reckoned on and I had to rethink whole sections of the work.

The question of what to project solved itself as the piece took shape. Some slides are used for their concrete visual impact and some are "color fields" used much as gelled lights.

I'm intrigued with the possibilities of slides and want to develop this idea and explore its possibilities. I'd like my next project to integrate 2 or more projectors and work on culminating sequences.

Beth Easterly
A woman talks to her stomach, and dances while she bakes a television cake. Those are the ingredients. Whatever comes out of the mix, the audience will have a chance to eat. Digestible? That's the experimental part.

-- Deborah Fortson

Performance art has been defined in so many, many ways over the past 15 years. It's been defined in opposition to some kinds of things ("You see, what I'm not doing is"), or as advocacy of other kinds of things ("This is what I find necessary"). More recently, performance art has been more aggressively defined as something beyond definition (as in the Sunday papers headlines: PERFORMANCE ART: WHO KNOWS? SURVEYING THE FIELD). This anti-definition, at its lowest, becomes a catch-all for unconventional trends in every other medium (IT'S WEIRD, IT'S WACKY, IT GOT INTO DOONESBURY). So it became pretty clear that, when we at Mobius wanted to assemble a panel of Boston-based performance artists to talk about their work with an audience, the thing that was a must to avoid was striving for a definition. What is exciting, though, is description and discussion. If performance art means such a variety of things, why not focus precisely on that variety as it exists within a specific group of artists? Let's talk with them about their particular back-grounds, their particular concerns, what gets them specifically moved, how performance art exists in a particular room on a particular day near the end of the 1980s. Questions and answers, looking at assumptions, shifting perspectives. We're hoping that what comes out of the room will go beyond Performance History 101 and have more to do with the ways we come to live in our work.

Not Defining Performance Art (Aesthetics without Answers) is the first in a series of round-table panel discussions we're planning on the subject of new art work, its production, reception and consumption. This discussion will feature artists only -- a group including Harris Barron, Ellen Rothenberg, Ron Wallace, Marilyn Arsem and others. Subsequent talks will focus on the social life of performance, including its critical and curatorial reception and management. It's free, so come and raise the temperature!

-- MPG

images from Larry Johnson
SCIENCE PROJECTS

October 15 - 17

Science Projects is a unique collaboration among Mobius, New England Foundation for the Arts, and the New England Museum Association. Science Projects presents new performance work by artists addressing scientific concepts, principles, and issues. The program was designed in response to the theme of the concurrent New England Museum Association Conference: "Utilizing the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences, each as an avenue to understanding the others." Science Projects shows how the appreciation of ideas of one discipline may be enhanced when approached through the perspective of another.

Following are statements and plans from many of the artists involved in Science Projects. Also included will be David Moss, Bob Rizzo and Victor Young.

Air: Landscape with Brain

Air: Landscape with Brain is the seventh performance work in a series that has concerned itself with aspects of heavier-than-air piloting as a metaphor for how we conduct our lives, in physical, psychological, esthetic, and environmental terms.

While we normally live at the interface of earth and air, altitude is an alien environment. It holds, for most of us, a deep, innate fascination, which includes awe, wonder, exhilaration and fear.

The performance work Air: Landscape with Brain involves simultaneous pre-recorded and real timespace. Its context derives from certain perceptions of and responses to experience, quickened and magnified by the facts of physics which allow observation and awareness during levitation.

-- Harris Barron

Human Interference Task Force

This past year, I collaborated with the Dance Exchange of Washington, D. C., on a piece called ATOMIC PRIESTS. The director of the Exchange, Liz Lerman (my sister), discovered that the DOE (Dept. of Energy) had commissioned a study which cost several million $$$.00 to study the feasibility of creating language, symbols, rituals, monoliths etc. to protect future people from contamination by radioactive wastes.

The choreographed piece is actually to be premiered on October 22 at Dance Theater Workshop. My use of the material will take a different approach but again as in other work of mine, I am fascinated with the image of technology and control, or in this case, lack of it. It boggles my mind that the DOE is creating science fiction. It scares the hell out of me to think that it may become scientific and social reality.

-- Richard Lerman

Just a Glass of Water Please

1. To make a performance I have to work at it. I read books, talk to people, take notes and do experiments. Unless I do the work, the piece will not happen, but the performance is not a direct result of the work. The performance comes together along a different line, outside of my control.

2. A group of us went into a restaurant and an individual in our party said, "I'd like a glass of big water please." What is "big water"?

3. In the winter I read in the bathtub. This winter I read War and Peace. The water is hot, as I read, I sweat.

4. Talking about water is difficult. The ideas slide away. Ideas and water are too much alike, they get mixed up too easily. Should I think in waves? Should my ideas flow? Do I want my thoughts to evaporate? I love to swim but I could learn to hate water.

5. At work, when it is warm enough, I drink a cup of tea on the front porch. Sometimes I write a short poem:

The rain is gone
Dave porch sits
I write.

6. In the 8th grade at Esak Hopkins Junior High School I had a science teacher named Mr. Troyano. He had a huge head and his favorite activity was to have us stand in a circle holding hands. He would then pass an electric current around the circle with a hand-held generator. He used to say, "I'm a science teacher but I believe in God, they'll never create life in a test-tube."

7. Performance at its best is not translatable into any other medium. The performance will not work as a video, a text, a play or a film. A good performance takes advantage of what makes performance unique.

8. I've written one short story in my life. It's about a fat boy named Jack who builds a volcano for his 8th grade science fair project. The volcano erupts.

9. On the 26th of August, 1981, without warning, a black dot appeared just below and to the left of my left nipple. At one time I believed that all black dots are formed on the floor of the Atlantic Ocean. That they float to the surface and drift with the wind. That they land on people and buildings and animals and change their lives forever.

-- Peter D. Burns
October

Tuesday, 13th
NOT DEFINING PERFORMANCE ART ... AESTHETICS WITHOUT ANSWERS
A panel discussion by performance artists from Boston, with questions and answers from the audience.
7 pm  FREE

Friday to Sunday, 23rd to 25th
BETTY FAIN AND DANCERS
present the premier of Fain's latest choreographic work, Nepal.
Fri & Sat, 8 pm
Sun Matinee, 3 pm $7.00

M.P.G.
Saturday and Sunday, 24th and 25th
MOBIUS PERFORMING GROUP
presents short works by members of the Blacksmith House of the Cambridge Center for Adult Education. Call 547-6789 for more details.
8 pm  $7.00

November

Friday, 6th
NEW MUSIC with Taylor McLean, Dominique Eade, Tom Pisek, and Dan O'Brien.
Time TBA  $7.00

Thursday and Saturday, 5th & 7th
STRING DUET 2
Movement, music and installation by Taylor McLean with Nicole Chuang and John Voigt.
Time TBA  $7.00

* November 13-15, 20-22:
AFTER THE FIRST DEATH, a solo performance by Julie Rochlin of MPG

* December 4 & 5: DIANE ARAVANITES-NOYA & COMPANY. New and old dance works.

* December 10-12: EVA DEAN DANCE COMPANY
Post-modern dance company from New York.

* December 17-20: THE HOUSE OPPOSITE
A new multi-media performance by Mario-Erik Paoli of MPG.
On the Origin of Information

When I first saw the complete genetic code for the virus phiX174, more than 5000 C's, G's, A's and T's, I thought of music, and I used a stretch of it in a piece called EMERGENCE, performed by Harry Spaarnay on bass-clarinet perhaps eight years ago. This is a pretty obvious idea (Marilyn Belford did a piano roll version of e. coli at P.S. 1 a few years ago, and I am sure there have been others) and not enough to build an interesting piece, at least for me. But, since phiX174 is the first organism to have its entire genome decoded, the circular sequence, taken as a whole, offers fruitful formal possibilities. By interpreting the nine overlapping genes as a score or story-board, I can get the overall form of a multi-media piece. Tape music, spoken text, real-time computer graphics, and performance will express the DNA code of this tiny organism in ways analogous to the real-life expression of the genes as proteins. This piece is not meant to be a documentary; few of these expressions will be literal and it probably won't be on NOVA.

PhiX174 is a bacteriophage that preys on e. coli, a bacterium that lives in our intestines. It is a single circular strand of DNA enclosed in a icosahedral or 20 sided capsid with spikes sticking out its 12 vertices; it looks like one of those primitives mines being fished out of the Persian Gulf. It invades an e. coli cell by binding to and piercing the cell wall with one of these spikes and injecting its DNA. The viral DNA takes over the bacterium's metabolism, and uses the cell to produce its own DNA, triangular proteins for the capsid and spike proteins. An enzyme is produced that assembles perhaps 200 new viruses and another enzyme lyases or bursts the bacterial cell wall. Total time 20 minutes.

An interesting feature of the DNA sequence is that read at different phases, the same stretch of C, G, A, and T codons can code for more than one gene. The resulting overlapping genes suggest a multi-media counterpoint I will use in the piece. Here is a mini-score of "0 of I". The upper-case letters refer to the genes. Notice that genes B, C, and E overlap longer genes. Below the genes are brief notes about their proteins. Not to temporal scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>spike</th>
<th>capsid</th>
<th>spike</th>
<th>spike</th>
<th>double strand synth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JJJJJJ</td>
<td>JFFFFF</td>
<td>FFFFG</td>
<td>GGGGG</td>
<td>HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spike</td>
<td>capsid</td>
<td>spike</td>
<td>spike</td>
<td>single strand synth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBBBBB</td>
<td>CCCCCCCCCCCCCCCC</td>
<td>EEEEEEEEEEE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assembly</td>
<td>single strand synth</td>
<td>lysis</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

genes J, G & H: spike proteins

gene F: the major capsid protein

gene A: enzyme that replicates the double DNA strand

gene B: enzyme that assembles the capsid and spikes

genes C & D: enzymes for single strand DNA synthesis

gene J: enzyme that lyases or bursts the host bacterium's cell wall

Possible visual contents of the piece:

* 20 color cellular automata patterns (after Wolfram) based on the amino acid sequences of the genes.
* Triangular vehicular automata (after Braitenberg), whose movements are influenced by the codon sequences.
* 3D wireframe animation of icosahedra.

Performance could include:

* assembly of a glow-in-the-dark stick model of the virus
* recitation of a text based on the letters of the DNA of one gene
* physical movement based on the amino acids of the genes

Music will:

* work with C, G, A and T (which can be D or B flat) as notes, but will transpose them a lot to get more variety.

My goal is to produce a twenty minute piece of a fairly abstract quality with lots of visual and sonic variety, obvious coherence, and an alien quality (the voice of the virus). It shouldn't be necessary to have any of the information in this explana-

--- Larry Johnson

Origins and Ends

While societies confine their practices to be more covert, artists refine their practices to be overt.

Performance is art overt.

--- Donald Burgy
In 1980, the artists in the Fort Point Channel area established the Fort Point Arts Community (FPAC) office to coordinate efforts for preserving their community area. "Open Studios" is an ongoing tradition in the arts community which provides a special opportunity for visitors to observe the artists' working environment, discuss the artwork that is made, and purchase work if desired.

Since 1984, FPAC has held its Group Show at Mobius, featuring the work of artists who, for one reason or another are unable to open their studios during this weekend. Following are statements by a few of the number of artists who will be participating in the FPAC Group Show at Mobius.

The Last Words

Words are the last thing anyone needs to experience art. In fact, the only commentary I have any tolerance for is that which teaches you to get along without it.

Quiet down everyone -- we won't be able to hear ourselves see!

-- Ellen Young

My photography is comprised of black and white imagery spanning the past six years. I have completed one portfolio of fifteen prints of portraits from the East Boston area. Currently I am completing portfolios on the MBTA and Revere Beach and in the last year have begun work on a series of photographs printed from copy negatives shot from polaroid images left uncoated which have degraded over a period of time. For the most part my photography is straight-forward and concentrated on a personal reflection of the kinds of beauty which I find around me.

-- Todd Gieg

My paintings are abstract images based on my experiences in the Sonoran Desert and Santa Catalina Mountains of Arizona. The medium is either oil on canvas or acrylic and pastel on unprimed canvas.

-- Laurie Hasty

Through representational painting I deal with seemingly innocent interactions of figures. However through the use of color, scale and composition the innocence of the subject matter is lost to a feeling of impending doom. While my composition and color are a strong focus of my work, they are not intended to overwhelm the philosophical idea of the duality of life around us. Whether confronted with a 4 foot child or being exposed to intense sunlight at a beach, the special issues are intended to create a questionable feeling of one's own perspective, literally and philosophically.

-- Joan Ryan

For a sculpture to work it must be understandable to the eye. The parts and process within one's grasp, available. As a sculptor I want the ability to manipulate space, orient lines, and define boundaries. Moreover, I want the ability to cause balance and create movement among the parts. These pieces are made by forming linear elements, end to end, into a continuous loop. At what angle and direction these elements take will depend upon the sculptor's eye. But it is upon the viewer's eye that we must depend if the sculpture itself is seen from beginning to end.

-- Charles Deffenbaugh
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Mobius Works-in-Progress program #24 is scheduled for some time in February/March, 1988. Exact dates will be announced in November. Artists put on your thinking caps! Please submit yer proposals for performances (20 min. maximum, lo -tech) by November. Or call us for details. Thanks!

ABOVE THE TREE LINE
Betty Fain and Dancers
October 23 - 25

Above the Tree Line evolved from my readings on the people, geography, and early mountain-engineering expeditions in Nepal. The physical and emotional images of the struggle, anguish, exhilaration, drive, despair, serenity, and affection that were evoked by the photographs and texts became the focus of my working. Each of the four sections of the evening-long piece began with an image drawn from a specific source -- the torturous descent of Annapurna by the 1950 French Expedition; the ascent of Everest by the 1963 American Expedition; the early treks on primitive paths through high country; the description of people and life in remote villages. I used physical postures from photographs and my imagination to develop the movement, which is kinetic and gestural. To create an emotional state through the movement and gesture, I worked on projecting the character of a situation, so there seems to be a story.

-- Betty Fain

PAULA HUNTER & DANCERS
October 29 & 30

I will present one new work and several other choreographed works, most of which I recently premiered in New York City at the Cunningham Studio.

All of these works are characterized by my interest in revealing the secret world of the unconscious. Merce Cunningham and John Cage wanted to expand choreographic possibilities with the use of chance. I want to expand those possibilities by controlling my conscious decisions in favor of those decisions which are rooted in a hidden reality.

The new work, as yet untitled, is inspired by the ideas and work of Giorgio de Chirico, the early Surrealist painter. I am especially affected by his statement that: "To be really immortal a work of art must go completely beyond the limits of the human good sense and logic will be missing from it."

A reviewer once wrote that I "seemed to reach the strange by staying with the ordinary"; I believe that is true of all the work I produce. And yet I use "strange" sound -- anything from Sonic Youth to a spoken monologue -- I certainly do not use costumes associated with dance and my movement combines Butoh-like slow motion, street dancing, athletics, contact improvisation and traditional dance technique. But by using the unconscious as my guide, I think that the strange and the ordinary become almost interchangeable.

-- Paula Hunter

Topological
Keeping the blade and thumb
a rocking system
while ratcheting the wrist
the apple spins
dropping skins
like bird flights
long slow carves
down to the smacking
bulb of
gristle.
Twisting.
And Daddio said "Good trying is risky business."

-- Eric Hughes
SOUND/IMAGE/EVENTS

Larry Johnson
Richard Lerman
Tom Plsek

November 4

Tom Plsek and I are working on an improvisatory piece based on different levels of memory, from immediate through short term to long term (with levels in between). I will be working primarily with text-sound, although computer graphics and slides will probably play a part. Some of my memory sources will be extra-cranial -- a pile of notebooks going back to 1973. I have been rehearsing independently of Tom, with my daughter Arielle, born April 12, 1987. I expect to really flow with improvised vocal sounds by November. In keeping with the theme of reminiscence, I am looking over my earlier work, particularly for slides and tape, and will dust off and spruce up one or two pieces that have never been seen at Mobius -- possibly CENTER, for overlapping circular slides in primary colors and music based on the number 108, or ASHOSHOAOASHASHO, a piece for slides, music, and text-sound, for which the title is a mini-score.

-- Larry Johnson

Recent work of mine has drawn from continued use of transducers as process and image. Mostly, I have chosen to work with microphone type transducers, and there the central idea has always been that a microphone can make a small sound large. In our daily usage, we only think of the end product or use 'micro' phone. But I've also done work since 1980 with several pieces that use images of nuclear energy and nuclear processes. I have installed a piece in Bremen, West Germany and in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, called FOOTNOTE FROM CHernobyL. This piece will now have a performance version -- and this grew out of an improvisation/performance I gave in May in Eindhoven. The piece will be a trio here, with S/I/E and as with all the nuclear pieces, a central idea/image is that of the seductiveness of technology.

-- Richard Lerman

STRING DUET 2

Taylor McLean

November 5 and 7

String Duet 2 is a development of the first String Duet performed at a Mobius Works-in-Progress evening in March. The piece will be performed, as it was in March, by two air-dancers, Nicole Chuang and myself, and by musician/narrator John Voigt.

The piece is built of sculpture, dance, music and language. These elements do not always work in a concerted manner, often at cross-purposes, and intentionally so. Sense, non-sense, countersense, sensuality, sound and movement compete for attention when crossing the street. Why not here? We should all be used to it by now, especially after thirty years of Ornette. String Duet may be theatre, but I would not know because I am not a theatre person. But I know that it is a sculpture, I know that it is dance, and I know that it is music.

It is about making a space of one's own. This includes the notion -- familiar to every child -- that space does not come into existence apart from the space one makes for oneself. . . The rest is someone else's mistake. When the ground is taken from under your feet, and that horizontal motion often called progress is blocked by an accumulation of socio-cultural debris, how do you define a positive reality? As such, the piece is an oblique parable about the condition of the artist and the condition of underdevelopment, a perenially twinned set of concerns in the African-American community for about 350 years. In both cases survival depends on the ability to make space and on the endurance to continue making and reinventing space, because what is made will be vaporized, or appropriated, or revised by the present owners of history shortly after it appears. String Duet 2 will try to create an abstract model large enough, and detailed enough, to connect with the audience on an emotional, experiential or conceptual level.

An earlier description of String Duet 1 is again appropriate. We will use our bodies, two pulleys and a rope to describe moments where mass-in-space (what you see) and energy-in-time (what you feel) become indistinguishable through the release of the kinesthetic sense of location. If successful, we will have a reality that is not immediately convertible into real estate. Clear enough?

The prerequisites for the performance are:

- Fear
- Place
- Space
- Work
- Ground
- Verticality
- Corruption
- Partnership
- Suspension

-- Taylor McLean
MOBIUS PERFORMING GROUP MEMBERS
Jude Aronstein
Joan Gale
Laure Liverman
Mari Novotny-Jones
Bob Raymond
Jonathan Scheuer
Marilyn Arsem
Dan Lang
David Miller
Mario-Erik Paoli
Julie Rochlin
Victor Young

MOBIUS STAFF
Marilyn Arsem, Director
Mary-Charlotte Domandi, General Manager
Nancy Adams, Publicity
Beth Giles, Intern

MOBIUS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
George Moseley, Treasurer
John Shea, Clerk
Janie Cohen
Elizabeth Wyatt

Hey! If you're moving, please let us know at least six weeks in advance. Send us a postcard or something like that, ok?

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