

MOBIUS NEWSLETTER

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The PLEASURE°ADDICTION°DANGER programs bring our second season here to a close. While the summer may seem quiet, things are brewing.

We are planning a two-week summer workshop with Beth Galston, an installation artist. She'll be creating an environment with scrim and incandescent lighting.

"Layers of whiteness and light build up to obscure our vision, then as we move through, the space slowly unfolds its structure and boundaries."

The workshop will be with performers, dancers and musicians. It will be an opportunity to collaborate, and explore and create performances within the installation. We are planning on an informal presentation at the end of the two weeks. If you're interested in participating, call us.

Mobius Performing Group will also be working on JUNK LOVE over the summer. It's a sprawling, large-group performance conceived by David Miller, and will be presented in November as a co-production with TheaterWorks.

The SOUND ART AT MOBIUS series will continue next season, with programs of sound artists from the U.S., Denmark, the Netherlands, England and Belgium. David Tudor will be here first, in September.

Next season first newsletter will arrive in September. We'd like to expand it to include graphics, so if you have something, send it in! Also, is anyone interested in designing an unusual mobius strip logo??

And if you're interested in presenting work at Mobius next year, call us!!

PLEASURE°ADDICTION°DANGER

Sponsored by Mobius Performing Group

May 30 - June 14

One of the goals of the Mobius Performing Group has been to expand its work, to include contact with other area artists working in different media. Our Works-in-Progress programs (the most recent given this past February) have represented one step in this direction, and will be continued. The current project, Pleasure°Addiction°Danger, is another significant step forward.

We have invited a number of artists, working in sculpture, music, photography, performance, video, dance, film and poetry (at least!) to collaborate with us and each other on the creation of new pieces

which express (somehow!) facets of the pleasure-addiction-danger constellation. This topic was chosen by M P G, as being the most resonant and buzzing of the number of possibilities that were discussed. Seven pieces are now in the works and are described below, at various points in their development.

What's most exciting about this project is not only the diversity of media represented, but also the fact that most of these collaborations are taking place between people who haven't worked together before. As the following statements reveal, this meeting of individuals, art forms and topics is proving to be very fertile and should make for an exciting series of pieces.

BREATHE/DON'T BREATHE

Marilyn Arsem attempts a solo piece on Pleasure°Addiction°Danger.

Running around I try to think about whether I have any addictions, what my addictions are, what do I find pleasurable, what do I find dangerous. Nothing? How dull, how safe, how insulated, how middle-of-the-road. What is a risk? Making/performing a solo piece. Something I've never done. But I don't want to make a piece about making a piece. So what are my addictions, what is pleasurable, what is dangerous? I intend to find out by June first, and I intend to sing it.

-- Marilyn Arsem

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L000VE. Is it addictive, does it draw you ever further into a closed-system circle with the Beloved? Or is it releasing, does it let you go back out with more power, more focus, more touch? How about being ALOOONE? Is it creative, generating plans and dreams from solitude? Does it come from repulsion, two negative poles driving each other away? Or is it just isolation?

We're developing a piece which involves (at least) quadrophonic poetry with projected images and movement, as a performer at a bank of machines and a dancer work to sort out all of these questions. All of this seen a little obscurely, shadowed behind a scrim. We're hoping to develop an organic image of the performers as heart/head/nerve center, with the poetry and projections serving as what is seen and spoken.

And what happens when it becomes too much to keep figuring out being TOGETHER and being ALONE? What happens when the Mundanity Principle (which would like to call itself the Reality Principle) intervenes? The piece will have to be interrupted somehow.

-- Dallas Miller, David Miller, Matt Smotzer, Andrew Neumann

* * *

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

We're working on songs for live performers, tape, video and computer text display.

-- Dan Mydlack and Jonathan Scheuer

* * *

INCORRECT FORMS OF LOVE

we will make you familiar with a friend who is sleeping in your house . . . you didn't know your friend was sleeping in your house . . .

LOVE+REALITY IS DANGEROUS

THE DANGER OF BEING ONESELF

self-revelment / revelation : deconstruction limb by limb

why have your subconscious do it to you when you can do it consciously

EXPRESSION OF POWER IS A SENSUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD

pleasure in action : violence to make it count

being physical with someone receptive demanding more

TOTAL EXERTION

crossing the edge to return

vulnerability

so desperate for something that you are over the edge for it

WE WANT MORE LIFE, FUCKER!

Lauri Liverman
Suzanne Shepard
Mary Traynor

* * * *

Pleasure. Danger. Plea-sure. Dan-ger. For some reason these two keep bouncing back and forth, and that one in the middle (addiction) gets lost. Plus these two rhyme, more or less; ZSUR. JUR.

I am reading this book on translation, and on p. 22 it discusses David Antin's idea on understanding. Under a capital U (ZSUR, JUR) it discusses the idea of Understanding as "tuning" of 2 opposites together, like when 2 people walk together and adjust to each other, instead of the usual idea of understanding as a "ghostly merging of identities, of 2 people standing on the same spot."

On p. 23 under a capital V (V for what? -- danger sign, yield sign, aggressive male counterpart to U?) the book says for tuning, or walking together, to happen, there has to be trust. It gives the example of trusting Wittgenstein's un-demonstratable black beetles each of us carry inside.

I like the way these two words and two letters, U and V, play off each other, and begin to think of a utopia where pleasure and danger tune together, while two people walk side by side with black beetles inside . . .

-- Gary Duehr, with Paul Miller, George Mosely, Julie Rochlin

* * *

Artificial Light (The Disillusioned Actor)

Begun as a collaboration between actress Mari Novotny-Jones and filmmaker John Gianvito, "Artificial Light" has developed into a meditation on the actor's plight.

Illusion: I would be a member of a theatre company that would do classics, modern and new playwrights, and experimental work in performance. I would be able to act in everything and never have to prove myself in endless auditions in numerous theaters all over the city. The artistic commitment would lie in doing shows that would touch people, give them a sense of history, raise social consciousness, maybe even change their lives. All of us, directors, actors, writers and technical artists, would support each other in our work, would challenge each other. There would be much love and many risks taken. There would be integrity. I would make a living wage and not be preoccupied with money. The audience would love us.

Danger: I have lost my way in the maze of commercialism.

Addiction: The only thing to do is to keep questioning and searching and working. I hope I will find the brilliance of that illusion again.

Pleasure: In the balance of words, movements, emotions, sounds, and light, the actor and the audience connect and there we should feel divine; rejoicing in the most common of bonds we as humans strive to share: love, honesty, beauty, and the spirit.

-- Mari Novotny-Jones



As I make my first step into theater, I continue to lose sleep, worrying at night about the outcome of this piece, while the production adorns itself more and more with my questioning. Mostly, does theater hold any appeal for me?

-- John Gianvito

This is theater on the ledge of theater with an ear towards the people shouting "Jump".

* * *

We've met once. 5 different angles to Pleasure/Addiction/Danger. What has evolved remains mostly in words and thoughts at the time of this writing.

We envision the piece as an installation of our combined obsessions. A twisted wall sculpture with no apparent inside or outside, right side, wrong side. This 'wall' confuses the sensibilities regarding the boundaries . . . of "space" (in its most literal interpretations). Tom and Bart are interested in sculpture and spatial transformation. The element of Danger has a strong attraction. Tom has been known to suspend large boulders and panes of glass. Together Bart and Tom talked of transforming a vertical wall into a horizontal ceiling. Sheets of thin glass with large rocks and people beneath. Within this seemingly precarious, dangerous environ Mario, Jude and Malcolm develop their obsessions. Mario has been working on a multi-channel audio/video, "The Gates of Delirium", with found sound (TV) and found footage (porn films) that has been reconstructed/deconstructed, "scratched" and processed. The thrust of the tape is desire/need & anarchy.

"Desire is collapsing. Fearing death, we avoid freedom and choose religion, wealth and sex appeal." Within the walls, monitors will be placed with this video piece assaulting the senses.



Malcolm, a composer of sounds, is working with sound/movement repetitions/improvisation. Doors and openings opening into something else. Breaking through/transformations within the wall are all concepts he's interested in.

Jude is wanting to move through the space, experimenting with falling and balance as a response to the environment. There is also an attraction to the pleasure/danger compulsion and how this transforms from playful falling to violent crashing.

So that's the vision.

-- Jude Aronstein, Tom Brennah, Malcolm Goldstein, Mario-Erik Paoli, Bart Uchida

* * *

These are the statements we've received at "press time". Given the rapidly evolving nature of this project, it's inevitable there will be more people involved than have been indicated above. We're sorry for any omissions, but it'll all be made up when the programs are printed!

INTERVIEW: DAN LANG ASKS DAVID MILLER ABOUT THE 36 DRAMATIC SITUATIONS

DL: Why don't you start by giving a brief explanation of what you've been doing every month for the past 2½ years.

DM: Well, I've been working on a piece called The 36 Dramatic Situations. It is inspired by a book of that name by Georges Polti, who wrote the book around the turn of the century. In this book Polti divides all of drama, that is, playwriting, and fiction by extension, into 36 generic situations or plot types. This is his own schematization of this. I'd heard about this before I ran into the book, as a sort of weird byway of literary or dramatic theory. One of those things that you sort of hear about and say, "How odd." So in December of 1982, at a used book sale at the BPL, I saw a copy of the book for a dollar, and I said, "Gee, great." I bought it, not knowing what I was going to do with it. It's a well-enough written book, but it's not a real good "read", you know. I knew that if I was to sit down and read straight through it I could finish it in about two days, and I would have learned nothing. So I puzzled for a couple of days about it, and said, "What am I going to do?" And I just got one of these little flashes. Somehow I said to myself, "Well, 36, you could make performances out of these little things, and that would be one a month for three years. And here we are in December of 82, we're about to start a new year, so it's perfect, we'll go through December of 1985." That was the origin of it.

DL: Do the 36 dramatic situations cover life in general as well as the stage? Are these 36 dramatic situations which can be said to represent all the dramatic situations which occur in life?

DM: Well, I think that would actually be part of the theory because, according to traditional thinking about drama, drama is supposed to be the complete mirror of life.

DL: I was wondering if you would summarize the way in which you personalize the material, or whether you can only talk about it in terms of each specific month.

DM: The main question that I ask myself every month is, "How do I personally feel about this given situation?" For example, last fall there were four situations in a row which had to do with the concept of sacrifice. Either sacrifice of oneself or of a loved one. Meaning, frequently, physical sacrifice. There was one, November's situation, "Necessity of Sacrificing a Loved One" was the name of it, and the prototype for this was the Abraham and Isaac story. And there were two possible reasons for sacrificing a loved one, for one's God (as with Abraham and Isaac) or for the betterment of the state. Now I was really depressed by this situation, I don't like it, I don't like the concepts, I don't like the assumptions behind it, I don't like anything about it.

DL: So how did you deal with it?

DM: Well, I'm not exactly sure how I hit on this solution, but I took out an ad in the "Messages" column in the Phoenix. It was basically a message from Isaac to Abraham, saying, I forget the exact words, but saying "Fuck off Pop, you're not sacrificing me for anybody, and if you come near me again, you're never going to see me for the rest of your life."

DL: So you took the victim's --

DM: I took the victim's point of view and said, the entire concept is ridiculous. God and Country, no, it's not worth killing your son for.

DL: Have you ever enacted one of the situations as a ritual??

DM: Yes. One would be number 11, "The Enigma", from November of '83. It had to do with a mystery, a lot of detective novels fell under that category, but also more abstract kinds of things. And I was figuring, "what's my enigma?" That month I was going home for Thanksgiving, and I realized that I had avoided visiting three places in Amherst, which is my home town, where I had previously lived. Two of them were family homes, and one of them was the first apartment that I lived in with my ex-wife. And I had avoided going to see them. So I said, "All right, how about going to see them?" I was able to contact one of the families that currently lived there. They were generous enough to allow me in. The other two families didn't respond, I wrote letters and they didn't respond at all. Which isn't surprising, because it's a bizarre request, you know. What I wound up doing, though, was visiting each of the places when the people weren't there. I didn't obviously, go into the places where I had no response. I did go into the house of the family I had contacted.

In fact, they even told me where to find the key, it was really amazing. So I went in and I was all by myself in this house. It didn't amount to some kind of formal ritualized action, but it certainly, for all three places, involved a real specific focus on experiencing the memories associated with the physical, geographical spaces.

DL: So far what you've described involved mainly the participants, so I want to ask how important to any of these, or in general, how important to you in this series is an audience.

DM: Oh well, it actually varies from month to month. It varies very significantly. The last month's, which was March, I did as a short piece for the Vernal Equinox Festival, with Eventworks. It really has to do with a bunch of factors, and this is in fact one of the things that's really interesting about it. What I do from month to month depends not only on the nature of the situation and how I feel about it, the kinds of imagery I come up with, but also if there are any specific performing opportunities available or not. I have done some pieces, really not for about a year and a half now, which were outdoor, unannounced types of performances.

DL: What's your favorite?

DM: My favorite, oh boy. I've had several that I've liked a whole lot. OK, I don't have a favorite but I can mention one that has good memories for me. The first phone answering machine performance I did, in either March or April of 1984, was "Murderous Adultery". It was the two lovers murdering the third member of the triangle. This was actually a big phone machine performance I did with a couple of friends, and we rounded up about twelve audience people. And we were making masses of phone calls, and keeping schedules of when we seemed to be able to contact people, when it was most likely that they were going to be in and out. That one was a lot of fun. What was interesting about that one was that essentially we were telling a story, but we were telling a story with all of the connecting tissue dropped out. So that I was avoiding an explicit indication of what the plot was. The result, of course, was that most people didn't know what the plot was. But it seemed to be intriguing enough to many people that they wanted to find out what was coming up next, even though it wasn't quite clear what was going on. It was explicitly directed toward the audience as voyeur, as in "Rear Window".

DL: When you think of the whole thing, even up to this point it's not finished, right now it's a work in progress.

DM: Yeah, it's been a work in progress for 2½ years.

DL: What is the significance about it in terms of a statement about your art?

DM: Beats me! Truly, I don't know! Well, I probably know something. It has a lot to do with my capacity for sticking to tasks which most people would find incredibly tedious, even when I find them incredibly tedious, as I have from time to time. It's had a lot to do with strengthening my own sense of self-discipline. There's one thing that Keith Kurman said, which was kind of neat, kind of inspiring. He said that it was important to him even just to know that this thing was going on.

DL: I would venture to say the reason it's important to know that these things are going on is that it reinforces a belief that these things are important in real life, because they go on all the time and have connections month to month, and are not just separate, isolated and lonely occasions of art-making, divorced from daily life.

DM: This thing really from the very beginning has been woven into the fabric of my life. There's been the complete range, from private actions to public performances, and really every stage in between, I think. It's been an ongoing fact of my life and has changed my life. I guess if I were to set this up as being of benefit to anybody else in any way, it would have to do with a model for what is possible in terms of integrating art activities with life activities. Think of the one-year performance of Tehching Hsieh and Linda Montano, where they were tied together. The personal discipline that was involved in that, 24 hours a day for a year, is far greater than this project, but what it has in common is that, again, nobody saw the whole piece. But people knew that it was happening, people now know that it did happen and can make an imaginative effort to project themselves into that situation, to say "Wow, what would it be like, that mutual dependence?" That kind of discipline, that kind of dedication, can provide inspiration as a mental model. This is a much easier kind of thing to do, although it lasts longer. But maybe it's a model also for integrating your life and your art.

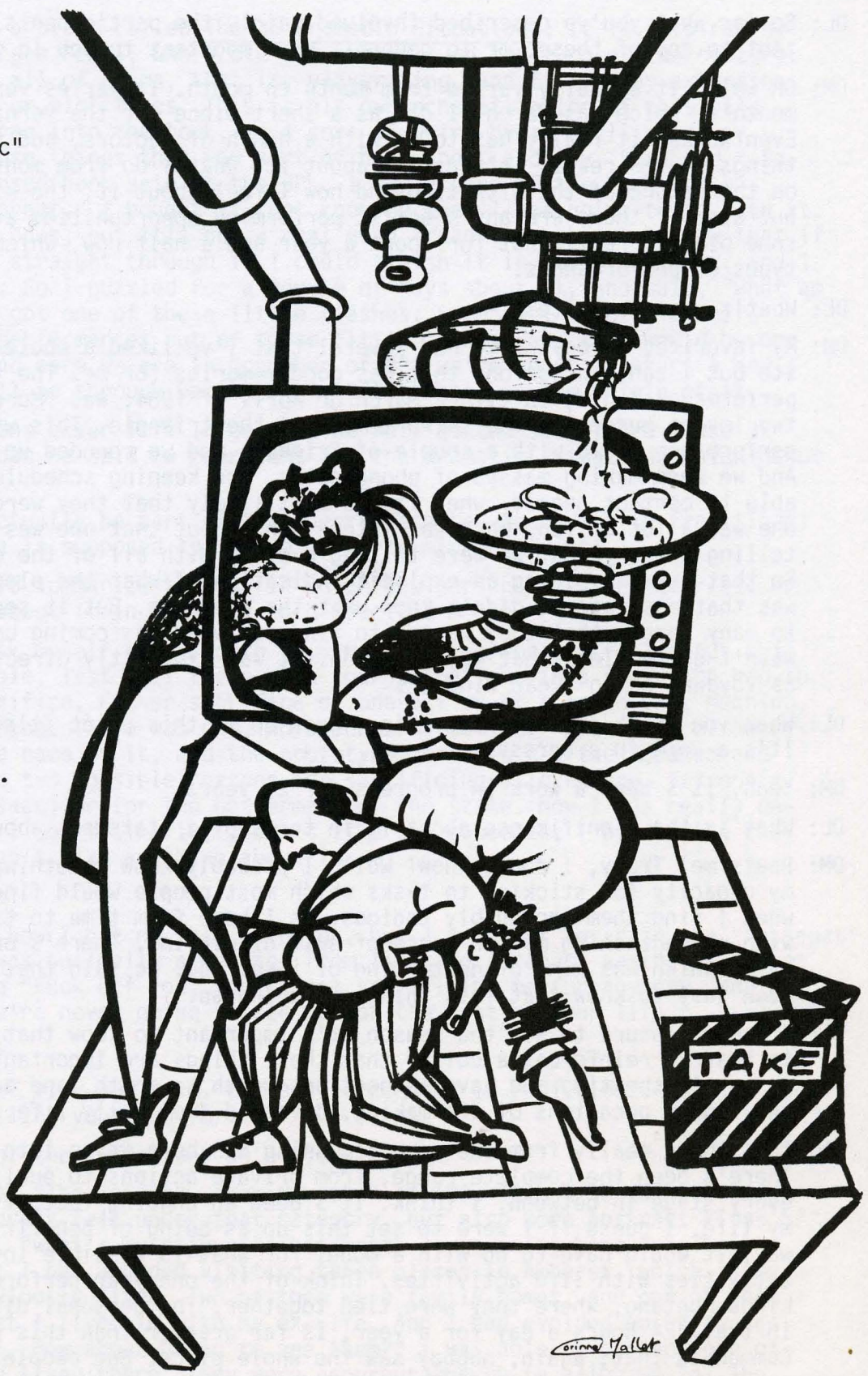
On April 20th Mobius held its 1st (and perhaps now annual) "Performance of a Party" fundraiser. Knowing that no Mobius event is really complete without a review, the ROLE of a REVIEWER was bought by a party-goer. Mr. K.K. Lube felt it his dutiful obligation as "one time critic" to out do every critic in town. We are happy to include his review in this newsletter.

A series of impressions:
A special to the Newsletter.
by K.K. Lube

p-ART-ies.....I've been to so many of them, from Miss Perle's in Washington, to the Mr. and Ms. Wines in Newport. The decor set the tone. Peeling paint and exposed pipes. An unpolished floor--bare walls, (had the paintings been removed?)

The invites included mostly unfamiliar people. An improper cast for an evening of ebulliance. What about the sets? Pre-opening rumors heralded global themes. Directorships were offered to the highest bidders. The scripting seemed, like the acting, less controlled than the environment ought to have been, but then of course the inattention to details made more complex the obtrusive presence of various media. While able to accurately record, reproduce and delineate the semi-logical cohesiveness, and intangible heuristic pan-natural events occuring at this financial uplifting, I was completely confused.

Parties as a form have been prominent social expressions of carrying-on for several thousand years. I was repulsed by the degradation of such delightful old forms as the "post-theater gathering", the "closing opening", the "opening-closing", and the Debs-on-the -scene.



THE ARTIST'S VOICE

The Problem of Language

Yet is it?

Did someone argue it was?

And if no one ever has, does that mean that there is less of one?

And who is the third party?

And who is the first?

And who is the second?

*

The first party attends a performance by the second party who enters and speaks.

Or enters and plays a tape which speaks.

Or engages a projector which beams speaking-things onto a screen.

Or writes quietly in the background.

Or sings quietly in the foreground.

Or interrupts to burst in with a speak-torrent.

Or looks on from a mild distance remarking on the goings-on.

Or talks to himself.

Or talks to the first party.

Or talks to the other things.

Or suggests speaking by somehow not speaking.

Or causes one to imagine what must have been said previously, offstage, before the things arrived.

In any event: talk.

*

Who is talking?

-- The second party.

What is he saying?

-- I can't hear from back here.

Then what is he talking for?

-- Quiet!

What if he stopped? What would happen?

-- But he's still talking. He insisting on it. He wants to talk.

*

TALKING: (Talk as idea-material)

This means only that. This can mean all of this. This is like this which is not here. I am not this.

You should remember this. This is true. This is indebted to that. This is a division of that.

This is important! I am historical! You are here! We should act!

*

And the problem is when talking stops being talking and becomes the act of talking pretending to be talking. Or when talking becomes a thing that wants to be a talk. Or when there is not enough talking for the things, which are poor, in reality. Or when talking increases dramatically to the lack of things, ideas, and human kindness.

(And yet, can there be just talk? Free of thingliness? Without pointing out past things, things that come to mind, obvious things lit in the corner . . . And not sounds, but talking, going on, word-things that follow one after the other, hitting the head, ear, and body-parts. . .)

-- Gary Duehr

BLACK DOT REPORT

On April 16 I did my Heat of History piece at a place called The Garage in Montpelier VT. I shared an evening with two dancers. We all drove down from Burlington in separate cars. I drove down in a van with three friends and we saw a beautiful sunset away over the hills behind us.

Only about 15 people came but a reviewer from the VT Council of the Arts was there. I had applied for a grant and he came to judge my work.

The performance went pretty well but it was not the best I have ever done. Because there were so few people I did not get a lot of energy from the audience. At one point in the piece I went outside to ride my bicycle and try to produce the Heat of History in my body. The audience was all ready to go but I kept forgetting things I needed and had to rush back in and get them.

After the show we went out with some old friends who live in the Montpelier area. I was very hungry so I bought some nachos at the bar. A friend of mine who manages the state papers for VT told me about a course he wanted to teach. The course would deal with certain small VT towns that consistently voted Democrat against their own best interests and the fate of the dinosaurs. Then we talked about how many kids go through a dinosaur stage and a cowboy stage when they are growing up.

On the way back the wind was very strong and pushed the van from side to side on the highway. I fell asleep in the back of the van.

-- Peter Burns

EXTRA: Marilyn Arsem was awarded a four-week residency at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, N.H. This is one of the oldest art colonies in the U.S.; Marilyn will be there for the month of August, working on the development of Audience in Harborland, an outdoor, multi-location event which will surface in a year or so. You'll hear more about this!

Also, Marilyn and Richard Lerman recently attended the National Association of Artists' Organizations conference in Houston. They talked with a great many people involved with spaces similar to Mobius across the country, and were relieved to discover that

the challenges we face here at Mobius are not unique. (!)

Thanks to a Mass. Council Travel Grant, Marilyn has made trips to Seattle and Portland, and will soon be travelling to Los Angeles and San Francisco, meeting with the directors and staffs of other performance spaces. We're beginning to explore the possibilities of exchanges between artists who have performed at Mobius and West Coast artists. Specifically, we hope to set up a Northeast/Northwest exchange program with Seattle and Portland spaces.



MORE STOP PRESS NEWS!
Marilyn Arsem and Richard Lerman will be teaching a course on Performance Art at the Summer Museum School, 230 The Fenway, from July 1 till August 11. The focus of the course will be on creating new pieces. For more information, call 267-1219.

-8-

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MOBIUS

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