

# MOBIUS NEWSLETTER

354 CONGRESS STREET BOSTON  
(Fort Point) 617 542-7416

Vol. 4 #4 Jan/Feb 1987

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.

## WHAT ARE INSTALLATIONS AND WHY IS MOBIUS SHOWING THEM IN JANUARY?

Installations are art as environment. "I am for art that comes out of a chimney like black hair and scatters in the sky," Claes Oldenburg wrote in Store Days, referring to his downtown New York creation of 1961 that was something between a store and a gallery. It displayed cardboard and plaster suits hung in rows and false shirts and food items on shelves. On some evening Happenings were held there, performances of domestic scenes acted by his friends, impromptu plotless

playlets, the forbears of many of the performances presented at Mobius.

Some other ancestors of installation and performance art were the Dada Cafe Voltaire in Zurich in 1916, a reaction to the absurdities of World War I; the Merzbau of Kurt Schwitters, in which the artists created an environmental dwelling collaged from the debris of the outer world; the theater works of Antonin Artaud; and the elaborate drawings devised by the Surrealists in which to present  
con't p. 10

## WELCOME TO THE INSTALLATION PROJECT AT MOBIUS

The new year brings our newest project, a series of installations curated by Helen Shlien. This project continues our efforts to provide a place for work that can't easily be produced in Boston, either because of its interdisciplinary nature or its spatial requirements. It is funded in part by a grant from the Visual Arts program of the National Endowment of the Arts.

In January, Meredith Davis of Concord and Dan Devine of New York City, will each take a full room and create an installation. February will feature the installations of Polish emigre Ewa Kuryluk, now living in New York City, and Bart Uchida of Boston. Special thanks goes to Boston artists Tom Brennan, Richard Lerman, David Miller and Michael Timpson, who interviewed the artists for this issue of the newsletter.

Mobius will be open Wednesday through Saturday, noon to five, throughout the two months. Fight the winter doldrums, and come to see the installations!

-- Marilyn Arsem

MT: Would you like to talk about the piece you're going to do at Mobius?

MD: As much as I can. It's still in the forming stages, so it's not totally coherent. It involves the same issues, the nature of existence, trying to connect up with those things. It will have two sides to it, similar to the recent piece I did at the Kingston Gallery last summer. The thing about that piece was a new element that I started working with and which will be carried through because of the structural differences at Mobius, which is utilizing outside light. In my studio pieces and other piece previously I've blocked out light or totally diffused it so that you could not see outside. In this case at Mobius there are the four nice arched windows in the front of the gallery. I originally thought I would diffuse the light so that it would be

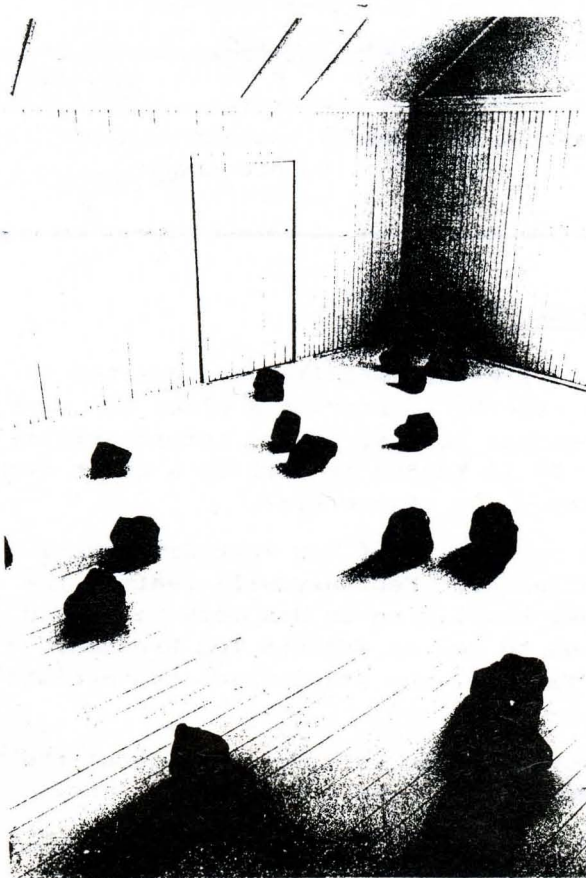
# MEREDITH DAVIS

## JAN 3-25

sort of blocked, the view, but I'm going to in fact use that full view into the chaotic world outside as part of the piece. The other half of the installation, to the right of the entry, will be a combination of panels, with white pella translucent material cascading down from the ceiling. People will be walking on peat moss so that they will physically be feeling something underfoot. The peat moss stops at the edge of where the door is, so that there will be a drastic change. You walk into the regular gallery flooring, and then you've got to step over this little boundary, and you start walking on peat moss, and it's a very soft type of thing and already associations sort of start bubbling, I think. The interior of the space has a skylight which I've been playing with, and directly under that will be a bed of coal, which again can be walked on. The noise, the sounds made by that, I think are very dynamic.

MT: How do you feel about people interpreting your work, assigning symbols to the objects you use in your work, like the coal, and those fish?

MD: I find a frustration with that. I find that my work has to be approached in sort of an Eastern manner. In other words you have to approach it from your senses, rather than an analytical mindset. I think if you try to label it you're going to run into trouble with



the true content of the work. There are things in my work that are -- I use particular elements quite a bit, over and over, I've used fish, I've used coal, I've used red lines, and they have specific meanings for me. But I don't feel that what it means for me has to be what it is for everybody. I would hope that there would be an underlying gut reaction for whoever sees the piece, that might be more important, sort of an understanding. It's like a connection with some higher forces. And the other stuff, the symbolism of the materials I use, to me is a very superficial aspect of it.

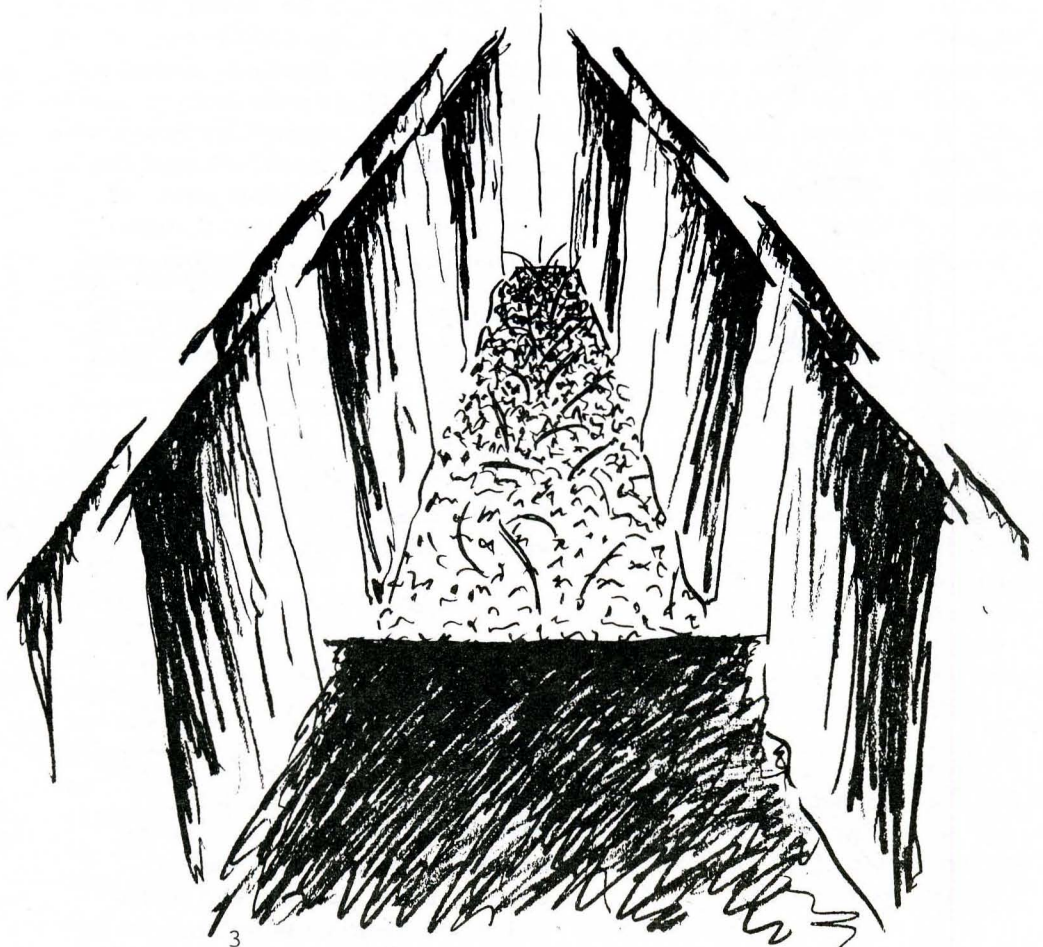
MT: I was thinking that when I walk into your work, that there is a sense of spiritual calm, but at the same time I get a sense of madness of the unexpected.

MD: I think that a lot of the unexpected in my work has to do with the materials. I take things out of the natural context. Coal you don't often see used as art (laughing). Or dead fish. Especially with gaping mouths. And so maybe that is, in a sense, the surprise. You wonder how long you can maintain the surprise, and whether it's an important element, but I guess for me it is. I mean, you're absorbing stuff from all sides, floor, ceiling, walls, everywhere. There has to be some type of jolt, to bring you to focus in on what you're looking at, such that it's not necessarily just another room. I feel like there needs to be a jolt. You know, to awaken in some way, something in the viewer.

My intent is to create an environment in which the viewer experiences a sense of connectedness, whether it be with him/herself, the immediate environment, or the forces of nature. The materials I use are commonplace and familiar, but not generally what one thinks of as objects of beauty. My interest in them has to do with their unassuming and unpretentious nature. The materials range from being archaic substances of nature to modern industrially produced items.

I admit to reading a fair amount of material relevant to my work: books on Eastern philosophies, metaphysics, paleontology, and archeology. I use the information to help clarify what I have done once a piece has been completed, rather than to provide material for the specific purpose of creating new works. No doubt the information has some bearing on new work; however it seems to be mentally processed more through a system of osmosis than one of calculated action. My strongest source of inspiration continues to be observations of nature through the experience of rural living.

MEREDITH DAVIS

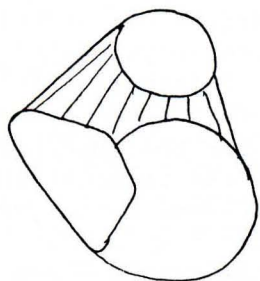


Sketch for Meredith Davis'  
Upcoming Installation

# DAN DEVINE

## JAN 3-25

RICHARD LERMAN TALKS WITH  
DAN DEVINE



RL: The last time I saw you, I remember that your work was kind of sculptural and also painterly.

DD: Yes, they were on the wall and on the floor...

RL: Has your work changed a lot since then?

DD: I suppose it has. It still has the same sense of concern for light and environment. The piece I'll be doing in January will be another environmental piece. There will be wall pieces and sculptural elements in the center of the room. Lighting will be an important part of it. The lighting will come primarily from the baseboards.

RL: Has being in New York, do you think, affected your work at all?

DD: Well, I suppose. I'm from New York originally. I lived in Boston for about four years, maybe five years.

RL: I always get the idea of Boston artists leaving here to go down to New York. I guess in your case, it was going back home.

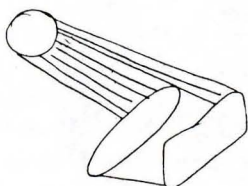
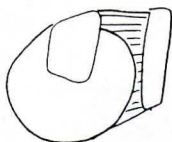
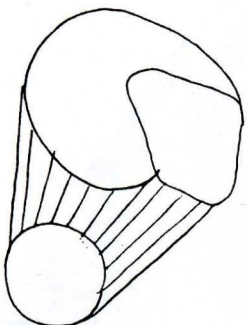
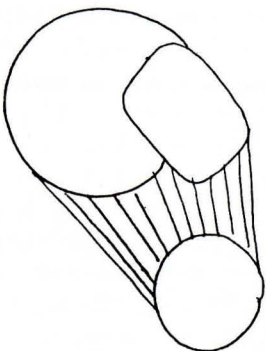
In terms of the processes you've been working with, have they changed at all or are they much the same? I recall that you worked with a lot of found objects.

DD: This is totally fabricated. The wall pieces are made of galvanized steel and they are based on industrial objects. They might be something as small as a pipe fitting or as large as a space ship. They are illusionist in that they look three-dimensional, but they aren't really. They're fairly low relief. There will also be pedestals, of the same material--galvanized steel-- in the center of the room. The pedestals will be lighted from the baseboards. Then when people walk around the space, their shadows will be cast onto the wall along with the shadows of the pedestals. The people become like objects and the shadows become memories of them, the same way the wall pieces are memories of objects that might have been on pedestals.

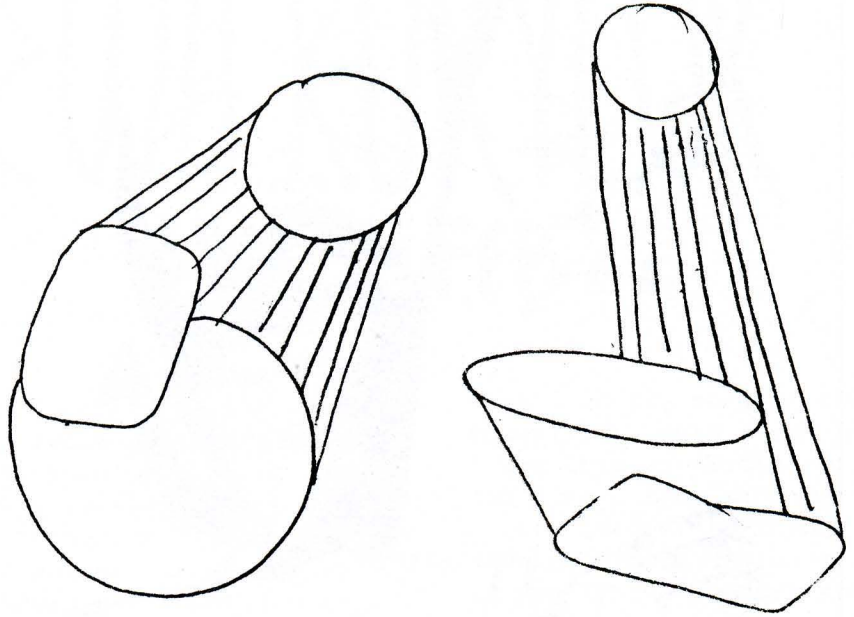
RL: It sounds different from the work that I had seen, but that was long enough ago that that would be expected.

DD: There was some illusionist stuff then, and there were some of the same concerns-- the things that become memories and how things would have two personalities. In the pieces that I did in '83, there was the paint as object and the paint as representation. And the metal pieces were sculptural objects that had their had their own size and personality, but they also referred to or alluded to another scale, so they could have been like land masses in a pictorial sense. There was always that play between the real and the alluded to. I think that there's still that same sort of sensibility to it.

RL: In terms of this coming show at Mobius, have you had any recent large scale shows along these lines?



DD: No. I've been in quite a few group shows in New York. One was curated by Steve Westfall. He did a show that was called "Transformations" at the Richard Greene Gallery on Wooster St. That was a very nice show to be in, because he was trying to find pieces that were abstract and also referred to the figure. There were a lot of natural types of materials used in it. Mine was one of the maybe two or three pieces that weren't of natural materials. A lot of people saw my work and I think started to understand a bit about it. I wouldn't say that I always work with the figure, but there's always something figural in the pieces.

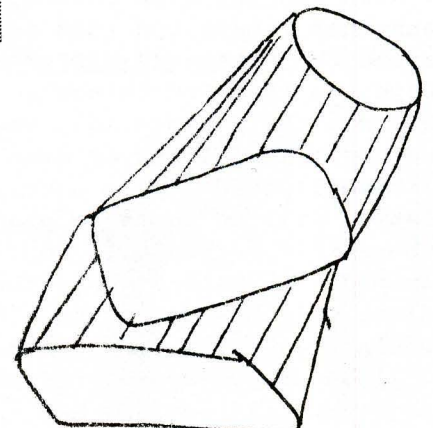
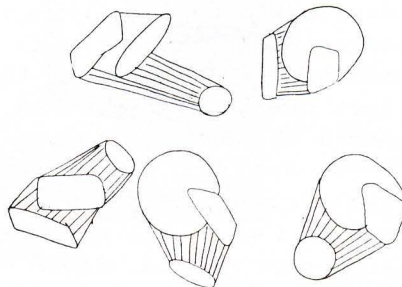
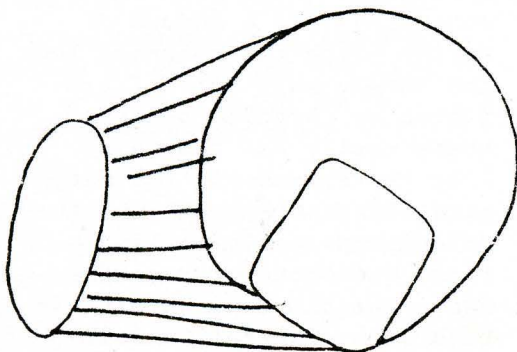
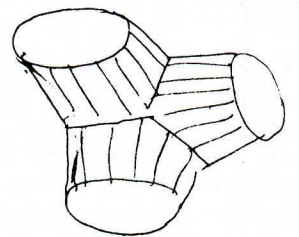
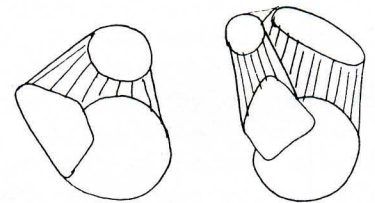
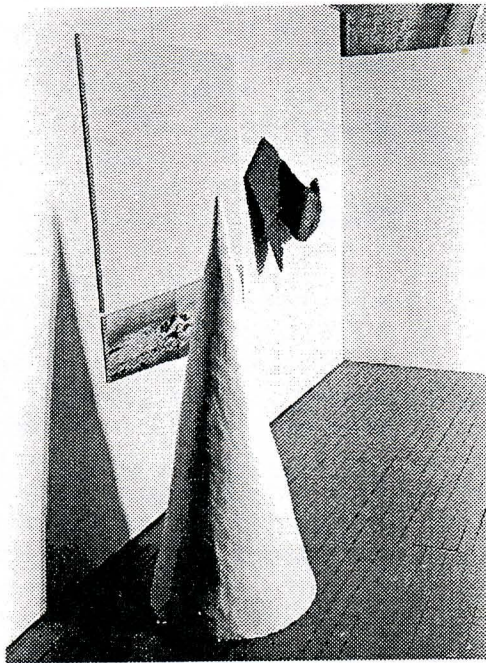


Sketches for Dan Devine's Upcoming Installation

RL: Have you thought of doing any collaborative work with any other artists in the New York area, perhaps in performance art or anything else?

DD: I was involved in a collaboration with a German artist who now resides in the United States, in New York. We also did a piece in Boston together. His name is Stefan Roloff. We worked pretty well together on the piece, but it wasn't a collaboration with a performer.

Some of my pieces I consider to be performance pieces. When a person walks into a space that is lighted in a particular way, it uses the shadows. This is a performance piece in my mind with the audience as the performer.





DAVID MILLER TALKS WITH  
EVA KURYLUK

DM: Would you talk a bit about the work you'll be doing at Mobius?

EK: I'm doing a very large installation, and it's going to be called "Theater of Love". I draw and paint on cotton, and then I hang and fold and drape the cotton in different ways, so that the things acquire a third dimension, they become like reliefs or even like sculptures. This installation will be partly a place where this cotton will be draped, and falling onto the floor will become cotton sculpture on the floor, and will be draped over different objects, like benches and chairs, and will over them

have the effect of sculpture. I have always been very much interested in imprints and preserving memories, as on this cotton. Because cotton is such a very evocative material. It's unbleached, so it's somehow evocative of skin, it has almost the kind of color of skin, and at the same time it reminds me of bedsheets, of the material that we have on our bodies, so it's a kind of intimate material. I have always drawn on it rather intimate moments of life, which then sort of become impressed, the cloth becomes impregnated with them, and then unfolded for the viewer. And I think "Theater of Love" will consist of such sort of old, faded drawings of erotic memories.

What is eroticism about? Eroticism is to a very large extent about touching. Additionally to the drawings on the cotton, I will touch those parts of cotton which will not be covered by drawings, the other side of the cotton which will then be folded forth and folded back. I will touch it with my own hands which I will put into this slightly reddish paint, so that it will be evocative. One side will be evocative of the skin outside, but the other side will be evocative of the skin inside, when you open it up. I always do the drawings with this reddish felt pen and white acrylic, that has acquired this quality of flesh and skin. And the drawing itself is done very, very sharply, so it's almost like opening up the skin itself. It's like touched skin which then opens up.

DM: When you were talking about having moments of life impressed on the material, it made me think of the Shroud of Turin.

EK: Yes, and the Cloth of Veronica. It's really the Cloth of Veronica that I have always been impressed with. My mother used to have this book with medieval paintings and when I was a child I looked through them, and I came across this picture of Veronica. You know, Veronica, when Christ was going up Golgotha, she swept the blood and sweat from his face, and the face became miraculously imprinted on the cloth. There has always been this entire speculation about, you know, was there something like a Shroud of Turin? Maybe the Veronica legend became only sort of projected or invented because there really was something like the Shroud. It's a very miraculous story, because the Shroud apparently really exists. The Cloth of Veronica has never existed, but it has been very powerful in religious imagery. It's like this

man, before he's dead, gives to the woman his true image, instead of leaving her a child, leaves her the only true image.

As a matter of fact, I've been doing studies on this. I discovered that the woman -- Veronica is an invention of the Middle Ages, but the legend has been based on a story that has been recorded in the Bible, the story of a menstruating woman. She suffers from this constant menstruation, and when she touches Christ this menstruation stops. And so this is one of those miraculous healings Christ did. What's interesting is that this is the very woman to whom the name was given, Veronica, but Veronica means "vera icon", the true image. It's a symbolic transformation, that the woman was healed of her flux of blood by Christ when he has, before his death, his own flux of blood. His flux of blood is preserved on the very cloth of this woman, there's this exchange of blood.

When I started to do these drawings of my own, it's not that I had very much in mind menstrual images, but it's just occurred to me that, if you are wounded, if your skin is hurt, then there's blood on the skin. It's a sort of scar, a red scar, and then when you wipe it off with cloth, it becomes imprinted. And this is really one of the most archetypal images, this kind of imprint that remains on the cloth. So that the cloth is the recipient of our suffering, of our blood.

DM: What drew you specifically to installations? You could do drawings on cloth and not take it to an installation level, or put it in that form.

EK: When I was a painter, I produced all these solid objects. And obviously something happened to me, that somehow these solid objects did not appeal to me. This whole story with cloth, with all the sym-

# EWA KURYLUK

## JAN 31 - FEB 22

bolism attached to it, it's really about something else. It's so much more about memory, and it's really not any more about producing objects. Really if you now go and translate this idea into something commercial, I think it becomes pure kitsch. If you announce that you are now doing the Shroud of Turin or what not, you put it into plexiglass boxes, and you start selling it -- you can do it, and it has been suggested to me many times. But it's exactly what I don't want it to be.

The whole idea is ephemeral, it almost asks for installations, that means for something that will come and go away. And it will only stay with you as a remembrance. This whole idea, of course, it is not very practical (laughing), it is a little bit against the practicalities of life. It's all very Utopian, it forces me to take up a lot of other jobs to support it. But on the other hand, there is a particular

thrill in it, because the material is very, very light. I had this exhibition in Buenos Aires, they gave me the entire museum, the Center of Art and Communication which is really the largest space of modern art in Buenos Aires. I worked for about five days and then I produced really a very large exhibition, which has come out of one suitcase.

In our age, we move a lot, life has become so ephemeral, it's less and less solid walls. People move so much, that you know I have always thought that they could take such a piece with them, put it into the suitcase, unfold it in a different place, fold it back. And I have encouraged this idea, but again it seems to be Utopian, because people who buy art do have very large apartments. They like very much to have large plexiglass boxes, because they are not certain about the value of the cloth, they are certain about the value of the plexiglass (laughing)!



Ewa Kuryluk at work



NOTES ABOUT "EITHER OR"

I intend to create a suspension of logs that hovers over a walkable groundscape. The idea of logs and groundscapes is derived from "Shadows and Memories", a recently created site-specific, outdoor piece at Maudslay State Park in Newburyport, MA. There, I utilized segments of trees already cut, and re-constructed the loose image of a former tree by linking several pieces together and suspending them over a remaining stump in the ground. Other smaller adjuncts to this central piece were linked and suspended above the ground within a chosen pine grove. It was my way to celebrate life through the uplifting of cut trees back into the air. It was also another small voice in the ecological battle for awareness and balance as Society continues to pit itself against Nature. I guess other symbols can be readily derived, but here I shall leave the remaining interpretations to the interpreters.

Finally, as an artist concerned with interdisciplinary work, it is my desire to include for the opening event a live sound interpretation that will evoke different states of awareness or reactions to augment the installation. What these sounds will be shall be left solely to two Boston composer/sound artists, Taylor Mclean and Tom Plsek.

BART UCHIDA

TOM BRENNAN TALKS WITH BART UCHIDA

TB: Why don't you talk about the materials you choose.

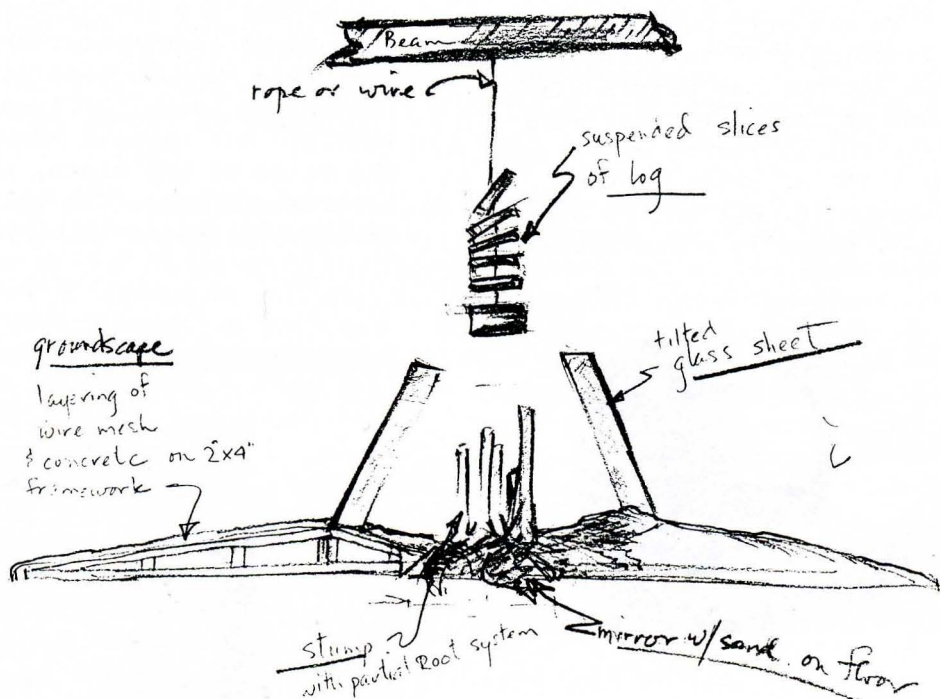
BU: I come from a traditional sculpting background. I'm a wood carver and I'm a stone carver. It's difficult to be challenged, I find today, using those traditional techniques. You know, I don't want to come up and carve a Michelangelo. And I don't want to go back and carve a Moore or a Noguchi. So what does a carver do? You start adding different materials -- just in order to be able to keep it interesting for yourself and, in your own way, to continue to make a contemporary statement. In my case, it's through the combination of stone and wood with the carving process that other materials got added into it.

TB: What materials do you add in?

BU: Glass. Plexiglass. I find a real direct connection just in physical material. It has a silica base. And so does stone...limestone and marble. In addition to that, glass because it's clear. You can see through it. And it's impenetrable, but you can almost feel as if you can walk through it as opposed to a block of stone. Those contrasting elements are very intriguing. And that's why I like chain or linkage of anything -- because there's a physicality to it and it can imply this stoppage, yet you can walk around it or in-between it. You can't do that with a mass of stone. Plus the two different ways of approaching material. With carving you take away. My finished sculpture, though, is an assemblage.

TB: Let's talk about installations and the interaction of materials in space. Where does the line get drawn, other than ego?

working sketch only  
for Either/Or  
Suspension / Groundscape





# BART UCHIDA

## JAN 31 - FEB 22

BU: Installations as opposed to the traditional sculptural object... There's no one set answer, but one I see is the artists need to work larger and larger and larger. I think it's a natural phenomenon, not just purely an ego trip, although there's a lot of ego involved as well. The trick is to balance these two things off. And we have the opportunity to express almost as large as we want. I mean, look at sky art, for goodness sakes. I mean, as we understand it today, it's probably the ultimate statement on grandeur. Where's the end of it?

TB: It's a big space.

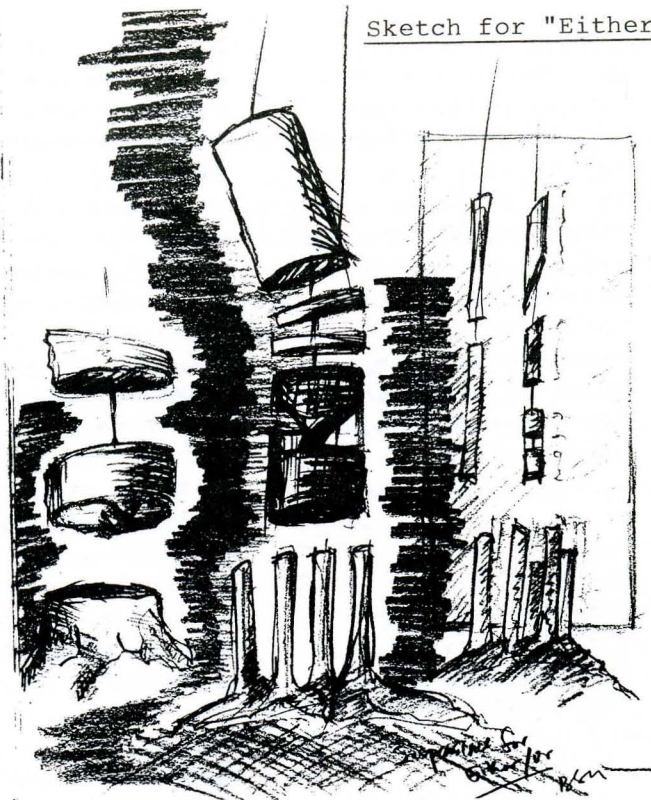
BU: It's a big space. The idea of space! Whether it's a person putting the pencil down and making this line across the page creating space all of a sudden or a sculptor taking a solid object, carving into it, and having space. The installation comes from this conceptual, intellectual way of viewing space differently than beginning with an object; whether it's the room or the sky which we want then to manipulate. A successful piece is one that is not just a graphic statement, but one that utilizes or adds to the feeling of the space of what surrounds us. To be sensitive to the space, in dealing with a room or even in an outdoor environmental piece, and to create your own sense of the visual space that you want your piece to interact with -- I find that challenging. I find that is also a little humbling because there are things within the space that are bestowed upon

you, and you have to accept and acknowledge all the limitations, if I can use that word. They shouldn't be limitations. We see them as objects that already pre-exist and that you then either add to and sort of fill the statement or fight against it in order to create a new statement. Installation work comes from a preoccupation with space and one that explores it in the fullest possible way.

TB: Well, it's a framework.

BU: Absolutely. And it's a challenge, you know. It kind of takes away from the idea of the artist working in his quiet little corner in the studio, inspired or uninspired. When you do an installation, you're thrust into the so called maddening world and you deal with it. It's part of an intellectual attitude. I believe art is an integral fabric of our society, so I would not like to see art as taking on any kind of elitist position. But on the other hand, I would not like it not being acknowledged at all as a function in our society.

TB: I wanted to ask you about your use of hanging objects,



hanging logs as it's part of your art vocabulary. What does the act of hanging something do and why is it interesting and intriguing?

BU: The immediate thing that I'm aware of is that when I hang something it is free from the ground and that comes psychologically from working with stone or with wood [with logs]. I mean, they're so bloody heavy. So awkward. So rooted to the earth. There's a sense of freedom when you suspend things.

TB: A liberation.

BU: Absolutely. There's a very different feeling that comes from something that is definitely rooted to the earth or something that is suspended from the earth. Now, you can say again it's one of liberation. But there is, in addition, a different emotional as well as psychological connotation to that. So it's nice to be able to play with all the premises. I love material and I don't need to carve stone all the time or forever. It's a question of intellectually being able to be free to be creative. That's what we're all about.

their paintings in Paris in the 1930's. Opposite to the Dadaist and Surrealist tendencies towards chance and the bizarre juxtapositions of the unconscious and of dream life, but also creating environments were the artists who believed in a total geometric utopian order, as exemplified by the Bauhaus Theater founded by Walter Gropius in 1926, and the strictly ordered room, complete with right angled furniture, created by Mondrian in the 1930's.

These directions or themes in 20th century art seem to be eclipsed briefly in the late 1940's and 1950's by the triumphs of Abstract Expressionist painting, emanating from the U.S. and making its influence felt world-wide. But while it continued to exist, its appeal soon lessened for the next generation of artists, partly because of its very success, which had been commercial as well as artistic. Two other, again seemingly opposite but converging art movements soon arose: pop art, loving? hating? the common commercial objects of daily life, soup cans, Brillo boxes, billboard beauties, etc.; and conceptual art, in which the artist's concept was to be all important, leaving no permanent object to be bought and sold. Warhol's pop art work is too well known to need discussion, but it is worth noting that he incorporated performance into his work from the beginning, in the form of his own rock music group, the public personas of the artist himself and the people who lived and worked with him in his "factory", and in his movies.

The ultimate conceptual and performance artist of the mid-20th century was perhaps Yves Klein, who died in 1962 at the age of 34. As a painter he made monochrome canvases, especially in a distinctive color called

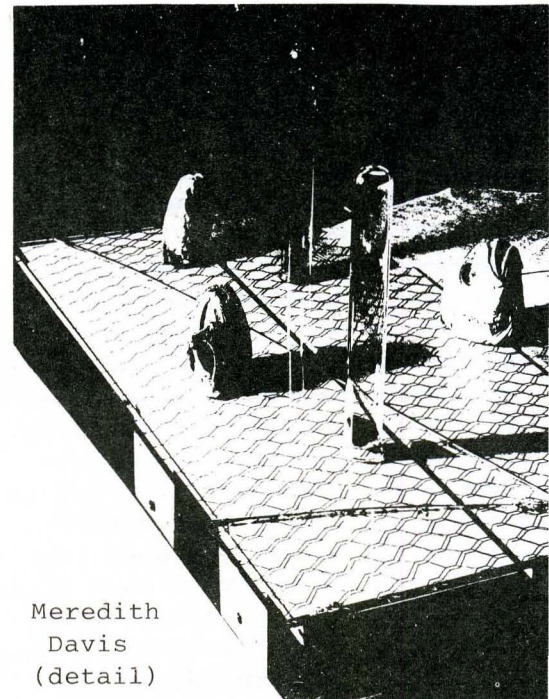
International Klein Blue. As a performance artist he leapt out of windows, exploring deep space and the Void, and endangering himself as other performance artists were later to do with guns and knives, and as a performance painter he choreographed nude models who rolled in his Blue paint then imprinted themselves on canvases. As a conceptual artist he presented an exhibition of the Void in a clean white painted gallery in Paris in 1958. If anyone wished to purchase any of the Void, the imagined work was exchanged for pieces of gold which were then ritually dropped into the Seine.

In the U.S., installations started to appear in museums in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Among them were the grim social-realist tableaux of Ed Keinholtz, "The Beanery" and "Black Seat Dodge" that simulated seedy aspects of American life complete with smells; and the cooler, more distanced explorations, as exemplified by the 1969 Museum of Modern Art show entitled "Spaces", that featured the felt sculptures, the glass enclosures of Larry Bell, the neon lighting of Dan Flavin, etc. Installations, then and now, have served to express many of the abiding concerns of 20th century artists: to decommo-  
dify art by making something too unwieldy for the art market, or something temporary for a particular space, to explore the interaction of real space and time with artistic space and time, to use common materials instead of fine art materials, and to express social and psychological concerns directly or symbolically.

Applying these categories to the artists who will present installations at Mobius in January and February demonstrates that each of them works within and displays knowledge of these central con-

cerns, while expressing her or his own particular sensibility. Meredith Davis deals with the interaction of time and space, using found objects and light to create a simple scene that emanates a complex psychological meaning. Dan Devine, who started his artistic career as a photographer then moved through photocollage to three dimensionality and finally to sculpture, is now working with post-minimalist, elegantly crafted objects in the tradition of Donald Judd, Richard Artschwager and Larry Bell. Ewa Kuryluk's work is expressionistic, in an Eastern European tradition that contrasts strikingly with most American or young German neo-expressionists in its refinement and use of personal, autobiographical imagery. Bart Uchida, who is also a sculptor in the traditional medium of carved stone, sometimes works with natural, found materials and constructs large, quasi-architectural forms. His work is a reminder of the connections installation art has not only with earth works but with the entire domain of landscape architecture and public monuments.

--Helen Shlien, Curator



Meredith  
Davis  
(detail)

**3 MONDAY EVENINGS  
AT THE LONGY SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

**November 24, 1986 . . .** Conducted by David Hoose, Featuring 3 Boston Premieres and Soprano Janice Felty.

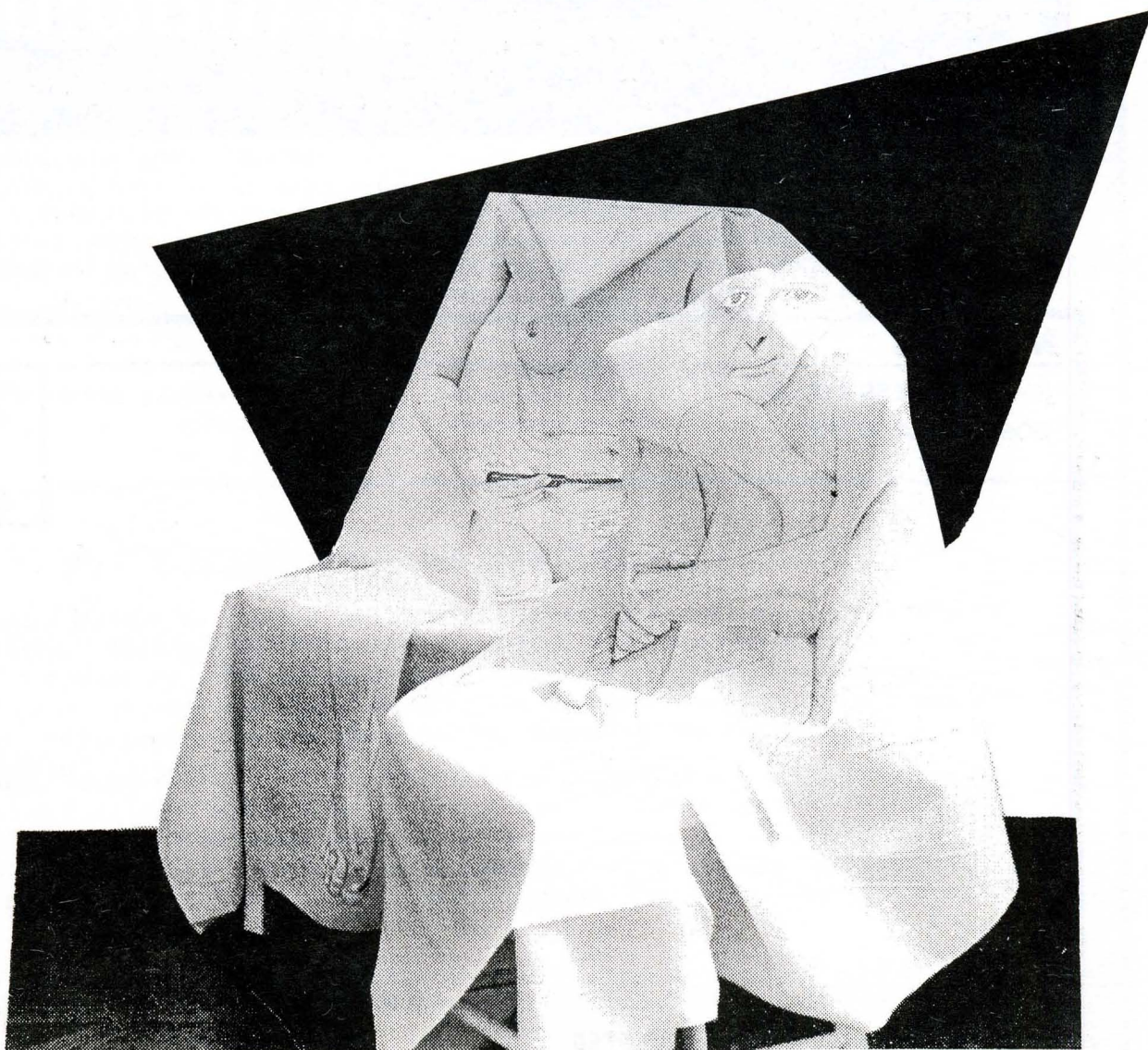
**February 23, 1987 . . . .** Birthday Celebration Honoring Milton Babbitt and George Perle, Conducted by Gunther Schuller.

**April 13, 1987 . . . . .** An All British Program, Conducted by Oliver Knussen.

**collage 1986-87**

**TICKETS . . . . .** \$8 general admission, \$5 students and senior citizens. Available at the box office the night of performance and in advance at Bostix (Faneuil Hall), Out of Town Tickets (Harvard Square) or by calling Concert Charge at 497-1118.

**FOR INFORMATION . . .** Call (617) 437-0231 or write collage, Inc., 296 Huntington Avenue, Suite 208, Boston, MA 02115.



Ewa Kuryluk  
(detail)

# 4 INSTALLATIONS

January 3-24:

**MEREDITH DAVIS**

**DAN DEVINE**

January 31-February 21, 1987:

**EWA KURYLUK**

**BART UCHIDA**

**at mobius**

MOBIUS 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.

## **MOBIUS**

**354 CONGRESS STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02210**

**NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOSTON, MA  
PERMIT NO. 8147**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**