

# mobius

*boston's artist-run center for experimental work in  
all media*

## About Mobius . . .

Mobius has an unusual dual role in the Boston arts community. Mobius is both the Mobius Performing Group (MPG) and a space for other artists to present their work. Though sometimes a delicate balancing act, I think maintaining this dual role is at the heart of Mobius' strength.

As some of you may know, Mobius began 13 years ago as a performing group directed by Marilyn Arsem. Mobius Theater, as the group was known in pre-history, has since transformed into a collaborative of 18 artists working in performance, installation, sound art, new music, film, video, dance and intermedia. In the fall of 1983, Mobius also became a space when they took over the Congress Street location we now occupy, and began inviting other artists to present work here. Our identity has confused some people ever since, depending on how they got to know Mobius first.

The key to understanding Mobius as an integrated whole can be found, I think, in our organizational subtitle, "artist-run center for experimental work in all media." Though Mobius functions with a three-tiered system of MPG, staff and Board of Directors, all artistic and programming decisions remain in the hands of artists. And as a collaborative effort of artists presenting artists, the responsibility for Mobius goes both ways, and I hope that anyone using the space will take on some sense of responsibility for the organization. At a time when some legislators are censoring the content of artworks, it is essential that places like Mobius that leave art in the hands of artists, continue to exist.

As MPG has grown and become more prolific, there is somewhat less time and space available for everyone. There is also an increased strain on the physical plant and on the Mobius staff, who deals with the multitude of day-to-day questions, inquiries and demands from artists using the space. So please treat Mobius gently but with enthusiasm: give it lots of attention, create events, clean up after yourself, volunteer, donate lots of money, offer suggestions, write for the newsletter, read the newsletter, bring your own hammer and come to everything.

Nancy Adams -- Mobius Performing Group



photo credit Bob Raymond

## Mobius Performing Group

Nancy Adams  
Marilyn Arsem  
Meredith Davis  
Scott deLahunta  
Joan Gale  
Dan Lang  
T.W. Li  
Laure Liverman  
Mari Novotny-Jones  
Mario Paoli  
Tom Plsek  
Bob Raymond  
Joanne Guertin Rice  
Julie Rochlin  
Jonathan Scheuer  
Bart S. Uchida  
Ean White  
Victor Young

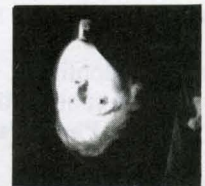


## Mobius Staff

Marilyn Arsem, Director  
Mary-Charlotte Domandi, Gen. Manager  
Britt Raphling, Publicity/Booking  
Coordinator

## Board of Directors

George Moseley  
Janie Cohen  
Marilyn Arsem  
Marcia Maglione  
Beth Pease  
Kathryn Sumpter



**Mobius** (the space) was founded by members of the 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.

**Mobius, Inc.** is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mass. Council on the Arts and Humanities, the Boston Arts Lottery Council, The Polaroid Foundation, The Boston Globe Foundation and generous private support.

**Mobius is located at 354 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210. Tel: (617) 542-7416.**

**Dreams (breathe/don't breathe)  
OF HOME and THE BEGINNING OR  
THE END**

**MARILYN ARSEM**

Friday, November 3, Saturday, November 4,  
Sunday, November 5

**DREAMS (breathe/don't breathe) OF HOME and THE BEGINNING OR THE END** are the final two works of the Pig Baby series, begun in 1984 with Bob Raymond. The works explore images of life in death, and death in life. Operating in real time, the performances involve a series of activities using natural materials such as meat, fish, bread, hair and bones, that result in olfactory experiences, as well as visual images for contemplation.

Many of you have seen this work develop over the years. This is the first time that I have shown these two pieces on the same program in Boston. I put them together for the first time last June in a performance at Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, N.Y. I was pleased with the result; I think the pieces compliment each other in a number of ways. I look forward to hearing people's responses.



photo credit Bob Raymond.....Marilyn Arsem in The Beginning or the End

**Parlor**

**NANCY ADAMS**

Friday, November 10, Saturday, November 11

Last spring I presented an "evolving" work entitled **Parlor**. This is a solo, non-verbal performance set in a 20' diameter circle. In November I will be presenting the portion of **Parlor** which I showed last year along with a new, related piece, also set in the round, with the audience seated along the perimeter. I will be working with vocalist Britt Raphling on the new section.

This new piece continues where **Parlor** left off. Though not necessarily a continuation of a narrative, the new work will be, perhaps, **Parlor** 's alter ego.

Visual materials (textiles, objects, paint and light) continue to form the basis of my performances. I assemble materials, create an environment, and then plug myself in and wait to see what happens. Sound and musical additions filter in throughout the process. I am smack in the middle of working and won't say more for now.

I also feel reticent about discussing the intellectual themes of **Parlor** because I am much more interested in collecting audience reactions. After seeing the first section of **Parlor**, my father, an Episcopal clergyman, sent me a two page theological interpretation of the piece, which focused on the struggles of addiction. Other people have seen the work as exploring the confines of romantic relationships. Some have seen it as a purely feminist work which addresses a woman's control over her own destiny, and her power to limit or liberate herself. I do have my own feelings about the piece, but I don't think too much. I hope to make performances which will have integrity on their own terms.



photo credit Joe Cane.....Nancy Adams in Parlor

## Works-In-Progress #29

Thursday, November 16, Friday, November 17, Saturday, November 18

Mobius presents **Works-In-Progress #29**. On these evenings various artists will present ideas, images, thoughts, and themselves to you the audience. And then they ask: What are your thoughts? So here is a good opportunity to see a large variety of work and discuss the piece with the artist.

At this writing the schedule of featured artists has not been set. Please call for updated information and reservations

## A Day without Art INTERNATIONAL AIDS AWARENESS DAY

Friday, December 1.

On December 1, Visual AIDS, an organization of art professionals working to bring AIDS awareness and programming to art institutions, is sponsoring "A Day without Art". This title is a metaphor for the chilling possibility of artists' deaths from AIDS. Institutions are responding in a variety of ways by organizing performances, discussions, exhibitions, AIDS education, or by dimming lights or closing down, whatever is deemed appropriate and meaningful. A poster is being printed and will include the names of the hundreds of participating institutions all over the country.

This is the first major event organized by Visual AIDS, which began in New York in order to facilitate AIDS-related exhibitions and events (not to fund raise). Visual AIDS/New England extends these activities to the

cultural institutions in our regions. By focusing on programming, we hope to increase awareness and encourage discussion about the pressing social issues AIDS raises generally within American society, and the devastation it has wreaked on the art community in particular.

Mobius is represented on the Visual AIDS/New England steering committee, which, in addition to working on programming, is preparing a resource guide that includes artists in various media doing AIDS-related work. If you have any input for this, or would like to get involved in general, please let us know.

Our activities for this day are still being planned. Please call **mobius** for more information.

**December 1**, performances of **The Exact Location of the Soul** and **dead leaves in my bed** have been cancelled. Joanne and I feel it is an honor to be a direct part of the observance, **A Day Without Art**, the nationwide day of action and mourning to call attention to the AIDS crisis. We have only lost a performance. **-Mari Novotny-Jones**

## The Exact Location of the Soul MARI NOVOTNY-JONES

Saturday, December 2

"Wisdom and knowledge, the ability to heal, courage, creating, and all other attributes considered valuable in human nature; were received as a form of grace in dreams or visions."

Chippewa Tribe from Dreams by David Coxhead, and Susan Hillen

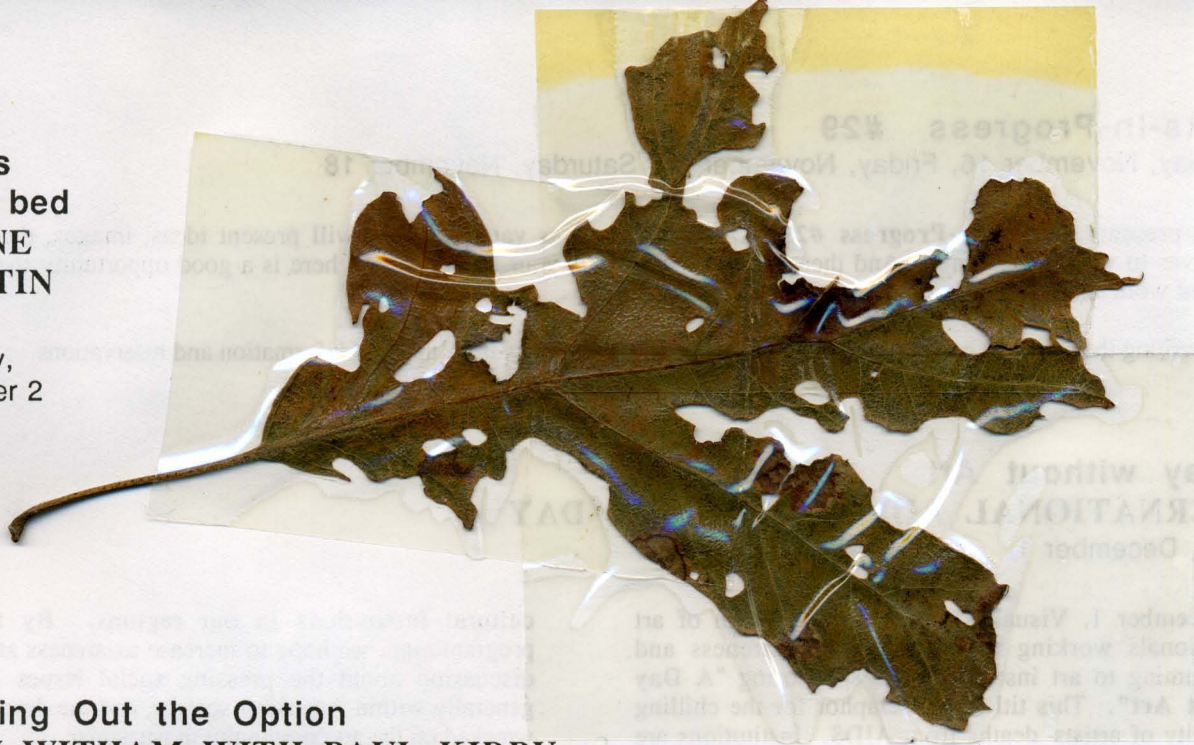
**The Exact Location of the Soul** at first look is a humorous piece - almost a Lucille Ball kind of campiness. Mechanical dogs yap, Heart And Soul plays incessantly, a woman is ironing and humming.

Humor is important to me in my work. It gives me permission to relax into something that might be deeper inside than I originally had thought. Work surprises me - constantly. Images are not conscious things - they surface at all times, odd hours. They come to me alot in dreams. These mysterious attributes - night mysteries - small romps into something that appears larger than me.

I have had the opportunity to perform **The Exact Location of the Soul** numerous times since Domestic Trilogy. I am thankful that people laugh, pick up the little dogs by the tail and put them upright on their paths again. It is playfulness that makes audience and performer enter into this ritual together. But I still think the audience knows there is something else - maybe a little sinister or strange about to happen.

There are gaps that I feel in my own life - holes. There are moments when I see somehow my mother and my grandmother before me. I see them ironing, humming, filling gaps with bluing and clorox. Their chores; insipid in nature, repetitive, and endless - were the foundations of family life. They were canonized and rebuked equally by their husbands and children. "Know your place." Somehow when my past women appear to me, I imagine them to say "know yourself". There is an absolute belief in the thought that while doing these actions, the richest, most beautiful life was happening inside their heads. Maybe my work is the manifestation of their dreams.

dead  
leaves  
in my bed  
JOANNE  
GUERTIN  
RICE  
Saturday,  
December 2



**Rounding Out the Option**  
**BETSY WITHAM WITH PAUL KIRBY**

Thursday, December 7, Friday, December 8, Saturday, December 9, Sunday, December 10

**Rounding Out The Option** - performed by Paul Kirby and Elizabeth Witham, conceived/directed by Elizabeth Witham. A visual and verbal journey into another reality. Two individuals share the experience of independent and codependent living.

My artistic process:

1) Certain ideas, objects, visions entertain me, stimulate my interest, make me curious. For example, creating made-up phrases from a very dry, formal source of vocabulary which end up being very visual and emotionally descriptive to me. I put my work together like a collage leaving the final product to be a partial surprise to me.

2) Coincidences, accidents, unforeseen experiences happen which feed into the piece I am forming. For instance a coincidence that Paul Kirby and I own an identical pair of workboots - so we decide to wear them. An accident - we had no idea how much the sounds the boots made would effect our dancing in them. Unforeseen experience - that using table lamps for lighting would create such dramatic lighting and that the darkness in between would be so potent and suspenseful to us during performance.

3) The excitement comes from finding a methodology, a formula, an interesting plan which brings together all of the various elements I am working with. Much the same as when I painted; mixing colors, canvas shapes, subject matter, and brush strokes; now I am mixing light, sound, movement, and scenery. A great deal of internal imaging goes on as well as relying on an intuitive sense of order.

My relationship to the audience:

1) I usually have no idea what the audience will get from viewing my work - but I have an absolute faith/trust that they will each come away from the experience with something.

2) Dancing in front of an audience causes me to extend my energy out toward them or in a way that invites the audience in to share my experience with me. I feel a dialog going on when I perform which supports me and stretches me to take greater risks as as artist.

3) After I perform for an audience the verbal feedback they give me goes directly back into my work. Sometimes it does, but it may not actually change anything on the surface of a work. However, their responses always change my internal experience which I feel rounds out, deepens, and expands my performances. For example, someone who saw **Rounding Out The Option** when I performed it at the First Congregational Church May 12th, said they felt "taken on a journey". This stimulates my imagination and nourishes my own images of the work.

In terms of this particular piece:

**Rounding Out The Option** is the most ambitious project I have tackled as a director/choreographer. The evolution of this work reflects my own evolution as an artist by incorporating all of my skills and interests: acting, dancing, singing, set design, writing, and directing. My voice as a sound instrument and as intelligent communication instrument is a logical next step in expanding my range as a performing artist. Also I find myself shifting away from improvisational performing where so much is left to chance. With **Rounding Out The Option** I am doing more purposeful structuring and shaping of the work ahead of time. Once the piece gels I plan to reinsert the challenge of finding spontaneity during the process of performing it.

## Appeals to Your Appetite

### STEVE THOMAS AND SALLY SOUDERS

Thursday, December 7, Friday, December 8, Saturday, December 9, Sunday, December 10

Our working relationship began in Burlington, Vermont, where we both sang in a new-music vocal ensemble. When Sally moved to New York City and Steve to Boston, we kept in touch. Eventually the idea of a long-distance collaboration presented itself, and we decided to go ahead. **Appeals to Your Appetite** began with a flurry of exchanged notes, letters, and long distance phone calls, and eventually settled down to monthly rehearsals in New York and Boston.

Sally is a dancer/choreographer who also has classical voice training. Steve is a singer-composer and performance artist. When we began **Appeals**, we wanted to make a collaborative singing/talking/moving performance piece in which these elements were integrated and flowed naturally in and out of each other. By collaborative, we mean that, although Sally may generate most of the movement phrases and Steve the music, when it comes to putting these elements into the context of the piece, we put our heads together, edit, chop, reassemble and generally turn whatever we've got into Sally-Steve rather than Steve or Sally. It's a slow and sometimes laborious process, but it's creating a piece that feels stronger and richer than anything we might have done individually.

When we began working on **Appeals**, all we had was the desire to work together. To get things going - and get past those awful empty first few moments together in the studio - we decided to begin with our own relationship,

literally working with the material of our friendship. We did an exercise just speaking sentences about each other, then added a simple movement sequence, then improvised singing phrases to the sentences. Gradually this initial idea of relating opened out into an exploration of the various ways that men and women relate - or try to relate - to each other.

**Appeals** is structured in five (more or less) scenes, each beginning and ending in a black-out. The scenes, and the piece itself, proceed in a circling, non-linear manner, so that pieces of material are continually resurfacing to be re-examined from different angles and in fresh combinations.

We're beginning to realize that each scene uses a different mode of address. We were well into working on scene 2, for instance, before we realized that we hadn't yet spoken or sung directly to each other, although plenty of singing and speaking had been going on.

The piece is much more ambitious than anything either of us has attempted before. We began by jokingly referring to it as our "mini-opera." Now, several months later, **Appeals to Your Appetite** - which didn't even have a working title when we began - has taken on a life of its own, whose integrity we try to respect even as we continue to shape, extend, and tinker with it.

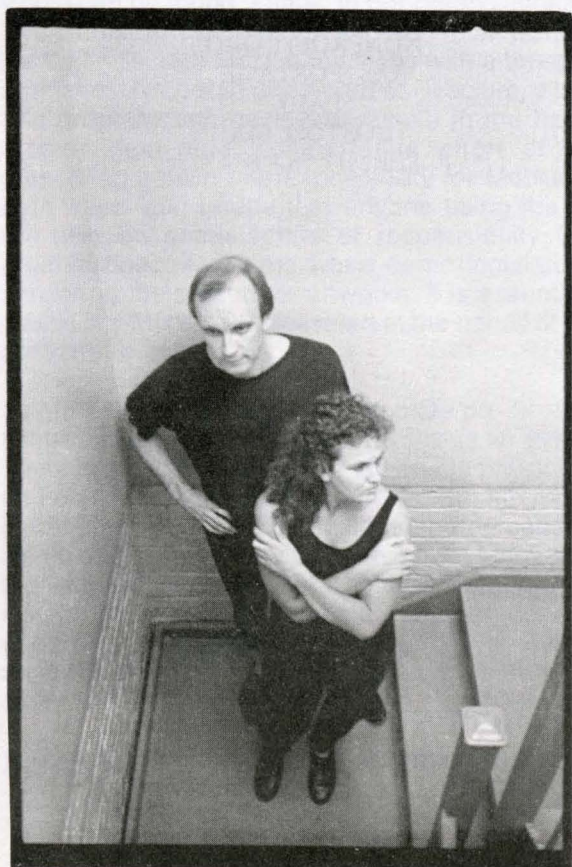


photo credit Janice Ploof....Sally Souders and Steve Thomas

## mobius

### 13TH ANNIVERSARY BASH

is coming up in early winter!! Be on the lookout for this amazing event, which will include a big party, performances, appearances by old-timers from the deep dark history of **mobius**, and all generally big-time fun. It will take place in the early winter, we'll let you know more about it.

### BUTTON, BUTTON, who's got the BUTTON?

## mobius

get your **button** today and another one tomorrow or buy two today!

**Buttons** many be purchased at all performances for one dollar.

Photo credits for the **buttons**:

Photo Joe Cane.....Nancy Adams in **PARLOR**

Photo Bob Raymond....Marilyn Arsem in  
**DREAMS (breathe/don't breathe) OF HOME**

