

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

ISSN 0703 9503 ISSUE NUMBER 37 FALL 1989



CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY means that culture is an essential human need and that each person and community has the right to a culture or cultures of their choice; that all communities should have equitable access to the material resources of the commonwealth for their cultural expression; that cultural values and policies should be decided in public debate with the guaranteed participation of all communities; that the government does not have the right to favor one culture over another.

THE ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY supports community cultural participation. We believe in cultural pluralism, and understand the necessity to integrate the struggles for cultural, political, and economic democracy in the United States. The most important initiatives for cultural democracy take place on a grassroots level in communities, neighborhoods, and among activist artists and other progressive cultural workers.

Contents

Welcome.....	2
Roy McBride.....	4
Winona LaDuke.....	5
1992 Campaign.....	6
Debbie Scott.....	8
Glenn Sheldon.....	10
Gil Ott.....	11
Alan Bolt.....	12
Juanita Espinosa.....	15
Charles Frederick.....	16
Margaret Randall.....	18
Cynthia Weiss.....	21
Tim Drescher.....	22
Death of a Mural.....	23
Judy Branfman.....	24
Network News.....	27
ACD Folks & Info.....	28



ACD Board

Front Row (kneeling) (left to right): Carol Petrucci, Tripp Mikich and Bob Lamadafkie **Middle Row** (left to right): Denise Mayotte, Betty Kano, Lisa May Knauer, Genie Barringer, Natasha Bonilla, Bill Stroud, and Judy Branfman **Back Row** (left to right): Sal Salerno, Ron Sakolsky, Bill Fleming, Ricardo Levins-Morales, Ana Cardona, and Mat Schwarzman

WELCOME to the new expanded "Cultural Democracy". We've now "gone desktop", and have been able to increase the number of pages to 28. Our editorial collective has grown and our spirits are high. Most of what appears in this issue is culled from events occurring at, or being inspired by, the Alliance for Cultural Democracy's 13th annual national gathering (Minneapolis, May, 1989) entitled "Remapping Our Homeland".

This gathering represented a significant step towards remapping our homeland as a multicultural nation. The U.S. is, for most of us, either a homeland that was stolen from us (as it was from the Native Americans who discovered Columbus or for the Chicanos now living in "occupied Mexico") or we ourselves were stolen to labor here (as was the case with African-Americans) or else the theft of our ethnic heritages was attempted upon our arrival here as immigrants. Yet in spite of these crimes against us, we are, a stubborn, diverse people, not simply in terms of race and ethnicity, but in relation to interwoven cultural identities based upon class, gender and sexual preference. That the gathering reflected this "rainbow" in all its dimensions was apparent from the variety of cultural activists in attendance (both as invited guests and as conference registrants) and the cultural events (ranging from the Native American drumming which opened the event to the Brazilian dance party on Saturday night which closed it).

From the keynote speech by veteran Mississippi civil rights organizer Hollis Watkins to the cultural animation work of Alan Bolt of Nixtoyolero Teatro in Nicaragua to the New York city-based AIDS activism of Charles Frederick of the Cathedral Project and Dignity (whose constituency is gay Catholics) to conference organizer Juanita Espinosa's discussion of the Native American Cultural Arts Program in Minneapolis; this was a dynamic gathering. Workshops included the Alliance's two ongoing projects: the Columbus Quincentennial Celebration (recast by ACD as 500 years of oppression and resistance in its Call To A Campaign For A Post-Columbian World) and the draft of the Declaration of Cultural Human Rights (presently being reworked and strengthened).

The gathering ended with what has to be the wildest Mayday Party in the Midwest — an incredible combination of street parade, pagan celebration of Spring and Haymarket remembrance of voices silenced, which has been put on for the



Illustration by Barbara G. Walker



past 15 years by The Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre. This year's theme was "Voices of Trees" — honoring trees through ceremony, movement and song. Aside from trees, human inhabitants of the planet were honored too. As the schedule of events put it, "On Mayday, we honor the strength of working hands and living hearts. We honor the power and creativity of people working together."

This issue of "Cultural Democracy" begins with the opening remarks of poet Roy McBride and Native American rights activist Winona LaDuke, who, each in their own ways, explore the "remapping" theme that set the stage for the gathering. It is respectfully and lovingly dedicated to the memory of the late C.L.R. James who said of West Indian artists in 1961, "We are Western, yet have to separate what is ours from what is Western, a very difficult task...We have to master a medium, whatever it is, that has developed in a foreign territory and on that basis seek and find out what is native, and build on that." (*The Future in the Present: Selected Writings of C.L.R. James*, Lawrence Hill and Co., 1980). And that too is a "remapping" project that has only just begun....

—Ron Sakolsky
Editorial Coordinator



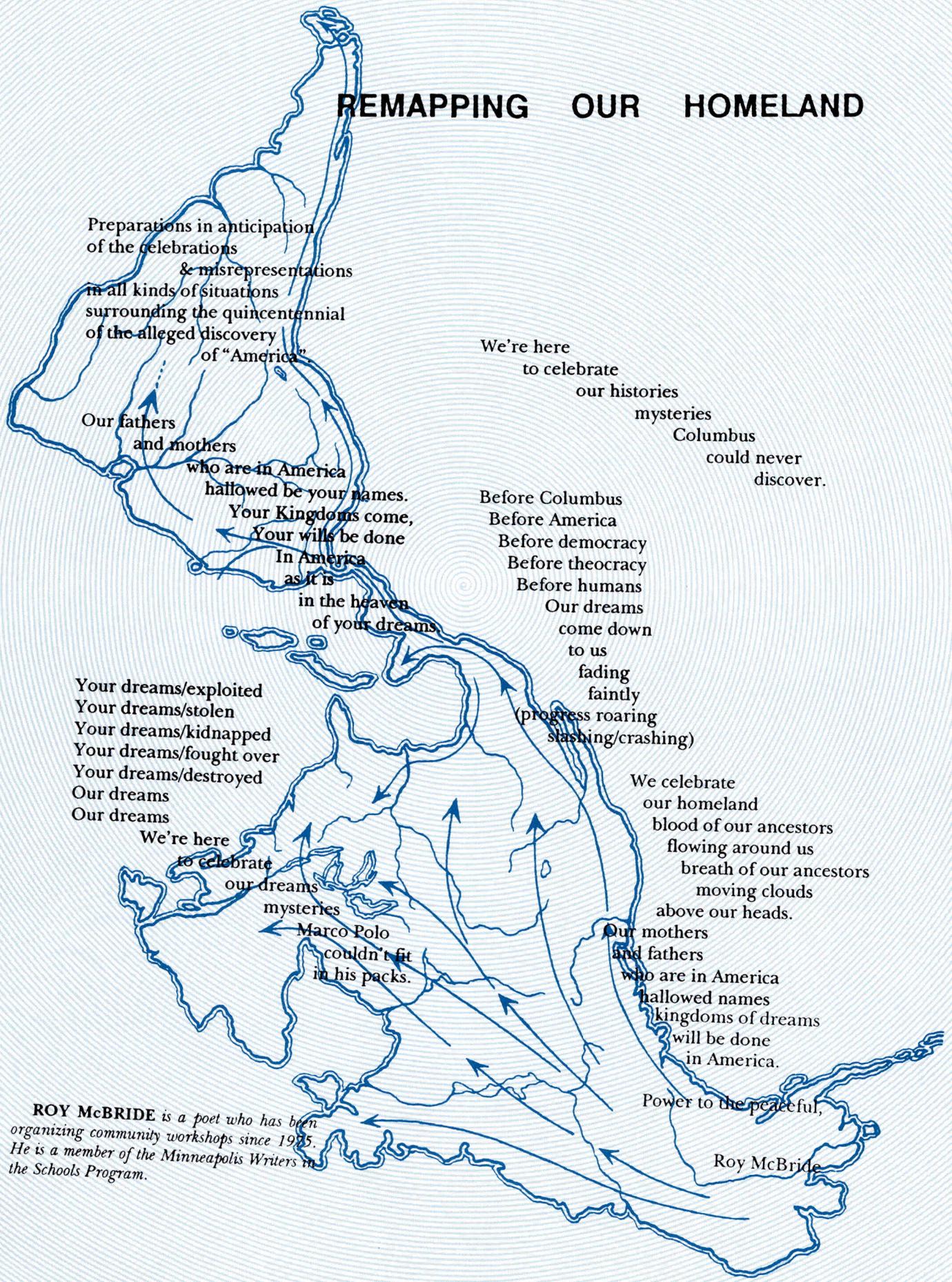
photos Sal Salerno

Mayday '89



Mayday '89

REMAPPING OUR HOMELAND



Preparations in anticipation
of the celebrations
& misrepresentations
in all kinds of situations
surrounding the quincentennial
of the alleged discovery
of "America"

Our fathers
and mothers
who are in America
hallowed be your names.
Your Kingdoms come,
Your will be done
In America
as it is
in the heaven
of your dreams

We're here
to celebrate
our histories
mysteries
Columbus
could never
discover.

Before Columbus
Before America
Before democracy
Before theocracy
Before humans
Our dreams
come down
to us
fading
faintly
(progress roaring
slashing/crashing)

Your dreams/exploited
Your dreams/stolen
Your dreams/kidnapped
Your dreams/fought over
Your dreams/destroyed
Our dreams
Our dreams

We're here
to celebrate
our dreams
mysteries
Marco Polo
couldn't fit
in his packs.

We celebrate
our homeland
blood of our ancestors
flowing around us
breath of our ancestors
moving clouds
above our heads.

Our mothers
and fathers
who are in America
hallowed names
kingdoms of dreams
will be done
in America.

Power to the peaceful,

Roy McBride

*ROY McBRIDE is a poet who has been
organizing community workshops since 1975.
He is a member of the Minneapolis Writers in
the Schools Program.*

GREETINGS TO THE ACD NATIONAL GATHERING FROM WINONA LADUKE

1989 is the 100th anniversary of the Nelson Act, the law which first violated the 1867 treaty of the Anishinabeg or Ojibway people, and the law which made it possible to begin taking the people's land at White Earth. It has been a very long 100 year war, and today, the fact still remains that 94% of the land on the reservation is held by interests other than the White Earth tribe. Our people, four generations of them now, have been forced into poverty. And, some three-fourths of our people have been made refugees in our own land—people without land, people without a homeland, but people who always keep an eye towards home, and remember where home is. Our experiences, exposure, and wanderings in the hemisphere do not change who we are, and where we have come from. We will always be Anishinabeg.

It was twenty years ago when a small girl who lived far away received a check for \$94.60 from the Federal government. No note, no explanation and no receipt. To a small girl, that is a great deal of money. Yet that check represented her portion of a land settlement payment for most of northern Wisconsin. The federal government had paid, in their minds, in full, for Northern Wisconsin with a series of checks like this—total payment amounted to around 14 cents an acre.

Three times in my lifetime, this same process has been repeated. Each time the amount is for more money, but each time the process is the same, no note, no explanation and no receipt. As I grew older, I was able to understand enough to send the checks back to the federal government, but the process remains, and continues. Band by band, nation by nation, acre by acre, the United States is in the process of "buying America", in their mind, from the Indigenous people. In this process they have "purchased" allegedly 95% of the so-called public domain for some \$800 million. This, in international terms, is viewed as the largest real estate transaction in history. This is also very cheap real estate.

As parcel by parcel, the United States makes settlement checks out to Indian people, the US Indian Claims Commission proceedings slowly grind to a halt. The next stage had been the internal reservation land claim settlements, and White Earth has led the way. With the passage of the WELSA Act in 1986, the same process of sending checks out to Indians across the country has been undertaken. And, somewhere a little girl will get a check with no note, no explanation and no receipt.

Canada has entered into so-called Comprehensive Claims negotiations with Indian nations in the north. What is painfully apparent to someone who has just lived through a so-called claims settlement is that the Comprehensive Claims Negotiations of Canada have exactly the same intention, and will likely have the same result. And, somewhere a little girl will get a check with no note, no explanation and no receipt.

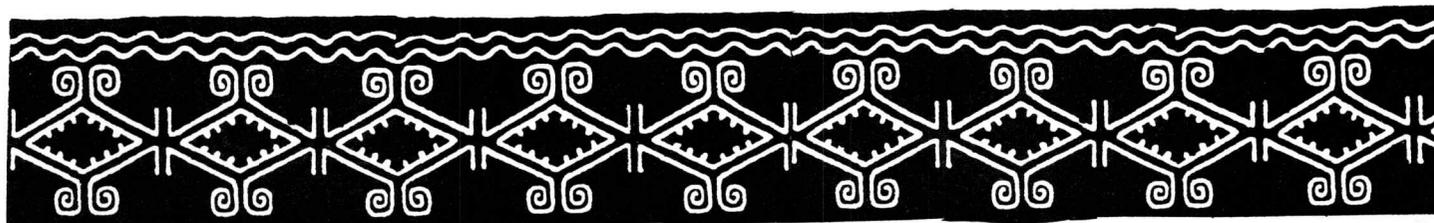
I bring this to your attention because you are here talking about the Quincentennial, and how we will celebrate our 500 years of resistance. I believe that the underlying relationship of Indigenous people to the land, and all of us who are now born into this land, is a web; a bond so strong that it will continue to stand in the face of any so-called land claims settlement. And, I believe that, as we enter the next 500 years, we must reaffirm that



relationship. I also believe that all people must stand together against this injustice, and the callous anonymity of the land claims process. So long as there are Indigenous people living and breathing on this land, there is testimony to the resistance; there is a testimony to the deceit which is the America they have made. Sometimes when I think about the magnitude of the deceit I get a bit discouraged. Then I remember that this 500 years is just a short time in our history here on this land. And this too shall pass. I wish you all the best in you work this week. And, I would like to leave these words with you, from my friend Simon Ortiz, a poet from Acoma Pueblo.

That dream
shall have a name
After all
And it will not be vengeful
But Wealthy with love
And compassion
And knowledge
And it will rise
In this heart
Which is our America.

WINONA LaDUKE is a member of the Makwa Clan Mississippi Bank of the Anishinabeg. She lives on Minnesota's White Earth Reservation and Moose Factory, Ontario, and is active in the White Earth Land Recovery Project (P.O. Box 327, White Earth, Minn., 56591).





CALL TO A CAMPAIGN FOR A POST-COLUMBIAN WORLD:

1992 And The Next 500 Years

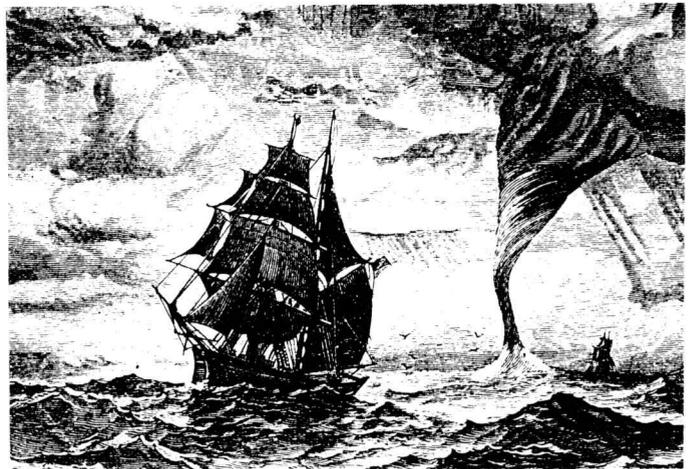
"He discovered greed, love, power, tragedy, death, treason, and mutiny. Then he discovered America."
— IBM ad for miniseries on Columbus

"Halt, who goes there?"
"Nuestra America!"
— after Jose Martí/Eduardo Galeano.

In school I learned of heroic discoveries
Made by liars and crooks. The courage
of millions of sweet and true people
Was not commemorated.

Let us then declare a holiday
For ourselves, and make a parade that begins
With Columbus' victims and continues
Even to our grandchildren who will be named
In their honor.

— Jimmie Durham, Cherokee, from "Columbus Day", 1983



In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue and accidentally landed in the Caribbean, unleashing the age of modern colonialism. As 1992 approaches, governments, corporations and other not-exactly-public-interest groups are launching their own massive "patriotic" celebrations of the Quincentennial, or the "Quiniento" (as it is called in Latin America).

The story of Columbus that will be officially told and retold will feature the arrival of "civilization" (European) in a land "unowned" by the hundreds of "primitive" Native nations living there, and thus ripe for the "inevitable March of Progress." The official story will virtually ignore the gross injustices and incredible suffering that occurred along this march—to the indigenous peoples, but

also to an Africa still mourning the loss of her abducted and enslaved populations, and to the nations of Europe and Asia affected by the industrial revolution's habit of driving people off the land and onto boats. The obliteration of 98 per cent of the original population of the hemisphere will be pictured as an unfortunate side effect.

The Columbus Quincentennial raises a matrix of complex, intricate issues including the environment, racism, intervention, access to freedom of expression, land rights, and cultural rights. We need to analyze carefully and critically what separates us from the official position. Then it's up to us to challenge the silences, the false representations of our own histories.

We hope you will join the Alliance for Cultural Democracy (ACD) in telling another kind of story, a more thoughtful story, told in the voices of many cultures.

It is a story of invasion, slavery, stolen lands, forced labor and exploitation ... and a story of hard work and resistance. It is a story of displacement and impoverishment, destruction of the land, cultural deprivation ... and a story of labor union organizing, solidarity under repression, defense of the land, cultural survival in the face of tremendous odds.

All along there has also been the vision of a world that has overcome the legacy of broken treaties, loss of self-determination, disregard of sovereignty, economic and military intervention, reckless disregard for the environment and for human life. That's where culture comes in. As we plan for the Post-Columbian era, cultural workers can plant the seeds of new growth, new visions.

The ACD is a national network of grassroots cultural workers in all the arts, founded in 1976. At our annual conference, held in Minneapolis in May 1989,

we committed ourselves to facilitating a national organizing campaign around the Quincentennial. It offers all of us a unique opportunity to work in coalition with a multicultural array of artists and organizers to establish a cultural program with strong political ramifications.

Our first step is to find out what programs you and other progressive cultural groups are already planning so we can let everybody know what the local models are and how we can hook up, collaborate when feasible, and spread the available funding as widely as possible. One of our goals is to avoid duplication of tasks, overlapping, and lack of communication. Another goal is the visibility to be gained by co-operation. Another is to make links to the Latin American events already under way, and to European roots and reasons for immigration, while acknowledging the natural leadership of the directly colonized peoples.

We see ACD's role as:

1) Catalyst and clearinghouse to collect and disseminate information and resources useful for local organization.

2) Part-time coordinator: Although ACD IS NOT A FUNDING ORGANIZATION and is in no position to raise funds or do groundwork for other groups, we will try to initiate activities in areas not already covered by others. For instance, we may seek funding to produce and develop school curriculums (including filmography, bibliography, etc.) for the next three years we may campaign to influence media coverage and arts funding. We may support or initiate national exhibitions or film festivals, etc.. October 12 is already the Día de le Raza and International Day of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. It is particularly important that our plans link up with those of Native peoples throughout the hemisphere.

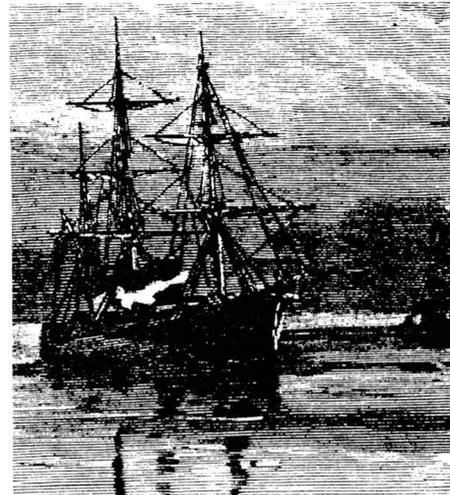
3) The "Quiniento" is being commemorated in Latin America and Canada, but in very different ways from those planned for the United States. On one hand, an epic canoe trip involving 400 people from various countries has already taken place and an international conference of indigenous peoples will be held in November, in Quito, Ecuador. On the other hand, the U.S. government is promoting a Tall Ships extravaganza, celebrating colonialism in a PBS miniseries on "the spirit of discovery," and will apparently be sending three space ships to Mars in 1992. The chairman of the federal Christopher Columbus commission is John Gaude, a rightwing Cuban emigre and a unionbusting real estate developer living in Miami, which makes him quite a symbol in his own right.

Let's tell our truths through plays, songs, slideshows, exhibitions, artists'

books, mail-art actions, public access TV programs, a 1992 calendar with our own events on it, poems, novels, billboards, posters, videotapes, films, murals, mass ceremonies, educational aides such as booklets including resources and a bibliography, conferences, parades, radio cassettes, streetworks and actions, "guerrilla tours" of institutions upholding the Columbian "ethic", and a poster call signed by a thousand groups that would hang on everyone's wall reminding us to get to work.

In summary, here's what we need from you:

- 1) information about events being planned or in process.
- 2) Ideas for projects, campaigns.
- 3) Organizations and individuals (with addresses and/or phone numbers) we should contact.
- 4) Related graphics, poems, articles (in xerox; no originals, please)
- 5) Suggested books, films, videos, etc. for the ongoing curriculum/bibliography.
- 6) Any financial contribution will be welcomed with extravagant enthusiasm.



An old ACD slogan is "Imagination." Imagine, then, with us, a post-Columbian hemisphere ruled by justice and mutual respect, and act on it.

Please send any ideas and information you may have to:

Quincentennial Project
Alliance for Cultural Democracy
P.O. Box 7591
Minneapolis, MN 55407





Photo by Susan Alzner

MIDNIGHT OIL

Passion For A Better World

Debbie Scott

'We carry in our hearts the true country/and that cannot be stolen/We follow in the steps of our ancestry/and that cannot be broken'

—"The Dead Heart" by Midnight Oil.

When Australia's Aborigines were to regain ownership of one of their sacred sites, Ayers Rock, the Australian Film Commission asked rock group Midnight Oil to write a song commemorating the event. The white, urban-dwelling band initially hesitated to undertake the project, believing it should be done by Aboriginal musicians. But the Aborigines trusted Midnight Oil. They also knew the Oils had the potential to reach a lot of people in the cities with their music. Out of the three written, the Aboriginal people chose "The Dead Heart".

Thus began one of the most extensive campaigns ever undertaken by a popular band, to raise awareness about indigenous peoples' rights. In 1986, after "The Dead Heart" was finished, Midnight Oil was invited to come out and tour the remote Aboriginal communities of the Australian outback. The group performed free concerts at each stop and visited with tribal elders and community

Left to Right: Malati Yunupingu, Milkayngu Mununggurr, Rob Hirst, and Witiyana Marika in Mesa, Arizona.

activists, hoping to learn firsthand about the struggles and victories of these oppressed people.

The trip, dubbed the Blackfella/Whitefella tour, subsequently spawned the band's 6th album *Diesel and Dust*. The LP brilliantly captures the essence of the desert and the people who have inhabited it for more than 40,000 years. It also conveys thought-provoking messages about the treatment of these and other Native peoples. The LP's release on the eve of the Australian Bicentennial brought national attention to the plight of the Aborigines and illustrated the irony of festivities that in essence, celebrated the demise of Aboriginal culture.

Lead singer Peter Garrett explained that the timely release was not pre-planned, but once it received airplay people couldn't help but become aware of the controversy. "One minute you'd have the Prime Minister on the radio saying, 'I don't want these celebrations ruined by activists', and the next minute you'd have, 'The time has come/to say fair's fair' (from a song about land rights entitled *Beds Are Burning*)." Ironically, just four weeks after the official Bicentennial celebrations, *Beds Are Burning* won Australian Song of the Year at that country's Recording Industry Association Awards.

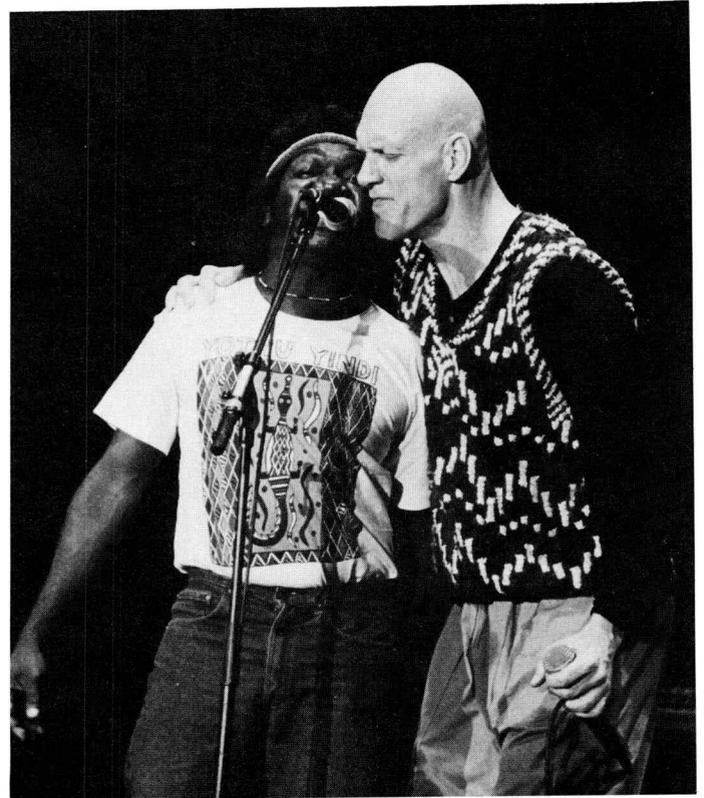
Midnight Oil has gone to great effort to convey their message of Aboriginal land rights. In fact, much of *Diesel and Dust's* effectiveness lies in the fusion of medium and message. Aside from its lyrical intensity, the LP is rich in

musical textures created by the band's uses of acoustic instruments and ringing harmonies. They also have taken their role as interpreter beyond the boundaries of the music. The video clips accompanying their singles appropriately deliver the tune's message, and a documentary has been made about the *Blackfella/Whitefella* tour. Their newspaper-style press materials dubbed the "Oil Rags" are also educational, with various Aboriginal illustrations and phrases relevant to Native peoples' rights. The group's political passion has even found an avenue outside the band, through Garrett. In 1987 the singer, who is also a lawyer and former senate candidate with the Nuclear Disarmament Party, published a book, *Political Blues*.

The Oils have musically focused on a variety of issues in their career. Among them are the environment and nuclear disarmament-issues that are not endemic to Australia. Yet the band's greatest successes in the U.S. ironically have come with their *Diesel LP*. They embraced the opportunity to spread their message. To promote indigenous peoples' rights in a graphic way, they invited an Aboriginal band, Yothu Yindi, and Sioux Indian activist/poet John Trudell as opening acts for their U.S. concerts.

The tour culminated in a benefit show in Mesa, Arizona for the Big Mountain Navajo and Hopi Indians affected by a government - mandated relocation from their tribal homelands (PL-93-531). Besides providing financial assistance for the legal struggle against the law, Midnight Oil aimed to rekindle interest in the 14 year case and raise awareness of the current oppression that affects all Native Americans. "There's a parallel experience between what's happening in our own country and in America," Garrett relates, "and it didn't make sense to us to come through America playing *Diesel and Dust* unless it had some kind of American focus." The next day the Oils, Yothu Yindi, and John Trudell met with some of the Navajo elders involved in the fight. As the two hour meeting concluded a feeling of renewed optimism filled the air.

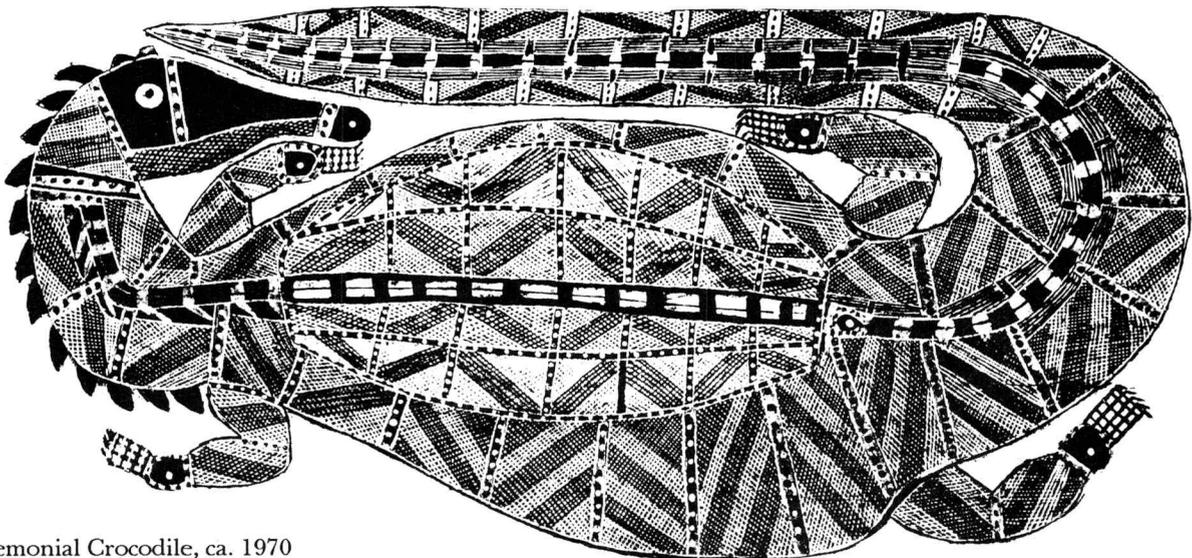
The Oils are continuing to do their part for Native peoples. This spring they were involved with a new LP *Building Bridges*, a compilation of several Aboriginal and



Bakamara Yunupingu (Yothu Yindi) with Peter Garrett (Midnight Oil) in Mesa Arizona.

non-Aboriginal Australian bands, put out in conjunction with the National Coalition of Aboriginal Organizations. Peter Garrett told one Australian interviewer: "Midnight Oil music is essentially about recognizing that things have got to be set right, and that people have the potential to change their society. They shouldn't believe it's up to governments and powerful groups to change it." A fitting statement from a group who's potential is being realized.

DEBBIE SCOTT is a freelance music writer who visited Australia in 1988.



Ceremonial Crocodile, ca. 1970
Yirawala, Western Arnhem Land

PLUNDERER VS. POET:

a brief reflection

Glenn Sheldon

Christopher Columbus was unquestionably a selfish dreamer. His stuporous discovery of "America" was a grand fluke. The great American poet, Thomas McGrath, says it best at the beginning of his brief poem "Columbus":

Columbus, wearing a night-gown made from
a treasure map,
Is sleepwalking on the giant avenues of an
invisible sea.

Columbus was relentless in his search for the Orient. Indeed, he sailed by dead reckoning, which means he had minimal knowledge of celestial navigation and only compasses to guide him. Consequently, he headed due west:

He dreams he had discovered the Isthmus of
Compound Interest
In his constant pursuit of the droppings of the
One Historical Zero.

Tears fall through the meridians of his hands.
He is sad. His sadness makes the winds blow,

McGrath continues:

Filling his sails with the algebra of abstract labor
Birds faint at his passing and the fish turn
to stone.

He is looking for gold that breathes and has
dark skin

And can be renamed "Slave." The birds revive,
screaming.

Certainly, Columbus was more than a bully, but at times he simply bullied. When he and his crew were arrested on a Portuguese island for African poaching and lying, Columbus threatened to shoot up the town if he wasn't released; he was! As for the few captives from the gentle Arawak tribe who survived the voyage back to Europe in 1493, they were exhibited by Columbus for the specific enjoyment of the King of Spain. Here is where McGrath both ends and re-begins his poem:

In the dungeons of the King the dark zero grows
wounds and weapons.

At sea the waves trudge off in search of a new
continent.

To explain: the ends of McGrath's poems are often re-beginnings. The critic Terrence Des Pres explains that like "any bard, [McGrath] preserves the memory of events in danger of being repressed or forgotten." McGrath, in the role of a poet, is in search of a continent, and he seeks to expose the truth of "America" buried beneath the lies of our propaganda, or revision.

Here I have quoted McGrath's poem in its entirety and in sequential order. McGrath is unique for he dares to tell the truth—as he, a poet, sees it—Columbus was a plunderer. Why should we celebrate such a thief? Why does America ignore a tribal elder, like Thomas McGrath (who is both 73 years old and in ill health), in favor of celebrating a spiritually narcoleptic hero like Christopher Columbus?

GLENN SHELDON is a poet and writer who is presently in a Ph.D. program at the University of Pennsylvania (Indiana, Pa.). His Masters Thesis was written on Thomas McGrath.



POPULAR EDUCATION IN PHILADELPHIA

Gil Ott



Philadelphia photographer, Harvey Finkle

"Women of Hope."

No one living in Philadelphia could be unaware of the vitality of the city's neighborhoods. Scores of class, cultural, and ethnic groupings mix, and are at once segregated in distinct sections of the map with names like Olney, Germantown, Frankford, and Hunting Park.

While it is located in Center City—a "neighborhood" most readily characterized by capital investment and merchandising—the Painted Bride Art Center has emphasized cultural diversity in its program throughout its twenty years. More recently, the Art Center has realized that such access meets only half the need. The neighborhoods themselves are the geographic locus of remarkable talent, yet they are marginalized by dominant arts funding and practices, and lack creative outlets.

This understanding has led the Art Center to initiate a program entitled Popular Education Community Workshops, in which the Bride works with Philadelphia neighborhood-based organizations to seed cultural projects. Working with their community leaders, neighborhood residents conceive and execute projects geared to their collective interests and talents. While the content of a project may not directly address problems existing in the neighborhood, the process of working together toward a common goal can stimulate interracial or intergenerational understanding, and can reaffirm community pride.

In the first stage of each project, Bride staff meets with representatives of the neighborhood to discuss their needs, and to assess their resources. The Art Center then contacts artists, who continue the discussion with neighborhood residents. As clearer direction emerges, the Bride contracts with the neighborhood group, providing funding for them to hire artists, and to execute the piece.

The goal is empowerment of the neighbors. The Art Center and the artists function as catalysts; the neighbors create and own the product. Wherever possible, neighborhood resources are utilized, including spaces for rehearsal and performance/exhibition, administrative coordination, and fundraising options. Ultimately, the Bride hopes that participating neighborhood groups will want to continue their own cultural programs once their Popular Education project has come to an end.

Since the Popular Education Community Workshops Program was founded this past winter, three projects have begun:

In early discussions with the Art Center, OLNEY NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER described problems of transience and unethical real estate practices in their racially diverse neighborhood. The Bride introduced them to theater artist Heath Allen, who helped them interview many area residents, and create a collective script from those impressions. Local high school students rehearsed and performed the play, *The Ugly Fence*, at the Neighborhood Center in June.

Located in predominantly African-American Southwest Philadelphia, the SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT CENTER has noticed a gap between teen and senior populations, resulting in generational segregation and the loss of neighborhood history. With the Painted Bride's help, the Center invited Philadelphia-based poets Mbali Umoja, Kimmika Williams, Richard Nichols, and Homer Jackson to lead writing, oral history and performance workshops with the different age groups. The artists are now helping residents produce an intergenerational performance piece, including rap and choreopoetry, to be presented this summer.

The homeless of Philadelphia actually represent the *absence* of neighborhood, yet the Popular Education Community Workshops has begun working with two Center City shelters — WOMEN OF HOPE and MY BROTHER'S HOUSE — toward a project intended to educate the public about homelessness, and to offer the homeless themselves a crucial outlet for their own artistic talents. The Painted Bride is sponsoring workshops for interested artists, to provide them with necessary training, following which they will work directly, one-on-one with shelter residents, establishing creative relationships over a ten week period. This process will culminate in an exhibit and performance of the Women of Hope shelter auditorium.

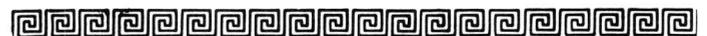
The Bride is currently talking with several other neighborhood-based groups, with an eye toward establishing more projects in disadvantaged areas throughout the city. An ongoing series of free workshops, for both artists and neighborhood activists, has also begun, focusing on specific topics such as racism, oral history techniques, and the challenges of organizing within the Puerto Rican community. These workshops are an integral part of the Popular Education Program, giving artists and neighborhood activists an opportunity to meet, and to discuss common needs and objectives.

While neighborhood-based arts projects have occurred before in Philadelphia, the Popular Education Community Workshops Program is the first attempt at neighbor-generated projects. As such, it questions the centralized "arts machine", and, in presenting a real alternative, will strengthen the city's overall cultural life.



GIL OTT is the author of several books of poetry, including **Public Domain** (*Potes & Poets*, 1989), **The Yellow Floor** (*Sun & Moon*, 1987) and **within range** (*Burning Deck*, 1986). As the Director of Special Projects at the Painted Bride Art Center, in Philadelphia, he coordinates the Popular Education Community Workshops, a cultural program for the city's neighborhoods. Mr. Ott is the Editor and Publisher of **Singing Horse Press** and **Paper Air** magazine.

For information on the upcoming National Conference Festival of Community-Based Art (Nov. 3-5, 1989), contact: Painted Bride Art Center, 230 Vine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106.



Culture as Catalyst Workshop:

Alan Bolt Juanita Espinosa
Charles Frederick



Illustration by Cliff Harper

CULTURAL ANIMATION IN NICARAGUA:

What Is The Revolution?

Alan Bolt

I am the artistic director of Nixtoyero Theatre Company. We are part of a grassroots movement in Nicaragua. Our main goal is to develop cultural animation. We know that making art alone isn't cultural animation because culture is everything we make in life. Culture is the social action of human beings—all the actions: agriculture, science, technology—whatever you can imagine. Cultural animation has to do with all of it.

When I read outside Nicaragua what people say about the country, I am amazed. I have a lot of very good friends in the States, but their view of Nicaragua is a very romantic one. We are an "amazing dream that came true", or we are "the new paradise for socialism." Then they go down there and they get disillusioned and they say, "They were lying to me." It's not true—they were dreaming their own dreams and they wanted us to become their dreams, not our own dreams.

We have had ten years of a true revolutionary process. That doesn't mean that the government is always right because every government has human beings making the decisions. These human beings have been educated by human beings. Some of these human beings who have been educating us have been oppressors, so we learn to oppress and we learn to be oppressed. We have internalized colonialism. We are deeply colonized. Ten years of revolution doesn't mean we have changed all these things and suddenly become free and internalized freedom. It doesn't mean we suddenly don't have the old archetypes and the old values.

Even now we have the old archetype of political power. We say that people have to participate, but we don't believe people have the right to participate. We think we shall have a new education, but we can't imagine what kind of education that could be because we still believe in the dream of the universities. We still believe in the dream of one day being a developed nation with big factories and machinery and everything computerized. We still have the dream of becoming a metropolis, like a Paris of the tropics. We believe that this is the only real economic opportunity for the people of Nicaragua or the rest of the countries of Central America. There are many stupid dreams to deal with. We have internalized all these dreams. We have a lot of false images. We have been bombarded by images coming from television and the movies. Males want to be like Robert Redford. Women would like to look like Madonna.

In the middle of all this we have not only an economic crisis, but a ten year war against us. With the war we have learned not only that we have to be heroic, but unfortunately we have changed a need into a value. There was initially the need to fight. Now it has become a value to be a warrior. So we are on the wrong path ideologically. Similarly, women were organizing their movement, but suddenly that became too subversive in our presently unstable society, because it was too great a change in the conduct of power. So this is our society—complex, many nations, many languages, many old values, many economic problems, and the war. This might seem a very oppressive view of what's going on, but, at the same time, there is a new dynamic in women, in the Indians, and in young people. People are looking for alternatives, and that's good. Most of the militants got disillusioned, and that's good too because if you don't have any illusions you just look at the facts. Then you try to do something real about real facts.

After the revolution, I began to organize theatre groups all over the country because I was the head of theatre for the Ministry of Culture. Slowly many struggles began because one of our illusions was that culture is only what

Western Europe has produced, not only in the arts, but in everything—in agriculture, in medicine, in philosophy, and in religion. Instead of creating big national companies to educate the people as some of the leadership demanded of me, I organized popular groups to develop the popular tradition. That was the first internal struggle, and we lost it. So we went to the mountains to work and we began to organize this company Nixtoyaleero.

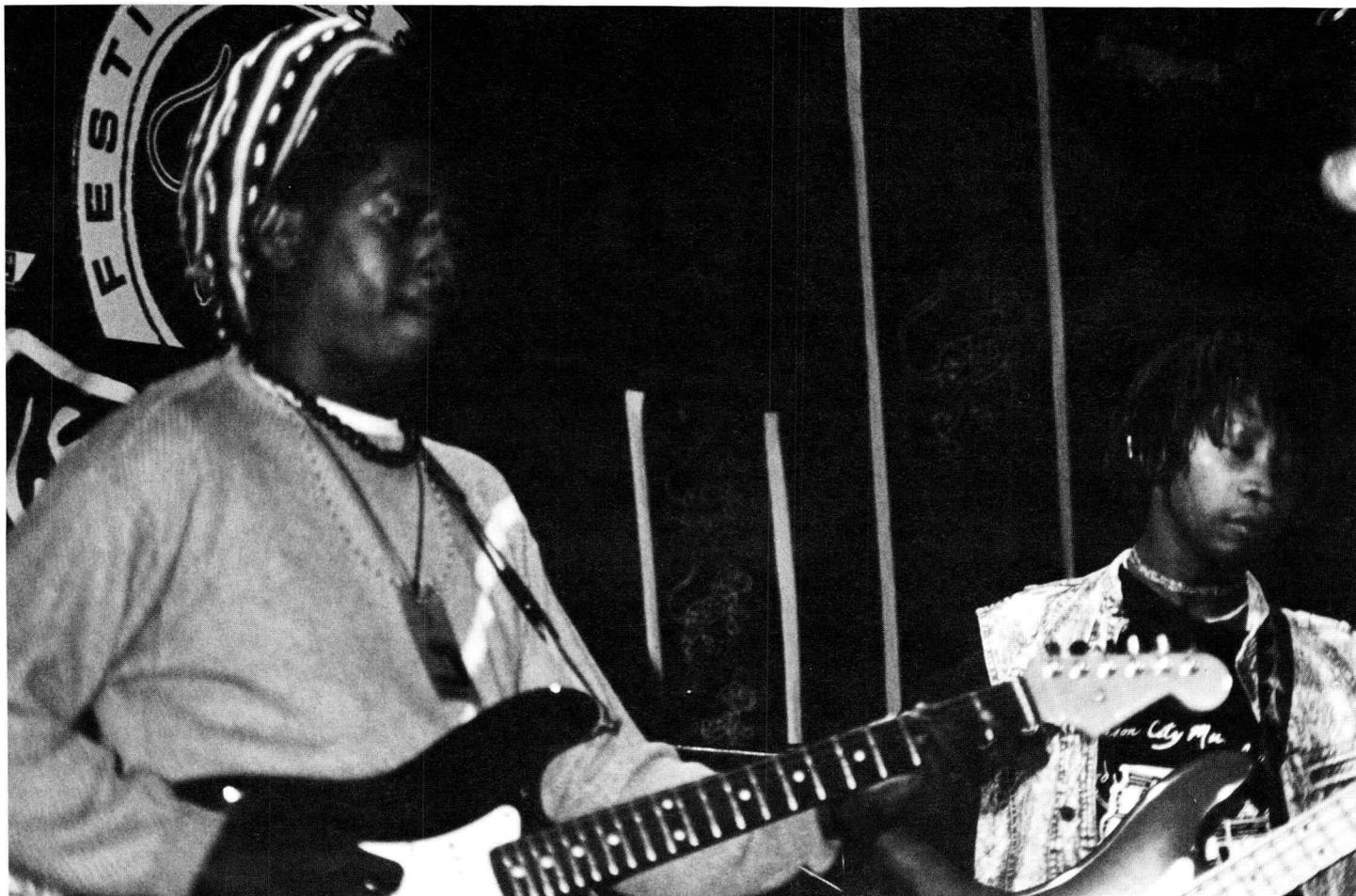
We decided that it was important to develop a program to train people to develop their own cultural movements. We were making wonderful plays about the basic issues of our society, male archetypes and political power, violence by men against women, corruption in the government and the bureaucracy. Whatever you can imagine, we were doing it. Every play was a political scandal, but criticism wasn't enough. We needed to help the communities to have their own theatre groups, their own music groups, their own festivals, their own programs. It was not easy to do these things because we had to deal with a lot of officials in the government who thought that what we were doing was the work of the CIA in that we were giving impulse to the communities to bring forth their own power. Developing the capacity to participate meant to be able to oppose the official decisions on policies of agri-reform, prices for grain, making of new roads, and other things that effected the people's lives. The people were able to stand up and say, "We don't agree with this! This is wrong!" Then suddenly the officials began to believe that we were organizing

riots of the people against the government. Not all of the people in the government thought this, but some with enough power to stop our work.

So the big question began to be "Are you with the revolution or against the revolution?" We asked in return, "Who is going to defend the country? Who is producing in this country?" It is not you. It is the people. If the U.S. and the counter-revolution are attacking the country and we are all going to defend the country, defend the revolution, then *what is the revolution?* Is it your decision as an official of the government or is it popular collective action to improve life? What then is the revolution? Is it to create a hierarchical state or to give more possibilities to participate in decisions which effect daily life to the communities and little villages? What is the revolution? That's still the big debate in Nicaragua. If we have done one wonderful thing in this life, it is that we opened that debate.

In our movement, we found out that we were repeating the models against which we were working as revolutionaries. So we engaged in a lot of reflection on our own work. What are we doing and why? Why do you or I have so much power to make decisions? Why don't I count on the rest of the people to make decisions? It's a very complex process of self-criticism, while at the same time trying to deal with the complexity of a country in the middle of a war.

Now we are organizing a wide democratic cultural front,



Soul Vibrations playing their "Afro-Nicaraguan" brand of reggae at W.O.M.A.D. (World of Music Art and Dance) in Toronto, Canada, Aug. 1989.

"Our project is to recover the culture of our black forbearers. ...To wake up the people so they can revive their consciousness and not only live to eat and sleep like animals." Arjuna Leo Flores, (r), bass player, Soul Vibrations.

have so much power to make decisions? Why don't I count on the rest of the people to make decisions? It's a very complex process of self-criticism, while, at the same time trying to deal with the complexity of a country in the middle of a war.

Now we are organizing a wide democratic cultural front, not as an organization which has meetings, but basically to make actions together. We will be working not only within our own movement, but also with other people who are interested in these revolutionary debates. We are trying to organize a real movement for cultural animation among the people. Yet right now the government is opening the doors to the right wing parties, but not to us. International political pressure is making the government open the doors in that direction, but not in our direction. So we have to continue our struggle. The good thing is that whatever we do counts because if we improve just a little bit, then the rest of the people coming behind won't have to do that little bit. They can then go beyond it.

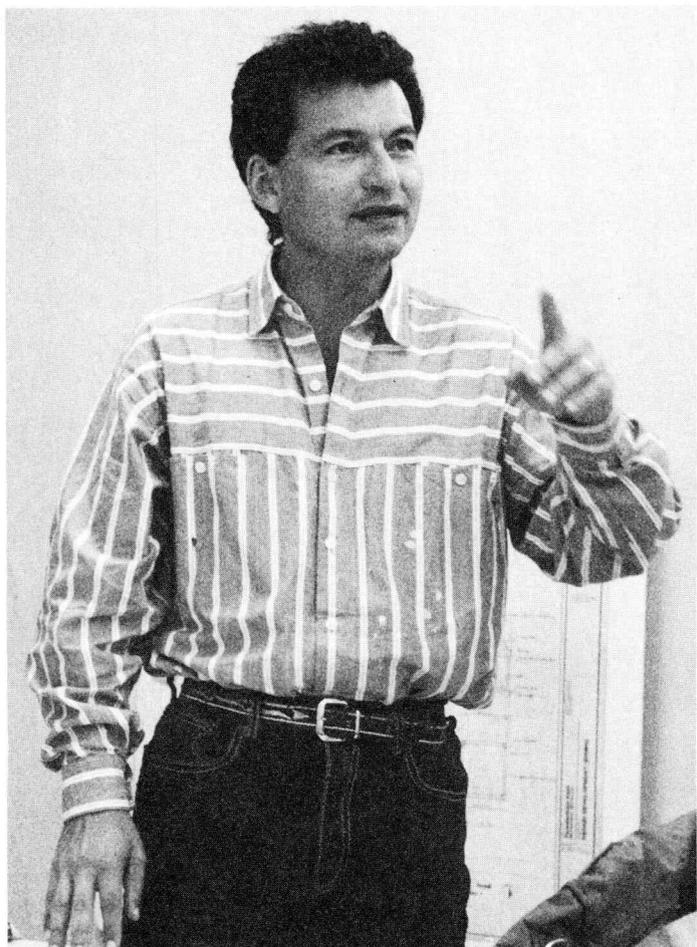


Photo by Sal Salerno

ALAN BOLT is a theatrical writer, director, teacher and performer in Nicaragua. He currently leads a nationwide grassroots organization called *Movimiento de Animacion Cultural Rural*, based at his family's old estate outside Matagalpa. There he conducts workshops as part of a national reclamation project incorporating native dance, masks, music, ritual and symbols. His theatre company, *Nixtoytalero*, has toured world-wide performing works based on both ideas of social change and folk traditions in Nicaragua.

The above article is excerpted from Bolt's talk at the 1989 ACD conference in Minneapolis.



REBUILDING THE SPIRIT OF THE NATION:

The Native American Cultural Arts Program

Juanita Espinosa



I strongly and clearly believe that every Native person born into this world has a gift just by the fact that they're born Native because of the philosophy, the culture—because of the way you're raised. You're always told some kind of story. You're always inspired to go into some kind of gift—doing beadwork, or creating images, or dancing, or singing, or writing poetry, or saying prayers. All of those are gifts that need to be recognized, worked with and developed.

The Native American Cultural Arts Program (NCAP) seeks to create the kind of language and the kind of images that enable people to understand that every Native person has a gift to share that needs to be handed down to the children and given to the community.

Native culture is spiritually-based, rooted in ceremony, in prayer, in contemplation, and in being respectful of all the people. If we use the kinds of answers available in terms of building the spirit, working with the person and appreciating the beauty of the things people are creating, we can get further. We instill something in each individual that is a reminder of the gifts with which they came into the world. It's going to be us doing it for ourselves and for our community and for our children in the way we know it needs to be done—not letting anyone's rules and schedules and timeliness define it for us.

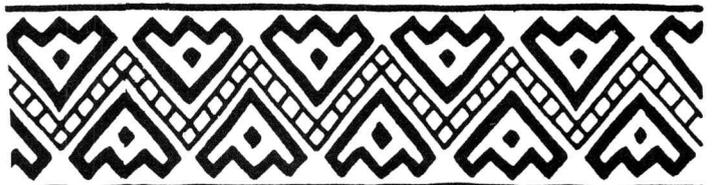
At NCAP, we're attempting to figure out a way for Native artists to share themselves without getting exploited. We need to find out what they want and don't want to share. There must be no question that this is a Native program from a Native person's perspective. I think we have a real chance with this program, if we do it in a way that is respectful. We set it up so it's wide open, with lots of places for feedback. We don't set the rules. The artists set the rules. They want to be involved in the process. They want their ideas utilized. Those are real things that people want. Right now we're having a problem trying to create structure because we don't like the structures that exist. We know we have found a new model for ourselves. We know the answers are within each of the artists and each of the communities. NCAP is just looking at ways to help get them out.

There is no word for art in our language. Creativity is really understood to be a way of life. You're born with the thought that you have to survive and that you came into the world to live and to take care of the land. That's your purpose. However you do that, it's with the idea of making life beautiful. When we can talk on that level, everybody can see their part and how they fit. Then we can start searching for our own answers—where we want to give of ourselves. In this way, we're hoping that this project will bring together the community.



Photo by Sal Salerno

JUANITA ESPINOSA is a Dakota-Ojibway community organizer, mother of three children, and board chair of the Minneapolis American Indian Center. She is currently working with NCAP/COMPAS.



THE CATHEDRAL PROJECT:



Illustration by Bob Waldmire

Cultural Animation As History Unfolding

Charles Frederick

I'm going to describe a project I've been involved in for a couple of years and propose within it some of the things I've learned about cultural animation.

My current work in the gay community as a gay man was occasioned by the crisis of AIDS. The Cathedral Project is a loose coalition of groups and individuals under the leadership of gay and lesbian Catholics, specifically Dignity and the Conference for Catholic Lesbians.

The Cathedral Project was formed in March 1987 when the New York Archdiocese expelled gays and lesbian people from the Church as a consequence of the new ruling by the Vatican in October 1986 which declared homosexuality an intrinsic disorder and a tendency towards evil; in effect, declaring all gay and lesbian people a category of sin. The Cathedral Project is a proclamation and public witness that this is wrong. The Cathedral Project is also challenging the Church to address its failure to ensure care, material assistance and honor to people with AIDS. The action of the Cathedral Project has been to present ourselves respectfully and inclusively as a sign and a presence among other Catholics at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

In response, the Cardinal and the trustees of the Cathedral called the police into the sanctuary of the Cathedral and had us arrested, charging us with criminal action. We are still struggling in the courts with the consequences of this repressive police action. We continue our activity with a once a month presence in the Cathedral, on the street in front of St. Patrick's

Cathedral, and with civil disobedience activities. To date there have been close to 200 arrests at the Cathedral. We have extended the mission of our presence to a general call for justice in all aspects of church and society.

What I've come to understand from this work is that cultural animation in society is to compose your identity as a subject in one or more of the narratives of the society. Thus composing yourself as an active subject in history by finding your identity within one of the great narratives of the society, all of which always must be changed.

Particularly in the situation in working with AIDS, the challenge here is to show that AIDS is not an attribute of identity. In men's restrooms in New York, in straight restrooms, you will find the graffiti on the wall "G A Y, Got AIDS Yet?" AIDS is not a attribute of identity. It is a condition to be ameliorated. The people who are oppressed are the ones who have the responsibility of fixing it. We have a responsibility for retrieving the name of "gay" as a subject in human history and a location for universal liberation.

I went to Dignity three years ago as a place to work with AIDS. It's a common occurrence that the structures of support and care required for a crisis of health are always found first in the communities effected. I was raised Catholic so I went to a place where I knew the tradition. I was also interested in Liberation Theology as cultural expression and as a movement. I was interested as an artist in community animation.

Why the Catholic Church? It is a naming place in human society. There are 900 million people around the world who accept Catholicism as one of the ways they name themselves. There are 50 million Catholics in this country alone. The peoples' wisdom must always grow, but where the people gather in history is where history will be. The Catholic Church is a mythic tradition, an organization of community and identity. It's a system of ritual and order of relations, and a

system of morality. It is also a construction of a system for institutions of power. However, it is finally, and most importantly within this welter, a place of human self-recognition. In working with anything, the right naming is the way you begin to do the right caring. It's the identity and the subject of the person which first must be known to find the strength to heal.

People should be able to be free wherever they are in human society. They should not have to choose between personal identity and tradition, personal identity and family, personal identity and relationships or community. Liberation should not require an annihilation of a history and culture. However, dialectically and simultaneously, the responsibility is to ensure that tradition is not oppressive to the people in it or to other people.

My working definition of culture is people imagining and creating their own reality. It's also the human presence in the world of things. It is the wording of the universe. When you name it, you recognize it. So our job is to create a movement for justice and through cultural animation to re-authorize culture. Continually, the people who are in the tradition at the moment must make it be what it will be. They are the authors. People simultaneously compose themselves within a culture and while composing themselves within the culture, re-create the culture. It's a subtle dialectic; you become yourself, and as you become yourself you also make the world different. You create yourself within the conditions of the world.

What are the tasks of cultural animation? Number one, it's an act of refusing oppression. This begins the healing of the effects of oppression. You understand how to use language as prophetic inclusion, not as secular opposition. As I said earlier, you shouldn't have to annihilate culture to become free; you should transform it. Then you begin the work of the re-naming of yourself which is always accompanied with a new action. In all of this process, we must develop a new accountability, everyone to each other.

Aesthetically speaking, cultural animation uses every skill of artmaking you can imagine. We do a Mass—it's theatre. We do educational work—its writing. Every possible skill is used in one place. To always say that you have this art form and that art form, makes everyone as alienated from each other in disciplines as they are in life. We've tried to stop that.

What do we mean by cultural animation? The word at the center of it is "anima." We're not making cartoons. We're talking about anima, which is spirit. What does that mean? It means the totality of being human, both the measurable and the ineffable. Without understanding that that's what you're working with, you will not succeed. People wish to imagine a new

world by imagining their full humanity. If you reduce it to only a materialist conception, you will not be important to that imagination. You are involved in telling the story of the community which includes, but extends beyond, analysis. Remember that the story of any community is constantly a process of both revealing and concealing, both to other communities, and even, to themselves. If we still like ambiguity in art, that's the place where it's most interesting.

In political terms the story of a community, as you work in cultural animation, should become the story of how it is not an object, but a subject in history. For a community story to be recognizable in both the telling and the re-telling, it must be told to its particular culture, in its systems of signs, its rituals, behaviors and values. A story, as opposed to a report, tells the wisdom of the community as part of its narrative. It reveals oppression and promise. Cultural animation retrieves history. At the same time we want to make sure it remains self-critical. Every tradition is a dialectical mess. In cultural animation, we seek to be ourselves and to know ourselves simultaneously. In cultures of oppression, they want you to be yourselves without knowing what it is you are because that's the way it keeps you oppressed. Cultural animation is an intervention in culture, not through an art object or an individual authority, but by facilitating a collective creation from the people of a community.

My work as an animateur with Dignity began as facilitator of a circle discussion in feminist consciousness raising form. What pains people is often what keeps people from moving. We began with questions. "Why did you join Dignity? What should Dignity become? Why did you come to the Ad Hoc (the specific mobilizing form we had invented)?" This became extraordinary as people expressed the pain, the hope, and relationships of their lives and those having been opened could never be put back.

The next step after that storytelling amongst ourselves from the most personal point of view, was using that to then recognize what we were. The question was "What is it to be gay?" Gay identity was formulated as a subject in history, not just as personal experience, although the two are the same. From within that we had a new recognition of self and began to understand that there was a militant expression and movement forward.

The next thing to do was to find the expressive art form, the cultural expression of how to enter into the Catholic tradition which is a tradition of public worship. To do that we literally composed ourselves as a sign within the ritual. During the High Mass when the Cardinal

gave his sermon and everyone sat down to listen politely, we stood up! We were silent, but we actually composed ourselves as a sign within the Mass. What the Church recognized was that we were a semiotic disturbance. We had a name and we were making that name known.

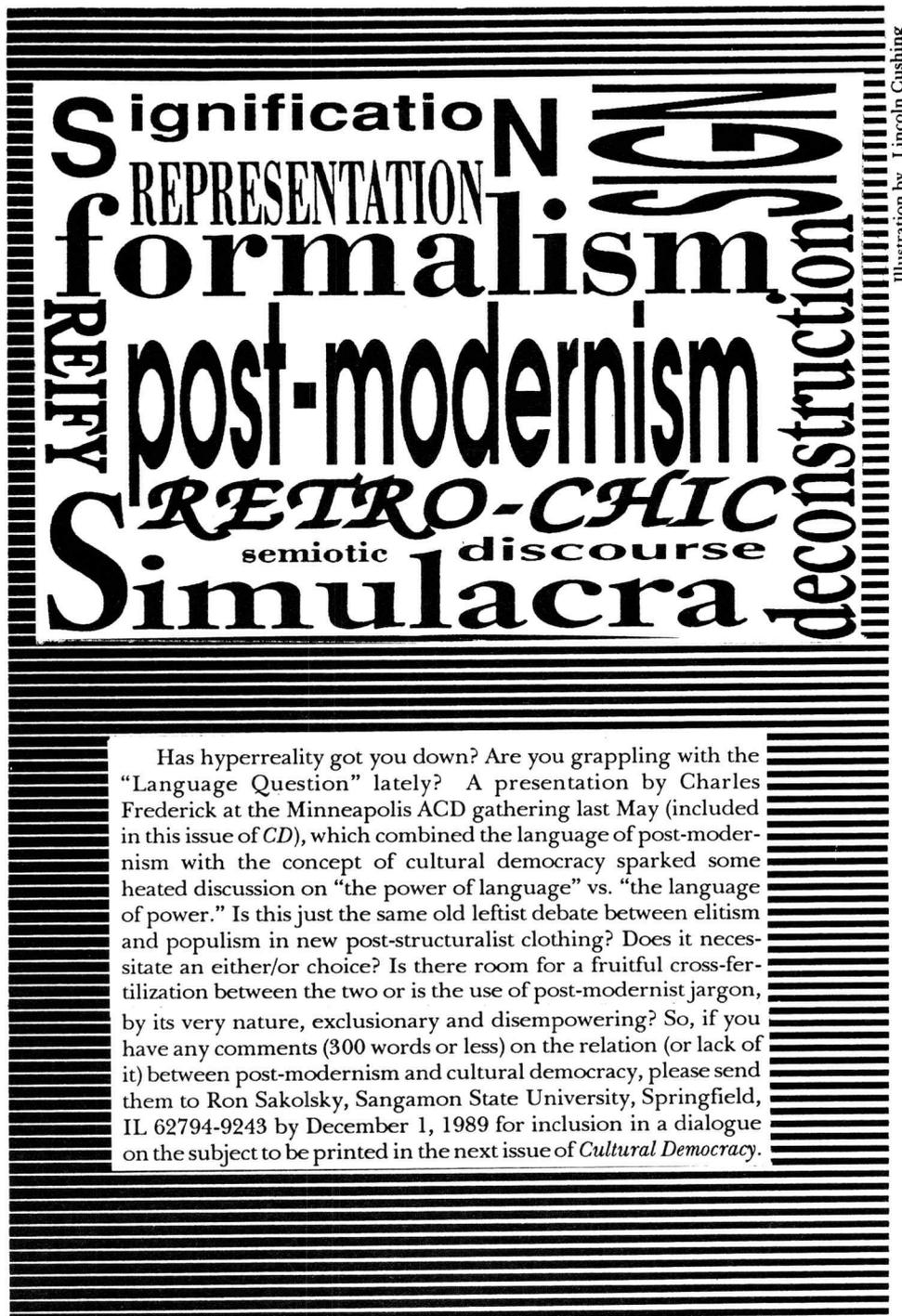
So the Church used the resources of the state against us and had us arrested on criminal charges. It was extraordinary on the day when the police walked across the main altar. Several dozen police walked down the aisles of a packed cathedral and ripped us out of the pews and led us off to paddy wagons. People were crying in the church, saying, "This is fascism." They understood because we had composed

ourselves in a way which was both unavoidable to be dealt with and was the most cogent expression of that tradition.

The dissemination of cultural animation, as opposed to dissemination or publication of artworks, is history unfolding. It is people getting to a new place. It is a new community actualization.

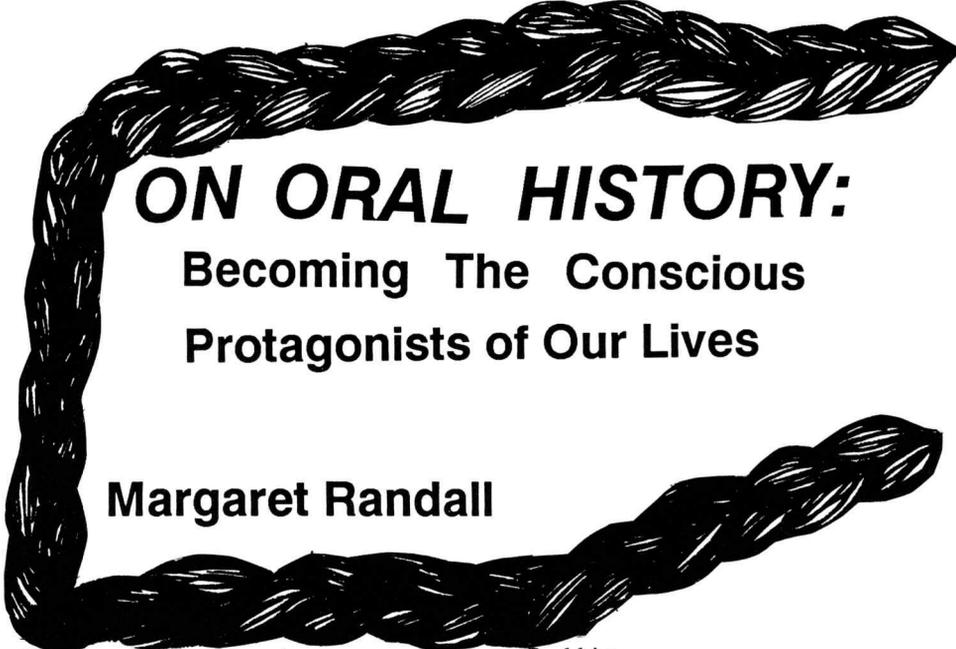
CHARLES FREDERICK is a writer, poet, theatre worker, and animateur in New York City. He is a past board member of the Alliance for Cultural Democracy.

The above article is excerpted from Frederick's talk at the 1989 ACD conference in Minneapolis.



Has hyperreality got you down? Are you grappling with the "Language Question" lately? A presentation by Charles Frederick at the Minneapolis ACD gathering last May (included in this issue of *CD*), which combined the language of post-modernism with the concept of cultural democracy sparked some heated discussion on "the power of language" vs. "the language of power." Is this just the same old leftist debate between elitism and populism in new post-structuralist clothing? Does it necessitate an either/or choice? Is there room for a fruitful cross-fertilization between the two or is the use of post-modernist jargon, by its very nature, exclusionary and disempowering? So, if you have any comments (300 words or less) on the relation (or lack of it) between post-modernism and cultural democracy, please send them to Ron Sakolsky, Sangamon State University, Springfield, IL 62794-9243 by December 1, 1989 for inclusion in a dialogue on the subject to be printed in the next issue of *Cultural Democracy*.

Illustration by Lincoln Cushing



ON ORAL HISTORY: Becoming The Conscious Protagonists of Our Lives

Margaret Randall

Suppose you want to write
of a woman braiding
another woman's hair—
straight down, or with beads and shells
in three-strand plaits or corn-rows—
you had better know the thickness
the length the pattern
why she decides to braid her hair
how it is done to her
what country it happens in
what else happens in that country.

—Adrienne Rich



You must be able to write what you
think, and maybe what you write about
your day-to-day, everyday, ordinary life
will be some of the same problems that the
people of the world are fighting out. You
must be able to write what you have to say,
and know that that is what matters. And I
hope you can see that you can begin
anywhere and end up as far as anybody
else has reached.

—C. L. R. James



Oral history.
What does the joining together of these
two words really mean?

Oral, of course, is from the spoken
word, an oral tradition: people, and the
stories we tell. Also from a time when
people's stories were more familiar,
valued, honored; not yet pushed aside by
the more "educated" written (later,
academic) telling.

Superseding the oral with the written
brought with it an obvious ranking. Those
telling the story represent the economic
interests of those in power (most often
commissioned or paid directly by those
interests). White, ruling-class men, and
their ideologies. Very occasionally,
women trained in the male educational
centers, women who could "make it in a
man's world" or "write as well as a man."

So we've had the stories, the *histories*
and *herstories*, of those who came before
us, all filtered through the myopic lenses
of *the other*. More to the point: *the other*,
posing as self. An ahistoric arrangement in
which we, the people, become *other* to
ourselves.

The lives of working women and men,
told by those who reaped our sweat and
blood. The lives of Native peoples offered,
presumptuously, by those who came to
defile our land, plunder and rape, and
finally conquer. The lives of slaves, told by
slaveholders. Women's lives, when told at
all, distorted through a male lens.
Heterosexism making invisible the lives of
lesbians and gay men.

We read about our forebears. We
"learn" our history, in books and texts and
films and TV specials whose primary
reason for being is that of perpetuating
our false identities: identities which are
not such, but disguises designed to keep
us from knowing who we are.

As just one example, think of all the
Indian or Hispanic children, watching

grossly distorted images of themselves on
mainstream U.S. television or film. There
are so many insulting people's images in
advertising, school texts, the media. In
our multicultural society, the current
repression of bilingualism is yet another
travesty of self.

We learn all this. And then we learn
that we must unlearn it. Oral histories
have been key in replacing these false
identities with bits and pieces of our real
selves. We become, once again, the con-
scious protagonists of our lives.

Even as the system's tools for maintain-
ing this identity-bondage are ever more
perverse and refined, we have our own
ways of keeping the collective memory
alive. We *know* who we are—in the stories,
in the legends, in the voices handed down
from generation to generation.

These are the original oral histories,
what the grandmothers and grandfathers
told the mothers and fathers, what the
mothers and fathers tell their children.

And, although the term "oral history"
is used to describe stories which are
precisely that—a history handed, orally,
from person to person—a number of
amazing written accounts have also sur-
faced: narratives such as Linda Brent's
extraordinary slave memoir, or Mother
Jones' autobiography.

What about the technical components
of oral history? How is it made?

First of all, it is not *made*—passive
voice—by some invisible power. *We oursel-
ves make it.*

Originally, and in most cases, we record
a voice. We may use a tape recorder or
take extensive handwritten notes. Some-
one, or a group of people, who have lived
a particular experience, tell their story to
a writer who records, orders, edits. Sup-
plementary supporting data, from the
more traditional archives or other sour-
ces, may be used as well. But the central
voice comes from the person or persons
who have lived the event.

Respect is essential here. I have
recorded the stories of people who cannot
write their own, and I've worked with
those who are able to take an active part
in the process. I generally transcribe every
word, making two copies of the material;
one I file—in order to be able to keep an
accurate record of what has been said—
and I am free to apply my creativity to the
other.

I may feel that a non-linear use of time
is more appropriate to telling a particular
story. Then I may cut and paste. In recent
years I've wanted to photograph the in-
formant and search for other visual im-
ages as well. Working in the darkroom,
printing these images, has influenced how
I might edit a voice; the sound of a voice,
in turn, affects how I print an image.

Depending upon the particular project, there are a number of stages and moments when a text may be submitted to the person telling the story. He or she may read it or I may read it to them. Listening to what they've said, they may have valuable input or feedback, enriching even more the final product. In oral history, process is as important as product.

Because working people, farmers, people of color, and women have for so long been manipulated, used, kept uneducated and without access to the mechanisms of writing and publication, the vast majority of our stories, as uttered by us, have been passed on orally—or told in diaries, private journals, and songs—the so-called “lesser” literary forms. Only occasionally, and sometimes to be used against us, were out-of-context fragments of these stories passed on by those who had access to the pens and presses.

In some parts of the colonized or neo-colonized world, notably in Latin America, people's revolutionary struggles first used the words *historia oral*, or oral history, to describe a new genre. One which linked history with literary narrative, a life or lives often told to someone else. Within the cultural context of political change, the ordinary woman and man became the recognized protagonists. We

could tell our own stories, and began to do so.

Often we did this through a listener, someone with the tools for recording and the connections necessary to publication. *Operation Massacre* by Argentinean Rodolfo Walsh, *Life of a Runaway Slave* by Cuban Miguel Barnet, Mexican Ricardo Pozas' *Manuela*, Domitila de Chungara's and Moema Viezer's *Permit Me To Speak!*, *I, Rigoberta Menchu* as told to Elisabeth Burgos, Salvadoran Roque Dalton's *Miguel Marmol*, my own *Sandino's Daughters* and other books followed one another in fairly rapid succession.

People began to speak of this new category of writing. And discussions about its contours, limitations, and possibilities became more and more widespread. As some revolutionary societies consolidated and a much greater percentage of the population learned to read and write, people began to produce their own stories. And social institutions began to validate those stories.

Cuba, throughout its by now 30-year-old revolutionary experience, has done a great deal in this respect. As a result of the literacy campaign of 1959, the vast majority of Cuban adults learned to read and write. After the campaign, Fidel Castro suggested to a black woman more than one hundred years of age that she write about her life in slavery, during the pseudo republic, and under socialism: he insisted no one could tell it better.

Of course learning to read and write is one thing. Possessing the confidence, skill and energy to tell one's story is another. As far as I know, that ex-slave woman never did write the book Fidel had urged. But Cubans of both sexes and from many ways of life did begin to reclaim their collective memory. It's something that happens in revolution. And the Cuban revolution supported this explosion in the retrieval of an entire national identity, as has the Nicaraguan revolution and other people's movements for change.

In 1971, *Casa de las Américas*, Cuba's extraordinary Latin American cultural institution, added *testimonio* (oral history) to the categories of novel, short story, poetry, theatre, essay, and children's literature in its prestigious annual literary contest. The year before, Rodolfo Walsh had been one of the contest's judges. He had written *Operation Massacre*, based on his research (and resultant solving) of a crime against Argentinean workers in the mid-fifties. That book from the era of Juan Perón, was among several that popularized the new literary genre.

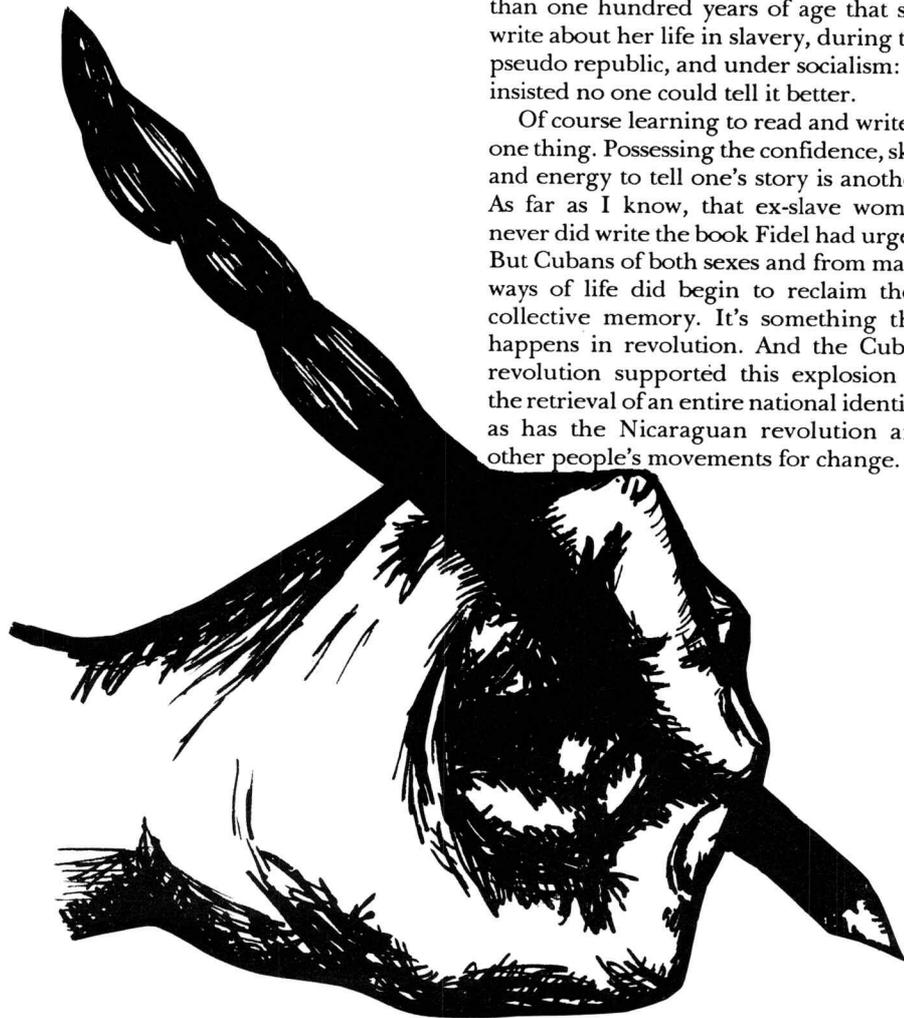
Cultural imperialism is as widespread as its economic, political, and military counterparts. U.S. anthropologists like Oscar Lewis came to try to tell Latin Americans their own stories—and to tell their stories to a waiting world, always avid to define “the ways of the natives.” In the metropolis, Lewis' *Children of Sanchez* (about working class and marginal Mexicans) was widely acclaimed. But when the man who saw things through his prism of “a culture of poverty” went to Cuba with Ford Foundation money to tell the islanders' stories, the Cubans threw him out. They felt that he was distorting who they were, as well as reneging on his promise to train local people in oral history skills.

I don't think it's surprising that many of the next oral history titles to emerge from Latin America were written by and about women. Feminism had exploded across our collective consciousness. Women in the “developing” as well as in the “developed” countries began to understand the unique ways in which we've been robbed of a knowledge of our foremothers; and how our lives today are trivialized, ignored, or invalidated. We began to remedy this colossal lack by talking to each other, convincing our sisters that their stories are important, insisting they be heard.

Books like the aforementioned *Permit Me To Speak* (Domitila Barrios de Chungarra's story of a Bolivian miner's wife as told to Moema Viezzer) and *I, Rigoberta Menchu* (a Quiche Indian woman from Guatemala telling her story through Elisabeth Burgos Debray) were forerunners, along with some of my own early efforts: *Cuban Women Now*, *Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution: The Story of Doris Tijerino*, *El pueblo no solo es testigo*, and *Sandino's Daughters*.

Rigoberta Menchu's original tongue is Quiche. Already in her early twenties, this Indian woman decided to learn Spanish specifically so she could tell her story to the world. People are becoming aware of the importance and the power of their words.

All this work was essential. But it wasn't enough. The more we tried to reclaim and



retrieve our history, the more obvious the inherent problems became. Questions arose, questions of ethics, of responsibility, of power and control. We began to understand that knowing our foremothers was not simply a question of researching a mistold history, and finding the women who'd been left out. Where would we find them? The history itself was skewed.

We quickly knew that it wouldn't work to ask who the women erased from the earliest stones or codexes were, who the women from the Middle Ages or Renaissance had been. The very concepts of Middle Ages and Renaissance are male-defined. In order to retrieve our women's lives, we have to *revision* history itself.

The same has been true, of course, for Native peoples, working people, people of color, and others whose identities are subsumed and subverted to stereotypic classist, racist and sexist models.

Among our most exciting poets, most notably the women, many work diligently to *recreate* the voices—and thus the lives—of historical figures desecrated or absent in the more traditional texts. In this country I'm thinking particularly of Muriel Rukeyser, Jane Cooper, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Paula Gunn Allen. Poets who revive images of foremothers as diverse as Molly Brant, Rosa Luxemburg, Fannie Lou Hamer, Emily Dickenson, Willa Cather, Ethel Rosenberg.

Our authentic people's voices appear more and more frequently, not only in the book or poem or article, but in other mediums as well. Think of the inspiration for, and the content of, some of our most vital songs, street and stage theater, dance, murals, poster art. The names of some groups have become household words in certain circles: Teatro Campesino, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Taller Grafico, La Raza Cultural Center, West End Press, Midwest Villages and Voices, Sinister Wisdom, Ikon, San Francisco Mime Troupe, Wallflower Order (later known as Crows Feet and Dance Brigade).

Other lesser-known but important works include a broad-ranging conceptualization of what may be considered within the oral history framework. There are murals like San Francisco's "Our History Is No Mystery," which include replicas of news stories read aloud by passersby. That, too, is oral history.

Since the Freedom of Information Act made accessible the enemy's words about our lives, there are writers working with people's FBI files and using them to fill in some historical blanks. Oral history is nurtured, as well, by our recreation from such sources.

There are neighborhood photo projects in which whole communities spin

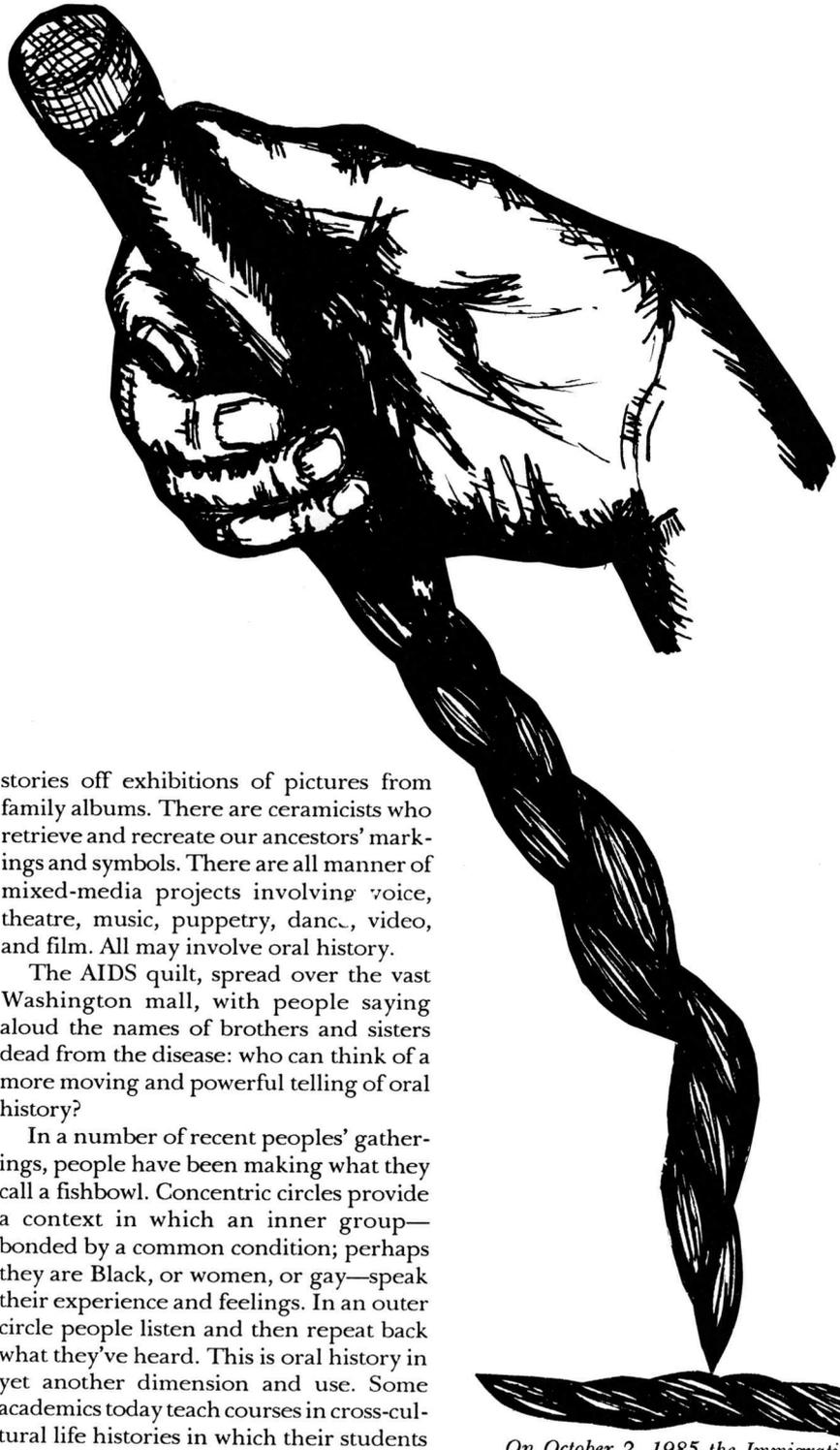


Illustration by Carol Petrucci

stories off exhibitions of pictures from family albums. There are ceramicists who retrieve and recreate our ancestors' markings and symbols. There are all manner of mixed-media projects involving voice, theatre, music, puppetry, dance, video, and film. All may involve oral history.

The AIDS quilt, spread over the vast Washington mall, with people saying aloud the names of brothers and sisters dead from the disease: who can think of a more moving and powerful telling of oral history?

In a number of recent peoples' gatherings, people have been making what they call a fishbowl. Concentric circles provide a context in which an inner group—bonded by a common condition; perhaps they are Black, or women, or gay—speak their experience and feelings. In an outer circle people listen and then repeat back what they've heard. This is oral history in yet another dimension and use. Some academics today teach courses in cross-cultural life histories in which their students learn to tell their own stories. This is oral history as well.

Oral history, then, is the recuperation of a memory that has been taken from us. It is our essential voice, relevant and necessary to the ongoing task of remapping our homeland.

MARGARET RANDALL is an internationally known writer and photographer whose books include *Albuquerque*, *Sandino's Daughters*, *Cuban Women Now*, and *Poetry of Resistance*.

On October 2, 1985 the Immigration and Naturalization Service denied Margaret Randall resident status, stating: "Her writings go far beyond mere dissent, disagreement with, or criticism of the United States or its policies." She was given 28 days to leave the country. Instead of leaving, Margaret Randall continued to speak, teach, and write in the U.S., and on July 17, 1989, the Board of Immigration Appeals ruled in a 3-2 decision that she is a U.S. citizen and cannot be deported.



Photo by Sandra Goldin

"Meaningless Trash" Art Bench by Olivia Gude, 1989. One of a series of art benches sponsored by the Chicago Public Art Group.

Public Art Workshop

Cynthia Weiss

Workshop participant Lucy Lippard raised the general question: "How can we break away from the tired imagery used again and again in community murals?" I think that art works shown by the workshop presenters help to provide some answers.

Seitu Jones (St. Paul) showed us an installation in a university gallery dedicated to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King. Every viewer, in order to get to the other side of the gallery, had to pass through a narrow passage flanked by dramatic silhouettes of demonstrators, thus becoming part of the "movement" themselves. Richard Posner (Seattle) showed us a glass brick entrance for a Veterans' Administration building. Panels in the installation were transformed from swords into plowshares as the viewers walked by.

As public artists we have long worked

within, and understood, the intersection of community empowerment issues and a visual arts language. To enrich this language, I think we must also cross over to new intersections. For example, we can make neighborhood art works from cement, glass, steel remnants or neon; use commercial graphic styles for inspiration, or draw from a body of Conceptual, Performance or Installation art ideas to enrich our community arts vocabulary. Another intersection would be to work within the tension of community and commercial art, of visual arts mediums and industrial ones, or between community issues and contemporary "mainstream" art ideas. Similarly, Minneapolis-based presenter Marilyn Lindstrom's commercial project for a fruit market of larger than life fruits and vegetables (beautifully painted with an industrial air brush) offers one such intersection. On a sobering note however, she has just recently seen her 1981 mural collaboration with Miranda Bergman on the building that formerly housed Haymarket Press "disappeared."

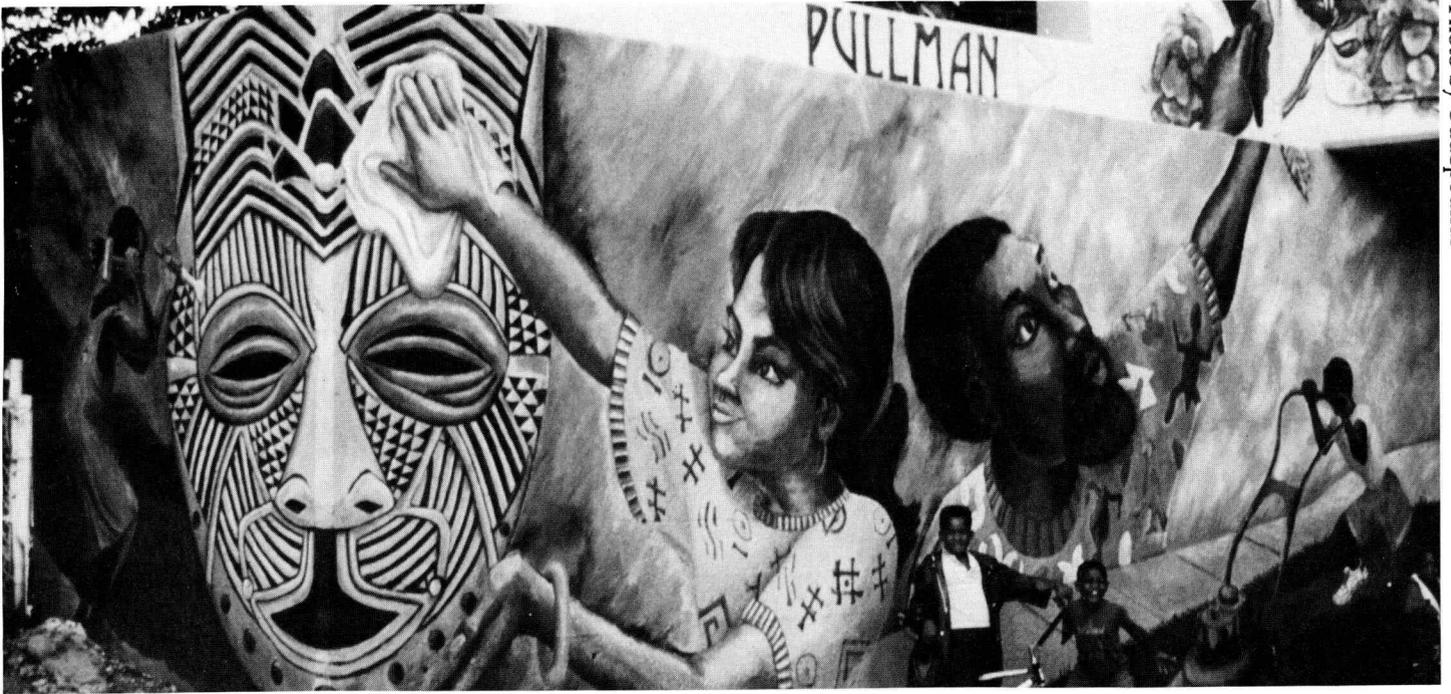
Ironically this mural is on the cover of the 1987 book *Museum of the Streets: Minnesota's Contemporary Outdoor Murals* (Pogo Press, St. Paul).

I propose that we structure the next ACD Public Art workshop to specifically address the issue of expanding our boundaries. Some ideas to discuss could be:

- The aesthetics of public art
- The role of abstraction in community murals
- Inter-disciplinary art collaborations
- The use of new materials
- How we generate images as artists/teachers
- How we bring the community with us as we break new ground

It sounds to me like we have enough material for a whole murals' conference. How about it, public artists?

CYNTHIA WEISS is a Chicago-based muralist and mosaic artist. She is a longtime member of the Chicago Public Art Group (formerly Chicago Mural Group).



Making Art As If Race and Class Really Mattered

Tim Drescher

In the first three months of 1989 I attended three conferences, two in the San Francisco Bay area and one in Albuquerque. It strikes me that there were some common threads woven among them worth discussing, so let me try to indicate them in hopes that others will elaborate. The gatherings, incidentally, which could have been held nearly anywhere, were: Third World Women Artists (held at Mills College, Oakland), Agenda for the 1990's (held at the San Francisco Art Institute), and Alternative [sic] Murals Conference held in Albuquerque.

The central issue at each was the role of artists of color, and the confusions/dilemmas concerning that grouping. The two Bay Area conferences were organized by ethnically mixed groups and gave prominence to the issues. The New Mexico conference was organized by an Anglo, and avoided issues and the opportunity to discuss them. One question raised was what is meant by "marginal"? People of color certainly are not a minority, unless one's field of reference ignores most of the planet. On the margins of what? The term has a professional use indicating mental deficiency. Since it is not useful as a term of social locating, then what?

"People of color" is ungainly and furthermore misses some crucial points, e.g., by eliminating working class whites, oppressed ethnic groups who are white, sometimes women, etc. Interestingly, *colored* is beginning to be used again, and seems to have lost the derogatory connotations of the thirties and forties and fifties.

Artists spoke of wanting to be recognized as artists, not ethnic artists, but that the only way they can show their works is in "ethnic" shows. Doesn't the term *artist* imply white and male? Surely it does, for the most part. Hence the proliferation of shows of women artists, Asian artists, black painters, and the like. Several artists who want to be recognized for their art, not their skin tone or ethnic heritage, were caught in a desire to reject *the system* while also wanting its non-racist recognition. Not likely in this society,

"I WELCOME MYSELF TO A NEW PLACE," the Roseland-Pullman Mural Project. Olivia Gude, Marcus Jefferson and Jon Pounds. A project of the Chicago Public Art Group, 1988.

but what are the priorities to be?

Understandably left undiscussed, but still worth mention, were the destructive consequences of racism on white folks. No one would argue that racism impinges on whites in anything approaching the terrible ways it does on people of color, but that does not change the fact that whites are harmed enough by racism to limit their lives in unacceptable ways. Some whites more than others, of course, just like some people of color are more affected by racism than others.

Some speakers noted white critics who made a living (sic) off criticism of the art works of people of color. These critics were called *opportunists*. They are certainly out there. But does this necessarily include all white critics? What about content? Can artists want to be recognized for their art work alone and then complain when critics don't like it? Sure, why not? Yet how can we discuss when criticism and reactions to it are "falsely" categorized into solely racial terms? One thing is clear, and that is the need for people of different (from the white, male, elitist status quo) backgrounds to write more about art done by everyone.

However, the use of the common term "white" to indicate the enemy of people of color misses some absolutely essential distinctions, and thereby muddies issues of racism. The point is that while there is an horrendous hierarchy of skin color in this country, class is an important mediating factor. The people in charge are white and male (with almost no exceptions) and *wealthy*, which makes the difference. Put it this way: would a multi-ethnic group be well advised to trust a working class white man or an elitist black man, if such a choice had to be made? It might depend on the issue at hand, and there are qualifiers, but the point should be clear. We all must learn to be more specific if we want to be more effective. Much more needs discussion. Let's try to clarify.

TIM DRESCHER is a muralist, teacher and former editor of the late *Community Murals Magazine*. Starting with this issue, *Cultural Democracy* will begin publishing photos of murals and articles/news of interest to community muralists on a more regular basis. If anyone would like to reply to the issues raised in Tim's article, please contact Ron Sakolsky.

Death of a Mural...



Photo by Judy Branfman

Houston at Second Avenue, New York City, 1986

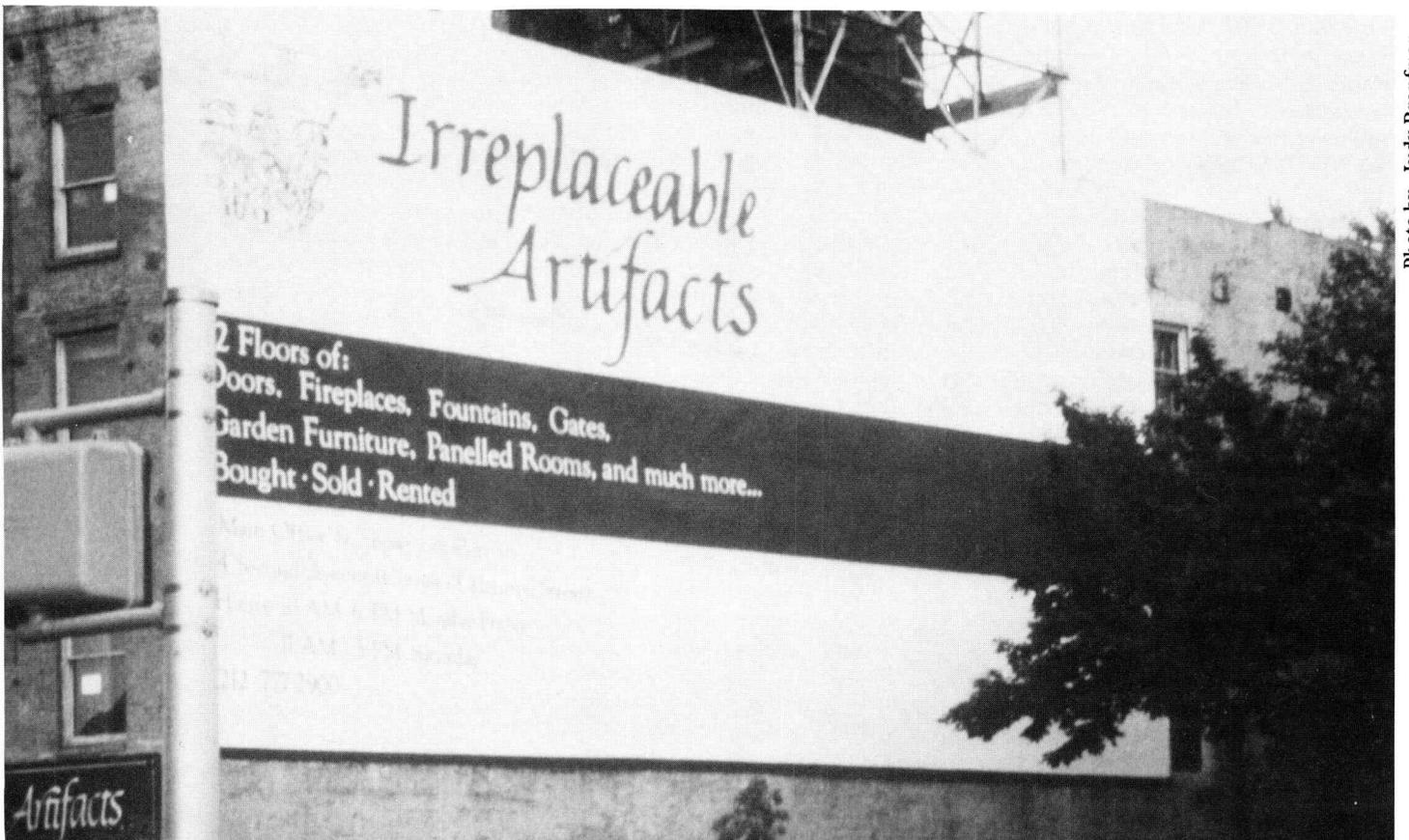


Photo by Judy Branfman

Houston at Second Avenue, New York City, 1989

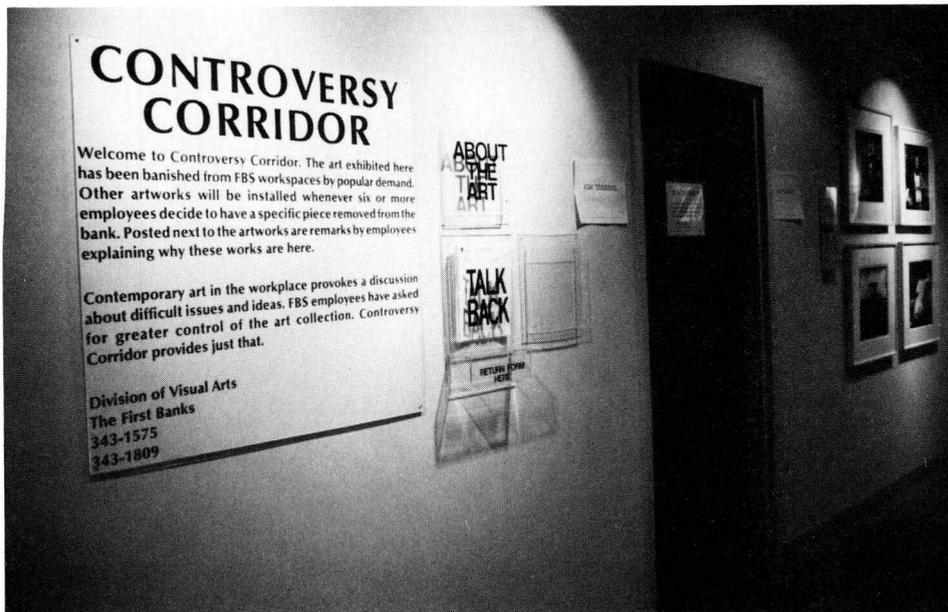


Photo by Judy Branfman

"Welcome to Controversy Corridor. The art exhibited here has been banished from FBS workspaces by popular demand. Other art works will be installed whenever six or more employees decide to have a specific piece removed from the bank. Posted next to the art works are remarks by employees explaining why these works are here.

BANKING ON THE VISUAL ARTS: Cultural Democracy or Corporate Deception?

Judy Branfman

"EMPLOYEE ART SELECTION is a program of Cultural Democracy through which employees select art for their own workspaces; a project in team building and empowerment" (from First Bank System Visual Art Program *Fact sheets*).

In April, ACD received a call from the First Bank System (FBS) Visual Arts Program. They had heard about the upcoming ACD conference in Minneapolis and wanted to invite us to drop by their headquarters and look at their innovative work when we got into town. Having heard about First Bank's art and claims of employee empowerment, and controversial artwork, I decided to accept the invite and see what "cultural democracy" looked like corporate-style.

After arriving in Minneapolis, I headed for Powderhorn Park where a local organizer suggested I look into First Bank's recent history of redlining. It turns out that in 1987 Twin City officials and community groups realized that First Bank had almost eliminated its participation in a number of small business and housing loan programs. Studies of FBS, the area's largest banking institution and one long active in local economic development lending, confirmed that the bank's lending practices had changed drastically. Between 1985 and 1987, participation in

Minneapolis-sponsored community and economic development programs shrank from \$10 million to less than \$1 million.

The beginning of these policies coincided with a massive restructuring at First Bank that took place in the mid-1980's which led to a centralization of credit decisions and pointed toward strict lending criteria which limited or eliminated viable loans to distressed neighborhoods. At the same time, the bank was seeking to expand into nine new states, creating fear that a larger market might lead the bank to concentrate its resources in the wealthiest areas and ignore economically depressed city neighborhoods. (1)

Although not considered "red-lining" in the strict sense, (the practice of purposely denying loans to specific geographic areas, generally minority neighborhoods), First Bank did cut back certain, less profitable, lending activities and the newer focus was on less community-based lending areas. In "Do The Right Thing", three Black men sit around talking on a very hot day and ask (sensibly enough), "Why don't we own...our own neighborhoods?" One answer is that banks still do not give enough loans to people of color. On the other hand, as to First Bank itself, it's about to relocate into the newest and tallest building in town.

When the early 80's brought banking

deregulation, as Meg Spilleth wrote in her article "The Art of Banking Dangerously", new First Bank President Dennis Evans "was aggressive, confrontational and nontraditional...(and) steered the bank away from corporate lending, the traditional and stodgy mainstay of the banking business. Instead he focused on the volatile and glamorous world of bond trading. Evans made no secret of his disdain for traditional bankers and their plodding ways." (2) By the end (early 1989) of Evan's tenure his "dangerous banking strategy" had not proven successful and resulted in big losses for the bank. However, Evans' "strategy" called for a facelift of equivalent proportions. Between 1981 and 1989, Evans and First Bank Art Program Coordinator Lynn Sowder had collected over 3100 contemporary art objects, much of it "controversial" and "confrontational" work (artists such as Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman, and Anselm Kiefer who are often considered political and provocative), and had developed an arts program in the workplace that was drawing national attention.

After acquiring this huge collection of contemporary ("controversial", "confrontational") work and installing it all over the bank headquarters and branches, the word came back that the workers were not taking kindly to having that kind of work around them day after day. So Sowder developed an educational program that utilizes:

- "arts-jargon free" essays hung next to artworks
- printed questionnaires (Talkback forms) with responses that are shared
- informal meetings (often with artists and other arts-related people)
- employee art selection, where employees select art from the collection for their workspaces (and beginning this year some employees will participate in the purchase of new work)
- three public galleries with rotating exhibits
- and the most widely touted-Controversy Corridor, where a work may be placed if six or more employees decide to censor it, by filling out Talkback forms and having it moved from their work space. Another six employees can fill out Talkback forms and have the piece taken out of Controversy Corridor and brought back into the same (or different) work space.

The rationale for this program that stood out as I went through the thick packet of FBS Visual Arts Program materials was included in the four paragraph "Manifesto": "The First Bank visual arts program is an organizational transformation tool, an agent of change which acts as a catalyst for the ongoing examination of this corporate culture. The visual arts

make visible the invisible, promotes diversity, open communication and the building of a community based on shared values and respected differences...We are committed to forging new, more democratic relationships between people and the art of our time. By empowering our audience we build the bridges necessary for meaningful encounters to take place between the public, artists and art..."

Program Director and Curator Lynn Sowder states many times that an important goal of the program is to stimulate dialogue. There is clearly no end to this "dialogue"—with Talkback, essays, Controversy Corridor, and discussions among curators of corporate collections all over the world. The First Bank introductory packet contains numerous catalogues and brochures and a series of edited pieces written by bank management, art administrators, artists, critics and curators. All include mention of the First Bank's program, although not all of it is completely complementary. A conscious effort has been made to share the wide variety of responses that the program evokes, as if to prove Sowder's claim that "openness to thinking critically about ourselves is one of the most unique and remarkable qualities about First Bank." (3) If quantity of discussion—or for that matter diversity of opinion—is all that's needed to insure democratic relationships, then it's possible that the program has achieved its goals.

Yet Lynn Sowder has claimed more. She contends that workers get a "sense of ownership" of the workplace. Defining ownership of the workplace in a different way, Emily Anderson, from North Country Development Services in Minneapolis (a group that promotes worker ownership) says, "There are two basic and essential components of worker owner-

ship. One is actual ownership in the financial sense—where there is investment and return, where the profits go back to the workers...The other part is involvement in governance, in making policy decisions...Anything else is rather superficial." What exactly does a "sense of ownership" mean at First Bank? Does the empowerment that comes about from voicing opinions on art carry these employees into the Board room? Do the values of equal access and participation inherent in the concept of cultural democracy (a phrase often used in First Bank's Visual Arts Program) carry beyond the equal ability to walk past an artwork and talk about it?

While First Bank has encouraged an endless debate about art, there appears to be no goal beyond the debate itself. In an essay handed out by First Bank, Pam Korza talks about an art project in Los Angeles' MacArthur Park where the chosen artists "met intensively in the beginning with members of the business, elderly and ethnic communities...to better understand the issues surrounding the park...The artworks themselves reflect aesthetic, political or social contexts of particular relevance to the surrounding communities..." This is a chosen working style familiar to many ACDers, although it is rare in most public art projects. Korza makes an attempt to link this thinking with First Bank's program, but really can't succeed. First Bank has not attempted to make the artworks reflect the social contexts of the employees or the surrounding communities or opened up a discussion (via art or otherwise) on their neighborhood lending practices or corporate policies (for example, their controversial support of the Hormel Corporation throughout the bitter strike in Austin, Minnesota).

The artwork in their collection is not made for, about, or by First Bank employees or their concerns. It has been bought for the bank by art world knowledgeable (and is an outstanding "blue chip" contemporary collection—controversial or not), who assume that bank employees will benefit by it (like it or not). On a mini-tour, through spaces where employees had picked their own art out of the collection, we passed an office with duck and hunting prints on the wall (exactly the sort Sowder was brought in to replace with "flair"). My guide gave me the expected smirk and "some things never change" quip (it was the office of an executive who could do what he wanted). On passing the numerous (more public) spaces fitted with contemporary art, there was patronizing approval—these workers are learning what's what.

In fact, the only place I could see any mention of workers' actual participation in the art-making process itself is listed under "Art Therapy Workshops." According to the Fact Sheet, "ART THERAPY WORKSHOPS led by accredited art therapists involve employees in creating art and examining its role in expression, communication and community." This seems to indicate that the special skill of making art should be left to the real artists—and the best anyone else can hope for is a therapeutic experience. It doesn't appear that First Bank takes their workers seriously enough to provide long term art classes or workshops—a pretty clear sign that no matter how creative workers get,



Photo by Sai Salerno



"First Bank's other (art) program? First Bank has been the Hormel Corporation's chief banker since the 1920s and the two companies share interlocking directors. At the time of the 1985-86 strike against further wage cuts and concessions at Hormel's Austin, Minnesota plant, First Bank controlled 16% of the stock. First Bank claimed it had no influence over the Hormel Corporation and continued to back the company throughout the strike, even when Hormel sandblasted a worker designed and painted mural on the outside of the union office.

creativity is best applied to First Bank business. Investing in long term artistic creativity costs money—and besides it would take time away from work.

Apparently the extent to which First Bank is willing to go in creating cultural democracy is letting their workers participate in picking the art they want to have and talk about in their daily work lives through the Employee Art Selection Program. Although this is unusual in relation to most corporate decorating and collection policies, it sounds much like the dominant US idea of “democracy”—linking it almost solely to a type of ineffectual free speech. In a society where free speech and the existence of criticism are often held up as proof of “democracy,” First Bank’s program seems designed to be “democratic” without offering to change a thing in the area of real power. It seems to me that activities more in keeping with the professed goals and language used repeatedly in the arts program might be to facilitate workers self-organization (First Bank, like most banks, is not unionized) or have workers play an active role in setting bank/investment policy. Both could be active and long-term projects in “team building and empowerment.” Instead where art is chosen by employees who all work on the same floor for a period, a sense of familiarity and community may be formed in the process, but this does not last. Within 6 months most work groups have been shifted to a new location and that growing sense of familiarity is lost.

A similar example of short term thinking occurred when a well known videographer was hired to document a budding employee women’s group working through their process of evolution. As the group fell apart because of internal differences/divisions, the video artist (a man) continued his documentation. No effort was made to help the group work through their process in a productive, long-term way. The documentation was the only thing to which First Bank had a commitment (and the thing of real monetary value). It’s curious that, in an industry where the major labor issue is discrimination against women, a workplace that makes such strong claims for empowerment and community could overlook this event.

What is being cultivated then? Perhaps, more than anything else, is a sense (developed by Bank Prez Evans) that everything changes in these turbulent times and there’s not much you can do about it. What is lost is the possibility of hanging in there and developing an analysis of the workplace and its context and initiating appropriate action.

As First Bank Administrative Assistant Cindy McKay says about Controversy

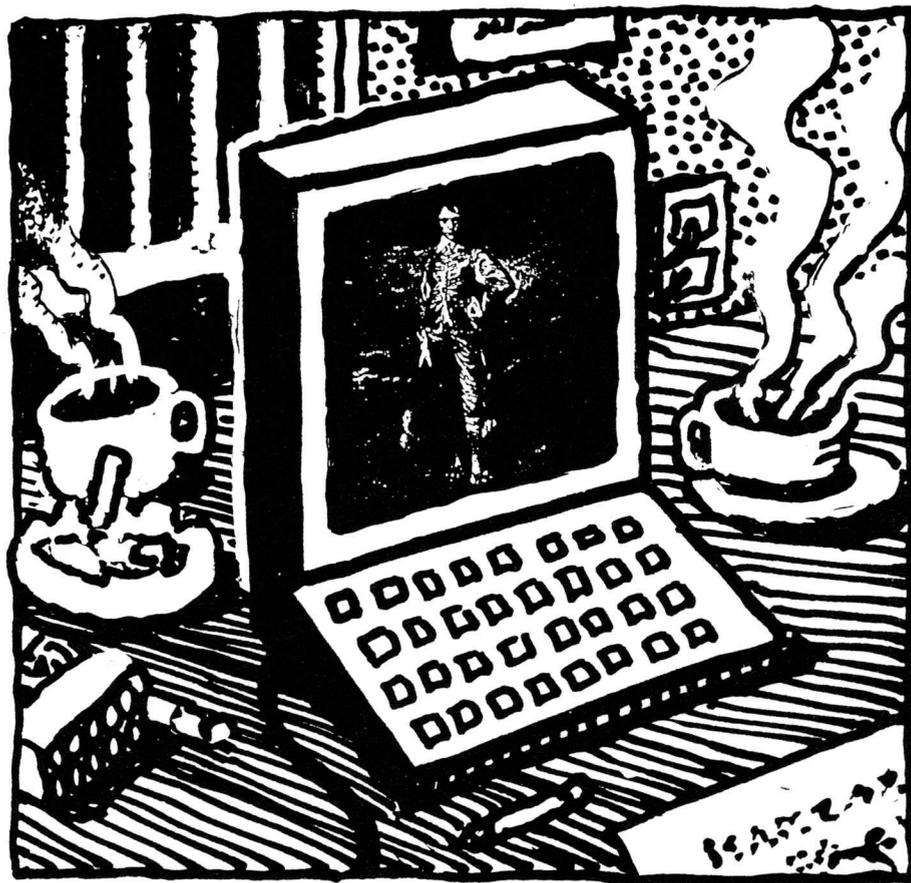


Illustration by Bill Crook

Corridor,"...The majority of people don't care anymore because people stressed the fact that they don't like the art and it hasn't changed anything. So who cares what we think anyway?...You can send things to Controversy Corridor, but what good is that going to do...because it only has to stay there so long before it will be circulated again? Management doesn't care. Controversy Corridor is a way for them to show that they do, but not enough for them to change things." (4) Education and discussion about art can be important, but fall short as solitary components of a "cultural democracy." In a similar vein, when it come to crucial human and community issues First Bank falls short. In spite of the enlightened language, it's business as usual. The motto seems to be "talk about art and keep on working." While artists must make a living, First Bank's program is helping to create a logjam to timely democratic participation at FBS. In one of the most complex examples of corporate p.r. to date, false promises and cooptative use of language proliferate, while First Bank profits rise again.

Citations:

1) From *Economic Development: What Works At The Local Level*, National League of Cities, Dec. 1988 (FBS is not mentioned by name in the case study in this book)

2) Meg Spilleth, "The Art of Banking Dangerously", *Twin Cities Reader*, January

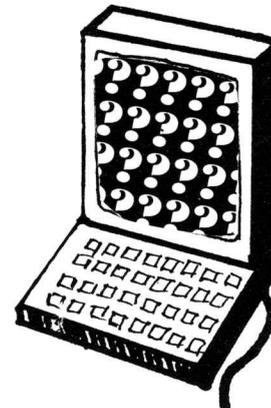
18-24, 1989

3) Lynn Sowder (August 4, 1988), from First Bank Division of Visual Arts publication "Talkback: The Ins and Outs of Controversy Corridor", page 2

4) from "Controversy Corridor" by Adelheid Fischer in *New Art Examiner*, April 1989.

See also, Peter Rachleff's article "Hornel: Welcome to Austin, Poland" in *Zeta Magazine* (January, 1989).

JUDY BRANFMAN is an ACD board member and an artist, educator, and activist in Boston, currently doing work on community control of development. This piece is excerpted from a longer work-in-progress on art, community development, and corporate intervention.



Network News



INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS SUPPORT PROJECT LAUNCHED

Information is now considered to be one of the most important commodities in the world. Thus far, it has been concentrated in the hands of those with the most power: primarily corporations in the First World and, increasingly, international conglomerates that are moving the communications industry closer and closer to monopolization. Rarely do truly independent media operations survive or flourish. Yet a viable and independent media that is able to successfully disseminate wide-ranging information, knowledge, and political perspectives is critical to a free-thinking and democratic society.

Highly advanced and expensive technology is one of the (many) obstacles that make independence in media difficult to achieve and/or sustain. However there are certain technological developments—particularly in the publishing industry—that have the potential to facilitate the growth of small, under-capitalized enterprises. For example, desk-top publishing, an extremely inexpensive and quick (yet high-quality) method of production, makes access to print media much more democratic and realizable to a variety of groups and interests.

In an effort to support independent media, the Institute of Social and Cultural Change (which currently includes South End Press and *Zeta* magazine) is about to launch a third project—the innovative "Publishers Support Project." The goal is to promote independent and progressive publishing nationally and internationally. Their experience uniquely positions them for this work: establishing and maintaining an alternative press in a less-than-friendly and highly monopolized industry

has given them the opportunity to learn almost all there is to know about the mechanics of book production, author relations, running a business, and developing an editorial response to a changing political climate. The Publishers Support Project will be a vehicle for sharing some of these skills, offering general support (through fundraising and material aid) and specific support through skills-sharing and technical training, particularly around the new computer-based publishing technologies.

This very specific and realizable goal could have significant and wide-ranging implications in the world of idea-sharing and information dissemination. It will be a step toward bringing control over communications into the hands of the people and building a real literacy—not just the ability to read, but also to generate and share ideas. For more information on this project, write/call:

Institute for Social & Cultural Change,
116 St. Botolph St., Boston, MA 02115
(617) 266-0629

INKWORKS PRESS CELEBRATES 15TH ANNIVERSARY

Inkworks Press in Berkeley, California was started in 1974 as a collectively owned and operated print shop to provide good quality, reasonably priced printing for the progressive movement. There are only two similar shops in the country which are older, Omega Press (formerly Resistance Press) in Philadelphia and Salsedo Press in Chicago. Starting with few skills, cast-off presses, and no capital, Inkworks has developed into a full-service shop with modern state of the art equipment. From sales of \$50,000 the first year, it has grown to produce over \$1 million of printing last year. Besides occasional donations, a sliding scale of fees for commercial and community work results in an average donation of 10% of gross sales to progressive groups in the form of discounted prices.



Inkworks' commitment to community printing does not stop at cheaper prices. Because of its goal to improve the quantity and quality of movement propaganda, its salespeople spend extra time consulting with customers and suggesting more efficient options. Inkworks also occasionally solicits publishing projects which otherwise might not happen because of lack of resources. These have included a songbook of women's music, a monthly calendar of community events, a booklet for the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador's FMLN, a sister city edition map of Nicaragua, and several posters which are distributed nationally.

Inkworks is organized as a non-profit corporation without individual shares because the collective wants to ensure that the project continues as a resource for the community. Its structure is collective, with equal say in decision-making by all members. Inkworks has an elected manager as well as various committees which help to decentralize management tasks. It currently has twelve collective members and two co-workers. It is a union shop, with the Graphic Communications International Union (AFL-CIO). The specific details of Inkworks' principles of unity which guide its work have changed over time, but all stem from a Marxist perspective that views capitalism as inherently exploitative and poses socialist alternatives as being more just and humane ways to organize society.





Editorial Coordinators

Olivia Gude
Ron Sakolsky

Editorial Collective

Elliot Barowitz
Gennie Barringer
Judy Branfman
Lincoln Cushing
Tim Drescher
Lisa May Knauer
Tripp Mikich
Shawn Nethercott
Gil Ott
Jon Pounds
Tom Page
Mat Schwarzman

Design and Production

Bill Crook
Larz Gaydos
Pat Howard
Frank Martin
Carol Petrucci
Bonnie Rubenstein
Deserrie Ruptash
Catharina Sack
Ron Sakolsky
Debbie Scott
Bob Waldmire

Word Processing

Lula Lester

Typesetting

Jim Murray
of Cultural Correspondence

Printing

Inkworks



Call: **Americans For Cultural Freedom** (212-233-3900) for up to the minute information. AFCF is a coalition of arts organizations formed to preserve the integrity of the National Endowment for the Arts funding process and to protect the First Amendment rights of artistic freedom in the wake of the recent Serrano ("Piss Christ") and Mapplethorpe (Corcoran cancellation) actions. Additional information about who represents your Congressional district can be obtained from the U.S. Congress Information Line (202-224-3121) if you want to call your Congressperson and tell him/her what you think.

1989 BOARD MEMBERS

Coordinators

Betty Kano
1340 Peralta Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94702

Ricardo Levins-Morales
2311 E. 32nd Street
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Projects Coordinator
Judy Branfman
327 Summer Street, Studio 3
Boston, MA 02210

Membership Coordinator
Genie Barringer
1839 N. Decatur Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30307

Editorial Coordinator
Ron Sakolsky
Fool's Paradise
Pawnee, IL 62558

Treasurer
Bill Fleming
521 Harold Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30307

Corresponding Secretary
Ana Cardona
1031 Daisy Lane
East Lansing, MI 48823

Recording Secretary
Natasha Bonilla
4126 6th Street NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Finance Coordinator
Lisa May Knauer
88 Second Avenue #6
New York, NY 10003

Publications Coordinator
Carol Petrucci
1218 1/2 South Spring
Springfield, IL 62704

and...

Joe Lambert
155 Ripley
San Francisco, CA 94110

Bob Lamadafkie
59 Leisure Lane
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

Denise Mayotte
3204 10th Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Tripp Mikich
1326 Shotwell Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

Susan Perlstein
118 8th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Sal Salerno
3204 10th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Mat Schwarzman
625 Scott Street #201
San Francisco, CA 94117

Bill Stroud
1048 Fulton
San Francisco, CA 94117

Board Alternate
John Crawford
2535 Duranes Road
Albuquerque, NM 87104

**JOIN THE ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY
AND SUBSCRIBE TO CULTURAL DEMOCRACY**

ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY: MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
membership & donations are tax-deductible

Individual Membership \$ 25 \$ 40 Other \$ ____
Organizational Membership \$ 50 Contributions \$ ____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (home) _____ (work) _____

Organizational Affiliation (if any): _____

Please send a check or money order payable to the **Alliance for Cultural Democracy**, to P. O. Box 7591, Minneapolis, MN 55407. For more information call (415) 346-8031

Is there someone else you think should hear about ACD? If you attach their name, address, and telephone number, we'll send them a copy of this brochure.

Theater, Performance and Social Change Program
New College of California
50 Fell St.
San Francisco, CA 94102

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage
PAID
San Francisco, CA
Permit No. 11763



Illustration by Cliff Harper