

MOBIUS NEWSLETTER



Vol. 5 #1 September 1987

354 Congress Street, Fort Point, Boston 02210 (617) 542 7416

We are now beginning our fifth season at Congress Street, and our ninth year as a performing group. Our commitment continues to be to support the development of original experimental work in different media, with a particular focus on performance. While we present work of nationally known artists, we are most interested in our community of Boston-based and regional artists.

The role of the audience is especially important in the development of new work. In a city where the media tend to be uninterested in the newest art forms, it is the audience that provides the crucial critical response that makes the work grow. You don't have to like what you see for it to be an interesting and thought-provoking experience. Criticism that helps the artist develop the work further requires only a respect for the effort, a concern for the intent of the artist, and a willingness to take time to respond to the work. This role is definitely different from that of the 'entertainment consumer'. It is instead an involvement with the artist and the art-making process.

This newsletter is a step in understanding the work that is presented at Mobius. It is not written as PR to 'sell' you the work, or to promise that it will be the best or the most entertaining thing you will ever see. It is written by artists to begin to explain their processes and concerns, and to give you a framework in which to view their work. The next step is to come to see the work. Then, for the adventurous, to discuss it with the artists.

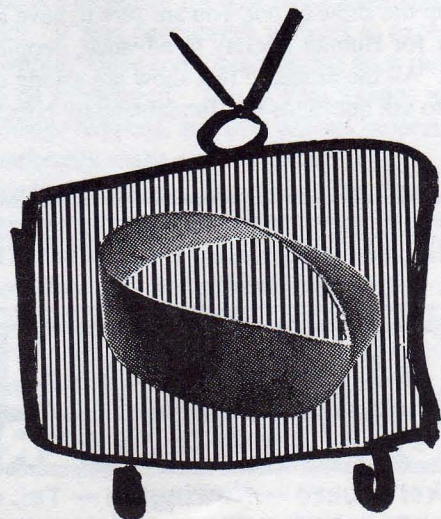
--Marilyn Arsem

Social Terrorism: A National Juried Exhibition will be presented by the Blue Gallery from September 12th to October 10th at Mobius. An Opening reception will be held on Saturday, September 12th, from 6pm to 10pm. The gallery will be open Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 5pm. Statements by the artists and the exhibition's organizer, Tim Brooks, appear on the following pages.

**SOCIAL
TERRORISM**

A Night of Video

On Friday, September 8 at 8pm we will screen a videotape of Michael Burlingame's **To A Random**, which premiered last year at the Boston Phoenix film festival, and a collection of video shorts by Mario-Erik Paoli of MPG. A large video projection system will be used.



SOCIAL TERRORISM

By Tim Brooks

About a year ago I began placing ads in newspapers and magazines around the country to solicit artists to enter a competition called Social Terrorism: A Juried Exhibition. I didn't tell them what Social Terrorism was and as expected I soon began to receive new entries that represented vastly different interpretations of the term. Ultimately, the interpretations (and the work) that other jurors and I liked best became the show. I now feel that it is the show, the collective statement of the thirty artists included in it, that defines the term 'social terrorism' and not vice versa. I cannot adequately describe that statement here. What I can do is to try to describe what social terrorism means to me. My ideas, while influenced by the work in the show, are dependent on my preconceptions and intentions.

Media-spawned homogeneity is infecting american society and breaking down our ability to think on our own. Everyone wants to look alike, smell alike, eat alike, drink alike, talk alike, fuck alike, abstain alike and smile alike. Academics have replaced intellectuals and people who want to be artists are replacing people who want to make art. The emptiness and coldness often present in currently fashionable artwork is no longer a statement of protest, but a true and accurate reflection of the unthinking minds and unmoved spirits of the makers and the buyers of the work. The current american art scene is plagued by a flock of career minded sheep, regurgitated by the art schools into the galleries and eagerly lapped up by investment conscious collectors who buy junk art when they tire of junk bonds.

Against this smelly mess individuals driven by ideas and emotions that they cannot suppress continue to hurl firecrackers at the dragon of american culture. What the Social Terrorism show is trying to do is to combine some of these small explosives in one place, to assemble a cultural car bomb that can at least break a few windows and cause a few people in the immediate area to look up from their TVs long enough to wonder if maybe something else isn't going on.

Using art as a weapon to attack and hopefully tear down the cultural status quo is not a new idea but it is still, I believe, a valuable one. Nobody will like all the work in this show. Some will be offended by the attacks on god and religion, others by assaults on academic notions of intellectualism, or the general lack of respect for the seriousness of art. Whether you like the work in the show or not, you are sure to have a response to it. In order for Human Society to advance, people must be made to think. All the artists in this show are asking questions, and asking us to ask questions that fundamentally effect our lives and our future.

Thea and Valentina

By Casey Clavin

Social Terrorism names the practice by which the powerful attempt to coerce the vulnerable through intimidation to conform to an approved code of behavior (political, social, religious, etc.). Consideration of such a practice is a major impetus for my work.

The specific subjects of my sculptures are the passions of individual Saints as listed in Butler's Lives. These martyrdoms (executions) represent the persecution (prosecution) in a secular (legal) context of individuals for their spiritual (political, cultural) ideals. They fail to comply with the currently sanctioned status quo. (In an event where persecution is based on race - culture in an irrefutable form - compliance with the endorsed program is impossible.)

An account of a given trial is an opportunity to reflect on the taut line separating power and vulnerability, and to examine some instances when (Social) (T)errorism fails to be persuasive. In many accounts, one finds in the "defendant," not fear, but a certain pleasure, an excitement derived from total commitment. Sometimes onlookers are inspired to convert, witnessing in the "defendant's" unshakable faith a safeguard against intimidation. Absence of fear in the "vulnerable" often elicits extraordinary sentences from the "powerful". To have a person hanged, drawn, and quartered reveals that death (the ultimate threat) is not quite enough..

But these are the romanticized accounts of a remarkable few, the exceptions which prove the rule. In citing those who remain constant to their horrible deaths, I mourn that which is so often destroyed in an individual by the pressures brought to bear by the dominant forces in society.

They Will be still, They will not Cry

By Steven Finke

They Will be still, They will not Cry was first a page in a book I am making. The page in the book originated as a dream in my head. The dream was in some way filtered out of my waking life, which at that time, I was dealing with what we as adults do to children, whether it be physical or emotional abuse. I see this entire adult-child issue as being a very strong aspect of "social terrorism" in our society.

Every night like all nights like all families I will nail my children to their beds so they do not get out the nail through the copper through their hands into the wood crucified

they will be still

they will not cry

*they will accept because this is the law
But tonight I cannot find the copper sheets*

I go up to get it

My children stay in bed and wait

I am on the stairs and I decide

I tell my wife who waits upstairs

I will not do it any more

the law is broken

IF DRUGS ARE ALLOWED IN SCHOOL

Why Not Give God The Same Courtesy????

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The Nine Judges of the Apocalypse
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Alter-Piece
By Doug Northern

All my life I've lived in the South, the Bible Belt. And all my life the dichotomy that existed between what I was told and what I saw in reality--the practiced and the preached--has exerted its influence over me, as it ultimately does with us all. My work is an expression of that deeply felt and sometimes painfully perceived dichotomy.

In so far as religion goes, any religion, I couldn't care any less if one has a god or gods, or whether those are men or spirits or grapefruit; it's all one to me. The thing I can't stand is what people do to and with their religions: they're concerned with spiritual control and spiritual one-upmanship. As I see it, any religion can stand as a metaphor and a symbol for all the others. Whatever form it takes, oppression is always made even more monstrous when sanctioned with supernatural authority. For such reasons my work tends to be none too polite; one cannot always afford to be so.

Even so, there is humor, and for me it's always a gallows humor. I can tune my TV into any of the evangelical terrorists and, in between fits of nausea and astonishment, laugh like a madman. What I'm saying is that there aren't any saints-- unless we all are. We're already gods; we just need to learn to be human. It's good to be aware that the Saint and the Conqueror Worm are the best and the most inexorable of bedfellows.

"Baby" and "Woman"
By Ashley Parker Owens

These bronze plaques immortalize extremely public text from the tabloids, in order to draw attention to it.

The tabloids force our loss of innocence through the daily intrusion of inaccurate and distorted media. Through this entertainment, we lose meaning from complex events in our lifetime.

Joya
By Jean Roller

The mixed media cigar box construction "Joya" concerns revolution, execution, and assassination, particularly in latin countries.

The lid of the box shows an idealized (or propagandized) version of tobacco pickers: clean, well fed, happy. The description under the picture reads "the leaf tobacco in these cigars has been grown from Havana seed by expert growers in the finest plantations in Central America. Product of Honduras." This is reminiscent of current American political theory that the seeds of revolution come from Havana and are distributed and cultivated in Central America. The pictures of Freda Kahlo and Trotsky in the lid refer to their involvement in revolutionary Mexican politics (and with one another).

The central picture in the box itself is the central portion of

"Executions of 3rd May, 1808" by Goya concerning executions in Spain by Napoleonic soldiers. The two outer figures are from "the Execution of Maximilian" by Manet. This time a Mexican execution.

The fallen figure at the bottom of the box represents an American soldier shot at an outdoor cafe in Central America. Beneath him are the words of President Reagan (words that were recently repeated almost verbatim after the shelling of the Stark): "We know that no words can console," he told their grieving families, "but we thank you for your sons."

Nursing Home Series #4
By June R. Silance

My imagery is concerned with communicating the problems of aging in our society--primarily the loneliness, illness and hopelessness associated with the institutionalized aged.

The works are acrylic (in some cases including oil stick or pastel) and fabric on largely unprimed canvas and fabric from which the texture or pattern is reminiscent of the aged, i.e. the sheerness of certain materials stands for the fragility of the body; white sheeting is associated with illness/death; cabbage roses are reminders of old houses (bodies).

Plutonium
By Michael Donne Stevens

The title of this picture is "PLUTONIUM." The date March 27, 1979 coincides with the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant catastrophe.

"...we may meet the enemy, and not only may he be ours, he may be us."--Walt Kelly

Baby with Blackbirds
By Elaine Vrael

My work may have several meanings, including abstract, figurative, and symbolic. One problem I want to symbolize is how happily and unknowingly we go along with conventional cruelties and injustices completely unconcerned with the consequences--which is the way children behave. That is one reason I use children as subjects. Some of the paintings symbolize how we humans egotistically think we should manipulate all of nature to our own advantage. Under these conditions, we are alienated from natural harmony and balance--something is wrong. Other works express my feelings that life is mysterious, and that we don't have all the answers.



Cargo Coke Cult

By Anne Greene

This box conveys the influence of Western culture on third and fourth world societies, an influence which has many negative repercussions. Drugs which are forbidden in our society are sold elsewhere; our religious beliefs are forced upon others; our customs and products replace indigenous ones; bottle-feeding is encouraged to replace breastfeeding, simply for profit, as a specific example.

Earnest, LeRoy, Skipper and Bill

By Mary King

The Black Men at the top of the picture are the minorities who are shut out (put in prison, chain-link fenced from their neighbors, not told, not hired). As a result they have not become completely enmeshed in society's dramas and can see society's rules and proprieties more clearly. Here they could be observing from an operating theatre.

But the sexual tension (it's really terror) surrounding the Circus Woman is too intense. Who will be the accused? She or The Men?

The White Woman on Her Sofa and The Two Polynesian Attendants are trapped in their designated lives just as they are confined in this little picture. The Two Polynesian Attendants know they are trapped.

Earnest, LeRoy, Skipper, and Bill have a mother and a father. Earnest and Bill are car or insurance salesmen and are quite a bit older than their brothers. LeRoy was slow in school but is the family comic and is much loved. He works somewhere. Skipper would have gotten into trouble in high school (speed) except for his mother believing in him and Earnest and Bill sitting on him.

Earnest's name is really spelled, "Earnest." Earnest, LeRoy, Skipper, and Bill may be in prison or they may be in an operating theater. In either case, they can see the world more clearly than the people who are enmeshed in it can.

Why Waltz When You Can Rock and Roll

By Amy Knaggs

I was pretty amazed when I first saw one of Marv Hoffman's advertisements. Here was someone putting his business advertisements to double use, --publicizing his shop and championing his personal views about current events at the same time. My drawing came from the desire to have a vehicle for these ads, thus the border.

When I visited Hoffman's Gun Center I came across some very friendly people, with kind of a different line of thinking. First off, the store's personnel all had 45's waist high, tucked between the top of their Levi's and their shirts. "That's why America's great," I was told. "Citizens have the right to carry personal firearms." I was given a tour of the store, tips on weapon use, and various anecdotes. "No matter how strong you are, a machine gun will tend to ride up on you. "Hold it sideways so you spray the area, no ammo wasted sky-high."

"A Woman, she's awakened by an intruder, she's all sleepy and everything, she won't be a good aim with a handgun. A Woman needs a shotgun under her bed. She doesn't have to worry about aiming a shotgun, pointing it will do the trick. The intruder better get out quick or he knows he's in trouble."

When talking about the merits of various firearms, how well the weapon will "bring 'em down" is a phrase I heard often. Semi-automatic weapons, especially Uzis, are real popular these days. Because they're quite small, Uzis are easy to carry and conceal, which is a big plus. Purchase of one of these guns, the salesman at the store agreed, displayed an interest more in "urban renewal" than any interest in mastering the weapon at a firing range. "Uzis are fun, and as the saying goes, "why waltz when you can rock and roll?"

Space Cadets

By George Kocar

Space Cadets was painted about the time President Reagan launched his "SDI" program, commonly known as "Star Wars." The painting explores the perverse fascination man has for this "Buck Rogers" scenario of war in space from video games to the STAR WARS movies. Mankind is diving head first into extinction, and we have the technology to help us along.

Crosses To Bear

By Deborah Kruger

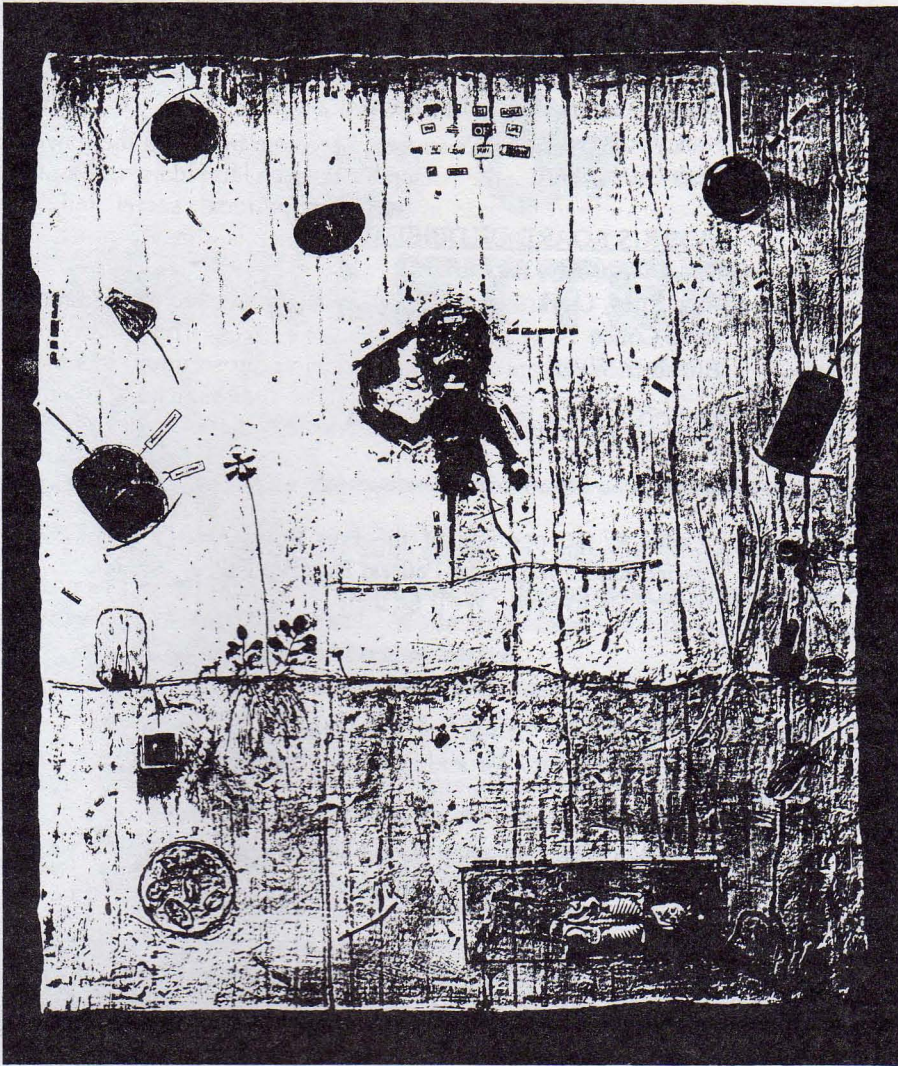
My work is about extremes. It is about the conflict between religious ethics and pornographic culture, about the contrast between women's and men's forms of entertainment, about the differences between how we are taught to view the world and how it really is.

These works juxtapose the refined world of wallpaper with the raw reality of pornography. The collaged crucifixes in Crosses To Bear compel viewers to examine their ideas about what it is we really worship in our culture.

Frequently, the work provokes a double take reaction. In the large collages, viewers are initially attracted by the visual cornucopia of wallpaper patterns. Almost immediately, they must confront the controversial content. This trompe l'oeil technique is a metaphor for how well camouflaged pornography is in society. It also encourages viewers to explore ideas buried deeply within. Once consciousness has been raised, it is difficult for it to be submerged. This is how images influence people, where change happens, and why politics properly belongs in art.

I intentionally make art that sparks dialogue. In this show, I am provoking viewers to re-examine their attitudes about sexuality, violence, eroticism, and the status of women.

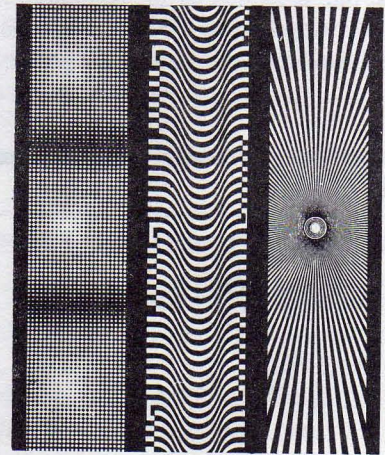
As visual imagery, pornography is art gone mad. It is art devoid of humanity. It idealizes slavery and torture, and tramples human dignity. As an artist, I offer these crucified parts as an indictment of a culture which plunders its natural resources, including its most precious one--the human spirit.



Ronald Gonzalez What's it All About 1984. Mixed media on plaster 27" x 23". From Social Terrorism.

Other artists appearing in the Social Terrorism Exhibition:

- Ron Bandy
- Cynthia Cole
- Jay Eckstien
- K. J. Hagen
- Roman Kujawa
- Michael McKenzie
- David Merkel
- Jan Ryan
- Jim Burnard
- Michael Constant & Ruben Masters
- Charles Grabarek
- Anne Greene
- David Henry
- Stephen Lowery
- Howard Quednau
- Valentin Tatransky



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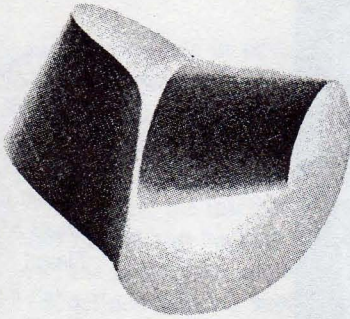
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Hey! If you're moving, please let us know at least six weeks in advance. Send us a postcard or something like that, ok?

Come to the opening of the Fort Point Artist's Community juried exhibition at the Federal Reserve gallery, September 18, from 6pm to 8pm. We'll be there...

MOBIUS (the space) was founded by members of the Mobius Performing Group, as a laboratory for artists experimenting at the boundaries of their disciplines. MOBIUS provides a forum for audiences and artists actively engaged in the development and critique of new genres of art-making.

Mobius, Inc. is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Massachusetts Council on the Arts & Humanities, the Boston Arts Lottery Council, the Polaroid Foundation, the Boston Globe Foundation, the Eugene F. Fay Trust, the Charles Engelhard Foundation, and generous private support.

MOBIUS

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