

MOBIUS NEWSLETTER



354 CONGRESS STREET BOSTON
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April - May 1988 Volume 5, Number 5

OOOPS... THIS IS NUMBER 6, NOT 5
(NOTED IN ARCHIVAL PROCESS)

Greetings!

This issue brings notice of a range of new work. **Mega Scan** is a weekend of video by Boston-area artists, which was put together by T.W. Li. It definitely includes new work and new names that you haven't seen yet! Following that will be our ninth annual performances of **Persephone and Hades**. We've performed this piece all over, but it is here that the sense of time is felt: we first performed it in 1980 at the Helen Shlien Gallery, located in the very space Mobius now occupies. We're very excited to have Marilyn Gottlieb-Roberts of Miami working with Mobius members on **Clean Break**. She has been doing interactive performance installations all over the Southeast, and is a whirlwind of energy and ideas. She is not to be missed! Next is a new project: **Boston Students Perform**. We invited Boston-area students to submit proposals for a weekend of performance. We wanted to see who the newest performers were out there, and give them an opportunity to show their work outside the schools. The students are from Mass. College of Art, Emerson College, the Museum School, and MIT. Come and see what they are up to! Finally, we are premiering, in workshop productions, two new pieces by Mobius members. Mari Jones and Jude Aronstein's **Little Feats of Daring** examines the baby worship that currently abounds in the media and consumer culture. And Dan Lang is **Critic of God**, with his usual wry sense of humor and convoluted reasoning.

PERSEPHONE AND HADES

Ninth Annual Performances

Mobius Performing Group

April 15 - 17

Persephone

I am hung up with the past of things.
Images of Persephone events from
the deep past keep surfacing. My first
memory is a cartoon from the mid-

fifties (black and white) that told the
story of Persephone. All I remember
is she was almost all white, he
entirely black, with a chariot drawn by
black horses. A great hurricane blew
about the earth, he grabbed her,
darkness upon light, the crack in the
earth grew large and they dove
through on the chariot from hell and
the earth closed -- quiet.

The scene is Slippery Rock
State College, Pa. I am on the
college Forensics team -- Frostburg
State, Md. -- my poem is a piece

called "Bavarian Gentians" by D.H. Lawrence. I picked it because I became lost in the imagery -- it kept pulling me in -- deeper. The poem concerns a flower (Bavarian Gentians) deep blue in color, and the poet leads the reader on a journey through the underworld -- with Persephone and Hades -- erotic, sensual, and mystical. Somehow that is where I wanted to be. When I did the poem -- there wasn't a sound. One judge closed her eyes and went off. I won 1st place that day -- my only time.

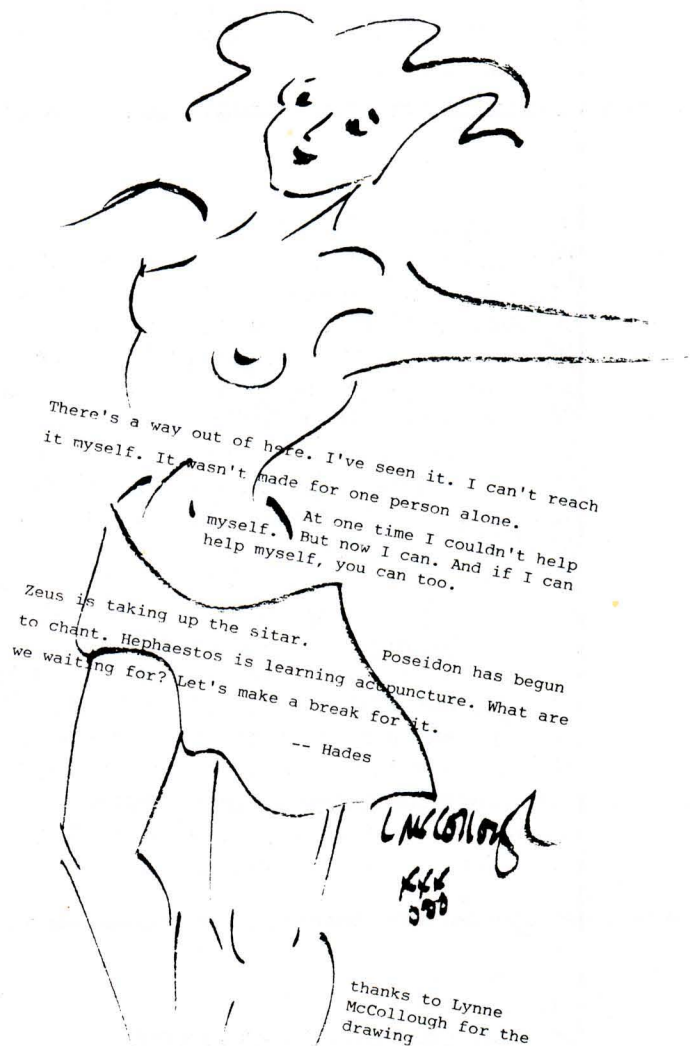
Just recently Marilyn Arsem, Bob Raymond, David Miller & I were out together. Bob and I both quote lines from the text of **Persephone** in our heads all the time. David said he never really thinks of anything from the text at all. Strange. They are stuck in my head, in Bob's also. In other people's too, I am sure. Like mantras. They become part of the fabric of my everyday life.

April 14, 1981. Tues. night -- Are Persephone's visits to the underworld just a dream, and when she awakens is she safe with her mother? Or is the life that she and her mother share on earth just a dream? When she awakens, is she in the arms of Hades? Or is this all a dream - Hades? Who really exists? Who really sets the limits here?

It was truly eerie tonight before I went on into Tartarus -- I was doing the whole improv with my mother playing it out in my mind. I decided to go on. I closed my eyes and walked to the curtain, ready to enter the underworld. For a split second I heard someone call my name. as I was reaching to lift the curtain. I was afraid to look back. It was a clear voice, a woman's voice. But I had the

momentum to go forward. I could stop. Mari becomes Persephone -- Persephone, Mari. Who is dreaming whom?

-- Mari Novotny-Jones
1988



CLEAN BREAK

Marilyn Gottlieb-Roberts (of Miami) with members of the Mobius Performing Group and friends

April 21 - 23

Clean Break: an installation/performance with the story of Perseus and his life as the

central metaphor -- part of **A Southeast Portrait**.

To form **A Southeast Portrait**, the decade of the 1980s was divided into three parts:

1) the materials and methods of the project were developed, culminating in the publication of the **Light Ambulant** catalogue (an art book collaboration with Cesar Trasobares) and the installation/performance **Extravagant Opening** in 1983.

2) the raw materials of the **Portrait** were gathered in a collaborative performance/installation 10-city tour of the Southeast, called **Gathering Evidence** in 1984-1985; and a necessary point-of-reference 5-city tour of the Northeast, **Spring Tour**, in 1986.

3) **Clean Break** at Mobius, in April 1988, begins the final segment, which culminates in the final portrait tour and publication of the collaborative **A Southeast Portrait** catalogue in 1988-1989.

Although the project began in 1980, its inception was in my fifth grade classroom with the realization that, playing the life-expectancy odds, I'd be alive and 61 in the year 2000; I became a juvenile milleniumist. Life wore on and schooling as well, shaping my rural (and pre-industrial revolution) Georgia farm girl stock into a clock-bound post-industrial revolution person. As this aspect of my life became more habitual, I found that I woke with ever greater frequency just before my alarm clock sounded. This quirk of the "psychology of time" roused my curiosity and switched my allegiance from the millenium itself to the penultimate decade; that is, the ten year period, the 80s of a given century, when the old century goes

into the chaos of disintegration and the coming century moves in with the chaos of integration -- the cultural mitosis that eventually grinds out the perception of new systems, new order. My old curiosity about the millenium, or more properly the double millenium, caused me to look to the 19th century for artistic models for my work -- the 19th century being, I guess, the penultimate century of this millenium. The most fruitful models were the painter George Inness, and the writers Thomas Hardy and Edith Wharton.

After initially choosing the Southeast, because it was both familiar and proximal, I've lately begun to realize the good fortune of that choice. The Southeast is close enough to the center of Western culture to speak its "language", yet far enough away to speak in fact a battered dialect of it. This dialect, with its malapropisms and misreadings, seems to me to have more clearly broken with the assumptions of historical habit than has its Northeastern U.S. and European kinfolk. In other words, it seems more likely to, even if by default, speak the cultural language of the present.

What is the historical habit I speak of? Culminating in the Industrial Revolution, I believe it had its Western roots in the Early Bronze Age of Greece. **A Southeast Portrait** borrows its central metaphor from this culpable era: the life and times of the Early Bronze Age hero, Perseus. Through collaborative installations, games, play-acting and story telling, **A Southeast Portrait** asks its audience/participants to engage in questions generated by this myth, arising in lives led after 4000 years of

fallout from the events represented in
the story of Perseus: myth in context.

-- Marilyn Gottlieb-

Roberts

BOSTON STUDENTS PERFORM

New performance work by Boston-
area students

April 29 & 30

Web

Memory. It is all memory. I can think
back clearly but I can't *remember*. My
past is leaking out of my head,
dissolving from view. I want to save it,
to try. The details are crisp, correct;
the proper faces are in plain view; but
what happened inside? I have re-
made myself. Over and over. I want it
to stop. I want to believe that I *am*:
that I have inherent traits and
strengths and weaknesses that do
not become muddled or suspect with
the latest introspection. I want to
understand where my words and
pictures and ideas come from. To
smash and batter and destroy all my
artificial facades of self and arrive --
at the center? I don't know. It is so
dark.

-- Ed Batista

Blessing Slate

So I had this dream that led to this
image -- **Blessing Slate**. I woke up
beside J and knew the dream was
mine to keep, like a large blue
marble. I remembered it. Clearly.

I discarded the analysis of the
dream, always returning to the literal.
Sometimes the ocean is really the
ocean. Slate reminds me of the sea's
swells. Someone told me slate smells
like water. Even so, how will I dance
on it? Can I use the stick to balance?
Sometimes birds are really birds. In
this case, slate is not really slate. Is
the stick a whale? So I decided to
work with it. Dream.

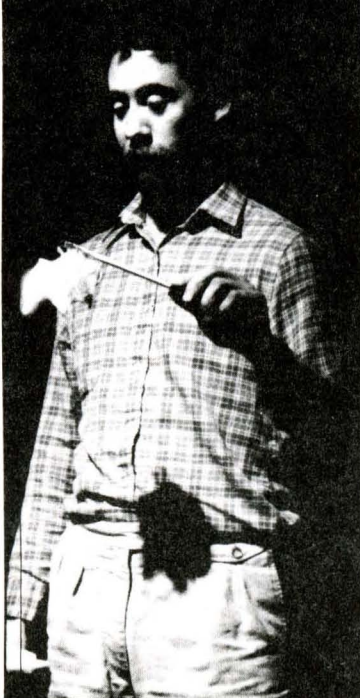
-- Steven Sciscenti

MOBIUS

PERFORMING

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MOBIUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mega Scan: A Video Extravaganza, Curated by T.W. Li
NEW VIDEO AND VIDEO INSTALLATION BY BOSTON ARTISTS

Screenings:

Fri, April 8 & Sat, April 9, 8 pm
A different program each night
\$5, \$8 for both nights

Video Installations:

On view at the screenings or
Sat, April 9 & Sun, April 10 12-5 pm
\$2 or free with screening ticket stub

PERSEPHONE & MADES

9th annual performances
of the audience-activated
Mobius Performing Group cult classic
April 15-17, Friday - Sunday, at 8 pm
Tickets \$7

CLEAN BREAK

An Installation-Performance
with the story of Perseus and his life as the central metaphor
by Marilyn Gottlieb-Roberts of Miami
with members of the Mobius Performing Group
April 21-23, Thursday - Saturday at 8 pm
Tickets \$8

Student Performance Art at Mobius
Performance work by Boston area students

Friday, April 29:

Ed Batista "Web"
Steven Sciscenti "Blessing Slate"
David Larkin "Mutual Visual Exchange"

Saturday, April 30:

Almitra Stanley/Michael McKay "Dialog for the Illuminated Box"
Anderson Inge "Personal Hurdles"
Ming Fen Hsu "Give Me Some Change"
Dumb Artists Collective "Apocalypse Tree"

LITTLE FEATS OF DARING

A new work by
Mari Novotny-Jones and Jude Aronstein
of the Mobius Performing Group
May 13-15, Friday-Sunday 8 pm
Tickets \$7

CRITIC OF GOD

A new work by Dan Lang of the
Mobius Performing Group
May 19-22, Thursday-Sunday 8 pm
Tickets \$7

THIRTEEN ACTIONS IN YELLOW
(an audience-of-one performance)

Some of you may remember the announcement of this project in the newsletter over a year ago. Well, I'm finally doing it. **Thirteen Actions** is preliminary work for some larger performances that I have in mind.

Thirteen Actions is a performance designed for an audience of one person which will take place outdoors in a park. The audience person will sit on a specific park bench for a specific period of time, during which a performance will unfold around him/her. Some aspects of the event will be easily identified, while others will blend in with the real life of the park. I will be working with elements of proximity vs. distance, 360-degree events, and a range of sensory experiences. The second half of the project will be videotaping interviews with each of the audience persons. I will meet with each audience member the day after the event, and videotape his/her description of what they experienced. Finally, I will edit the interviews to make a document of multiple interpretations of (essentially) the same event. Then we'll have a special screening, and the various audience persons can meet each other and compare experiences.

So, what I'm looking for is 8 - 10 willing volunteers to be the audience for this new work. It will entail:

- 1) sitting alone on a particular park bench for 30 - 45 minutes on a Saturday early in June.
- 2) meeting with me the next day for about an hour, to videotape your description of the event.
- 3) agreeing not to talk about the event to anyone until all audience persons have seen the event and been videotaped. (The entire project should only take two - three weeks, so you are sworn to secrecy for only a short time.)

If you are interested in being an audience person for this piece, call me at Mobius (542-7416) by May 1. If you've talked to me recently about being an audience for this piece, or called to put your name in the first time, please call again to verify that you are able to do it in June. If more than 10 people volunteer, I will put all the names in a hat and draw. Thanks!

-- Marilyn Arsem

Mutual Visual Exchange

For me it is very important that everyone can be involved, that no one is left out. So it is important that my work includes people and includes them in an active way. Allowing their natural responses to react to art work in a positive way instead of stifling them into a passive role.

The thing that echoes in my mind, that comes back to me again and again is that art is a powerful way to communicate to people. To use it in the most powerful way, art must be allowed to function as a dialogue. A dialogue where the viewer takes an equal part in making visual statements.

These ideas have led me to look for ways in which I can make statements to the audience visually, and the audience can respond by making visual statements back to me. One way that I am developing is a heat-sensitive liquid crystal panel. This medium changes color with the heat of your hand, so you can draw by rubbing your hand against it. It's magical stuff and great fun.

-- David Larkin

Dialog for the Illuminated Box, a film and performance conceived and produced by Almitra Stanley and Michael McKay, deals with the effects created when formality, constancy and predictability exist within the same space as chance, coincidence and incongruity; and the general wedding of mummery and intimacy.

"Our table is set with pears and cheese on a small blue plate, while, obscured by the window, the welcome mat is removed.

He pulled the past out from under his fingernails. The greatest

minds of the modern world were torn from the pages of his notebook; Left some untouched, and discarded."

-- Almitra Stanley
Michael McKay

Personal Hurdle is the live enactment of an individual divesting himself of a long-standing, emotional stumbling block, perhaps a deep, dark secret, or sadness.

A special method has been planned, to make certain that the exorcism works, once and for all. An ordinary household object will be selected and invested with the spirit of the problem, and it will be ceremoniously prepared for execution.

-- Anderson Inge

Give Me Some Change has grown out of a very real sense of self-hatred and isolation. As I continue to develop the piece, I wonder if that sickness needs to be repeated again.

-- Ming Fen Hsu

Apocalypse Tree

In the summer of 1981 an ad in the Valley Advocate -- "attention noise makers interested in exploring the possibilities of sound . . ." -- led to the formation of the band CARGO OF DESPAIR. A thousand or so noise induced headaches later, DUMB ARTISTS COLLECTIVE was born with a desire to present non-musical ideas to an audience.

As to the question of what is DAC and the philosophy behind it, we have no prepared cue-cards to flash. We individually and collectively do not subscribe to any one particular vein of thought. And rather than listing influences, which leads to the coo coo pigeon hole, we'd like to say

that in our small way, we are just trying to keep it small.

The genesis of the performance **Apocalypse Tree** that we'll be presenting at Mobius is a collection of those "important doubts" -- "What would happen if a tree never did cross the road; and maybe when a chicken falls in the woods, when no one's around, its thoughts aren't sound." Of course we don't know anymore than us, but we'll be asking anyways. Why don't you come. We'll let you scratch our heads, if we can scratch yours . . .

-- Dumb Artists
Collective

LITTLE FEATS OF DARING

Jude Aronstein and Mari Novotny-Jones

May 13 - 15

Jude and I had one of those crazy ideas, like "Let's work on a piece together!" Now what . . .

So, Jude suggested that we write letters to each other. That was great; we each wrote one.

I keep thinking this piece is about procrastination/maturation instead of procreation/creation. Images come, we like them, but the structure, the throughline hasn't totally emerged yet. So we keep thinking up more images, beads on a tangled string.

Creation is at the center of my life. I create my own work, collaborate with others on work we create together, and help young people believe in their own work. About two

years ago, my husband and I thought we would like to have a child. We were in OK positions financially, physically and spiritually. It seemed like a very strong desire, what with all the parenting magazines, children's clothes and toys and some peer pressure to have the "ultimate" baby. The biological timing seemed right. There was an emptiness in the center, under the bones of all this creating. I actually began to picture our little girl up in the clouds -- waiting to become flesh. Whenever I wanted to feel complete I would picture her -- see her in different stages, describe her in great detail -- all in my mind's eye. We tried and nothing happened. Things changed. I moved forward in time, finances dried up, and we were to be these two people standing on the platform waving goodbye to a train full of babies as it chugs out of the station.

I know at this point in time that nurture is stronger than nature. Very little time for thoughts or feelings of emptiness. That little girl I imagined doesn't appear very often any more. Oh yes, there are three o'clock feedings, but I'm not awakened to the cry of a child, it's the cry of an image or a thought -- creation. So sleepily, I go to the kitchen, turn on the light, put the water on, and then revamp lesson plans, work through an image or rewrite a piece of dialogue.

All of this has really nothing to do with the description of the piece. It has to do with the present state of creation. Maybe the present state of loss.

-- Mari Novotny-Jones

2 years ago I referred to the origins of this now emerging piece as Creation/Procreation. Now Mari and I

are throwing words around like *reproduction, replication*. I find that I try to define Creation and Procreation in ways which will forever distinguish these two processes from one another, in each and every situation. It's something I find myself compelled to do, it's even fun . . . but mostly I find that it is futile.

What Mari and I have to date is a set of images which are filled with fecundity. Be it the rich uniqueness of creation, or the seemingly banal replication (perhaps genetic strivings) of procreation; we hope these images will strike some chords . . . dissonant ones perhaps. For example:

1. Is procreation a creative act? or ...
 - a. is it the act of procreation which is creative?
 - b. is procreation something we fool ourselves into believing is a creative process?
 - c. are the byproducts of procreation something we should place alongside with all the other commodities we worship?
2. Is practicing birth control connected to creative activity?
3. Does having and following the urge to create . . .
 - a. satisfy
 - b. release
 - c. sublimate
 - d. stimulate. . . . the need to procreate.

Mari and I haven't gotten as far as to answer these questions, but we are doing our best to pose them in new and unusual ways, with hopes to stimulate some sane thinking on the subject.

Watch for our *baby worship rituals* and *safe snacks*.

-- Jude Aronstein

CRITIC OF GOD

Dan Lang's new solo performance will be presented in a workshop production on **May 19 - 22**. First presented as part of the March Works-in-Progress series, **Critic of God** is "aimed at uncovering the *single* very good reason that all is *not* well with the world." Video characterizations and interior monologues, as well as the inclusion of a number of conflicting points of view (regarding whether or not anything is wrong with the world, and if so, to what degree and why) will be featured. Give us a call at Mobius for the details.



FUNDRAISING PARTY!!

Keep your eye out for the great Mobius spring fundraising party! You will receive details soon...

THANK YOU CORNER

A big thank you to intern **Beth Giles** for designing the Mobius Works-In-Progress post card for the March program!

And extra-special thanks to **Ron Wallace** for printing our mailing list labels newsletter after newsletter. We appreciate your help and patience!!

Vermont Studio School Grants

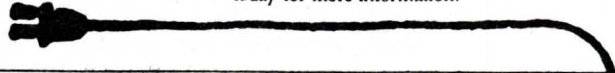
Work exchange grants, teacher's grants, and 12 week work/staff residencies available at Vermont Studio School, late May through late October. Opportunity to study with some of this country's top artists and faculty. Deadline: April 15th. For more information write: Vermont Studio School, Box 613, Johnson VT 05656 (802) 635-2727.

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Performing arts organizations now have on-line press releases, season schedules, *Free* ticket offers and promotional discounts on the *INFO Arts Line*.

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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?

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.

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Yes, I am delighted to stay on the Mobius Newsletter mailing list. I want to hear about new performance art, sound art, installation, video, dance, panels, fun parties, and more.

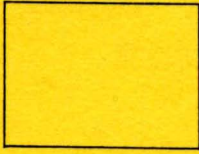
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