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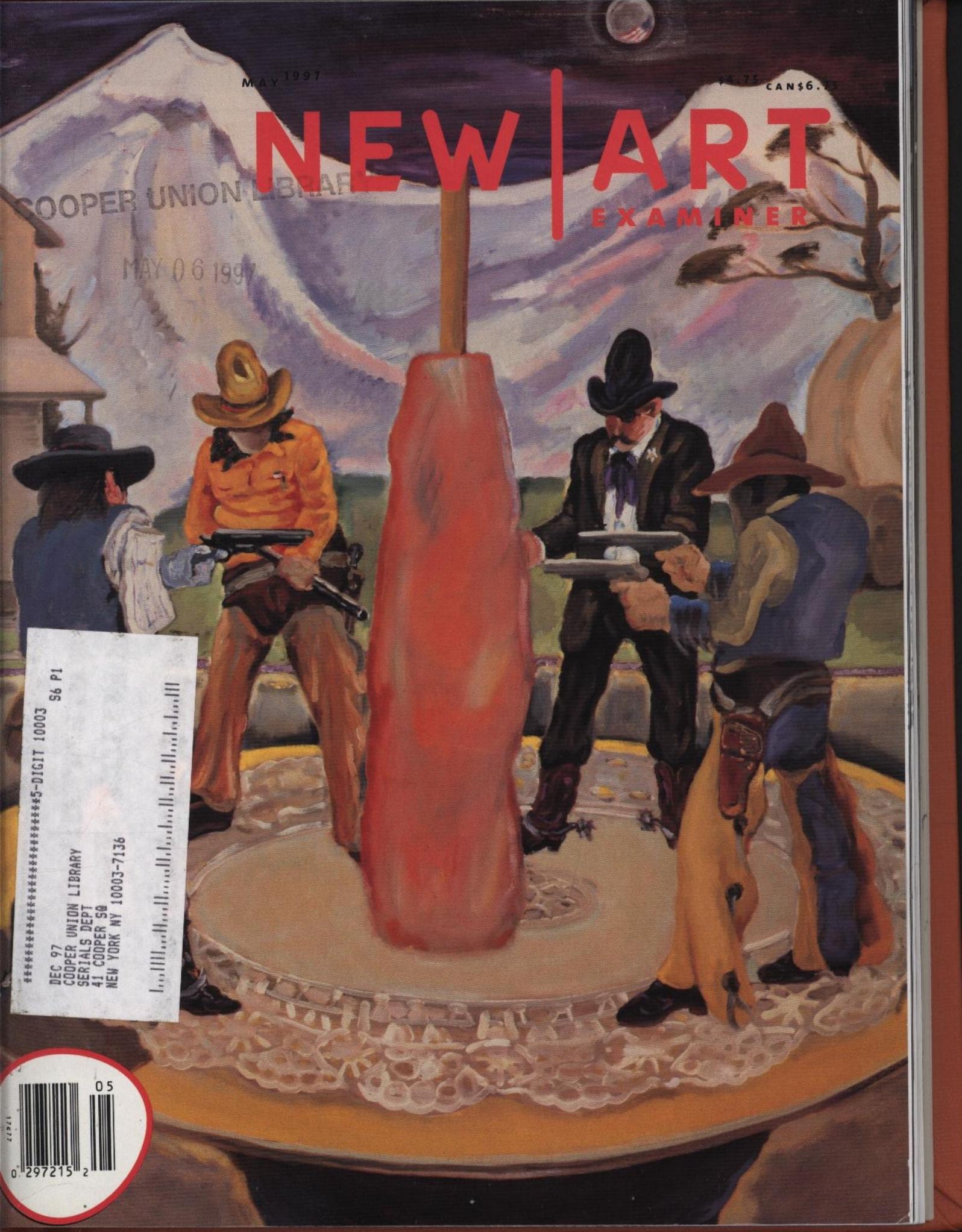
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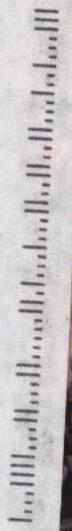
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The National Endowment for the Arts  
The Illinois Arts Council  
The Chicago Office of Fine Arts of the  
Department of Cultural Affairs  
The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

# NEW ART EXAMINER

Editorial and Business Office  
314 W. Institute Place  
Chicago, IL 60610  
Phone: 312/649-9900  
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Visit our Internet web site: WWW URL:  
<http://www.tezcat.com:80/~examiner>

Publisher: Grant Samuelsen  
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Published by the Chicago New Art Association

Address all correspondence regarding editorial matters to the Editor and subscription  
and advertising concerns to their respective departments, New Art Examiner, 314 W.  
Institute Place, Chicago, IL 60610.

New Art Examiner is indexed and listed in Art Index, H.W. Wilson Co., 950 University Ave.,  
Bronx, NY 10452, ISSN: 00004-3222; ART bibliographies, ABC-CLIO, Inc., Riviera Campus,  
2040 Alameda Padre Sierra, Santa Barbara, CA 93103; EBC-CLIO, Woodside House,  
Hinksey Hill, Oxford, OX15EA, England; also in BHA (Bibliography of the History of Art),  
Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, P.O. Box 8, Williamstown, MA 01267;  
International Photography Index, G.K. Holt & Co., 70 Lincoln St., Boston, MA 02111, Attn:  
Reference Division; ISSN: 0886-8115.

Subscriptions in U.S.: \$35 one year, \$62 two years; Canada and First Class: \$53; Foreign:  
\$68. Single copies: \$6 postage paid. Many back issues are available.

If you cannot find the New Art Examiner, please call this toll-free number for the  
nearest retail outlet:  
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New Art Examiner (ISSN 0886-8115) is published monthly except January and August for  
\$35 per year by the Chicago New Art Association, 314 W. Institute Pl., Chicago, IL 60610.  
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without written permission. Second-class nonprofit postage paid at Chicago, Illinois and  
additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to New Art Examiner, 314  
W. Institute Pl., Chicago, IL 60610. Volume 24, Number 8, May 1997.



This program is partially  
sponsored by a grant from the  
Illinois Arts Council



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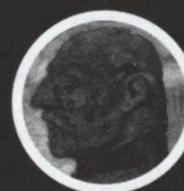
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on the cover:

SEYMOUR ROSOFKY

Showdown (detail), 1965. Oil on canvas, 51" x 63".

Courtesy of Thomas McCormick Works of Art, Chicago.



The Chicago New Art Association is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to examine the  
definition and transmission of culture in our society, the decision-making processes within museums  
and schools and the agencies of patronage which determine the manner in which culture shall be  
transmitted; the value systems which presently influence the making of art as well as its study in exhibi-  
tions and books; and, in particular, the interaction of these factors within the visual arts milieu.

cated, and symbolically freighted installation of photography, video, and text in which photographer Meridel Rubenstein and installation artist Ellen Zweig present their interpretation of Los Alamos, New Mexico during the years in which the first atomic bomb was being constructed there.

The symbolic spatial focus of the installation is Edith Warner's guest house on the San Ildefonso Pueblo near Los Alamos, where, at the instigation of physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the scientists working on the bomb would meet for weekend dinners to unwind and socialize with Warner and her Pueblo companion Tilano Montoya. The installation's conceptual focus is the thought of Neils Bohr, the most philosophical and morally aware of the atomic scientists, who was Warner's favorite visitor.

Bohr, who in his youth had flirted with Soren Kierkegaard's Existentialism of either/or choices, concluded, through his work in quantum physics, that abstractions that appear incompatible can coexist with and complement each other in the world of experience. He carried this insight into the moral realm, arguing that "only by entertaining multiple and mutually limiting points of view, building up a composite picture, can we approach the real richness of the world."

Following Bohr's guidance, Rubenstein and Zweig attempt to build a composite out of myriad binary oppositions, including the cultures of the Pueblo people and military science; the humanity and moral ambivalence of the scientists and the engines of destruction they created; and Warner's Quaker idealism and her respect and sometimes adoration for the scientists.

In their pursuit of complexity, however, Rubenstein and Zweig fail to achieve real richness, instead getting lost in detail, communicating confusion rather than nuance. The oppositions they juggle are not abstractions, but living conflicts that beg for resolute choice, not suspension in undecidability. The unity in "Critical Mass" is not sense, but sensibility. Rubenstein's eight large grids composed of muddy black-and-white photographs mounted on thick metal

backings that evoke the Pueblo and scientific cultures; Zweig's video installation, in which actors playing the participants at Warner's dinners rehearse their all-too-human foibles; and the dungeon noises and somber voices that are piped through the installation combine to create a gloom that is unrelied by either playful humor or serious critical or political commitment.

MICHAEL WEINSTEIN

## PALACE

### BERET, INTERNATIONAL

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### WALKER'S POINT CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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Palaces are places of opulence and infestation, intrigue and boredom. Each space, from the

ing and looking, compounding in the viewer an indulgent participation and (re)creating affect. Michael Piazza's *Entry* is a mixed metaphor of barricades and engagement. Hand-crafted stanchions, thick construction-grade red nylon rope, and janitors' swivel hooks direct one's body away from the empty, vestibular space. Hand-held, open-mesh, aluminum viewing fans are provided to frame the art and the experience, a contemporary version of the Constable glass.

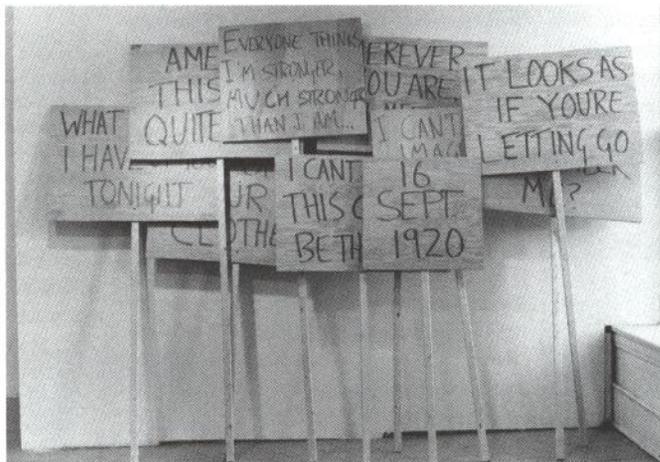
Vito Acconci's '60s video *Theme Song* drones on endlessly, imploring with honeyed supplication, "wait until you see what I have to tell you!" accompanied by his favorite taped seduction tunes stopped and started noisily off camera. *Fresh Acconci*, a video by Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley, baroquely enlists the audience to attenuate both their pleasure and discomfort in being accomplice to a plausibly pornographic encounter. In one "scene" a blindfolded woman plays a game of guessing over which part of her nude body a man's hands are hovering. As chillingly monotonous as the early Acconci tapes it parodies, another scene is an extended shot of two men, one black, one

white, in a bubbling hot tub. Through the steamy haze we watch the first man methodically attempt to open the eye of the submissive other. Offering up no vehicle for resistance, we watch with our eyes open, laughing and squirming in our approbation.

Henric Plenge Jakobsen's full-wall painting also relies on spectacle. "TERMINATOR," alluding to the northern European stereotype of Aryan power and duress, is spelled out in huge, white, bit-mapped letters on a black ground, calculating without histrionics the power of Western cultural hegemony and the

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Works by Rebecca Morris and Laura Owens are less recalcitrant. Morris's paintings elicit



### NICO JENKINS

Signs from "an Ongoing Protest Against it all," from "Palace." Wood, marker, dimensions variable. Photo by Michael Brosilow, courtesy of Beret, Int'l. Gallery.

grand vestibule (a place of preparation and public display) to the royal bath (replete with indulgences and narcissistic preening), is prescriptive without apology. The organizers of "Palace," an exhibition at two sites in Milwaukee and Chicago, have embraced the implicit irony of palaces; that which provides and withholds, excessively displays and oppressively coerces.

The works included in the dual exhibitions carry and expose the art apparatus of mak-

pleasure found in simple abstraction, as both *Zone* and *Hot Rocks* are monochromatic compositions of irregular, Naugahyde-like rectangles layered onto a thinly applied ground of organic camouflage-type shapes. Owens's *Untitled* delights us with the sheer beauty of Gorky-esque musings painted simply, yet with cheekiness, in just the corner of the canvas, only a part of a larger conception, incomplete yet replete with satisfying sensuality.

These works, collected under the aegis of "Palace," which connotes place and style, befuddle our desire to codify our own experience. The paradoxical relationship between marking, looking, and knowledge, and surveying, consuming, and displaying situates us both inside and outside of positions of control, and renders us harmless.

MICHAL ANN CARLEY

## JENNIFER STEINKAMP

### TEN IN ONE GALLERY

1542 N. DAMEN AVE., 60622  
773-486-5820

The role of psychedelia in the contemporary culture seems to be more to relax and numb than to awaken and liberate, as its original assignment would appear to have been. While I wasn't present for the heyday of the flower children and LSD, nowadays

psychedelic experiences seem to aim more at subduing thought and activity than opening the mind to new frontiers. Perhaps this reveals something about our mindset at the end of the century; that we have either become numb, or need to, in the face of so much that we cannot affect or control. I know that at times I would welcome the opportunity to become like the ostrich with its head in the sand.

Much current video work, especially works like Jennifer Steinkamp's *Blue Blow*, strikes me as a similar effort. This artist's psychedelic video projections represent not so much a retreat as a turning away from the forces and pressures that cause us stress on a daily level. As I entered the gallery to view *Blue Blow*, I felt almost immediately relaxed, bathed in a wash of video light and ambient sound (provided by Steinkamp's collaborator, Grain). The images projected on a wall-sized scrim recalled micro-cellular organisms pulsating in a constantly shifting fluid. Snowflakes drifted upward across the screen, not so much defying gravity as working without it. Both the music and the video projection served to slow me down, to temporarily still my thoughts. I was satisfied to simply absorb the light and sound, my mind gently wandering.

While Swiss video artist Pipilotti Rist is far more aggressive in her approach, there are similarities in the way that both Rist and Steinkamp surround their audience, immersing the viewer in a total experience. Both artists cause me to relinquish control of the direction my thoughts take; not by guiding them, but by setting them adrift. A good descriptive term might be "ambient" art—it's there to be an environment, mellowing out the viewer, like its musical counterparts.

The difficulties with this work, though, lie in this same unfocused ambience. Set free from any direction, my thoughts tend to go into a loop like the music and video projections, never really going anywhere, becoming slightly bored. I experienced no psychedelic epiphany, no awakening. It may be, however, my own linear-minded desire to have an outcome from such immersing experiences that prevented this. I do believe that the purpose of art such as Steinkamp's is to cause us to step back and relinquish control, if only for a moment, to a floaty, sensory experience. And to enjoy that moment.

KARL ERICKSON

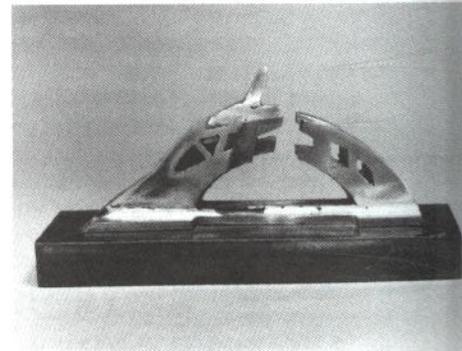
## NEW YORK

### RICHARD HUNT

#### THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

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212/864-4500

When discussing the work of sculptor Richard Hunt, one encounters a number of phrases that are repeated by critics and art historians. Terms such as biological, anthro-



### RICHARD HUNT

*Wisdom Bridge*, 1989 (final model). Welded steel, 8" high. Photo by Stephen Moriarty, courtesy of the Studio Museum in Harlem.

pomorphic, formalist, abstract, lyrical, metaphorical, subjective, and hybrid are frequently applied, and appropriately so. The influence of the Cubists, the Futurists, and individuals such as Picasso and the sculptors David Smith and Julio Gonzalez is also cited as a contributing factor in Hunt's formal signature.

In this exhibition, however, titled "Growing Forward," one is reminded of the *individual* quality of Hunt's approach to materials and the genre of sculpture itself. This group of sculptures, full-scale drawings, prints, and scale models represents an artist who is not preoccupied with current trends that eschew exclusive formal relations between artist and medium. The appearance of subject matter remarkably free of racial, gender, social, or political content may explain, in part, Hunt's formidable list of public commissions. The key word here is *appearance*, however, because there is more to this work than initially meets the eye.

While Hunt's work reflects his exploration of extra-aesthetic issues such as biology, history, and narrative, he is primarily concerned



### JENNIFER STEINKAMP

*Blue Blow*, 1997. Installation view (exterior), Ten in One Gallery. Video projection. Courtesy of Ten in One Gallery.

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## PALACE

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Added material

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**Source:** New Art Examiner, May 1997, Vol. 24, p49, 2p

**Item:** 505677858