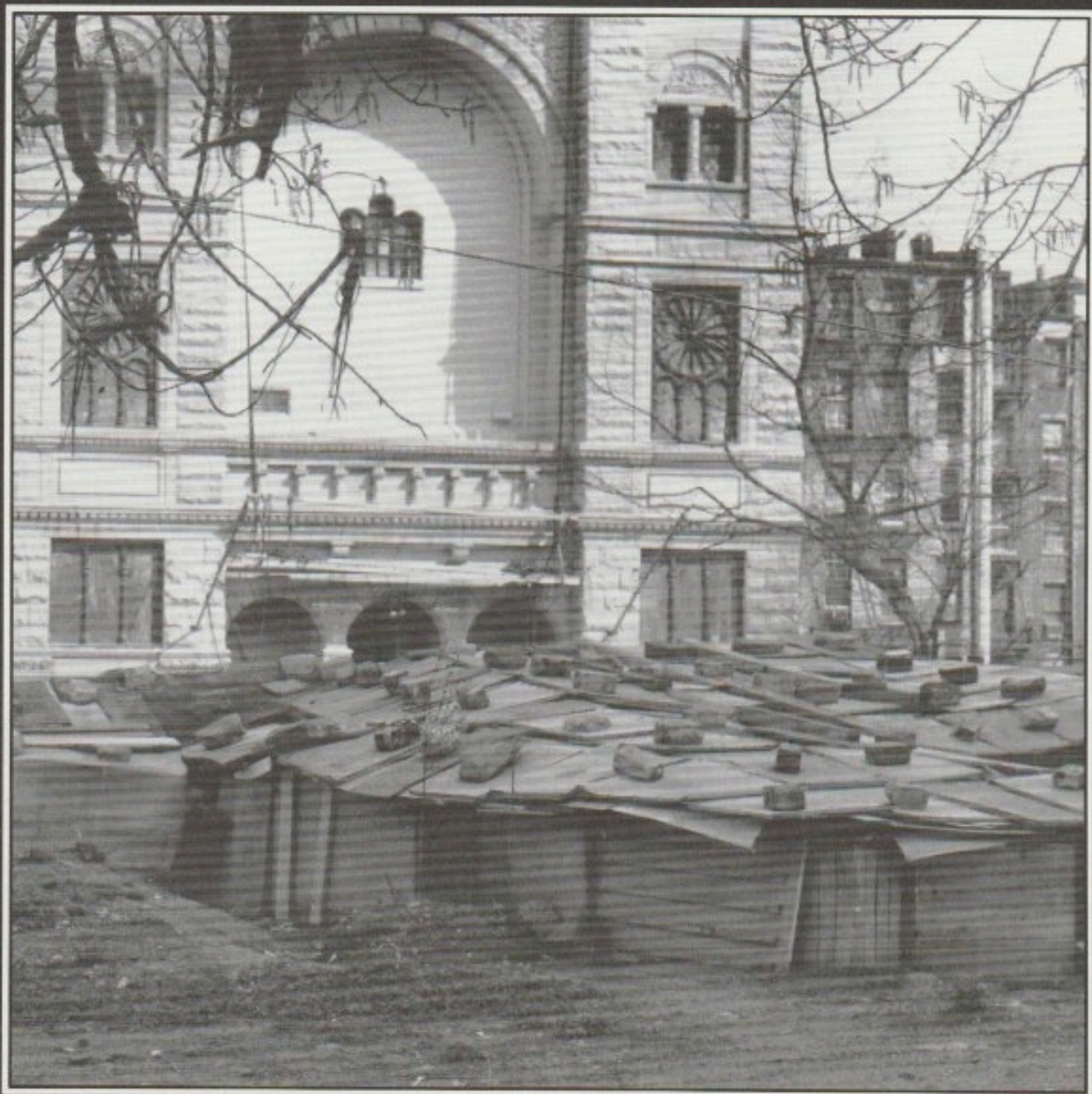


# REAL LIFE

MAGAZINE • WINTER 1988/89



REAGANVILLE, NEW YORK 1989

**REAL LIFE**  
MAGAZINE  
WINTER 1988/89

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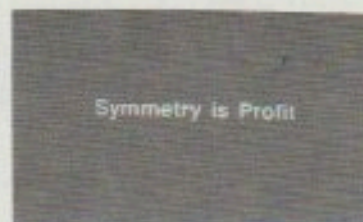
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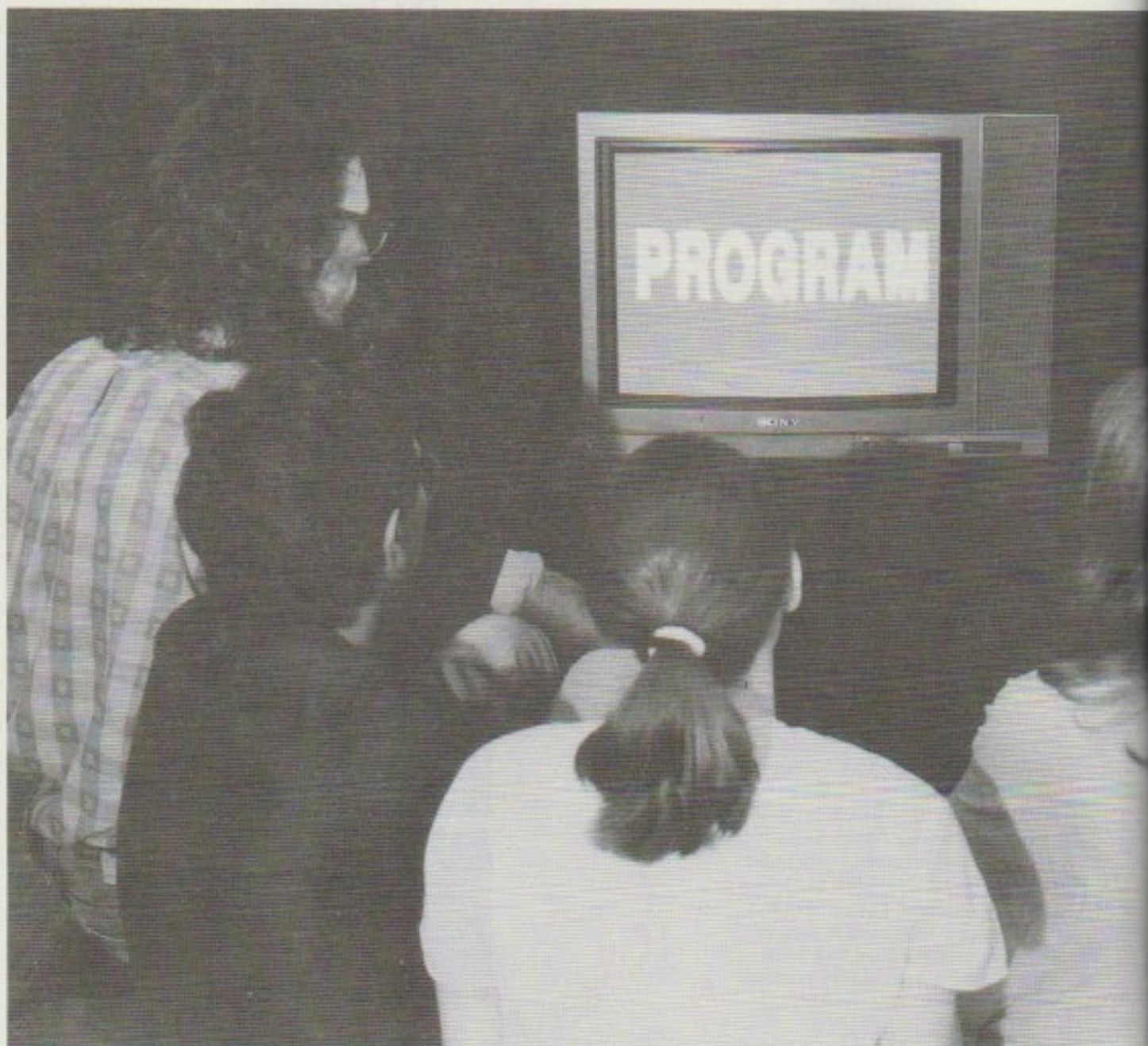
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*Critical Art Ensemble: Two Stills from video/film "Mirror of Reduction," 1988*

# CRITICAL A *interviewed by* R *Thomas Lawson* T ENSEMBLE



**Thomas Lawson:** *How did Critical Art Ensemble [CAE] begin?*

**CAE:** CAE proper began in the fall of 1987. The year before, in the fall of '86, I met Steve Barnes. We were both interested in making films after being disappointed with our other artistic endeavors. I had a couple of ideas mapped out and ready to go; he had access to the equipment and the ability to use it, and so the first collaboration began. We worked well together and consequently completed two short films very quickly. They were received well locally, and then we were invited to Miami by Charles Recher to show them and give a

talk on our theory of video at the Miami-Dade Downtown Campus. While doing the post-production work on these films we decided to call the production group Critical Art Ensemble, because we thought that no one's signature should be on the work, since the cast and crew had put so much work into the films too. We wanted it to be perceived as the collective effort that it was.

Six months after our Miami talk, we got together with some other artists who were, like us, disenchanted with the art situation in general, and particularly with the regional and local aspects of it. There seemed to be two primary problems. The first was attitudinal. Around the Southeast there seemed to be little concern about the current critical discourse (something which is still a problem here). The art institutions in the South are controlled by the attitude that theory is unimportant to art production and the art situation. It is a revised form of nineteenth-century Romanticism, in which rationality and criticality are in some way antithetical to art, or at best a parasite on the work of artists. From the institutional view, art is supposed to be of a sensual nature, the effect of which should be immediate response without any type of reflection on conceptual or political structures. Counter to this view, CAE members all agreed that the sensual must be balanced by the analytical, the perception of art is a reflective and not a immediate process, and that theory and politics is the starting point for art production.

The second problem is a methodological one, in which the artist is viewed as a fetish object. In this region, and I think in general, it is believed that one can produce work as if one were a singular segment of society, with the genius and ability that would allow him or her to cover any aspect of "creation" on one's own, and that anything else is considered compromising one's work, simply because other individuals helped to shape it. CAE, on the other hand, has always promoted the option of the collective, in which a group of specialists with differing talents come together to produce work that is superior and wider in scope than what an individual could produce on his or her own. Further, by acting as a group we have been able to

do more than just produce art work: we are also able to sponsor other artists' shows, and to act as producers of criticism in the region. In other words, we are able to act in all the different segments of the art institution. It was these two rallying points, in conjunction with a political position that we hold in common, that moved CAE from being just a video production collective to being the art collective it is now.

**TL:** *Was the idea from the beginning to do single night events?*

**CAE:** Yes. The method of presentation that we use was to a large degree based on guerrilla art action. Since we have never produced static objects that could be used in lengthy exhibitions, and had no interest in making that kind of art, we searched for other options. Guerrilla art caught our attention, but due to its lack of artist-audience contact, we thought that it would be inappropriate if we wanted to contribute to building a new arts audience in the South. The thing we liked about it was the notion of the hit-and-run strategy that the different guerrilla street theater groups were using. Give the audience one quick "riot of semiosis," and then move on. To repeat such acts in one area over time would only dull the audience's expectations and reactions.

Another aspect to this question that we must keep in mind is our notion of space in regard to art presentation. In New York, in just a small area, there is such a large audience that numerous alternatives in terms of work, publications, and presentations can be sustained by them. True, the spectrum of options there might be unbalanced, but a wide range does exist. In the Southeast, the audience for the *region* is tiny, and it takes this entire area to support an artist, particularly if you are doing anything outside the mainstream. Consequently, CAE is always travelling; it's the only way we can approach new audiences. Since the state of Florida is indifferent to activities like ours, we remain unfunded and like the grand majority of artists anywhere we all have to have other jobs in order to survive. The result is that we only have a limited amount of time to get to destinations (which are sometimes as far away as two days drive) do a show, and get back to our base before our jobs are in jeopardy. Hence to do more than a two-night event is not possible. It is a sad but determined reality. I suppose we are fortu-



*CAE group photo, 1988*

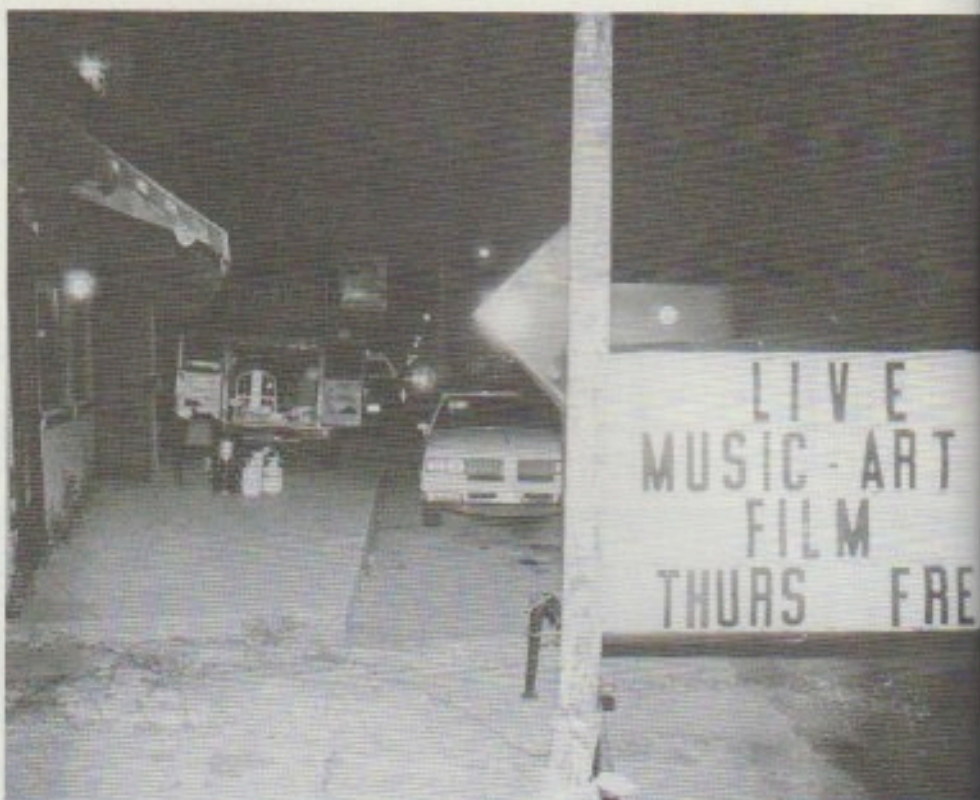
nate that it doesn't hinder our project very much.

**TL:** Was there any kind of conscious mirroring of mass-media activity—touring bands, music videos, and so on? CAE seems very interested in varieties of mass culture. You seem to regularly engage in some aspects of popular culture.

**CAE:** Most definitely. Popular culture is one of the best sources for ideas on how to present concepts that people would normally either ignore or become angered by. You mentioned music videos—we have directly taken formal aspects of our videos from this source. The producers of MTV took many of their ideas from artists and reprocessed them for popular presentation; CAE is just completing the cycle. The editing style we often use and the time duration in our videos is derived from music video. Other favorite sources are classic Hollywood cinema and Reagan's political commercials. You can say just about anything to an audience as long as a standardized format is used, one that the audience is used to watching. No matter how intelligent a viewer might be, s/he cannot defend against media infiltration indefinitely, since no one can constantly maintain a state of hyper-criticality.

Once again we have to return to the idea of building a new art audience, and the fact that we have to go to many different areas in order to do this. In our travels we have come in contact with a full spectrum of classes framed by the varying subcultures in the region. In order to present to them all new (at least to the area) political and critical concepts, without having to do all new pieces for each show, we have to use commonly-shared historical points of reference. The only place where such points may be obtained is from popular culture. The popular formats which act as camouflage for what we hope is a subversive message are capable of holding and communicating complex subject matter; they need not be considered incapable of conveying such ideas.

**TL:** Let's talk about something specific. Let's talk about the show *Frontier Production* we all participated in last night. I thought it was a great idea to have this art event take place in a rock n' roll bar where people expect some kind of entertainment, but as you mentioned, it can be difficult entertainment, so it seemed to be a good location to begin attempting what you are talking about. How did you develop this



program of starting with an esoteric art lecture, and moving into poetry, performance, video, and dance? How was this decided?

**CAE:** The title of the show came from our belief that we are working in a frontier area. As stated earlier, the art institution has yet to really expand and solidify out here yet, and what little has solidified is the most redundant aspects of so-called high culture, such as a symphony, mainstream dance theater, or watercolor galleries. This immaturity is also reflected in the differing states' funding policies. Any interesting work that is shown within institutional spaces in most of the South, is brought here—it isn't made here. Those presenting good work in the region are scattered; they get by as artists because they have made their own opportunities. It's the frontier spirit in the traditional sense; it is very analogous to the economic frontier in the West a century ago. *Frontier Production* was designed to show that significant work can be produced in the frontier environment as well as in urban cultural centers, and that it can be exciting because we are engaged in shaping a new art community, rather than just contributing to one that has already been established.

The choice of using a rock n' roll bar was made because we thought that the more the art space was decontextual-

*Pappy's Blues Bar Jackson, Mississippi  
March 1988*

ized, the better the chance we could overcome the rigid boundaries of art spaces and allow for more spontaneous participation from the audience. Just as with the videos where we searched for the best formats to get people to watch them regardless of content, so in looking for a performance space, we looked for a place where there would be an expectation of participation. The Warehouse (the bar) seemed particularly accommodating in this respect. With these expectations already in place, we didn't have to announce to the crowd that participating in the show was acceptable. They already came there to be a part of the spectacle. It's no sin for people to be actively entertained at an art event and the non-art location seems to be the best place for doing that.

**TL:** Where else have you done this?

**CAE:** One of the disco bar events that immediately comes to mind is one of the first shows that we did in '87, when we went to Miami to perform at Club Nu. This event stands out because it was a complete disaster. The crowd hated us. Club Nu is the Miami equivalent of the Palladium. They want to be trendy and have "artsy" happenings

there, but at the same time they don't want to have their dining and dancing disrupted. A piece would start and the room would be packed, and it would be empty by the time we finished. We did it for two nights too. It was torture for everyone.

**TL:** *Were they objecting because their dancing was being interrupted?*

**CAE:** Yeah, we were interrupting their good time, which wasn't our intention. The pieces that functioned the best were those that blended into the club decor. We had a painting installation, a duration performance, and a film/painting performance, all of which they liked, because these works only asked for recognition, they didn't demand it like the music and video.

**TL:** *Were most of the audience just there because they were going to a disco for the night? They didn't know what the entertainment was?*

**CAE:** Yes, given our pseudo-guerrilla format, many of our activities go unannounced; we just show up. At Club Nu this was done to such an extent that much of the club management didn't even know that we were coming. The

patrons don't really care who is there—they go because it is the "hottest spot in Miami." We weren't the only ones to have trouble there. From what I know, Karen Finley didn't do too well there either.

**TL:** *Well, what did work there?*

**CAE:** They liked the painting installation for obvious reasons. The duration performance, although a failure on the conceptual level, did at least make an impression on the most fundamental level. The performer had a real talent for remaining completely still in the most uncomfortable positions for very extended periods. The patrons would walk up and touch her to see if she was real. When they found that she was really a person, they would often exclaim that they couldn't understand how she could remain still for so long. They became extremely aware of both objective and subjective time. I suppose there is nothing too profound there, but for a non-art audience it is at least a start. The film/painting performance worked well because we did it while they danced. We had a large canvas which had numerous images painted around its periphery, and in the center we showed short bursts of film imagery. Using a pin-point spotlight, so as not to disrupt the film image, we could light up differing painted images. The result

was a continually-changing piece, in which the person holding the light had a degree of control over how the piece looked. A number of people on the dance floor were pretty enthusiastic over working the spot, and making their own painting with the images that we provided. This was one of the reasons that we started to add more participatory pieces to our shows.

**TL:** *It was a situation that only existed somewhere between art and spectacle.*

**CAE:** Yes.

**TL:** *I felt that at Frontier Production, things worked because there was a constant interplay between life, performance, the video, and the computer texts, and that's what rock n' roll audiences expect. You expect some disjunction between high technology and physical presence. It seemed that you latched onto expectations without it turning Miami.*

**CAE:** That is what we strive for in our shows as a whole, and in the individual pieces. For example, our choice of transferring our films to video for presentation is in part due to our attempt to capture popular expectation and habit. People will watch TV no matter what is on, and I don't really think that anyone of the television generation can completely escape the way that they have been socialized to interact with the television.

**TL:** *Yes, you watch video at clubs, TV on stands.*

**CAE:** This theory kind of failed at Club Nu. One of the reasons that I suspect this happened is because we had to show the video projected on a screen, instead of presentation on a box. The video wasn't framed as it should be. Another thing that was very problematic about the Miami show was that it was a situation of discomfort. People don't go to Club Nu and feel comfortable, because there is too much social pressure to look right, to dance well, whatever. It is not like a second home, the way a neighborhood bar can be. At The Warehouse, people are comfortable, it's home territory. You don't have to impress anyone. When we went to Jackson, Mississippi and played the blues bar, the people there were those who had been going there for years. It was their turf, and no matter what we did, they were not going to be intimidated, because they were at home, and we were the guests. We did not have a privileged position just because we were the entertainers. They always felt in control

*Hypertextual Poetry: Performance View  
Political Art in Florida  
The Warehouse, Tallahassee, Florida 1988*



of themselves and the environment. Consequently they were very willing to interact with us on a very egalitarian level. There was a lot of discussion at that show between the artists and the audience.

**TL:** *Tell me more about the Mississippi show.*

**CAE:** It was a volunteer job. Pappy's Lounge, where the show took place was in the heart of the Jackson ghetto, so no one could afford a cover charge, and Pappy could not afford to pay us. We had to get ourselves there, and bring all our own equipment. Logistically it was the kind of job that is most difficult, but it was also one of the most satisfying jobs that we have ever done.

**TL:** *So normally they played blues there?*

**CAE:** Yes. This was certainly the first art show that was ever there. In fact, we had audience members who claimed to have never seen art before (at least the way art is defined by the dominant culture). Others said that they were intimidated by museums and galleries, due both to ignorance and a feeling that they weren't wanted. All our worst fears were confirmed. Yet they were very appreciative that we would take the time to do a show with them, and talk with them about art. It was a real victory for us, since before we left, most of our peers told us that we were wasting our time, and that we would probably be ignored or beaten up. We showed that the absence of art in that area was a problem of institutional deprivation, and not a chosen rejection.

**TL:** *What did you do there?*

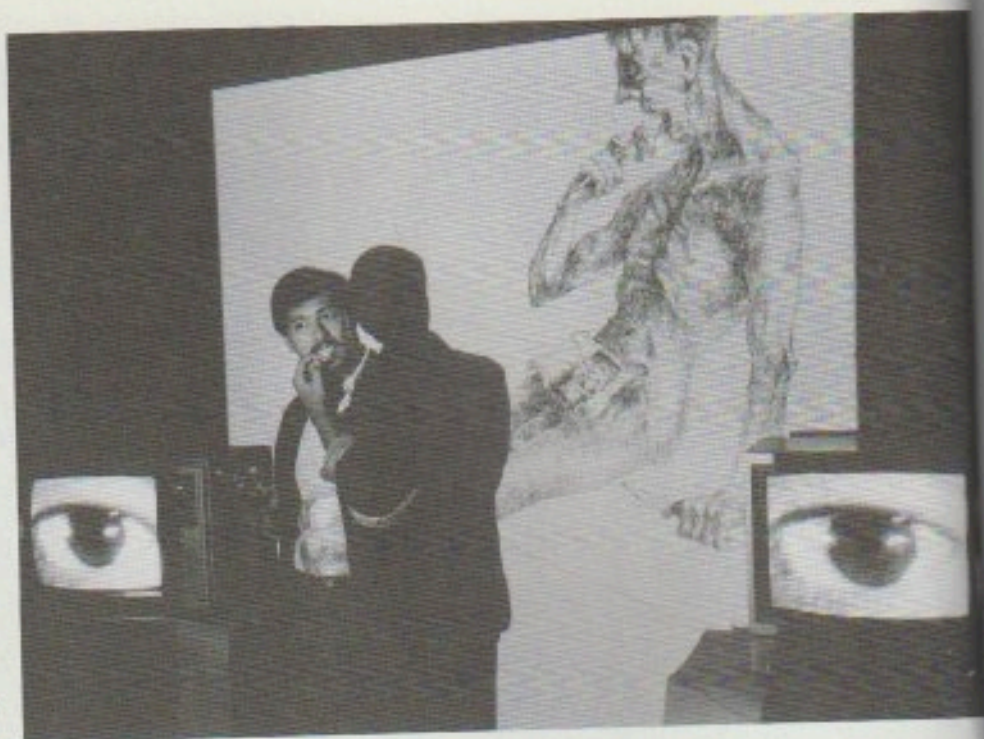
**CAE:** It was the standard show at that time. We did the duration performance, showed some videos, did a slide show, played some primitive/industrial music, did some computer portraits. It was pretty much the same show that we did in Miami.

**TL:** *The dialogue was after the show?*

**CAE:** No, all through it. Some members of the group would be working, while other members were interacting with the audience. During the intermissions, the dialogue really livened up.

**TL:** *Is it from this experience that you decided to add the lecture as a didactic introduction?*

**CAE:** No, that is something that we only do in Tallahassee, as an attempt to increase cultural awareness in our own community. Most of the artists that visit Tallahassee are brought by the university, and are usually people of historical



significance. They are well worth hearing if you want to know what was important twenty years ago, but they can tell you very little about what is significant now. So instead of just complaining about this problem, we decided to start our own visiting artist series, and combine each lecture with a show. It seemed that by using this tactic, the lecture presentation would be less likely to turn into a sterile seminar presentation, where the artist is kept safely cut off from the audience. This way the artist is someone who can be approached, because s/he is part of the audience as well as being the speaker; the artist isn't a fetish object, as so often happens in the university context.

**TL:** *It was interesting for me because I once did a nightclub presentation in Toronto that I didn't like. The nightclub was completely taken over by the art world, so there was no reason for the event to be in there. It was very alienating; two of us on stage in a darkened room with the spotlight on us, set up for a fight. It just didn't work. I was anxious about coming here to do that again, but it seemed to work really well; you didn't have me on stage for one thing.*

**CAE:** The artists that we bring are not supposed to be on exhibit, so we always try to place them in the audience.

**TL:** *It seemed like an interesting way to begin an evening of art in a club. We started with introductory theoretical information that the audience can chew on as they watch the show. The other important tactic you*

*Case # 43: Performance View  
Frontier Production  
The Warehouse, Tallahassee, Florida  
September 1988*

*employed was the live interaction, particularly in Hypertext with the digitized imagery and the reading of the text, or with the performance in the middle of the room. It kept breaking down the boundaries, so this thing was set up as a pure spectacle and would then collapse and be brought back into the room again.*

**CAE:** Boundaries have always been an issue for CAE, so we try to run the spectrum of boundary possibilities, and shift the boundaries before the audience can adjust to them. The state of confusion that results, ironically enough, helps to make the perception of the work more lucid. We like the idea of an audience that is as dynamic as the work.

**TL:** *Can you talk about Hypertext?*

**CAE:** Where should we start—the performance, the model of poetry?

**TL:** *My take on it was that the poetry is a lot like painting, one of these cultural artifacts that you don't quite know if it has any cultural relevance or not.*

**CAE:** Poetry doesn't have any relevance currently, and Hypertext is about making it relevant once more. As you are fond of saying, CAE is trying to "reinvent" poetry again.

**TL:** *The last time anyone tried something like that was Patti Smith bringing it into*

the rock arena. There seemed to be an echo of that with CAE doing it in a nightclub environment, but instead of chanting or singing it you are typing it, and it's coming up on screens.

CAE: It's back to the boundary problem again. In poetry, one of the sad things about it is that it has become so structured. The poet stands at the podium, on display for the audience, and the primary signifiers only represent bureaucracy. The artificiality of this un-art event is extremely tiresome now. We thought it was time to produce a model of presentation where all the elements of poetry are at least metaphorically presented as an interlocking whole. You can see the poetry on monitors, see it printed on a page, hear it read; hidden text and annotations are presented on an equal footing with the poems, and the audience response through the use of computerized digital equipment appears as an immediate part of the text. Back to the artificiality of the traditional style of performance—it is clear that the poets and the traditional audience see poetry as an immaculate product with

transcendental value brought by the wise intuitions of the poet. It is so self-congratulatory. This is not the way a work is perceived or meaning is constructed. It's not that simple. When people are bored to death at a poetry reading, it is not because they are ignorant of the situation. It's quite the opposite. It is because they know, consciously or not, that the event is being framed by a pathetic form of romantic hubris, and that the reading has nothing to do with what is now perceived as real life. The other reason that poetry has become so stagnant is because it has been thoroughly bureaucratized. One learns to be a poet at the university, and then publishes in university-sponsored journals. As we know, the American model of pedagogy does not lend itself to experimentation, but rather to imitation of the canon. Just as in opera, the subject matter and the models are fixed, and so even though the words and metaphors change, the poems are endless repetitions. This is why our first attack points were the boundaries in and around poetry, and its artificial sense of order. We describe Hypertext as "a metaphor for a textual constellation gone nova." Texts break down into confusion partly because you can't process the barrage of information that is given in any event. In terms of performance

our aim is to simulate this barrage.

TL: It really got explosive when that one audience member started chanting the words as they came up on the screen. At first I just assumed it was part of the performance. Her scream played as a counterpoint to the reader's declamatory style. It was very musical, and then I realized that this was a completely unplanned improvisation from the audience. I thought that really opened it up.

CAE: Yes, we have purposely left spaces open like that so an audience member may insinuate himself or herself into actively producing the work with the rest of the group. In Hypertext, no boundary is controllable. However, this can lead to discomfort in the audience.

TL: So there is a discomfort if someone chooses to "make a spectacle of themselves." It was very interesting.

CAE: Yes, the audience can get very nervous when it seems that the artist's authority is being undermined. Again, however, that is what Hypertext is all about. It is concerned with shifting the hierarchies latent in poetry and performance, whether those of spoken and written word, artist text and critical text, or artist's authority and audience authority. The performance, like the audience, is very dynamic.

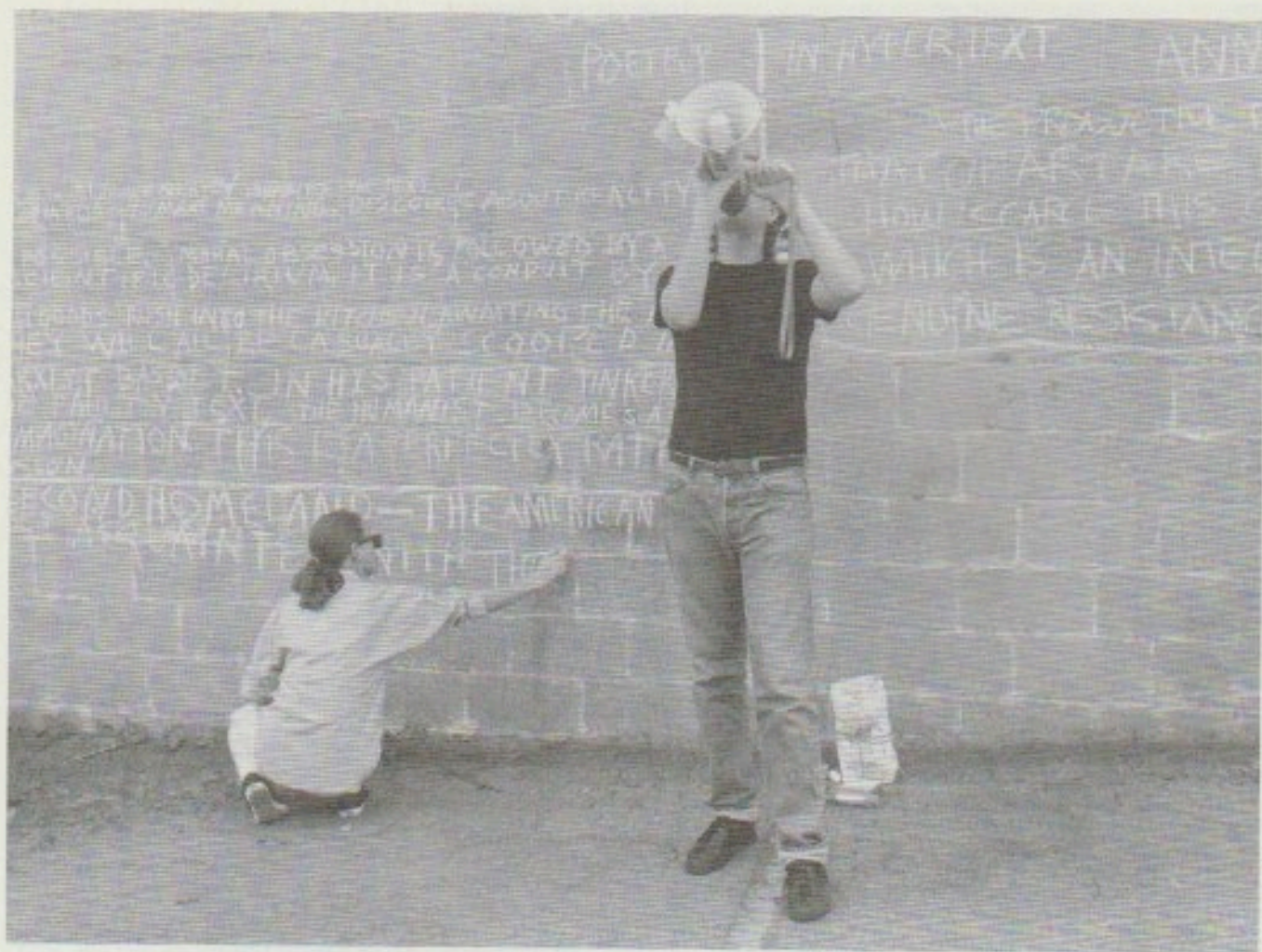
TL: Then you follow Hypertext with a more contemplative piece.

CAE: Right. After doing a piece in which any sense of the traditional contractual expectations between the artists and the audience have been blown open, we move into a piece that is more typical for a standard art event. The piece "Identity Crisis" questions the degree to which expectations given to us by the media with particular reference to gender determine our own concept of identity. We appropriated the images from TV commercials for the video portion, and images from still advertisements which are then collaged together and projected onto two shaped screens (one screen is in the shape of the international sign for a male and the other for a female). The audio is a preacher that is offering a folk reaction to this media battering. For this work, the audience is moved out of the performance area, and traditional boundaries are reestablished. It must seem rather confusing, since by this time they are just getting used to an open performance area. From that piece we go to a performance that is in the area established for

*An American Dream*  
Frontier Production  
The Warehouse, Tallahassee, Florida  
September 1988







the audience in the prior piece. This performance is more overtly critical, and is more difficult in terms of subject matter.

**TL:** *Could you describe the piece?*

**CAE:** In this performance, we are working with the idea of consumption at the micro level, which is a continuation of the last piece. The performance argues, in light of Lacan, that the subject is violently thrown into a social structure that demands constant consumption. After the pre-Oedipal stage, to re-establish the loss of unity marked by the appearance of subject/object, the individual assumes a posture of steady consumption. The media plays on this desire for unity by offering products that will supposedly fill the subjective void, which of course is never filled again. If the individual rejects the social structure of consumption, it is likely that the person will become the object of their own consumption. One pathological manifestation of this is auto-cannibalism. To show this we place two televisions behind the performer. He

has his back to them, but they call out to him, and ask him to consume them. He does not turn about, but the desire for consumption is so strong he has no alternative but to eat himself. The performer goes on to eat his nails, hair, skin, and then ends by cutting himself open, and drinking his own blood. The piece ends in this unresolved state, in which either alternative is horrible. It's quite pessimistic. It's from there that we go to the dancers who do a very light-hearted performance, much to the relief of the crowd.

**TL:** *I heard someone in the audience say, "Bring on the dancing girls!" And you did.*

**CAE:** After that we go to straight video to wind everything down. It's an interesting staircase effect.

**TL:** *In Tallahassee, CAE seems to function as a live publication for the evening; you seem to think that you have a public duty to bring work besides your own to public attention.*

**CAE:** Absolutely. Unlike New York where there is such a surplus of cultural capital; such an ethic would be absurd

*Percussion Duet  
Parking Lot for Art  
Pluribus Unum  
Atlanta, Georgia July 1988*

there. But in the culturally struggling regions it is really incumbent upon the artist to disallow a cultural dearth by presenting as much significant work as possible.

**TL:** *But when you are on the road you only show CAE material.*

**CAE:** Yes, but again it's a public duty to go to places where art isn't normally shown, and interact with audiences that are deprived of the art experience, because of the way art is often institutionalized. However, this is not all we do. For example, we will be doing the Dallas Museum of Art Video Festival in November and the University of Alabama in February. We do mix it up. It is a lot like our shows; they are a peculiar blend of elitism and democracy. Unfortunately, we are too often interpreted as being one or the other.

TL: *What about Atlanta. You did a show on the street there?*

CAE: Yeah, we did it in a parking lot (we'd always wanted to do a show in a parking lot). We did Hypertext there, revising it to meet the demands of the situation. We wrote on the walls of a nearby building, read the poetry through a megaphone, and took pictures of the audience with a polaroid camera. The photos were then given to audience members, or pasted into the text on the wall.

TL: *It was like an agitprop performance?*

CAE: Yes.

TL: *The Democratic convention was near you, wasn't it?*

CAE: Yes, a few blocks away. Our show was kind of an invisible counterdemonstration.

TL: *Who was in the audience?*

CAE: It was a relatively small audience, given the size of the parking lot. The show was poorly advertised by the sponsors, and what advertising there was primarily aimed at the art community, who seemed to have little interest in going to a parking lot in the middle of the Atlanta summer to see a show. I have to admit, it really was uncomfortable out there. We also did a video presentation at the Mattress Factory's "Political Art Show," which was indoors and well attended. I don't want to sound as if CAE is anti-gallery, because we are not, we just won't draw a boundary that ends with the gallery.

TL: *It seems that to me that part of what is important about what you are doing is the one-night-stand nature of it. You go in, come out, and move on to another location. Is that possible in a gallery situation? The gallery show is conceived more as a three week period.*

CAE: I really wouldn't know. It does seem difficult, since we have nothing that lasts other than the video, and there aren't very many video galleries. There is also the gallery bias toward painting and sculpture; they are salable items, which again we don't have. Recently we have been trying to put a show together for Moody Gallery at the University of Alabama. They seemed a little shocked that we only wanted to do a single night rather than something that would be up for three weeks. But they eventually said, "OK, one night." So it is possible to do, but I don't know what the commercial galleries are thinking.

TL: *It seems that most of your work has*

*been done here in the South. That is partly because of where you are located, but does this become a program?*

CAE: Well yes and no. We are interested in helping to form the art situation in the South, but at the same time if someone from New York or Chicago asked us to come up and do a show, we would. I would only hope that if everything went well we would have the will power to continue travelling as we do now, and not forget where we are needed the most.

TL: *Part of the reason that cultural life seems so tenuous in outlying areas is that people leave all the time.*

CAE: Too true.

TL: *It takes courage to hang out if you see an exit.*

CAE: That's the worrisome thing, but I think it can be done. You have no trouble leaving New York.

TL: *Yes, but it is just for a few days.*

CAE: That is all that we do. We leave Tallahassee for a few days and then come home.

TL: *I think working with a marginal audience is often more interesting and fruitful.*

CAE: A more receptive art audience needs to be developed in the South, and it's in mixing with these new marginal audiences that we get a number of our ideas on where and how to better present our work. It also keeps us experimenting so that our work does not stagnate. Without doubt, this agenda of seducing the marginal audiences is not very fruitful economically, since we have never even come out even on any of the things that we have done, but it is very successful in terms of the build-up of our ideas, and of our understanding of how to communicate with art.

TL: *You had a big crowd last night, you must have broken even.*

CAE: No, we lost money.

TL: *Maybe you are getting a reputation and credit will come.*

CAE: In this town, I don't think we could do any better than last night. Nor do I think that anyone else could, even spaces with funding.

TL: *Since you don't have any funding, how do you support the group?*

CAE: We all work, which is important. It takes a very brilliant person to continually do good work, and be a successful careerist. Once everything gets easy financially, it becomes too easy to just ride on past successes. I'm not saying that CAE is comprised of noble ascetics who despise money—we would certain-

ly accept funding for our projects if it came along.

TL: *Funding would give you time.*

CAE: Yes it would, but lack of money also offers some benefits. Having no money builds solidarity in the group, since everyone can be sure that anyone who is participating is completely committed. It is a real barrier against infiltration by the half-hearted.

TL: *Where do you start when producing work?*

CAE: Like many artists now, we begin with a theory or concept and then work down to material. An idea will get our attention, and then we will try to figure out how to translate it into image in a way that it will be entertaining and yet have a good deal of substance. So when we find a concept that really needs to be expressed in image, we decide what medium it will work best in, and then assign it to the specialist in that medium to direct the project.

TL: *Do you meet once a week?*

CAE: Sometimes we will go for long periods without a meeting, then other times we are meeting every day. It depends on the intensity of the work.

TL: *Last night you had an impressive array of equipment—monitors, computers, video cameras, slide projectors—obviously you are not in a position to own it all.*

CAE: Yes, that is where the collective comes into play again. Between all of us, we either own the equipment or have access to it. Technology is important to the artist, and it seems that it is up to the artist to show how it can be used to further humanistic interests.

TL: *What are your future plans?*

CAE: Primarily to continue what we are doing now. The next event on the agenda is a show for the Dallas Museum of Art Video Festival. They invited us because they wanted to expand their program to contain work that is more interdisciplinary with an emphasis on video. We won't be at the museum itself, but at another disco called the Starck Club that is co-sponsoring the event. It should be an unusual situation.

CAE is: Steve Kurtz, Steve Barnes, Dorian Burr, Hope Kurtz, Rick Dominguez. Associate members: Jennifer Canterbury, Beverly Schlee, David Williams. Former members: George Barker, Claudia Bucher, Greg Carter, Joel Whitaker.

This interview was conducted in Tallahassee on September 10, 1988 △