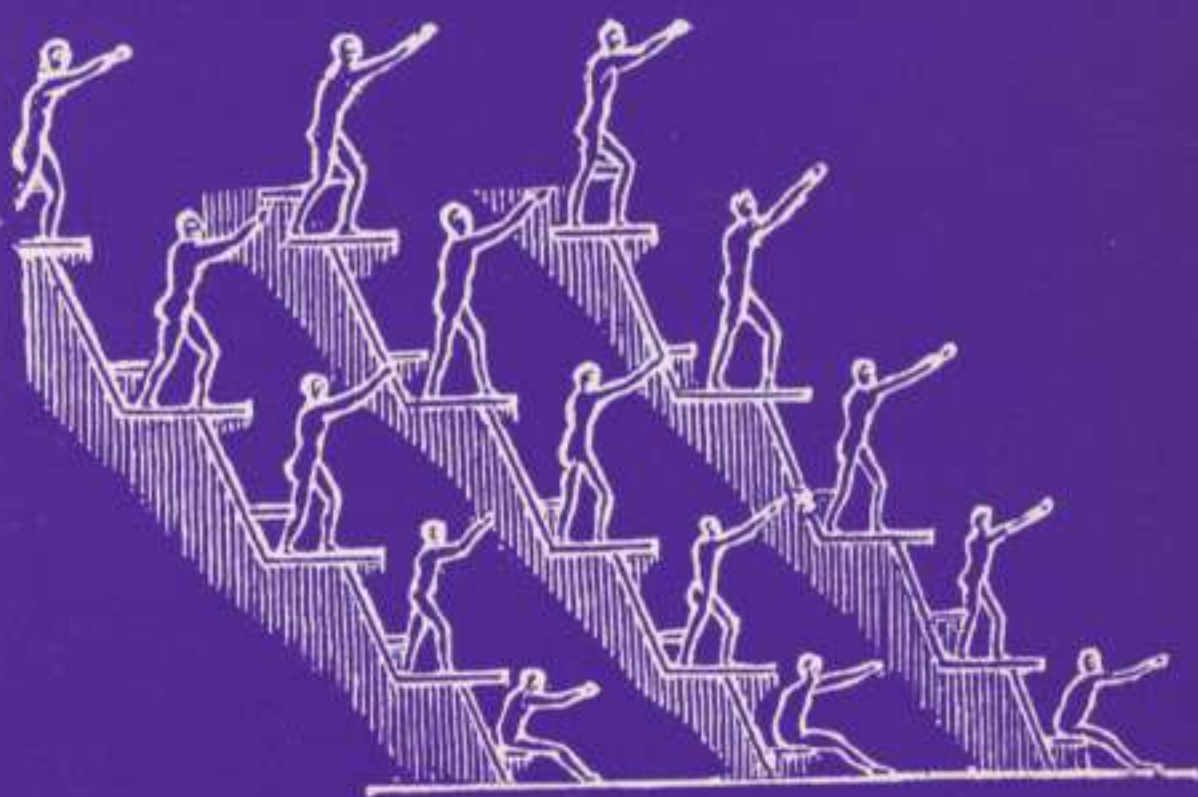


THE ART OF

# STYLING





**T**HE ART OF SPECTACLE is a major interdisciplinary performance festival featuring dance, music, theatre and the visual arts. The participating artists from Los Angeles and New York—Glenn Branca, Remy Charlip, Ping Chong, Lin Hixson, Robert Longo, Rachel Rosenthal, Carl Stone—are among the most innovative in the country. Their diverse artistic expressions exemplify the direction of performance art in the 80's.

THE ART OF SPECTACLE is presented by Some Serious Business, Inc., Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) and UCLA Center for the Arts.



## THE ART OF SPECTACLE

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# CONTENTS

6. The Art of Spectacle  
*essay by Jacki Apple*

18. Glenn Branca

20. Remy Charlip

22. Ping Chong

24. Lin Hixson

26. Robert Longo

28. Rachel Rosenthal

30. Carl Stone

# THE ART OF SPECTACLE

b y J A C K I A P P L E



*All of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles... The spectacle is not a collection of images but a social relation among people mediated by images... Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation... The spectacle which inverts the real is in fact produced.*

—Guy Debord, *THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE*

**T**HE SPECTACLE looms before us: monumental, magnificent, omnipotent, unattainable. A century of spectacles surrounds us, encompasses us, assaults us, seduces us. Time collapses. The spectacle is ever-present: a series of reproduced moments, a series of heightened moments separated from intention and consequence. We “*suffer from a loss of the real.*”

The word spectacle comes from the Latin *spectare*—to watch; *specere*—to look, to look at. In English: *something exhibited to view as notable or entertaining, a dramatic public display.* We are witnesses, voyeurs, passive consumers, accomplices.

What are we looking at?

An extravaganza, the operatic gesture, the scale of the cinema, the exaggeration of the ordinary, the magnified drama, the intolerable made ordinary, the sensational, an exaltation, a romance, experience as event, a simulation. We are fascinated.

What do we see?

The Crucifixion, the Holocaust, Hiroshima. The rally at Nuremberg, the celebration at Woodstock, the landing on the Moon, the bombing of Beirut. The Superbowl, *Star Wars*, a “spaceship” over the closing ceremonies of the 23rd Olympiad. Public assembly, public ceremony, public assassination. The rise and fall of world leaders, astronauts, rock stars, terrorists, athletes, and graffiti artists, James Bond, Indiana Jones, Alexis Carrington Colby. The “spectacle” of daily life. A sniper in MacDonald’s. The evening News as entertainment. Memory, history, dream, re-enactment. All of experience as a spectacular “production.”

The artists in this festival approach and interpret the idea of Spectacle in very different ways, and they were selected not for their affinities, but for their differences. Not bound together by ideology or style, generation or geography, media or subject matter, they represent a broad spectrum of viewpoints and esthetic sensibilities. They share interdisciplinary backgrounds and a willingness to confront the issues of our times.





ROBERT LONGO'S art personifies and embodies the fascination of the "spectacular event." In his drawings, sculpture, and performances, Longo resurrects classical and historical forms—equestrian statues, monuments, reliefs—and re-presents them clothed in contemporary, photographically generated images drawn from the media. Dramatically contorted human figures in exaggerated "heroic" postures are juxtaposed with monumental architectural reproductions. Anonymous men and women in business suits battle for power in an urban jungle. The result is oppressive, authoritarian, estheticized violence.

The scale, the narrative structure, the references are cinematic. The moment of action fills up the frame, explodes out of it, larger than life. Images of conflict and destruction, sanctioned and unrestricted force, are infused with a "fictitious" glamour and romance. Gestures are isolated from consequence. The surfaces are impenetrable. Terror and ecstasy are interchangeable and indistinguishable. Emotions are stylized and depersonalized. These are *performers*, not individuals.

Drawn from the public domain of previously produced images, Longo's images are simulations of already simulated realities, magnified fictionalizations of fictions. His works are "produced" experiences located outside of the "actuality" to which they allude.

More than any other visual artist of this decade, Longo's work reflects the harsh paradoxes of our times, and the profound schisms in our culture. His use of archaic modes and materials as vehicles for contemporary existential dramas is ludicrous. It is nearly as ludicrous as the implementation of equally archaic value systems and modes of behavior in the contemporary world of MX missiles and nuclear warheads.

Longo's art manages to be combative, uncompromisingly confrontational, and simultaneously utterly corporate. Its competitive aggressiveness and totalitarian brutality are mediated by a fixation with style and surface "image", and an unabashed admiration for technical virtuosity, the superbly crafted product as an end in itself, divorced from its application in the world. It both parodies and idolizes the postures of new wave rock, the look of fashion advertising, and the glamorized violence of Hollywood films. It is an art that is both seductive and repellent. It mirrors a world of chaos and decadence, a world of dominance, subjugation, and fascistic authority and order, a world in which only the strongest, most beautiful, and most ruthless survive and succeed. Our public fantasies as a culture collide with our private terrors. They inhabit the same body.

Longo's three part performance "spectacle" *Empire* (1981) is a paragon of the fascination with the *style* of fascism so prevalent in this decade. Wagner and the Third Reich meet Darth Vader. Albert Speer and Leni Riefenstahl meet Steven Spielberg. Restaged as a sculptural performance tableau, Part I—*Sound Distance Of A Good Man* was first presented in 1978. It combines four modes of art—sculpture, dance, film, and song. The elements are isolated, stripped of narrative, framed as pure effect. Reality is inverted. The *spectacle* is performed as itself.

Robert Longo's art is an American product. It is the vision of an artist of a generation that was born into and grew up in a media-saturated environment. It is an art that is so immersed in that environment, so precariously close to being infatuated with it, that it continuously reels at the edge of embracing what it claims to indict. It is the schizophrenia and obsession of its own culture.



H I X S O N

THE ENORMOUS SPECTACLE of everyday American life is what fascinates Lin Hixson. Like Robert Longo, performance artist, director, producer Hixson belongs to the generation born between the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the first children of television, and her work is shaped by pop culture and media. In each of her elaborate multi-media productions she has attempted to come to terms with the disparity between the life we live in the movies, and our attempts to replicate that life; the contradiction and tension between the desire for the world we have all been promised, and the unrelenting anxiety and confusion of the world we are living in.



It is the underlying sense of betrayal, disappointment, fear, and alienation that resides in the gap between the media world of spotless kitchens, perfect teeth, dry armpits, hot fast cars named after wild animals, sugar-free sex, eternal youth, beauty, romance, prosperity, satisfaction, and stardom, and our daily experience that concerns Hixson; the gap between the media spectacle of real wars, assassinations, and social protests, those daily serial installments of sanitized violence in living color, and the actual carnage.

While Longo annihilates the narrative, Hixson seeks to rescue the shattered pieces, reconstruct the story, and restore meaning. In all of Hixson's pieces the texts or "stories" are appropriated from various media sources, and intercut with those "made-up" by the performers, stories which are usually loaded with allusions to media "fictions." The stories break down, are retold. Realities are inverted.

In *Hey John, Did You Take The El Camino Far?* the text is based on "true" stories written by Hixson, one of which (John's story) she later discovered almost word for word in someone else's book about Vietnam. The second act borrows the story of *Bye Bye Birdie*. Finally the game show host, interrogator, and rock star are all played by Lance Loud who was launched into public attention in 1972 when his personal life along with the rest of his family's was displayed before millions of viewers on national television in the "real life," real time, video verité series *An American Family*.

*Hey John*, like all of Hixson's earlier works, is a collaborative effort, a Hollywood-style spectacle complete with cheerleaders, 1960s convertibles, a "bad boy" leather-jacketed rocker on a motorcycle, songs and dances, and Ed Sullivan on TV. Hixson uses the story of a relationship between Laura and John, an innocent midwestern college girl and the Vietnam veteran she meets at school and marries in 1969, as a metaphor for America before and after the Fall. *Hey John* is a journey from Camelot to Vietnam to our disillusioned present. The vehicle is television.

The game show *To Tell The Truth* is used not only as a theatrical device but as a sub-text. Things are not necessarily the way they appear. Who is the real Laura? Is John's story real, true, or an imagined nightmare? How do we discern fact from fiction, guilt from innocence, good from evil? Which twin has the Toni? If we are living our lives through the media, and if the representation is a "fiction," the images a manipulation, reality a simulation, a spectacular fantasy, then the validity of the ideology conveyed by those images and the rhetoric surrounding them comes into question.

In Hixson's work the world of *Father Knows Best* and *American Graffiti* collides with the world of *The Road Warrior*. The idealized adolescence of *Bye Bye Birdie* comes face-to-face with the despair and alienation of *Coming Home*, and the American dream wakes up to discover its own loss of innocence. Hixson's often nostalgic "Americanism" is ironically disconcerting rather than sentimental because it intentionally subverts both what is longed for and lost.

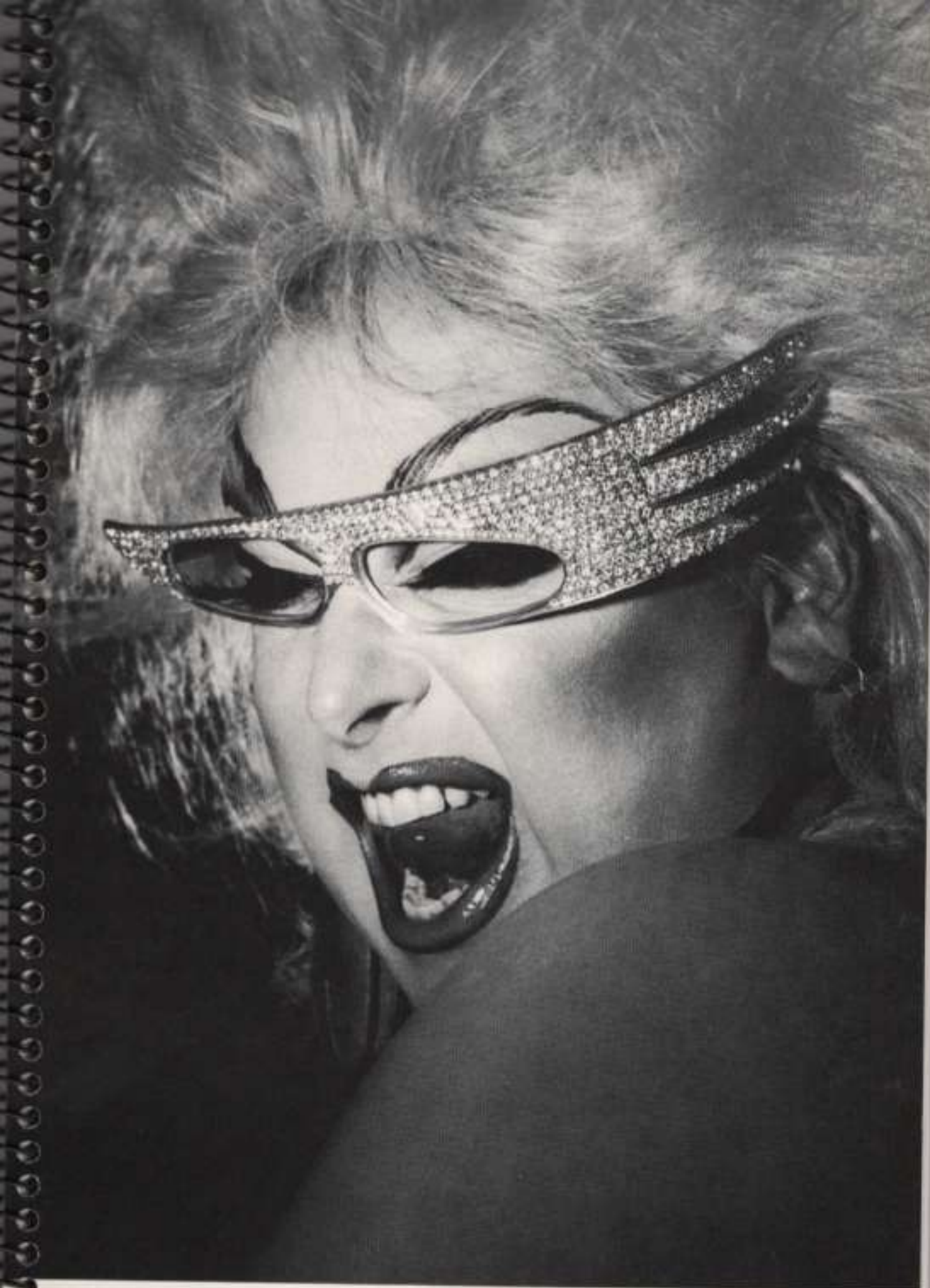
Both Longo's and Hixson's images allude to filmic experience but they represent opposite polarities. While Longo's invoke romanticized macho heroics and aggression, Hixson's invariably refer back to personal intimate relationships, the mythologies of friendship, love, family. They evoke the deep sense of loss, absence, and yearning that surrounds those things in our present culture. For Hixson the "loss of the real" is a poignant encounter.

▼

C                      H                      O                      N                      G

IT IS THE ENTIRE SPECTACLE of human history and consciousness that fascinates Ping Chong. He uses the term bricolage—"a new world created out of any and all available materials from an old world"—to describe his complexly layered theater performance works. Like Hixson, his stories are often assembled from already existing texts, but unlike her they are not restricted to contemporary pop culture or selected for their media allusions and iconography. They range from odd items in the *New York Times*, to copy in a travel brochure, to accounts from history, philosophical and anthropological writings, biographical journals, literature, films, and natural history magazines. *A.M./A.M.—The Articulated Man* is based on a Borges poem called *The Golem* which was inspired by a Jewish Frankenstein myth from 16th century Prague.





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# HIGH PERFORMANCE



HIGH PERFORMANCE



If Longo's work-esthetic is based in the rise and fall of Western civilization, and Hixson's in the mythologies of the American Dream, Chong's is distinctly grounded in Eastern thought and perception. It is informed by a Zen and Taoist philosophy. The Zen saying alluded to in Borges' story *The Circular Ruins*—"Am I a man dreaming I am a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming I am a man"—is also applicable to the way Chong's images and narratives fold in and out of each other. In the history of the world all of experience is of equal importance. The 20th century shooting of a European Archduke and that of a duck gliding across a lake in 16th century China are of equal weight and meaning in the lives of the duck and the man. The position of the incident in that fiction we call history is determined by what is remembered or forgotten, what is recorded, and by whom. Chong's perspective embraces both the microcosm of the single moment in all its detail, and the macrocosm of a timeless eternity. The tension between the individual and the universal is a current that runs throughout all his work.

At the core of his pieces is Chong's own experience as an outsider, a Chinese man growing up in western culture, and the psychology of the "outsider" is a recurring and dominant theme. This is intensified by the fact that his main characters are in actual fact "outsiders"—aliens, androids, psychotics, visionaries, or ordinary people displaced from their own culture and transposed into another. They are examined and viewed from a distance, the subjects and objects of behavioral studies. Ordinary actions become strange when isolated and framed. A painful sense of separation and alienation predominates. Chong's is an anthropological approach, an inspection of our own times and culture through a microscope or a telescope, through the lense of the camera, through the eyes of the other. Each piece is like a case study in which the spectator is an objective witness made conscious of his/her own position like someone on the other side of a two way mirror.

*A.M./A.M.*—*The Articulated Man* raises questions about the "human-as-body and the human-as-person." It is the story of an android created in a laboratory without a soul and instructed about the world by his makers. He must learn to master tasks and language. After he escapes he learns about the world from television in a Howard Johnson's Motel where he is hiding out, and his education is not dissimilar to Jerzy Kosinski's hero in *Being There*. Chong's robot hero finds he must make a choice between killing or being killed. He surveys our world—the Paradise he has been invented into—from the point of view of the world we have invented in him. *To what extent are we the products of a society and at what point does social dictate become repression*, Chong asks.

Chong applies the structural properties of cinema to theater. The montage, the mis-en-scene as narration, abrupt shifts in time and space, gestures and objects zoomed in on, focused on as if held in close-up are essential elements in his pieces. Music, sound effects, and text are composed and combined to function like a film soundtrack.

Chong's visual esthetic is one of pristine sets and often stylized movement, precision, clarity, and a concise, highly refined elegance. His images are potent, arresting, haunting. They are images that emerge from forgotten dreams, images revived from the debris of daily life, reclaimed from the cinema, apparitions of the prophecies of the present, manifestations of the unknown future we are imagining. They continue to resonate months, even years later.

We travel through time and space and the spectacle of history parades before us. Past, present, and future are synchronous. Film and live action are juxtaposed. Fragments are assembled from the vast storehouse of our collective unconscious, from our collective memories as a species, our cultural memories, our individual memories. Each assemblage is precisely structured to convey multiple meanings of a specific story, and to confront the mysterious nature of reality.



S T O N E

FOR COMPOSER CARL STONE the spectacle resides within the interior space of the sound. The spectacle is in the imagination of the listener and Stone is the guide. Stone plays with the internal clock, and to lose oneself in his music is to travel across the boundaries of time. You are sitting on



the big hand of the big clock as it slowly, ever so slowly, goes round the face. You are unified with the music; you move through it, evolve with it. Time-space relationships collapse and fall to pieces. You are in another dimension.

The subtleties of textures, the sensual nuances of Stone's music comprise an aural banquet. The effect is cumulative. Blankets of sound build up in layers, then peel back to reveal yet another set. The ingredients are suddenly apparent, distinct to the discerning aural palate, then blended together, emerging anew.

Stone's instruments are not musical but electronic. Pianos, violins, guitars, saxophones, trombones, and cellos are replaced by an information processing electronic technology—synclavier (digital synthesizer), stereo digital delay harmonizer, tape recorders, microphones, and an 8x4x2 mixer. His raw materials are the sounds of the "real" world—the natural and manufactured world, and already-existing music from whatever cultural context may interest him at the moment. The entire history of music is his supermarket. He feeds his materials into his instruments, processing them like dough in a pasta machine. They are molded, assembled, enhanced, re-presented, re-invented. Stone is a master chef.

He begins with a "realistic" sound portrait, perhaps a room or a mountaintop. He modifies it until it is "*completely unrealistic*," unrecognizable, until it becomes a totally new "realistic" sound portrait. Within all his abstract sounds are references to the concrete world. At some point his materials reveal themselves, and in turn reveal the process at work. It is a never-ending process of transformation.

His newest piece *Mae Yao* (named for a Thai restaurant in Tokyo) begins in a darkened ballroom. The sound entices, seduces, the spectacle unfolds like an expanding universe.

▼

B                      R                      A                      N                      C                      A

**G**LENN BRANCA'S MUSIC is a performance, a live event that cannot be paralleled in any other form, a theatrical spectacle. It aspires to a sustained collective orgasmic ecstasy, mystical ecstasy, divine transport to another state of hearing. It is a physical experience, a spectacle of sound.

Branca's music has been referred to as "*sonic grandeur... of unprecedented aural density*." Spectacular in its scale and power, his music is like a tidal wave, a massive wall of sound flooding the space. It demands that its audience surrender to it.

Massed hordes of guitars, guitar armies, electric guitar orchestras are amplified to maximum intensity, volume, force. Branca's guitars are like no others you've seen or heard before. They are guitars of his own invention with multiple sets of strings, played simultaneously, tuned differently. Imagine the "*towering piles of overtones*," the accelerandos... ringing harmonics that resound like choirs. Over an hour long, Branca's symphonies are a sustained assault on the senses.

Rooted in rock n' roll, and informed by an art rock attitude, combined with classical structures, influenced by Futurism, Varese, jazz, and heavy metal, Branca's music is neither new classical music nor avant-garde instrumental rock but a new kind of live electronic music. He uses electronic technology as pure power and energy. His is the sound of the end of this century, the roar of rockets that deliver a thunderous end or open the doors to heaven.

▼

C                      H                      A                      R                      L                      I                      P

**F**OR REMY CHARLIP the spectacle takes place in all dimensions around, above, before and inside of all of us. The sound in the mouth takes shape in the body, the gesture manifests itself. The movement of hands speaks a language. The face dances. An interior world is externalized. The psyche makes pictures with the body. The pictures speak. The exterior world is internalized, becomes personalized. An intimate relationship emerges between self and other. Each dance is a discovery and a rediscovery of the nature of being. For Remy Charlip the world is a place of wonder, a magical mystery tour, a spectacular amazement.

In the past ten years Charlip has established a unique relationship between danc-





**B**

**A**

**M**

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human psyche. Her metaphors integrate the personal and universal. Her images establish a dialectic of choice. She invokes reason and magic. She logically undoes the logic of our self-destruction. She demonstrates the "traps" of both intellect and emotions. She explains the systems, the rules of the natural world, the non-human world, the cosmic world. She relocates humanity back in that world which it has regarded as an adversary. She offers us another way to be, another vision of the future.

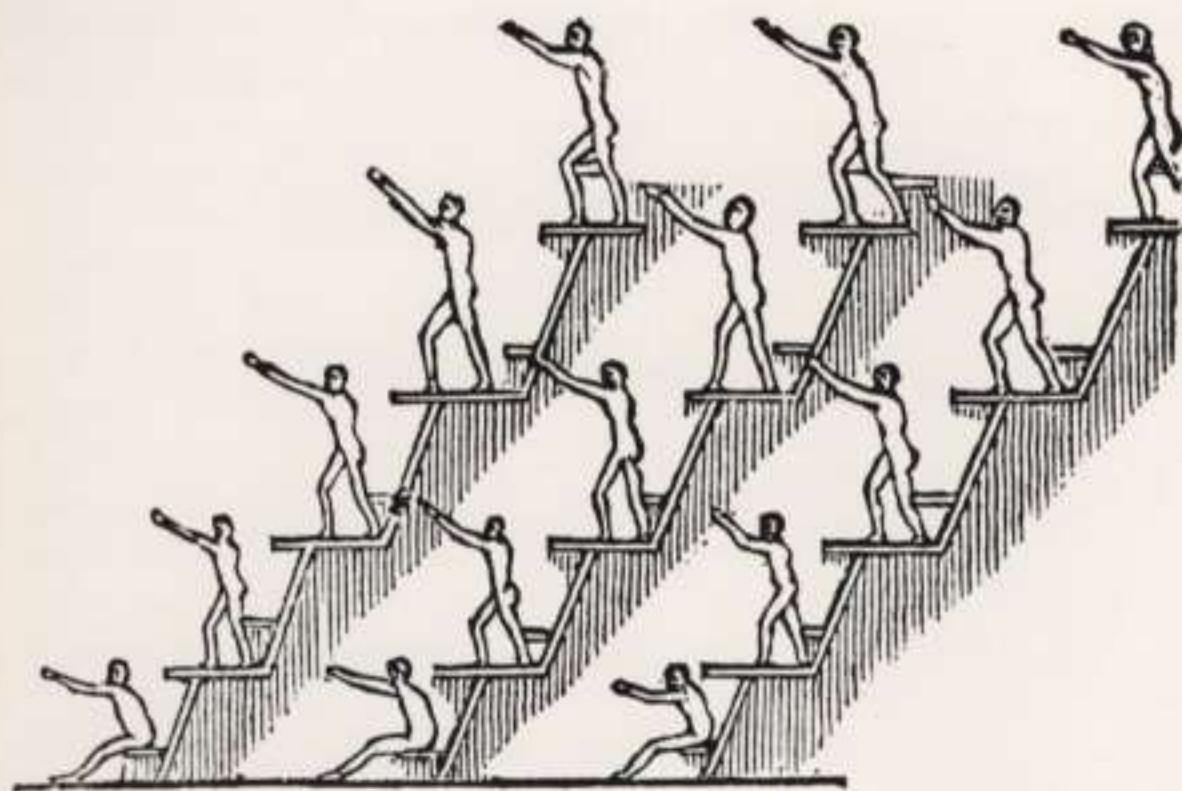
Rosenthal counters the spectacle of 20th century life as a cinematic fiction—a fantasy for which we take no responsibility as we passively regard and devour its horrors and hunger for its "glamour"—with a challenge. She demands that we recognize what lies behind the images that govern us. In *Gaia, Mon Amour* (1983) Rosenthal explored the battle between the male and female principle, the relationship between sexuality and violence, as a metaphor and a primal force in the relationship between humans and the environment they inhabit, their Mother Earth.

In her newest work *The Others* she deals with our relationship with animals, psychologically and physically, spiritually and mythologically, and the consequences of our rejection of our own animal nature, the hate, fear, and disgust for our bodies that is the result of our refusal as a species to accept our connection to and with the animal world.

Animals are the single most oppressed group on the planet, the only things on Earth without any legal rights. We may do whatever we like with them and we do not have to answer to anyone else for our actions. As a society we persecute, abuse, torture, and destroy them. They are a mirror for the way we regard ourselves and each other. The survival of our world, our human civilization rests on our understanding of ourselves as an integral part of the animal world, on our acceptance of and respect for our own animal natures. The extinction of animals is the prelude to the extinction of humans. If we destroy them and they disappear from the face of the Earth, so too shall we. It is a spectacle we will not be here to witness.

*The Others* is constructed as a microcosm of our planet and its hierarchal structure and it involves the participation and collaboration of numerous animals. Rosenthal uses the photographic image in service of the real not as a simulation or representation or replacement of it. Live video images of close-ups of the animals' faces will be projected simultaneously with their participation, allowing the audience to see them as individuals.

For Rosenthal the loss of our sense of the real in our lives is tantamount to the loss of our lives, and thus the loss of the world. She challenges us to awaken from a nightmare into a better dream.





FILMS: *Blade Runner*, *Ludwig*.

BOOKS: Harry Partach *Genesis of a Music*, Hofstadter *Godell, Escher, and Bach*, Dane Rudyar *The Magic of Tone and the Art of Music*, Mandelbrot *Fractal Geometry of Nature*, Raoul Vaniegem *Thesis on Living for the Younger Generation and Book of Pleasures*

ALBUMS: Del Tredici—*A Summer Afternoon*, ancient music of the Greeks.

IDOLS: Andy Warhol.

SONG: *You Really Got Me* by the Kinks.

PLACE: Rolle, Switzerland.

FOOD: —

PERIODICAL: *National Geographic*.

COLOR: Yves Klein blue.

IMAGE: The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

BUILDING/BUILT ENVIRONMENT: The installations of Dan Graham, the artist.

FAST FOOD: —

SEXUALLY CHARISMATIC ACTOR/ACTRESS: Iggy Pop and Laurie Anderson.

TV PROGRAM: —

IF YOU COULD PICK ANY TIME TO MAKE ART, WHEN WOULD IT BE? Late 19th century Germany.

IF ART IS IN A TRANSITIONAL PHASE, WHAT'S NEXT? —

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR EPITAPH TO READ? I don't want it to read anything.



"My music has nothing to do with conventional structure . . . I always think of it as very pure and beautiful . . . you can kind of dream into the music."



James Harkin



# GLENN BRANCA

GLENN BRANCA was born in 1950 in Harrisburg, Pa. He grew up listening to movie soundtracks, Broadway shows, and then rock 'n' roll. His earliest memory is hearing the Arthur Godfrey Show on the radio. His first instrument was a tape recorder. He recorded his grandmother's birthday parties, and percussion pieces.

His background however isn't music but theater. He began acting at the age of 11 and later decided he wanted to be a director. He studied theater at Emerson College in Boston in the late 1960s, and also played electric guitar and was lead vocalist in a top 40's rock band called *Crystal Ship*. He couldn't find any plays he liked so he began writing them.

When Branca first came to New York in the mid-1970's he was writing and directing plotless, characterless "theater" performance pieces that included music, and in the Soho art world he discovered an audience for his ideas. With a friend Jeffrey Lohn, he founded an "experimental" art rock band called *The Theoretical Girls* which performed in downtown rock clubs and art spaces such as Franklin Furnace and The Kitchen. A year later he started another more austere band called *Static*. Then he *hit upon the idea of assembling guitar armies*.

By the 1980's he was composing and performing full-length ensemble works he calls symphonies. His *Symphony #3 (Gloria)* was presented at the Brooklyn Academy of Music as part of the *Next Wave* series, and the 75 minute long *Symphony #4* toured twelve European cities. Choreographer Tywla Tharp commissioned him to create the music for her dance piece *Bad Smells*.

Branca loves spectacle—*like Fellini . . . like a circus event . . . It's about scale, psychic scale*—and his concerts are extreme theatrical experiences. He talks about music in terms of divine ecstatic experiences, a condition he wants his audiences to share in. He describes his harmonic series as *a natural phenomenon that describes in logical terms a natural process . . . almost like looking at structures of what is usually invisible to us . . .*

He lives in an apartment in New York's Little Italy adjacent to Soho, with Barbara Ess, an artist and musician who sometimes performs with him. He has an office nearby, and his own record label on which he records not only his own work but other musicians whose work interests him. He chain smokes unfiltered cigarettes, is interested in mathematics and philosophy, and listens to every kind of music there is except Country and Western. His future projects include a choral opera commissioned by the New York Public Theater for 1986, which he plans to write, compose, and direct. He has also designed a ballet that he is looking for sponsorship for. *These works are about massive movement, visually, and aurally . . . hallucinatory movement.*

*All I want is more pleasure . . . I wanna feel good.*





"I am involved with internal dancing . . . moving the internal furniture around."



**FILMS:** Buster Keaton's *Steamboat Bill*, *Seven Chances*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *The General*, *The Navigator*.

**BOOKS:** *Acupuncture Therapy*, *L'Amour Bleu*, *Gray's Anatomy*, *A Hole Is To Dig*, *Thirteen*.

**ALBUMS:** Nina Simone *Baltimore*, any Fred Astaire album, Lou Harrison *Symphony in G*, Stuart Dempster *In the Great Abbey of Clement VI*, and Nino Rota *Casanova*.

**IDOLS:** Fred Astaire, Jean Cocteau, Henri Matisse, Toby Armour, Mary Frank, June Ekman, Shirley Kaplan, Marjorie Barstow, Frank Baker, Mary Denaro.

**SONG:** *Put your bag of woe down and breathe and stretch and float away and maybe you won't want to drag that bag around no more.*

**PLACE:** Venice, Italy.

**FOOD:** Chocolate ice cream.

**PERIODICAL:** —

**COLOR:** Saffron.

**IMAGE:** The figure 8.

**BUILDING/BUILT ENVIRONMENT:** *Machu Picchu*.

**FAST FOOD:** Pizza.

**MOST SEXUALLY CHARISMATIC ACTOR/ACTRESS:** Clark Gable and Carole Lombard, Cary Grant, Randolph Scott.

**IF YOU COULD PICK ANY TIME TO MAKE ART, WHEN WOULD IT BE?** The *Edo* period in Japan.

**IF ART IS IN A TRANSITION PHASE, WHAT'S NEXT?** Less doing and more being.

**HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR EPITAPH TO READ?** When in doubt get horizontal.



▼

REMY  
**CHARLIP**

REMY CHARLIP was born in New York City of what he has described in a fanciful biography as *a missionary angel and a nail bed sitter*, and he has devoted his life to *a balance of gravity and levity*.

When he was 10 years old a teacher threw down a blob of clay in front of him and told him not to touch it until he saw something that wanted to come out. He sat and looked at it for about 15 minutes. He saw a dead horse in it, molded it, cast it, and brought it home. His family laughed at it for months. *It was then that I realized that something that I thought very serious like meditation was also funny to other people. That's when I got the idea to be a clown.*

He studied fine art at Cooper Union, New York City in the late 1940's. At the age of 17 he saw his first dance soloist, Harold Kreutzberg, perform at the Ziegfeld Theater in 1947. That was followed by Merce Cunningham and John Cage's *The Seasons* at New York City Ballet. *I thought dancers were free spirits, and the one way I could be a free spirit was to study dance. I didn't know how tyrannical they could be.* In the summer of 1950 he went to Black Mountain College where he met Cunningham, Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, and others. He joined Merce Cunningham's company and designed costumes and danced with him until 1961.

From that point on Charlip's life and work read like a magical mystery tour of the contemporary dance and theater world of the past 25 years. He has choreographed more than a hundred dances *in the usual way*, and more than a hundred more by making drawings and sending them to soloists and companies all over the world. The names of all those he has worked with are a part of the history of post-modern dance. He has choreographed, performed in, and directed plays, designed sets and costumes, and has won an *Obie*. He has created dances for television for WGBH, Boston, and has written and illustrated twenty-four children's books.

In the 1970s he spent four years living in Paris, where his now-famous *Air Mail Dances* started. He had promised Nancy Lewis he would make a dance for her, then forgot. When reminded shortly before her New York concert, he sent her a postcard of an Andre Kertesz photograph of a woman reclining on a divan, and a note—*This is the first movement of the dance. If you want more call me in Paris...* She did, and he sent her drawings from more French postcards.

But his favorite way to relax is in a bathtub. *I turn off all the appliances and light a candle, take the phone off the hook, put sea salt and baking soda in the water, and try to get symmetrical.* He also likes to lie on rubber balls on the floor.

His future plans include a book called *Dances Anybody Can Do* based on alternative ways of moving that are an important part of his own work—sign language, eurythmics (*the art of visible speech, putting the body into shapes made by sounds in the mouth*), jin-shin-jyutsu (acupuncture without needles), psychic healing, Alexander Technique, and Navaho poems.



# PING CHONG

PING CHONG was born in 1946 in Toronto. His parents emigrated from China where they had performed with the Peking Opera in the 1930's. A year later they moved to New York City's Chinatown, opened the first dim sum shop on Bayard Street, and performed in the Chinese Opera. Chinese was Chong's first language.

The traditions of the Chinese theater, and growing up as a "ghetto kid" in the intimate world of New York Chinese culture in the 1950's, deeply influenced his work. *The issue of memory in my work is directly related to my sense of exile from my own culture . . . When you leave your culture you don't know you are giving something up. But if you don't live in that culture—if you're an alien in another one—you can't stay with it. It's dead.*

As a child and teenager in Manhattan Chong loved the movies, sometimes attended as many as thirty in one summer, and frequented Radio City Music Hall. *It is through films that I have learned to listen and to see. They have shaped my vision and my theater.*

He attended Art and Design High School, studied art at Pratt Institute, then received a scholarship to study filmmaking at the School of Visual Arts. Still looking for a structure for his ideas, in 1970 he took a workshop with Meredith Monk that changed the course of his life.

He has since created nine major theater performance works that have been presented at major museums, performing arts centers, theaters, art spaces, and festivals throughout the United States and Europe. In addition he has collaborated with Meredith Monk on theater works, two television specials, and several films. He is the artistic director of the *Fiji Company*, and won an *Obie* in 1977.

Chong has to discipline himself *not* to work. *Right now I'm trying to learn to be disciplined enough to relax . . . to try to stop work at 6 o'clock instead of working until midnight every night.* At the moment his favorite way to relax is to read detective novels—Raymond Chandler, Ross MacDonald, Roald Dahl, *The Laughing Policemen* by two Swedish writers. *I take delight in the fact that I am an extremely eclectic reader.*

As far back as he can remember the first thing he did was draw. *I am afraid there was no choice about being an artist . . . Antonioni was very important to me in the beginning. Also Herzog. But Bresson and Ozu were for me the real inspiration. Some people expect me to say Bunuel because of the surrealism, which might appear important to me but isn't. I don't feel any relation to Bunuel.*

Chong also likes to read books on anthropology and he has used Claude Levi-Strauss's term *bricolage*, meaning *new worlds created out of any and all materials at hand*, to describe his works. He has recently been reading about pre-literate and literate societies. *You can't be passive about language; language is culture. I sometimes feel that each letter is the essence, the history of a civilization.*

His next work is based on stories from Italo Calvino, Lafcadio Hearn, the Brothers Grimm, and African folktales, and will *attempt to deal with primal material in a contemporary setting. I'm interested in the archaic, archetypal, sometimes savage elements in these tales, and in the relation of the organic to the highly technological.*

He likes the desert, doesn't know how to swim, and once almost drowned in a watering hole in the Roman countryside. He loves to sing and regrets he never studied music. He lives in lower Manhattan.





"My aspiration is to be able to make something which has that state of grace that's in the work of Ozu and Bresson, but I don't think I'll ever reach it . . . it's so hard to get there."



**FILMS:** Renoir *Grand Illusion*, Welles *Lady From Shanghai*, the original *Nosferatu*, *Sunrise*, *Ugetsu*, *Life of a Pirate*, all of Hitchcock, Bresson, Ozu, Ophuls.

**BOOKS:** Octavio Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, Thomas Merton's *The Wisdom of the Desert*, Vorhees's *The Secret History of Infamy, Morality and Literacy*, Robbe-Grillet, Borges . . . I plan to read Hawthorne this summer, and I just bought Richard Daly's biography.

**ALBUMS:** —

**IDOLS:** I don't have idols.

**SONG:** The soundtrack from *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence*.

**PLACE:** New Mexico.

**FOOD:** Chinese first, then Creole and Italian.

**PERIODICAL:** *National Geographic*, *Natural History*.

**COLOR:** No favorite color.

**IMAGE:** —

**BUILDING/BUILT ENVIRONMENT:** Adobe architecture, old New Mexican churches, Indian churches.

**FAST FOOD:** Matzo Ball soup.

**SEXUALLY CHARISMATIC ACTOR/ACTRESS:** —

**TV PROGRAM:** I don't like to watch TV except for the news and old movies.

**IF YOU COULD PICK ANY TIME TO MAKE ART, WHEN WOULD IT BE?** Now. I can't imagine any other time.

**IF ART IS IN A TRANSITIONAL PHASE, WHAT'S NEXT?** We're in a century of transition. We're living in a transition of civilization, a major transition in human history. Art is a small part of it.

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR EPITAPH TO READ?** Why don't I come back as a spring day.



# ROBERT LONGO

ROBERT LONGO was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1953. He was dyslexic as a child and had a hard time at school. Instead of doing homework he watched T.V., especially the *Million Dollar Movie* where he could see *King Kong* three times a day. There isn't a movie he doesn't like, and he thinks of himself as a master scavenger of film imagery with a *sludge fund of bits and pieces* in his brain to draw on.

He graduated from New York State University College, Buffalo in 1975, and for several years he ran Hallwalls, an artists space organized in Buffalo. He returned to New York in 1977 to what has since become a meteoric rise to international prominence. He has had one-person exhibitions at both Metro Pictures and Leo Castelli Galleries in New York, Gallerie Schellmann and Kluser, Munich, The American Center, Paris, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. His work has been presented in major museums throughout the United States, Europe, and South America.

For Longo there was never a decision to make art. *I couldn't do anything else. For him it is about obsession, dedication, and excellence. I am a lunatic about what I do because it's a system I invented...I basically created a religion—which is me—and I worship it every day.*

He lives in a loft in lower Manhattan, where rock music plays continuously especially when he's working. The latest album from one of his favorites often means he's going to get a lot of work done. *Music is like gasoline...I have to have that BOOM BOOM BOOM...It's a way of being plugged into the moment.* He can tell you what songs accompanied the making of all his drawings, paintings, and sculptural works.

Driving his car is his way of relaxing. He owns a black Saab Turbo which he only feels comfortable taking out in the middle of the night. Sometimes when he walks into his garage at midnight he feels like the Green Hornet saying to Cato, *Get the Car.*

His consuming passion at the moment is the movie he has been working on. He sees the motion picture as *the last frontier to reclaim, something that basically belongs to me by birthright.* He wants to *grow up out of the living room of Aaron Spelling the way the thing pops out of the guy's chest in the Alien. You made me, now you have to deal with me. My sophistication about vision is so much more advanced than the industry that's based upon it.*

Longo's ambitions, like his art, are spectacular in both their scale and scope. *I always establish these exaggerated myths for my situation and they have to do with aspirations. If you aspire to something that's 100% beyond reality, you have to make a 50% compromise and you're still 50% ahead.*

In about five or six years Longo plans to *go to art heaven where I can be an influence rather than the guy who's calling the shots.* Then he plans to *drop into the bottom scale of the movies, go through that,...and go to Hollywood heaven.* After that he wants to go into politics. That should bring us up to the year 2000! When he's 70 he fantasizes he will finally read *Moby Dick.*

*I want to live in the future no matter how bad it is.*





"I take on images that are trying to oppress us and turn them around and say there's hope in this . . . I think of the people who own my art as people with brave eyes."



**FILMS:** *Triumph of the Will*, Godard *Contempt*, *The Godfather*, *Taxi Driver*, *Star Wars*, *Network*, *The Shining*.

**BOOKS:** *Scarface*.

**ALBUMS:** The new Bruce Springsteen record, the new Bob Dylan record, a new Lou Reed record, and Talking Heads. Also my friends' music—Peter Gordon, Rhys Chatham, Glenn Branca.

**IDOLS:** Me.

**SONG:** *Louie Louie*.

**PLACE:** The Great Wall of China.

**FOOD:** Pizza.

**PERIODICAL:** *Life*, *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*.

**COLOR:** Prussian blue.

**IMAGE:** Everything I make.

**BUILDING/BUILT ENVIRONMENT:** The Parthenon.

**FAST FOOD:** —

**SEXUALLY CHARISMATIC ACTOR/ACTRESS:** Richard Gere in *Breathless*. That was a new level in assholeism. Diane Lane.

**TV PROGRAM:** Soap operas, *Cagney and Lacey*, *Kate and Ali*.

**IF YOU COULD PICK ANY TIME TO MAKE ART, WHEN WOULD IT BE:** Caveman or now.

**IF ART IS IN A TRANSITIONAL PHASE, WHAT'S NEXT?** Art is not in a transition stage. We've already reached outer space. We've already fulfilled our vision of the future so we're about lateral movement and dealing with the consequences of where we've gone to at this point. The art we have now is totally in time because of the media.

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR EPITAPH TO READ?** He was a nice guy.





"As a society we are totally fragmented. There is a tremendous need for a binding force, for a collective sense of the sacred . . . I feel very evangelistic about the fate of the planet and want to open people's minds and hearts to this issue."



**FILMS:** *Coup De Torchon*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Fantasia*, Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*, *Forbidden Games*.

**BOOKS:** Proust *Remembrance of Things Past*, the *I Ching Book of Changes*, Lyle Watson *Lifetide*, Jonathan Schell *The Fate of the Earth*, Tom Regan *The Case for Animal Rights*, Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, the *French-English Dictionary*.

**ALBUMS:** The Prokofiev *Concerto #3* played by pianist Martha Argerich, anything by Maurizio Pollini, any good Bach but not by Glenn Gould, Ivo Pogorelich playing Chopin or anything else, the opera *Turandot*, Erik Satie's piano pieces.

**IDOLS:** Merce Cunningham, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg. They aren't exactly idols but they were so important to me. Recently, Pina Bausch and Ariane Mnouchkine.

**SONG:** *The Man That Got Away*.

**PLACE:** 2847 Robertson Boulevard.

**FOOD:** Good kisses, Marrons Glacés, Sushi at *Katsu*.

**PERIODICAL:** *Brain/Mind Bulletin*.

**COLOR:** Lavender and green.

**IMAGE:** The *Mona Lisa*.

**BUILDING/BUILT ENVIRONMENT:** The famous rock garden *Ryoan-ji*, Kyoto.

**FAST FOOD:** Fruit.

**SEXUALLY CHARISMATIC ACTOR/ACTRESS:** Tommy Lee Jones, Jian Maria Volonte, Louise Brooks, Viveca Lindfors.

**TV PROGRAM:** I never watch TV except for an old movie occasionally.

**IF YOU COULD PICK ANY TIME TO MAKE ART, WHEN WOULD IT BE?** 1984.

**IF ART IS IN A TRANSITION PHASE, WHAT'S NEXT?** When is it not in a state of transition. I don't know. I don't have a crystal ball. I don't even know what I'm going to do a year from now.

**HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR EPITAPH TO READ?** She served the Earth and she was fun.



# RACHEL ROSENTHAL

RACHEL ROSENTHAL was born in a townhouse in Paris in the 16th arrondissement near Passy. As a small child she was not allowed to have paints to splash with because everything had to be kept neat and clean. Each morning as her governess wound her strawberry blonde hair over an ivory stick into fat sausage curls, she would cover the big marble bathroom table with tight pencil drawings of fantastic animals, princesses, and castles. Every day the table was scoured and the process repeated.

From the ages of 6 to 10 she studied ballet with Olga Preobrayenskaya, an emigré from the Imperial Russian Ballet who was the foremost ballet mistress in Paris in the 1920s and 30s. Every November 9th, both her birthday and her parents' wedding anniversary, she performed before 150 guests in her parents' elegant salon where Chagalls and Monets hung on the walls. From the top of the stairs she often observed guest performers Vladimir Horowitz and Yasha Heifetz at her parents' elaborate banquets prepared by a Cordon Bleu chef. She had fifty teddy bears of all sizes that served as actors in her puppet theatre shows performed before an audience of household servants.

When the Germans invaded France in 1940, her family left Paris, and went to the South of France. With the Nazis in hot pursuit they fled on foot with only overnight bags, first to Spain, then Portugal. After several months they obtained passage on a boat to Brazil.

In 1941, at the age of 13, she arrived in New York. She went to Music and Art High School where her classmates were Allan Kapprow and Morton Feldman, and she studied art with Hans Hoffman and William Stanley Hayter. From 1947 to 1954 she lived alternately in Paris and New York, acting, directing, and designing sets, and studying theater with Jean Louis Barrault in Paris, and at the Dramatic Workshop in New York along with Ben Gazzara and Tony Franciosa. She danced in Merce Cunningham's junior company and became close friends with Remy Charlip. In 1954 she moved into a loft on Pearl Street in the same building with her close friend Jasper Johns, and accidentally set it on fire.

She moved to Los Angeles in 1955, and a year later founded Instant Theater which she directed and performed in until 1966 when it was disbanded. Tab Hunter and Tony Perkins were students in her acting workshops, but their agents wouldn't let them perform with her because they thought she was "*too weird and far-out*." The artists from the Ferus Gallery were her first audience.

She married King Moody, an actor, in 1960 and they lived in Laurel Canyon with 17 cats, 6 dogs, and a 6 generation family of raccoons under the house. They moved to Tarzana the day before the 1971 earthquake because they needed more room for the animals.

Rosenthal began doing performance art pieces in 1975, and became an active leader in the Los Angeles feminist art community. Her highly controversial works brought her to prominence in the 1980s when she shaved her head, and appeared in public in her *Soldier of Fortune* camouflage fatigues with her pet rat *Tatti Wattles* on her shoulder. She has since toured all over the United States and Canada. She is a committed educator and has taught extensively in universities, and conducted numerous workshops. From 1981 through 1982 she founded and ran Espace DBD, an artists' performance space.

She lives in her two story studio building on Robertson Boulevard with her 13 year old blind black poodle *Zatoichi* and two pet rats *Tatti Too* and *Nanny*. She gets up at 6:30 every morning; speaks English, French, Russian, and Spanish; has a weakness for pastries; and is passionately dedicated to animal rights.



**FILMS:** *Casablanca*, *Kwaidan* based on four stories by Lafcadio Hearn, *Four Tales of the Supernatural* with music by Takamitsu, *Woman in the Dunes*, *Children of Paradise*.

**BOOKS:** Andries de Groot *Feasts for all Season*, Kobe Abe *Woman in the Dunes*.

**ALBUMS:** Glen Gould playing *Goldberg Variations*, Jimi Hendrix-*Are You Experienced?* Sufi music from Pakistan Qawali, Rumanian folk music.

**IDOLS:** Fatted calves, golden calves. I don't have any but there are people I admire deeply. I don't want to slight anyone so I won't say who.

**SONG:** *Spem in Alium* written in the 17th century by Thomas Tallis, *Purple Haze*, *Heat Wave*.

**PLACE:** A little restaurant in Paris near the Gare du Nord.

**FOOD:** The barbequed chicken at *Chao Praya*, the pastrami sandwich at the *Carnegie Deli* in New York, a rice and eel dish called nagi don-buri at a restaurant in Shinjuku Station, Tokyo.

**PERIODICAL:** *Computer Music Journal*, *Studio Sound*, *the Village Voice*.

**COLOR:** I couldn't care less.

**IMAGE:** A wall-size blow-up of Mao Tse Tung in his most meditative mood, the classic portrait you find in the red books.

**BUILDING/BUILT ENVIRONMENT:** The Akasaka Prince Hotel and the Washington Hotel, both in Tokyo.

**FAST FOOD:** Soft Tacos at *De al Pastor* at 9th St. and Broadway in downtown L.A.

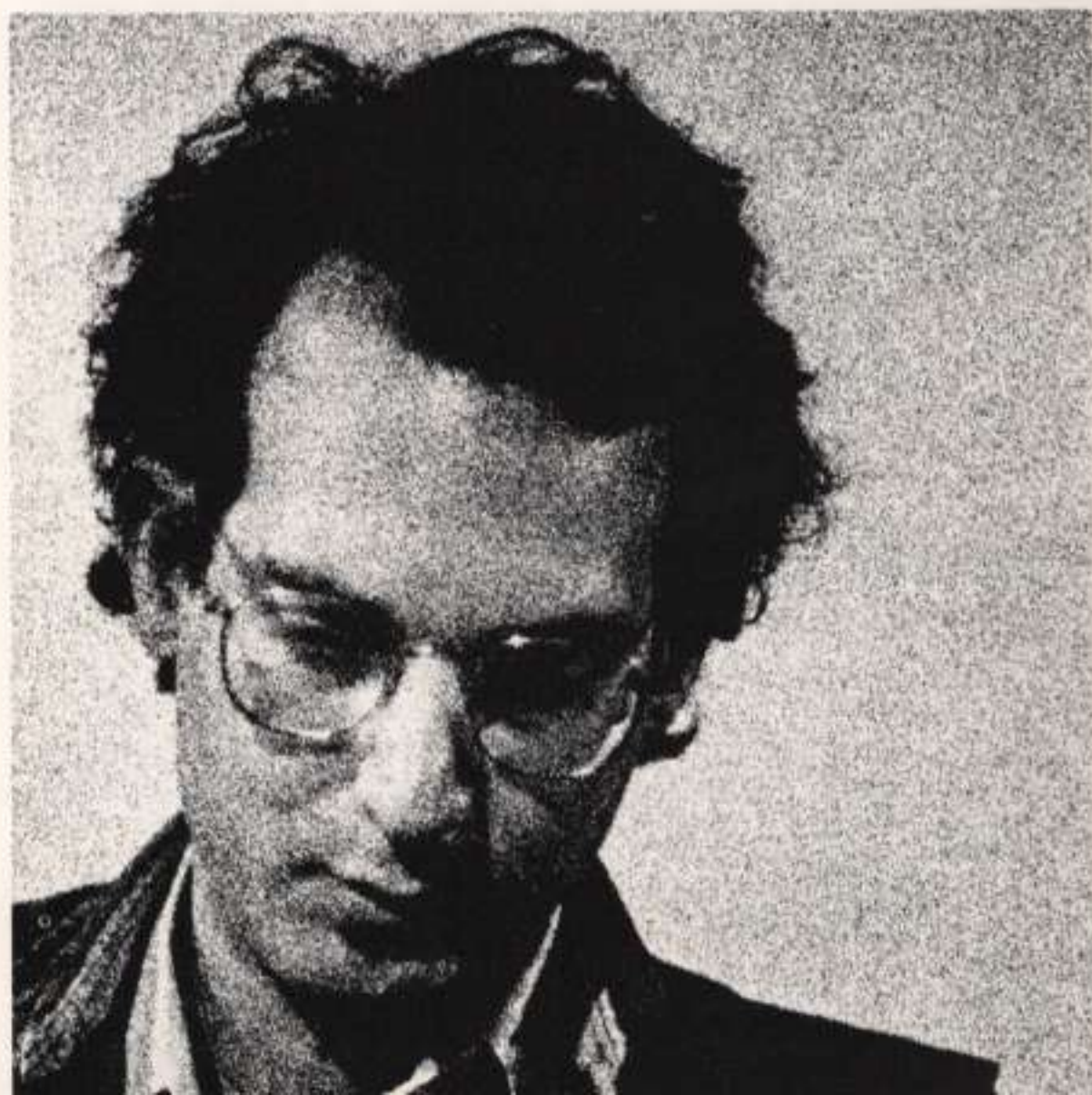
**MOST SEXUALLY CHARISMATIC ACTOR/ACTRESS:** Isabelle Adjani

**TV PROGRAM:** I don't own a TV. I listen to a lot of radio in my car. My favorite program was a comedy show with Fraser Smith on KROQ that's not on the air anymore. I like the pop psychologist Dr. David Viscott, and Jackie Apple's Audio Networks.

**IF YOU COULD PICK ANY TIME TO MAKE ART WHEN WOULD IT BE?** Ten years from now.

**IF ART IS IN A TRANSITIONAL PHASE, WHAT'S NEXT?** That's like trying to guess whether the stock market's going up or down. I'm not a betting person. Some people try to anticipate trends to be ahead of the game. I think that's rather artificial, so I don't spend a lot of time worrying about it.

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR EPITAPH TO READ?** Stay Tuned . . .





# CARL STONE

CARL STONE was born on February 10, 1953 in Los Angeles, and grew up in the San Fernando Valley, California. He was conducting along with records before he was out of diapers and he wrote his first composition entitled *Contents* at the age of 5. It had its world premier at his piano teacher's student recital when he played some songs from Bach's notebook plus his own avant-garde piece—a C Major chord repeated over and over again for about five minutes. A little put-off by the subdued response from the audience, he did not write another composition until he was 9.

By the age of 15 he was thinking electronically. It all started when he used effects pedals with his organ, *such as fuzz and waa-waa that only guitarists used at the time*. That led to more electronic modifications, to electronic generation, to synthesizers.

A Valley boy, Stone grew up four miles from the Galleria and attended Oakwood, a private high school known for its talented prodigies. His classmates included film director John Landis, and Chris Hardman, founder of the Antenna Theater. He studied electronic music composition with Morton Subotnick, James Tenney, and Barry Schrader at the California Institute of the Arts, where his exposure to not only classical, electronic, and world music, but art, video, film, and theater greatly influenced his development.

Since then he has established a substantial international reputation and has performed his compositions in museums, art spaces, clubs, concert halls, and festivals on every continent except Antarctica. *But I'm working on that!* He has been commissioned to do works especially for radio, and has made several record albums. His most recent *Woo Lae Oak*, like many of his compositions, is named after a favorite Asian restaurant in Los Angeles. A list of his works is in fact a guide to good eating.

Stone is a gourmet and outside of making music, eating is his favorite activity and subject. He recommends the barbequed chicken at Chao Praya. *If not better than sex, it's certainly as good*. There's a little restaurant near the Gare du Nord in Paris where *I'd rather spend the rest of my life eating those mussels meuniere than anywhere else*. He adds, *They also had the most incredible smoked trout, unlike any I had ever had. It was more like the consistency of a slab of the most delicious, delectable lox, but infinitely more smooth, buttery, rich, and flavorful*. He'd like to write a *Composer's Guide to Foods in the World*.

He lives alone in the Hollywood Hills, and his favorite way of relaxing is cooking. If he had a perfect dream house it would be *situated on the top of a hill with Tokyo on one side and the Pyrenees on the other*. He is presently studying Japanese.

In addition to being a composer, Stone has served the music and art community as the Music Director of KPFK Radio, Los Angeles from 1978 to 1981. He is presently the Director of Meet the Composer, Ca., Treasurer of the New Music Alliance, Vice-President of Independent Composers Association, Los Angeles, and on the Los Angeles Steering Committee, New Music America Festival, November 1985.

His ambition for the future is to go on doing his own work, and to have his music have *some long-term life beyond my own mortality*.



"I start out with an idea, a process, a sound . . . . It's like gardening or chemistry. You nurture it, and it gets bigger and bigger . . . ."



ELIZABETH FREEMAN is president and co-founder of Some Serious Business Inc., a non-profit production company for performance art, dance, new music, and video. Since its inception in 1976, SSB, Inc. has produced performances and exhibitions in galleries, studios, concert halls, parking lots, skyscrapers, passenger trains, theatres, hotel rooms, private homes and on broadcast television. Events produced have included composers Phillip Glass, John Cage, Steve Reich, playwright Robert Wilson, and artists Laurie Anderson, Bob and Bob, and Guy de Cointet among others.

In addition, Ms. Freeman's other recent projects include designing TRIPOD, a pre-school and support system for hearing impaired children and their families; and remodeling the Venice Family Planning Center.

JACKI APPLE writes intermedia art criticism for numerous publications. In addition to teaching contemporary art history, Ms. Apple produces *Audio Networks* on KPFK radio.

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# If you missed the exhibit

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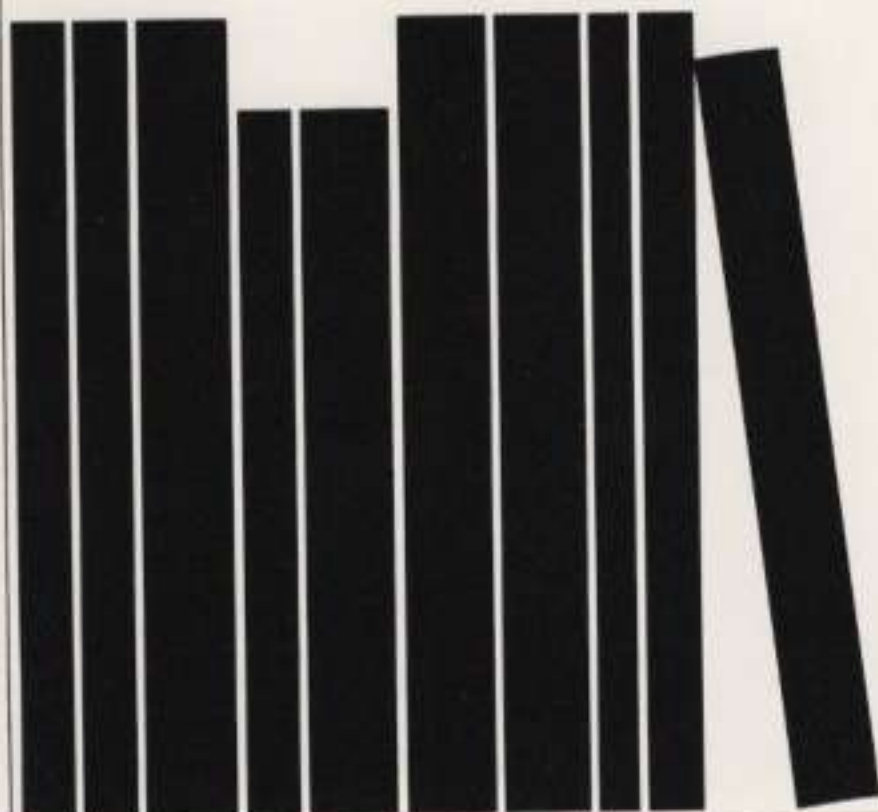
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