Sublime Discomfort

Mariellen R. Sandford

The rough-and-ready basement of 112 Franklin Street was uncomfortable: the stairs were steep, the chairs were hard, and it did get hot down there in the unfinished room back behind the boiler—for me especially in the late '80s when I was first very pregnant and then later carrying my Snugglied baby down below. Some of the performances were uncomfortable too—and that was a good thing. Franklin Furnace was a place for discomfort, for trial and error, for roughness and danger, for anger and humor, and sometimes for moments of great theatre. Frank Moore's *Intimate Cave* made me extremely uncomfortable, as his minions kept hounding me to take the shoes off my swollen feet and tried relentlessly to touch my belly. Robbie McCauley's *My Father and the Wars* was emotionally uncomfortable, but theatrically beautiful. Angelika Wanke-Festa shared her discomfort in *Heloise's Bird,* as she hung bound to a pillar for 24 hours. The discomfort was a treasure, and one that we didn't expect to lose so suddenly.

C. Carr attended these same performances and talks about them in "The Fiery Furnace: Performance in the '80s, War in the '90s." As I read her descriptions they evoke images, and it seems as if I am envisioning several different Furnaces—different sizes, different shapes, and different feels. Martha's open-door policy and permeable art boundaries let a great range of work into the basement. Just a sampling of these has found its way into this issue of *TDR*.

Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc., stoked its first coals in 1976.[1] As you will read in the very personal accounts of its history, the Furnace was first an archive of artist books, and soon thereafter—nearly simultaneously because of the speed with which the founder Martha Wilson tenaciously pursued her vision—a gallery for exhibitions and installations, a performance space, and a publisher. Jacki Apple, there almost from the very beginning, recalls the first few years when she helped initiate the performance program and, in her role as Curator of Exhibitions and Performances, witnessed the very early work of Karen Finley, Eric Bogosian, Ana Mendieta, Michael Smith, Barbara Kruger, and many more. Clive Phillpot also offers his memories of the early days with Martha. First an FF board member, Phillpot later was responsible for the purchase of the Furnace's extensive archive of artist books by The Museum of Modern Art. This divestiture was the first step in the dematerialization of Franklin Furnace. By now, in 2004, Franklin Furnace has been stripped bare of most of its worldly possessions, its material self.

After its basement performance space was closed in 1990—was it the cranky patron's phone call or the pressure of the far Right?—Franklin Furnace took its performances first on the road and then into cyberspace. After a few years of "Franklin Furnace in Exile" when the Furnace produced performances in a different downtown space each year, Wilson moved the Furnace into the ether.

1. Cheri Gaulke in her Broken Shoes *on the Franklin Furnace mezzanine loft, 13 March 1981. (Photo by Sheila Roth)*

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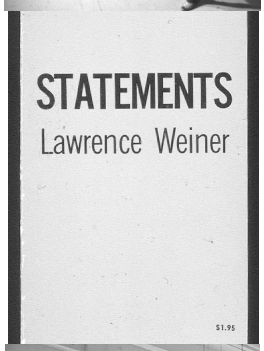

From Franklin Furnace: 2. Martha Wilson, Diane Torr, and Illona Granet perform as Disband, 24 April 1979. (Photo by Barbara Quinn) 3. Lawrence Weiner, Statements, *1968. (Photo by Marty Heitner) 4. Dolores Zorreguieta,* Wounds, *1994. (Photo by Marty Heitner) 5. Michael Smith as Baby Ikki, 6 June 1978. (Photo by Jacki Apple)*

With the book archive safely ensconced in MoMA and the performance space closed, Martha made the decision to give up the battle for New York real estate. In this issue, she talks about her transition from live art to, well, live art on the web.

The "liveness" issue remains a bone of contention. For me, it's personal—as are most accounts of the Furnace and its history. I need the space and bodies and objects of live art, just as I need the tangible pages of this journal, no matter how profitable or convenient or pedagogically expansive online publication is. I miss the basement, the place, the people. As I said, it's personal. And it was the personal that was at the heart of the Furnace. As an artist-run space, the artist came first. Jacki Apple talks about the "open-door policy": any artist could walk in and show her work, be listened to and taken seriously. As C. Carr puts it "'Yes' was the ethos of Franklin Furnace." This was a very personal vision of an ideal art world, a move to change the male-dominated art world of museums and galleries in place in the 1970s when Martha Wilson first sought to single-handedly "make the world safe for avantgarde art."

In its present incarnation, Franklin Furnace, with Martha Wilson still fanning the flames, is saying "Yes" to artists looking to explore the potential of live art on the Internet. With its Future of the Present program Martha is looking to make the world not just safe for avantgarde art, but to make that art more available to a "socially equal" audience (see <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/born_digital/history_essay.html>. Sequential Art for Kids remains active in P.S.52, where teachers and librarians collaborate with artists Benita Abrams, Ron Littke, and others to develop literacy programs where ESL students make their own artist books. And the Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc., website continues to expand its digital "Archives of the Avantgarde" and "Unwritten History Project" (<http://www.franklinfurnace.org/archives/archives.html>).

There was a proliferation of new work being done in uncharted locations during the 1970s and '80s in New York City. Alan Moore and C. Carr talk about some of these. As Moore tells us, the geography of the art world was changing: moving into Tribeca, like the Furnace and the Clocktower; the Lower East Side, like performance clubs Darinka and 8BC; and into the boroughs of NYC, like P.S.1 in Queens. It moved into basements, second-floor apartments, abandoned schools, and warehouses. Performances occurred at sunset on a landfill, at 2:00 A.M. for the partying crowd in the backroom of a bar, for days on end in storefront windows.

Franklin Furnace on Franklin Street was a vital and unique part of this time and place, this art zone of activity. Carr wonders if there will ever be such a place again in New York. I hope so. I hope there is someone out there right now saying "Yes" to an artist who walks in and says, "I want to try something, something uncomfortable . . ."

Note

1. The Franklin Furnace website is an invaluable resource, and includes a timeline of key events and performances. See <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/about/about.html> for the timeline.

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The Fiery Furnace

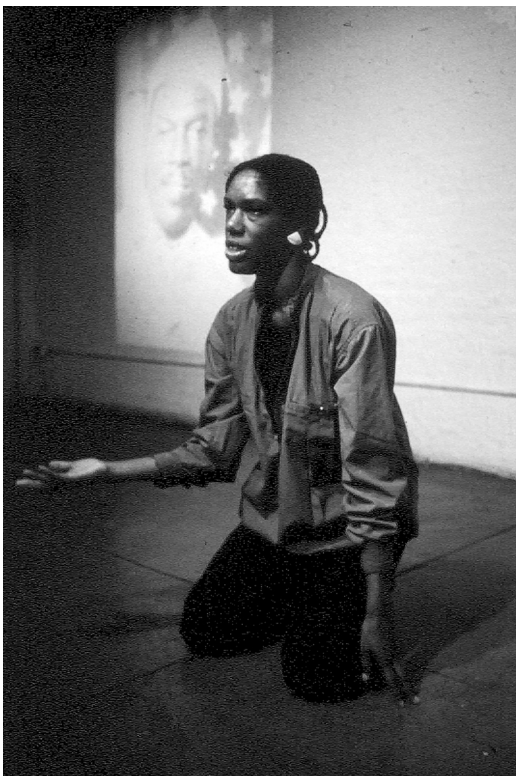
Performance in the '80s, War in the '90s

C. Carr

The performance space at Franklin Furnace never stopped looking like the ordinary basement it was. Exposed pipes. Clip-on lights. Then, "75 people on hard folding chairs." (So Martha Wilson described the audience [Wilson 1997].) At the back a couple of windows opened on an airshaft, where the occasional intrepid performer entered the so-called stage. (There wasn't one.) The sink and refrigerator were occasionally incorporated into a piece, while the cement floor and brick walls never got an upgrade even to rec-room ambience. Yet this basement was the opposite of "nothing special." This was rare. This was an autonomous zone. Since it closed in 1990, it hasn't been replaced on the New York performance scene, and may never be.

The Furnace accommodated artists the way a gallery does, but like the East Village clubs, the space was funky and impervious, the attitude "no holds barred." Here an audience could see that part of the performance art spectrum that is *not* about theatre, though there was that too: a first show for Eric Bogosian, for example, in 1977. Here an artist could also choose to work all week on an installation, then perform in it, or live in it. Galleries may support such a project for someone who's established, but not for the emerging artists served by the Furnace. Even at other edgy downtown venues, you had to strike the set every night.

The Furnace helped fill in some very important cracks, by supporting artists who might have otherwise fallen through them. Tehching Hsieh, for example, created world-renowned year-long ordeals in the late '70s and early '80s, but had no gallery, no funding, no actual toehold in the art world. In 1981/82, he did a piece in which he lived on the street, never entering a building, subway, tent, or other shelter. The Furnace arranged to display the artifacts—the maps he made every day to show where he'd been, his greasy



1. Robbie McCauley in her autobiographical My Father and the Wars, *21 November 1985. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

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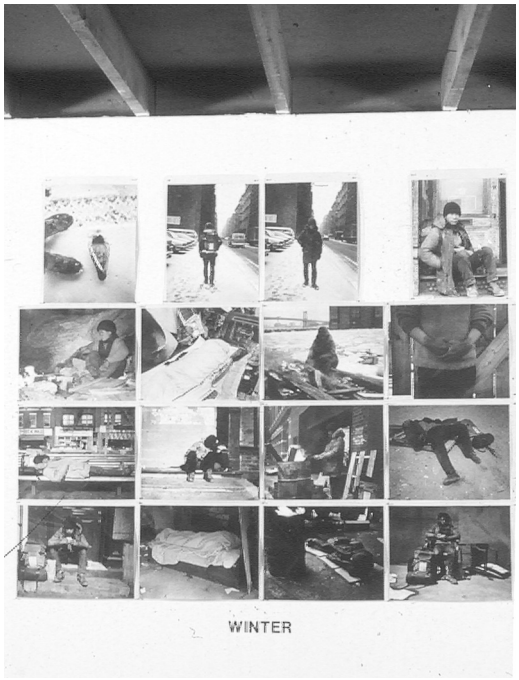


2. & 3. Tehching Hsieh "Living Outside" during a One Year Performance, *26 September 1981 at 2:00 P.M. to 26 September 1982 at 2:00 P.M. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace) The installation at Franklin Furnace, 16 February 1983–12 March 1983, included photos, maps, and artifacts. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

pungent clothing, the photo documentation. They did this so soon after that preparations were negotiated with him on the stoop. He was still doing the piece and couldn't enter the space.

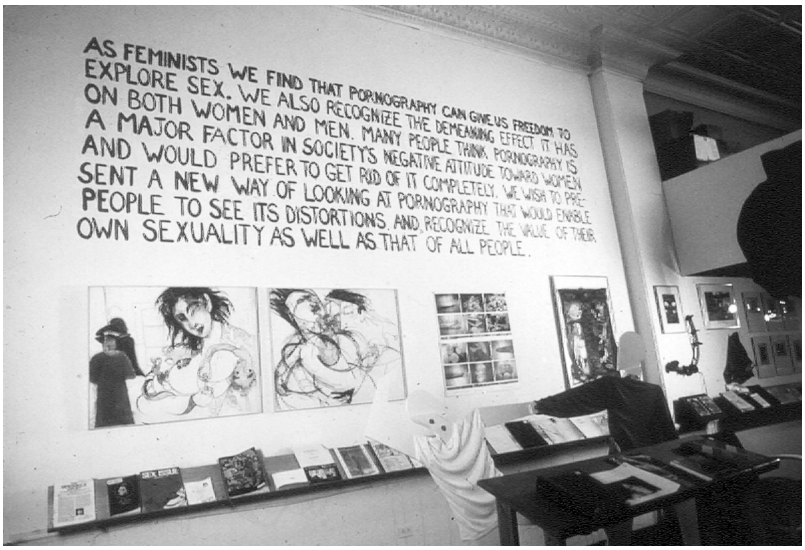
Back when she opened on 3 April 1976, Wilson saw the Furnace as a store and archive for artist books. Then that first June, artist Martine Aballea asked to do a reading from her book. Wilson said, "Yes." "Yes" was the ethos of Franklin Furnace. Wilson approached her job like an artist—with a willingness to take risks—and said "yes" if it was at all feasible. This would end up changing (art) history. For example, Aballea then showed up in costume, lugging her own light and stool—and the performance art program was born.

Franklin Furnace began as one of the alternative spaces made possible after the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts. "In those days, NEA program officers came to the Furnace to encourage us to apply," Wilson remembers. A couple of decades later, she found it shocking to realize that the '70s had been a golden age. "We were the darlings of the avantgarde," she said of the Furnace and its Tribeca/Soho neighbors of that time: Printed Matter, the Clocktower, the Collective for Living Cinema, the Kitchen, Artists Space.

> We got money. We got praise. The notion that experiment is good and should be supported by the culture was out and about. We had no idea that the climate would change 180 degrees. I would say by about the mid-'80s, the avantgarde was viewed as a virus eating away at the body politic—something that needed to be stamped out if possible. Artists should be—if not killed—at least silenced. (Wilson 1997)

In the period just preceding the culture wars—late '70s to mid '80s—the art margin percolated with manic energy. That was the era of "schizo-culture," postmodernism crossed with punk, and so much began then: In 1975, a new band, Television, played the first live music at a Bowery dive called CBGBs. In 1979,

artists took studio space, then performance space, in the empty P.S. 122. Between 1979 and 1984, the East Village performance clubs opened in basements (Club 57, Darinka, 8BC), storefronts (WOW, Limbo), actual bars (the Pyramid), even second-floor apartments (Chandalier), and performers had great freedom, restrained only by occasionally raucous audiences with short attention spans. It was a time of political engagement with art's impact (*The Real Estate Show,* 1980) or America's impact (*Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America,* 1984), and galleries blooming in dozens of tiny East Village storefronts (starting with Fun Gallery in 1981). Certain artists took their work directly to the street (Jenny Holzer, Jean-Michel Basquiat) or the subway (Keith Haring), or re-created "street" in an old massage parlor (*The Times Square Show,* 1980). It was an era of fashionable heroin, DIY aesthetics, and Super-8 blockbusters starring Lydia Lunch. "I think it was an age of innocence," says Wilson, "because we were still under the impression that we could change the world."



4. Carnival Knowledge's Second Coming, *January 1984. Installation view of exhibition manifesto, artist books, and drawings by Nancy van Goethem. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

5. Jennifer Miller and Susan Seizer in Mud Wedding, *14 January 1984, as part of Carnival Knowledge's performance series at Franklin Furnace. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

Any space first opened to honor artist books is not concerned with being trendy, but Wilson was attuned to the ferment and provided a door into the art world for people like Holzer, for example, who had her first show (*Truisms*) at the Furnace in 1978. Wilson also turned the space over to Artists Call for an exhibit in '84.

Wilson liked breaking barriers. In January 1984, she presented Carnival Knowledge's *The Second Coming,* a pioneering show that brought feminists and sex workers together to ask: Could there be feminist porn? A porn that doesn't denigrate women or children? These questions were posed in a manifesto painted in red on the Furnace wall. The feminist artists in Carnival Knowledge had first encountered Candida Royalle, Veronica Vera, and Annie Sprinkle at a porn trade show. They all met together for a year, wrote a proposal, and Wilson said, "Yes." Hundreds of artist books and videos with sexual themes went on display on the main floor. Gossamer fabric breasts hung in the stairway leading to the basement, and there Carnival Knowledge featured "domestic" pieces dealing with everything from eating to masturbation. Performances included mud-wrestling done by artists and monologues done by sex workers, most notoriously *Deep Inside Porn Stars,* in which they talked about their lives. Twenty years later, it's easy to forget how revolutionary that was. The Morality Action Committee picketed for an afternoon and soon had church groups all over the country writing to Wilson's funders. Two of them, Exxon and Woolworth's, pulled their money out. Another vanguard moment. And just the prelude to real trouble. But I'll get to that.

Franklin Furnace was small, just a storefront, with a specialized mission defined by Wilson as "time-based art" (artist books and performance). Given that, the range of work was amazing.

For example:

4 October 1985. "The poetry of words is over," announced Jean-Paul Curtay during the opening for *Letterism and Hypergraphics: The Unknown Avant-Garde.* We were in the gallery on the main floor, where work on the walls indicated that, indeed, the alphabet was in deep trouble. Entire new symbol systems covered portraits, musical scores, and calendars like so much code.

Exhibitions at the Furnace usually featured work that was hot off the griddle, but some shows honored precursors to the art that was Wilson's regular fare. Curtay, who'd curated the *Letterism* show, clicked, shrieked, and wheezed his poems that evening. In my notes, I attempted to describe them: "the exasperated protest of an extraterrestrial" and so on. Curtay talked about the work's significance, how Letterism splintered off from Dada in 1945, influenced by that movement but critical of its nihilism. They'd come up with 150 new "letters," all the sounds that written language omitted and polite company outlawed—gargling, snorting, moaning, slurping, etc. Letterist work confronted the inadequacy of language by pushing it into pure sound for greater emotional range. Poetry had returned to some preliterate origin.

Six days later. I returned to the Furnace for a standing-room-only performance of *Made for TV Terrorism* in the basement. I'll never forget it. I'd already seen Dancenoise (Anne Iobst, Lucy Sexton) in the East Village clubs, a setting that relegated their choreographed aggression, combat boots, and ugly soundtrack to the head-banging context of punk. At the Furnace, they looked uncategorizable. (And they *were* in 1985.) For one thing, they'd been decorating. Squirt guns, oven mitts, Spidermen and Mickey Mice hung by strings over the audience. Along the west wall a banner read ESCAPE=BANG. Along the east wall hung many surgical gloves. A blue lamb–shaped chalkboard across the back bore the message, "Make your bed." Behind my right shoulder, I saw a baby doll in

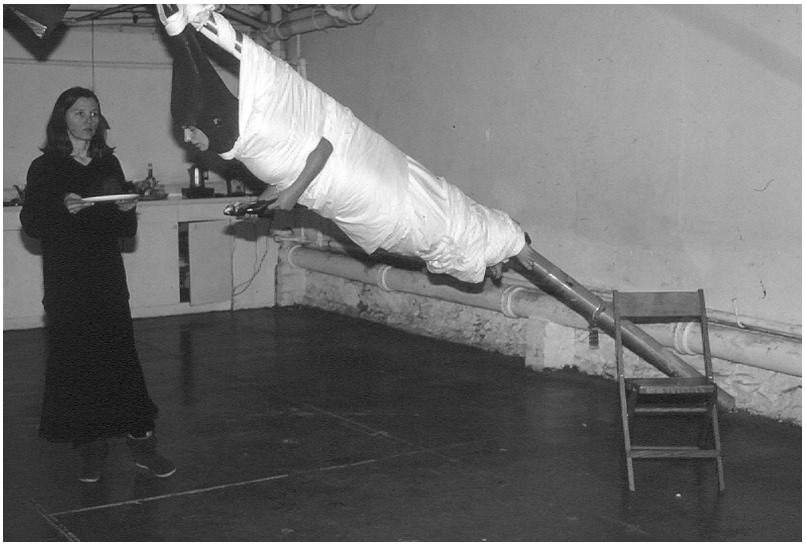
6. Anne Iobst and Lucy Sexton, the Dancenoice duo, performing Made for TV Terrorism *at Franklin Furnace on 10 October 1985. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

bloody playsuit stuck up in the pipes; behind our chairs, broken dolls and toys. Dancenoise would soon challenge every bromide laid out to little girls—and then some.

Don't make a mess. Don't fuck up your doll.

They performed surgery on a female dummy, tap-danced, ran full force into a wall, removed two male dummies in long johns and lizard heads from a refrigerator, talked about terrorism, and endured many many fast costume changes. I'm sure that isn't the half of it. Near the end, they fought each other with knives, then disemboweled the lizard-headed dummies they'd hung from the ceiling during some hardboiled pas de deux, leaving so much fake blood and real slime on the floor they could have skated away. Here was a "critique of representation" that burst right from the gut. Sexton and Iobst never intellectualized about their stuff, but they were among the transgressive women performers of that era who worked straight from the id to address issues of power and control—a fact I was just starting to put together in October 1985. I only knew then that the show thrilled me.

December 1985. I spent an hour in the basement watching an ordeal—*Heloise's Bird*. Angelika Wanke-Festa had been lashed to a pole cocoon-style, with white strips of cotton. Planted at a 45-degree angle, only her arms dangling free from the elbows down, she was wearing a red rabbit-ear headdress. Wanke-Festa would hang there for 24 hours. Spectators could walk through for nine of them. Around her, the basement had become a bizarre living space. Ancient home movies played across the back wall. At the center of the room, a black rabbit rooted through newspapers at the bottom of its cage. Another woman, Jay Sims, performed maintenance tasks: preparing food she didn't share, occasionally adjusting the helpless body on the pole. At one point, Sims read in German from the letters of Heloise and Abelard, interrupting Wanke-Festa, who'd been intoning, mantra-like, some long surreal text of childhood memory and fantasy: ". . . of course you can't expect people to like what you do, or to respect you for your effort or your ancestors, webbed feet or not . . ." I thought the piece depicted an exaggerated and sick parent/child relationship. When I came back the next day to watch it end, Wanke-Festa seemed barely able to hold her head up.



7. Angelika Wanke-Festa remained bound to a pole for 24 hours for Heloise's Bird, *12 December 1985. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

This was an unusual endurance piece, given that the artist, who clearly suffered physically, turned herself into a character or perhaps just a prop in a story she didn't control.

14 May 1987. A woman in a blue wig and a dress cut full of revealing holes kissed every spectator who entered the basement, directing us to wait for a "mid-priest" who would take us to "the cave of the shaman"—a tent constructed from quilts, sheets, and strips of aluminum foil. There Frank Moore sat naked in his wheelchair. This self-appointed shaman was born with cerebral palsy, 99 percent physically disabled, spastic, and unable to speak. When we were told we could approach him, no one did. Moore lurched forward with a cry. He howled. Soon enough, people began to warm up. Moore's performances focus on what he calls eroplay, "an intense physical playing or touching of oneself and others" (press release), and they don't work without audience participation. Spectators were urged to explore Moore's body, then each other's. *Intimate Cave* went on for five hours, a reprise of the Summer of Love complete with group grope. A certain embarrassment threshold was reached, then crossed by some. Others were just uncomfortable. I took notes. That Moore would be the one urging us to stay connected with our physical selves seemed both ironic and poetic, even if his performance didn't motivate me to explore the anonymous bodies around me. As the evening wore on, the basement began to look like a photo of a Living Theatre event—half-naked people walking through a mess.

November–December 1987. I encountered the Anonymous Artist at the Furnace one night when I inadvertently crawled into his "monastery," a closet-size plywood structure on the main floor, where the artist was fasting and praying for 40 days and 40 nights. In the tiny antechamber, on hands and knees, visitors could peer through a slit about two inches high to see a blue-lit cell and the motionless white-shrouded figure of Anonymous. A single rosary decorated the wall. What distinguished this piece from other ordeals was its sincere and overt Christianity. Anonymous emerged without fanfare on Christmas Day "to share life, God's greatest gift, with the world" (press release). The piece's title, *Ad Interiori Deserti* (Toward the Interior Desert) was a reminder, however, that at such an internalized hermetic contemplative level, all religions begin to blend into

one. Most radical was the artist's decision to take no credit for the work. The Furnace press release promised that this person's age, race, and name would never be disclosed "in an effort to remove the influence of the artist from the artwork" (see Carr 1987).

May 1988. Fiona Templeton's *You—the City* was a Furnace piece set in various midtown streets and buildings, for an audience of one. Spectators entered this astonishing work at ten-minute intervals and had direct contact with each performer, which made the usual audience behavior (e.g., voyeurism) seem quite odd. It began, for example, in what seemed to be an office where each spectator in turn sat down across a desk from what appeared to be a businesswoman. Judging by her body language and inflection, we had an important deal to make. But she was saying things like "Get your desire like you get a joke." Upon completing her short monologue of non sequiturs, she led me from the office and downstairs into Times Square, where she announced, over the traffic din, "Your new idea will get older." Was I supposed to talk back? The "businesswoman" took me across the street and left me, as another woman in a fake leopard-skin coat rushed toward me. She and I, apparently, had known each other all our lives. Taking my arm, this woman guided me up the crowded sidewalk, her speech full of vague threats. I would have to "decide." My family would be "devastated." I seemed to be implicated in something. This charade? My passivity? The usual crises of perception and attention? Over the course of the next hour or so, I was handed on from person to person, even driven for a couple of blocks in a battered car with beer bottles rolling on the floor while the driver said things like, "Sophisticated audiences don't ask questions. You don't either, I see." But *You—the City* was definitely asking questions. What looks like acting and what doesn't? Do spectators need the acting (the distance) to feel comfortable with the behavior they're witnessing? And what's a spectator to do when she isn't just a spectator anymore?

Summer 1991. During a July and August residency at the Furnace, William Pope.L first painted the wall and floor to show a skyscraper falling from the sky to impale one hapless street person. Then he took to the streets himself to perform. Pope.L is an African American artist whose work exposes racial dynamics in ways designed to make everyone uncomfortable. One day he set out to wiggle down the street on his belly along Tompkins Square Park in Manhattan's East Village, holding a potted flower in one hand, dressed in a good black suit. Pope.L has done many of these crawls. For him, they're about the vulnerable black male body, about homelessness and the many black male bodies supine on the street, about the African American tradition of struggle. But that day, a black spectator intervened—first offering help, then confronting the white man documenting the piece, finally forcing the artist to stop after one block. On other days, Pope.L would park himself on a sidewalk to sell aspirin (at a hundred dollars per pill) and mayonnaise (a hundred dollars per spoonful). He also did the first version of a signature piece, *Eating the Wall Street Journal*. He quite literally ate *Wall Street* newsprint while seated on the sidewalk on an American flag.

The abject imagery in much of Pope.L's work speaks to the subconscious damage done by racism—and the humiliating consequences. Fear, anxiety, shame, dyspepsia. In a closing performance at the Furnace, Pope.L sat on a stage built in front of the window, visible to anyone passing by. Dressed in a pair of white Jockey shorts, Pope.L covered the rest of his body with mayonnaise, becoming (briefly) "white." In the 90-plus heat, the mayo soon began to drip, turning transparent and shiny. Then there was the smell, described by the artist as "sickening" (Pope.L 2002). So he stood there, glistening and rank, showing the videotape of *Crawl Tompkins* and reading from the journals he'd kept about his street activities. A sign that read "How Much Is That Nigger in the Window?" hung on the

front door. From gag-inducing foodstuffs to N-word, it's all about what can't be stomached.

The Furnace constantly took risks with people who didn't yet have much of a track record, giving first New York shows to visual artists like David Hammons and Barbara Kruger, and to performers like Karen Finley, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Annie Sprinkle, and Robbie McCauley. I don't mean to imply that every Furnace show was brilliant. Sometimes when you're "emerging," you're half-baked. Sometimes experiments fail. But if they succeed, they can become legendary. In what's left of "alternative space" today, few presenters can afford (literally) to allow failures, and this is terrible. Those who know they mustn't fail can't risk anything. That being said, I saw little outright failure at the Furnace. The old storefront earned its spot on the avantgarde walking tour because Martha Wilson was at work in the office loft, granting artists permission to leave terra firma, and sometimes they soared.

But, on 21 May 1990, Wilson came to work to find large white stickers affixed to the front door: "VACATE—DO NOT ENTER. THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS HAS DETERMINED THAT CONDITIONS IN THIS PREMISES ARE IMMINENTLY PERILOUS TO LIFE." That day, after 14 apparently perilous years, the Furnace was charged with not having an illuminated exit sign or emergency lighting and with keeping the front door locked during a show. The basement performance space never opened again.

The war against the National Endowment for the Arts was then one year old. I date the opening salvo to 18 May 1989, when Senator Alfonse D'Amato rose dramatically on the Senate floor to rip up the catalog containing Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*. On 13 June 1989, Washington DC's Corcoran Gallery of Art canceled Robert Mapplethorpe's show, *The Perfect Moment*. In July, Republican congressman Dana Rohrbacher initiated the first proposal to defund the agency, and in the fall, new NEA chair John Frohnmayer revoked a $10,000 grant to Artists Space for *Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing,* an exhibition about AIDS.

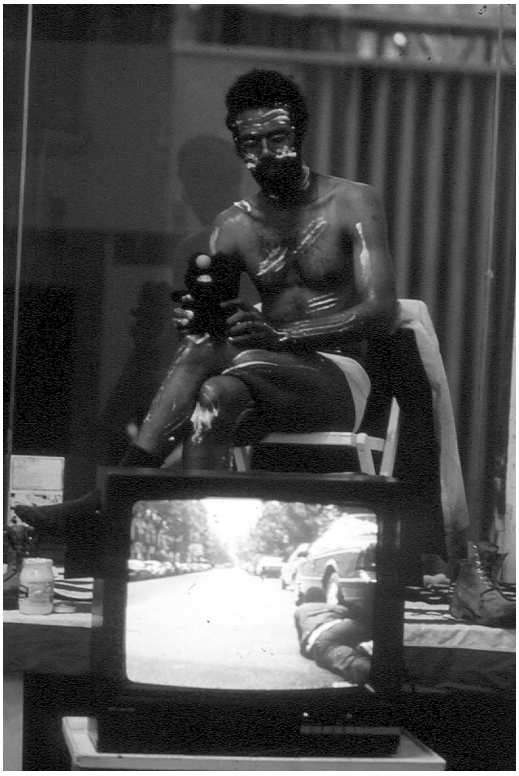
These events were mere foreshadowing to the blitzkrieg year of 1990, when repression and paranoia hit nonprofit arts organizations with gale force. That was the year that Mapplethorpes's show opened in Cincinnati and museum director Dennis Barrie was indicted for pandering obscenity and the illegal use of a child in nudity-oriented material (*New York Times* 1990). It was the year that Congressman Rohrbacher accused the Kitchen of using taxpayer money for Annie Sprinkle's *Post Porn Modernist*. (Sprinkle had never even applied for a grant, much less received one.) And it was the year the House of Representatives engaged in an hour-long debate over Judy Chicago's 1974 *Dinner Party.*

No one knows to this day how Franklin Furnace ended up on the far right's radar screen. Maybe it dated back to the Carnival Knowledge show, where Annie Sprinkle made her transition from porn star to performance artist. But that wouldn't explain how they got the names of certain other artists, some of whom weren't even well-known within the art world. In February 1990, the *New York City Tribune,* a right-wing rag published by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, published an article on "obscene art," singling out performance artists Karen Finley, Cheri Gaulke, Frank Moore, and Johanna Went. All created work that had sexual content. All had performed at the Furnace. In fact, all but Finley were from California and had performed at no other New York arts venue. In March 1990, Senator Jesse Helms ordered the General Accounting Office to investigate the "questionable activities" of the endowment, giving them a list of artists that included the four named in the *Tribune* article.

Then in May, 10 days before the basement closed, conservative columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak published a piece ridiculing Karen Finley

as "a chocolate-smeared woman" (1990:23). Three days before the basement closed, Finley opened upstairs at the Furnace with an installation, *A Woman's Life Isn't Worth Much*—words and images about the horrors wrought by sexism and misogyny painted directly on the wall. Finley had done her first New York performance in the Furnace basement in 1983, a monologue called *I Like the Dwarf on the Table When I Give Him Head*. (As Wilson remembers it, the artist also took a bath in a suitcase.) When the fire department shut the performance space, Wilson assumed a Finley critic was to blame. What really happened was that a man had tried to leave in the middle of a Diane Torr performance the night before, found the door locked from the inside, and called the fire department.

It got worse. A couple of weeks after her show at the Furnace closed, Finley was defunded by the NEA—along with John Fleck, Holly Hughes, and Tim Miller—while various officials showed up at the Furnace to grill and to probe. The General Accounting Office began the investigation ordered by Helms, while the state comptroller and the IRS both launched audits. Ironically, the NEA itself had been auditing the Furnace (and other spaces) since 1985, and would continue to do so until 1995, part of what Wilson described as the endowment's effort "to fund the good-looking and professional side of the art world while defunding the chaotic and hairy" (Wilson 2004).



8. Wiliam Pope.L in a performance that closed How Much Is That Nigger in the Window?, *an installation at Franklin Furnace from 1 July 1991 through 31 August 1991. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

The Furnace would never again be free from the scrutiny of people who hated everything it stood for. Early in 1992, an NEA peer panel awarded the Furnace a $25,000 grant, only to have the neocon political appointees in the agency strip it away. The issue was "artistic merit," supposedly. Of course, what does that mean? According to the neocons, who'd implemented bureaucratic changes to "break the grip of the arts establishment" on the agency (see Carr 1992), it meant the content of one videotape included with the proposal. That tape featured a sexually explicit performance by one Scarlet O. The peer panel—the "arts establishment"—saw more than that, namely the organization's reputation over a 16-year history. But when the Furnace's proposal got to the National Council on the Arts, an advisory body of arts luminaries appointed by the President, only the poet Donald Hall voted "yes." That year, for the first time since the organization opened, the Furnace failed to get an NEA grant.

Over the years, a fragile ecology had developed among the NEA, foundations, and corporations to support the nonprofit art world. Once the Endowment was under attack, that whole ecology began to erode. For example, the NEA stopped granting seasonal support to arts groups—meaning, money to just pay rent and the light bill. They did this to stop tax-funded electricity from shining on the likes of Annie Sprinkle. Conservatives wouldn't allow it.

That's admittedly the Cliff Notes version of what went wrong financially on the cultural margin. The point is that everyone has struggled since the '90s, but the Furnace had a huge extra burden. Losing that basement seemed to cut the guts out of the organization, and Wilson was never able to compensate for that loss with her Franklin Furnace in Exile series at other venues. She spent a year interviewing architects in pursuit of a redesign that would bring the building up to code, finally selecting a beautiful plan by Bernard Tschumi, doable for

$500,000. But in a funding climate where it's hard to pay the light bill, a new space was mere pie in the sky.

Wilson went virtual early in 1997 to stay true to the overarching mission at the Furnace: preserving, promoting, and disseminating the work of the avantgarde. But I regard the demise of the Franklin Street space as Exhibit A on what it meant to lose the culture war.

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C. Carr *was a staff writer at the* Village Voice *for 16 years, where she covered the art margins, especially the performance scene, and the ensuing culture wars. Her book,* On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century, *was published by Wesleyan University Press/University Press of New England in 1993. A new book, about the impact of a lynching on a small Midwestern town, will be published in Fall 2005 by Crown.*

Franklin Furnace and Martha Wilson

On a Mission to Make the World Safe for Avantgarde Art

an interview by Toni Sant

Ed. note: Franklin Furnace celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2001. During that period, Toni Sant, who has served as the organization's resident researcher since 1999, had a series of conversations with founder and director Martha Wilson about the early days of the Furnace and the Tribeca neighborhood, its mission and programs, managing an artists' space in New York, the institutions legal and political battles, and the move from 112 Franklin Street to the web. These talks with Wilson run throughout this section, in four parts.[1]

PART 1:

Art and Real Estate

SANT: Franklin Furnace gets its name from a place: 112 Franklin Street. From the very first day that you and I started planning the celebration of Franklin Furnace's first 25 years, we agreed to address not just that place but also the spatial dynamics that have determined the organization's modus operandi and aspects of the events presented by the Furnace. How did this decision to put so much emphasis on real estate come about?

WILSON: At one point in the early 1990s, when I was looking at new homes for Franklin Furnace, I remember thinking to myself, I'm spending 80 percent of my time on the question of real estate! Franklin Furnace had a home that started out as a sanded patch of floor in front of the loft that was also my home, and then it expended into the belly of the loft, and then I moved into the mezzanine and just the kitchen in the back.

SANT: When you signed that lease back in 1975, what were you looking for in terms of space?

WILSON: Honestly, I was looking for a place to live, as everybody in the building was looking for a place to live.

SANT: So the landlord had spaces he was letting out for people to live in?

WILSON: No, no! It was a net lease of the entire building to a gaggle of artists: Willoughby Sharp, Duff Schweniger, Virginia Piersol, Patrick McEntee, Kurt Maneske, Martha Wilson, Haviland Wright. And we had an agreement between parties that Haviland and I shared the ground floor, Willoughby had the top floor, Virginia had third floor, and so on.

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SANT: Was the original concept that all five floors would be living quarters for artists?

WILSON: Well, no. Not exactly. Willoughby's original concept was that it would be the Franklin Street Arts Center. Each floor would have an activity. I was on the ground floor and since there were already bookcases and I was interested in books I would obviously have a bookstore, and he would have a video theatre, somebody else would have film screening and editing services, I guess that was going to be Virginia, I'm not quite sure anymore. Anyway, nobody took it seriously at all; everybody bought hot-water heaters and moved in, including Willoughby! No, that's not true: Willoughby mounted some programs of what he called Live Injection Point in the basement. But his vision was of a building full of artists that would be creating public events and the whole building would be a place for public and community gathering.

SANT: Does this mean that Willoughby was the first live-art event organizer at 112 Franklin Street?

WILSON: Yes. I would say so. Willoughby and Virginia Piersol, an artist whom I had seen perform at the Idea Warehouse, Alanna Heiss's space on Reade Street. Alanna Heiss was busy getting city-owned properties and turning them over for art-use all over the city through the Institute for Art and Urban Resources.[2]

SANT: What was the first thing you did when you moved in?

WILSON: The first thing I did was buy a vacuum cleaner, the second thing I did was buy a hot-water heater, third I bought a stove; converting the space slowly.

SANT: Was the space officially recognized as a mixed-use building? I don't know what the laws were like at that time, but was it possible for you to be living in this place when at the same time you were having a bookstore there?

WILSON: It was a net lease for the whole building and it was also for commercial use.

SANT: But could you legally live in a commercial space at the time?

WILSON: No, not really. The Loft Law [1982] came in after we were already occupying the space.

SANT: And the Loft Law made it legally possible to live in a commercial space?

WILSON: The Loft Law says you can live in a commercial space, but the landlord is responsible for upgrading the commercial space and making it livable under the terms of the Loft Law. You have to have a way to get out in case of fire, you have to have two ways of egress, reasonable windows, and heat on weekends, whereas commercial leases don't require that kind of stuff. The city was acknowledging that artists were pioneering these neighborhoods and they were trying to shelter this activity by making the landlords come up to a code.

SANT: During those early years of Franklin Furnace, this was happening all over Tribeca and Soho, right?

WILSON: Soho was the first neighborhood that was pioneered—I think the Loft Law was pioneered there too—and then Tribeca was the second neighborhood that was covered by the Loft Law. Now I think it's in Williamsburgh and in Dumbo.[3] The Loft Law has now gone on to cover various artists' neighborhoods where pioneering activities are going on.

SANT: The Loft Law is significant in understanding the development of Franklin Furnace. How did you decide to incorporate Franklin Furnace?

WILSON: At first it was not clear if I was incorporating the Franklin Street Arts Center or if I was incorporating a separate entity within the Franklin Street Arts Center. The confusion was in January, February, March of 1976 when I was out pounding pavements, going to the Attorney General's office and incorporating the organization, which only cost a few hundred bucks. I also made this decision that I was a separate corporate entity from the Franklin Street Arts Center. I was Franklin Furnace, an organization that existed on the ground floor of this building known as the Franklin Street Arts Center. Willoughby Sharp coined the term Franklin Furnace; I always give him credit for that. I was going to call it the Franklin Stove and he said, no you must call it Franklin Furnace.

SANT: How does a furnace or a stove relate to a bookstore?

WILSON: It's a hothouse for artists' ideas, a place where ideas create light and heat.

I used the same three months that I was incorporating myself to gather the books for opening day, which was 3 April 1976. So, opening day arrives and I opened the bookstore, and meanwhile Printed Matter is starting to form. Printed Matter is not a sole proprietorship as Franklin Furnace was—I was operating solo—but a collective, about 12 people. They decided that the art world needed books to be published, especially risky stuff that wasn't being published by commercial houses or that artists couldn't afford to do themselves. And, that artists' books needed to be distributed. There was a big need in that. So, first three months I'm gathering books, second three months, April, May, June, we're talking to each other. Printed Matter and Franklin Furnace are talking to each other because obviously our services, our ideas, are overlapping. They want to distribute and I have a bookstore, but I also have this archive and I'm incorporating as a not-for-profit, and they're incorporating as a for-profit because they don't want the Internal Revenue Service to have any control over their content.[4] What they decide to publish might be too radical for a not-for-profit. So, for a little while, Printed Matter and FF were going to coexist in my loft. That was one of the scenarios.

But that didn't work. So, Printed Matter moved to the Fine Arts Building at 105 Hudson Street, which was a building where a bunch of other spaces and galleries existed, including Artists Space.[5]

It's a hothouse for artists' ideas, a place where ideas create light and heat.

SANT: Why did Franklin Furnace need Printed Matter? I mean, how did Franklin Furnace and Printed Matter come to compliment each other?

WILSON: We figured out that we should just divide the pie up. They would take distribution—I figured out that standing in line at the post office was really not a lot of fun—they would take distribution and publishing, and I would take exhibition and archiving. We took the not-for-profit/museum functions, and they took the for-profit/bookstore type functions. By summer 1976 we had figured out that Franklin Furnace was going to be at 112 Franklin Street and would have a not-for-profit program.

SANT: What was the next significant episode in terms of real estate?

WILSON: Well, the 10-year lease came to an end. We thought it would we never end!

SANT: Was the landlord willing to renew the lease?

WILSON: No.

SANT: Did he have a problem with renewing the net lease of the building or just your part as a commercial space?

WILSON: We were all served with eviction notices but my situation was legally slightly different because by this point it was clear that the Loft Law protected people on the second and third floor, fourth and fifth floors, but it was not clear that it protected people in the commercial space. And I was living in the commercial space. It was one of the vagaries of the Loft Law itself.

SANT: Was it in any way because of Franklin Furnace's activities?

WILSON: No, not at all. Our landlord wanted us to vacate the building so he could sell it empty for twice as much money as his daughter ultimately sold it for. So I got a separate attorney, Paul Gulielmetti, to handle my case and the second, third, fourth, and fifth floors were handled by David Ratner.

SANT: How did the cases end?

WILSON: We all had to establish that we were living there on such and such a date. I did it with my Con Edison bills and with my telephone bills, same as anybody else. The landlord sued everybody on the lease and the lawsuit went for another 10 years or so.

SANT: And meanwhile you were still there.

WILSON: We were putting our money in escrow, and trying to deliver the rent, and he wouldn't accept it, and would put it into his escrow account—and attorneys' letters were going back and forth. This went on for another four years. The landlord died on Halloween in 1990. And his daughter, Louise Longa, told me that he had spent $100,000 to get us out of the building and she was not up for that, and why didn't we make a reasonable offer to buy. So I called my neighbors right away and we put together an offer for $650,000 which was half of what he had wanted. So they sold it! We did a big art sale, everybody got up the money, as best they could, we made a $50,000 down payment and got ourselves a mortgage.

SANT: How did the ownership work out?

WILSON: We formed what is called Cond-Op, that's a co-op on the second, third, fourth, and fifth floors, and a condominium that was FF, the ground floor and basement.

SANT: So you lived there for a good 10 years after the lease expired, first thanks to the litigation, and then to the fact that you bought this space.

WILSON: Yes, and along the way I gathered roommates because the net lease for the ground floor was $532 or something like that, which was an unheard of sum at that time and I had a whole series of roommates because I could not afford to live there all by myself.

SANT: And all this was during the time before the end of the lease and the litigation?

WILSON: Yes. The basement was occupied also, illegally, because you are not allowed to live in a basement. We kept that really quiet. Finally the co-op took back the basement and leased it to Franklin Furnace. The basement was occupied with people until 1980/81, at which point Franklin Furnace took over the lease to the basement.

SANT: Was that a legal lease?

WILSON: It was more legal than having people live in there. We had storage there, but we needed a performance space and that's why we really got it. In fact you went through the storage unit to get to the performance space.

SANT: And so Franklin Furnace moved its performance space to the basement of 112 Franklin Street.

WILSON: And also around 1980/81 my last roommate moved out. And then I moved out too.

I want to tell a very short story of the early days when a guy with a sapphire ring came around. He was the elevator inspector, the building inspector, water inspector . . . I don't remember . . . he was some kind of inspector from the City. He had this big sapphire ring on his pinkie. He rang my doorbell and I came and he held his hand out and I didn't get it. I didn't understand this was the day when you bribed the building inspector to leave. We were naïve, middle-class people. I didn't understand how the city worked at the time, but those days eventually were over.

SANT: So you didn't grease the hand with the sapphire ring?

WILSON: No. I didn't know! I figured out what I was supposed to do later. We probably had to pay a fine or something that time. They just come around every three months for their regular payoff.

SANT: After some years, however, you did get into some serious trouble and your performance space was closed down. What happened exactly?

WILSON: There are two ideas about what happened around the closure of the performance space at 112 Franklin Street. Diane Torr and I did an oral history of this for my "Archives on the Avant-Garde" page on the website [<http://www.franklinfurnace.org/archival/index.html>]. Karen [Finley] was opening her installation in May 1990 and it was called *A Woman's Life Isn't Worth Much*. There was a group in Washington called People for the American Way, with Norman Lear and other people funding it. They called us and said, "We don't know what's going to happen but we tell you something is going to happen around Karen's opening. We would advise you to invite the entire board and just be

ready for something." So I did. I invited the entire Board of Directors and we all stood around at the opening and it went off without a hitch, and one of the board members invited me to come over to visit Agnes Denes to have some dinner. So I did, but I felt weird about it because my friend Diane Torr was performing later the same night downstairs in the performing place. And it was really loud and there were cotton balls offered to the patrons who were going in for the performance because it was going to be really loud. But one of the patrons, who is nameless to this day, didn't see the sign or was outraged that it was loud, and left early. Upstairs there was a buzzer to let yourself out. He didn't know about the buzzer. The door was locked.

SANT: Was the buzzer not labeled clearly?

WILSON: No, the buzzer wasn't clearly labeled. The door was locked. I guess eventually he figured out how to get out. He called the New York City Fire Department and said we were an illegal social club. There was a lot of effort by the city to close illegal social clubs because there had been a fire in the Happy Land Social Club and 85 people had died. So the Marshall called me next day and said, "You are running an illegal social club so I'm going to come over and close your ass." I said please come over and see what we are doing here, we are not running an illegal social club, and you can count how many people we have in the basement, we never have more than 75 people in the basement, that's the law, please come over. So the next night I'm still not able to see Diane's performance because I'm upstairs with the Marshall. He's counting how many people are going downstairs, looking at the egress and everything. And then he gives me a ticket because the people in the basement had to egress through the hallway which went past the boiler room. There was a statute on the books, and it had been on the books all those years and I had never been closed before, but they found that day, that you can't exit past the boiler room. So we were closed. We had a ticket! And it's the end of the performance season, we had one performance to go, and we put the artist up at the Kitchen. And then we started to argue with each other, you know, whether the call to the fire department was politically motivated to close the performance space, or just a cranky person who was unhappy that he could not leave.

So the Marshall called me next day and said, "You are running an illegal social club so I'm going to come over and close your ass." I said please come over and see what we are doing here.

SANT: So this was an ambiguous issue for you and the artists.

WILSON: Even on the staff level there was no agreement. My feeling was that we were told numerous times by People for the American Way and from other people around, Karen's attorneys, that she was being harassed: "She is been politically harassed and something is going to fall on you too because you are presenting her work." So I did not know what to do! I really had no idea. I went to Joe Papp who said, "You consider it political harassment and tell every living being whose listening to you that this is what's happened to you, and you can do a benefit at my place. You just make the biggest, loudest noise possible. The way that political suppression works is that people are silenced. This is what happened in the McCarthy Era. I've been through this, I know what it's like, this is what I advise you to do." So fine! We did a wonderful benefit at the Public Theater, and Karen performed, and Eric Bogosian performed, Leon Golub talked about political art, and Allen Ginsberg called in from California. And I dressed up as Barbara Bush for the first time.

So the benefit came and went, and the issue never got quite resolved. C. Carr told my story in *The Village Voice.* And then in the book, *On Edge,* she put a footnote saying that she got a call from the unnamed person—we never did find out who it was—who said, "No, I am not a political plant, I'm a cranky person!" But subsequent to this event, as if to bear out my side of the story, I got letters from the General Accounting Office, the Internal Revenue Service, and the New York State Comptroller. All these letters showed up in the summer of 1990 right after Karen's show at Franklin Furnace, and we went through a triple audit during the summer.

SANT: Did this happen before you had announced the benefit? And if not, were they possibly triggered by the benefit?

WILSON: I think the GAO letter was triggered by Karen Finley's show at Franklin Furnace; they were following her activities. But they knew about these other artists I had shown also: Cheri Gaulke, Frank Moore, Johanna Went. All of them use sexually charged content in their work. So they were after the sexually explicit artists in the program. I think they were trying to establish the idea that we only showed this kind of work and that we were a bordello or something.

SANT: Did all this lead to the decision to sell the space?

WILSON: No. I say what led to the decision to sell the space came a little bit later. We had no interest at all in leaving the space in 1990, but by 1993 we had made the decision. We had started thinking about the long term. What the vision for Franklin Furnace was going to be, and we thought it was going to be a downtown arts emporium. A beautiful gathering place where people can see exhibitions and performance, and there will be a Cyber Café perhaps. I don't think we had the term Cyber Café yet, but that was the idea, some kind of watering hole for artists to look at books and . . .

SANT: In some ways, that was the idea all along, wasn't it?

WILSON: But fully legal this time!

SANT: Would you say that this was a clearly thought-out concept rather than something that would come about by letting it happen organically, as it had before?

WILSON: Yes. Designed by a legitimate architect, and up to code. We owned the building, so now we're not going to exit past the boiler room, we're going to have two means of egress, handicap accessible entrance . . .

SANT: You never told me how you managed to open again after you were closed by the Fire Department.

WILSON: We didn't! We used the basement as storage only. We put all the archives there.

SANT: So that was the end of the basement as a performance space?

WILSON: Yeah, that was it!

SANT: And was the performance program presented on the ground level later?

WILSON: No. Our performances started happening in other people's spaces all over town.

SANT: Oh! Already?

WILSON: 1990 was the beginning of performing in exile in other people's spaces: 1991 was Judson Memorial Church, 1992 was Cooper Union, '93/94 the New School, and 1995 P.S.122 and NYU, I think, or maybe that was '94. We started making deals to do series in other peoples' spaces.

SANT: This is why the events that led to the closing down are significant. Diane Torr and Karen Finley's shows where the last to be hosted at the Franklin Street performance space.

WILSON: I did continue the installation program on the ground floor right up to the end. February 1997. We closed with our 20th anniversary exhibition *In the Flow.*

SANT: How did the decision to sell the physical space come about?

WILSON: I think in September 1995 I said I want to sell the loft and become a production company.

SANT: Wouldn't you still have needed office space?

WILSON: Yes, but we had a pretty valuable commodity at this point. By the end of the '90s it was clear that the loft was worth something. So the board had a whole committee that for two years was working on this ideas of selling the loft. They bought the idea that we were going to sell the physical space and go virtual, in the broad conceptual sense, but then when we actually started to go virtual they started

to realize we were leaping into the unknown and thought, What business does she have taking us there? She doesn't even have a computer that she knows how to use!

SANT: Did you really not have a computer?

WILSON: It's absolutely true. I got to be horrible starting in Spring of 1996. I started fighting openly with my board. They were prepared to fire me if I couldn't demonstrate that the artists' community wanted to go there with me into this virtual space that I was taking them into. For a little while there was even some question whether the loft would be sold. It was just a horrifying time! But then the loft sold. But we didn't actually close until 9 September 1997. We stayed on at 112 Franklin Street as tenants because the person who had bought it, Christopher Cauldwell, let us stay there for a little bit longer till we found another place to live.

SANT: And you did find the current office space at 45 John Street within a year or so, didn't you?[6]

WILSON: Yes. With a little detour through Chelsea that was going to be a collaboration with other arts organizations but the board said, "Absolutely not, it's not a good idea for leaking boats to lash themselves together!" So we went to the property owned by the deacons and ministers of the Collegiate Church of New York, Dutch Reform Church of New York, chartered in 1628. And they are very good landlords, I have to say.

Notes

1. The conversations were transcribed by Amante Sant.
2. [*See Alan Moore and Debra Wacks's article in this issue.*]
3. Two Brooklyn neighborhoods. "Dumbo" stands for Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass.
4. Printed Matter was founded as a for-profit alternative arts space in 1976 but reincorporated in 1978 to become an independent nonprofit organization.
5. See <www.artistsspace.org> and <www.printedmatter.org>.
6. [*On 1 October 2004, Franklin Furnace moved its offices to 80 Arts—The James E. Davis Arts Building, 80 Hanson Place #301, Brooklyn.*]

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continued . . .

A Different World

A Personal History of Franklin Furnace

Jacki Apple

Franklin Furnace opened its doors in April 1976. It was a very different world. As a cofounder and first curator, it is easy for me to look back on those early years in the 1970s and reminisce about the good times and the accomplishments of our youth. There are many many stories to be told about the art and the artists, and our struggles to keep it all going. But beyond the historical significance of personal anecdotes and descriptive data that need to be documented before they are lost, is the fact that Franklin Furnace is not only still here but continues to thrive when so many other artists' spaces have ceased to exist as such.

This leads me to look deeper into the philosophical underpinnings of the artist space movement and the pitfalls it faced in the 1980s when inflated budgets and ambitions and marketplace values brought about either the demise or co-option of many such spaces. By the 1990s a younger generation of artists emerged, but with ambitions honed by graduate school mainstreaming goals, they failed to lead the way and start new spaces. Not surprising, considering the collapse of arts funding for small organizations in recent years. Thus the artists space as we understood it, created it, knew it in its inception has become a seriously endangered species, almost extinct in some parts of the country. No doubt, there are those who may mourn that the Furnace as a physical space, a geographical site that was a point of exchange for two decades, is gone. But the spirit that fueled the Furnace for all those years is very much alive due to the fact that as an artists institution it has mutated and adapted to the needs and conditions of the times. Ironically perhaps, it has been able to evolve in form in response to the cultural environment without surrendering its primary raison d'etre because it has not lost sight of those principles on which it was founded.

How does an arts space become "established" without becoming the establishment? That's a bit like asking, How does the revolutionary not become the new dictator after taking power? The parallel between politics and art is apt because the politics of the whole artist space movement was about the empowerment of artists, and the demise of the movement is about the power and politics of money and media both in and out of the art world. So survival is a balancing act. Catch-22! The real politik is that you need to be able to work on the inside in order to stay alive financially and serve your community in a tangible way, and the ideal politic is that you need to remain on the outside creatively in order to remain relevant and meaningful. In the '80s the gravitational pull of a certain kind of "success" was immensely seductive and easy to fall into. In the early '90s

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the survival of one's integrity required standing up to the assaults of the culture wars (on both the right and the left); at the same time the notoriety could leave you martyred and defunct. Dead heroes are still dead! Add to that the real estate situation of the boom years, and it took something close to a miracle to keep the doors open in New York City by the year 2000.

How did Franklin Furnace do it? I could cite the obvious: Furnace creator and founder Martha Wilson's moxie. Fundraising skills, chutzpah, bringing in new artistic talent on the administrative end, a supportive and active board of directors, interesting exhibitions and daring performances, community activism. But that could be said about other spaces and organizations too. Minus the Martha part, which is no small thing. Part scholar, part Quaker, part radical, her idiosyncratic vision produced a paradox: a cross between the museum archive, the avantgarde *kunsthalle,* and the cabaret—all housed in a storefront and a basement. It is this paradoxical combination that defines the uniqueness of the Furnace.

A hard wind was blowing on a cold night in December 1975 as Martha and I walked down West Broadway toward Canal Street. We were talking about artist books and a space Martha had been to see that day, a storefront on Franklin Street, which was below Soho in what came to be Tribeca. But in those days it was all still young and raw, and people were just beginning to move into the triangle below Canal. Martha was saying what a great space it was, with really high ceilings so one could build a deck, and since there really wasn't any place to show artists books wouldn't it be great to start a space for that. Willoughby Sharp was putting together the whole building with a 20-year lease, and since it was on the ground floor with a big front window, it would be perfect for a bookstore. What did I think? If she did it, would I help her? I said, "Yes, of course. It's a great idea. Let's do it!" That's how the Franklin Furnace came into being. Its inception reflects a set of values central to the era.

It was a good time, the best of times in fact, the last time in 20th-century America when artists empowered themselves and created the contexts in which their work was seen, written about, and produced. As a generation of artists we utilized the counterculture values we came of age with to create an alternative to the establishment art world. We created a community of visual artists, dancers, musicians, and poets in which we made new kinds of spaces to meet the needs of a new aesthetic. We were both artists and curators and we shaped the discourse around our work by writing about each other. We had no money and it didn't matter. We could take a raw empty space in a depressed neighborhood and make it a center of radical artmaking activities. So we did. It seemed that simple.

In today's heavily commercial, youth-, entertainment-, and media-dominated art world it is difficult to communicate to those who were not there the special quality of those times, the spirit of family within the community, and the truly interdisciplinary nature of the art world. Sculptors doing installations, video artists, performance artists, book artists, composers, dancers, poets, and experimental theatre directors, all came to see each other's works and exchange ideas. And Franklin Furnace became an informal gathering place where, though generations, sensibilities, and media apart, Ray Johnson might appear on one night and Scott Johnson on another; conceptualists and feminists might show one month, and painters and papermakers another. People still talked to each other face-to-face. People had time to hang out, even when they were working hard. Radical form and radical content went hand-in-hand, and the Furnace as a place was a medium of discourse in itself.

The Furnace opened initially as a bookstore in the front part of the Franklin Street space. Martha had assembled an impressive inventory of independently produced small-edition books from a number of artists, from the relatively less

Nancy Buchanan

Ten unique books form a portrait of father, Louis N. Ridenour, Jr., from his birth to his death, through documents and letters. In compiling this piece, I also consulted numerous histories of the time—since 1911 to 1959 encompassed the first atomic weapons, the rise of physicists in America, the McCarthy era, space exploration, and computers. I typed fragments of my research on red paper, and cut windows to my father's papers, to demonstrate how his life was shaped by the times. Other pages, blue tissue paper, had brief quotations from interviews with people close to him. My father, though a target of J. Edgar Hoover because of his liberal opinions and flamboyant lifestyle, considered himself a patriot, and I felt a red, white, and blue portrait appropriate.

—Nancy Buchanan (2004a)

The Furnace has never shirked from political material, as evident in Martha Wilson's own long-running satirical impersonations of Barbara Bush. One of the most powerful political works shown at the Furnace in the late '70s was a series of books by Los Angeles artist Nancy Buchanan. *Fallout from the Nuclear Family* (13–31 May 1980) was a complex portrait of Buchanan's world-famous nuclear physicist father, Louis N. Ridenour, Jr. Ten one-of-a-kind books containing a montage assembled from a vast archive of his birth-to-death professional and personal documents, essays, letters, and photographs, revealed not only the life of the man, but of the social and political culture in which he played an essential part. Found dead at the age of 47 in a Washington, DC, hotel room, Ridenour had been a prominent member of the post–World War II military industrial complex. After editing for MIT the texts on radar resulting from his war work, he left academia to become a Pentagon advisor, and in 1950 was appointed the first Chief Scientist of the Air Force. Although he continued to be active in weapons development, after World War II he became involved in efforts to limit the arms race and keep nuclear research out of military control. At the same time his language shifted as he tried to adapt to the changing political climate. By the late 1940s Ridenour had succumbed to subtle red-baiting and "better dead than red" rhetoric. In 1950 he reviewed a book describing a new weapon of radioactive poisons, "death sands," that would kill civilians but leave cities intact—essentially a neutron bomb (Buchanan 2004a). Aided by the post-Watergate era's Freedom of Information Act, Buchanan discovered that her father paradoxically was not the government's idea of the "perfect" scientist. His FBI files revealed that J. Edgar Hoover signed a number of suspicious memos regarding Ridenour's security clearance, which he, amazingly, always received. The FBI, concerned from the Eisenhower administration forward with increasing the ever-tightening requirements for Federal employees with clearance, focused on Ridenour's liberal leanings as well as his racy lifestyle which supposedly involved "excessive drinking" and "loose [behavior] with women" (Buchanan 2004b).

Buchanan uncovered the darker side of the 1950s, not only in the deep schisms between her father's ideals as a scientist and the political realities that corrupted him, but in the underside of the idealized "nuclear family." Interweaving short quotes from her own research on various sociohistorical subjects—including the Red Scare of the '40s and '50s, scientists speaking out against atomic weapons, etc., and recollections from those who knew him—with his own writings, from youthful utopian short stories to his last disillusioned letters, she allowed us to see the many facets of the man and his time.

In his 1982 *Arts Magazine* article "War Games: Of Arms and Men," Jonathan Crary succinctly sums up the brilliance of Buchanan's work:

> Ridenour's failure was ultimately one of critical intelligence, of a willful blindness to the powerful network of institutions in which he was immersed and which crushed him. Buchanan's archive awesomely lays bare the seamless, interlocking texture of the military, academic, and corporate entities through which Ridenour circulated, all the time voicing his belief in the autonomy and incorruptibility of the scientist. The analogy between artist and scientist is a silent but key part of Buchanan's work. No less than the scientists, the artist is also susceptible to illusions of autonomy and independence. (1982:79)

It took Buchanan two years to complete this project and she credits the Furnace with giving her the courage to take this sometimes painful and difficult journey to the end. The timing was prescient, shortly followed by the Reagan era of arms build-up, Star Wars defense plans, and corporate alliances on the one hand and the co-option of the artist by media celebrity and entertainment industry money on the other.

In conjunction with her books, Buchanan did a performance reading selected excerpts—*Glossing the Text* (15 May 1980)—to acquaint people with the contents of the books on view at the Furnace. She subsequently expanded the Franklin Furnace material into a full performance at the University of California, San Diego, and at the Berkeley Art Center, in 1981. She describes it as follows:

> I played some of my audiotapes of my father's colleagues & friends, like Jimmy Doolittle and Dr. Abe Taub, while I laid eggshells on the floor. When the voices concluded, I walked over them, crushing them. The lights dimmed, which revealed stars painted on the walls with glow-in-the-dark-paint and the also-painted shells became fallen stars, metaphors for my childhood memory of my father's explanation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics—as well as for his own life of "walking on eggshells" with all the political and security issues in his career. After this, I read one brief selection from each book. (Buchanan 2004a)

The books have been shown several times since in *War Games* at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, NY, and at Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA, in 1982; *The War Show,* State University of New York, Stony Brook, in 1983; *Family As Subject Matter in Contemporary Art,* Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, DC, in 1985; and in a solo show at Walter-McBean Gallery, San Francisco Art Institute in 1991. They will be included in *Shutters,* curated by Sandra Firmin, at the University Art Gallery, State University of New York, Buffalo, 10 September through 27 November 2004.

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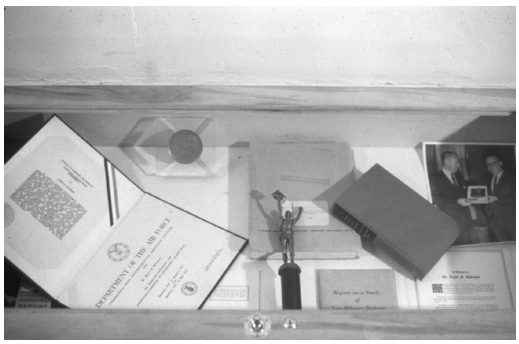


1. & 2. Nancy Buchanan's 1980 installation at Franklin Furnace, Fallout from the Nuclear Family. *(Photo by Ransom Rideout; courtesy of Nancy Buchanan)*

known to such well-established artists as Sol LeWitt. And I was the first "salesgirl." At that point no one was getting any salary, although Martha hoped that the Furnace would eventually become the means to sustain ourselves and our art, without having to suffer the indignities of working in the uptown world. Martha moved into the back part of the space, and I had recently left a Seventh Avenue fashion career. During that summer the deck was built, a kind of mezzanine overlooking the exhibition space that would later become both Martha's living space and the offices. It also became clear that we were not going to survive by selling books, so Martha decided to go nonprofit. Thus in the fall of 1976 we became an "official" artists space with our first Board of Directors, which included Weston Naef, Fredriecke Taylor, Henry Korn, and Vito Acconci.

One of the guiding principles of the Furnace from the beginning was to be a place that responded to a range of art activities and forms that artists were engaged in but lacked a venue for. In keeping with the proliferation of the Soho art scene, the Furnace quickly became the location of a discourse generated by both the participants and the audience. At the same time Martha saw no disparity between the pursuit of the new and simultaneously validating historical precedents. Thus one could develop an archive of limited edition printed matter from the past and present, and exhibit the latest one-of-a-kind artist books. This of course opened a whole discussion of what constituted a "book" and how far that definition could be stretched. By allowing for a certain elasticity in what could be considered a book, and because we were willing to present unconventional interpretations, we were able to encourage an enormous range of forms and aesthetics to flourish. It is the continuity of this way of thinking and the capacity to mutate that is at the heart of the Furnace's ability to both survive and thrive through changing times.

We had been open for barely two months when the first event of what was to become the performance program came into being quite by chance. Around the end of May 1976 Martine Aballea, a young artist from Paris, showed up with some one-of-a-kind books with her writings. I thought they were quite wonderful, in terms of both the literary quality and the vividness of her visual imagery, so I invited her to do a reading. She was reluctant to read alone so I agreed to do

1. In the first performance at Franklin Furnace, Martine Aballea read from her artist book Sleep Storm Crystals, *26 January 1978. (Photo by Jacki Apple; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

it with her, and then invited the dancer/choreographer Erin Martin to join us. We created a setting for her text and the reading became the first "performance" at the Furnace. We opened the doors to the street on a hot late afternoon in June and about 35 people showed up, filling the space and spilling out into the street. This is when I got the idea that we should start a performance series for artists who write, as there were a lot of them (including both Martha and myself). Martha agreed and in the fall of 1976 we launched the artists' reading series.

The performance program was so popular that in the first year we presented two artists an evening, once a week, and by 1978 expanded to two evenings a week, allowing for more complex stagings. Our performance season went from September through May, and in 1978 we presented 72 performances; 64 in 1979. While for many artists the opportunity to do a reading was sufficient, others began adding visual elements, and the events became more and more "performative." Eric Bogosian was a young performer who had worked with Richard Foreman. Bogosian was working at the Kitchen, and with a little coaxing from me and a lot of encouragement he did his very first piece, *Slavery,* at the Furnace on 13 October 1977. By 1978 we presented such elaborate productions as Matt Mullican's *Talking About My Work* (16 March 1978), and with a bit of handholding and a few histrionics, Robert Longo did the first version of his "operatic" performance *Sound Distance of a Good Man* (18 April 1978) shortly after coming to NYC from Buffalo. At the time both artists were still relatively unknown.

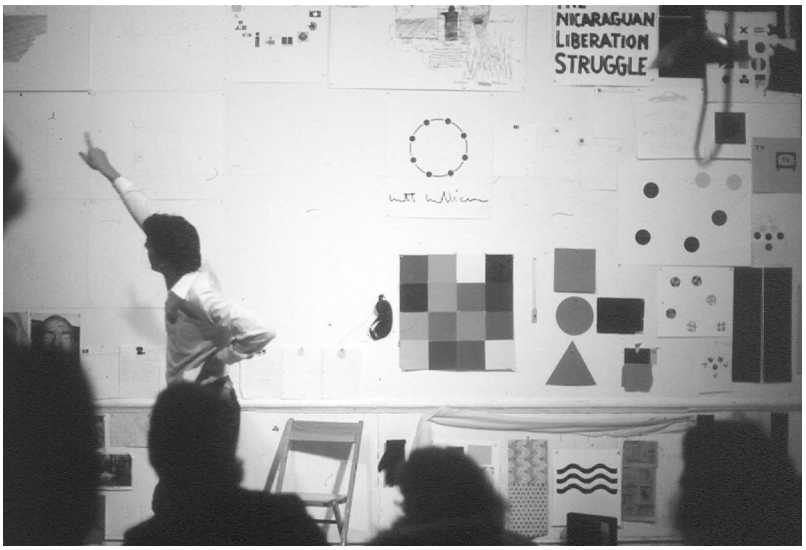
The list of names of artists who showed and/or performed at the Furnace in the early years of their careers and later achieved widespread recognition is notable: Barbara Kruger, Michael Smith, Kathy Acker, Constance De Jong, Mierle Ukeles, Barbara Bloom, Alice Aycock, Larry Miller, Dara Birnbaum, Lynne Tillman, John Malpede, Ana Mendieta, Ida Applebroog, Stuart Sherman, and Nigel Rolfe are just a few. At the same time we also presented already established artists with their roots in the 1960s, Fluxus, and the Judson Church Dance Theater, giving them the space to try out new works in an informal setting. They included Simone Forti, Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Geoff Hendricks, Philip Corner, Jackson MacLow, Carolee Schneemann, John Cage, Lee Breuer, Joan Jonas.[1]

At the beginning of 1977 Martha made me Curator of Exhibitions and Performances, as she was fully occupied with her role as Director. Although the idea that an artist could curate and organize exhibitions, write about one's colleagues and peers, and practice one's own art on equal terms was a fundamental premise of the artists space movement, the translation of this ideal from theory to practice presented certain challenges. Egalitarian participatory democracy, as anyone who came of age in the free-wheeling 1960s knows, isn't always as easy as it sounds. Leaders rise to the top; power corrupts. Certain guiding principles have to be laid down, adhered to, and periodically reviewed.

We had a very open door curatorial policy. Anyone could make an appointment to show me their work, and if they just showed up without an appointment and I wasn't too busy, I would see them. When it was an artist from out of town, or from overseas, I always made a space to see them. We wanted the Furnace to be a place where artists could hang out and feel at home, without adhering to hierarchal formalities. Even if an artist didn't get to show, it was important that she was treated with respect, and the experience of showing her work to someone was a dialog, a good exchange between artists, not a humiliating experience—which was so often the case with commercial galleries.

The exhibition program was for artist books, and we featured two artists every three weeks. It was important that the programming remain flexible so that we could respond to the changing needs of artists. Thus we never filled up our time

2. Eric Bogosian in his first performance, Slavery, *13 October 1977. (Photo by Jacki Apple; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*



3. Matt Mullican, Talking about My Work, *16 March 1978. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

4. Robert Longo's Sound Distance of a Good Man, *18 April 1978. (Photo by Conrad Gleber; courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures, New York)*

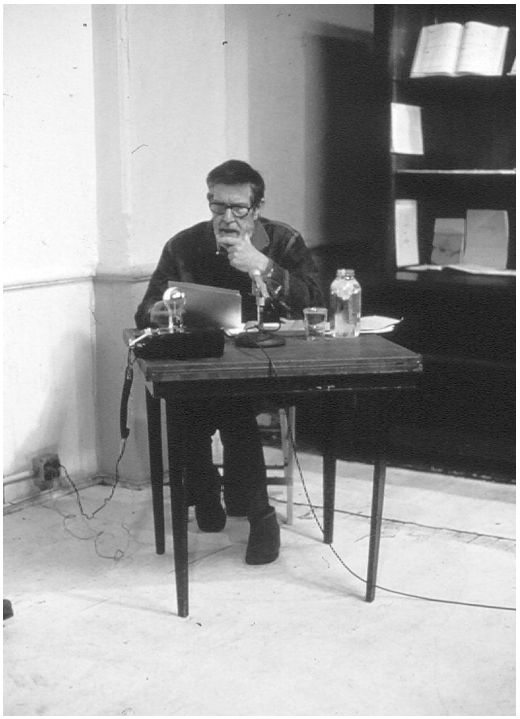
5. As Baby Ikki, his diapered toddler character, Michael Smith celebrates Baby Ikki's birthday, 6 June 1978. Smith, a video and performance artist, has also done many performances as his deadpan alter-ego Everyman character "Mike." (Photo by Jacki Apple; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)

slots for more than a few months in advance. Sometimes we would make space at the last minute for someone from overseas who was only in NYC for a brief visit, especially in the performance series, such as Krzysztof Zarebski, who performed *Zones of Content* on 14 November 1978.

We also decided that we would be open to many different aesthetics and sensibilities and show a wide variety of work. For the exhibitions, my goal was to choose the most exciting work in each genre—sculptural books, conceptual books, handmade paper books, photo/text books, painters' books, fiber and textile books, object books—stretching the definition of "book" as far as possible. We dared to show "edgy," unpredictable, and sometimes difficult work, as well as elegant, beautifully crafted, and poetic work. Raw, brazen, political, satirical, sexy, or just hilarious art could all be part of the mix. Thus the Furnace became known for a willingness to experiment, rather than for representing any one group or style. There was always the possibility of being surprised by something totally outside of one's expectations. In that sense the Furnace as a "site in process" was very much an artwork in itself. It was not very difficult to maintain this in the first few years: it was in tune with the culture of the downtown art world at the time.

What is remarkable is that more than a decade later in a very different cultural environment, Martha, with the backing of her Board and staff, was willing to uphold those values and principles on which the Furnace was founded and stand up against censorship and discrimination in the culture wars of the late '80s and early '90s, despite the risks and pressures.

The philosophy of egalitarian democracy applied not only to our policy for selecting and presenting artists but to all of us who worked at the Furnace. In that sense the Furnace was also a social experiment. Everyone did the dirty work and the fun stuff regardless of title. I picked up cigarette butts and cleaned the floor after performances. I drew my salary out of what was left over from the door after



6. Established artists were able to try out new works at the Furnace. John Cage, You Will Only Make Matters Worse Cont'd Pt. III, *10 January 1978. (Photo by Jacki Apple; courtesy of John Cage Trust)*

the artists received their half. Not much, since tickets cost only a few dollars, in keeping with our policy of charging only what our audiences could afford. We also didn't have any, or at least not very much, heat in the first two years. The winter of 1977 was especially brutal in New York City so on any particularly cold day my assistant, Howard Goldstein—who started as an intern from Rutgers University graduate program and could type and take dictation—and I would get into Martha's bed and turn on the electric blanket and work on letters and press releases with our gloves and scarves on.

You can see that even though it was only 27 years ago, it was a very different world. Technology was minimal. Personal computers were rare and we were happy to have a working IBM Selectric typewriter. So we wrote things out by hand and took turns at the typewriter. Later we got another one and I did my press releases on it myself. Videotaping performances was infrequent and usually in black-and-white. I shot color slides of the events. We didn't even have an answering machine.

Our communal ethos included our visitors, and it led to some very funny situations. It was after all still a rather raw space, and the first year and a half the bathroom had no enclosed walls. That meant the toilet sat in full view on a platform in back. It soon became apparent who was willing to use it and who wasn't. Women did, and men didn't, excusing themselves to walk two blocks to Magoo's.

During my time as curator I also established the WindowWorks series, the guest-curated Cabinet Shows, and several national and international traveling exhibitions. We wanted to maximize every available space. Initially the wall that separated the front exhibition space from the performance area was little more than glass-fronted old-fashioned book cabinets. They provided a perfect opportunity to invite other artists and writers to curate theme-based book exhibitions. The first of these, *Artists Notebooks, Scripts, and Scores* organized by Mayra Levy, gave us an inside look at the working processes of performance artists. Subsequent shows brought in work from other parts of the country and the world such as Lynne Tillman's *Recent, Rare, and Remarkable Books from Europe* (March 1978), Los Angeles artists book aficionados Judith Hoffberg and Joan Hugo's *Artwords and Bookworks* (June 1978), and Conrad Gleber's *Chicago Books* (May 1979). Projects for the periodical *S.M.S.* and for *Fandango* magazine were displayed (January 1979) as well as audio art in *Sound Works,* which I organized with guest curators Bob George, Sam Schoenbaum, John Duncan, William Furlong, and Charlie Morrow (April 1980).[2]

The Cabinet Shows also led to some international exchanges. Poet and art critic Wyston Curnow curated a show of artist books from New Zealand (4 May 1978) and artist Jill Scott did one from Australia (3 November 1979), which led to my organizing a traveling show of American books for museums and art spaces in those two countries. Howard Goldstein and I also curated a traveling show of one-of-a-kind *Visual and Sculptural Bookworks* for the Montclair Museum in New Jersey; the Nelson Gallery in Kansas City, Missouri; and the Seibu Museum in Tokyo, Japan. The latter led to one of those cultural misunderstandings that would have been funny were it not for the damage. Judy Simonian, an artist from Los Angeles had contributed several of her sculptural books, which were shown

Nigel Rolfe

Among the numerous performances presented during Franklin Furnace's first decade, the work of English-born artist Nigel Rolfe remains vivid. Rolfe, who has lived and worked in Dublin since the 1970s, had already carved out a distinctive niche for himself in Europe when he came to New York for the first time to perform *Drawing* at the Furnace on 6 December 1979.

While Rolfe's work was certainly rooted the traditions of early '70s body art and '60s actionists, his work differed. Rolfe used his body as both a drawing tool and as a performative sculpture, directly confronting and interacting with elemental materials and environments rather than employing the body as the site of the action itself. He defined sculptural performance as a process in which the artist directs the material employed within a given space, with all the conditions of the process being of equal importance. He saw himself as a demonstrator of visual changes rather than as a "performer" in the common usage of the term. In describing this process as "sculpture in motion" Rolfe stated, "I believe that we have a fundamental and primitive material understanding which transcends social codes [. . .] and my work often deals with the building of balance in materials followed by an often violent disturbance and collapse [. . .]" (in Apple 1979). These "real time" acts of physical stress were often pushed to the limits of endurance, as demonstrated in *Zone.*

Over several days Rolfe covered the floor of the performance area with a precise "drawing" of alternating, evenly spaced stripes of white flour and powdered brick-red terracotta clay dust, running vertically from the back wall toward where the audience would sit, and bordered on either side by a rectangular "holding" area of dust—white on the left, red on the right. This became the ground for the culminating performance in which Rolfe's naked body met the field of dust and transformed both the landscape and his body. On the evening of 6 December, Rolfe lay down parallel to the first stripe and slowly rolled his body across the striped pigment-dust and flour, from one side to the other and back. He continued this action repeatedly with increasing effort, over and over, each time blurring the lines and blending the colors, leaving imprints where the force of his body impacted the ground. Gradually the original drawing was replaced by this new drawing, and the two colors blended into a fleshy pink. At some point one became aware that the dust would soon be clogging Rolfe's ears, nose, and mouth, making breathing difficult and inhaling dangerous. This sense of elemental risk reinforced the visceral immediacy of the piece.

Although Rolfe was certainly not the first male artist to engage in such tests of endurance and stamina, his work seemed to strive beyond the preoccupation with his own body's limits and capacities. In retrospect I find in it parallels with Japanese *butoh* in its primal energies and imagery (the white-coated, loincothed body), and its underlying political implications.

This political aspect became more apparent in Rolfe's performance *The Rope* in April 1984. Taken in part from the complete work *The Rope That Binds Us Makes Them Free,* it was about and for Ireland, not only for its current period of political strife and unrest, but for its long history of oppression. In describing the impetus for the piece, Rolfe stated:

> In Leitrim, a county towards the North-West, we found cottages left long ago with everything intact. Like the Marie-Celeste float-

> ing in a deserted and barren landscape. Tea by the hearth, food on the table, the bed just slept in [. . .]. From one of the cottages, I took a ball of sisal twine covered with creosote. To bind my head with this ball. (Rolfe 1999)

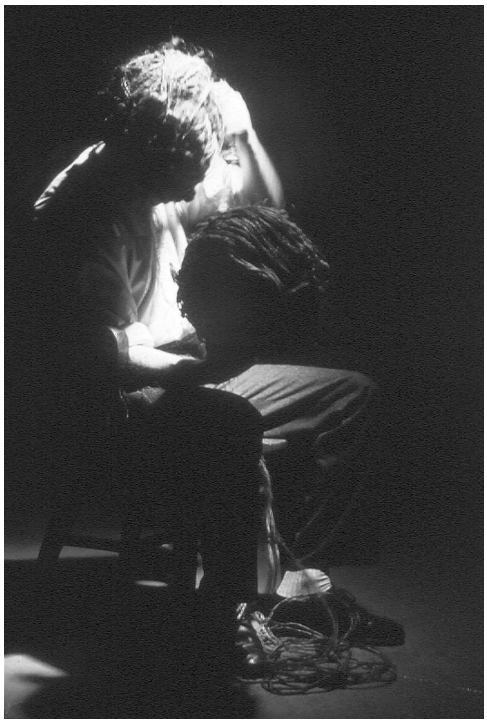
Subsequently, the work became about "those places, a memory, an echo of distant voices" (Rolfe 1999). But more: a symbol of Ireland itself.

Again the performance involved the interface between the material—in this case the creosote sisal twine—and the body. The reference is both more clear-cut and more brutal: separating the head from the body by binding the head with the twine until he could neither see, nor hear, nor freely breathe, leaving the body ungrounded, trapped, and immobilized, and the head senseless.

Rolfe describes *The Rope That Binds Us Makes Them Free:*

> A work that is both metaphor and metamorphosis. A process led transformation whereby the head becomes an iconic image of smothering intensity. The binding action is predictable but unexpected, a parallel for cultural isolation and parochial values and the grief that these strictures smother a society with. This is a rural image, organic but in the field of human recognition, something we can have never seen but all the same recognize. We anticipate the lack of breath, the isolation, the bondage. It protects us and we welcome its security but meanwhile and at the same time it smothers us, blinds us, renders us trapped and isolated without hearing or sight or breath or balance. In more sculptural or formal terms from without the figure assumes a medieval mantle. This twinehead is strange and funny but threatening and dark. A transgressive journey into the pagan, a wrapped head, bound repeatedly on the surface but under the skin of time both then but now. It is in the archaeology of the soul, in the territory of psychic history. It is of the earth, the smell of the soil is in its gestures, its ritual, the craft of the hand on hand process. This is a real time action, no tricks, nothing hid-

1. Nigel Rolfe, Drawing, *6 December 1979. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*



2. Nigel Rolfe, The Rope, *22 April 1984. The performance was part of the larger work* The Rope That Binds Us Makes Them Free, *performed from 1984 to 1988. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

> den, across real time passing. Again and again and then again but somehow time stands still, a few moments or an hour it makes no difference. We are outside but on the inside, we bear witness but take part. To breathe but to be without breath, to see but to have our eyes bound and blinded, to hear but this in turn becomes muffled and withdrawn, the senses are edited and then withdrawn. Inside is an inner world, foetal and far away. Outside is now the domain of the rope man. The creosote sizal twine features are the all turning and seeing face. The rope head looks back and follows around the room taking time and slowly taking stock, the transformation is complete. (Rolfe n.d.)

When I met Rolfe in Dublin in the summer of 1979, I knew that his work was guided by a deep sense of urgency that was already beginning to fade in American performance as the influences of media and entertainment came to the forefront in the fast-approaching 1980s. Thus it seemed imperative to bring Rolfe to the Furnace, where he not only fulfilled, but outstripped our expectations.

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open with all the pages heavily crinkled and crushed, giving them a fan-like effect. The Japanese thought the books had been damaged in shipping and in an effort to return them in proper shape they had carefully ironed all the pages flat. Judy was devastated, and explaining the mistake to the Seibu Museum for insurance compensation involved some very confused and confusing communications.

I am especially proud of all the "firsts," the opportunities we created for emerging artists regardless of age. During Carole Forget and Kay Hines's first exhibitions of their sculptural bookworks (1 June and 29 April 1978, respectively), we were visited by the noted collector and art patron, the late Patrick Lannon, and I convinced him to purchase several of their pieces. All the money went directly to the artists. In 1978 three artists received their first NEA grants after having shows at the Furnace. One of the artists, Mimi Smith, had her 1982 politically charged, media-based window installation *Art Lobby* exhibited at the Wall Street headquarters of the Chase Manhattan Bank when the Puerto Rican Liberation Group FLAN bombed the bank. In the grand tradition of the avantgarde, the Furnace has never shied away from controversy, preferring to support the artist's right to freedom of expression, even if some might find that unnerving or offensive. Long before attracting the attention or arousing the ire of bureaucrats, funders, and politicians in the '80s and '90s, works with potentially inflammatory political and/or sexual content found a home at the Furnace, though at the time I don't think we thought of any of it as being that "radical." Rather, it was just part of a curatorial philosophy that supported diversity.

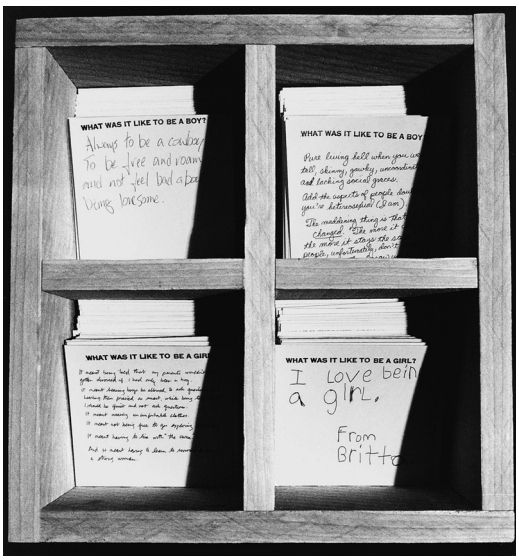
Several examples come to mind, particularly in relation to the impact of feminism on the '70s art world, and the feminist roots of both Martha's and my own art. We gave our artists a lot of room. We didn't try to make the Furnace be for one style or even two or three. We tried to stay as wide open as possible. Thus we could show Mary Beth Edelson's goddess-based narratives and rituals (*Story Gathering Box,* March 1978) and photographer Jackie Livingston's matter-of-fact, at-home family portraits of her naked husband and child. Livingston's images hardly seemed like they would be the center of a storm of controversy and charges of pornography, over which Cornell University fired Livingston from her teaching job. Yet the controversy over the work of this recipient of a New York State Council on the Arts grant demonstrated the double standard that allowed the use of the female body in any manner whatsoever by men, while the display of male frontal nudity and male genitals was still not acceptable art—especially when the artist was a woman. Rather ironic since Livingston's husband was reclining in a manner not unlike Manet's *Olympia.*

We also showed Los Angeles performance artist Richard Newton's books of color Xerox photographs (November 1978) from performances as well as a film that played both sides of the gender issue. In *You Take Me to a Room in Brawley and We Smell Onions,* a piece performed in a motel in the desert town of Brawley, California, Newton inhabited several personas, two in drag, first as a white-veiled virginal bride, then as a black underwear-clad whore, and finally in an S&M scenario as a naked man in chains. Newton's appropriation of imagery used by feminists to express women's enslavement would have been considered questionable had he not based the piece on an autobiographical text portraying an awful wedding night by his then-girlfriend Linda Burnham, the founder of *High Performance* magazine. He employed these roles as commentary on the situation of the artist, thus equating it with the historic position of women. Some might have argued with that analogy since Newton, as a straight white male, still held a position of privilege in the art world.

In *Touch a Penis,* however, Newton displayed his own ambivalence and vul-

nerability by exhibiting his organ as an anonymous piece of flesh hanging through a hole in a sheet and offering it up to viewers to touch. The potential dangers of the situation placed the piece within the realm of feminist precedents set by Barbara Smith in her 1973 performance *Feed Me,* which allowed for the possibility of sex with the artist as a mutually agreed upon act; and Yoko Ono's 1964 *Cut Piece,* where audience members were invited to cut off pieces of her clothing. In that context however it could also be seen as a boy's competitive bid for attention: "Hey, Look at MINE."

Perhaps one of the most memorable and certainly more disturbing works for me was the December 1977 reading by Jane DeLynn of an excerpt from her untitled novel. Posited as a feminist work, it was a story of violence and retribution in which three women pay back a man who had raped a friend by subjecting him to an equal degree of physical and sexual abuse and humiliation, not merely as revenge but as an act of empowerment. The man in question was no cliché redneck in a bar with too many beers, but an affluent professional in a high-rise office. Bound and gagged, he was left by his assailants on the floor to be found in the morning by his colleagues, face down, pantless, with a dildo up his ass. The cold precision of DeLynn's language and delivery along with the vivid explicitness of her imagery, seemed both dangerous and thrilling in its implications.



7. Mary Beth Edelson, Story Gathering Box, *1978. These story gathering boxes began in 1972 and are ongoing. The first survey of the story boxes at Franklin Furnace included 13 wooden boxes that contained cards stamped with various topics; spectators wrote on the cards and left them for others to read. (Photo courtesy of Mary Beth Edelson)*

In addition to all those artists who showed or performed at the Furnace and have since received acclaim and renown, of equal interest for me are those who have not received the same degree of recognition despite the quality of their work. The selectiveness of official history, like memory, is always biased. Thus in many ways it is more fascinating to reexamine those artists whose work still resonates for me, even if they may have disappeared from the public eye, and/or dropped out of the art world completely. I have lost touch with Martine Aballea, Carole Forget, Judy Simonian, and Jackie Livingston. And Frank Young, whose ambitious September 1978 installation *Frozen Books & Newpaper Pieces* filled the entire gallery space with huge books constructed out of thousands of newspapers. But I know that Kay Hines is still an active working artist living in lower Manhattan, though she has never received the kind of recognition her work has warranted. She had to be coaxed and prodded into having her very first show at the Furnace (April 1978), and it still remains one of the more memorable. Hines stretched the form of the book to that of a poetic "machine," or a text-producing sculpture, while holding fast to the primacy of the intimate interaction between reader and writer. Her "books" were never static. They required a physical gesture of engagement. In that sense they were performative, and suggestive of her early background as a filmmaker. Among my favorites was a large rotating cylindrical book with bicycle pedals. If you wanted to read it you had to pedal. The other was a vintage Coke machine filled with green Perrier bottles each containing a "message"; an epigram from the mind of the artist/writer was spit out by the machine with the insertion of a coin. I still have mine, and every so often give it a read when I need a little inspiration. Never having made any concentrated or determined efforts at promoting herself, 25 years later Hines remains idiosyncratic and elusive, despite her prodigious talents. Yet she continues to produce complex, thought-provoking work which she occasionally shows.

California Feminists

Cheri Gaulke and Linda Nishio

In the 1970s Los Angeles was the heartland of feminist performance, much of which had grown out of the Women's Studies program headed by Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro in the early days of CalArts, and the Women's Building in downtown L.A., a hotbed of feminist art activities. In addition to having presented several of L.A.'s first-generation feminists—Barbara Smith, Leslie Labowitz, Nancy Buchanan—and in keeping with a policy of supporting the work of emerging artists, the Furnace featured works from the next generation, including Cheri Gaulke and Linda Nishio.

Cheri Gaulke
Broken Shoes, *13 March 1981*

As a member of the Feminist Art Workers (Nancy Angelo, Cheri Gaulke, Vanalyne Green, Laurel Klick) and as a solo artist, Gaulke participated in the 1981 L.A./London Lab performance series, conceived by Martha Wilson. *"I felt Feminism was the most important issue of the '70s, and it was high time to see how women artists from different sexual environments presented their work, and how they dealt with their local conditions,"* Wilson stated in the catalog introduction (in Wilson 1982).

Curated by Suzanne Lacy (L.A.) and Susan Hiller (London) the series served as a vehicle for bringing feminist artists from two different cultural environments together. An articulate leader in the L.A. feminist community, Lacy had already received widespread attention for her own community-based work. Her criteria for selecting artists was to highlight different aspects of California performance and to represent women who had not had much exposure in New York.

Gaulke's appearance—she was a young, beautiful lesbian—in many ways defied the unglamorous stereotypes of '70s feminists, while at the same time her work was firmly rooted in the feminist principles and politics of her California predecessors. In retrospect her performance at Franklin Furnace, *Broken Shoes,* represents an aesthetic bridge between the generations of the '70s and the '80s. Originally performed in the Los Angeles series *Public Spirit, Broken Shoes* was an exploration of women's feet and shoes as a metaphor for female sexuality and mobility in society; high-heeled shoes, often referred to in the common fashion vernacular as "fuck me" shoes, were a central visual feature. The sexual implications of these shoes and the fetishism that accompanies them played off of vivid descriptions of the ancient Chinese practice of footbinding, which is also associated with a fetishistic sexual aesthetic. In both instances women not only pay the price of easy mobility for the pleasure of the male gaze and male sexual arousal, but suffer pain and injury in the process.

The performance used the entire space of the Furnace—the entryway, the downstairs performance area, and the mezzanine loft. As the audience arrived, they were greeted by women dressed in loose white pants and shirts and red high heels. They carefully and with intensity removed each audience member's shoes and placed them in the performance space. Later in the performance, the audience's shoes were attached to strings from the balcony and made to dance like marionettes.

The accompanying soundtrack was comprised of various first-person stories: a young Chinese woman's account of having her feet bound from the age of seven; a contemporary woman's harrowing tale of injuries incurred when she tripped in her *"sexy, tough, shoes with attitude"* and fell down a flight of stairs. The Chinese woman's story is a model of women's psychological and physical oppression across centuries and cultures:

> I was born at the end of the Manchu Dynasty. In accordance with custom, at age seven I began binding. Mother showed me a new pair of phoenix-tip shoes and beguiled me with these words: "Only with bound feet can you wear such beautiful shoes. Otherwise, you'll become a large-footed barbarian and everyone will laugh at and feel ashamed of you." I felt moved by a desire to be beautiful [. . .]. Every other day, the binding was made tighter and sewn up, and each time slightly smaller shoes had to be worn. The sides of the shoes were hard, and I could only get

1. & 2. Cheri Gaulke's Broken Shoes *utilized the entire space at Franklin Furnace, including the mezzanine loft. 13 March 1981. (Photos by Sheila Roth)*

> into them by using force. I was compelled to walk on them in the courtyard; they were called distance-walking shoes. I strove to cling to life, suffering indescribable pain.
>
> —anonymous Chinese woman (in Gaulke 1982)

The slender, svelte Gaulke, glamorously attired in a shiny tight-fitting Chinese dress, played a woman "trapped" on the balcony above the audience. At times she used crutches to help her stand on absurdly exaggerated custom-made high heels. At another time, she manipulated a miniature skeleton with bound feet that glowed eerily in the dark. Toward the end of the performance she "escaped" from the balcony by forming a ladder out of crutches tied together. With her bare feet firmly planted on solid ground, the liberated Gaulke, together with the women in white whose feet had been painted bloody red, danced in celebration of survival, freedom, and community.

During the series, Gaulke also performed *Heartbeats* with the Feminist Art Workers, a collaborative performance group formed at the Woman's Building to create work about feminist art and education. *Heartbeats* was a faux panel discussion/performance/lecture about what it means to work collaboratively, both in terms of the group dynamic and in relation to the individualistic art world.

Gaulke's last performance was at Highways, Santa Monica in 1992, and she has since moved on to other media such as video and sculptural public art works, including a completed work for the Pasadena Gold Line Metro-Rail Station in Los Angeles titled *Water Street River of Dreams* (2003) and *Seven Generations* for the Lake View Terrace Public Library in Los Angeles (2003). She is currently designing three bridges over the L.A. River, creating three glowing glass and steel towers for the City of Lakewood, and developing a memorial for Filipino World War II veterans. Gaulke also recently received a COLA grant to produce a series of artist's books. Although her subject matter and media have changed, she remains committed to community-based art and the collaborative processes involved.

Linda Nishio
Cheap Talk (Great Wall Series), *18 October 1979*

While Linda Nishio also participated in the L.A./London Lab series as the *Ghost in the Machine* (7 March 1981), she came to Franklin Furnace in 1979 to do her first public performance work, *Cheap Talk (Great Wall Series)*. Unlike the more visceral, live action, process-based work of earlier Los Angeles feminists, Nishio's piece signaled the '80s generational shift to media-based and media-influenced work. Combining film, slide images, spoken and visual text, and live action, Nishio engaged in an orchestrated dialog with her own recorded projected image. As she did in much of her earlier work (when she was still fresh from her graduate studies with Geoff Hendricks at Rutgers), the artist was preoccupied with personal angst and issues of identity. Nishio introduced into her discourse material that would become central to L.A. performance a decade later: her Asian (Japanese American) ethnicity.

Nishio used the myth and cliché of the "artist as sufferer" as a vehicle for her own rage and self-critique. The wall, rather than the space, became the central stage for activity and the site upon which the action and interaction took place. The wall was the site of aggression and confrontation with the self as other: Nishio amplified the sound of her own head banging against the wall. Live action reacted to the filmed action and visa versa, as her present persona and recorded alter ego sparred, as monologs slipped into dialogs, and back again. Words, sentences, and phrases were interrupted and split apart and the audience had to string them together to attach meaning and complete a thought. Sometimes the words were visual text on film, sometimes they were spoken; sometimes the words were projected onto Nishio's body. Freudian slips were acknowledged and referred to throughout the work.

At one point the image on the wall was a color film in which the camera panned up and down Nishio's nude body; she paced in front of the screen and carried on a dialog with the film voice.

> Live: What's bothering you?
> Film: Nothing
> Live: Once it's off your chest, you'll feel a thousand times better.
> Film: My chest is flat. I've nothing to hide.
> (*Film image: FREUDIAN SLIP*)
> Performer as narrator: She confuses chest for wall. What she meant to say was, "The wall is flat and I've nowhere to hide."

A little further on:

> Live: Do you think I like this division you put between us?
> Film: For the time being, yes. It reminds me of the Great Wall of China.
> Live: I'm familiar with walls and you're not Chinese.
> Film: I'm close. My eyes are shallow but wide apart. I am a deep thinker.
> Live: You're like me.
> (*Film image: FREUDIAN SLIP*) (Nishio 1979)

One of the greatest challenges of any artist-run organization is raising the money to keep it afloat, pay the staff, and meet the artists changing demands for services and support. In the late '70s the hoops one had to jump through to obtain any kind of private-sector funding seemed somewhat unsavory. Though I must say Martha approached the task with surprising equanimity; the fact that the Furnace was able to sustain its radical programming along with its continually expanding archive for more than two decades, is a testament to her skill and perseverance, especially since she has never compromised her own eccentric style in her pursuit of support.

Still, there were occasions to make fund-raising (something I have an aversion

3. Linda Nishio, Cheap Talk, *18 October 1979. Performance with film, slides, and audio. From the* Great Wall *series, 1979–1981. (Photo by Mark Clair; courtesy of Linda Nishio)*

Later the same images returned in black and white, and the patter was in couplets from film to live and back again, like a Ping-Pong game: "I'm not myself"/ "I stand behind my words"; "I extend myself in and out of frame"/ "I use my body like a paintbrush"/ "I'm a victim of rape" / "I'm standing here" (Nishio 1979).

Nishio's angst was intellectual and ironic, self-conscious and self-critical, with language rather than action as the primary medium. She used the body as image as the site of a discourse in which visual and verbal signifiers played off each other. And in that sense she had more in common with the next wave of feminists, such as Cindy Sherman, than with the generation that created Woman House and the Women's Building.

In 2004 Nishio is still an active artist in Los Angeles, working with a variety of media. The recipient of individual artist grants from the California Community Foundation, the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, and the Durfee Foundation, she recently exhibited sculptures, digital drawings, and photography from the *R2W: Rec'reate to Wisdom* series at the Japanese American Community and Cultural Center in L.A.

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1982 "Introduction." Franklin Furnace *Flue.* Special double issue, *L.A./London Catalog* and *Sex, Performance, and the '80s*, 3, 3/4:1.

to!) into an enjoyable art event. By 1979 we had such a sizable and notable roster of artists to call on that we decided to have a benefit that would give artists an opportunity to exhibit their culinary talents and would attract affluent guests to buy tickets to devour the goodies. The Paper Plate Benefit was held in May with a buffet of great platters of exquisite food prepared by artists who were also known for their cooking. The guests acted as if they hadn't eaten in days rushing to sample as many of the gourmet dishes as they could, and I recall a very large fish becoming nothing more than a head and skeleton within 15 minutes. Who knew rich people could eat so much so fast! You would have thought they were bidding on precious art commodities rather than an ephemeral experience.

8. Artists call on their culinary talents for a Furnace fundraiser. Carolee Schneemann at the Paper Plate Benefit, 1979. (Photo by Toba Tucker; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)

I left the Furnace in 1980 with an NEA Museums Program grant to curate an historical exhibition on artists spaces of 1969 to 1975 that were no long in existence—before access to that material disappeared. A comparatively modest but historically important exhibition and catalog opened at the New Museum in May 1981. More than two decades later we are once again attempting to document the history of an extraordinary artists space before those of us who were there are gone. The Franklin Furnace has become virtual, but not entirely. It is still radical in an increasingly conservative era, still fluid in its ability to evolve, still committed to presenting experimental work from emerging and submerged artists, still giving form and voice to the ephemeral, the untried, the esoteric, the edgy, still recognizing historical precedents, still empowering the artist, and holding fast to its philosophical goals: "to make the world safe for avantgarde art." Will it survive beyond Martha Wilson's unique leadership and tenure? Will the next generation meet the challenge to carry on and remain true to the founding principles? Hard to say. But a record of the Furnace's accomplishments will be there for future students, artists, and historians to ponder. And I am proud to have been a part of it.

Notes

1. For a complete list of performances at Franklin Furnace, see "The Unwritten History Project" at <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/archives/archives.html>.
2. *Sound Works* at Franklin Furnace consisted of "sound works and related visual materials including scripts, scores, photographs from performances, albums, etc." (press release). In conjunction, there were six live performances including Arleen Schloss's "play on letters and rhymes" on 17 April 1980, in which "precise verbal execution of sounds using systems of memory and improvisation [was] combined with video film, and slide projection"; The Idio Orchestra (3 April); The Social Climbers performing "five hours of modern renditions of world pop classics" (8 April); Y Pants, three women artists who performed on "amplified toy instruments accompanied by tape loops" (15 April); Louise Guay, a Montreal artists whose "bilingual, multimedia, sound performance" was composed of "fragmented narratives" (22 April); and culminated with poet John Giorno reading from recent work (29 April). Marking the fact that this was a primarily aural exhibition, *Sound Works* was "planned in part for a blind audience, a minority audience usually overlooked by the visual art world" (press release).

Jacki Apple *is a visual, performance, and media artist, audio composer, writer, producer, and educator whose works have been exhibited, performed, published, and broadcast internationally. She is an Adjunct Professor at Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA, where she teaches modernist cultural history and performance art, and is a member of the Faculty Council. She was Curator of Exhibitions and Performance at Franklin Furnace from 1976 to 1980, and is a former Media Arts and Contributing Editor of* High Performance *magazine. She lives in Los Angeles, CA.*

Money Matters

SANT: Since your life after 1976 has been almost synonymous with Franklin Furnace, I'd like you to give us an idea of why you chose to move to New York City and eventually dedicate your professional life to this organization you've founded.

WILSON: As you know, I was living in Canada, in Halifax, with my boyfriend. He dumped my ass after we had already bought a house and restored it. Well, he was a gracious guy. He paid me the equity that he and I agreed I had put into the property that we owned in common so that I could afford to leave. He gave me $5,000 when he sold the property.

I had been tiptoeing around the idea of calling myself an artist: I'm going to be an artist and I'm going to put my personality back together somewhere else. Richards just dumped my ass, so I have to reconstruct my personality from the ground up. So I decided to go to New York and called Simone Forti. Simone had been a visiting artist in Halifax at the Nova Scotia College for Art and Design and had rashly offered to be available if anybody wanted to come to New York and crash there. So I called her and told her that I wanted to come to New York in a flash, and I lived with her for 30 days. I got to New York and had to find a place to live, ended up living in Billy Apple's studio on 23rd Street, but Jacki wanted to divorce Billy's ass. So I moved to 112 Franklin Street and at that point Richards had sold the house in Canada and had given me the check for $5,000.

SANT: What did you do with that $5,000?

WILSON: I basically set up my living situation, but I used the remainder of the $5,000 as my capital investment in this new business at Franklin Furnace.

Brian O'Doherty took me to lunch with Richard Kostelanetz and said the same thing, you know, I'm the head of the Visual Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, we want to support budding young arts organizations, and you can apply to us for money.

SANT: Before you started working on Franklin Furnace, where else had you worked in New York?

WILSON: One year I worked in Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and one year I worked at Brooklyn College. Then Brooklyn College fired the English and Art teachers in the great budget cutback of 1975, and I was on Unemployment. And Unemployment was the first grant I ever got. I never looked for a job for a minute. I used the money to start my business and I knew I wanted to be a not-for-profit organization.

SANT: Didn't you need more money than what you got from Unemployment Insurance to run Franklin Furnace and for your own living expenses?

WILSON: I needed more money, absolutely! At that time the state and federal agencies were all actually seeking out worthy projects and saying you can apply to us for money. So the lady from the New York State Council on the Arts came down, looked us over, checked out what we were doing and said, the deadline is March 1st and you can apply for money. And Brian O'Doherty took me to lunch with Richard Kostelanetz and said the same thing, you know, I'm the head of the Visual Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, we want to support budding young arts organizations, and you can apply to us for money. So I did that, and in the first year I got $5,000 from the New York State Coun-

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cil on the Arts. The budget for the first year was $12,000 so it must have been five from the NEA. And then the rest of the money that I had to work with was $2,000 left over from this check from Richards, and Unemployment Insurance. That was the $12,000 that comprised the first year's budget.

SANT: What did you do with that budget during the first year?

WILSON: Rent. Rent was a big number. Rent was $500 a month, which I was already splitting with my roommate. That was a lot of money for us! There was rent and stationery. Postage. A lot of postage. Printing and Xeroxing and stuff like that. All the earliest archives are on carbon paper—we kept carbons because that's what we did at Abrams. My year at Abrams was extremely valuable because I learned how a business works. It wasn't like graduate school, which was all about ideas—very nice. It was about how you actually publish something and the way you actually publish something is you keep copies of everything. So I was the air traffic controller for the editorial side.

SANT: Did you also hire people to work for you?

WILSON: Not really. At first I only had volunteer help.

SANT: When did you start hiring people?

WILSON: This is a very good story: Barbara Quinn, a painter, came in to Franklin Furnace and said, "Look I have raised money in order to keep bread on my table—that's what I've done in my professional life to keep my body and soul together. I'm an artist and but I also do this fundraising and you need to hire me because you obviously don't have a flying fuck of an idea what you're doing here." And she was absolutely right. I thought, well I'm getting $75 a week from Unemployment and she wants $40 a day that leaves me with $35 a week left over for myself. If I don't hire her I die but if I do hire her I'll die also, so, I'm going to hire her to work for me one day a week and help me to raise money. She taught me completely invaluable things: for example, if you write to a foundation and they reject your application, wait six months and you write back. I had no idea! It's laughable to look at it now, but she taught me how to do it. The other thing she figured out was, this is work that moves: it's temporary installation work, it's performance work and books. All these things move but visual artists who make painting and sculpture are making this stuff and they understand it and they will help us. So she organized our first art sale. She got big-time artists, her colleagues. At first she asked them to donate work then later we figured out that if we offer to split 50-50 with the artists we could get much better work.

SANT: Working like a gallery.

WILSON: Yes. It happened maybe once a year. She organized the *500 and Under Art Sale,* the *Sweet Art Sale:* for our fifth birthday party, we commissioned birthday cakes and then sold them to the public, and Laurie Anderson performed twice. It was a giant effort! I don't even know how we survived these things. She made a set of William Wegman prints which we raffled off. Anyway, we came up with schemes to raise money.

SANT: How long did she work for you?

WILSON: Ten years, I think. She started pretty early. Jacki Apple, Barbara Quinn, and I ran the joint for some years. Then Jacki and I had a falling out and she subsequently moved to California.

SANT: What had you hired Jacki to do?

WILSON: Actually I never hired Jacki. Jacki programmed the performances and split the gate with the artists, and that's how she made money. She wasn't really making any money from her gate at Franklin Furnace and she was splitting the gate with the artists.

SANT: Was that the only money that the artists were making? The split profit from the gate?

WILSON: In the very early days, yes. But later we started to raise grant money and pay fees. I was trying to raise $100 a year, so we started out with a $100 and the next year we paid $200.

SANT: Was the grant money in addition to half the gate?

WILSON: In the very beginning it was just half the gate, but later we decided it didn't matter. We wanted to unhook the number of people who came from the value of the work. The work can be very valuable and 2 people would be there or it can be not so hot and a 150 people would be there. So the grants made it possible for us to offer a fee. So the artists knew that they were going to get $350 for this gig.

The artists always knocked themselves out. We would offer $300, let's say, and Charles Dennis installed a chain-link fence, and Ichi Ikeda created a six-inch-deep swimming pool that filled up the whole basement space. They always spent way more. I think the prize might go to Laurie Beth Clark who spent $15,000 on her performance installation, bringing 12 people out from Wisconsin and all these props and back-wiring my electrical box. The artists plunged in because it was an opportunity to perform in New York—they put their own resources in as well.

SANT: Did they raise money from other sources too?

WILSON: They raised money. Maybe they had other grants too, who knows? And maybe their grandmother gave them the money. I think Laurie Beth Clark probably worked for a year to get up the money to come and have this gig in New York. It was a very big deal after a while to have this opportunity to present your stuff to the New York audience.

SANT: There was an admission fee for the performances, but was there an admission fee for the installations?

WILSON: No.

SANT: Did you pay a fee for both performances and installations?

This was all fine in the '70s, but then the '80s started and we were expected to institutionalize and become professionals. And that meant first of all take the decisions out of the hands of the artist, which I was not going to do.

WILSON: Everybody got a fee. It was one of the requirements of the grants: "We'll give you this money but you must pay artists' fees." And all artists were fine with that! Later I made it a conscious decision to hire artists to be my Directors of Development and all my staff. The only people on the staff in 25 years who traditionally have not been artists are the financial managers. By hiring artists and having artists on staff, the first response that an artist gets when they come to the door is friendly, warm, and understanding. And we know you're going to flip out at six o'clock right before the doors open for your show as you're hammering the last nail into the wall. And this is all fine because we understand, you're an artist and that's what artists do. This was all fine in the '70s, but then the '80s started and we were expected to institutionalize and become professionals. And that meant first of all take the decisions out of the hands of the artist, which I was not going to do.

SANT: Expected by who?

WILSON: By the National Endowment for the Arts, mainly. They were the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. If you could get an NEA grant for any project then you could get other money to join, because they were an imprimatur of some kind.

SANT: Besides this perspective of legitimacy with other grant-giving institutions, did the NEA also shape the way Franklin Furnace could or couldn't create a comfortable working environment for the artists you wanted to present?

WILSON: Yes. For example I would ask for blanket money for my entire season, and I wouldn't tell them who the artists are going to be. And after a decade had gone by they started to say, "No, we really want to know, we don't want you to pick the artists, we want to pick the artists, we want to know who we are giving the money to. We want to know if Annie Sprinkle is in your program . . ."

SANT: Surely this didn't just happen overnight. Did it? What led to this situation?

WILSON: Take the final report for *Teenytown* [1988]. *Teenytown* was a project of Thought Music, which was Robbie McCauley, Jessica Hagedorn, Laurie Carlos, and John Woo. They designed the whole thing with old animated film footage. It had live performance, recorded sound; it was a multimedia event.[1] We got an NEA grant for that, but by this point we were in the middle of a ten-year NEA audit [1985–1995] for which we had to show the front and the back of every single check stapled to the invoice, every expense. And send it to Washington and they had to approve it and send it back. So can you imagine how many thousands of dollars it cost them to audit my $5,000 grant. It's just unbelievable, but anyway, at the end of the grant I had already sent in and verified all the expenses according to the budget category that I had originally proposed. Now it's the end of the grant and I have to send in an organizational chart, a written narrative report, written financial report, a list of all the other programs that I've done, and an audited financial statement, to append to this final report. A huge amount of paperwork for a relatively small grant. I think this is a control deal. Through the money, they control these organizations that are getting the money.

SANT: And do you still apply to get this grant?

WILSON: Yes.

SANT: And it's still the same amount?

WILSON: No. That was under the Inter-Arts program, which no longer exists. Then the NEA itself came under fire. At first, under Ronald Reagan, they were being run by Frank Hodsoll, who was an attorney and a friend of Ronald Reagan's who got a nice plum job after this one somewhere else in the government. He dismantled the critics' fellowships first. We didn't see the writing on the wall yet, we didn't understand that the whole fellowship program was going down the drain. It took a decade for it to go down, but where I am going with this is the NEA itself reorganized multiple times to hold off congressional efforts to kill it altogether as an agency. In the old days there used to be all these different programs: Dance, Music, Visual Arts. Now there are four programs: Heritage and Preservation; Access, Arts Learning; Creation; and Organizational Capacity.[2] So dance will be under Creation, for example. All the programs have been subsumed into these larger efforts.

SANT: Do you get it every year?

WILSON: No. Actually in the old days, in the '70s and the early '80s we could pretty much count on a grant to support our entire season from the NEA Visual Arts Program. Then the fateful day came when my support material including a performance by Scarlet O was played for the National Council of the Arts and they rescinded FF's $25,000 seasonal grant. That was at the end of 1991 for the 1992 season. Then the Peter Norton Family Foundation replaced it! They just thought it was absurd that the grant was rescinded.

SANT: How did they hear about the situation?

WILSON: I wrote them a letter. One of my Board members said: "The Peter Norton Family Foundation will look at a one-page letter and they'll make a decision in 30 days." They did work fast, and we didn't have to send them an armload of paper.

SANT: And was that the only time they gave you money?

WILSON: So far, yes.

SANT: And how has your relationship with the NEA been in recent years?

WILSON: We got a $10,000 Creation Grant for our first full season with Pseudo in 1998,[3] then we got zero for the second year, so in 2000 we went for Heritage and Preservation again.

SANT: Have you ever sat down with your board, or with someone else, maybe a financial consultant, and specifically discussed changing the way you operate so you can raise more money?

WILSON: With Franklin Furnace's Advancement grant in 1983 I hired Elisabeth Devolder Scarlatos. I've had development consultants. Barbara Quinn was the first one. Second one was Jackie Schiffman, who was with me for a billion years. And we started our education program under Jackie's guidance. And then I got a Capital Campaign consultant when we were to become a downtown art emporium. Steve White was my Capital Campaign consultant. Each person fed into how we put together the budget.

SANT: Was there ever an instance where you saw Franklin Furnace being taken in a different direction than you wanted it to go just so you could raise money?

WILSON: Barbara Quinn and I had the biggest fight one can imagine when she said, "Look, there's money available for us to catalog our collection," and I said I have zero interest doing that. I have no interest in becoming a library and spending our time cataloging. And she said, "I'm sorry! There's money available to catalog the collection, and to do the right thing we have to catalog our collection." So, there's this towering fight, battle of wills. She won! We applied for the money, we got the money, we cataloged the collection. Is that selling out? I don't know. I think one of the jobs of the development director is to say, or Jackie would say, "There is more money available for education programs and we have an education program. Why don't we grow the education program and apply for more money to support it?"

SANT: Is there something that hasn't changed with regards to money matters and Franklin Furnace over the past 25 years?

WILSON: Well, there's never enough money!

The formula for putting together the budget, which started out very, very small and then grew to $400,000 in the '80s, than shrank again down to $300,000 or so, the formula has never been a constant. It has always changed slightly each year, how we patched together the money for the program. In the earlier years it was over 50 percent federal money. Later on, during the cultural wars, private foundations picked up where the feds crapped out. New York State Council on the Arts has been steadily supportive for the whole time, 25 years. And now that we are in the virtual state we're again finding new support, whole new foundations that didn't exist before, for example the Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science, and Technology, a foundation started by the inventor of the SoftImage software, based in Montreal. They are giving new money to art that exists on the Internet. The whole foundation didn't even exist 20 years ago.

I like to pay as fat and fluffy artists' fees as possible, so a large portion of the budget always goes out as artists' fees. During the beginning of the '80s I was applying successfully for fairly large NEA grants, $30,000, 25, 12. Now it has gotten smaller. We put in a good spin on that and said we streamlined and downsized and the reality is that we'd like to have more money, but we do the best we can. We can only have an archivist for two days a week, because I can only afford him for two days a week.

SANT: Are you and the administrator the only full-time employees?

WILSON: No, I'm the only one full-time.

SANT: Do you need a full-time professional staff to run Franklin Furnace?

WILSON: No. We have figured out the drill after all these years.

Notes

1. For more on *Teenytown,* see the "Unwritten History Project" on the Franklin Furnace website <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/archives/archives.html>.
2. The NEA has since reorganized its categories yet again. See <http://www.arts.gov/grants/recent/index.html>.
3. Pseudo Programs, Inc., provided the first platform for Franklin Furnace's "Live Art on the Internet" programs between 1998 and 2000. For more on Pseudo see Toni Sant's interview with Galinsky in this issue.

continued . . .

Being There

The Tribeca Neighborhood of Franklin Furnace

Alan Moore with Debra Wacks

When Martha Wilson opened the Franklin Furnace in 1976, the downtown neighborhood called "Tribeca" was getting hot. It was full of artists, and the venues that served them were crowding in. But there were limits to the degree to which artists would be able to make this district their own. Ultimately, norms of quiet tastefulness would prevail over artistic fancy. An exemplary incident was the 1985 renovation of Teddy's nightclub. This low-slung building was a streamlined survivor from a 1950s "rat pack" style. Renamed El Internacional, it was outfitted with a spastically colorful tiled floor, which extended out onto the sidewalk, and topped with a green verdigris crown. Inside, every room was painted a different color. Outside, the old name of the place, in a casual loungy typeface, was still visible beneath a black-and-white cowhide paint job. Once a neighborhood nightclub, it was now a trendy international tapas bar. Comment by locals to the *New York Times* was scathing (Miller 1985:B4).[1] Artists and politicians alike disapproved the garishness of the place and its foul cooking odors. Martha Wilson of the nearby art space Franklin Furnace was one of the few who voiced approval of the décor (1985:B4).

It's no surprise that Martha Wilson would have a different take. As the founder of the artist books and performance venue Franklin Furnace, she is a champion of the avantgarde and an advocate for artists—and Teddy's redecorator was the artist Antonio Miralda,[2] a Spaniard known for comestible spectacles. Miralda designed a stage set, complete with a facsimile of the Statue of Liberty's crown—at a time when the real one was veiled during conservation. After it opened, Miralda put on a fabulous sidewalk "floor show" performance in front of the new El Internacional.

This little incident is about taste, about the look and feel of a neighborhood. By 1985, Tribeca had greatly evolved as a district since artists had first moved into its cold-water lofts in the 1950s (Allen 1999; Harvey 2000). It was already established as a genteel quarter of the city and one of its wealthiest. From 1792 to 1965, it was the hub of the wholesale food trade, the site of the city's great Washington Market. Adjoining it to the south are the districts of government and finance, anchored until recently by the overtowering World Trade Center. To the north, Soho burgeoned as an artists' district from the 1950s into the 1970s. Like Soho, Tribeca boasts mostly elegant, masonry-clad cast iron commercial build-

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ings, many in the brick Romanesque revival style of the 1880s. With its wide quiet streets and amply proportioned old loft buildings, the historical character of this repurposed commercial district is held dear, which is why its denizens responded so strongly to the garish external redecoration of a restaurant.

This article will sketch the geographical background of the Franklin Furnace. We discuss the cultural district, the Tribeca neighborhood of downtown Manhattan, which was the context for this protean and bumptious little venue. This writing is distantly informed by Pierre Bourdieu's conception of fields of production (Bourdieu 1993). It is influenced too by the resurgent discourse in the work of artists and geographers around conceptions of psychogeography derived from the Situationists (Sadler 1998). This is some sort of philosophically inclined guided tour of the Tribeca art world of the 1970s and '80s, a beginning to a proper account of this vanished art world. To elucidate the complex aspects and

1. & 2. Franklin Furnace, outside and in. The view from the street shows Dara Birnbaum's 1978 installation A "Banner" as "Billboard": (Reading) versus (Reading Into) *(Photo by Jacki Apple; courtesy of Franklin Furnace). The front window is visible in this interior shot of Dolores Zorreguieta's* Wounds, *from 1994. (Photo by Marty Heitner; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

overlaying scenes we describe, this narrative tour stutters somewhat in regard to time and place.

The main artistic developments in Tribeca during the 1970s lay in the growth of demi-institutions: nonprofit places for art exhibition called "alternative spaces." These proliferated below Canal Street, while the Soho district north of that street mainly saw a growth of commercial art galleries and shops. Franklin Furnace was founded in 1976, nearly 10 years before the makeover of Teddy's. In the nation's bicentennial year, Tribeca had just been named.[3] Also in that year, the exhibition venue P.S.1 opened in Long Island City, Queens, with a show called *Rooms*—which included Miralda's work. P.S.1 was an abandoned public school, a sprawling 1893 Romanesque revival building. Its conversion to an art space was the greatest undertaking of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, run by the redoubtable Alanna Heiss. The IAUR was formed in 1971 with the aim of prying loose vacant city-owned buildings for artists to use as studios and exhibition spaces. Inspired by similar projects in London, Heiss started her quest for space in New York in the late 1960s (see Greenberg, Ferguson, and Nairne 1996; see also Heiss 2003). She wasn't particularly choosy. "We aren't about fancy buildings," she said in 1975, "We're about the expansion of contemporary art" (in Davis and Rourke 1975). Heiss further explained that she was attracted to Tribeca because she found it "underdeveloped" (in Holland 1977).

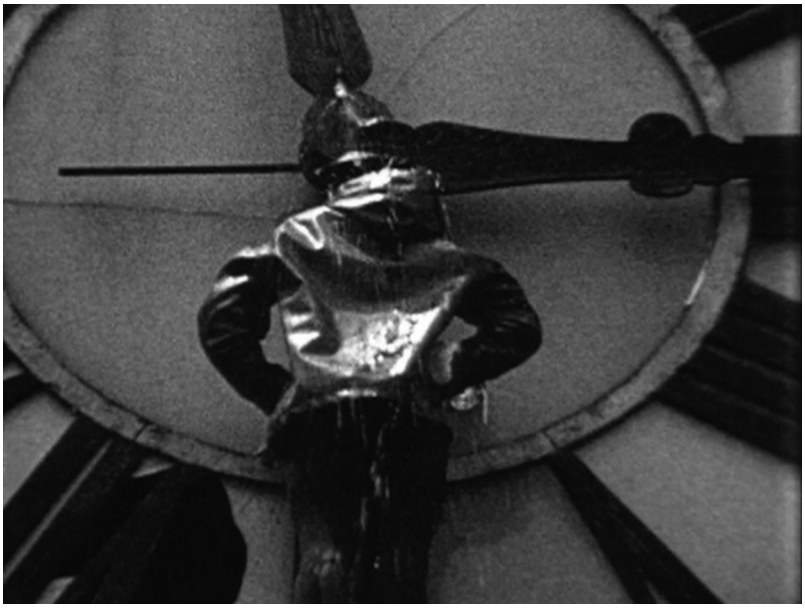
In her innovative administrative work, Heiss regularly made provision for the work of sculptors, obtaining the use of large industrial buildings and yards citywide. This was sculpture in the modes called "minimal" and "process"—innovative, expansive, rough-hewn, and site-specific.[4] In Soho in the 1970s, sculpture was the art form of the moment, and the community was built by renovating abandoned factories that would accommodate this large-scale work. Soho was not a conventional bohemia in the romantic, Parisian aestheticist sense, but a converted factory loft district. In the 1970s it was full of serious, mostly college-educated, predominantly male artists, and imbued with the masculinist ethos of construction work.[5]

The creative re-use of abandoned industrial space was in a sense the covert urban imperialism of a privileged class, with artists as the stalking horses for the well-to-do.[6]

Real estate values went up and artists were forced out of Soho, so they looked to the south and discovered Tribeca. As the Tribeca area became inhabited by artists, places sprang up to serve and exhibit them, and the neighborhood became a kind of playground, a ludic environment for contemporary art and cultural experiment. A new urban attitude grew up in the shell of the old. In the process, the area became attractive to the more venturesome rich.

After a critically well-received series of programs at a temporary venue called the Idea Warehouse, Heiss scored a real estate coup by taking over the Clocktower on Leonard Street in 1976. This was the ornate top of the New York Life Insurance Company building, finished by McKim, Mead, and White in 1898.

Like so many other buildings in the recession-plagued 1970s, this building had fallen into the hands of the City of New York for back taxes, and was being used for offices. Entering this spooky underused building to visit the Clocktower exhibition space was like stepping into a *noir* movie set. The space inspired numerous memorable site-specific works. For example, Gordon Matta-Clark, a central figure in the early days of the Soho art space 112 Greene Street, had himself filmed as he shaved while standing on the clock dial (*Clockshower,* 1973), a daredevil stunt that recalled one by silent comic Harold Lloyd in *Safety Last* (1923). Other works strove to match the oddity and theatricality of the architecture. In 1974, Dennis Oppenheim mounted a six-hour untitled installation in which the stiffening corpse of a dog lay on the keys of an electric organ that had been dragged through graphite on the floor. For *Eagles Nest* (1974), Richard Mock



3. Alanna Heiss founded the Institute for Art and Urban Resources to take over urban buildings and turn them into art spaces. At the Clocktower building, Gordon Matta-Clark's Clockshower, *1973. (Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix [EAI], New York)*

bloodied the eagles on the parapet as a protest against the Vietnam War, then nearing its grisly conclusion (Mock).

Even as the IAUR opened the Clocktower, they were simultaneously running seven other spaces (Davis and Rourke 1975), a mini-empire, which bespeaks the cozy relationship between the government of NYC and supporters of the city's avantgarde.[7] The *Rooms* show that opened P.S.1 in 1976 was the high-water mark of the artistic fascination with raw space.[8]

As deindustrialization proceeded, and factories throughout the United States shut down in the 1960s and '70s, cheap raw space was widely available in the central cities. (This continues to be so in many smaller cities.) Most artists require space to make work and show it, and they need this space cheap. This material requirement led to the *Times Square Show* of July 1980, held in a derelict building in the heart of what was Manhattan's sex district. This show was key for the New York art scene of the 1980s since it exposed a new generation of artists working in styles called "punk" and "neo-expressionist," most of whom foregrounded social content. As in *Rooms,* many of these artists made the picturesque building site part of their work.

In 1976, however, simply to take over an abandoned commercial space was an insufficient raison d'être for an aspiring art institution. The basis of Wilson's Franklin Furnace was not the postindustrial urban site and its (re)uses as explicated through sculpture or painting. Franklin Furnace was initially concerned with artist books and soon would embrace installation and performance art.

The kind of artist books that the new venue exhibited is a different animal than the traditional deluxe edition, the *livre de peintre,* born of the collaboration of a famous painter and a poet and a printer's showpiece. Rather, this modern book was a principal medium of conceptual art.[9]

Teaching English grammar at the College of Art and Design in Nova Scotia, Wilson and her friends were making booklike published work. She found that art institutions would not handle this work, "So," she said, "I decided to be the institution" that would.[10] The founding of Franklin Furnace, then, is less about the place than it is about the placeless—the art concept contained in the form of the book.[11] Franklin Furnace joined an international network, like De Appel in Holland, and Other Books and So, Artwords, and BookWorks in London. None

of these enterprises were simply artists' bookshops; all had a broader agenda. Since the Renaissance, the book has been the traditional portable communications device. It can be a lovely, impressive and precious object, but the new wave of artist books sought mainly to distribute rather than to valorize artistic information.[12] Concern for this kind of book is concern with the communicative and social being of art.

In 1977, a few blocks down the street from Franklin Furnace, Printed Matter opened a store selling artist books in the Fine Arts Building on Hudson Street (see www.printedmatter.org). Among the founders of this venture was Edit deAk, the coeditor of a neighborhood newsprint arts monthly called *Art-Rite,* which had just come out with an issue on artists books (Frankel 2003:114–18, 162). Others[13] were the feminist critic Lucy Lippard and artist Sol Lewitt, who had defined the term "conceptual art" (Lewitt 1969).[14] The two spaces were "sororial twins," Wilson explains. They divided up the tasks around artist books: The Furnace would archive and exhibit them, while Printed Matter would publish and sell them.[15] In 1980 Printed Matter moved to a storefront on Lispenard Street, just below Canal. They began a series of window exhibitions there, supported by Franklin Furnace as a means of drawing more attention to the publishing movement. While Franklin Furnace had no explicit artistic control over Printed Matter's exhibitions, Wilson was chosen as an artist in 1994 to be exhibited in the window of Printed Matter.[16]

The cooperative net lease for 112 Franklin Street was an unusual rental structure.[17] The co-op group needed Wilson to take the ground floor. One of the principals, former *Avalanche* magazine publisher Willoughby Sharp, followed her to the site of another rental that she was going to see and gave her a hard sell for Franklin Street. She caved. The early days of Franklin Furnace were hard-scrabble as Wilson lived in the space and took on roommates to pay the rent. The Furnace itself was at that point just "a clearing in the front" of the first floor, says Wilson.

Nonetheless the environment was congenial. Sharp planned to make an arts center at the building. He had been inspired by the Western Front in Vancouver, Canada, a building owned by artists with all sorts of facilities supported by generous government funding.[18]

Plans for the arts center included a "live injection point" (called a LIP) for cable TV in the basement. The Franklin Street tenants did eventually construct a video studio, which was active for a few months, but the grander scheme came to naught. These artists were looking to cable TV as a medium for artists to communicate directly with the public (Bear 1983).[19] As it happened, cable TV was quickly developed in commercial directions, leaving little room for artists. But the group at 112 Franklin is an early link between artist books and an interest in broadcasting artistic information through electronic means. This teleology is slowly unfolding in commercial publishing as well as artistic bookmaking.

In 1976 Franklin Furnace was the new kid on the block amidst a host of recently established alternative spaces and art organizations. After the Clocktower (where exhibition activity fell off with the opening of P.S.1), the most prominent was Artists Space. Organized in 1972, Artists Space opened in Soho in '73, and moved to Tribeca in 1976. This was their largest incarnation, with 6,000 square feet of galleries, performance spaces, and a visiting artist studio. Artists Space was established by the New York State Council on the Arts, and they supported other nonprofit exhibition ventures through regrants.[20]

Artists Space was housed in the Fine Arts Building at 105 Hudson Street, the same building that was Printed Matter's first home. The building had been net leased by Julian Pretto, and it soon became a vast warren of artists' studios and offices. The FAB brought overnight heft and depth to the Tribeca art scene. The artist Joe Lewis, who later joined Stefan Eins in founding Fashion Moda in the

4. Artists Space was housed in the Fine Arts Building on Hudson Street. The space had 6,000 square feet of galleries, performance spaces, and a visiting artist studio. Screening of Roger Welch's PersonA *series, 25 April 1974. (Photo by Yuri; courtesy of Artists Space)*

Bronx, had a studio there. He recalls having coffee with Marcia Tucker, who had an office in the FAB before she launched the New Museum on 14th Street (Lewis 2003). The intense and cryptic performance artist Ralston Farina had a studio in the building. A prolific performer of his "time art," Ralston, who died young, was a sort of Zeitgeist of downtown avantgarde performance.

Pretto soon opened his own gallery on three of its floors. In 1977, other galleries in the FAB included David Ebony, Ellen Sragow, Photo Works, and Marina Urbach's C Space, which specialized in European and South American artists. (Annina Nosei Weber, who later opened a gallery in Soho, and Marcia Tucker curated shows at C Space [Holland 1977].)

The nonprofit alternative spaces were starting places for a number of dealers as well as artists. Helene Winer left Artists Space to start Metro Pictures with Janelle Reiring, the best known of these ventures (de Coppet and Jones 2002). Josh Baer, an artist's son, worked at White Columns, a pioneer alternative space, which had moved from Soho to far west Spring Street. There the gallery operated a storefront in a sleek, art deco building opposite the picturesque Ear Inn, a bar owned by Fluxus-affilated artists.[21] Baer soon started his own gallery. After him, Tom Solomon, dealer Holly Solomon's son, did a stint running White Columns before starting his gallery in Los Angeles.

There was always more ambiguity in the makeup of the lesser-trafficked galleries in Tribeca than there was in the storefronts jostling with the couture shops in Soho. Those in Soho were clearly commercial galleries. But what to make of Oil & Steel, a gallery that rarely held shows? This was the venture of Richard Bellamy, famed director of the Hansa and the Green galleries. Bellamy's chief artist was Mark di Suvero. The sculptor controlled an empire of city-owned spaces, including a 19th-century loft building on South Street (now part of the restoration), and what became the Socrates Sculpture Park in Queens (some of di Suvero's monumental works are still there in his work yard). Bellamy preferred his Tribeca location on Chambers Street to Soho, he said, because there was "less public contact" (de Coppet and Jones 2002:129).[22] The Soho dealer Heiner Friedrich, a venturesome German, achieved a sort of apotheosis of dealerhood

through his leadership of the Dia Foundation (Glueck 1985:C13).[23] Formed in 1974, Dia's offices were across the street from Franklin Furnace, although relations were merely civil. This was the "empire of white male artists," Wilson recalls, and they were of "a much higher caste."

Just Above Midtown moved from the 57th Street gallery district into 178-80 Franklin Street in 1980, exhibiting contemporary work by largely African American and other minority artists. Another important Tribeca space in the 1980s was the Alternative Museum, formed in 1975 and set up at 17 White Street, a former egg-packing plant. Its director, Geno Rodriguez, described it as "the only alternative space at the time," by which he meant, a place that represented the disenfranchised rather than "emerging artists" (Rodriguez 2003).[24] The Alternative Museum was social, political, even didactic in its shows, exhibiting many political artists, artists of color from the United States, and Latin Americans. By 1982 the Alternative Museum was joined in its mission to represent diverse and political art by Exit Art, a small space opened on Canal Street by Jeanette Ingberman and Papo Colo. This project began as an exhibition at Franklin Furnace, *Illegal America* (10 February 1982), celebrating a past of radical political gestures by artists. (Exit Art soon moved to a large space on Broadway in Soho, and is presently in Chelsea.) And in 1981, two artists, Martin Weinstein and Teresa Liszka, opened Art in General in the General Hardware building on Walker Street in a multistoried venue. The gallery frequently exhibits Latin American artists as well artists from other countries and the U.S.

As an artists' neighborhood, Tribeca was the poor southern sister of Soho, which got most of the ink and magazine photo spreads. Canal Street was a kind of littoral zone of salvage commerce. Today it is lined with tiny stalls offering gimcrackery, many with vendors from nearby Chinatown. But at the western end of this odd shopping street, some of the shops selling army surplus, plastic or metal stock, old appliances, and assorted mechanical and electronic parts, remain. These were the places artists shopped for the effluvia of assemblages and components of installations. George Maciunas and the Fluxus artists combed this mercantile beach of industrial civilization for the little bits they boxed into "Fluxkits" and then sold for a while in 1964 at a "Fluxshop" in the front part of Maciunas's second-floor walkup apartment at 359 Canal Street. Fluxus artists remained in Tribeca and, in 1970, John Lennon and Yoko Ono produced a "Fluxfest" at Joe Jones's storefront on North Moore Street in Tribeca (Young and MacLow, 1963:n.p.). In the early 1970s, the Austrian artist Stefan Eins[25] opened his studio as a "store" called (and located at) 3 Mercer Street just above Canal Street. It was there that many who would form the artists' group Collaborative Projects (aka Colab) met.

At 59 Wooster Street, not too far north of Canal, the Kitchen opened in 1974.[26] This center for video and music was started by Woody and Steina Vasulka, video makers who had begun to exhibit artists in 1971 in the old kitchen at the Mercer Arts Center on lower Broadway (Gendron 2002:244–45).[27] At its Soho incarnation, the Kitchen provided an exhibition space by day and a performance space by night for cutting edge, multidisciplinary art (Goldberg 2003:24). As Franklin Furnace started to showcase performance art in the late '70s, Wilson synchronized schedules with Robert Stearns and Mary MacArthur at the Kitchen so they could see each other's offerings and not split their audience. Wilson notes that "it was basically the same herd of people" going from place to place.

The explosion of performance art in lower Manhattan in the early 1980s is a complex phenomenon, involving theatres like The Performing Garage, music venues like Experimental Intermedia, Roulette, and Stilwende, and film groups.[28] One of most complicated of these film institutions was the Collective for Living Cinema, which moved into a space on White Street in Tribeca in 1977. Started

by students of the avantgarde filmmaker Ken Jacobs in a church basement on the upper west side in 1973, Collective showed over a hundred films a year. Collective specialized in the difficult, abstruse, and politically troublesome—films with no mass market. They ran workshops in filmmaking, hosted symposia and special events, and published two magazines: *Idiolects,* on film, and *No Rose,* dedicated to nonfilm work by filmmakers. The group was undone by a combination of bad luck and cutbacks in state funding, and finally closed their doors in 1991.[29]

Downtown Manhattan was a community of art spaces concerned with new art in all genres. In terms of space, money, and attention, the places south of Canal in Tribeca were often poor relations, especially after the Fine Arts Building closed in the mid–1980s. Unlike Soho, Tribeca had the overweening presence of the downtown financial district. Neighbors were lawyers, brokers, bankers, and their families with a high-profile admixture of well-to-do artists—painters David Salle and Brian Hunt, and later entertainers Robert DeNiro and David Letterman. Bohemian impulses in the district were paralyzed by the proximity of wealth, whose scions slowly sucked up the marginal spaces artists had inhabited during the depressed 1970s.

This sense of the inevitability of being priced out—from Soho to Tribeca, and, after 1980, to the East Village—inflected the interventionist public art, the noncommissioned "guerrilla" art works that appeared on Tribeca streets in the late '70s. Anne Messner, Rebecca Howland,[30] Beriah Wall and others made objects and produced performances on the streets. Such interruptions of the smooth rolling gait of the daily crowds of office workers gave artists a sense of belonging, a feeling of agency, and some fleeting visibility to a public largely unaware of their presence.

However disruptive the succession of displacements for the artists concerned, the gentrification of lower Manhattan was a happy outcome for the city's tax base. It was a side dish to the commercial entrée, the development of lower Manhattan, which had been highly determined and carefully planned. The capstone to the first phase was the demolition of many blocks and then the construction of the titanic World Trade Centers between 1966 and 1977. With their millions of square feet of office space, the towers were to spur the revival of the district through what David Rockefeller called their sheer "catalytic bigness" (Darton 1999). Another mammoth complex of offices arose in the 1980s west of the Twin Towers called the World Financial Center, and next to it a geographically enclaved community called Battery Park City. During the 1970s, however, the land that would house these precincts of the well-to-do was still only landfill—great rolling dunes swaying with fields of cattailed reeds—which had to settle before it could support construction.

It was here that Art on the Beach, the most memorable of the numerous public art series sponsored by downtown cultural agencies, took place. Produced by Creative Time, the project responded via art to the emergent Oz of international finance capital through metaphor and comparison. Artists relied on the strange contrast of urban megalopolis and the neighboring wild, overgrown beachlike land. For instance, *Wheatfield—A Confrontation,* the 1982 work of Agnes Denes, was a material argument for sustainable uses of land, and evoked the beleaguered family farm. David Hammons built a decorated shanty "beach house" called *Delta Spirit* in collaboration with artist Angela Valerio and architect Jerry Barr in 1985, which was a set for a performance by art-jazz guru Sun Ra and his Solar Arkestra. In a recent article on the contention over cultural facilities in the post-9/11 downtown, Herbert Muschamp recalls Erika Rothenberg, Laurie Hawkinson, and John Malpede's piece, *Freedom of Expression National Monument* of 1984 (Muschamp 2003, sec 2:1, 21), which was reinstalled in Lower Manhattan during the months prior to the hotly contested 2004 presidential election.[31] For this

5. Erika Rothenberg, Laurie Hawkinson, and John Malpede installed Freedom of Expression National Monument *in 1984 as part of Creative Time's Art on the Beach program. Art on the Beach ran from 1978 to 1985 on the sandy Battery Park City Landfill created by the construction of the World Trade Center. The piece was reinstalled in Foley Square in Lower Manhattan from 17 August through 13 November 2004. (Photo courtesy of Creative Time)*

work, a huge megaphone was pointed at the WTC towers, so that visitors might line up at the platform for turns to shout into the wind at the structures and what they symbolized. Art on the Beach was an annual circus of public art, new approaches, often audacious, freestanding all-weather installations and performance works.

For their annual beach series, Creative Time arranged architects with visual and performing artists into "teams" to make collaborative pieces. This program was coordinated with the Battery Park City Authority, which was planning the apartment complex and was interested in involving artists with the new buildings. The outcome was a series of remarkable temporary works, integrated installations, and performance environments. Did the model succeed? It is not clear whether the artists were successfully insinuated into the planning process for the completed development. Today there are some permanent works scattered about Battery Park by artists including Louise Bourgeois, Mary Miss, Brian Tolle, and Martin Puryear. Anita Contini, who produced Art on the Beach is presently serving as "art czar" for the Trade Center site rebuild. Even so, the role artists will be allowed to play in the highly capitalized development in downtown Manhattan is likely to be a small one.

Rosalyn Deutsche recounts the story of the development of Battery Park City. Built by a semipublic corporate "authority," BPC was financed through a combination of municipal bonds and tax abatements (1991). The low- and middle-income allowances were gradually stripped from the project over the years of planning; subsidies were to be used to make low-income housing in other parts of the city (Lipton 2001:A1, B4).[32] As a result, the completed BPC was entirely luxury housing. Deutsche contends that the public art made at BPC was used to legitimate this economic segregation of the city.[33] Art on the Beach was a sort of isolated laboratory space for this collaborative public art experiment, well separated from any urban social context. Still, there were continuous allusions to the

world beyond the beach in the work of many artists over the years, with shows featuring oversize Reagan photos, docked pirate ships, ruined nightclubs, and dried fish evoking an earlier urban era of the Tribeca area.

The moment when artists predominated in the Tribeca neighborhood is not the story of the self-determination of an artists' community. It is not a junior version of the Soho story, nor is it a more sedate version of the East Village do-it-yourself artists' bohemia. Rather, Tribeca may be about the rise of a new corporate culture of the arts in tandem with the redevelopment of lower Manhattan. Through downtown arts agencies and the Tribeca alternative art spaces, the avantgardism of the downtown scene was in some measure inscribed into corporate culture.[34]

While none of these venues would have existed without state support, a great deal of this inscription is due to both private patronage and corporate support. The outlines of this story have yet to be written. The more public face of this activity was the aggressive art-buying practices of the fedora-wearing Jack Bolton for the Chase Manhattan Bank collection. Jeffrey Deitch, a well-informed former Sohoite and occasional critic working for Citibank's investment services was also a visible figure on the art scene. The munificent albeit discreet examples of Dia Foundation patronage, providing artists like Lamonte Young and Robert Whitman with entire buildings to work in, offered a new model of grand patronage as the scions of a Texas oil drilling equipment fortune embraced avantgarde art.

The 1970s also saw a warmer relationship between municipal government and the advanced arts, left over from a period of moderate Republican amity under Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Mayor John Lindsay. The city's Department of Cultural Affairs was far more visible, maintaining offices and a gallery at Columbus Circle in the building put up by Huntington Hartford for his museum, the New York Cultural Center, which had fallen to the city for back taxes. Federal arts funding through the National Endowment for the Arts reached a high-water mark during the Carter presidency (Jensen 1995).[35]

The public agencies supporting culture downtown grew up in this atmosphere. In addition to the IAUR and Creative Time, there was (and remains) the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. This was primarily a networking agency, which published a newsletter during the '70s and early '80s. Their activities expanded significantly in later decades. In 1989, well into the Reagan years, the LMCC dared to sponsor a politically charged exhibition of signs on the street by the collective RepoHistory.[36] The RepoHistory signs challenged the bland and fixed face of history presented in the financial district with strong and often controversial revisionism. This was an evolved work of political art, and a significant step toward a new kind of public art nationally.

A sharp crack in this apparent climate of amity between business, government, and art was the controversy over the federal commission of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* that arose in 1981, after the piece was in place. The story of the struggle over this cyclopean slab of steel plate erected like a fence across a plaza used by lunching workers is well known.[37] After a federal hearing, which turned out anxious members of the art world in force,[38] Serra's piece was dismantled in 1989 (Jordan 1987). That a work of such aggressive avantgarde aestheticism should have been built at all indicates how far "difficult" high art had advanced in favor with government funding agencies—or how hands-off they had been, letting arts people in peer review panels decide what should be funded. But the controversy also revealed how wide the gap between artists and the public had become. This presented a populist political opportunity which right wing politicians quickly exploited.

As an avantgarde venue, Franklin Furnace was well-situated to receive some of the first blows of the "culture wars." The venue hosted the Second Sunday events

6. A crowd waits outside to be selected for admission to "Combat Love" night at the Mudd Club, 17 June 1979. (Photo by Allan Tannenbaum, from New York in the '70s, © *2003 Allan Tannenbaum)*

of the PADD (Political Art Documentation and Distribution) group, which formed in 1981. These monthly evenings included performances, slide shows, and talks. One of these meetings was put on by a feminist collective formed within PADD called Carnival Knowledge. Their concern for reproductive rights issues led to a full-dress exploration of sexual political issues. They proposed and produced an exhibit at the Furnace in 1984/85 called *Second Coming.* A performance at this show featured former pornographic film star Annie Sprinkle.[39] This occasioned one of the opening public battles in the culture wars, as a Christian group picketed the show and put pressure on the Furnace's corporate sponsors (Exxon and Woolworth withdrew support).[40] At the same time, the show split feminist opinion between those who had been battling the porn industry since the 1970s, and those who called themselves "sex positive" and opposed any kind of censorship.[41]

In the years to come, Wilson increasingly found herself defending her institution from spooked cultural bureaucrats and often hostile media attention. In this sudden role of spokesperson for artistic freedom, her performance background helped, and she was able to inflect her administrative role with humor during a period of high-pitched anger in the art community.[42] She often appeared as a stand-up comic type of spokesperson, first performing as Barbara Bush at a 1987 benefit at the Public Theater, "Franklin Furnace Fights Back for First Amendment Rights."

Wilson founded Franklin Furnace in 1976 as a space dedicated to a particular mode of artmaking: the book. But over the next several years a clear shift in public perception occurred, so that by the mid-1980s, the Furnace was clearly seen as a performance space. How do we understand this?

A complex of impulses were involved. First, Wilson's own work began to revolve increasingly around performance. The art world heated up considerably in the 1980s, so that a greater diversity of work was being shown and discussed as art. Then too downtown Manhattan became a nighttime entertainment destination, and art venues showing performance became part of that.

The performance component of the Furnace arose in part from the relation between the two forms in Wilson's own artwork, begun in the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design during the heyday of conceptual art, and continuing in New York. In addition to making books, Wilson performed in Nova Scotia "for the benefit of the camera." When she came to New York, "I was traumatized by the idea that people were going to be sitting in chairs" watching her perform live, but she soon recovered from the shock. Between 1978 and 1982, Wilson formed the a capella art rock band called Disband with friends.[43] Later, Wilson stood up as an ironic spokesperson for artists when, as a solo performer, she impersonated Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush, and Tipper Gore.

Political position-taking was definitely a vital aspect of both media. In the case of artist books, many who promoted them in the mid-1970s were veterans of artists' political organizations. A show called *Vigilance,* which Lucy Lippard and Mike Glier curated at Franklin Furnace in 1980, brought together many such uses of the book by artists. Lippard was also key in the formation of PADD in 1981, which was tied to both Printed Matter and Franklin Furnace—not only by overlapping personnel, but in its archival intentions as well. PADD was to be a repository for posters and other political art materials to be "documented and distributed." Finally, through the agency of Clive Philpott, PADD's archive was brought into The Museum of Modern Art library in 1989. Franklin Furnace's collection of artist books was acquired by MoMA in 1994.

The concern with books has an ideological root. First is the precept of enlightenment, the idea that spreading information through exhibiting and selling books is a good in itself. Books contain, and libraries represent, ideas and knowledges that are not always instrumental. There is a chance for change, somehow, sometime, if the messages only can be kept.

Performance is overt: instead of sitting in a corner and writing, the artist is present to deliver the message, openly saying something to a crowd. That there is a continuity between all these forms of artistic endeavor is an article of faith for Martha Wilson. She believes that artists make no distinctions between genres and modes of production, rather it is the public that makes the distinctions. Contemporary art is idea-driven, and whatever works best to convey the idea is what the artist will do.

This catholic philosophy of opportunistic forms was called "intermedia" in the early 1970s, a word coined by Fluxus-affiliated artist and publisher Dick Higgins.[44] The international Fluxus movement of the 1960s was proto-conceptual, and there is a regular connection between books and performance in the works of its artists. The Fluxus book, in fact, is part of a family of object works produced

in multiple editions. Most of these works require viewer participation to complete them. Many text works—most notably by George Brecht and Yoko Ono—are in fact scores, instructions to the viewer to perform specified actions. These actions, or "events," are the stuff of Fluxus performances.[45] The formulation of performance as event drew together art and everyday life in a way similar to the contemporaneous Happenings and the work of the Judson Dance Theatre.

By the 1980s, performance art had expanded far beyond the Fluxus event. At the same time, the Furnace's focus on performance coincided with a rebirth of nightlife in downtown Manhattan. This began with the emergence of a radical stripped down New York–based rock 'n' roll style called punk. Punk music headquarters was the CBGBs nightclub that opened in 1973 on the Bowery at the end of Bleecker Street (see Kozak 1988).[46] This gritty motorcycle bar was the polar opposite of the uptown glittery celebrity disco scene of Studio 54. The punk music movement gathered steam and depth from progressive loft jazz, art music, and art rock.[47] Musicians played for and starred in quick super-8 films (Hoberman 1979), and the No Wave/New Wave scene coalesced into the semblance of a broad cultural movement which found expression in nightclubs. One of the first of these new clubs was in Tribeca.

Tribeca already had a number of bars frequented by artists, among them Puffy's, McGovern's, and Mickey's (later called the Raccoon Lodge). At Magoo's Tavern, just a block below Canal Street, the owner Tommy gave generous tabs for artworks he hung on the walls.[48] At Barnabus Rex (Barney's) near Chambers Street, the tiny bar rocked with jukebox dancing into the wee hours. But the big sparkplug for the new nightclub scene and its art world echo effect was the Mudd Club on White Street, just below Canal (see Gendron 2002; Hager 1986; Frank and McKenzie 1987). Started by Steve Maas in a building owned by the then little-known painter Ross Bleckner, the ground floor bar soon blew up into a coke-laced party palace, which drew celebrities like flies.

Artists played a central role in making the Mudd Club glamorous,[49] and their work set a trend for nightclubs in the 1980s. For instance, in 1978, Keith Haring curated the *Graffiti* show upstairs at the Mudd Club. This signaled the vivifying injection of hip hop energy that helped to remake the downtown scene. Hip-hop culture grew out of a block party mix of rap, turntable music, graffiti, and break dancing (Fricke and Ahearn 2002).[50] It soon began to reconfigure the anemic disco scene, and the stage was set for the Chelsea mega-clubs.

The first step was made in the tracks of the Mudd when Rudolf (a German entrepreneur who went by one name) tried to open Pravda on Crosby Street in lower Soho. The place was explicitly intended to "establish a total interaction between art and entertainment" (Pravda Project 1979), but it was open only for one night, then closed by neighborhood opposition. By 1982, Rudolf had partnered with Jim Fouratt, a veteran of the 1960s hippie era club scene, to open Danceteria on 21st Street near 6th Avenue. For many years this full-building venue was the democratic alternative to celebrity-luring clubs, and a place where artists had a free hand—for a while, until they were replaced by new artists.

In Tribeca proper, the bar Tier 3 began to book bands in the late 1970s. Artist Gerry Hovagimyan tended bar and Kiki Smith painted murals. Perhaps the apogee of the art-based nightclub was Area, opened on Hudson Street, Tribeca, in 1983 by a group of Californians. Eric Goode and his friends got a loft on Walker Street and researched the club scene: the big uptown discos like Studio 54, Mirage, the Saint, Xenon, and New York New York. In response, the spot they opened was styled more like a museum than a dance club with themed exhibits—such as "Natural History," which featured display cases with live-in performers and celebrities. Here Andy Warhol rubbed shoulders with Mayor Ed Koch. As

Stephen Saban writes, "At Area the artists had the star power. Every night throngs of hopefuls gathered outside the club, waving hundred-dollar bills to get in. Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat sailed past the ropes. Donald Trump [the millionaire real estate developer turned TV celebrity] didn't" (Saban 2003).[51]

There was constant visible evidence of a new culture on the street posters put up to announce events. All along Broadway in Soho between Houston and Canal Streets—near bus stops, subway stations, photo shops, or other places artists would see them, like outside friends' houses or on street corners—posters papered downtown streets. These notices were not just posted anywhere, but along affectional routes. They formed an external cognitive map of networks within urban spaces, hinting at the relations that formed within these spaces.[52] They were then accreted onto by others who wanted those connections, so that the encrusted streets of downtown New York became routes of affiliation and supplication. These were the scabs of publicity, the backdrop for the street paintings of Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Richard Hambleton. Street displays became outright aesthetic and propagandistic arrangements, which, like subway graffiti, issued a graphic challenge. Today strenuous enforcement of city laws have made this kind of display a thing of the past (although there is still a de facto enforcement exemption for commercial bill posters).

As this fluid and exciting network of nightlife began to absorb the attention of young artists interested in popular audiences, the world of the Tribeca alternative spaces began to seem staid. At the same time, cuts in federal funding during the Reagan presidency led to closings and the scene contracted. The most dramatic years for the Franklin Furnace lay ahead. During the late 1980s and into the '90s, Wilson found herself hip deep in the alligators of reaction as the culture wars took hold across the American art scene. The Furnace was a frontline institution in a national battle between puritanical reactionaries empowered by a conservative government and artists whose work was rooted in expression of sexuality and gender. In the face of sustained political attacks and a steady retraction of government arts funding, Wilson managed her place with aplomb and perspicacity.

As this is written, the restaurant El Teddy's has been closed, a victim of the post–9/11 downtown business slump. It seems as if this monument to decorative excess, this most flamboyant reminder of the period when Tribeca was an artists' district doesn't really fit anymore. The quiet luxury of a well-appointed dining room and the Euro-bistro–styled bar café have become the new norms. Just as punks are still to be seen on the streets of the East Village, Tribeca still bears traces of its artistic past. Yet the district today is unequivocally wealthy, and its days as a stomping ground for the most venturesome artists are over.

Notes

1. Wilson also told the reporter, "We are in an aesthetic dogfight. This is not about smells or regulations. What is really going on is freedom of artists to manipulate buildings." Jeanette Ingberman, who curated at Franklin Furnace before starting the alternative space Exit Art with Papo Colo, also commended Miralda's project to the *Times.*
2. It seems ironic that Miralda, who has had an active career in Europe, is not better known in New York today. He is, after all, an artist of food, an aesthetician of the restaurant, and downtown New York today is crowded with pricey restaurants and bars.
3. The name "Tribeca" derives from "*Tri*angle *Be*low *Ca*nal Street" (see Goldman 1974).
4. The history of the concept of site-specificity and its permutations as an issue in contemporary art are succinctly discussed in Kwon (2002).
5. Stephen Koch, in "Reflections on SoHo," describes this masculine ethos of work (1976). His observations are matched by Richard Kostelanetz in his *SoHo: The Rise and Fall of an*

Artists' Colony (2003). The rhetoric of space is examined by Pamela Lee in her book on Gordon Matta-Clark (1999).

6. This analysis is closely reasoned by Zukin ([1982] 1989). It is also a theme in the work of Neil Smith (2000) and Christopher Mele (1996).
7. This seeming generosity with city-owned spaces for cultural purposes in Lower Manhattan extended to more traditional cultural groups and social movement organizations as well, such as La MaMa E.T.C. on the Lower East Side, and city schools given over to community groups there.
8. Nancy Foote's review in *Artforum* was titled "Apotheosis of the Crummy Space" (1976; see also Beck 2002).
9. Wilson called this kind of book the "luncheonette" version compared to the deluxe editions (in Padon 1998:108). The artist book, like the photograph, was revalued by the conceptual art movement as a form of evidence, documentation of artistic actions performed. The photograph makes an appeal to the eye much like that of a painting, and it has proved more marketable as an art medium than the book. For more on artist books, see Lyons (1985).
10. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Martha Wilson are from conversations with the authors (Wilson 2004).
11. This premise was literalized in the 1980 series of shows called *The Page as Alternative Space.* Clive Phillpot curated 1909–1929, Charles Henri Ford 1930–1949, Jon Hendricks and Barbara Moore did 1950–1969, Ingrid Sischy and Richard Flood 1970–1980.
12. The development of this essay's argument leaves aside New York City's important centers of creative book production conceived on the alternative space model, most notably the Center for Book Arts and the Dieu Donne papermaking center. These places are dedicated to the production of fine artists' books and editions.
13. The founders of Printed Matter are listed on a flier as Carl Andre, Edit deAk, Lucy Lippard, Walter Robinson (deAk's coeditor on *Art-Rite*), Pat Steir, Irena von Zahn, Mimi Wheeler, and Robin White.
14. Henry Flynt has priority in use of the term "concept art" in 1963 (see Higgins 2002).
15. Wilson notes that Printed Matter began as a profit-making venture to avoid censorship of their publishing projects. Later on, Ingrid Sischy successfully applied for nonprofit status.
16. Window exhibitions were a popular way for artists to reach new audiences. The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council newsletter *Downtown* (1980) contains a roundup of window exhibitions around downtown New York, including the long-lived "10 on 8" exhibits in windows on 8th Avenue.
17. In a net lease, the lessee takes responsibility for an entire building, writing individual subleases to each floor's tenants. In a city of many empty buildings, this was a way for artists with some capital to get raw space. At 112 Franklin Street, a group took on the net lease, including Sharp, Wilson, Virge Piersol, and Duff Schweninger (Franklin Furnace 1999).
18. Willoughby Sharp recounts the story of his developing interest in artists' television in a talk he gave to Victor Azevedo's class at the School of Visual Arts on 5 October 2001 (Sharp 2001).
19. Liza Bear was Sharp's partner in *Avalanche* magazine and produced a number of video works on the mechanics and politics of early cable and satellite television.
20. These funds included the independent exhibition program for group shows and the emergency materials fund. Small grants were given to artists to help only with nonprofit shows, i.e., shows at other alternative spaces or artists' lofts. The funds quietly sustained a lively and diverse exhibition scene.
21. The Ear Inn was started (or, rather, the bar in the building was continued) by artists Rip Hayman, Sari Dienes, and Paco Underhill (see Coe 2002).
22. Bellamy in 1984 dealt only in the work of di Suvero, Myron Stout, and David Rabinowitch.
23. This article relates how the building at 6 Harrison Street bought for composer La Monte Young had been put up for sale owing to the strain put on the Foundation by a lawsuit by Donald Judd.
24. Rodriguez's space consistently exhibited Leon Golub, Nancy Spero, Adrian Piper, and David Hammons. Clearly many of the artists exhibited at the Alternative Museum did "emerge," and ultimately became well known.
25. In 1978, Eins went on to the South Bronx to found Fashion Moda with Joe Lewis. Fashion Moda papers are at Fales Library, NYU. Eins recalled that Wilson told him the 3 Mercer Store influenced her conception of Franklin Furnace. "The store, yes," she replied (in the videotape cited above).

26. It remained at the Wooster Street location until 1985 when it moved to West 19th Street.
27. Bernard Gendron writes that concerts by the New York Dolls rock band paid the bills for the Kitchen at the Mercer Arts Center. He sees this as a key event in the conjunction of high avantgarde culture and popular music. The building housing the Mercer Arts Center collapsed in 1973.
28. Many are listed in a 1982 issue of *Downtown* (1982).
29. This information was gleaned from a folder of publicity materials from the Collective for Living Cinema records at the Anthology Film Archives library.
30. Messner and Howland were among the mostly Tribeca artists who produced the Real Estate Show on the Lower East Side in 1980, a key event in the resurgence of political art in the '80s (see Moore and Miller 1985). Soho had a number of "volunteer" public artworks, like the welded assemblage metal sculpture set up in the '70s and only recently removed from a traffic island at Broome Street and West Broadway.
31. This section of the *Times* is devoted to the redevelopment of the Ground Zero site.
32. This money, given to the City by the Battery Park City Authority, was not used to build public housing. Instead it simply disappeared in the general budget.
33. Deutsche references the sociology of Peter Marcuse. In a critique of the completed project, Abby Bussel picked up the cudgel: "BPC is an uptight imitation of the city that it was designed to extend. Its architecture is antiseptic, and the regimented zoning of its parks, commercial, retail, and residential areas discourages a free-flowing street life" (Bussel 1994:72).
34. For the venturesome Franklin Furnace, however, survival was more a matter of tenacity and art community support, since, as Wilson notes, after the 1984 imbroglio over the *Carnival Knowledge* exhibition (see text below), corporate support for the Furnace fell off completely.
35. Martha Wilson said that when she opened, representatives from the NEA actually came to her door to ask if Franklin Furnace had applied for funds [*see the interviews with Wilson in this issue*].
36. This group evolved out of the PADD group (see text below). The RepoHistory files on this exhibition at the Fales Library, New York University, show that relations with the LMCC were not always easy.
37. Principle accounts of this incident are Jordan (1987), Buskirk and Weyergraf-Serra (1991), and Senie (2002).
38. Wilson defended *Tilted Arc* (in Jordan 1987:64).
39. Wilson notes that the *Carnival Knowledge* group was selected to exhibit at the Furnace by a peer review panel. The Annie Sprinkle performance *Deep Inside Porn Stars,* Wilson said, was about "dual citizenship in self-love and self-loathing," since Ellen Steinberg is a fat girl from Southern California while Annie Sprinkle is a voluptuous porn star who lives in New York. The show received extensive publicity.
40. Reagan's NEA director Francis S.M. Hodsoll overrode the peer review panels' decisions and canceled the 1984 grants to PADD for the journal *Upfront,* and to the feminist collective publication *Heresies.* Franklin Furnace received a reprimand. The radical Lower East Side art space ABC No Rio was also refused funding by the NEA during this season. These events are discussed in an article by Lord (1983). Wilson said this was the first time she knows of that the NEA peer review panel process was overridden. In 1990 the Moral Majority group came after Wilson and the Furnace with senators behind them.
41. Dubin (1992:147–49) has a succinct account of the Furnace's troubles around presenting Sprinkle's work. See also Brownmiller (1999) for an account of the politics of the anti-pornography fight among feminist activists.
42. Wilson wrote her performance work together with the history of Franklin Furnace in "The Personal Becomes Political in Time" (2000).
43. Members of Disband included Martha Wilson, Ilona Granet, Diane Torr, Donna Henes, Ingrid Sischy, and briefly Barbara Kruger, Dale Kaplan, and April Gornik. Wilson tried earlier to form a band called the Administrators, but her fellows running other alternative spaces would not join her.
44. A similar kind of diversity of approaches within the oeuvre of one artist is now common in contemporary art. The Furnace exhibited the work of Higgins' Something Else Press in 1979.
45. This is the central thesis of Hannah Higgins (2002). She emphasizes this component of Fluxus against the view of it as a politicized avantgarde defined by leader George Maciunas.

46. Punk as a cultural style was strongly taken up by British youth, and the music soon rebounded from England. Now "punk" signifies more than this moment of popular musical style. It is a deep-rooted youth subculture, which together with hip-hop has continued and transmuted worldwide.
47. A key event in this scene was the No Wave series of concerts at Artists Space. From this series English avant-rocker Brian Eno produced the first art rock compilation album (see Gould 1999). The 1981 film *Downtown 81* is a pictorial tour of the nightclub scene.
48. This was an extensive collection, including work by Richard Artschwager, Ron Gorchov, Elizabeth Murray, David Reed, Dorothea Rockburne, Judy Rifka, and John Torreano. According to the agent for the sale, Tommy's collection was sold to a Japanese client when he retired (Colin 2003).
49. See the interview with Diego Cortez by Edit deAk in Moore and Miller (1985).
50. Jim Fricke and Charlie Ahearn (2002) tell the story of "old school" hip-hop, "back in the day" (the 1970s) in the South Bronx.
51. Saban was a founder and columnist for *Details* magazine during the 1970s and '80s, covering New York nightclubs.
52. This idea of "intelligence networks," the external signs of "swarm brains" or "hive minds," relates to the contemporary interest in psychogeography as first elaborated in the work of the Situationists.

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Alan Moore *was active in the artists groups Colab and ABC No Rio in the 1980s. Since, he has edited* ABC No Rio: Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery *with Marc Miller in 1985, and written "Local History: The Art of Battle for Bohemia in New York" (with James Cornwell), in* Alternative Art New York: 1965–1985, *edited by Julie Ault (University of Minnesota Press, 2003). He has also written "Political Economy as Subject and Form in Modern Art" for the fall 2004 issue of* Review of Radical Political Economics, *and a chapter for a forthcoming book on collectivism after modernism edited by Greg Sholette and Blake Stimson.*

Debra Wacks *earned her PhD in Art History with a certificate in Women's Studies from the Graduate School and University Center, CUNY. In 2001, she curated and wrote the catalog* SMIRK: women, art, and humor *for the Firehouse Art Gallery, New York. She has taught at the College of Staten Island, York College, and New School University and has published review articles in* Art Journal. *Recently she left New York City with the intention of exploring Asian performance art and now resides in Hong Kong.*

The Franklin Furnace Programs

SANT: When you first organized Franklin Furnace, your main activity was collecting artist books and showing them to the public. How did you start your performance program?

WILSON: Our thought was that the same artists who were publishing these books could be invited to read their published stuff, the stuff that we had in the collection.

SANT: Isn't this similar to the many public book readings that happen at many mainstream bookstores now?

WILSON: But not at the time! No.

SANT: Readings in bookstores have been around for quite sometime, haven't they? I mean, if we go to a different place and time other than New York in the mid-1970s, such as San Francisco in the mid-1950s with the Beats, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and the City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco, and Allen Ginsberg reading *Howl* . . .

WILSON: That's absolutely right. OK.

SANT: Were you building on anything like that? Were you aware of such things or were you reinventing the wheel?

WILSON: Reinventing the wheel, I would say. I was not focused on the performance program at all because my friend Jacki Apple was my coconspirator and curator. We had already collaborated on a performance work in 1973. I was living in Canada at that time.

SANT: What had you done together before Franklin Furnace?

WILSON: We started corresponding because Lucy Lippard had come to Halifax and introduced us through the catalog to an exhibition that existed only on notecards, about 7,500. So I knew Jacki: she had been in the art world for a billion years already. She had this idea of doing a reading, inviting Martine Aballea to read her work.[1] That was in June 1976. There wasn't a performance program, you know, not even a concept yet. In fact, for the first two years the calendars say "Artists' Readings."

SANT: Can you elaborate on the first reading?

WILSON: Sure. Martine came to Franklin Furnace in June 1976 for her reading, bringing her own lamp, wearing a costume, reading in character. So from day one the artists are not considering these things to be readings where you stand at a podium and read your text. And many years later [in 1991] at Judson Church, Eileen Myles did a wonderful performance called *Life* where she explains that she made the break from being a poet to being a performance artist when somebody pointed out that the way poets read is like this [*demonstrates*], and the way performance artists read is like this.

SANT: So poets read with their head down while performance artists look at their audience. Perhaps that's because most poets are absorbed in the words whereas performers are more concerned with their audience.

WILSON: Yes!

SANT: Was there any art hanging at Franklin Furnace in 1976?

WILSON: Yes, both hanging and lying down. September was the first show, but even before this, in the Spring of 1976, I was accommodating artists who did one-of-a-kind books, like Karen Shaw and Power Boothe. We started the artists' readings in September, October, November, December. We had a calendar: a series of readings, a number of exhibitions, mainly one-of-a-kind books—artist books, but

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they're objects—plus there were exhibitions of artist books that were published. But there were no terms yet and the artists themselves were not making distinctions among all these things. John McClurg's books hung from the ceiling, which was 16 feet high, and Charlemagne Palestine's books were like giant flowers covered with pigment, but they were blank notebooks from Canal Street, the pages of which he had crumpled. So they're kind of multiples/not multiples. My point being that it was not a big step from where the artists were . . . no, I'm putting this wrong! The artists didn't make a big distinction among all the forms. They were also doing installations, pretty soon audiotape, film, music . . . it was all one big blob. It was the beginnings of postmodernism, and everybody played in three bands, and made films, and did street performances, and events inside and outside, installations in the backyard—everybody was doing everything. You were just an artist and you used whatever form was appropriate, which I believe harks back to the Futurists. The Futurist poets and painters were experimenting with everything, as avantgarde artists should do.

SANT: Did the main newspapers cover the early performances?

WILSON: I embarked on a quixotic effort to get the *New York Times* to recognize that there was this "not theatre" category called performance art. I must have spent 10 years trying really hard to establish performance art as something in the visual arts tradition as distinct from this thing called theatre.

SANT: Did any critics write in the "Art Review" sections?

WILSON: No, in theatre. Well, dance. There wasn't any real place for performance art. Sometimes dance, sometimes theatre. C. Carr[2] single-handedly created a space for performance art. She was a political writer, a cultural-scene writer, not exactly an art-world writer.

SANT: She created that space in the *Village Voice,* not in the *New York Times.*

WILSON: Yes, in the *Village Voice.* And then the *New Yorker* had another category, I think they called it "Acts" for some years, and then they abandoned the category altogether. I took this point seriously: what Franklin Furnace was doing descended from the avantgarde work that was done in the early part of the 20th century by the Futurists and Constructivists. By 1980 I started to do shows to prove, in a way, never having been trained in art history, that the contemporary artist books movement had historical antecedents. So I invited guest curators to prepare exhibitions, autodidactically giving myself and Franklin Furnace's public lessons in the history of avantgarde practice. *The Page As Alternative Space, 1909 to 1980* [1980–1981] was the first of these historical shows: a year-long exhibition in four sections with four curators who showed the magazines and the books, photo-works, posters, and boxes of the contemporary and historical avantgarde.

SANT: Did your interest in artists' books develop through your formal training in English literature?

WILSON: From literature, yes. But, I was dissatisfied with literature.

SANT: Dissatisfied? In what way?

WILSON: It wasn't smart enough, and broad enough. All these white guys as my PhD advisers at Dalhousie University rejected my thesis as "visual art" in 1972.

SANT: What was your proposed PhD thesis about?

WILSON: Based on the idea that Henry James, who was a novelist but also an art critic, may have created a model before he wrote each one of his novels, I would read the novels and then I would re-create the model that I believe he must have created in order to write the novel.

SANT: What did you do instead?

WILSON: I went in a huff over to the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and got myself a job teaching English grammar.

SANT: Although you soon left education as a career, within Franklin Furnace you had an Education Program for some time. What lead to the creation the Franklin Furnace Education Program?

WILSON: Franklin Furnace developed most of its new programs by responding to artists. Diane Poston, an artist and bookmaker, wanted to organize art classes around books at P.S.130 in Chinatown to subversively promote literacy while the kids were having fun. At the end of the school year, the proud kids and their proud parents came to Franklin Furnace to see their books on display. They were great—trap doors hinged on toothpicks, clouds made of cotton balls, liberal use of glitter. They were autobiographical books so the kids didn't have to "learn" anything—but they were writing in English! Right away, Jackie Schiffman, my Director of Development, recognized that we had a literacy program here. She asked me what I wanted to call it, and I decided on Sequential Art for Kids. This left the door open to performance artists like Laurie Anderson and Eric Bogosian, who said teaching kindergarteners was the hardest job they had ever done. We had in the program artists who made paper, like Ken Polinskie, artist bookmakers and illustrators like Susan Share and Ariane Dewey, photographers, filmmakers, and animation artists, videographers—anything but painting and sculpture, line and surface, all that formalist crap.

SANT: How do you describe Sequential Art for Kids now?

WILSON: This was a subversive effort to validate what the kids already knew but didn't know was knowledge. For another example, artists and videographers Ron Littke and Benita Abrams divided up the ESL kids at P.S.52 in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, into the younger set and the older set. The younger ones wrote, acted, and produced videotapes based on Russian, Middle Eastern, and Chinese folktales they already knew. The tapes are completely charming, with radical changes in scale and narrative that don't bother the kids at all.

SANT: So although the program has one goal, its methods are diverse. What did the older kids do?

Franklin Furnace developed most of its new programs by responding to artists.

WILSON: The older ones did video documentaries of the streets where they lived. This exercise gave them the chance to examine their situation in this new world, as kids of first-generation immigrant parents who sometimes would give them the lease to read because these parents couldn't understand English.

SANT: When did you start this program? And is it still running?

WILSON: Sequential Art for Kids started with one artist in one school in 1985, and at its zenith a decade later, had 19 artists in as many schools in all the five boroughs through a collaboration with Library Power, which Jackie organized. Now it is small again, and concentrated upon video because P.S.52 had all this great equipment and no personnel who knew how to use it. Sheila Salmon at Library Power recommended Franklin Furnace. Enter video artists!

SANT: It seems to me that the connection between art and education is quite strong for Franklin Furnace. Has this been the case throughout the past 25 years? What role does education play in your organization's *raison d'être*?

WILSON: In the early days, when I was trundling around Lower Manhattan getting incorporated, it struck me that one of the agencies to which the not-for-profit sector is beholden is the Department of Education. The charitable purpose of Franklin Furnace is not art, but education. Ever since day one we have assumed an aggressive educational stance with regard to the value of avantgarde art to contemporary cultural life. This is not to say that we put labels on the wall explaining the art, as in the '80s we were encouraged to do, nor did we ever have docents or audio guides. But I still believe contemporary art has a lot to say to contemporary culture, and that American society doesn't get how valuable a resource their artist community is. Our student interns are almost always from anywhere but here—Europe, South America, Israel—places where studying the American avantgarde has value. I think Franklin Furnace's work will have value to America too, but we will be long dead.

SANT: Do you have a strategy that will ensure that it will be valued in the future?

WILSON: I am seeking a partnership with a collegial institution that will be here when I'm not, and will perceive Franklin Furnace's archives not only as historical commodity, but as pedagogical material sooner rather than later. And this leads into my ongoing discussion with the behemoth, New York University.

SANT: How has the way artists are chosen for your program changed over the years? Are there any artists you as Martha Wilson, or you as Franklin Furnace, invite to produce a piece?

WILSON: None. None at all.

SANT: How long has it been this way?

WILSON: Very long. When Jacki Apple left the position as curator I didn't want to be the curator. I didn't want my taste to determine the program. I wanted the artists' community to tell me what was happening in the future of the art world. So we installed a panel system.

SANT: Who chooses the panel?

WILSON: I choose the panel.

SANT: Doesn't that imply that in some ways you're actually choosing the artists by proxy?

WILSON: Yes. And I yell during meetings, but I don't vote on the panel. I can't tell you what I yell about because it will reveal who the artists are. Anyway, I make my opinion known, but the panel blows me off. They don't have to pay any attention to my opinion, although I might direct the panel.

SANT: Give me an example of how you direct the panel.

WILSON: In 2001 I asked them to please give more money to less artists to create live art on the Internet because it's taking more time and they don't have enough money to do what they want to do. So we asked the panel to please select three artists to get $5,000 each, and that means these artists are still going to be short because they always do projects that fill to capacity all the available time, space, and money. That just comes with the territory. At least I'm giving them enough money for maybe two months of expenses.

SANT: That sounds rather reasonable. Have you ever directed the panel by saying there should be more grants given to women and/or minorities?

WILSON: No. But I select the panel and I put a lot of women and artists of color on the panel. And to be fair, the field that came to be known as performance art is chosen by many outstanding women because they couldn't say what they wanted to say in the form of paintings, so they took up this flexible form, which came to be known as performance art.

SANT: Are you saying that women picked up what we have come to call performance art because they could not work in the appropriate environment or they could not express themselves freely through painting or sculpture?

WILSON: Actually there is something in there that needs to be teased out. That is true. Women have not met with success often in the commercial system and had to choose alternative organizations like Franklin Furnace and also alternative media like performance art—but they wanted that. I mean I am deliberately a performance artist myself because I don't want to have a studio, I don't want to store sculpture, I don't want to work in bronze. No! I want it to disappear. I want it to be an idea-driven product that I'm making. I don't know whether I made that clear. Performance art is a good category for that. But at no point did I consciously say I'm not going to show men and I'm only going to show women. Or I'm going to show political work. That came up once when an artist asked me, "Do I have to do political work to be selected by Franklin Furnace?" In reality, the panel selects work that appeals to them, which is often activist and political.

SANT: That's not the case so much anymore, with the *Live Art on the Internet* program.[3] Since your first season at Pseudo there have been some very noticeable works that aren't overtly political or activist in context.

WILSON: Covertly political, I think. Like Patricia Hoffbauer's *Carmenland, The Saga Continues* [6 March 1998] or even *Pseudo Studio Walk* [by Halona Hilbertz; 6 February 1998] in a certain remote way could be read as political.

SANT: I see what you mean. I would add Irina Danilova and Steven Ausbury's *IR MIR Is Here!* [15 January 1999] to that list.[4]

WILSON: Speaking of political, I want to talk also about the maneuvering that took place both in public and behind closed doors as Franklin Furnace went through the process of becoming virtual, and how the Board and I have resolved our differences by developing a new initiative that has a spiritual purpose.

SANT: You have not used the word spiritual before.

WILSON: Not in the organized religion sense. But as I was taking Franklin Furnace into the unknown, there were some members of the Board who wanted to be reassured that there was good art happening on the Internet. So we convened three town meetings to air all points of view, and while we were excoriated by artists who felt the loss of Franklin Furnace as a clubhouse, artists like Jordan Crandall of X-Art Foundation eloquently defended artwork taking place in the virtual realm. But the Board wanted

While we were excoriated by artists who felt the loss of Franklin Furnace as a clubhouse, artists like Jordan Crandall of X-Art Foundation eloquently defended artwork taking place in the virtual realm. But the Board wanted to go even further to support the spirit of risk that they felt had been beaten out of the art world during the Culture Wars.

to go even further to support the spirit of risk that they felt had been beaten out of the art world during the Culture Wars. David Perlmutter, my intrepid Chair at this time, proposed a fund—a cash prize, an award—to go to artists who were attempting the impossible, trying to do projects that would never have been funded anyway by the NEA's discipline-based categories. We cast around for a name, in jest called it the McMartha Award, and in the end, this was the name that stuck. The first award was to be given on 7 November 2001 by Yoko Ono to Kyong Park for his *Adamah* project in Detroit, where he and community members are establishing a new society on the xeric space left by the failure of the capitalist system.[5] His project coincided with the 300th anniversary of the founding of Detroit, making *Adamah* an unfundable, in-your-face project developed by a brilliant artist and architect, whom most people know as the cofounder with Shirin Neshat of Storefront for Art and Architecture. But September 11 intervened, the market tanked, and our dream of an annual award in collaboration with Creative Capital Foundation didn't materialize. In the end, without fanfare, we gave $25,000 to Kyong Park to celebrate Franklin Furnace's 25th Anniversary.

SANT: This is not being given to online projects, then?

WILSON: It could be. The idea is that these projects fall out of the confines of what we usually consider to be art practice. They can be in any medium, now known or hereinafter imagined, and concern any subject under the sun—in the postmodern spirit.

SANT: Is that what you mean by spiritual?

WILSON: Yes.

Notes

1. [*See Jacki Apple's article in this issue.*]
2. [*See C. Carr's article in this issue.*]
3. See "Historical Summary: What We Learned from Franklin Furnace's Presentations of Live Art on the Internet, from 1996 till Now" by Martha Wilson <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/born_digital/history_essay.html>.
4. The original performances were webcast live from New York by Pseudo Programs, Inc., from its studio at 600 Broadway, and then archived for at least six months on the Pseudo web servers. Pseudo's archives from this period are no longer available to the public, but the works presented by Franklin Furnace at Pseudo.com are now documented online at <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/born_digital/born_tffpseudo.html>.
5. See "25th Anniversary McMartha Award" at <http://www.franklinfurnace.org>.

Kyong Park, Detroit, Making It Better For You. *Images from a video produced in December 2000. The* Adamah *project is comprised of multiple events and discrete works including videos, installations, and text pieces. Portions of this project were made possible by Franklin Furnace's 2001 McMartha Award. (Still from a video by Kyong Park; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

Adamah*, meaning "of the earth," is a long-term urban renewal project meant to inspire the local community and provide a new equity for Detroit. We believe that solid growth of communities does not come from casinos or stadiums, but rather that it comes from the people of the city investing time and care in themselves.* Adamah *is a reclamation project focusing on an area northwest of downtown Detroit, an area historically abandoned and disused. The plan seeks to turn the area's idle land into productive, educational, and job-creating spaces by evolving the land into a self-sufficient agricultural zone. By depositing these public spaces into a community owned and governed land trust, a new and shared equity for the economic development of the area will emerge. [. . .] A plan for* Adamah*'s completion in 2010 has begun, with hopes of its attaining sovereignty in 2075.*

continued . . .

Changing Spaces

Galinsky and the Virtual Furnace

an interview by Toni Sant

Before the end of the 1996/97 season, Franklin Furnace announced it was going virtual. The organization sold its premises at 112 Franklin Street in downtown Manhattan and with that ceased using any physical space to present its art and performance programs. For the first two seasons following the decision, a number of works were presented on the Internet in conjunction with Pseudo Programs Inc. Through Pseudo.com, Franklin Furnace started making the works and ideas of the artists on its program available to a broader audience on the web.

The main producer working with Franklin Furnace at Pseudo was Robert Galinsky; an artist in his own right known only as Galinsky. Born in New Haven, Connecticut, Galinsky moved to New York in the early 1990s to develop his career as a writer. In 1995 he cofounded Pseudo Programs. He left the company in 2000 and briefly worked with Arts International as Director of New Technology and Media. I interviewed Galinsky at my apartment in Jackson Heights, NY, on Wednesday 9 August 2001. Galinsky is no longer professionally involved with Internet technology. He continues to write poetry, perform, teach, and produce performance on screen. His website is available at <http://www.galinskyplace.com>.

SANT: The Internet became available to communities outside academia and the government in 1994. By the end of that year, the World Wide Web really started getting major public attention through Netscape Navigator 1.0, the first commercial browser release. What were you doing in 1994, the year before Pseudo.com appeared?

GALINSKY: In 1994, and for a few years before that, I was teaching. I was also producing, mostly spoken word shows. I was doing the occasional theatrical audition, but I was mainly teaching conflict resolution and drug prevention—using theatre, film, and poetry—to special education kids in all five boroughs.

SANT: Were you teaching in the New York City public school system?

GALINSKY: Yes, but I was working for a private company called L.E.A.P.—Learning through an Expanded Arts Program.

SANT: How did you meet Pseudo's founder, Josh Harris?

GALINSKY: I met Josh in mid-1994. I was teaching and producing what I called *Live Axe!* and *Galinsky's Full-Frontal Theatre,* which were multigenre shows. In-

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stead of getting seven of the same type of artists, I got seven different types of multigenre artists and did an evening where the audience saw seven different things. On the producer's side of it this was great because we had seven different groups promoting the show, and seven different types of audiences were showing up: a poetry audience sitting next to the singer-guitar audience, sitting next to the live fashion show audience. It made for a great evening because you have drag queens sitting next to completely intellectual, book-minded poets in the audience. This was at La MaMa Galleria and later at a place called Play Quest Theater on 28th Street.

SANT: Did you meet Josh at one of these shows?

GALINSKY: I had seen him at the shows but I never met him. Then Josh was doing a pilot for TV and Spyro Poulos, one of the original Pseudo founders, invited me to perform there at the pilot party, and then we met and talked. He liked what I was producing so when it was time for him to do his radio show he said, you know, you want to produce this show about the Internet? I didn't own a computer in 1994. I didn't have email and I didn't know about the Internet either. I didn't care. I thought it was interesting. I was into the raw live experience.

SANT: Was this how you started working on Pseudo?

GALINSKY: Josh called what he was doing Jupiter Interactive but it was too close to Jupiter Communications, the company he had just sold and so he had to change it, and he came up with Pseudo.

SANT: I know you got involved with Prodigy at the time? Was this part of your deal with Josh?

GALINSKY: No. Josh told me that if I tried to work with Prodigy that he would box me out of New York because they were his competitors. He knew he had a resource that he didn't want diluted by them. But I went there anyway without him knowing and negotiated a contract.

SANT: What did you do for Prodigy?

GALINSKY: What Prodigy was doing at the time for the Internet was a great idea. They were experimenting in this particular field: web groups that had chat, bulletin boards, and content based on the Internet. If you were knowledgeable on a subject, like somebody who understands cars, they start a car interest group. Everybody in the world who was on Prodigy could migrate to this car group. And the same applied for poetry and spoken word, of course, which was my group.

SANT: How is it that you claim to be a cofounder of Pseudo?

GALINSKY: At first I was still teaching. From 9:00 A.M. till 1:00 P.M. I was teaching, and then from 2:00 till 10 or 11 at night I was at Pseudo, getting paid $300 a week.

SANT: What was your role at Pseudo?

GALINSKY: In the beginning I did everything, as did everybody. My job was to structure our one-hour AM radio show on WEVD, make all the promos that go on that show, create deals and barters with other websites to get advertising for trades of advertising, go into the studio and actually produce the acts, produce the music, work with the musicians, do the voice-overs myself, hire other voice-over talent, hire other talent, create the system of how to trade links with people so as to get more exposure, create affiliations with other websites, create

1. Halona Hilbertz, Pseudo Studio Walk, *6 February 1998. The inaugural netcast presented by Franklin Furnace in collaboration with Pseudo Programs, Inc. Galinsky produced the netcast for Pseudo's performance channel, ChannelP.com, which developed into a two-season collaboration and a CD. (Video by Galinksy; screen grab by Tiffany Ludwig; courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

affiliations with non-website businesses, try to get sponsorships, book the show, cohost the show, and run the control board during the show.

SANT: And what went on during this radio show?

GALINSKY: The show was better than anything we produced afterwards. It was a wild party show. The whole thing was scored live by the incredibly talented sound designer and musician Tom "TBO" Linder, who was also a cofounder of Pseudo. Every show we booked three or four technology-oriented people who could speak about the changes that were happening with the Internet, because it was changing all the time. First the modems connected at 14.4 Kbps and then it was 28.8 a week later. Then we also had the sexy side of things. We booked people who were doing interesting content on the web at the time, like *The Spot,* which was the first online soap opera from California. We had the Mighty Sparrow from the West Indies, the King of Calypso, on the show. My philosophy was, and Josh agreed with it, that we didn't just want to bring the net out on the radio but we also wanted to bring people who had never been on the net to the net and then out to the radio. It was a very action-packed hour. We had the Isley Brothers on the show and we invited the cybercafés at the time, the guys from alt.coffee on Avenue A. We were really marrying what was offline with what is online. It wasn't like a *Home Improvement* kind of show about the net. It was about getting to people who had never really touched the net and how it can really affect that person or that person's opinion or how their work as artists might be affected by it.

SANT: Were you aware of anybody else doing this elsewhere at the time?

GALINSKY: There were two others. One show was really like *Tool Time,* a technical point of view. And then there was another group that was syndicating short show pieces in the same vein for other radio stations. So we were the only ones who were really dealing with the culture, human beings first, how it affects them or how they affect it, and that's the beauty of it.

SANT: Still, the show and the new medium evolved very quickly. When did you start having the audio streamed on the web?

GALINSKY: At the beginning we did the show on a Thursday night starting at 10:00 P.M. The show was like a party, and sometimes there would be a party afterwards too. At 11:05 P.M. we'd have a full tape of the show and one of our guys would walk down to our place at 600 Broadway and put it on the encoder and within two hours it would be on the net as an hour-long file that could be downloaded.

SANT: I remember that it took people quite a while to download large audio files on a 28.8 Kbps modem.

GALINSKY: Right, but our file was not the sort you'd download that way. It was streamed, but not live.

SANT: That was when Progressive Networks, as Real Networks was called back then, developed RealAudio which was probably the first real webcasting product on the market.

GALINSKY: And within a five-month period we went live with the stream. That was when we actually decided to dump the radio show and build our own studio in the Pseudo loft.

SANT: Yes, Progressive Networks had developed their system for live streaming by the beginning of 1996.

GALINSKY: Live streaming of audio only. I remember the first night we ran it; it must have been like what Alexander Graham Bell did, except we had a party going on with about 40 people! Somebody ran down the loft to the another room where there was a computer and went to hear it live, with all the crackling.

SANT: When and how did all this develop into the various channels—like the Performance Channel at ChannelP.com—which made up what came to be called the Pseudo Online Network?

GALINSKY: When we got off the radio we went down and dark for about three months and said that when we came back we were not doing just one show. Josh's philosophy was "think wide and the investors will come." We had a 10,000-square-foot loft on the corner of Broadway and Houston; it was wide open and empty except for this little studio and Josh's bedroom in the back. People came to me with their show proposals and I'd say show me what you've got, and they'd do their act and if I liked it I'd say that's a show, let's do it. We put all our resources behind these shows. So the network started out with about 25 different radio shows on the web. The thing ran for probably like a year, just us burning through shows. We probably created 60 different shows, but only about 20 of them ultimately stuck.

SANT: What was happening on the Pseudo.com website at this time?

GALINSKY: There was a chat attached to the audio files, so we also had a live chat audience during the shows; we had chat-jockeys running each channel.

SANT: Was Prodigy involved in any of this?

GALINSKY: This was never done on Prodigy. We had a client-contractor relationship with Prodigy. They contracted us to build new chat software so Josh hired this contractor to build this chat software for Prodigy, and he told Prodigy that the only way he would do this is that Prodigy would let him have his own area labeled "Pseudo" on Prodigy chat.

SANT: During the time that Pseudo had chat rooms on Prodigy the various Pseudo channels were still being organized into a network. How did you organize all the different shows into a network of channels?

GALINSKY: After running 26 different shows we realized that we needed to organize the shows so that people who come to our website could really get to know quickly and understand what this is all about. Someone who shows up for Love and Romance or Hip-Hop doesn't want to sit through the Indie Film Show or the Indie Rock Show. So we came up with six or seven channels based on genres.

SANT: Was this when you stopped being involved in the whole of Pseudo and focused on just one channel?

GALINSKY: Yes. This was when I went from macro-Pseudo to micro-Pseudo. I had hired the brilliant Janice "Girlbomb" Erlbaum to be my associate producer on all the Pseudo shows, and when we decided to go to channels I said, "I'm tired of producing everybody's fucking show and making sure everybody's show is great. I want to make just one show great. I want to go back to my roots in performance and art." Janice was totally psyched about taking it to the next level. So we promoted her to executive producer for the Pseudo Online Network and I became simply executive producer of the Performance Channel.

SANT: Was this when you got involved with Franklin Furnace?

GALINSKY: No. We already had a relationship with Franklin Furnace. Franklin Furnace was actually the first paying customer, client, call it what you want, that Pseudo ever had for a show! They were paying for our services, which was the very first real income we had based on creating a show or program.

SANT: Before we get deeper into your relationship with Franklin Furnace, tell me some more about how you operated ChannelP.com.

GALINSKY: We decided to make ChannelP when we saw what shows we already had in our mix of shows on Pseudo.com. We had Franklin Furnace, we had Taylor Mead, and we had *Go Poetry!* and Action New York in the mix of all the shows—and we figured that these shows would go on ChannelP. That was the beginning of our Performance Channel.

SANT: Now tell me more about how you got the Franklin Furnace program going.

GALINSKY: Martha Wilson came to us at one point—late 1996 or early 1997—with this idea of doing a show and said she could get a grant. But at that time we were not ready for what she wanted to do, so she went to Thinking Pictures and she tried to do it with the studio at Exit Art. Two months later it fell through with Thinking Pictures for some reason and we got together again and we sat down and I understood exactly what she was saying. She said, "Let's get X amount of dollars to do X amount of shows. Let's develop this thing!" I said OK, here is the deal: 10 artists, 10 shows—what does Pseudo do for these shows? The contract basically said that each artist comes in for two weeks and gets six hours of production time from Pseudo to do a 30-minute or a one-hour show. So it was great because the artists came in and they always got more than their six-hours—they always needed more. I got to coproduce and codirect and I was exposed to really good and really bad art and artists.

Martha and I reveled in it. We loved it! And at the same time it was informing Franklin Furnace where it could go now. Martha was thinking a lot about the physical overhead, space overhead, and she realized that she didn't need it. She

didn't need to have a physical space of her own now any more because she's got this virtual stage and now she can do everything in this rented physical space, far cheaper and with a lot less intellectual problems and fiscal problems.

SANT: It seems to me that at this time Martha also saw in you someone who could help Franklin Furnace develop its programs. I see your role as the Franklin Furnace program producer for the first two seasons they worked at Pseudo.

GALINSKY: Yes, I had a meeting with the artists Franklin Furnace was presenting every two weeks. I sat down with them and explained the technology to them. Some people knew exactly what they wanted to do, but some other artists came in completely without a clue, and still didn't want to have a clue. Some of them saw it as a place for them to take old material and just cut it together and have it end up being viewed on the web. Kathy Westwater, who is a choreographer, totally got it. She had a 12-section dance piece and concentrated her time on getting the piece shot and then having somebody create a script for it so when the audience on the web showed up they could reassemble her choreography, rearrange these 12-pieces to create their own choreographies. The piece was called *The Fortune Cookie Dance* [19 February 1999]. So there were some artists that really grasped the higher-end technology side and there were some artists that looked at it as a video studio.

SANT: One of the pieces that attracted a lot of attention was Halona Hilbertz's *Pseudo Studio Walk* [6 February 1998].

GALINSKY: She sure did! She came in and said, if I have 15 minutes I want to walk across this 1,000-square-foot loft. Set up the camera over there and I'll come toward it. I'll go away I'll come toward it again and go away. It was a great piece. I loved it because it drove a lot of people nuts! It was one of those pieces that pissed a lot of people off. When people get pissed off that usually makes me happy, and it was very meditative. It was also beautiful because you could hear the wooden floor creaking over the Internet, and I felt that those two technologies meeting, wood-planks creaking against each other meeting the technology of streaming on the net was a great combination.

SANT: You just said, "When people get pissed off that usually makes me happy." Was that why at one point you had a show where you put the Performance Channel on trial?

GALINSKY: Putting ChannelP on trial was like putting Martha Wilson on trial. Basically it was a way for us to take everything that Martha stood for and put it on trial.

SANT: Did she appear during the trail?

GALINSKY: She didn't appear during the trial, but it was a way to put her, or rather Franklin Furnace, on trial. Many people at Pseudo had never seen Performance Art, and there were others in the company who didn't understand it or they didn't think it was valuable. I would just pull out the contract and say this is bringing in money, and they couldn't say a word. Anyway, so we put ChannelP on trial. The judge was a complete Jessie Helms meets George Washington meets Newt Gingrich, completely politically incorrect. Philip Galinsky, my brother, played the judge. Sometimes it was agreed that whoever we put on trial would know that he had this really bad attitude and sometimes it wasn't made clear to them before they took the stand and they'd get on and realize that they were facing a really ignorant and biased guy.

SANT: Who did you put on trial?

GALINSKY: I was on trial once as executive producer of the channel. One of our associate producers, Megan Williams, was on trial and she broke down crying the first time, so she made a repeat appearance. We put the guys from 88 Hip-Hop on trial, a couple of in-studio engineers who were pro-ChannelP, other producers from other shows who were against ChannelP and were against us in real life.

SANT: What did you have to say to "the judge" in defense of Performance Art?

GALINSKY: My performance was pretty flat because I was straight and logical. The judge was actually over the top but consistent, and it wasn't like some hilarious Benny Hill type conversation or cynical, but you could really engage in an intellectual fight with this ignorant guy. Anyway, I made I guess the usual argument for why Performance Art is good, why Franklin Furnace works, why ChannelP works, what balance it strikes with the rest of the company. These were the arguments we continued to make to the business department until the last moment when they canceled ChannelP.

SANT: What was your reaction when Pseudo Programs Inc. decided to shut down ChannelP and with it the third season of the Franklin Furnace online program?

GALINSKY: That was one of the major death knells at Pseudo, when they got rid of that show and the Performance Channel itself. That marked the beginning of the end.

SANT: I remember that one of the last things the Performance Channel tried to do was to go to all the major downtown and off-off-Broadway theatres and performance spaces like the Kitchen and La MaMa and offer to stream their shows on the web.

GALINSKY: Once these things hit the eyes of the guys who really held the purse strings, they couldn't wrap their heads around that, for whatever reasons. Franklin Furnace and the entire Performance Channel kept the network grounded into seeking a truth.

SANT: Pseudo.com's Performance Channel closed down in December 1999 and Pseudo Programs Inc. went bust in September 2000. When did your relationship with Pseudo end, and what have you been doing since then?

GALINSKY: I left Pseudo in February/March 2000. The timing was such that I was doing my play [*The Bench*] at the Kitchen so I spent 3 weeks doing nothing but working on the play. I never have the opportunity to work for six hours a day on a play, so this was a great opportunity. After the play was done in April, I interviewed with Arts International.

SANT: What did Arts International hire you to do exactly?

GALINSKY: To run the new technology and media division, which means to run the website.

SANT: How do the experiences you had during your five-years with Pseudo inform what you're doing now?

GALINSKY: The pinnacle of it is I know what not to do. I still believe that the best people are still figuring out what to do. The best people stick with an idea and get dedicated and get behind it and will make a way to see it through. Some of these things I get proposed to me now I've seen them crash and burn already.

We're wrestling with the idea of whether to build our own studio or just go out and find a studio and rent it. It sounds great to have your own studio, our

own place, with lighting, sound, streaming, everything—we need the facilities. There is a whole different kind of managerial head that you need to manage a physical space. Then what you do inside it is a whole other can of worms. Do we want to be in the business of managing physical space and programming with the technology in that space, or do we want to just focus on what we know and do well already and just go do it in someone else's space?

SANT: It's interesting that you bring this up because it is also something that Martha Wilson has had to deal with when discussing the idea of going virtual with her board of directors.

GALINSKY: Martha's attempt to get people to understand, for her to make that transition from "I have a physical space" to "I don't need it because I've got a virtual space," was really cool. That was a leap I think she made knowing that it was a huge chance for her to take because of her reputation and her history and her company having a physical space and rocking it out like that. She didn't have full support from the powers within her group but she had plenty of support from the artists and from us, and that was totally the right move. In my heart I know the joy and beauty of having your own space. It's incredible! But then the overhead that goes with it kills you. I agree with Martha, because when you're working in someone else's space the overhead is so much less. There are other spaces out there that you can make deals with or agreements with or whatever and just go and do your thing. Let them handle the ticket office, the ushers, who's cleaning the bathrooms, who's ordering the napkins and the toilet paper, who's the bartender, who's got the relationship with the beer and soda company, and all these things that you forget about when you've got to deal with the director, the producer, the actors, the rehearsal time, the props, the set, the music, the recording of it, and all those other things that people like Martha and myself really want to deal with. The real things that surround the performance, the art.

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Convergence

The Furnace and MoMA

Clive Phillpot

My first memory of Franklin Furnace is of a set of teeth. These glistening fangs belonged not to Martha Wilson but to her dog, possibly a German shepherd, who greeted me somewhat ahead of Martha when I dropped by Franklin Street in April 1977. I was in New York for a week-long interview for the position of Director of the Library at The Museum of Modern Art. I must have arrived at the Furnace at a quiet time, or before the scheduled opening hours, hence the fierce greeting. But Martha restrained the beast and invited me in.

Back in London, England, I had already been involved with artist books increasingly since 1972—buying them for the Chelsea School of Art Library, writing about them for *Studio International* and other magazines, and being involved in exhibitions for the British Council and the Arts Council of Great Britain. Thus my antennae were sensitive to any mention of artist books in the media. In 1976 or 1977 I read somewhere about the establishment of Franklin Furnace in New York and wrote for information. By the time I got to New York, Franklin Furnace and Printed Matter, the other new artist books organization, were on my list of places to visit.

I eventually settled in Manhattan in November of 1977, and within a few weeks had set up the beginnings of the Artist Book Collection at the MoMA Library and ordered my first titles from Printed Matter bookstore. There seemed to be no reason to defer to the existence of the Franklin Furnace Archive at that time since, to my mind, not only was the Furnace still a fledgling, but the material that could fall under the rubric of "artist books" was an essential part of any library that wished to document contemporary art. I also had no sense of competing with the Furnace: as far as I was concerned, the more institutions collecting artist books the better. Let a hundred flowers bloom.

After my first brief acquaintance with Martha—and her dog—I saw more of her in New York, both casually and at more formal occasions such as a panel entitled "Artists' Books & Beyond" at the Furnace in May 1978.[1] Then in October 1978 I was asked to speak at the annual meeting of the somewhat anarchic Associated Art Publishers (AAP) in Chicago and spent several days hanging out with Martha and our hosts Conrad Gleber and Gail Rubini.[2] So Martha and I became fully aware of each other's intentions and progress in building our two collections. I also spent time at the Furnace viewing exhibitions of books and other art forms, as well as attending some performances. In addition Martha would some-

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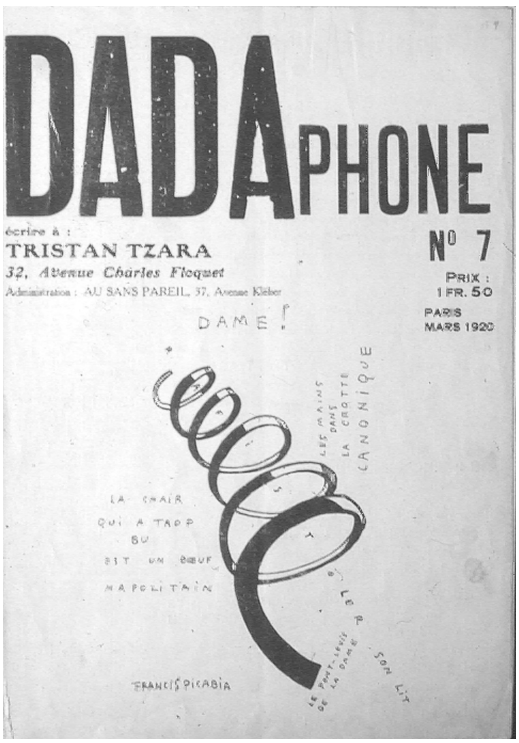
times invite me down to see a book exhibition and meet with the artist whose work was on display.

My view of Martha Wilson's collection was that she had looser criteria for artist books than I did. Her attitude appeared to be that if an artist called something a book it was a book, whereas I generally considered that an artist book had to actually *be* a book (or more likely a pamphlet) that utilized the familiar codex format in which pages are fixed in a sequence, as with any paperback. In addition I usually wanted to see a commitment to multiplication and to dissemination and therefore looked for works in editions of at least a hundred. (To my mind books that were unique or printed in limited editions negated Gutenberg and the whole significance of the printing press, and also created artificially rare commodities.) Martha seemed to be more laidback about all these factors. Another difference between the two collections was that Martha had the wonderful bonus of plugging into artists' networks across many countries, and sometimes hooking into the mail-art community.[3] She thereby freely acquired very diverse material that was outside the scope of the bookselling world, which was the common route for The Museum of Modern Art Library, although MoMa frequently included among their sources specialist booksellers such as Printed Matter. The MoMA Library also had the funds to buy older material on the secondhand market that had not been picked up at the time of publication, while the Furnace relied on donations and gifts.

I guess it was as a result of my conspicuous activities in the area, and because of the commitment to artist books that Martha and I shared, that I was asked to join the Board of Directors of Franklin Furnace in 1980. Joining the Board gave me the chance to get to know the Chair of the Board, the writer and critic Alexandra (Ally) Anderson (-Spivey) much better, and to establish or re-establish friendly relations with the artist Lawrence Weiner; Amy Baker (-Sandback), publisher of *Artforum;* Frederieke Taylor; Marcia Tucker, director of the New Museum; the critic and historian Shelley Rice, and several others. In the same year, 1980, probably because she had heard me give a lecture on "The Body Language of Movement Magazines" at the Visual Studies Workshop in November 1979,[4] Martha asked me if I would curate one of a series of four exhibitions entitled *The Page As Alternative Space.* My period was 1909 to 1929, and my topic was magazines. Collectively these exhibitions sketched in a history of artists' publications (rather than artist books) within which Martha could locate her collection. These four exhibitions garnered some useful publicity for the Furnace (and for me personally—see the *New York Times* article by John Russell, entitled "Art People: Riches from a Museum Library" [1980]). They also coincided with the launch of the Furnace's magazine *The Flue,* which included references to the exhibitions, as well as other features relating to artists and books.



1. The seventh and final issue of Tristan Tzara's Dada *journal,* Dadaphone, *was published in March 1920. Included in* The Page As Alternative Space 1909–1929 *exhibition, curated by Clive Phillpot, October–November 1980. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

My memories of the meetings of the Franklin Furnace Board of Directors include the pleasure of working and thinking, and of finding common ground, with the members of the Board, especially Lawrence Weiner, Ally Anderson, Amy Baker, Frederieke Taylor, and later Ann Coffin. But working with Martha was not so

The Flue

For 10 years, Franklin Furnace published the *Flue,* both a record of dynamic events and a site for original artworks. Published between 1980 and 1989, the 16 issues of the *Flue* ran the gamut of formats from tabloids designed and illustrated by Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, and others, to posters and pamphlets, to catalogs such as Cubist Prints/Cubist Books, which documented the eponymous exhibition organized by Franklin Furnace. Then-emerging artists Ana Mendieta and David Hammons created original works for the pages of the *Flue,* as did artists who were invited by Regina Vater to augment the exhibition Multiples by Latin American Artists.

The philosophy of the *Flue* was to both produce art and document art history in-the-making. There was never any effort made to ensure consistency of format; instead, value was placed upon allowing artist/editors and designers complete freedom—within budgetary constraints.

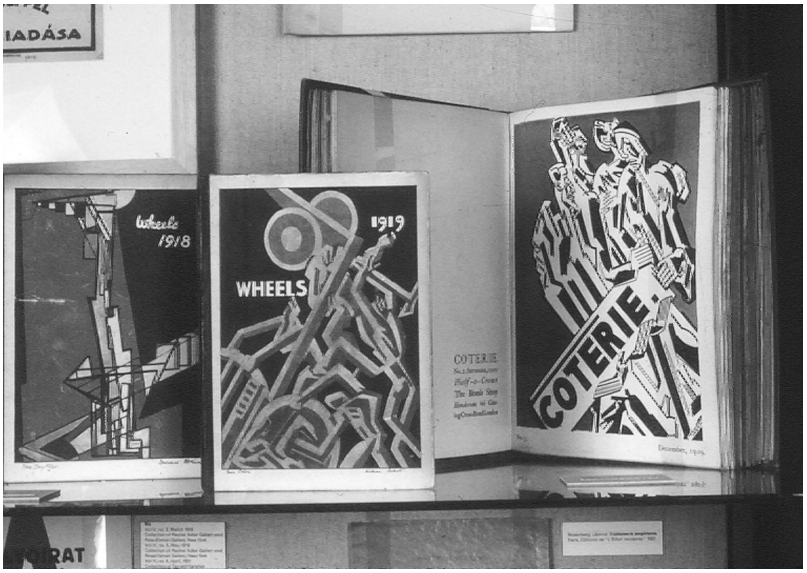
For more information on the content of each issue, see "Catalogues" from the Franklin Furnace Archives at <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/archives/archives.html>.

—*Martha Wilson*

simple. Martha had firm ideas and was not necessarily receptive to ideas that conflicted with hers. And this was not just my personal beef. The entire Board would frequently arrive at a decision, perhaps with Martha's reluctance, only to find that by the next meeting the Board's proposal had disappeared. This became increasingly frustrating, for it seemed to render any discussion of ideas irrelevant, unless those ideas coincided with Martha's. As much as I supported the activities and direction of Franklin Furnace, I began to see my role on the Board as decorative; the Board only *appeared* to be a collective decision-making body. The Furnace was Martha's baby.

I also had a more theoretical disagreement with Martha: she asserted that the Futurists initiated the modern histories of both performance art and book art. I didn't have a problem with her version of the history of performance, but I disagreed that the kind of book art she and I collected institutionally had a direct lineage that went back to the Futurists. To me the Futurists had no conception of art dependent upon the form of the book; rather they created conventional books and magazines that in a few cases employed inventive typography. These publications were more design works than artworks. I held that the radical break in the nature of artist publications did not happen at the beginning of the century but rather around 1960, when the common or garden paperback book became a structure not just for design, texts, or documentation, but for art.[5] Neither Martha nor I budged on our respective views. I, perhaps naturally, thought that my view was correct, even scientific, whereas at the time I saw Martha's position as bound up with her need to justify the existence of a space devoted to both performance and books. Martha seemed to me to be stretching the facts in suggesting that performance art and book art had moved together through history. I could live with our divergent views of history, however Martha's perspective led to the inclusion in her program of perfectly good exhibitions such as one on Cubist books,[6] but, to my mind, at the expense of more difficult and challenging exhibitions about artists' publications since World War II.

My feeling of being a passenger on the Board, unable to effect change, was



2. The Cubist Prints/Cubist Books *exhibition curated by Donna Stein began its tour at Franklin Furnace in October 1983 and traveled to the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco; The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; the Center for the Fine Arts, Miami; The Marian Koogler McNay Art Museum, San Antonio; and Galerie Berggruen, Paris. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

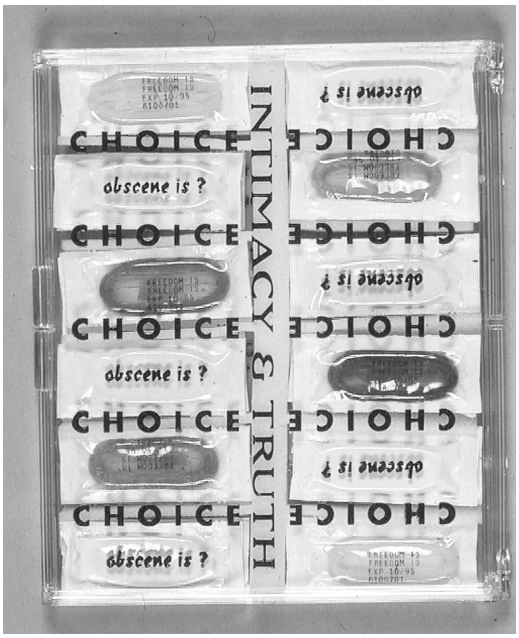
leading me to consider resignation. The eventual trigger for this action was what appeared to be some bloodletting in the palace. Three members of the Furnace staff, with whom I had had friendly relations and who, in my dealings with them, were conscientious, capable, and committed, were suddenly fired by Martha. They were John Copoulos, Jill Medvedow, and Howard Goldstein. I had not been alerted to whatever problems might have existed before this act and was, if I recall correctly, simply informed at the next meeting, along with the rest of the Board, that they had gone. My sympathy with the plight of the three, plus my other concerns, pushed me into resigning from the Board in 1982.

My resignation did not mean that I had any animosity toward Martha, just that I did not want to be a rubber stamp for her decisions. So we continued to see each other frequently and inevitably, given our shared interests and the size of the artist books community in Manhattan and beyond. In addition I was, by this time, a member of the Board of Directors of Printed Matter and thus saw a lot of Amy Baker, who was also on that Board. I kept in touch with Lawrence

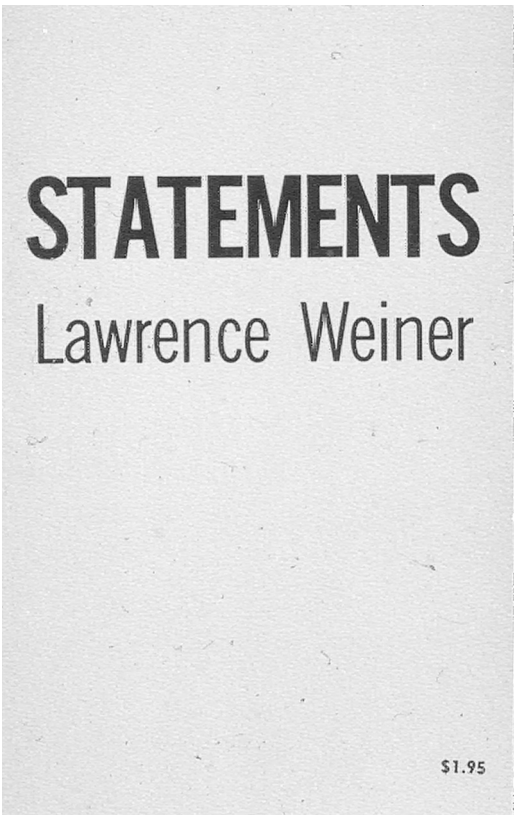
Ed. note: For more from Martha Wilson on the relationship of the Futurists to performance art and book art, See "A Brief History of Temporal Art" by Martha Wilson online at <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/about/about.html>:

> When F.T. Marinetti, the Italian poet and founder of Futurism, saw [Mallarmé's "*Un coup de des jamais n'abolira le hasard*" ("A throw of the dice will never eliminate chance"; 1897)], he perceived that the pages of a magazine had been transformed into visual space as well as sequential, but indeterminate time. His influential manifesto, "Parole in Liberta" (Words in Freedom), was published in 1912, connecting words, the page as art space and reader-controlled time in one document—which was published in thousands of copies and intended for a mass audience.

Ed. note: Plates 3–10 represent the range of work in The Museum of Modern Art/Franklin Furnace/Artist Book Collection. Selected and captioned by Martha Wilson.

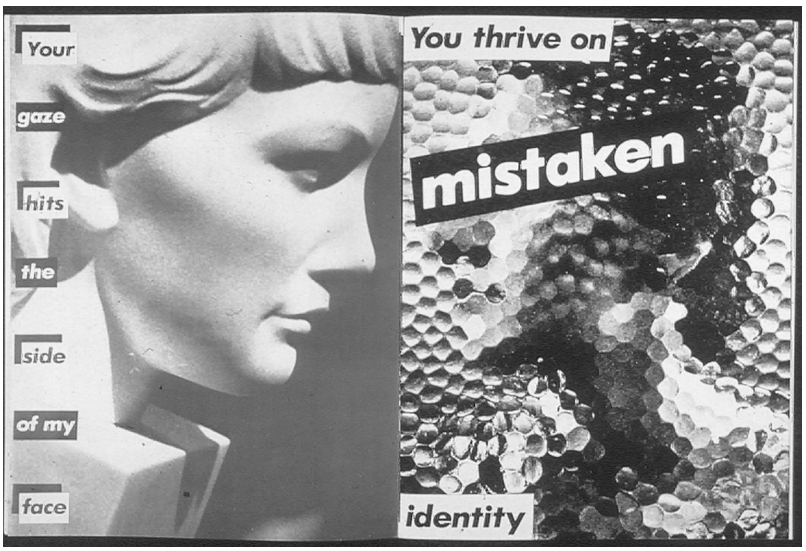


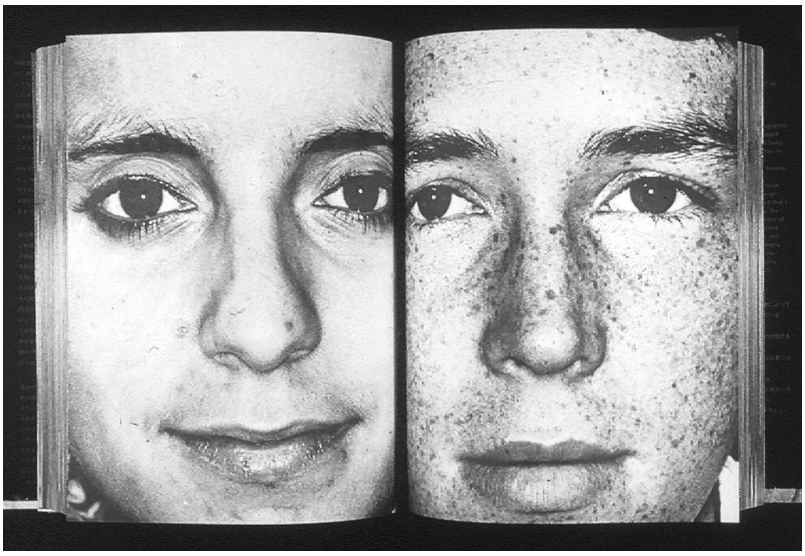
3. Daniel Martinez, Obscene Is?*, 1990; Martinez' colorful condoms were self-published and commissioned by The Peter Norton Family Foundation. Franklin Furnace included any work an artist claimed to be a book in its artist books collection. Over the years FF received a solid block of concrete, cookie tins filled with ephemeral objects, plastic boxes, and, before Franklin Furnace moved from its TriBeCa loft, a chair—which was accepted into The Museum of Modern Art/Franklin Furnace/Artist Book Collection. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*



4. Lawrence Weiner, Statements, *1968. Published by Seth Siegelaub, this work stands as a watershed publication of the artist books movement. It states its title and its $1.95 price on the cover, as if to say, "This art is affordable." Inside, the text is set in rectangular blocks and words are divided to fit, without necessarily conforming to normal syllable division—reinforcing the idea that the words themselves are a material. The texts suggest actions that may be performed by the reader—or simply appreciated as concepts. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

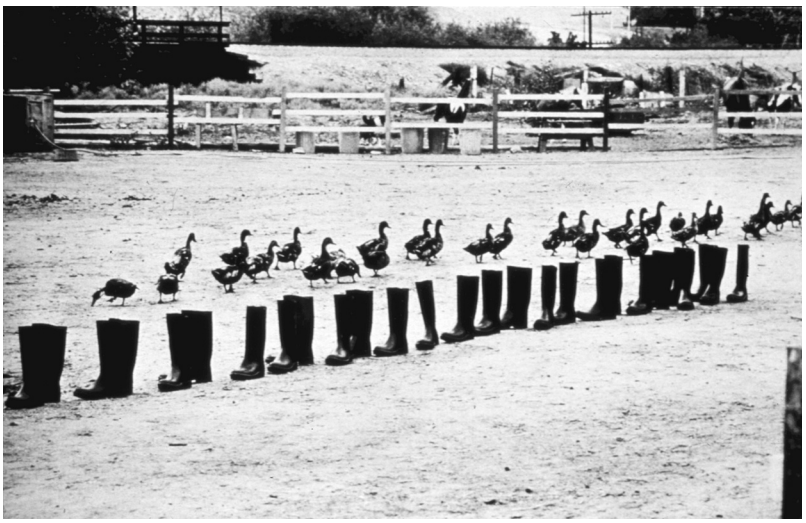
5. Barbara Kruger, No Progress in Pleasure, *1982. This is Barbara Kruger's visual and verbal treatise on contemporary culture. The progress of the imagery in the book begins with image-text works on facing pages; in the middle of the book, the image-text work takes up the entire two-page spread and is laid out vertically, urging the viewer to rotate the book 90 degrees and to flip the pages up like a calendar—in effect, pumping up the volume of the message. (Courtesy Mary Boone Gallery, New York)*



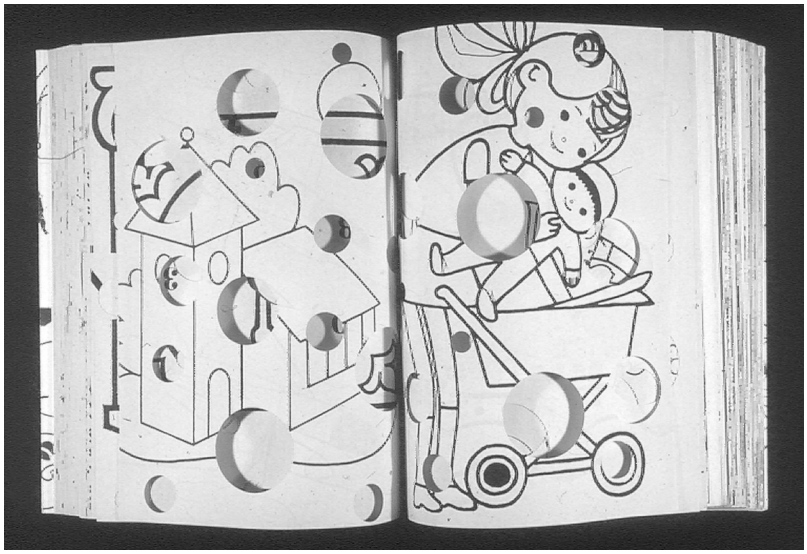


6. Ken Ohara, One, *1970. Ken Ohara's* One *is over 500 pages of black-and-white images of faces—male, female, old, young, white, black, freckled, hairy, smooth. All the faces are cropped to emphasize only the central features, which is what a baby learns to recognize—eyes, nose, mouth. As you flip through these faces, the truth of the title emerges: We are all one. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

7. Mirtha Dermisache, Diario No. 1 Ano 1, *1972. Mirtha Dermisache published* Diario No. 1 Ano 1 *in newspaper format in Argentina, at a time when that nation was living under a dictatorship and censors reviewed every piece of mail leaving the country. This work made it through because the censors did not understand that her nonsense calligraphy represented a critique of what passed for news. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*

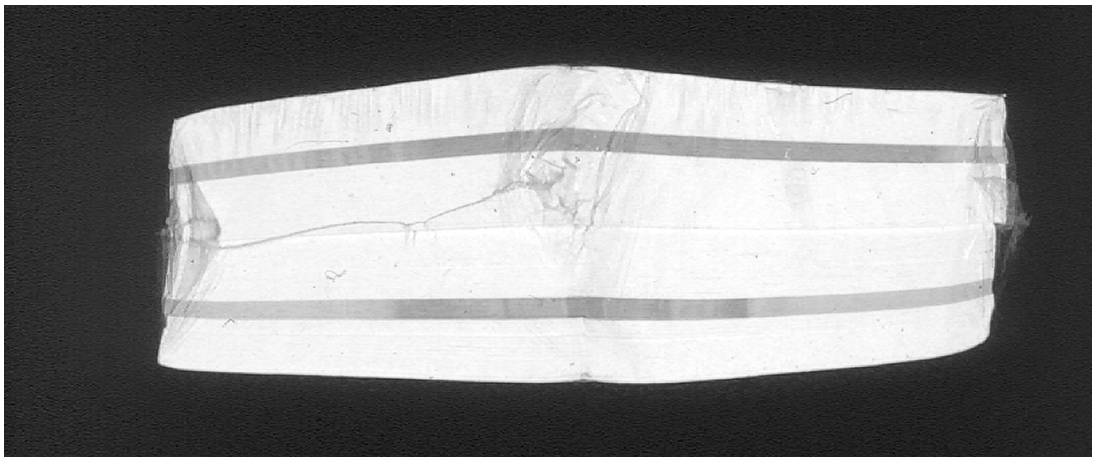


8. Eleanor Antin, 100 BOOTS Move On, *24 June 1972, Sorrento Valley, California, 8:50* A.M. *(mailed: 9 December 1972). Eleanor Antin published her* 100 BOOTS *postcards episodically in 1973, harking back to 19th-century picaresque novels, which were published in installments to keep the audience on edge. The postcard pictures tell the story of the boots' adventures, e.g.,* 100 Boots Out of a Job. *(Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York)*



9. Dieter Roth, Bok3b und Bok3d, *1961. Dieter Roth (he spelled his name several different ways) bound comic book pages and coloring book pages right-side up and upside down, and punched them full of Swiss-cheese holes. Published by Hansjorg Mayer, this volume looks perfectly normal on the shelf but, when opened, it completely subverts conventional expectations for the book form. (Photo courtesy of Dieter Roth Estate and Anton Meier Gallery, Geneva)*

10. Conrad Gleber, Meat Book, *1976. Conrad Gleber is an artist who happened in 1976 to also be a professional printer and whose work often made use of the imagery made possible by offset printing technology.* Meat Book *consists of white paper (bread) and meaty pink paper shrink-wrapped in the triangular form of a sandwich. (Photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace)*



Weiner, Ally Anderson, Frederieke Taylor, and Ann Coffin at different events and institutions in the city. Sometime in 1985 I was talking to Martha at one such event when the idea that I might like to be involved with the Furnace again came up, and I agreed to join their Advisory Board.

At around this time, possibly before I agreed to return to the fold, Martha had been suggesting—at least once in print—that at some point the Franklin Furnace Archive of artist books would need another home. She even proposed The Museum of Modern Art as the ultimate venue. At the meetings of the Advisory Board—which to my pleasure included also Lawrence, Ally, Frederieke, Ann, and others from the earlier Board of Directors—the notion arose that MoMA

might acquire a duplicate set of (many of) the artist publications at the Furnace. I do not remember whether this suggestion came from me, but I certainly supported it. As far as I recall we considered simply transferring these duplicates to MoMA, the benefit to the Furnace being that once the MoMA Library catalogued the publications in its computer catalog, this intellectual labor would not need to be repeated at the Furnace. MoMA could give the Furnace sorely needed electronic cataloging records for the other copies still held by the Furnace. (I had supported the idea of employing a professional librarian at the Furnace, but the time spent by the eventual incumbent was eaten up by elaborate cataloging of older and/or rarer items in the collection.)

This modest proposal was difficult for Martha to accept. Giving up a baby for adoption is never easy. Concurrently, I was again in the position of being a member of a body—the Advisory Board—that seemed irrelevant, since Martha still seemed to be implementing only those decisions of the Board with which she agreed. Feeling totally ineffectual, I resigned again from Franklin Furnace in 1987, leaving the proposal to transfer duplicate artist books to MoMA up in the air. It may have looked as though I was shooting myself in the foot, since my resignation might have cost me the opportunity to steer the duplicates to MoMA and to possibly enrich the MoMA collection. However, as it turned out, some time after this possibility had receded it was replaced by a much more significant proposal: Would MoMA like to acquire the whole Franklin Furnace Archive of artist publications?

In the years since I first arrived in New York in 1977, I had been steadily expanding the Artist Book Collection in the Museum of Modern Art Library with new publications obtained from artists, Printed Matter, and other suppliers, as well as with rarer out-of-print publications from earlier times. By the time the Franklin Furnace proposal that MoMA acquire their collection was made manifest in 1994, the MoMA Library collection was also one of the best in the world. Thus when negotiations began between Franklin Furnace and the Museum, the acquisition could be portrayed as a marriage of equals. Similarly, if the purchase was not successful, the MoMA collection could happily continue on its own way.

The mechanics of the purchase took over a year, if I remember correctly. This was due to the fact that I had assembled a Library Committee at MoMA that was involved in finding the money for such a purchase and which met only twice a year. Perhaps this is not the place to elaborate upon the details of the transaction, except to say that the support of Richard Oldenburg and Riva Castleman, respectively director and curator of Prints and Illustrated Books at the Museum, was crucial; as was the strategy devised principally by committee member Gilbert Silverman whereby duplicate books might be sold to offset the purchase price of the collection. However, the actual purchase would not have been possible without the generosity of committee chair Mrs. (Evie) Melville Wakeman Hall.

The dowry was paid (in instalments), the marriage was consummated, and The Museum of Modern Art/Franklin Furnace/Artist Book Collection was conceived in 1993 (<http://moma.org/research/library/library_faq.html#ff>). My contribution to the official birth announcement was a characterization of the MoMA artist book collection as deeper and the Furnace artist book collection as wider; this being so, they complemented and enriched each other. Martha and others on the Board of the Furnace were insistent that the joint collection adopt the Franklin Furnace principle that if an artist declared something to be an artist book then it was appropriate for inclusion. I had no problem with this position, and said nothing about it at the time, even though it was presented almost as a concession by MoMA. In reality I had had exactly the same attitude, it was just that my practice at MoMA over the years had been to divert to other parts of the Library items that did not seem to me to be artist books based on the codex form.

Thus pieces of paper that seemed to have little to do with books per se had instead been placed in the artist files (catchalls for ephemera, etc.); books that were not artist books had gone into the main collection; magazines had been added to the periodicals collection, etc.

Writing now, 11 years after these events, my satisfaction in facilitating the merger of the Furnace and MoMA collections, and in giving many many artists the pleasure of knowing that their work is in The Museum of Modern Art in New York (as Lawrence Weiner has pointed out), is tempered by the thought that two purchasing possibilities for artists were reduced to one. If another institution, especially one with no prior interest in artist books, had acquired the Franklin Furnace Archive, there might now be *two* large—and different—collections of artist books supporting artists through acquisition, cooperation, and competition.

It will have been apparent that this account is personal. It includes facts, but also those of my memories that are still extant more than 10 years after my return from New York to London, England. I have chronicled my intermittent, checkered, and pleasant relations with Martha Wilson because many celebratory and even historical accounts of institutions either omit or gloss over the essential attention to personality. Franklin Furnace was obliged to adopt the trappings of bureaucracy and management so that it could survive in a world of funding agencies and foundations; but this should not be allowed to obscure the fact that Franklin Furnace would have been nothing, would have achieved nothing, without the single-minded drive and commitment of an exceptional individual: Martha Wilson. Martha Wilson was and is Franklin Furnace; her personal and institutional contribution to the promotion and preservation of artist books was indispensable.

Notes

1. "Artists' Books and Beyond," organized by the New York Chapter of the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) at Franklin Furnace 6 May 1978. Speakers: Martha Wilson (Franklin Furnace), Barbara London (MoMA), Ingrid Sischy (Printed Matter), Barbara Moore (Backworks), and Clive Phillpot (MoMA).
2. The Associated Art Publishers Conference, at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 13–15 October 1978. Keynote Speakers: Clive Phillpot and Lucy Lippard.
3. Mail art, simply defined, is art that utilizes the postal service, or, in a secondary manifestation, is art that takes a form relating to postal products or apparatus—for example, artists' postage stamps and artists' rubber stamps (see Phillpot 1995).
4. "Options in Independent Art Publishing," a conference at the Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester NY, 6–9 November 1979.
5. My essay "Books by Artists and Books As Art" (1998) lays out the history of the contemporary artist book as I see it, beginning in April 1963 when California artist Edward Ruscha published the small paperback booklet *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations 1962*. See also "Some Contemporary Artists and Their Books" in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook* (1985).
6. The exhibition in October 1983, *Cubist Prints/Cubist Books* was curated by Donna Stein. The accompanying publication, of the same title, was edited by Stein and released as a double issue of *The Flue* (1983).

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Clive Phillpot *was Director of the Library of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, from 1977 to 1994. During that time he was also a Board Member and President of both Printed Matter and ARLIS/NA (Art Libraries Society of North America). He wrote for many exhibition catalogs and journals, including* Artforum, Art Journal, *and* Art Documentation. *He is currently a freelance writer in London, England.*