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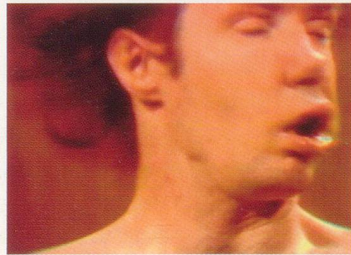
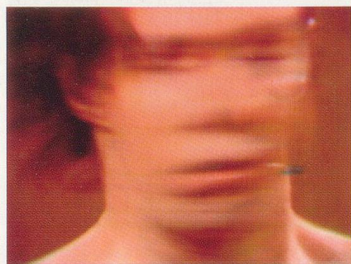
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# A Dialogue with Language Itself

JEREMY SIGLER & PAUL McCARTHY



When I recently sat down and talked on tape with Paul McCarthy in his studio, I continuously tried to steer the conversation toward poetry. I suppose, being a poet, it was for self-centered reasons. However, I didn't anticipate that when Paul got hold of the manuscript, he'd be compelled to work back into it, to hack it apart, to call each word and every syllable into question—to essentially re-write the damn thing! It was as if the spoken words we had shared in our pleasant studio discussion a week earlier had suddenly become, as written text, suspect, inaccurate—simply wrong. It became clear that Paul regarded the first version of the transcribed interview to be an exterior facade, a mere surface, inhibiting an alternative, more primary, loaded language. He sent back an impressive document that had transformed our rather conventional conversation into a messed-up, non-grammatical procedure, a dialogue, in other words, with language itself, unearthing—in typical Paul McCarthy fashion—a language all his own. Indeed a poem, in every sense of the word.

Jeremy Sigler

The final version of the artist's revised text follows. Please note that a facsimile of the (illuminating) original manuscript appears on pp. 120–134.

PAUL McCARTHY, RATTLE HEAD, 1974,  
3 min. 27 sec. color video / RASSELKOPF,  
3 Min. 27 Sek. Farbvideo.

JS: And then there were ...

And then what? Did you do screen tests?

PM: I wrote these scenarios. Wenchies being auctioned, "and you're frightened and you begin to cry."

JS: Did you give them lines?

PM: I realized I wasn't interested in the lines. I was interested in their body position, their faces when they were crying. It became about asking them to cry on all fours, or ... crawling while walking back and forth across the room ... like ten times, very slowly.

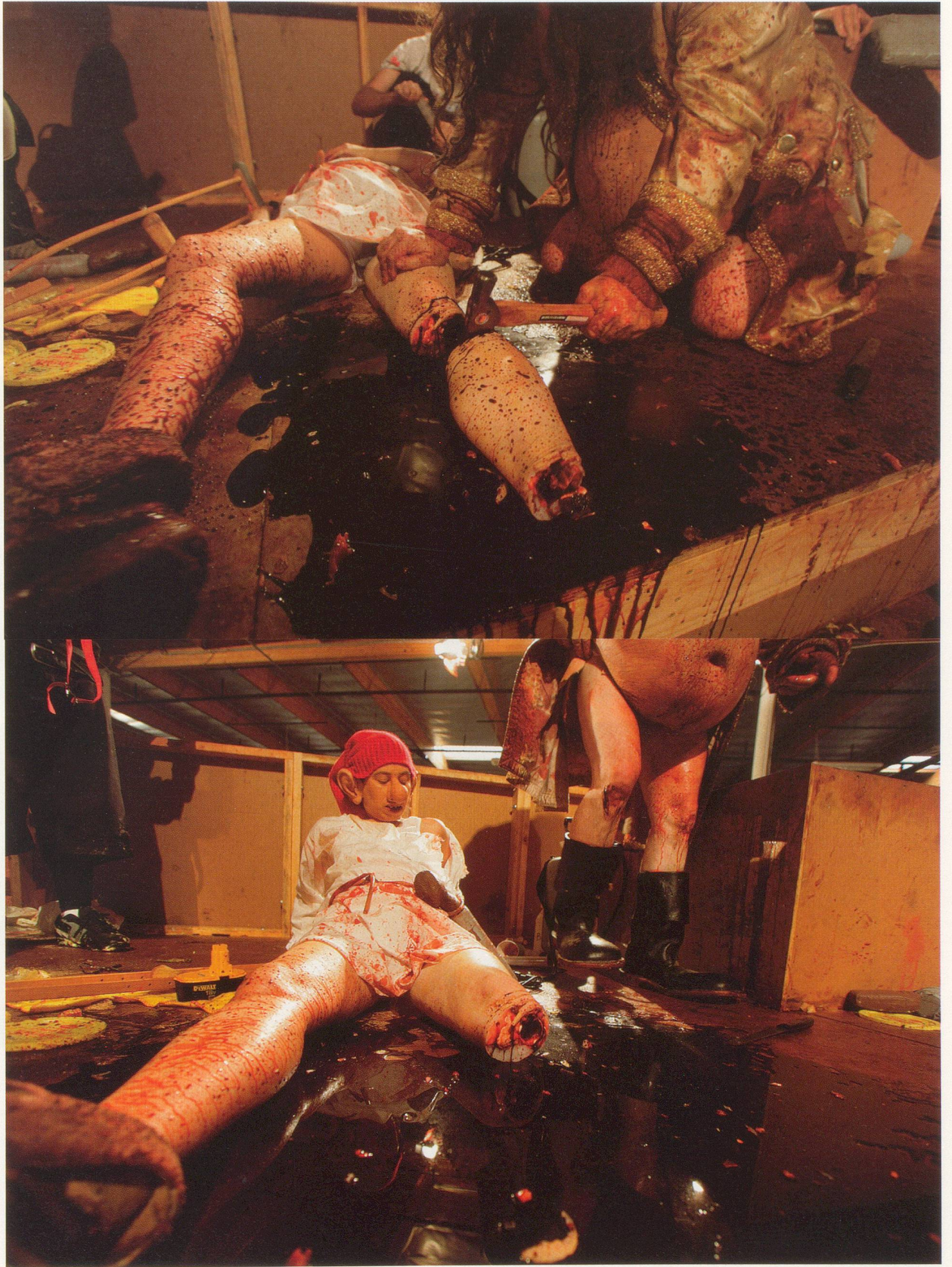
JS: It sounds pretty.

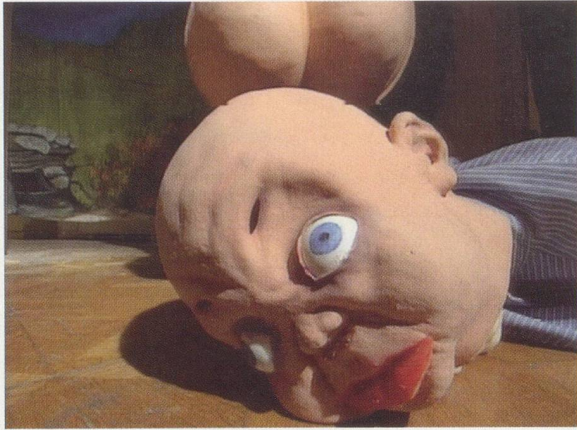
PM: You start with the genitals. I had auditioned this guy who I wanted to play a rich boat

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JEREMY SIGLER is the author of two books of poetry, *To and To* and *Mallet Eyes*. He is *Parkett's* assistant New York editor.

PAUL MCCARTHY, PIRATE PROJECT, 2001–2005, performance scenes / Szenen aus der Performance. (PHOTOS: ANN-MARIE ROUNKLE)





PAUL McCARTHY & MIKE KELLEY, HEIDI, MIDLIFE CRISIS TRAUMA CENTER AND NEGATIVE MEDIA-ENGRAM  
ABREACTION RELEASE ZONE, 1992, performance / HEIDI, MIDLIFE-CRISIS-TRAUMAZENTRUM UND FREISETZUNGSZONE  
ZUM ABREAGIEREN NEGATIVER MEDIEN-ENGRAMME.

owner who has these servants who abuses his power. At one point I realized still that what I was really interested in was his body. I spent all this time posing him on a table, a pedestal as if he was a Greek sculpture. It was about advertising and abusing power, one over another. Human but with this twist.

JS: The actors you audition need to be stuntmen?

PM: No.

JS: What about performing with materials. I get the feeling that something diabolical is about to occur.

PM: Realism, in the sixties you get shot where there's real danger. I was interested in the fake. Real blood, I began using ketchup. Though I did earlier where there were actions, let's step on glass, let's paint with shit.

JS: Falling from a rope.

PM: I cut a rope and fell.

JS: But when you are performing, you almost seem to leave your body.

PM: You mean NO?

JS: Exactly.

PM: It's more about focus, focus on a table, concentrating on something. I focus. To make a work of art the world can disappear. Yes, disappear but I don't think I'm—I'm in a trance. I made a videotape where I shook my head fast. It was called RATTLE HEAD (1974). When I did it my eyes rolled up and it looked trance-like. I made myself look like that on a ... I also made these pieces, 1970, where I spun for 30 minutes at the same speed as the video tape reel.

PM: That word fuck (focus) reminds me of sports ...

PM: I played baseball. It was my way of socially fitting in. Fingers of the mitt. (*This refers to the drawing in the original manuscript, see p. 121.*)

JS: Would you say there's quality to your ...

PM: Yes and no. NO.

JS: I'm thinking of Yoko Ono. For her, it became a kind of style.

PM: In that type of singing there is a release, I'm sure. I was interested in therapy, and I talked about venting. I made a hollow box covered in—the type of bent metal hot rods (VENTED CUBE DRAWING, 1975). Then I wrote this poem about venting. Venting the subconscious. I want to vent a situation ...

JS: Your work has gotten to be more collected and technical over the years with elaborate props and electronically animated, kinetic sculptures. You've come a long way from dipping your penis into buckets of black paint (PENIS DIP PAINTING, 1974).

PM: Yes, a while I made work solely by myself. I made the video tapes in ... When the nineties came around I bent over with Mike Kelley, Jason Rhoades and Benjamin Weissman. I had the idea to have started working ...

JS: And you call on experts ...

PM: Yes ... one point, I might fuck up the idea if I might not be able to make it. So I worked with fabricators, multiple types of work being done all at once. I had multiple interests. I was interested in abstract figures, in realistic figures, the mechanical figure, these different ideas of repression representation. That I became interested in Disney as sculpture. Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck attracted me.

JS: Did you aspire to create an entire theme park?

PM: Yes, there was this idea of creating. I was trying to create a town and also a production



PAUL McCARTHY & MIKE KELLEY, HEIDI, 1992,  
installation detail.

company. In Los Angeles there are production companies. They're film industry. I wanted my studio to be a production.

JS: The studios share personnel so it's not unlikely that a guy who is working for you is working for Disney or some block ...

PM: My studio is made of people right now, I work closely, I have only a number of years with my son Damon. Friends came to Damon, his friend, it turns out, Disney, *Men in Black*.

JS: This makes you kind of like all the other Hollywood directors. Any directors in particular. I'm looking at—what about Mario Bava?

PM: Dario Argento. Was looking for something into Pasolini, I think I was seriously affected by Jack Smith films and Warhol where it's obvious the actors are pretending, pretending to be actors. We're going to get dressed up in costumes, and pretend we're on a boat.

JS: Russ Meyers and John Waters, there's this idea of the artist as some kind of pervert, to accept something that is in very bad taste, deeply humiliating.

PM: I want you to recognize what you just saw, but it doesn't fall into place. You can recognize the character, it's Pinocchio but the story isn't there. John Waters is a filmmaker because I'm not a filmmaker. I'm not a storyteller. I'm interested in the action situation being wrong theater.

JS: When I saw TOKYO SANTA (1996), I thought of *Bad Santa* (2004), which I'd just seen in the theater. I think Terry Zwigoff's *Bad Santa* (played by Billy Bob Thornton) and your "bad" Santa weren't too far apart from one another.

PM: Yes, very close.

JS: How aware were you? I'm thinking of this article he wrote on Jackson Pollock where he talks about painting but with all sorts of non-art, everyday materials.

PM: I think at the time I read that big fat brown book I was making these all red paintings influenced by Tony Smith. That is when I did the DEAD H (1968), Smith's DIE (1962) which was hollow. I didn't know of Acconci's work until I came to L.A.. His work was language—especially since he began as a poet. What about poetry. Were you interested?

JS: I wrote poetry in the seventies, hot a lot. Writing. You're right about the groans and moans—out of my mouth. That becomes poetry, not a written poetry, not a written script, just a verbalization.

JS: It reminds me of Dad.

PM: Or James Joyce.

JS: What about Cy Twombly? His paintings are scatological. They have the same idea of debauchery.

PM: Twombly, he uses shit and piss?

JS: No, I think he uses Crayola crayons, colored pencils and bits of smeared house paint.

PM: I think about Cy Twombly. In fact, DeKooning or DeKooning. I had gone and bought buy blond wig the day of the performance. I put the wig on. Before the taping I thought I would be Warhol. Then I looked DeKooning. The character DeKooning happened that day, it was not preconceived, Twombly and DeKooning.

PM: DeKooning also paints with Mayonnaise.

JS: What other painters have influenced you?

PM: —I liked. He divided the canvas into rooms. Like there was a big room above the small bedrooms across the bottom. This was the sixties which were very Byzantine-like—with smaller panels on the side and bottom. I painted them on the floor, they were stages. I'd be down on all fours on top of the painting. The problem was I never had enough, so I began to mix black paint with motor oil. And pour gasoline on them.

JS: Have those works been seen?

PM: Most were destroyed. When I came to L.A. in the ... in L.A. motor oil pieces—motor oil poured on paper and between sheets of glass. I also made pieces using butter and Vaseline. I covered the walls of a room with Vaseline and spray painted them red. I made a piece where I spread Vaseline in the cracks of the sidewalks with a rolled up newspaper on the corner of Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevard.

JS: And then I guess you moved ketchup, always reminds me of Warhol ...

PM: Campbell's Soup, chicken noodle and ketchup were always part of my diet. I grew up with them. My father put ketchup on everything and ate Campbell's donut soup.

JS: Karen's body in a piece (KAREN'S KETCHUP DREAM, 1975)...

PM: A dream. So I turned it into. At that time I made video tapes and photographs that were never shown. They just went into cardboard boxes.

JS: How did people react to your early performance work?

PM: There was support. I didn't any work until I was outside on the porch of the gallery. There was a huge group who were not allowed in. You didn't expect love.

JS: Nowadays you have museum shows right out of grad school.

PM: The world.

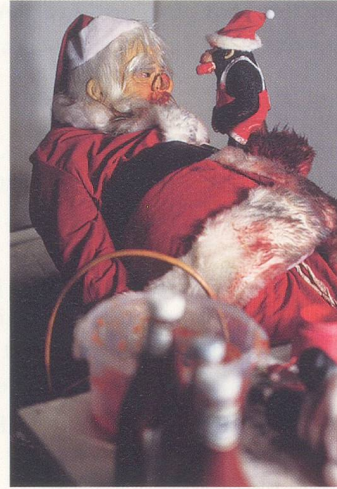
JS: But not having a gallery must have fed you up experimental and resourceful. One of your videos in the operating room of some hospital?

PM: It was an autopsy. I wanted to make color. I had a friend who worked in the USC Medical Center late late at night.

JS: Gallery representation? You pull down your pants for the viewer and show your ass.

PM: There was always this, something had to be shown. Art world was interested, I think that it was work that was about Los Angeles. The L.A. art world wasn't interested in dirty little work. It would be categorized as "nasty work," European work, derivative.

JS: About L.A.?



PAUL McCARTHY, TOKYO SANTA, 1996, performance, video tape  
and installation; performance scenes at Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo /  
Szenen aus der Performance.

PM: I spent a lot of time in the streets in the early ... bought a lot of. There used to be these fairly ... with full of movie stills and you'd just thumb through images. I really liked this image I found, one from a film called *Europe in the Raw*, woman on a bed. (1963). When I did *SAILOR'S MEAT, SAILOR'S DELIGHT* (1975) the image on still was a ... I mimic the pose from that movie still. At the time it was Russ Meyers discovered that later. The *BOSSYBURGER* set was a set for a family and, I think there was shocking sunny L.A. has an underbelly.

JS: But your European character.

PM: In the early eighties ... something in France when they asked, I asked them to get me a chalet in the Alps to remake the story of *Heidi*. As a kid I was in the Alps. I wanted to be Swiss. I was really into having grown up near the mountains. I was totally into the boots, books, and parkas—the whole deal.

JS: So tell me about *HEIDI* (1991).

PM: The French government declined. In the end, *HEIDI* never got made and I talked about doing something together. Although the piece takes place in a small structure, one side a small chalet, the other side the American Bar and bedroom designed this Adolf Loos. It's a schizophrenic. You have Mike on one side and Paul on the other side. I always viewed it as a split melon by Adolf Loos.

JS: Your new project is also pretty.

PM: Four years ago Damon posed that we do a remake of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the ride, starring Johnny Depp, and we started building a big fiber glass bloody boat, that houseboat we found. This announcement that Disney was going to do *Pirates of the Caribbean* starring Johnny Depp ... they stole our idea. Beginning to envision The Museum of Munich came ... asked to show the piece. The museum has enormous rooms. At the same time, we had begun working on which was a life size remake of the television show *F Troop*. *F* is for fuck. Its called *FORT FUCK* (2005) The museum was originally by Hitler to house degenerate by the Nazis' fascist invasion.

PM: A pirate boat invasion connects to the world today. *A STRAIGHT LINE FROM HITLER'S BERLIN TO DISNEY'S DISNEYLAND* (2005). It gets there by way of Berlin to Bavaria and Ludwig's, the Eiffel Tower, Las Vegas, and Disneyland. Adolf Hitler told me he wanted to build a straight road from Berlin to St. Petersburg with a German village every 100 kilometers.

JS: Speaking of roads, wagon train, I'm thinking of Hummers? A wagon train—

PM: Well, my original plan was to buy a piece of property in the California desert and go shooting. At one point I declined that maybe I should build a prairie schooner. My grandfather had a lamp wagon in his living room on the mantle, a little covered wagon, a prairie schooner made by a prisoner in Utah in the thirties or forties.

JS: But once it becomes actual ...

PM: It's fully functional, a convention—steel axles, bearings, and. The problem. My plan is to take them as a parade and then into the museum. Nazi, Disney parade.

JS: Would you say that your work has some relationships?

PM: I became a student from my dorm who considered myself a concrete poet. ("Oh, what's that?") His was to substitute the world for the action. At the time, I tried to steal a steam shovel, drive it on campus, dig a hole, and bury myself and the machine and the hole. A definition of poetry being equated to object or event, a huge effect.

JS: Poetry.

PM: When I went ... the university ... a year or so later, Yves Klein. He said, artist leaped from a ledge. Then that same year, I jumped out of a window. (*Laughs*) I didn't realize that Klein's leap had been a swan dive.

JS: He was like parallel to the ground—. And what about your leap?

PM: Pathetic jump. I found out that Klein's leap had been a photograph.

JS: I'm curious.

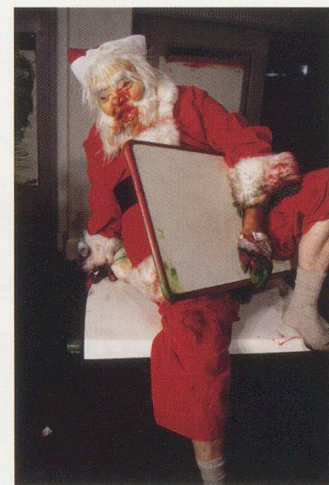
PM: My mother wanted to be an artist. It's a giant inflated bottle of rum. My smoking and drinking with her young brother who died of alcoholism.

JS: And your father. I recall a drawing you did of him before his death. And then there's that sculpture, the father helping his son suck a sheep or goat, or that's how I remember it.

PM: ... also about a father and his son. Ten years old, so I was reflecting on father. He worked seven days a week from seven morning until seven night. His job he was working. He expected to work.

JS: What was his occupation?

PM: Well, my father was a butcher. He worked in a grocery. One of my earliest memories of my father is of him in a white shirt.



Paul M. Carthy with Jeremy Sigler

JS: I imagine it would be fun to act in one of your pieces. Tell me about auditions.

PM: They come here and I don't quite know what to do with them.

JS: Are they professional actors?

PM: I didn't go to a casting agency. I put an ad in the *Hollywood Reporter* announcing that I was making films: a western and a type of pirate movie and I wound up with two hundred head shots. The description said that it might require nudity and that it was an unconventional film. We picked people from these head shots, and then there were a number of people from experimental theatre backgrounds.

JS: And then what? Did you do screen tests?

PM: I wrote these pretend scenarios. There's this scene where these wenches are being auctioned. So I tell them: "You're about to be auctioned and you don't quite know what that is, and you're frightened, and you begin to cry."

JS: Did you give them lines?

PM: I realized I wasn't interested in the lines; I was interested in the body position of ~~them~~ <sup>these</sup> faces when they were ~~opening~~ <sup>crying</sup>. It became about asking them to cry in a particular position, like on all fours or... while walking back and forth across the room... like ten times, very slowly.

JS: It sounds pretty intuitive.

PM: You start with this premise. I had auditioned this guy who I wanted to play a rich boat owner who has these servants and who abuses his power over them. Then I realized

that what I was really interested in was his body. I spent all this time posing him as if on a pedestal.

like a greek sculpture, it was about ~~his~~ <sup>one</sup> ~~power~~ <sup>over another human</sup> but with this

*Tim*  
*Empire*  
*Exposure*  
*Visions*

*imo*

*a few*

*you*

*them*

*at one point still*

*1-1*

*1-1*

*on a table as if he was a pedestal. like a greek sculpture, it was about one over another human but with this*

JS: ~~Don't~~ the actors you audition need to be like stuntmen?

*no but it's a thing*

PM: I don't think I'm auditioning anybody for that purpose alone, but some of them are younger and stronger than me so they can perform longer than I can.

JS: What about the ~~business~~ of performing with materials. In ~~POST-TRANCE~~ (1991), I get the feeling that something diabolical is about to occur.

PM: You're talking about the issue of realism: that definition of performance in the sixties where you get shot ~~in~~—where there's an element of real danger. But I became interested in the fake. As opposed to using real blood, I began using ketchup. Though I did early performances where there were real actions, like stepping on glass.

JS: ~~And~~ falling from a rope.

PM: Well, I think it's just a matter of being aware of your body.

JS: But when you're performing, you almost seem to leave your body behind.

PM: ~~Is~~ like going into a trance?

JS: Exactly.

PM: It's more about focus. It's about consciously attempting to make something to make a work of art. So a lot of the world disappears in all that. But I don't think I'm

~~pretending to be in a trance.~~ I made a video tape years ago, where I shook my head really

fast. It was called RATTLEHEAD (date?). When I did it, my eyes rolled up, and it

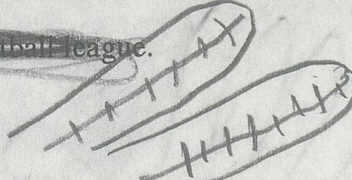
looked ~~real~~ trance-like. I also made these pieces (SPINNING, EDIT #1, 1970) where I

spun for thirty minutes. But I didn't think of it as being a whirling Dervish.

PM: ~~Is~~ That word "focus" reminds me of sports. Aren't you an athlete?

PM: I played baseball competitively growing up. It was my way of fitting in. I still play in

a fast pitch softball league.



*Fingers of the Mitt*

*you mean?*

*(B)*

*(C)*

*NO?*

*focus on a table*

*concentrating*

*I focus*

*video tape*

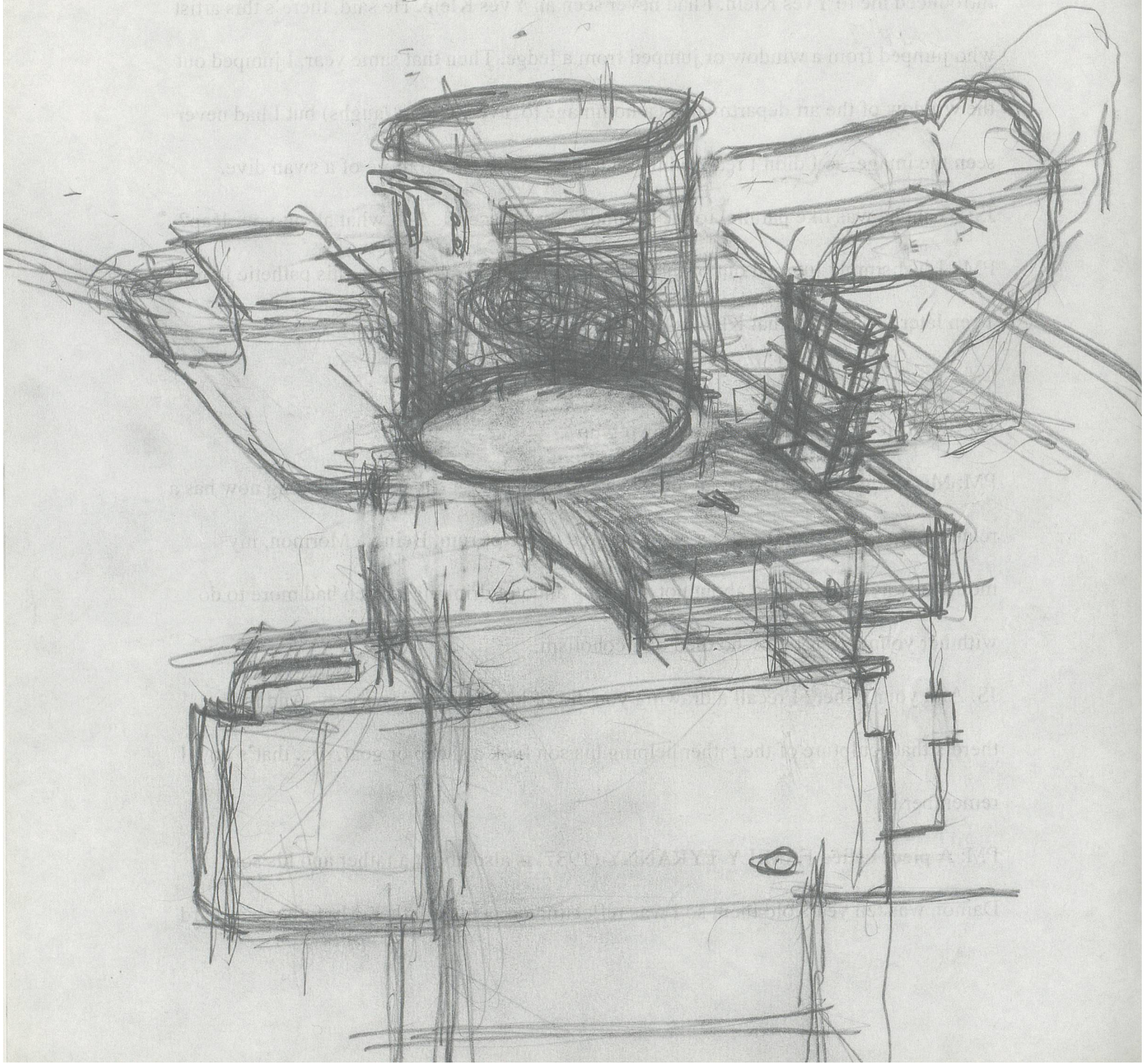
*can you disappear*

*I made my sets look like that on a*

*at the same speed as the video tape reel.*

*Fuck*

*socially*



yes and no

JS: Would you say there's a cathartic quality to your performance work?

PM: No. It's not about setting up a situation for a catharsis

JS: I'm thinking of Yoko Ono ~~the way she did her therapy~~. For her, it became a kind of singing style.

PM: In that type of singing, it feels like there <sup>is</sup> a release. In the 70s, I was interested in primal therapy, and I talked about art as a venting. I made a hollow box with its face covered in louvers—the type of bent metal ~~that you use on~~ hot rods (VENTED CUBE DRAWING, 1975). Then I wrote this poem about venting. In a way, I kind of vent <sup>ing</sup> the subconscious. ~~I would, and I still do, talk about setting up a situation to get something unexpected to happen.~~ <sup>I WANT TO VENT</sup>

JS: Are you also trying to get something out of your system?

PM: It's more the opposite. You're in the present and you've brought these elements together and then you start forming them. It's in the forming that something begins to happen and you see something in it. <sup>collected.</sup>

JS: Your work has gotten to be more collaborative, and technical over the years, with elaborate props and electronically animated, kinetic sculptures. You've come a long way from dipping your penis into bucket of black paint. (PENIS DIP PAINTING, 1974)

PM: <sup>yes</sup> ~~For quite~~ awhile I made work solely by myself, but even then when I made the video tapes in the ~~seventies~~ <sup>80s</sup>, there would be a crew. When the nineties came around, I <sup>beat over</sup>

~~collaborated~~ with Mike Kelly and Jason Roads and Benjamin Weissmen. <sup>started working</sup> At one point in the eighties I had the idea to have something fabricated by an outside company. Some of those things got really technical.

JS: And you had to call on experts?

b

PM: I'd attempt to do it myself at times, but then at one point I realized, I might fuck up the idea if I fabricate it because I might not be able to make it well enough. So I worked with fabricators. Also I wanted to have multiple types of work being done all at once because I had multiple interests. For example, I was interested in an abstract figure. I was interested in a realistic figure. I was interested in a mechanical figure, these different ideas of representation. That was when I became interested in Disney as sculpture. The form of Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck is what attracted me. And that was when I made a clumsy attempt to mimic that kind of fabrication.

JS: Did you aspire to create an entire theme park?

PM: *yes* I WAS trying to create a Toon company, or studio. In Los Angeles, *there are companies* these small production houses are very common.

They're all sort of connected to the film industry in some way, either producing elements for film or for commercials. *I wanted my studio to be a production*

JS: And I'd imagine that the studios share personnel. So it's not unlikely that a guy who is working for you is also making things for Disney or some blockbuster movie?

PM: My studio is made up of about *thirty* people right now, but I work really closely, and I have *only a* number of years, with my son, Damon. Then some of his friends came to work for me. It was like, "Damon, what does your friend do?" And his friend, it turns out, makes robotics for Disney and just worked on "Men in Black." (Robotic Pig, 2004)

JS: This makes you kind of like all the other Hollywood directors. Have you been influenced by any directors in particular. I'm looking at all these horror movie props (cast legs filled with blood)—what about Mario Bava?

REPRESSION

and also a

I wanted my studio to be a production

for working

10

BP 000

and Warhol

PM: For a while, I was really into Dario Argento. I was looking for something in all these films. In a way I found it, but in a way I didn't find it. I'm really into Pasolini, and have been for a long time. I think I was seriously affected by ~~Solo~~. Lately I've been kind of interested in Jack Smith films where it's obvious there's something pretend going on... like we're going to get dressed-up in costumes, and pretend we're riding this raft. I've

also watched a lot of westerns, all kinds: Italian, Spanish, Germany, and American.

JS: With Russ Myers and John Waters there's this idea of the artists as some kind of a pervert, who is pushing the audience, or society in general, to accept something that is really in bad taste, or in some way deeply humiliating.

I want you to recognize

PM: I want my work to be a snippet of that. Like somehow you know what you just saw, but it doesn't fall into place. Like you can recognize the character from pop culture, like

its

Pinocchio, but can't put the story together. But I can't really compare myself to John Waters, because I'm not a filmmaker. I'm interested in taking it the whole distance, but not so much in making something meant to be seen in a blackened theater.

John Waters is a fellow maker I am not a traditional story teller  
I'm interested in the actors being wrong  
situation

JS: When I saw TOKYO SANTA (1996), I thought of the recent release, Bad Santa, which I'd just seen in a theater. I think Terry Zweigoff's bad Santa (played by Billie Bob Thornton) and your "bad" Santa weren't too far apart from one another.

no reason to include

PM: [...] yes ~~the same~~ very close

JS: When you were an art student, how aware were you of the ~~visual~~ ~~guide~~. Had you read any of Allan Kaprow writing? I'm thinking of this article he wrote on Jackson Pollock where he talks about painting, but with all sorts of non-art, every day materials.

PM: I think at the time I read that big fat brown book on Assemblage. By 1968 I knew of Bruce Nauman. But I was really more interested in Minimalism. I was making these all

Red

what about poetry - when you speak J.S.

black paintings influenced by Tony Smith. That was when I did the DEAD H (1968), which related to Smith's DIE (date?), which was hollow. I didn't know of Acconci's work until the 70s when I came to LA., although he was a huge influence in the art world. His work was ~~so~~ language-based, especially since he began as a poet.

JS: And yours, by comparison, must be ~~more~~ based.

PM: I generally wrote ~~some~~ poetry in the 70s, not a lot. And the scores are another set of writing. You're right about the groans and moans - I didn't know how to get a word out of my mouth. Then in the performances, maybe from 1977 to 1983, I talked the whole time. That becomes poetry, not a written-down poetry, not a written script, but just a spontaneous verbalizing.

JS: It reminds me of Dad's poets like Hugo Ball or Kurt Schwitters.

PM: Or James Joyce. Now, I'm doing a lot of writing on the drawings. But it becomes obvious that I'm dyslexic and not able to spell.

JS: What about Cy Twombly? His paintings are really scatological; they have the same idea of debauchery and debasement.

Twombly

PM: This is the first I ever heard of 'em. (laughs) Did he use shit and piss?

JS: No. I think he uses like Crayolo crayons, colored pencils, and bits of smeared house paint.

or De Kooning

PM: I ~~don't~~ think about Cy Twombly at all. In fact, DeKooning comes up in PAINTER (1995), the video I made, but it was totally coincidental because I had gone and bought

BUY

a black wig, a brown wig, and a blonde wig, and the day of the performance, I put the blonde wig on, and when I put it on I said, "Oh Warhol, oh I'm Warhol." Then I looked in the mirror and went, "Oh no, I'm DeKooning."

the character

De Kooning happened

that day it was not pure coincidence  
Twombly and De Kooning

→

Before the Taping I thought I would be Warhol

PM

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JS: Did DeKooning also paint with Mayonnaise as ~~substitute for white paint?~~

PM: But the intention of that piece is not to be DeKooning; It's about this painter who's a fan of DeKooning and wants to be like DeKooning.

JS: What other painters have influenced you?

PM: Early on, I was really into British pop painting like Kato; and Peter Blake—I liked

the way Blake's paintings were architectural. He divided the canvas into rooms. Like

Bed

there was a big room above and smaller rooms across the bottom. This was the 60s, and

was working on black paintings, which were very Byzantine-like—trptychs, one with a

*with smaller panels on the side and bottom.*

big vertical column with divisions across the bottom like rooms. Then I started painting

*I painted them*

on the floor, and the supports were structured as platforms that were up off the floor like

~~four inches~~. So they were almost like little stages. I'd be down on all fours on top of the

painting smearing paint around with my hands. The problem was I never had enough

black paint, so I began to mix my black paint with motor oil. And I would light the

*pour gasoline on them*

~~paintings on fire.~~

JS: Have those works been seen?

*most*

PM: No. A lot of them were destroyed. When I came to LA in the seventies, some of the

*in LA*

first pieces I did were motor oil pieces—motor oil poured on paper and between sheets of

glass. I also made a lot of pieces using butter and Vaseline. I covered a room or walls in

*the walls of [unclear] with*

Vaseline and spray painted them red. Then I made these pieces where I spread boiling

Vaseline in the cracks of the sidewalks near Melrose

*with a rolled up newspaper on the snow of duckhorn and saintn Morris*

JS: And then I guess you moved ~~onto ketchup~~. Your ketchup, always reminds me of

Warhol ~~tomato soup~~.

*Campbell soup and ketchup were part of my diet*  
*the house on the kitchen*  
*that I grew up with them*  
PM: There is a correlation to the Campbell soup can. It was something that was so central to the dinner table. But the fact is ~~my~~ father put ketchup on everything. *and also Campbell's tomato*

JS: And didn't you spread ketchup all over your wife Karen's body in a piece (KAREN KETCHUP DREAM, ~~EPH #2~~, 1975).

PM: ~~I had a dream and in the dream I had spread ketchup on Karen.~~ So I turned it into a ~~real piece.~~ *at that time I would* A lot of those video tapes were made, and the photographs were taken, and *that were never shown* maybe a few friends saw them, and then they just went into boxes. *and some that are in place to show* There was kind of an erotic thing to it. It was this mix of something that was meant to feel good, but then there really was this stink. *then there is this small spot streak*

JS: How did people react to your early performance work? Were they supportive or mortified? *that at all*

PM: To a degree there was support within my community of artists, but I really didn't *show* any work until ~~1990~~. *on the porch* At that time, I was just outside of the gallery art world. That's the way it was. There was a huge group of artists who were not showing. I think there *in gallery work* ~~was a certain acceptance of this.~~ *allowed in* You didn't expect a show. *love*

JS: Nowadays young artists have museum shows right out of grad school.

PM: I believed video might be a way of getting something out into the world. *just*

JS: But not having a gallery, must have ~~forced~~ *fed* you up to be more experimental and resourceful. Didn't you film one of your videos in the operating room of some hospital?

PM: I wanted to make color video tapes, but at the time color equipment was much more *it was an autopsy* difficult to get your hands on. I had a friend who worked in the USC medical center and we would work at night there using their color video equipment. *USC Hospital*

*late at night*

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JS: But ~~were you hoping for gallery representation? In one performance you pull down your pants for the viewer and show your ass, as if you're saying "kiss my ass."~~ (ASS ENDT, 1972)

PH: There was always this ~~hope that something would be shown. But the art world of Los Angeles was interested, even though I think it was work that was about Los Angeles. The LA art world wasn't interested in dirty work. It would be categorized as "messy work,"~~ <sup>hard to be</sup> <sup>little</sup> <sup>Nasty</sup> ~~like European work, derivative of Actionism or Happenings or Fluxus.~~

JS: ~~In what way was your work about LA?~~

PM: I spent a lot of time in the streets ~~of Hollywood during the early seventies and I bought a lot of movie stills. There used to be these stores that were fairly large, almost like a record store. The boxes were out, and you'd just thumb through images. I really liked this image I found~~ <sup>with full of movie stills</sup> <sup>one</sup> <sup>IN</sup> ~~from a film called Europe and the Raw, it was a woman on a bed. (EUROPE IN THE RAW PUBLICITY STILL, 1963) When I did SAILOR'S~~

<sup>I miss the pose</sup> ~~MEAT-SAILOR'S DELIGHT, EDIT #2 (1975) the image and the pose I used comes from that movie still. At the time I didn't even know it was a Russ Meyer film I~~

<sup>the</sup> ~~discovered that later. And of course, BOSSY BURGER's set was directly from a set for~~ <sup>and</sup> <sup>shocking LA</sup> ~~the sitcom, Family Affair. But generally, I think there was something about this place: sunny LA, there's an underbelly, or a violence here.~~

JS: But your work also has European characteristics.

PM: In the early eighties I ~~got an NEA grant to do something in France when they asked me what I would like to do, I asked them to get me a small chalet in the Alps where I proposed to remake the story of Heidi. Actually, as a kid I was really into the Alps because I wanted to be a Swiss mountain guide. I was really into rock climbing and~~

near the mountain

mountaineering, having grown up ~~right~~ <sup>books, and</sup> around ski resorts and mountains in the foothills of Salt Lake. I was totally into the boots, ~~the packs, the parkas~~—the whole deal.

JS: So tell me ~~more~~ about HEIDI (1991).

PM: The French government declined. In the end, I ~~never traveled to France and HEIDI~~

never got made, ~~until later when Mike (Kelly) and I talked about doing something~~ <sup>small structure one side a small</sup> together. Although the piece takes place in a ~~kids~~ <sup>the other side the american bar, and bed room designed</sup> version of a Swiss chalet, there is also this Adolph Loos aesthetic. It's ~~like~~ <sup>by Adolph Loos</sup> a schizophrenic ~~building~~ <sup>mallon</sup>. You have Mike on one side and Paul on the other side. I always viewed it as a split ~~piece~~.

JS: Your new project is also pretty ~~schizo~~?

PM: ~~It's a long story~~ <sup>like</sup> four years ago, Damon ~~proposed~~ <sup>starring Johnny Depp</sup> that we do a remake of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the ride, and we started working on building a big fiber glass ~~boat that would float inside of, and be held up by this houseboat we found.~~ <sup>Bloody</sup>

~~Then came~~ this announcement that Disney was going to do *Pirates of the Caribbean* starring Johnny Depp <sup>own</sup> (laughs) and I remember thinking, God they stole ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> idea. But ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> piece kept

~~going; it sort of had its own life. We were also beginning to envision doing these forty~~ <sup>foot sets but the problem was where to show them</sup> ~~foot sets but the problem was where to show them.~~ <sup>Then the museum of Munich came</sup> ~~Then the museum of Munich came~~ <sup>along, saw the piece and asked to show it, and they had these enormous rooms. At the</sup>

same time, there was another piece <sup>is</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>is for FURK</sup> begun working on which was a life size remake of the fort from the television show *F Troop*. It's called FORT FUCK (date). ~~Then there~~

~~was the fact that~~ the museum in ~~Munich~~ was originally ~~commissioned~~ by Hitler to house the art of the Third Reich.

~~I think your art would have certainly been considered degenerate by the Nazis.~~

Fascist invasion

PM: ~~But there's this idea of a pirate boat invasion that kind of connects to the situation of~~  
 the world today. ~~There's this piece I did a number of years ago which was called A~~  
 STRAIGHT LINE FROM HITLER'S BERLIN TO WALT DISNEY'S DISNEYLAND  
 (date?). It gets there by way of <sup>Berlin to</sup> Bavaria and Ludwig's Castle, the ~~World's Fair of the late~~  
 1800s in Paris when the Eiffel Tower was constructed, Las Vegas, and Disneyland. ~~This~~  
~~person told me that Adolph Hitler~~ <sup>told me he</sup> wanted to build a straight road from Berlin to St.  
 Petersburg, with a German village every <sup>100</sup> ~~so many~~ kilometers ~~along the road.~~

JS: Speaking of roads, ~~can you talk about your wagon train piece?~~ When I first saw them  
~~they made me think of Hummers?~~ <sup>I am thinking</sup> a Wagon Train

PM: (Laughs) Well, my original plan with ~~Damon~~ <sup>go shooting</sup> was to buy a piece of property in the  
 California desert and shoot this western/prairie film. At one point I ~~decided~~ <sup>decided</sup> that maybe I  
 should build a ~~wagon~~ <sup>prairie scooper</sup> and then ~~realized~~ <sup>realized</sup> that my grandfather had a toy wagon in his living  
 room on the mantle, ~~this little covered wagon that was a lamp.~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~It had been made by~~ <sup>a prairie scooper</sup>  
 prisoners in Utah probably in the 30s or 40s, I'm not really sure. ~~I decided that I would~~  
~~remake that toy wagon.~~

JS: But once the ~~scale of the toy is blown up~~ <sup>lamp</sup> it becomes like the size of an actual wagon.

PM: It's fully functional, and very sturdy, it's built stronger than a conventional wagon,  
~~it has steel axles, bearings, and everything.~~ The problem with these wagons is that they  
 are actually ~~stubbier and heavier than a conventional wagon.~~ My plan is to take them on  
 the road as a ~~kind of parade~~ <sup>Nazi, Disney parade</sup> and then into the museum.

JS: Would you say that your work has some relationship to pranks?

PM: In college, I became ~~friends with this~~ <sup>a</sup> student from my dorm who considered himself <sup>myself</sup>  
 a concrete poet. I said, "Oh, what's that?" His ~~definition~~ <sup>world</sup> was to substitute the word for ~~an~~ <sup>the</sup>

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I  
action. At the time, ~~he was doing those pranks~~. He tried to steal a steam shovel, drive it  
on campus, dig a hole, and bury ~~himself~~ <sup>myself</sup> and the machine ~~in~~ <sup>and</sup> the hole. ~~That~~ <sup>a</sup> definition of  
poetry being equated to ~~a real object or a real event~~ had a huge effect on me.

JS: ~~Did poetry then help form your idea of performance?~~

PM: When I went ~~to~~ the University of ~~Utah~~, a year or so later, ~~I met another poet who~~  
~~introduced me to Yves Klein. I had never seen an Yves Klein.~~ He said, ~~there's this artist~~  
~~who jumped from a window or jumped from a ledge.~~ <sup>leapt</sup> Then that same year, I jumped out ~~of~~  
~~the window of the art department as a homage to Yves Klein, (laughs) but I had never~~  
~~seen the image, so I didn't realize that Klein's leap had been more of a swan dive.~~

JS: ~~Yeah~~, he was like parallel to the ground—~~very~~ graceful. And what about your leap?

PM: I just simply jumped out of the window and landed on my feet, this pathetic jump.

~~Then later I found out that Klein's leap had been a faked photograph.~~

[ ]  
JS: I'm curious. ~~What was it like growing up?~~

PM: My mother wanted to be an artist. She was liberal. ~~One piece I'm making now has a~~  
~~relationship to my mother. It's a giant inflated bottle of rum. Being a Mormon, my~~  
~~mother always had a thing about not smoking and not drinking, which had more to do~~  
with her younger brother who died of alcoholism.

JS: And your father? I recall a drawing you did of him before his ~~surgery~~. And then  
there's that sculpture ~~of~~ the father helping his son ~~fuck~~ <sup>suck</sup> a sheep or goat, or... that's how I  
remember it.

PM: ~~A piece called FAMILY TYRANNY (1987) is also about a father and his son.~~

~~Dad~~ was ten years old ~~then~~, so I was reflecting on ~~being a father. My father was hard~~

~~working~~; he worked seven days a week from seven in the morning until seven at night.

~~When he wasn't working at his job he was working at home.~~ He expected ~~me~~ to work around the house.

JS: What was his occupation?

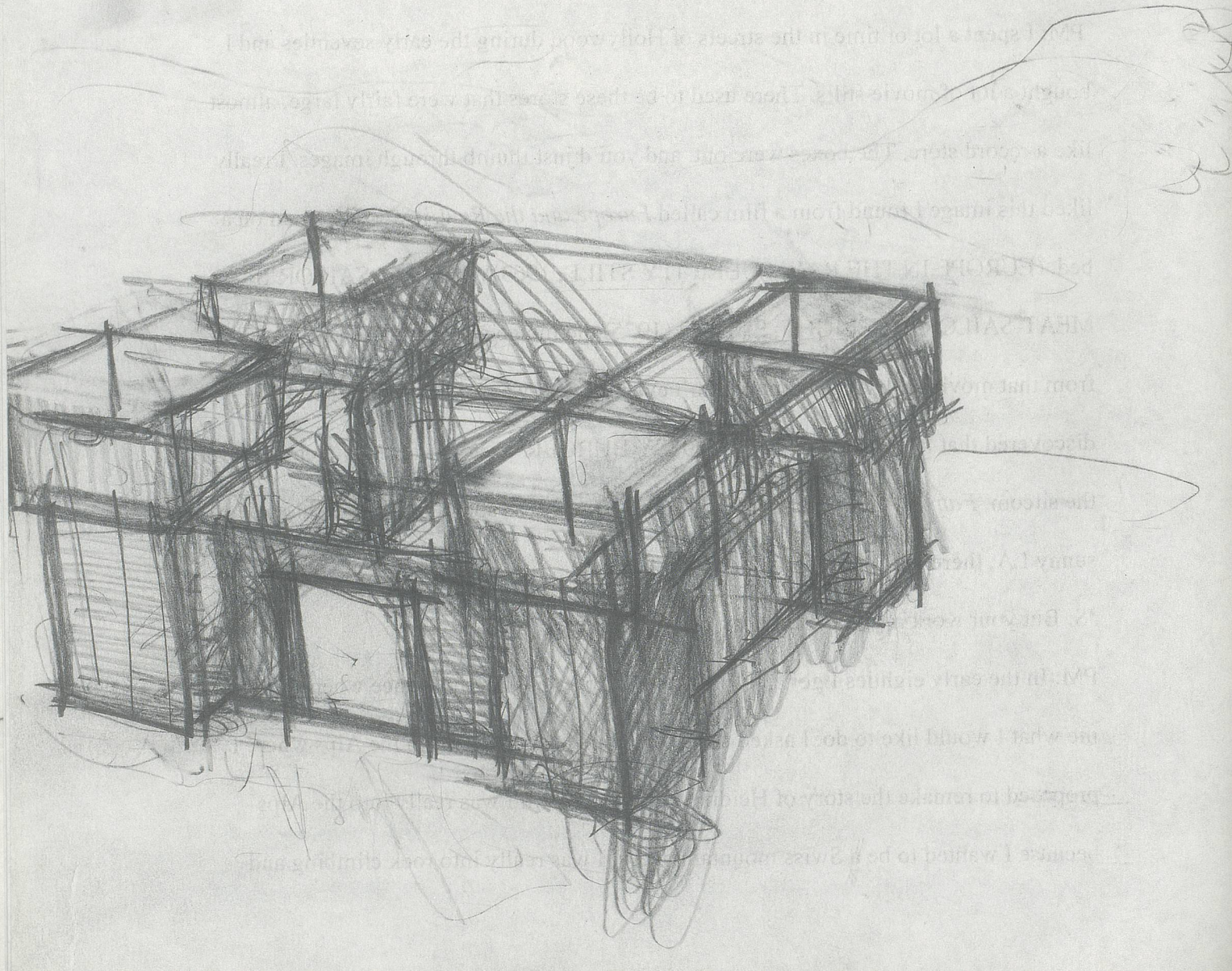
PM: Well, I think that's where it gets pretty interesting (laughs) My father was a butcher.

He worked in a grocery store. One of my earliest memories of my father is an image of

him in a ~~bloody apron.~~ white shirt.



~~nothing  
wasn't  
An apron that is~~



# Im Dialog mit der Sprache selbst

*JEREMY SIGLER & PAUL McCARTHY*

Als ich mich in Paul McCarthys Atelier mit ihm zusammensetzte und unsere Unterhaltung auf Band aufnahm, versuchte ich immer wieder das Gespräch auf die Poesie zu bringen. Da ich selbst Gedichte schreibe wohl vornehmlich aus egoistischen Gründen. Ich rechnete jedoch nicht damit, dass Paul, sobald er das Manuskript in die Hände bekäme, sich erneut in das Gespräch hineinarbeiten, es zerpfücken und jedes Wort, jede Silbe in Frage stellen würde, um schliesslich das verdammte Ding komplett umzuschreiben! Es war, als wären die gesprochenen Worte, die wir in unserem freundlichen Ateliergespräch gewechselt hatten, durch das Niederschreiben suspekt und ungenau geworden, schlicht falsch. Es wurde deutlich, dass Paul die erste Version des transkribierten Interviews als äussere Fassade betrachtete, als blosse Oberfläche, die sich vor eine andere, ursprünglichere, tiefere Sprache geschoben hatte. Er schickte uns ein eindrückliches Dokument zurück, in dem unser konventionelles Gespräch in einen chaotischeren, nicht immer grammatikalisch korrekten Prozess verwandelt war. Mit anderen Worten: in einen Dialog mit der Sprache selbst, der – und das ist typisch für Paul McCarthy – eine ihm eigene Sprache freilegte. Im eigentlichen Sinn des Wortes: ein Gedicht.

Jeremy Sigler

Im Folgenden finden Sie die deutsche Übersetzung des vom Künstler bearbeiteten Manuskripts. Zum besseren Verständnis beachten Sie bitte auch das als Faksimile abgedruckte Original (S. 120–134).

JS: Und da waren auch ...

Und dann? Wurden Probeaufnahmen gemacht?

PM: Ich schrieb diese Drehbücher. Mädchen, die feilgeboten werden, «und ihr habt Angst und beginnt zu weinen.»

JS: Hast du ihnen Text gegeben?

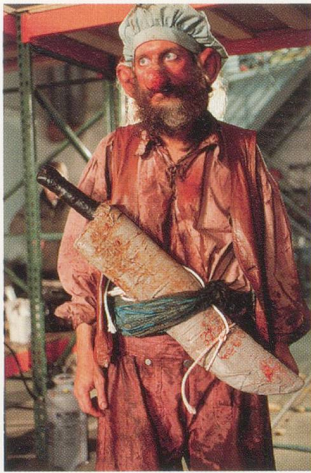
PM: Ich merkte, dass der Text für mich nicht wichtig war. Was mich interessierte, war ihre Körperhaltung, ihre Gesichter, wenn sie weinten. Es lief darauf hinaus, sie zu bitten auf allen vieren zu weinen, oder ... zu kriechen, wenn sie im Raum hin und her gingen ... so an die zehn Mal, ganz langsam.

JS: Das hört sich gut an.

PM: Man fängt mit den Genitalien an. Ich hatte diesen Typen vorsprechen lassen, der einen reichen Bootsbesitzer spielen sollte, der diese Bediensteten hat, seine Macht missbraucht. An einem bestimmten Punkt merkte ich wieder, dass es eigentlich sein Körper war, was mich

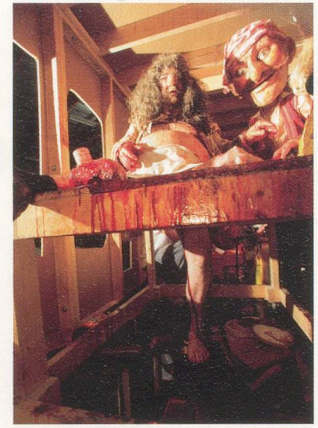
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*JEREMY SIGLER* ist Autor von zwei Gedichtbänden, *To and To* und *Mallet Eyes*. Er ist Mitarbeiter der *Parkett*-Redaktion in New York.



PAUL McCARTHY, PIRATE PROJECT, 2001–2005, performance scenes / Szenen aus der Performance.

(PHOTOS: S. DUENAS & A. ROUNKLE)



interessierte. Ich verbrachte die ganze Zeit damit, ihn auf diesem Tisch posieren zu lassen, einem Sockel, als wäre er eine griechische Skulptur. Es ging um das Demonstrieren und Missbrauchen der Macht des einen über den anderen. Menschlich, aber mit diesem gewissen Dreh.

JS: Die Darsteller, die du vorsprechen lässt, müssen Stuntmen sein?

PM: Nein.

JS: Wie stehts mit dem Spiel mit Materialien? In mir kriecht ein Gefühl hoch, dass gleich etwas Teuflisches vorfallen wird.

PM: Realismus, in den 60er Jahren schiesst man auf dich, wenn es wirklich gefährlich ist. Mich interessierte der Schwindel. Richtiges Blut, ich begann stattdessen Ketchup zu verwenden. Obwohl ichs früher fließen liess, lass uns auf Glas treten, lass uns mit Scheisse malen.

JS: Von einem Seil stürzen.

PM: Ich zerschnitt ein Seil und fiel runter.

JS: Doch während einer Performance, scheinst du deinen Körper fast zu verlassen.

PM: Du meinst NO?

JS: Genau.

PM: Es ist eher eine Frage des Fokus, Fokus auf einen Tisch, Konzentration auf etwas. Ich fokussiere. Wenn ein Kunstwerk entstehen soll, kann die Welt verschwinden. Ja, verschwinden, aber ich glaube nicht, dass ich, dass ich in Trance bin. Ich drehte ein Video, in dem ich meinen Kopf unentwegt und schnell schüttelte. Es hiess RATTLE HEAD (1974). Während ich das tat, rollten meine Augen nach oben und es sah aus wie in Trance. Ich liess mich so aussehen auf einem ... Ich machte auch diese Arbeiten, in denen ich 30 Minuten lang im gleichen Tempo herumwirbelte wie die Videobandspule.

PM: Dieses Wort *fuck* (Fokus) lässt mich an Sport denken ...

PM: Ich spielte Baseball. Das war meine Art gesellschaftlich dazuzugehören. Finger des Fanghandschuhs. (*Erklärung zur Zeichnung im englischen Manuskript, Seite 121 unten.*)

JS: Würdest du sagen, es gebe eine Qualität in deinem ...

PM: Ja und nein. NO.

JS: Ich denke an Yoko Ono ... Bei ihr wurde es zu einer Art Stil.

PM: In dieser Art zu singen liegt eine Befreiung, da bin ich überzeugt, mich interessierten Therapien und ich habe übers Dampf Ablassen gesprochen. Ich machte einen hohlen Kasten bedeckt mit – diesen geschwungenen Karosserielüftungsschlitzen (VENTED CUBE – Belüfteter Kubus, Zeichnung, 1975). Dann schrieb ich dieses Gedicht übers Dampf Ablassen. Die Durchlüftung des Unterbewusstseins. Ich will eine Situation durchlüften.

JS: Deine Arbeiten sind über die Jahre immer gesammelter, technischer geworden, mit ausgefeilten Bauten und elektronisch animierten, kinetischen Skulpturen. Du hast einen weiten Weg zurückgelegt, seit du deinen Penis in Kübel voll schwarzer Farbe getaucht hast (PENIS DIP PAINTING, 1974).

PM: Ja, eine Zeit lang arbeitete ich allein. Ich machte die Videos in ... Als die 90er Jahre kamen, hängte ich mich mit Mike Kelley, Jason Rhoades und Benjamin Weissman rein. Ich hatte die Idee, dass ich beginnen müsste, arbeiten zu lassen.

JS: Und du zogst Fachleute bei?

PM: Ja. Ein Punkt, ich könnte die Idee versauen, wenn mir etwas misslingt. Also arbeitete ich mit Firmen zusammen, verschiedenste Arbeiten wurden alle gleichzeitig erledigt. Ich hatte vielfältige Interessen. Mich interessierte die abstrakte Figur, die realistische Figur, die mechanische Figur, diese verschiedenen Ideen der Darstellung von Unterdrückung. So dass

ich mich für Disney als Skulptur zu interessieren begann. Mickey Mouse und Donald Duck faszinierten mich.

JS: Hattest du im Sinn, einen ganzen Themenpark zu kreieren?

PM: Ja, da war diese Idee etwas zu kreieren. Ich wollte eine eigene Stadt gründen und auch eine Produktionsfirma. In Los Angeles gibt es Produktionsfirmen. Sie gehören zur Filmindustrie. Mein Studio sollte eine Produktionsstätte sein.

JS: Die Studios beschäftigen zum Teil dasselbe Personal, also ist es nicht unwahrscheinlich, dass ein Typ, der für dich arbeitet, auch für Disney arbeitet oder für irgendeinen Klotz ...

PM: Mein Studio besteht momentan aus Leuten. Ich arbeite in der Nähe. Ich habe nur noch wenige Jahre mit meinem Sohn Damon. Freunde kamen zu Damon, sein Freund, wie sich herausstellt, Disney, *Men in Black*.

JS: Das macht dich irgendwie allen anderen Hollywoodregisseuren ähnlich. Manchen Regisseuren vielleicht besonders – wie stehts mit Mario Bava?

PM: Dario Argento. Suchte etwas in Pasolini hinein, ich glaube, ich bin stark beeinflusst von Jack Smiths Filmen und Warhol, wo es offensichtlich ist, dass die Schauspieler nur so tun, so tun, als ob sie Schauspieler wären. Wir werden uns verkleiden und so tun, als wären wir auf einem Schiff.

JS: Russ Meyers und John Waters ... da gibt es diese Idee des Künstlers als Perversling, um etwas zu akzeptieren, das sehr geschmacklos ist, eine schwere Demütigung.

PM: Ich wollte, dass man erkennt, was man eben sah, aber es funktioniert nicht. Man erkennt die Figur, es ist Pinocchio, doch die Geschichte steckt nicht drin. John Waters ist ein Filmemacher, denn ich bin kein Filmemacher, ich bin kein herkömmlicher Geschichtenerzähler. Ich interessiere mich für die Handlung/Situation als falsches Theater.

JS: Als ich TOKYO SANTA (Tokioter Sankt Nikolaus, 1996) anschaute, musste ich an *Bad Santa* (2004) denken, den ich eben im Kino gesehen hatte. Ich glaube Terry Zwigoffs böser Nikolaus (gespielt von Billy Bob Thornton) und dein «böser» Nikolaus liegen gar nicht so weit auseinander.

PM: Ja, sehr eng beisammen.

JS: Wie bewusst warst du? Ich denke an den Artikel, den er [Allan Kaprow] über Jackson Pollock schrieb, wo er vom Malen spricht, aber mit allerlei nichtkünstlerischen Alltagsmaterialien.

PM: Ich glaube, als ich dieses grosse dicke braune Buch las, machte ich diese ausschliesslich roten Bilder, beeinflusst von Tony Smith. Damals machte ich auch das tote H (DEAD H, 1968). Smiths DIE (Stirb, 1962) war innen hohl. Ich kannte Acconcis Werk nicht, bevor ich nach Los Angeles kam. Sein Werk war Sprache – schon, weil er als Dichter begonnen hatte. Wie ist es mit der Dichtkunst, hast du dich dafür interessiert?

JS: In den 70er Jahren hab ich Gedichte geschrieben, heiss, vieles. Schreiben. Du hast Recht mit dem Ächzen und Stöhnen – aus meinem Mund. Das wird zu Poesie, keine geschriebene Poesie, kein Manuskript, nur verbale Äusserung.

JS: Es erinnert mich an Dad.

PM: Oder James Joyce.

JS: Wie wärs mit Cy Twombly? Seine Bilder sind skatologisch. Sie haben auch diesen Hauch von Ausschweifung.

PM: Twombly, verwendet er Scheisse und Pisse?

JS: Nein, ich glaube er verwendet Crayola-Kreiden, Farbstifte und etwas verwischte Tünche.

PM: Ich überlege mir das mit Twombly. Eigentlich De Kooning. Ich ging und kaufte ...

kaufe eine blonde Perücke am Tag der Performance. Ich setzte die Perücke vor der Aufnahme auf und dachte, ich wäre Warhol. Dann sah ich aus wie De Kooning. Der Charakter De Kooning entstand an diesem Tag. Es war nicht vorbereitet, Twombly und De Kooning.

P M: De Kooning malt auch mit Mayonnaise.

J S: Haben dich noch andere Maler beeinflusst?

P M: Ich mochte ... Er unterteilte die Leinwand in Räume, als wäre da ein grosser Raum über den kleinen Schlafräumen darunter. Das war in den 60er Jahren, die sehr byzantinisch waren, mit kleineren Bildtafeln seitlich oder unter dem Hauptbild. Ich malte sie auf dem Boden, es waren Bühnen. Ich kroch auf allen vieren auf dem Bild herum. Das Problem war, dass ich nie genug bekam, also mischte ich schwarze Farbe mit Motorenöl und übergoss beides mit Benzin.

J S: Waren diese Arbeiten je zu sehen?

P M: Die meisten wurden zerstört. Als ich nach L.A. kam in den ... in den Arbeiten mit Motorenöl aus L.A. – auf Papier und zwischen Glasplatten gegossenes Motorenöl. Ich machte auch Arbeiten mit Butter und Vaseline. Ich bedeckte die Wände eines Raumes mit Vaseline und besprühte sie mit roter Farbe. Ich machte eine Arbeit, bei der ich mit einer zusammengerollten Zeitung Vaseline in die Risse der Gehsteige an der Ecke Wilshire und Santa Monica Boulevard verteilte.

J S: Und dann hast du Ketchup bewegt ... erinnert mich immer an Warhol.

P M: Campbell's Soup, Nudelsuppe mit Huhn und Ketchup gehörten schon immer zu meiner Diät. Ich bin mit ihnen aufgewachsen. Mein Vater übergoss alles mit Ketchup und ass Campbell's Raviolisuppe.

J S: In einer Arbeit Karens Körper (KAREN'S KETCHUP DREAM, 1975).

P M: Ein Traum. Also verwandelte ich ihn zu. Damals machte ich Videos und Photographien, die nie ausgestellt wurden. Sie wanderten einfach in Kartonschachteln.

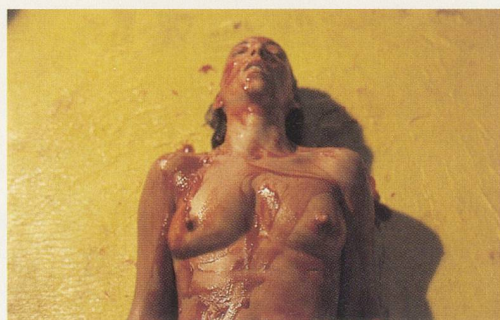
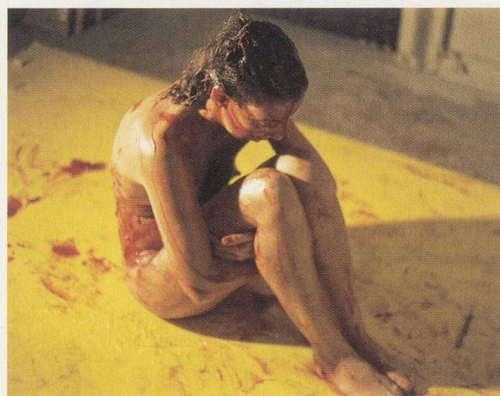
J S: Wie reagierten die Leute auf deine frühen Performance-Arbeiten?

P M: Es gab Unterstützung. Ich arbeitete nichts, bis ich vor der Tür der Galerie stand. Da waren viele, die keinen Einlass fanden. Man erwartete nicht, geliebt zu werden.

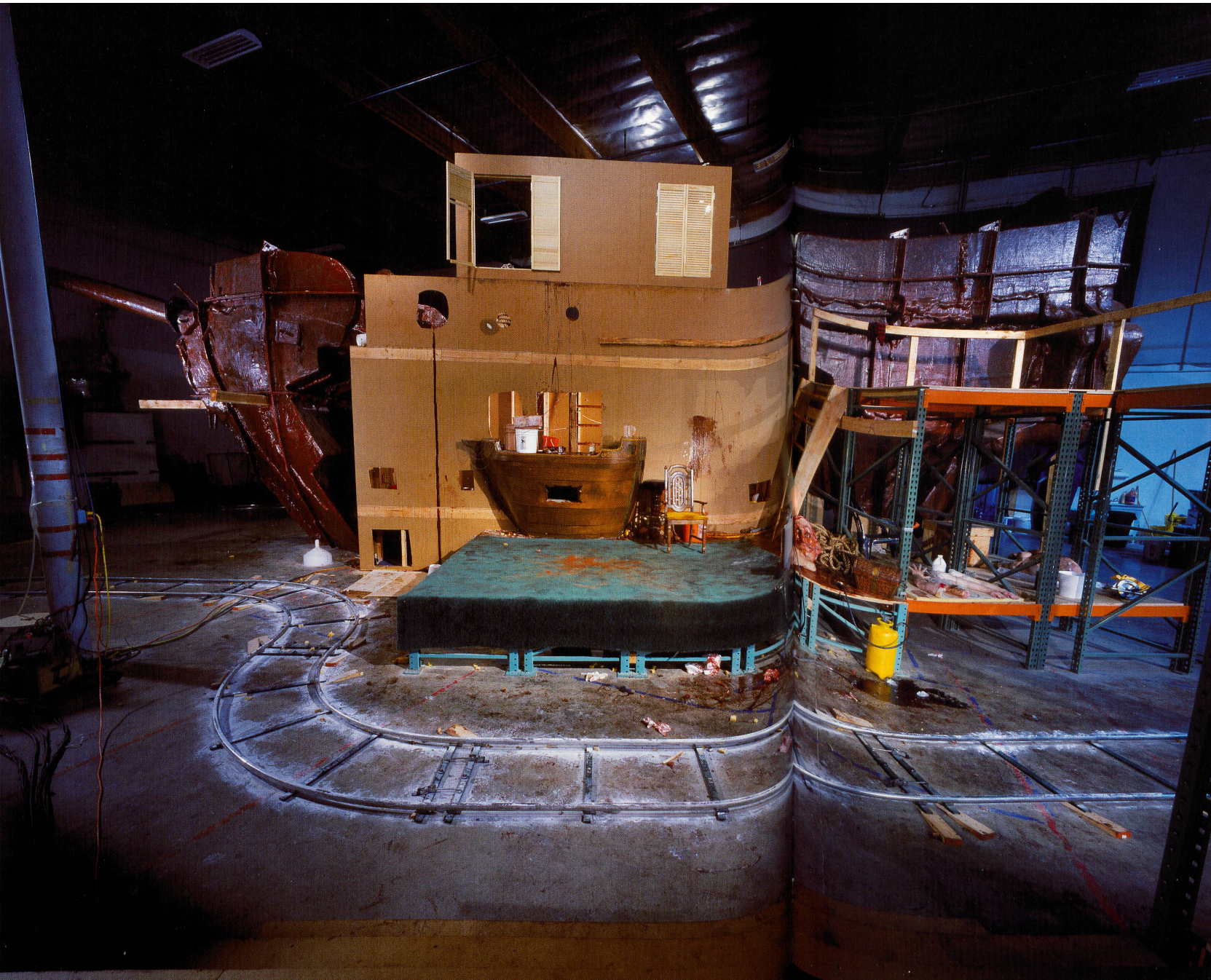
J S: Heute hat man Museumsausstellungen, kaum ist die Schule abgeschlossen.

P M: Schön.

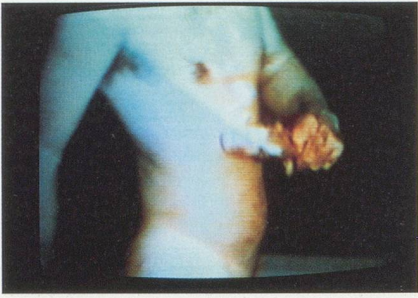
J S: Aber keine Galerie zu haben hat dir schliesslich gereicht ... experimentell und erfinderisch. Eines deiner Videos im Operationssaal eines Spitals?



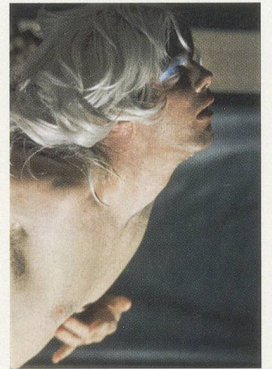
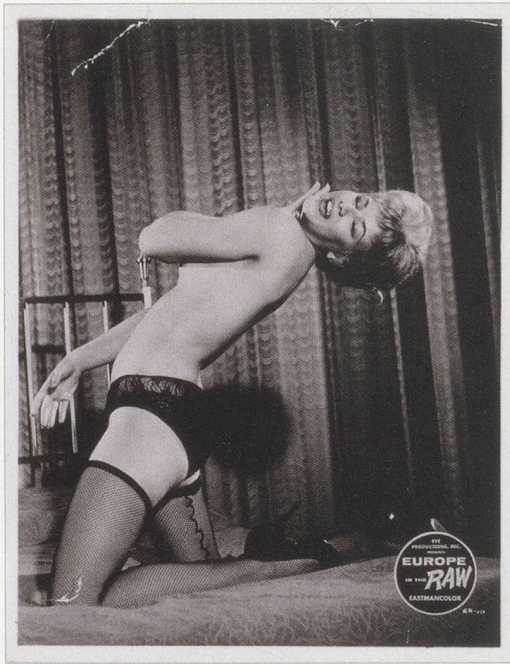
PAUL McCARTHY, KAREN KETCHUP DREAM, 1975,  
performance and video tape, Pasadena, California /  
Performance und Video.



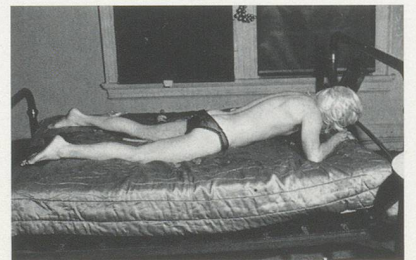
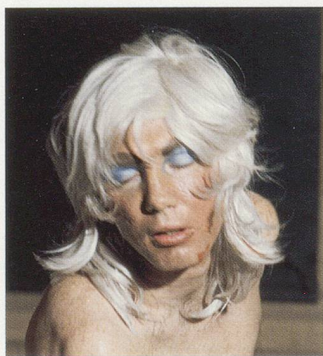
PAUL McCARTHY, PIRATE PROJECT (STAGE AND VILLAGE), 2001–2005, stage set for the work's presentation in "Lalaland – Parodie Paradies," Haus der Kunst, Munich, 12 June to 28 August 2005 / Bühne und Dorf, Bauten für die aktuelle Präsentation im Haus der Kunst, München.



PAUL McCARTHY, SAILOR'S MEAT, 1975,  
performance at the artist's studio in Pasadena /  
SEEMANNSELEISCH, Performance im Atelier  
des Künstlers in Pasadena.



Publicity still for Russ Meyers' film "Europe in the Raw" /  
Kinoaushangphoto für Russ Meyers' «Europe in the Raw».



PM: Es war eine Autopsie. Ich wollte Farbe. Ich hatte einen Freund, der im USC Medical Center Nachtschicht hatte.

JS: Vertretung durch eine Galerie? Du lässt für den Zuschauer die Hosen runter und zeigst ihm deinen Arsch.

PM: Das war immer so etwas musste gezeigt werden. Die Kunstszene war interessiert, ich glaube, es waren Arbeiten, die von L.A. handelten. Die Kunstszene in L.A. hatte kein Interesse an schmutzigen kleinen Arbeiten. Es wurde als «hässliche Kunst, europäische Kunst» abqualifiziert, als nicht originell.

JS: Über L.A.?

PM: Ich verbrachte eine Menge Zeit auf den Strassen in den frühen ... Kaufte eine Menge. Da gab es damals ziemlich ... mit ... voll von Filmstills, und man blätterte die Bilder nur so durch. Ich mochte dieses Bild, auf das ich gestossen war, wirklich, eines aus einem Film mit dem Titel *Europe in the Raw* (Nacktes Europa), eine Frau auf dem Bett ... (1963). Als ich SAILOR'S MEAT, SAILOR'S DELIGHT (1975) ... war das Filmstill ein ... Ich ahme die Pose dieses Bildes nach. Zu der Zeit war das ... Russ Meyers entdeckte dies später. Die BOSSY BURGER-Kulisse war eine Familienkulisse, und ich glaube da war etwas schockierend ... das sonnige L.A. hat einen Unterleib.

JS: Aber dein europäischer Charakter ...

PM: In den frühen 80er Jahren etwas in Frankreich, als sie fragten, bat ich sie mir ein Chalet in den Alpen zu suchen, um ein Remake von *Heidi* zu machen. Als Kind bin ich in den Alpen gewesen. Ich wollte Schweizer sein. Ich hatte mich wirklich hineingesteigert, in der Nähe der Berge aufgewachsen zu sein, ich war besessen von den Büchern, Bergschuhen und Windjacken – dem ganzen Drum und Dran.

JS: Dann erzähl mir von HEIDI (1991).

PM: Die französische Regierung lehnte ab. Am Ende wurde HEIDI nie realisiert und ich redete davon, etwas gemeinsam zu machen. Obwohl das Stück in einem kleinen Raum spielt, auf der einen Seite ein kleines Chalet, auf der anderen die American Bar und das Schlafzimmer im Design dieses Adolf Loos ... Es ist ... ein Schizophrenes. Da ist Mike auf der einen Seite und Paul auf der anderen. Ich habe es immer als geteilte Melone von Adolf Loos betrachtet.

JS: Dein neues Projekt ist auch hübsch.

PM: Vor vier Jahren hat Damon vorgeschlagen, ein Remake von *Piraten der Karibik* zu machen, mit Johnny Depp in der Hauptrolle ... und wir begannen ein verdammt grosses Fiberglas-Schiff zu bauen, dieses Hausboot, das wir gefunden hatten. Diese Ankündigung, dass Disney *Piraten der Karibik* mit Johnny Depp drehen würde ... sie haben uns die Idee gestohlen. Als wir allmählich konkret werden wollten ..., kam das Haus der Kunst in München und

wollte die Arbeit ausstellen. Das Museum verfügt über riesige Räume. Gleichzeitig hatten wir mit etwas begonnen, was ein massstabgetreues Remake der Fernsehshow *F Troop* (F-Truppe) werden sollte. F steht für *fuck*. Der Titel ist FORT FUCK (2005). Das Museum war ursprünglich von Hitler gebaut worden, um durch die faschistische Invasion der Nazis Entartete zu beherbergen.

PM: Ein Überfall durch ein Piratenschiff hat etwas mit der heutigen Welt zu tun. A STRAIGHT LINE FROM HITLER'S BERLIN TO DISNEY'S DISNEYLAND (Eine direkte Linie von Hitlers Berlin zu Disneys Disneyland, 2005). Sie verläuft von Berlin über Bayern und Ludwig, den Eiffelturm und Las Vegas nach Disneyland. Adolf Hitler hat mir erzählt, er wolle eine direkte Strasse von Berlin nach Sankt Petersburg bauen und alle hundert Kilometer ein deutsches Dorf.

JS: Wenn wir von Strassen sprechen, Güterzug. Denke ich an Geländewagen? Ein Güterzug.

PM: Nun, ursprünglich wollte ich ein Stück Land in der kalifornischen Wüste kaufen und auf die Jagd gehen. An einem bestimmten Punkt weigerte ich mich, womöglich einen Prärieschoner zu bauen. Mein Grossvater hatte im Wohnzimmer eine Wagen-Lampe auf dem Kaminbord, ein kleiner gedeckter Wagen, ein Prärieschoner, den ein Gefangener in Utah in den 30er oder 40er Jahren angefertigt hatte.

JS: Aber wenn es einmal aktuell wird ...

PM: Ist es absolut funktionell, eine Konvention – Stahlachsen, Lagerung, etcetera. Das Problem. Mein Plan ist es, damit eine Parade abzuhalten und dann ins Museum zu fahren. Eine Nazi-, Disney-Parade.

JS: Würdest du sagen, dass dein Werk Beziehungen hat ...

PM: Ich wurde ein Student aus meinem Schlaftsaal, der mich als konkreten Poeten betrachtete. («Oh, was ist das?») Er wollte die Welt an die Stelle der Tat setzen. Damals versuchte ich einen dampfbetriebenen Bagger zu stehlen, ihn auf den Campus zu fahren, ein Loch auszuheben und mich selbst samt Maschine und Loch zu begraben. Eine Definition von Poesie, die diese mit einem Objekt oder Ereignis gleichsetzt, ungeheuer wirkungsvoll.

JS: Poetisch.

PM: Als ich ging ... die Universität ... etwa ein Jahr später, Yves Klein. Er sagte, der Künstler sei von einem Sims gesprungen. Darauf sprang ich noch im selben Jahr aus einem Fenster (*lacht*). Ich wusste nicht, dass Kleins Sprung ein Schwanensprung gewesen war.

JS: Er war quasi parallel zum Boden ... Und was war mit deinem Sprung?

PM: Ein erbärmlicher Satz. Ich fand heraus, dass Kleins Sprung eine Photographie war.

JS: Da bin ich neugierig.

PM: Meine Mutter wollte Künstlerin werden. Es ist eine gigantische aufgeblasene Rumflasche. Mein Rauchen und Trinken mit ihrem kleinen Bruder, der am Alkohol zugrunde ging.

JS: Und dein Vater. Ich erinnere mich an eine Zeichnung von ihm, die du vor seinem Tod gemacht hast. Und dann diese Skulptur, der Vater, der seinem Sohn hilft einen Schaf- oder Ziegenbock zu lutschen oder so habe ich es jedenfalls in Erinnerung.

PM: Auch über einen Vater und seinen zehnjährigen Sohn. So dachte ich über Vater nach. Er arbeitete an sieben Tagen von sieben Uhr morgens bis sieben Uhr abends. Seine Arbeit, er arbeitete. Er wollte ... arbeitete.

JS: Was war sein Beruf?

PM: Mein Vater war Metzger. Er arbeitete in einem Lebensmittelgeschäft. Eine meiner frühesten Erinnerungen an ihn ist das Bild meines Vaters im weissen Hemd.

(Übersetzung: Suzanne Schmidt)



PAUL McCARTHY, PIRATE PROJECT (UNDERWATER WORLD), 2001–2005. The entire PIRATE PROJECT is part of the show “Lalaland – Parodie Paradies,” Haus der Kunst, Munich, 12 June to 28 August 2005 / Das gesamte Projekt ist Teil der grossen Werkschau im Haus der Kunst, München, vom 12. Juni bis 28. August 2005.