

Pg 4

Artpark

Artpark
Box 371
Lewiston, New York 14092

MEDIA
RELEASE

August 10, 1990

For immediate release

SURVIVAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES PERFORMANCE AT ARTPARK IS CANCELLED

Lewiston, NY. . . Artpark officials announced today that the performance by Survival Research Laboratories, Mark Pauline, Artistic Director, scheduled for September 1, has been cancelled because of changes recently introduced by the artist.

Artpark President David P. Midland said he became aware of the artists' current plans by accident on Monday and that these plans are different in essential detail from the proposal discussed with the artist last February, which mainly involved machine violence as a commentary on the post-industrial society. The current proposal is being billed on the west coast as a bible burning. "This is not the performance we contracted for," said Midland. He also added that "we do not condone the burning of the bible or, in fact, any book. This is an abhorrent act, even if symbolic."

Midland continued, "This project, which had been a collaboration with the Artpark professional staff until now, has gone off in a very different direction. We have lost confidence in the artist and his ability to work with us in a trusting and collaborative manner. While Artpark does not shy away from controversy, this is not what we expected, and we would take this action with any artist, performing or visual, under similar circumstances."

Of equal concern to Artpark officials is a recent poster promoting the Artpark performance, reportedly reproduced and distributed by Survival Research Laboratories in California. The poster suggests that the public not only donate bibles for the burning, but also that "Bibles can always be obtained for free from Hotels, Church organizations, libraries, the Gideon Society, thrift stores and your parents' house. Be advised that in certain instances theft is a moral obligation."

In response to the poster, Midland said, "Under no circumstance would we be party to an art project which suggests or encourages theft."

Since the inception of Artpark in 1974, it has been the philosophy and goal of this institution to provide opportunities for a broad range of expression by artists at this unique and innovative facility. During the ensuing 17 seasons, Artpark has become widely known for the quality and diversity of its program.

Artpark: The troubling silence over self-censorship

Continued from Page G1

out-and-out censorship. Private expression, they avowedly admit, is guaranteed by the First Amendment. It would be enough to strip the creators of such art of all public funding and bar them from all exhibition possibilities outside their own living rooms. It might also help to pass legislation that will allow the prosecution of anyone who displays or sells his or her art. They don't want to suppress this art, exactly, just make it either invisible or a criminal activity.

Can any kind of strong, socially critical art survive in this country? Not without the help of art institutions. Not without the help of art administrators. And certainly not without the help of artists.

Artists have come forth in times of crisis — in the wake of the cancellation last year of the Robert Rauschenberg show by the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., for example. But too many artists fall into a comfortable political stance. The fact is the creative act itself has been politicized, and the sooner artists realize this, the better chance there will be of salvaging some remnant of artistic freedom.

Generally museums and galleries have responded weakly, if at all, to threats of censorship and outside control. Where are the big institutions while the battle over National Endowment for the Arts funding and selection procedures continues? On the sidelines, mum as a rock. For too many art administrators are running scared, the fending bunny one hop ahead of them.

Why Artpark canceled Survival Research Laboratories is not entirely clear. On the one hand, Artpark claimed in a news release that the discovery of posters distributed in San Francisco headlining the show as a "Bible burn" was the impetus for the action. What further galvanized park officials were recommendations on the poster that Bibles could be easily stolen from hotels, churches and "your parents' house," and such thefts, in this case, would be "a moral obligation."

It didn't matter that Mark Pauline, director of Survival Research Laboratories, claimed the poster to be satire, an artist using the language of the far right in parody what he saw as its abhorrent behavior. "Satire or not," said park curator David Katzive, "the poster is out there naming Lewiston as a place where the Bible will be burned."

Clearly the park saw itself as caught between two unavailing choices: Cancel and receive the wrath of artistic censure and receive the wrath of the community.

But then David Midland, Artpark's executive director, maintained that the park's action was really the result of a breach of contract. He said censorship was not the issue. The group planned

Of burning Bibles and art's big chill

By RICHARD HUNTINGTON
News Art Critic

AMERICAN ARTISTS can thank Sen. Jesse Helms for one thing. He has shown that art is no longer a sweet, pretty-picture kind of expression in this country. Art has teeth, and if you believe Helms and his compatriots, it's about to chew up all the cherished values of this democracy.

Survival Research Laboratories is about as threatening as an artists' group can get. With Artpark's cancellation earlier this week of the group's Sept. 1 performance, the conflict over censorship of the arts, so furiously being fought across the country, has arrived in Western New York in full bottle regalia.

For the first time in 40 years, art is scaring people. It has its fingers in every hot issue of the day — abortion, gay rights, AIDS, sexuality, the military, religion, the economy, you name it. And those people who see art as a pleasant, mesmerizing spot on the wall behind the sofa don't like it.

Though art may appear obscene, blasphemous or morally repugnant to a segment of the population, few are calling for



A machine dream from a Survival Research Laboratories performance piece.

changes in the performance that the park had not contracted for. It was that simple.

A third reason given by both Midland and Katzive is vague, but no less interesting as an indication of Artpark's attitude toward its artists. Midland talked about a "breach of faith." He complained about the artist's lack of ability "to work with us in a trusting and collaborative manner."

Katzive said that all would have been OK if only Pauline had let the park in on his plans. "In the past when there have been controversial or potentially controversial pieces," he said, "we knew what the content was to be, what props were involved, whether they were consistent with park standards."

Both Katzive and Midland seemed especially upset by Pauline's allegedly faulty collaborative spirit. They had been "sandbagged," was the way Katzive described the sudden shift in Pauline's tack.

In the light of this fretting about lack of artistic collaboration, the seizure of 30 tons of Pauline's equipment already at the park looked a bit ominous, as though the park not only wanted to cancel but to penalize the artist for his bad manners. They were aware that this was equipment that Pauline would need for an upcoming performance in Barcelona.

The park insisted that the action was to recoup funds. After some legal pressure from an artists' rights group, it did agree to release the equipment to the artist. But still the image lingers of right-thinking administrators slapping the heads of bad-boy artists who haven't learned how to cooperate in the grown-up art world.

Pauline answers these charges by saying that he or members of his group were in continual touch with park program assistant Ed Pers. Pauline said, knew all about the Bibles and even offered to gather some locally. He said Katzive, who has a full-time job at a public relations firm in New York City and was at the park only part time, never contacted him after an initial meeting in February. And he said Katzive, as curator, was the one responsible for problems of content.

Why did Artpark administrators expect such smooth sailing anyway? They knew that Survival Research Laboratories is always knee-deep in controversy. Its performances are not only provocative but dangerous. Its gargantuan high-tech machines engage in futile apocalyptic battles that go beyond anything that theater or media arts are capable of. For Artpark, the group planned to use an electromagnetic "rail gun" that can liquify metal (Pauline calls it his answer to George Bush's "thousand points of light.") It is frighteningly violent, irreverent and routinely obliterates all acceptable canons of civilized behavior.

It is one thing for uninitiated conservatives outside the art world to call for censorship of the arts. It's another for arts administrators to censor art from the inside. As the Mapplethorpe/Corcoran case demonstrated, such actions will mobilize artists; they see the cut as coming too close to home.

At the Corcoran there were boycotts and demonstrations. Staff members resigned and benefactors shifted promised contributions. The museum finally apologized — after a fashion — and director

Christina Orr-Cabill, who initiated the cancellation, resigned.

While the reaction to Artpark's move will likely follow a different and perhaps less extreme course, I suspect that this will be no passing skirmish.

"We intend to take action," said Joy Silverman, associate director of National Campaign for Freedom of Expression. "At the moment we are composing a letter to Midland signed by 10 or 15 curators who have presented Pauline's work in the past. We are writing to all the artists who were at the park this season, asking them to send letters of protest. It is my feeling that artists should boycott Artpark in the future, the same way they did the Corcoran."

Lanny Walter, cooperating attorney for National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, said Artpark officials are vulnerable to litigation. "They can be sued over what they have done. From our way of looking at it, this is censorship, plain and simple."

Louis Hoch, a San Diego artist who constructed a piece at Artpark this summer, said the park is reacting to a climate of fear generated by the recent censorship controversy. "Artpark is acting defensively to real or imaginary threats to its funding."

"Artpark is not merely an amusement park for the entertainment of passers-by. It is a place for provocative and experimental work. I see Pauline's work as perfectly acceptable in this context."

"I saw my own work at the park. I gave a statue of St. Lucy in hell. It had as bad as Pauline's proposal. I put an angel on top of a TV set. Does that have some kind of unacceptable connotation? It is not that the kind of liberty extended to me has not been extended to

some reasons the Nazis did. And they do it out of fear, because they don't feel confident living in a world where there are any ideas but their own."

Pauline says it is precisely artists who are talking on these issues. "They are the only people who are mobilized. Even the media cannot approach these issues head-on. If artists don't do these things, then we deserve to have the NEA disbanded. We deserve to lose our art. We should all move back in the caves and forget it."

Buffalo artist Paul Sharris, known internationally for his films, is in an especially impressive position to comment: He has himself used a burned Bible in one of his recent sculptures.

The sculpture, first called "Christ vs. Buddha" but now given the more Eastern title "Non-alignment," will be exhibited in Amsterdam later this year along with other of what Sharris calls his "controversial sculpture."

In the work, a burned Buddhist text and a burned Bible will float alongside one another in a brickish pool of water. The water will be set in vibration from below, causing the two damaged books to bob gently against one another.

Sharris is emphatic about the use of such charged materials for art. "In my opinion, any material object is subject to artistic processing, whatever they may be," he said. "It is interesting to ask, would people be as upset if someone froze the Bible in a cube of ice?"

Freezing may be the appropriate metaphor for the long-term effects of the hot tension in which Artpark finds itself. Until the cancellation, Western New York had almost a charmed artistic life. Radical art in this city was a norm. The area had accumulated an admirable reputation through the nation as a place where experimentation and socially critical art could exist untroubled.

Artpark was once a contributor to that reputation. It no longer is. With a single act, it has frozen its own forward motion and perhaps that of other Western New York arts organizations as well.

Pauline. "From my viewpoint, if art doesn't offend in some aspect, you might as well throw it away. Artpark is saying, 'We don't want to disturb people... when institutions begin to self-censor, it's an indication that we are in a formidably repressive climate.'"

Ed Corcoran, program director at Hillwalk, hopes that the discussion won't be reduced to the cliché "Bible burning."

"There are disturbing speech phrases," he said. "Obviously, someone who cares about the Bible is going to be offended when they hear this. But there's more to it than that. It is urgent that people not criticize a work in advance, not condemn it on hearsay information. What may seem on the surface as a statement of intolerance may really be just the opposite — a statement denouncing intolerance."

Corcoran thinks that the anger that roils behind Pauline's work has good cause. Pauline is going after individuals who hide behind the sanctity of the Bible, and Corcoran says he has every right to go after them.

"The fundamentalists have entered the political arena, taking on issues like abortion. Because they have politicized their position, they have become fair game for artists."

Pauline, who sees fundamentalism as a well-timed phenomenon in this country, agrees. "Part of the problem in this country is we have middle-aged white men in power. The whole point of my performance is that the religious right really does run the country."

"The Bible and what it means have been deified by the people who use it as a justification for really evil things. I'm not talking about throwing a bunch of books in a pile and burning them. I'm not talking about restriction of information. Book burning as the Nazis did it was an act that destroyed a very limited creative process. What we're proposing doesn't destroy the Bible, a book that exists in millions of copies. It's a symbolic act, a comment on the Chinesean right, which does burn books and records for the

26

Artpark joins the fray over controversial arts

Show is canceled because the artist would burn Bibles

The Associated Press

BUFFALO — A state-funded arts park announced yesterday it has canceled a performance scheduled for next month because the artist planned to burn Bibles on stage.

A poster that the group Survival Research Laboratories distributed in its hometown, San Francisco, "indicated that the performance was going to be about Bible-burning," said David P. Midland, president of the Earl W. Brydges Artpark in Lewiston, 20 miles north of Buffalo. "It also indicated that people should go out and steal Bibles," Midland said.

The group's original presentation to Artpark officials did not detail any such activities, he said.

"The videotapes that I saw at the time were from previous performances and depicted what I would describe as machines, robots, in combat with each other," Midland said. "They indicated ... that the performance would be similar to what they had done in the past."

MARK PAULINE, the group's founder and director, said the poster, headlined "Ever want to burn a Bible? How about thousands of Bibles in Lewiston, New York?" was intended to be satirical. He said the Bibles would have been only a small part of the Sept. 1 show.

"We were not putting a pile of Bibles on a stage area and setting them on fire," Pauline said in a telephone interview from San Francisco. "We never do that."

"The statement we were trying to make was, there is like a kind of imprisonment people have that the religious right is foisting on us," he said. "My expression of that idea was to cover the machines (with Bibles) like space shuttle tiles — to entrap the machines in these Bibles."

Later in the show, a device similar to a jet engine would be used to blast the Bibles off the machines in "a sort of a birthing experience," he said.

THE INCIDENT appeared certain to fuel the controversy over government funding and censorship of the arts that began last year, after the National Endowment for the

Arts funded an exhibition of homoerotic photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe and a work by Andres Serrano that consisted of a crucifix submerged in urine.

Under pressure from conservative members of Congress, the endowment stopped funding works deemed to be obscene or offensive to religion.

Joy Silverman, associate director of the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, called on artists to boycott Artpark because of the incident.

"What they're doing is anti-arts. They're censoring at the worst possible time," said Silverman, whose organization was formed in response to the Mapplethorpe controversy. "We can't allow our colleagues to get away with this."

MIDLAND SAID HIS decision to cancel had nothing to do with the controversy over the endowment, from which Artpark receives \$30,000 a year.

"There are three issues," he said. "The first issue has to do with book-burning, which is certainly something we cannot condone. The second issue is promoting the act of stealing, which we certainly can't condone. And the third issue is a breach of trust with the park staff."

The poster appeared to imply that readers should steal Bibles from "hotels, church organizations, libraries, the Gideon Society, thrift stores and your parents' house."

Pauline said he was not encouraging theft of Bibles, but said, "In hotels, they're like towels. You can take them with you." Asked if taking hotel towels constituted theft, he said, "I don't believe so."

PAULINE SAID he warned Artpark officials weeks ago that his show might be somewhat tough for them to swallow.

"They knew exactly what we were going to do there. They knew we were going to produce something controversial," he said. "I asked them, 'Are you sure you're ready to handle this in Lewiston, New York?' They kept saying things like, 'We really want to stir things up this summer.'"

Artpark, which bills itself as the nation's only state park devoted exclusively to the arts, receives about one-third of its \$5.5 million annual budget from the state. Most of the rest comes through ticket sales, concession sales and the like.

By Don Givynn
Niagara Gazette

LEWISTON — Amid all the finger pointing over canceling an Artpark performance by Survival Research Laboratories of San Francisco, politics also played a behind-the-scenes role.

Town Supervisor Robert Wadlinger confirmed Friday that he had raised concerns about the controversial content of the program with Artpark President David P. Midland, who subsequently announced the artists would not be allowed to perform in the park.

Wadlinger said he had received a poster — he declined to name the source — from the West Coast which indicated the artist's plans for the Artpark engagement. The town official would not comment on the poster.

"When I saw what they had in mind (for the performance), I realized that was not the kind of thing we wanted for Lewiston or at Artpark," Wadlinger said, adding that he consulted with the town attorney (Benjamin Hewitt) about the matter.

"I think Midland did the right thing in this matter. I call him 'Brave Dave' for taking that stand," Wadlinger said.

'Brave Dave' cited for Artpark stand

TOWN OF LEWISTON — A ... ed at \$1,000.

Survival Guides

Page 5B

27

ULUB& VOICE 9/4/90

On Edge c.carr

Burning Questions

Survival Research Laboratories had never performed in "middle America" before, and SRL director Mark Pauline says he asked the Artpark people point-blank: "Do you know what you're getting into?" Apparently, they thought they did. Pauline says they even joked about wanting to "sit things up in Lewiston this summer."

New York State's park devoted to the arts (in Lewiston) looks quite Tanglewoody in the brochures. One Jonghime observer—Ron Elnike, the performance curator at Hallwalls in nearby Buffalo—described the usual fare there as "feel-good storytelling and crafts. I can't describe what a shock it was to see Survival Research on the schedule." An aura of transgression and apocalypse surrounds the San Francisco-based group. Their "choreographed rituals of destruction" (as a press release once put it) feature no human performers, just menacingly reimagined machines built from industrial detritus: a Square Wheel Car, a Sprinkler from Hell, a Flying Rocket Powered Shark, for example, along with missile launchers and mechanical soldiers. Remote-controlled by Pauline and crew from the sidelines, they stalk, they career, they spew fire, attacking jerry-built shanties, towers of glass, each other. Some incorporate, and thus reanimate, animal carcasses. These machines have personalities. They seem the crude steel manifestation of some brutal crash-and-burn impulse in the human psyche. The carnage is tough social satire, to which Pauline always attaches some enigmatic title, like *Extremely Cruel Practices: A Series of Events Designed To Instruct Those Interested in Politics That Correct or Punish*.

No one at Artpark had seen a live show, but they'd seen tapes. They scheduled SRL to perform in a parking lot September 1, after a show by the Nylons, described in the program as a "zany, high-wire a capella vocal quartet." Pauline shipped 30 tons of machinery to Lewiston. And he'd come up with a very specific target to confront: the religious right.

"We put our anger into the performances to confront people with their own worst fears," Pauline once said. So, for the fundamentalists, he built a giant—and mobile—

vagina dentata. The base is an old mermaid cart. The top is a metal female pelvis equipped with rotating steel jaws strong enough to snap a two-by-four in half. "We covered the whole outside with Bibles, like space shuttle tiles—a corset of religious dogma. We were going to burn those off with a jet engine—cleanse it with flame." They also planned to destroy a pyramid of huge photorealist "modular babies," and they were trying to get a house (or at least a facade) from Love Canal to "make a middle-class family setting."

Pauline doesn't spin out a lot of theory about his work, just keeps it simple: "We're trying to define indelibly the times we're living in." Times when fire and brimstone sear the art world? Times when years of an artist's work and thought can be reduced to a single word like *pornography* or *blasphemy*? In that, he ironically, succeeded. Because at Artpark, Pauline's still untitled show had been reduced to a single image: Bible-burning.

SRL needed thousands of copies of the Good Book, and began posterizing in San Francisco to get them: "Ever Want to Burn a Bible? How About Thousands of Bibles in Lewiston, New York?" Pauline called the poster's style satire, and the book-burning symbolic, "a comment on the Christian right, which does burn books and records for the same reasons the Nazis did."

But David Midland, Artpark's president, called it "unacceptable" and "a breach of contract." He never asked the artist what he intended. On August 10, he simply wrote Pauline to inform him that he had been canceled. A press release sent out the same day quoted Midland: "We have lost confidence in the artist and his ability to work with us in a trusting and collaborative way. While Artpark does not shy away from controversy, this is not what we expected." Midland seemed particularly upset that the poster suggested stealing the Bibles from motels or "your parents' house" because "in certain instances there is a moral obligation."

As Midland put it, "The park can't be party to illegal acts." Curator David Katzive concurred. Asked if Bible-burning personally offended him, Katzive replied, "I'm person-

ally upset that they [SRL] forced us to cancel the piece. I like their work and wanted to see it happen at the park. It's a lot like a dance company all of a sudden changing the costumes or the dancers. In fact, we'd still be getting a machine performance, but they've bilboarded it as Bible-burning. We feel like we've been sandbagged."

While Midland says Pauline refused to give them any information about the show, Pauline says he told Artpark about the Bibles in late July. The poster, in fact, specified that they be mailed to Lewiston. Pauline thinks park officials caved in to some sort of right-wing pressure. Midland says absolutely not.

Artpark had already advanced the artist \$19,000. Midland claims they only wanted to recover \$7,000. But Pauline, who didn't have a cent left after finishing and shipping the machines, says they asked him for "the money." They announced that they were impounding all his equipment until they got it.

At this point the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression (NCFE) stepped in to get Pauline a lawyer, and Artpark quickly let the machines go. But this has become another art skirmish headed for the courts, as Pauline's lawyer seeks an injunction to allow him to do the performance. Joy Silverman, director of the NCFE, wants artists to boycott Artpark and thinks Midland should resign. "Because of what's going on in this country," she says, "a presenter who does not stand up for artists should not be in this business."

Meanwhile, back in Lewiston, I contacted the man who started all this when he confronted Midland with a copy of the poster. Lewiston town supervisor Bob Wadlinger declined to tell me who had faxed it to him, but said, "I felt professionally bound to at least show some proper authority this thing. I'm a little embarrassed by the poster." He thought the Bible-burning would have shocked people—"We're a town that doesn't even have a pool parlor." However, I detected no particular hostility or dogma in this "middle American." When he took the poster to Artpark, Midland showed him SRL's tapes. "I sat there and enjoyed them," said Wadlinger. He described the imagery he saw—machines as "teased dogs." And he had ideas about what it meant. Ironically, this is probably all Pauline would ever ask for. Someone had seen his work, and been stimulated to think.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 1990

S.F. Artist Sues Over 'Bible Burn'

United Press International

Buffalo, N.Y.

A San Francisco artist filed a federal lawsuit yesterday against a state-sponsored arts center, alleging censorship and free speech violations because it canceled a weekend performance that includes Bible burning.

Mark Pauline filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Buffalo, seeking an injunction against Artpark in Lewiston so his group can perform Saturday.

Artpark officials canceled the appearance of Survival Research Laboratory of San Francisco on August 10, saying the troupe violated a performance contract by refusing to provide details of its presentation.

"We knew they wanted Bibles. We did not know why they wanted them or in what context they would be used. Then someone brought to our attention their poster about burning Bibles," Artpark programs supervisor Joan McDonough said.

Survival Research Laboratory distributed promotional posters, saying in part: "Ever want to burn a Bible? How about thousands of Bibles in Lewiston, N.Y.?"

In his court papers, Pauline said the cancellation amounted to censorship and a violation of the artists' First Amendment right to free speech.

He also described the troupe's "mechanical art performance," which he said has been performed about 35 times around the nation.

"As one small part of the performance, plaintiff had planned to cover a large, mechanized Mother Earth figure with Bibles, in a fashion similar to the ceramic tiles that protect a space capsule from disintegration upon re-entry to the Earth's atmosphere."

Niagara Gazette

Sunday, August 19, 1990

Obituaries	2
Police news	2
Grapevine	3-5
Way We Were	3

B

Artists to take Artpark to court

Director of spurned group claims they'll perform there next year

Politics played a role, 2B

By Don Glynn and Glen White
Niagara Gazette

A San Francisco-based artists' group denied a chance to perform at Artpark next month is taking its case to a federal district court.

"We intend to be in that park next year," said Mark Pauline, artistic director of Survival Research Laboratories.

Artpark President David P. Midland notified the group Aug. 10 that its Sept. 1 performance at the park was canceled because the artist had changed the content of the original proposal submitted last February.

Although Midland said he was offended by the artist's plan to burn Bibles on stage — a one-minute scene in the script — he emphasized the prime reason for the cancellation

was a "breach of contract."

Midland explained the artist's current proposal was being killed on the West Coast as a Bible burning. "I didn't become aware of the changes until a week ago," he said Wednesday. Midland's directive has drawn sharp comments from artists as well as free-speech activists across the country.

At the same time, he obviously has the full support of his major employer, the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the agency responsible for administering Artpark.

"Book burning has no place in art," State Parks Commissioner Orin Lehman said last week. "And I don't think that Lincoln or Jefferson would support that as a form of art," the commissioner added.

Lehman, strongly supportive of Midland's

position, said he had talked with the Artpark executive before the performance was canceled. "We leave those decisions to the individual administrators," Lehman said, adding that his office does not set policy on programs presented at Artpark, Jones Beach State Park, and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, all under the jurisdiction of the state parks department. Artpark also is funded through the National Heritage Trust.

"At issue here is the chilling effects of the religious right's campaign against freedom of expression settling over the artistic community," said Pauline. "Artpark was bound by contract to allow Survival Research Laboratory complete control over the method and means of completing the services described."

Pauline also said the Artpark press release on the cancellation was issued before his organization had any chance to respond to the

charges. "I was really disappointed they way they handled it," he added.

An Albany attorney for the National Campaign for the Freedom of Expression will be handling the pending federal court action, Pauline said. The lawyer could not be reached for comment.

"Censorship in all its forms is odious to me, but I can't second-guess Artpark's decision," said Nancy Post Lange, general manager of the Keenan Center at Lockport.

Aaron Christina, an administrative assistant with the American Civil Liberties Union in New York City, said: "The danger here is that there is too narrow a definition of what art is. It is unfortunate that this sort of perceived group called the 'religious right' is given more power than they actually have." Ms. Christina said, "It's also unfortunate when an institution for the public such as Artpark forfeits a chance to present a wide array of artistic expression."

FOREIGN LANGUAGE *ARTICLES*



Kleine Zeitung
27. 10. 92

Maschinentheater löste bei vielen Kriegsangst aus

Sogar Verteidigungsministerium wurde alarmiert: „Es fallen Bomben.“

■ VON DANIELE MARCHER

Schon Tage vorher wurde in den Medien über die Aufführung des Maschinentheaters in der Grazer Arlandhalle informiert, auch über die zu erwartende Lärmwelle berichtet. Trotzdem gab es während der Proben eine Beschwerdeflut der Anrainer, doch was sich während der samstägigen Aufführung abspielte, übertraf alles.

Innerhalb von zwei Stunden gingen bei der Grazer Polizei rund 400 Beschwerdesanrufe ein, 40 davon kamen gleich über den Notruf. Manche Grazer erstatteten wegen

Lärmbelästigung und sogar wegen Körperverletzung Anzeige. Doch bei fast der Hälfte der Anrufer löste die Maschinentheater-Aufführung regelrechte Panik aus.

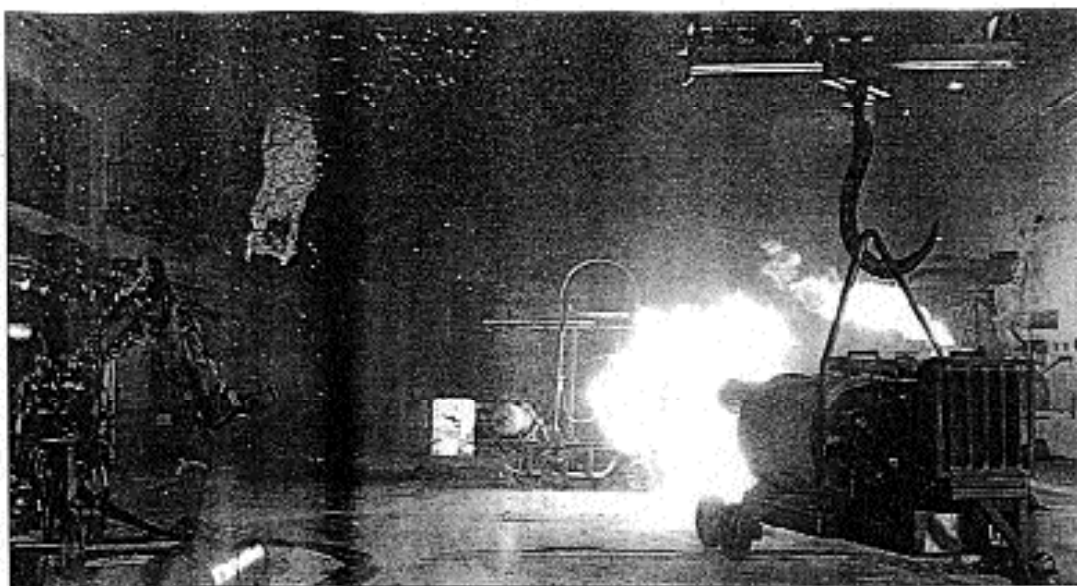
Sie berichteten den Polizisten aufgeregt von Kriegshandlungen im Norden von Graz, behaupteten voll Angst, jugoslawische Kampfflugzeuge seien in den Grazer Raum eingedrungen und würden nun im Norden Bomben abwerfen. Die Erklärung der Polizisten, es handle sich um eine Theateraufführung, wurde von den Anrufern als Beschwichtigung abgetan.

Doch damit nicht genug: Ein

Anrainer schaltete sogar das Verteidigungsministerium ein, das sich wiederum an das Innenministerium wandte. Das Ministerium in Wien kontaktierte umgehend die Grazer Polizei.

Diese stand ohnehin mit 18 Mann bei der Arlandhalle im Einsatz — und führte dort in hundert Meter Entfernung Lärmmessungen durch. Das beachtliche Ergebnis: 108 Dezibel. Zum Vergleich: Bei einem extrem lauten, suffizierten Moped mit kaputtem Auspuff muß man bei Vollgas unmittelbar danebenstehen, um die gleiche Lautstärke zu empfinden.

Kleine Zeitung
27. 10. 82



Steirisches „herbst“-Manöver: Szene aus der SRL-Show in der Grazer Arland-Halle

FOTOS: CHRISTIAN KUNWIRTH

„Krieg“ in Halle & Stadt

Die SRL aus San Francisco versetzten Samstagabend das restliche Graz in größere Aufregung als ihr Publikum in der Arlandhalle.

■ VON FRIDO HÜTTER

Die eigentliche Schlacht fand nicht im Saale statt: In der knappen Dreiviertelstunde, die der lautere Teil der SRL-Show am Samstagabend in der alten Arlandhalle währte, riefen rund 400 Grazer, einige davon über Notruf, die Polizei an. Menschen, die Feuerwerke kennen, denen bestimmte Windlagen die Umkehrschübe der Jets am Grazer Thalerhof machtvoll dröhnend ins Haus liefert, verfielen in panische Gedanken.

V1. Was aber begab sich vor Ort? Ein überaus diszipliniertes Publikum, etwa 2500 Menschen, darunter viele aus Slowenien, drängte sich sardinendicht im industriellen Ruinengelände. Berichterstatter der Deutschen Presse Agentur, der Süddeutschen, der FAZ, der Berliner Morgenpost, des kroatischen Fernsehens etc. waren angereist. Schließlich war es die Premiere der kalifornischen „Survival Research Laboratories“ im deutschsprachigen Raum.

Dieses Theater, dessen Hauptdarsteller tonnenschwere computergesteuerte Maschinen sind,



Gut gerüstet: Ein SRL-Besucher am Samstagabend in Graz

war bisher vorzugsweise auf großen Freiflächen zugange.

Die Hallen-Enge haben SRL denn auch nicht bewältigt.

Die ersten Minuten friedvoller Koexistenz von Wesen wie Inchworm, Walking Machine, Big Arm vermittelten eine klare Story. Als bald griffen Aggressoren wie Six Barrel, Shaker und die fürchterliche V1 ein.

Letztere, ein monumentales Rohr, speit Staub, Feuer, Schüsse und fürchterlich intensive Schallwellen. Sie war ohne die vor Ort ausgeteilten Ohrenstöpsel nicht erträglich. Aber eben durch diese blieb das Inferno aus

dem Kopf gesperrt; nur die Tollkühnen in den ersten Reihen wurden zeitweise von den Schallwellen umgeworfen bzw. von einer steuerungsunfähigen Maschine attackiert.

Es gab sehr intensive Bilder: Wenn etwa die V1 eine Fensterfront samt ihren bürgerlichen Blumentöpfen unter Feuer nimmt, ist das eine drastisch triviale Metapher. Und wenn der darüberschwebende Kran den einen oder anderen Kombattanten kurzfristig hochhebt, um ihn erst wieder auszulassen, kann man schon an die beschränkte Macht der UNO denken.

Drama. Aber die stete gleichzeitige Präsenz aller Maschinen, die Wiederholung der Abläufe und der abrupte Schluß ließen keine spannende Dramaturgie zu. Am Ende war man sich dessen sicher, was man eingangs nur geahnt hatte: SRL sind mehr Bastler als Bühnenkünstler, statt auf Emotion und Drama setzen sie auf Technik. Und verbleiben damit exakt in jenem mechanistischen Weltbild, das zu kritisieren sie vorgeben.





Verdens undergang i Sydhavnen

Den sidste Storbymat i København

Tekst: NIELS CLAF GUDME
Foto: SOREN HARTVIG

HUNDTER is arbejdende mennesker og mindre bliver draget i den stad København, for tilsluttet kommer til Storbymat. Rundt gennem to milliarder omsatligt og som og nye lige så voksende den... (Text continues with a description of the city's state and the 'Storbymat' concept.)

Nu sidder vi i Sydhavnen og venter på, at Sovjet Ransack Laboratorie skal gå i gang med An Original Machine Performance... (Text continues with a description of the machine and the workers' situation.)

«These are the bodies that were stolen from the morgue... (Text continues with a quote and a description of the scene.)

FULD MÅNEN står klart over havneområdet bag det, der ligner en katedral af forpudt stål og beton... (Text continues with a description of the night scene.)

Med tre kvarters forsinkelse varmer de maskinerende motorer op. Stråler af lys slår sig på jorden... (Text continues with a description of the machinery and the workers.)

Lysen går, og maskinerne begynder at destrøere hinanden. Nu går også maskinen sin vej. Til gengæld går en maskine op i luften... (Text continues with a description of the machine's operation and the workers' actions.)

område når folder om, rovet ned af gravkammer... (Text continues with a description of the machine's operation.)

Flammer udspyrer uafsluttelig fra en maskine med djetter... (Text continues with a description of the machine's operation and the workers' actions.)

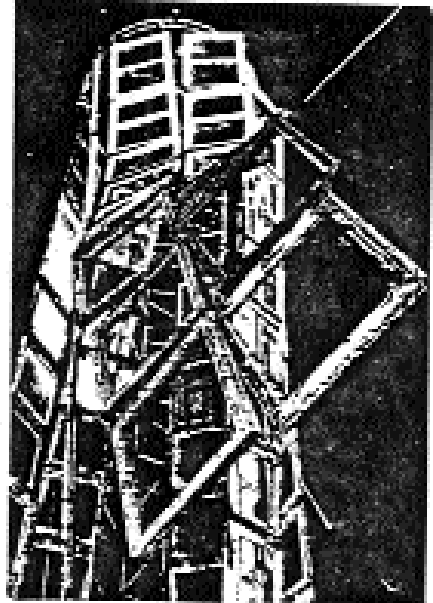
Gør vi dem atlikke kæben i et kvar med krogende... (Text continues with a description of the machine's operation and the workers' actions.)

Skænen er styg, Gennemskudt... (Text continues with a description of the machine's operation and the workers' actions.)

EN MINIRUTTEN nærmer sig fra bagved. Det er motorbetjent... (Text continues with a description of the machine's operation and the workers' actions.)

Arbejderen går over til jernløren og baggrunden... (Text continues with a description of the machine's operation and the workers' actions.)

Jag vil hellere se Strandsbergs... (Text continues with a description of the machine's operation and the workers' actions.)



SURVIVAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES IN AMSTERDAM

Molens zijn weerbarstig

Tijdens de perspresentatie van een voorstelling waaraan veertig mensen twee weken hebben gewerkt, vloog een enkeling van schrik onder de stoel. Werd de uitsmijter van het Zomerfestijn echt zo erg? Over de roestbestrijding van Mark Pauline.

A PLAN FOR SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT based on achieving complete freedom from restraints of society was bijna niet doorgegaan. De Europese première van dit Amerikaanse theaterspektakel van de Survival Research Laboratories had afgelopen zaterdagavond in de open lucht moeten plaatshebben, maar het regende. Zondagavond was de laatste kans. De hele dag regen, maar een half uur vóór aanvang gloeide plotsklaps een rode zon aan de einder en brak de lucht boven de Surinameka-

JIM SCHILDER

de in het Amsterdamse havengebied open. Wonderlijke regie. Intussen werden niet ver daar vandaan de laatste voorbereidingen getroffen voor een heel andere show, eveneens betrekking hebbend op de restraints of society: de ontroofing van de kraakpanden aan de Conradstraat, die door de bewoners was aangekondigd als een spektakel waarvoor men kaartjes kon kopen; geadviseerd werd een toneelkijker mee te nemen.

★

De Amerikaanse publiciteit over het werk van SRL, tien jaar geleden in Californië opgericht door Mark Pauline, had nieuwsgierig gemaakt. Er zou sprake zijn van gevechten tussen gevaarlijke machines, van explosies en vuur. Pauline behoorde op zijn elfde tot de Fucker Island Gang, een jeugdbende die de welgestelden in Florida onaangename

momenten bezorgde. Hij was gefascineerd door techniek, volgde een kunstopleiding in Florida, vertrok naar San Francisco en richtte SRL op. A San Francisco Army terzake New York, kopte de New York Times aan de vooravond van een optreden. *Technological Witch Doctors*, schreef een ander blad, terwijl een derde het had over *Wizards of Chaos* en een vierde over *Artists from Hell*.

★

Boven de kade wordt het langzaam donker, en het zicht op het 'speelvlak' wordt ontnomen door een zestal bruine goederenwagens (die dingen hebben hun theatrale waarde al tijdens eerdere Zomerfestijn-voorstellingen bewezen — NS, nooit wegdoent!). Ruim een uur te laat lijken ze ineens uit zichzelf in beweging te komen. Een groep te ver naar voren gelopen toeschouwers deinst terug als een vervaarlijke vlammenzee uit een wagon schiet.

We zien een chaotisch terrein, met wat gebouwtjes, een soort kerk en een uit olieva-

