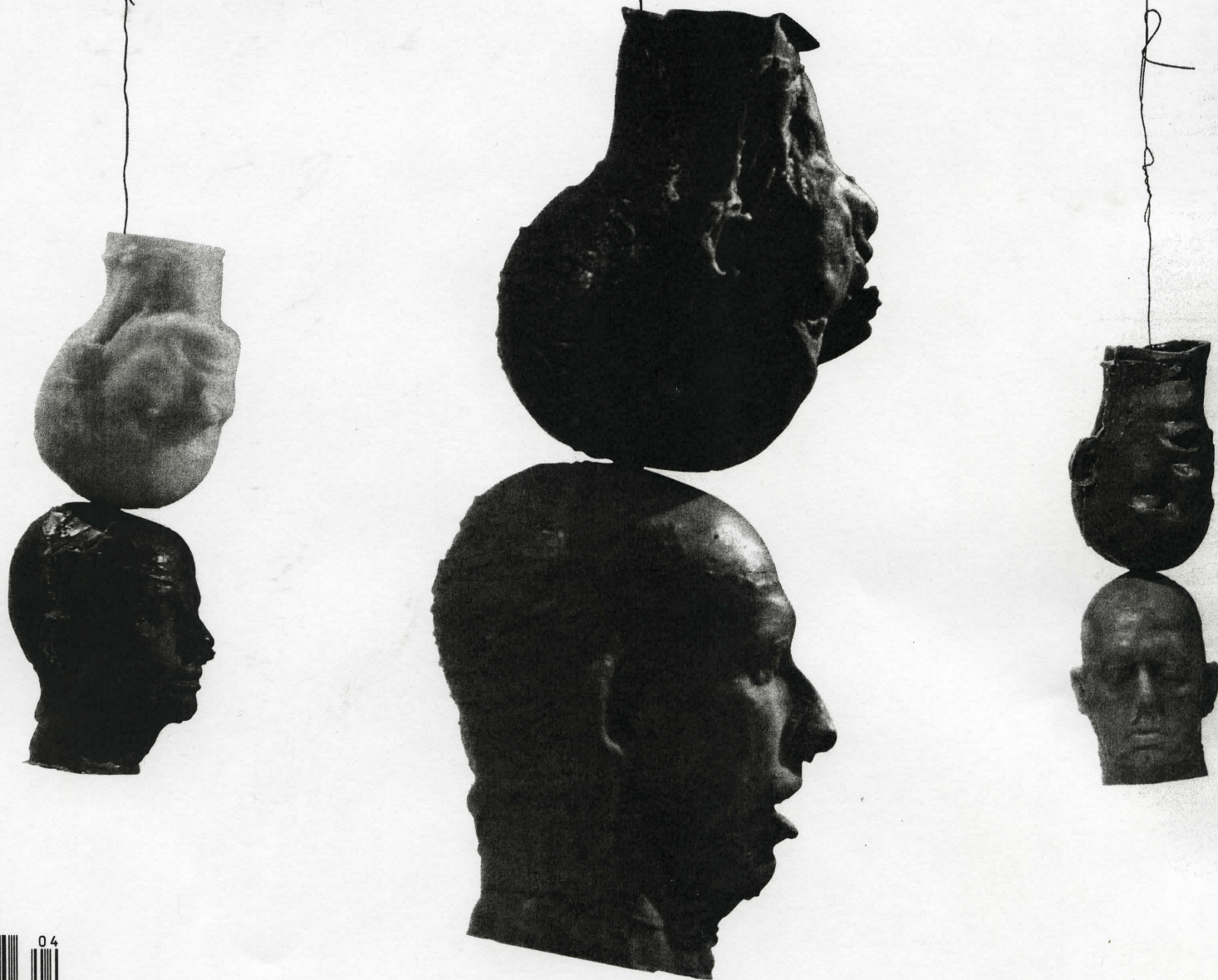


# ARTFORUM

APRIL 1995 \$7.00 SFr 15

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



**Publisher**.....Anthony Korner  
**Editor**.....Jack Bankowsky  
**Senior Editor**.....David Frankel  
**Managing Editor**.....Timothy Mennel  
**Editor-at-Large**.....Charles V. Miller  
**Reviews Editor**.....Sheila Glaser  
**Assistant Editor (Books)**.....Sydney Pokorny  
**Assistant Editor**.....K. Marriott Jones  
**Copy**.....Elizabeth Franzen  
**Photo Research**.....Chivas Clem  
**Contributing Editors**.....Jan Avgikos, Germano Celant, Thomas Crow,  
 Kazue Kobata, Donald Kuspit, Thomas McEvilly,  
 Declan McGonagle, Greil Marcus,  
 Molly Nesbit, Ida Panicelli, John Rajchman

**Editorial and Business Offices**  
 65 Bleecker Street, New York, N.Y. 10012  
 Tel. (212) 475-4000 Fax (212) 529-1257

**Executive Publisher**.....Knight Landesman  
**Associate Publisher**.....Charles Guarino  
**Design Director**.....Kristin Johnson  
**Production**.....Matthew Forrester, Gene Yu  
**Business Manager**.....Elisa Helligar-Lewis  
**Circulation Director**.....Stefan Fredrick  
**Circulation**.....Amanda Burney  
**Assistant to the Publisher**.....Yvonne Bennett  
**Interns**.....Gretchen Carlson, Meghan Dailey, Michèle Faguer,  
 David Gibson, Nicole Heinrichs, Elizabeth Katz,  
 Jaleh Mansoor, Abigail Messite, Theodore Sheehan

**Advertising**

**USA**

**Advertising Director**.....Knight Landesman  
**Advertising and Promotion Manager**.....Ruth Fruehauf  
**Sales Associate**.....Danielle McConnell  
**Advertising Production**.....Karen D'Angelo  
**Assistant**.....Jun Murai  
**Account Billing**.....Katherine Parker

**California**

Louise Hampton Sherley, Associate  
 8391 Beverly Blvd., Suite 334, Los Angeles, CA 90048  
 Tel./Fax (310) 390-1554

**FRANCE**

Melanie Facchetti, Associate  
 120 rue Perronet, 92200 Neuilly Sur Seine, France  
 Tel. 33 (01) 47 38 22 07 Fax 33 (01) 47 38 13 10

**GERMANY**

Mirella Rastorfer, Associate  
 Robert-Heuserstr. 12, 50968 Köln, Germany  
 Tel./Fax 49 (0221) 340 4446

**ITALY**

Graziella Levoni, Associate  
 Via Bigli 4, 20121 Milan, Italy  
 Tel. 39 (02) 7600 48 71 Fax 39 (02) 7824 93

**SCANDINAVIA**

Charlotte Lund, Associate  
 Riddargatan 17, 114 57 Stockholm, Sweden  
 Tel. 46 8 663 09 79 Fax 46 8 663 0978

**SPAIN**

Leticia Rodriguez de la Fuente, Associate  
 Guisando 26, Puerta de Hierro, 28035 Madrid, Spain  
 Tel. 34 (01) 373 8873

**U.K.**

Kaethe Cherney, Associate  
 17 Walcot Gardens, Kennington Road, London SE11 6RB  
 Tel./Fax 071 587 3655

**Directors**

Anthony Korner, Chairman; Robert Egelston, Charles Guarino,  
 Knight Landesman, Amy Baker Sandback, Ruth Scheuer

Volume XXXIII No. 8, April 1995. Contents copyright © 1995 Artforum International Magazine, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from Artforum International Magazine, Inc.

Subscriptions: Orders, inquiries, and address changes should be sent to ARTFORUM, P.O. Box 3000, Denville, N.J. 07834. For subscription inquiries call (800) 783-4903 in the U.S. or (201) 627-2427 overseas, during business hours. For subscription orders ONLY call (800) 966-2783 in the U.S. or (212) 475-4000 overseas.

Back Issues: Single copies and back issues available prepaid from ARTFORUM, 65 Bleecker Street, New York, N.Y. 10012.

Microfilm: University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. Microfiche: Bell & Howell, Micro-Photo Division, Old Mansfield Rd., Wooster, Ohio 44691. ARTFORUM is indexed in the Art Index, ARTbibliographies, MODERN, and RILA. Artforum (ISSN-0004-3532) is published monthly except July and August for \$46.00 per year (\$72.00 outside the U.S.) by ARTFORUM, 65 Bleecker Street, New York, N.Y. 10012. Printed by Mack Printing, East Stroudsburg, Pa. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: send address changes to ARTFORUM, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. AF, Denville, N.J. 07834.

# ARTFORUM

APRIL 1995

## COLUMNS

11 Q & A

Jeffrey Slonim on the Sundance Film Festival

13 Film

David Rimanelli on David Salle's *Search and Destroy*

14 Theater

Steven Drukman on Peter Brook's *The Man Who*

19 Essay

Homi K. Bhabha on Victim Art

21 Glamour Wounds

Rhonda Lieberman on the Further Adventures of Jewish Barbie

25 Preview: Venice Biennale 1995

Lauren Sedofsky talks with Jean Clair

31 Books

Allucquère Rosanne Stone on Kate Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw*

32 Bruce Hainley on Teresa de Lauretis' *The Practice of Love*

Lawrence Chua on *Dagger*

34 American Myths

J. Hoberman on Talk Radio

39 Special Effects

Carol Squiers on Bosnia

40 Real Life Rock

Greil Marcus' Top Ten

## FEATURES

62

### Head Trips: Bruce Nauman

Cast against Type **Lane Relyea**

Cousin Brucie **Peter Plagens**

70

### Returned to Sender: Remembering Ray Johnson

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Mailman **David Bourdon**

Brother Ray **Robert Pincus-Witten**

Something about Nothing **Nam June Paik**

Golf War **Chuck Close**

Between the Buttons **Jill Johnston**

R.S.V.P. **James Rosenquist**

76

### Critical Reflections

**Adam Gopnik**

with an introduction by **Chuck Close**

78

### Shock of the Newfoundland: Bruce Weber's Canine Camera

**Bruce Hainley**

**David Rimanelli**

82

### Theory on TV: Making a Killing

**Laurence A. Rickels** talks with **Michel Serres**

84

### Openings: Vincent Fecteau

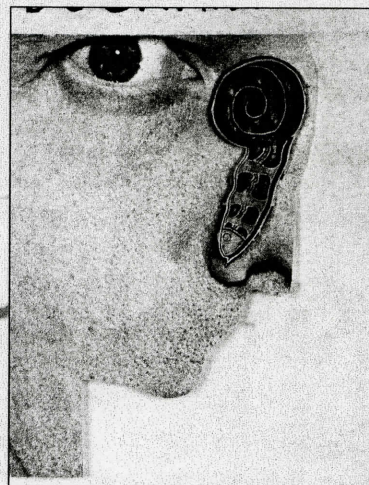
**Dennis Cooper**

## REVIEWS

86 **Focus: Gary Hill**

**Susan Kandel**

88 **From New York, Cambridge, Chicago, Oakland, Los Angeles, Montreal, Barcelona, Rome, Genoa/Brescia/Prato, Paris, Lausanne, Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Antwerp, and London**



**Ray Johnson, Duchamp, 1977**, china-ink drawing in layers, collaged on a black and white photograph of Johnson's face cut to shape the profile of Marcel Duchamp, 17 x 13½".

# RETURNED

RANDY JOHNSON  
84 WEST 77  
LOCUST VALLEY  
NEW YORK 11546

LONG ISLAND, N.Y. 115  
PM  
13 MAR  
1991



MR.  
D. BOURDON 3-C  
315 W. 23 ST.  
NYC, NY 10011



# TO SEND REMEMBERING RAY JOHNSON

JAN 13 1991

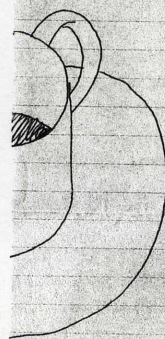
DEAR PINK

ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY 13, 1995, RAY JOHNSON JUMPED FROM A HIGHWAY BRIDGE OVER SAG HARBOR COVE, LONG ISLAND, AND WAS SEEN BACKSTROKING AWAY FROM LAND. HIS BODY WAS FOUND THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, HAVING WASHED ASHORE NEARBY. WE ASKED SIX AMONG THE HUNDREDS OF CORRESPONDENTS WHO RECEIVED JOHNSON'S MAILINGS TO SHARE THEIR MEMORIES OF THE ARTIST AND HIS NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL. EACH ARTICLE ACCOMPANIED BY A MAILING THE WRITER RECEIVED FROM JOHNSON.

PLEASE SEND  
YOUR POL

OF COFFEE

TO ANDY



## Portrait of the Artist as a Young Mailman

### DAVID BOURDON

I first met Ray Johnson when we coincidentally visited Andy Warhol at the same time, perhaps in late 1962. We sat on a sofa in Andy's townhouse, politely commented on the new silk-screened canvases that he unrolled on the floor for our inspection, and stealthily eyed one another. I couldn't help but notice that Ray had a mischievous glint in his eyes and a sly smile that would suddenly slide into a toothy and rather menacing grin. This somehow sparked my infatuation with him, which bloomed over the next several years.

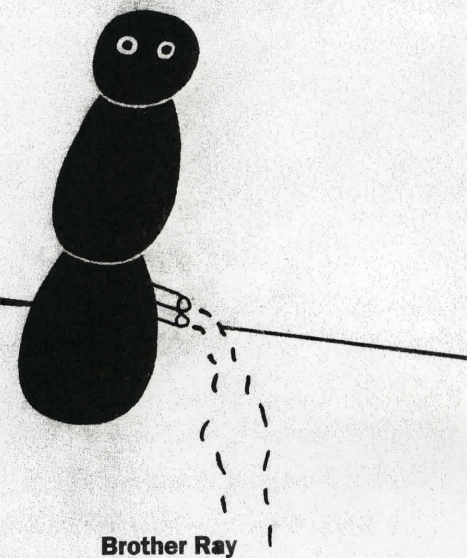
Ray's public persona, fabricated like Andy's with tremendous cunning, required an absence of any useful information. When he designed a cover for the November 1947 issue of *Interiors*, the contributors' page carried this editorial note: "Ray Johnson, the most modest of our cover artists, is, we guess, well under twenty. He refuses to give us any information about himself except that he is a student at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, mostly with Josef Albers." (Actually he had just turned 20.) Still, Ray and I started bumming around together, prowling mostly by night through a succession of murkily illuminated scenes that ranged from seedy waterfront taverns and Village coffee houses to Judson Church dance concerts and Lower East Side walk-up apartments containing clusters of amphetamine-

*continued on page 106*

Correspondence School, he became a household name in the art world, a celebrity, as it were, franked in inverse proportion to market, that real-life stress about which Ray (not to say artists in general) felt acute ambivalence.

The taproot nourishing Ray's idiosyncratic and mercurial work is Joseph Cornell more than it is the oft-argued fraternity with Andy Warhol & Co. His collages are beautiful and authoritative in a way free of period theoretical buttressing. More's the pity that this simple formula

*continued on page 111*



ANDY WARHOL  
URINATING 12.16.64

© Ray Johnson ROBERT PINCUS-WITTEN

Ray Johnson never achieved the popular success of many of his friends, certainly unjustly. But his career is documented in the cold comfort of several publications on his hermetic and obsessive collages, and on his role in the larger developments of Pop art. Also, through the broad network of the mailings of his New York

Opposite page, clockwise from top:  
Ray Johnson, envelope containing correspondence sent to David Bourdon, 15 May 1991, 4 1/8 x 9 1/2".  
Ray Johnson, correspondence sent to Robert Pincus-Witten, 1970, drawing, two parts, each 12 3/8 x 4".  
Ray Johnson, correspondence sent to Robert Pincus-Witten, 1970, 11 x 8 1/2".  
This page: Ray Johnson, correspondence sent to David Bourdon, 15 May 1991, drawing, 8 3/8 x 10 7/8".

Something about Nothing

NAM JUNE PAIK

Ray Johnson started mail art some 35 years ago. Now everyone's doing E-mail art.

Did Ray go away because he couldn't stand the proliferation—the vulgarization—of his cherished medium? His last message to me was on my phone machine a couple of years ago: "It's Pablo speaking." And he hung up.

Ray Johnson learned something ~~about~~ "nothing" from John Cage back in the Black Mountain College days in the early '50s. The problem was that he learned it too well. "When you negate everything, why not negate careerism too?" Twice in the early '60s Ray turned down one-man-show offers from a very prominent gallery. He extended nothingness to its logical conclusion.

I asked Cage in 1960 at Peggy Guggenheim's palazzo in Venice: "Why do you compose?"

Cage: "Because I promised Schoenberg I would."

Paik: "Why do you *still* compose?"

Cage: "It is important to do meaningless things."

Paik: "Treue um Treue, à la SS/Hitler?" (Faithfulness for the sake of faithfulness, like Hitler's SS?)

Cage: "No, that's a self-glorification. My case is self-abandonment." Then he got serious: "When I was around 20, I was interested in both architecture and music. Architecture, however, is about making something permanent, and about possession, whereas music is about giving up something, giving up myself."



Goethe House New York  
German Cultural Center  
1014 Fifth Ave., N.Y. N.Y. 10028

FEB. 26  
1983



"...a codicil in my will provides for the disposition of my body in this way. "Sewn up in a clean white sack and dropped over board, twelve hours north of Havana, that my bones may rest not too far from these of Hart Crane...".

-page 117,  
"Mémoria" by  
Tennessee Williams

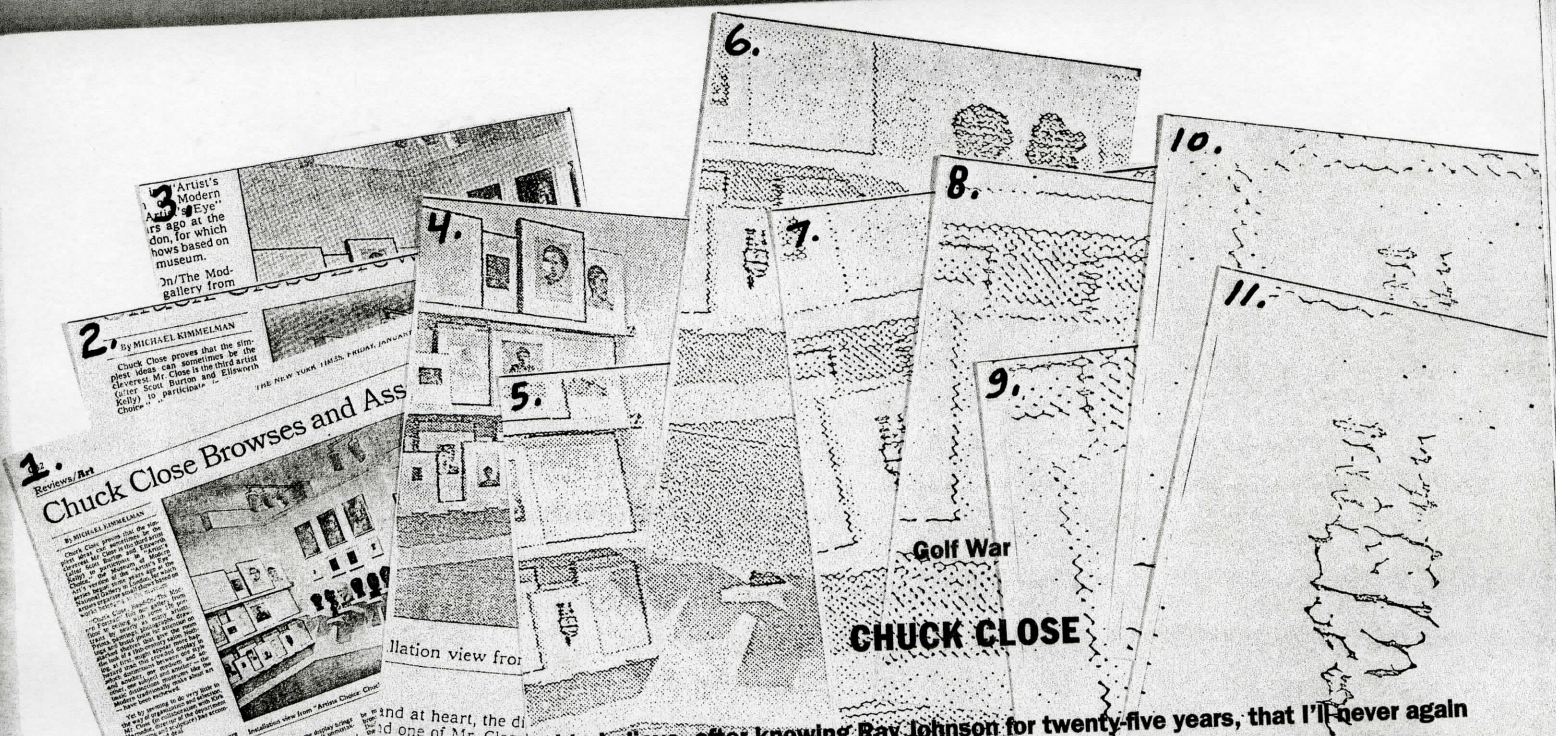
Mr. Ray Johnson  
44 West 7th St.  
Locust Valley  
New York 11560

please  
send to  
BILL  
WILSON  
↑

Y-109 2229

This page: Ray Johnson, correspondence sent to Nam June Paik, 26 February 1983, fax, 8 1/2 x 11". Opposite page, top: Ray Johnson, correspondence sent to Chuck Close, 16 July 1990, 11 photocopied pages, each 11 x 8 1/2". Bottom: Ray Johnson, correspondence sent to Chuck Close, 16 July 1990, 11 x 8 1/2".

continued on page 111



**1. Chuck Close Browses and Ass**

By MICHAEL KIMMELMAN  
Chuck Close, whose work has been the subject of a major retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, is back at the gallery. Mr. Close is the third artist (after Scott Burton and Ellsworth Kelly) to participate in the exhibition.

**The Reach and Grasp of Jacques-Louis David**

By MICHAEL KIMMELMAN  
Jacques-Louis David, the French neoclassical painter, was one of the most important artists of the 18th century.

It's hard to believe, after knowing Ray Johnson for twenty-five years, that I'll never again receive something in the mail to add to and send on to someone else, or hear his voice on the phone asking me some trivia question about a marginal movie star.

In 1991, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, I curated a show of portraits called "Artists Choice: Chuck Close." In one of my regular telephone conversations with Ray I said I was sorry MOMA didn't own one of his portraits because I would love to put one in the exhibition. We talked about getting a collector who owned one of his pieces to give it to the Modern, or about him donating a piece himself, but he very much disliked being judged by curators (or for that matter by anyone else) and didn't welcome the possibility of being rejected. So, in typical Ray Johnson fashion, he found a circuitous, slightly subversive route into MOMA's collections: he began to include Clive Phillpot, then the director of the Modern's library, in his circle of correspondents, his letters taking the form of hundreds and perhaps thousands of Xeroxes and drawings. Ray knew that Phillpot wouldn't throw away anything he had sent in, and also that anything in the files of

continued on page 111

July 16, 1990  
Thank,

I am Love:

1. BILL DE KOONING.
2. BILL DE KOONING DE KOONING.
3. COPY COPY LEFT RIGHT RAY JOHNSON RAY JOHNSON.

Copies of these have been sent to Clive Phillpot, Library Museum of Modern Art.

If you want to use the single large head or the smaller ones, to my understanding of Mr. Phillpot, the xerox prints sent to him become part of the Museum Collection.

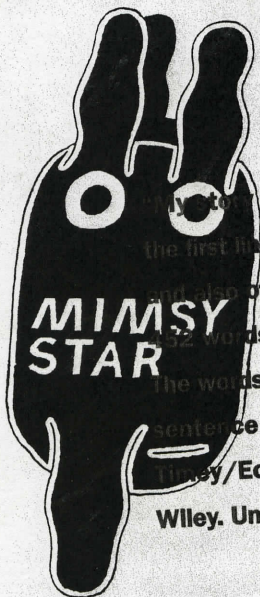
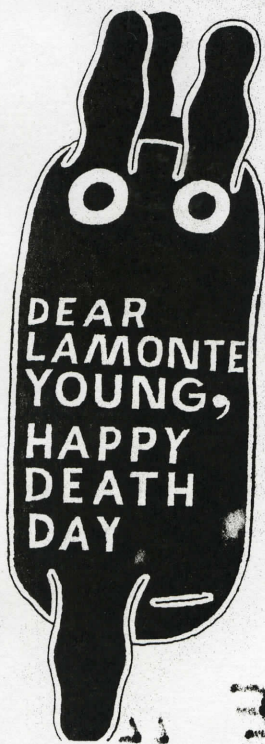
Best,



# ART IN AM FINE

Between the Buttons

JILL JOHNSTON



...begins with some unfamiliar handwriting on an envelope." That was the first line of a piece I wrote called "Casting for '69," published January 9, 1969, and one of Ray Johnson's appropriations of the piece—the first paragraph, or first sentence—was for a collage he made titled *I'd Love to Turn You On*, dated 1969. The words are handprinted inside the form of a lightbulb. A collage under the last sentence of the text includes a put-down of Harold Rosenberg—"Looks Old (Misery/Eccentric and/Chinese-Modern/To me today)"—attributed to William T. Wiley. Underneath that, Ray wrote a kind of p.s. to his appropriation of my text:

"Dear Sir: We love your dangerous dance critic sister Jill Johnston—New York Correspondence School." The last I heard from Ray personally—and I was never a correspondent in his Correspondence School (for the reason that Ray scared me)—was sometime after November 22, 1994, the date of the message, which he sent circuitously, as he famously did, through Geoff Hendricks. He wrote the message on an 8½-by-11-inch sheet of paper with a Xeroxed photo of himself from the back, his head turned in profile, and a drawing of ten stacked

continued on page 113

11.22.94

RAY JOHNSON  
44 WEST 7 STREET  
LOCUST VALLEY  
NEW YORK 11560

Words in it—  
to a charming  
California  
art dealer  
OR  
some-  
thing.

Jill - Ronald Feldman sold  
the *I'd Love to Turn You*  
ON work which has my  
hand-lettering of your



PHOTO BY  
EDWARD  
WESTON

RAY JOHNSON'S  
NEW BOOK  
"TEN BUTTONS"  
SEND FOR YOUR  
FREE COPY

A RAY JOHNSON NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE SCH  
PALOMA AND CLAUDE PICASSO FAN CLUB MEETING  
NOVEMBER 1, 1991 6-8 PM  
GOLDIE PALEY GALLERY MOORE COLLEGE OF ART  
PHILADELPHIA 19103

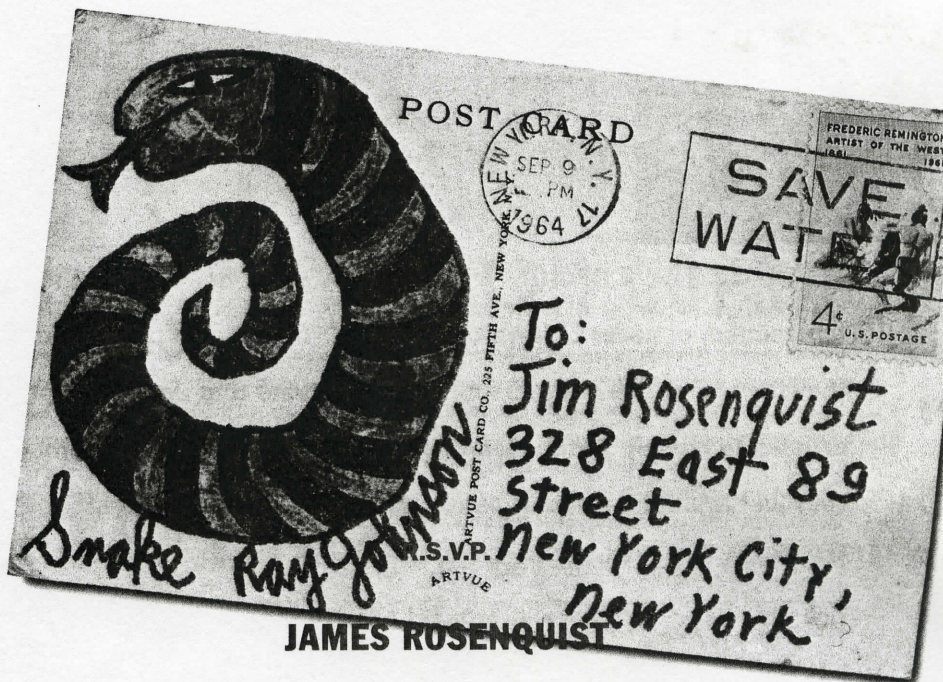
please send to Jill  
Johnston

Ray Johnson,  
correspondence sent to  
Geoff Hendricks to be  
sent to Jill Johnston  
(verso and recto), 22  
November 1994, photo-  
copy, 11 x 8½".





Left: Ray Johnson, correspondence sent to James Rosenquist, 9 September 1964, collage, 7 x 3½". Right: Ray Johnson, correspondence sent to James Rosenquist, 9 September 1964, drawing on postcard, 3½ x 5½".



I met Ray Johnson in September 1956, when he invited Peggy Smith and me to a party to view a huge fireworks exhibition on the Hudson River put on by Macy's and the Japanese. I met two young, shy fellows there named Jasper Johns and Bob Rauschenberg. When I got a loft in downtown Manhattan on Coenties Slip, in 1959, it was Ray who introduced me to Agnes Martin and Lenore Tawney, who lived nearby. A short time later he called me around midnight and said "Do you want to go to Helen Keller's and get blind?" So I got out of bed to see what this was, and it turned out to be a waterfront bar called Keller's, filled a third with sailors, a third with tourists, and a third with gay people.

I would see Ray over the years, but not often. I remember him sitting in my four-room \$60-a-month apartment in 1963, for some reason watching John Kennedy's funeral with my wife, mother, and father. Once I visited his apartment on Suffolk Street; there was a stack of books that went up to the ceiling and a clothesline going from one wall to another. When I asked Ray why, he said that the books stacked to the ceiling supported the roof and the clothesline divided the space. Once when Ray was sick I visited him in the welfare ward in Bellevue, where they also treated criminals. *continued on page 113*

**RIMANELLI / SALLE** *continued from page 13*  
foreground against a flat colorful backdrop. (Salle favors saturated reds and blues—colors that scream “cinematic.”) Employed with discretion, this could have remained an arresting visual effect, but overuse quickly renders it a compositional cliché. Its meaning is straightforward, and cinematically self-defeating: Salle’s characters really are as shallow as cardboard cutouts. In one of the film’s few genuinely witty touches, Mirkheim meets Kim, his would-be benefactor, in a sleek Manhattan office decorated with an Alex Katz painting of ruthlessly flattened dancers against a flat bubble-gum-pink background.

The Katz reference is one of *Search and Destroy*’s few, rather haphazard nods to the real-life art world—the place where Salle gained the notoriety that prompts us to look at his filmmaking in the first place. In his use of color and superimposition, Salle the director occasionally seems to be reminding us, in a nudge-nudge, wink-wink kind of way, of Salle the painter. But this effort to signal some sort of continuity between the artist’s two careers seems half-hearted, as if Salle didn’t quite believe it himself. Despite a thick cake-frosting of artiness, *Search and Destroy* is an artless act of self-indulgence.

Ultimately, Salle’s contribution to the *Lust for Life* genre is best understood in the context of changes in the contemporary art world—a last desperate act of the ’80s art follies. Given the shrinking of the art economy and the paucity of art glamour today, Mirkheim’s dogged struggle to transfer himself from a small esthetic pond into a more charismatic one mirrors the supposed exodus of big-name artists to Hollywood. It is no surprise that the sometimes egomaniacal figures of the art world’s ’80s boom years would seek in the film industry a new source of narcissistic gratification. I just wonder how many people are going to pay eight bucks to see *Search and Destroy*. □

**SEDOFSKY / CLAIR** *continued from page 26*

**JC:** I’m going to show Helmut Newton’s *Sie Kommen*—a diptych of five magnificent woman, eugenic prototypes, nude in one photo, dressed as executives in the other—next to photographs by Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault, the ’30s French psychiatrist who was fascinated by the draped fabric worn by Muslim women.

**LS:** *And the ethnic conflicts?*

**JC:** I’ve sent a colleague to the former Yugoslavia to look for material illustrating the present conflict’s pressure on the status of the image. What does it mean for a Montenegrin, Serbian, or Croatian artist to make images now?

**LS:** *What’s the connection between this paroxysm of ethnic or religious difference and the genome, or the mapping of the brain?*

**JC:** The idea of monstrosity, of complete difference. I hesitated before deciding to show Nancy Burson’s computer-manipulated photographs of faces side by side with her photographs of children with genetic problems that make their faces monstrous. It’s pure horror, but at the same time it’s pure otherness.

**LS:** *There seems to be a clear teratological motif, which spills over into that most eminent other, death.*

**JC:** It’s going to be a very joyous Biennale. Its chronology, 1895–1995, will be interrupted by thematic groupings, exploding the idea of time. You’ll see Andres Serrano’s “Morgue” photographs, for example, alongside other morgue shots of cadavers dating to 1895, 1920, 1930. We’ll see the same obsession embodied in nearly identical forms at a hundred years’ distance, ruining the idea of the Modern.

**LS:** *In New York there’s been a strong rejection of Serrano’s “Morgue” series.*

**JC:** Of course, it’s totally taboo. It’s the heart of the exhibition.

**LS:** *What do you mean when you describe the choice of representing the body, above all the face, as metaphysical?*

**JC:** Kafka says you don’t make love to phantoms. Equally, you don’t give yourself up to voluptuousness with abstract works.

**LS:** *Both points are debatable. What do you mean by metaphysical?*

**JC:** Once you’ve posed the problem of the face, that is, the face-to-face, you’ve gone back into the metaphysical. Reread Emmanuel Levinas. □

Lauren Sedofsky is a writer who lives in Paris. She is currently at work on a book about contemporary architecture and is also collaborating on a screenplay with the French film-director Leos Carax.

**STONE / BORNSTEIN** *continued from page 31*

Bornstein presents a possible plan for producing the circumstances in which such a class might emerge. The first step is perhaps the most frightening: coming out not to the public, but privately to one’s own kind, which for transsexuals is infinitely more threatening. The next is to overcome the pervasive imperative to public silence: “Transsexuals presenting themselves for therapy in this culture are channeled through a system which labels them as having a disease for which the therapy is to lie, hide, or otherwise remain silent.” To hide, parenthetically, from each other—since gender-identity clinics routinely discourage transsexuals from meeting each other and encourage them to disappear into the “normal” population as quickly as possible. To pave the way for the breaking of public silence, it is necessary to create space for a specifically transgendered positionality within a mesh of discourses that afford little if any room. Transsexual identity is, almost by definition, that which is spoken by others; Bornstein points out what all transsexuals know, that “virtually all the books about gender and transsexuality to date have been written by non-transsexuals who, no matter how well-intentioned, are each trying to figure out how to make us fit into their world view.”

For this critic, the greatest hope for transforming the battleground of gender, as Bornstein knows and shows, is conscious, situated performance. The theater within which this performance is deployed is the body, and while there may be local observers, the intended audience is culture itself. Bornstein is acutely aware of this, and she has stakes in how that knowledge is deployed. She sees the purpose of the transgendered performance as disruption of the smooth and tightly knit surface of identity discourse, thereby creating an opening for transformation. She does not hesitate to engage with performance in all its forms, including the volatile problem of the complex interplay between gender and power. In her work one of the most useful counterpoises to traditional analyses of power is S/M; and she locates the discourses of transgender and S/M neatly within a larger performative framework, observing that “transgender is simply identity more consciously performed on the infrequently used playing field of gender, [while] S/M is simply a relationship more consciously performed within the forbidden arena of power.” In fine, she maps performance onto an episteme not unlike that of quantum mechanics: power and gender, identity and relationship, are aspects of the same inexpugible pleroma, alternately real and virtual responses to social attractors, and manifesting only in specific representational frames in engagement with specific observers. Those who have followed the thread of S/M discourse as it has unraveled through the years may find this recuperation within a larger discussion of power relationships a breath of fresh air after such ’70s classics as the em-

barrassing *Against Sodomachism*.

Pulling those threads in two hundred pages is a tall order, but Bornstein makes admirable headway. With its gentle humor, invocation of the performative, and gnarly confrontation of difficult and dangerous issues in a mainstream venue, *Gender Outlaw* is the first of its kind; but, as the burgeoning numbers of transgendered who are in the process of finding their own clear and strong voices know with increasing assurance, certainly not the last. □

**RELYEA / NAUMAN** *continued from page 69*

to sit comfortably within himself, nor is he able to achieve an objective distance. This is how he redefines the self and the world: to him, they look like a dog chasing after its own tail.

What we’re left with, then, is the same spiral Nauman drew in neon in 1967. Only the tone has changed, grown more troubling: now the true artist, though he might want to help the world, can’t seem to get out of his own way. Self-entanglement is one of Nauman’s most cherished themes, but that doesn’t automatically make his work narcissistic. If there is a mythological figure to best compare Nauman to, it’s not Narcissus but Oedipus: here the artist is cast as chief investigator, a master at solving riddles—he pledges to reveal the truth to those withheld from it, yet his solution to the crime comes with the discovery that he himself is its perpetrator. Likewise, the only truth Nauman arrives at is that the clues he turns up are ones he’s planted, that the unknown can only be revealed once the desire for knowledge creates it. Nauman is equal parts problem-solver and troublemaker, which makes his offer to serve as our guiding light all the more a mixed blessing, as he himself admits in a poster from 1973. It’s a revised message to a curious world: “Pay Attention Motherfuckers.” □

Lane Relyea lives in Los Angeles. He contributes frequently to *Artforum*.

1. Robert Pincus-Witten, “Bruce Nauman,” *Artforum* X no. 6, Feb. 1972, p. 31.

**BOURDON / JOHNSON** *continued from page 71*

fueled poets. One afternoon we made a pilgrimage to Bellevue, visiting three different loonies, each in a different bin. Going out with Ray was like participating in a performance event. His visits were either preplanned and shrewdly calculated or entirely spontaneous, resulting from a fortuitous conjunction of time and neighborhood. He relished chance in all its dimensions.

Ray didn’t have gallery shows during the early ’60s, so he staged private presentations in people’s homes or offices. He would show up at the appointed time with 100 collages, all the same size (7½ by 11 inches), wrapped in bundles of 25. He’d lay them out on tables, desks, beds, whatever, and occasionally he sold some.

Often, after spending all evening with Ray, I’d return home and find one or more letters from him in my mailbox. The contents often meshed, intriguingly, with the evening’s preceding events. Ray’s mail art in those days (ca. 1964) consisted mainly of clippings from newspapers and magazines, often Scotch-taped to Schwitters-esque ephemera and sometimes bearing instructions to forward certain items to someone else. The contents of the letters were often marvels of analogical reasoning, dwelling on formal parallels and visual puns. One of his cheekiest mailings to me consisted solely of the cardboard cylinder from a roll of toilet paper, flattened, addressed, stamped—and delivered.

When Andy was shot in 1968, I spent most of the night at the hospital awaiting news, then telephoned Ray as soon as I returned home. Although I provided reasonably up-to-the-minute information, my report had the unfortunate effect of prompting Ray to go out for a newspaper. As he hurried toward an all-night news- *continued on page 111*

**BOURDON / JOHNSON** *continued from page 106*

stand in his dismal Lower East Side neighborhood, he was set upon by a small band of delinquents, one of whom attempted to knife him in the back. He escaped and spent the rest of the night being driven around in a police squad-car looking for suspects. Ray was so spooked by the experience that within a few weeks he relocated himself and the New York Correspondence School to suburban Long Island, where he remained for his final 26 years.

Ray still visited people, of course, and his extensive network of telephone pals kept him au courant. He read books, attended movies (he was a big Jim Carrey fan), and watched TV (he was mesmerized by the PBS dramatization of Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City*, with its arch allusions to Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*). But undoubtedly there were moments when he felt underappreciated. In 1980, around the time of his 53rd birthday, he took an ad in the art section of the *New York Times* to announce: "Ray Johnson/nothing/no gallery."

In recent years Ray occasionally left a falsetto message on my answering machine: "Hi, David. This is Andy. I'm up here in heaven and it's so-o-o-o beautiful." I believed he was joking but now I'm having second thoughts. After all, Ray trained his friends to examine ambiguities, search for double meanings, scrutinize coincidences, and be on the lookout for subterfuges. He surely knew that his abrupt, unexpected departure from this world would leave us sifting clues for a long time. □

David Bourdon is a writer who lives in New York. He is the author of *Warhol* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), and his next book, *Designing the Earth*, will be published this fall, also by Abrams.

**PINCUS-WITTEN / JOHNSON** *continued from page 71*

wasn't applied to his work when it was being shown regularly during the '60s and '70s.

Early memory points to the Willard Gallery as a meeting place of choice, for in addition to Morris Graves (then perhaps Willard's best-known artist), Richard Lippold and Ray also showed there. Even in the light of today's confounding of confession and history, the amalgam of Lippold and Johnson—names seemingly pulled from a hat—seems to beggar sense (ethereal construction versus impudent collage). In fact it perfectly characterizes the startling convergence of young artists then losing faith in the reigning AbEx patriarchy. During those far-off affordable postwar days, the two toiled about the Lower East Side together—in a hearse, no less, belonging, I could swear, to Graves.

Despite manifest temperamental dissimilarities, the Lippold/Johnson/Robert Rauschenberg intersection was intensified through total-immersion baptism in the Black Mountain College pool. Rauschenberg was in North Carolina in 1948–49, the year of Lippold's artist-in-residency and the tail end of a three-year stint there for Johnson. As is by now common knowledge, Cy Twombly, on Rauschenberg's advice, also went to Black Mountain shortly thereafter, in 1951, the year I first met Ray. It has always been tempting to suppose that Twombly's archaizing and fetishlike sculpture gets its arcane reticence from the forget-me-nots exchanged between the Black Mountain painters and dancers to commemorate their propinquitous friendships. This recondit property is also sensible in Rauschenberg's collage box-and-pebble work. But it is Ray's work above all that retains its aura of talismanic gift, from the early labor-intensive collages to the Kurt Schwitters-like enclosures of his later tireless mailings. So, clues deposited in the memory bank of an insecure teenager who came of age in that earlier age of anxiety—living vicariously, nose out of joint for being pressed

against the glass—now yield interest.

I met Ray when I was going to the High School of Music and Art and beginning to test the waters of the avant-garde. He was monkishly handsome, his ostrich fuzz finally tamed by full tonsure. Ray spoke in a fluty manner, with a high-pitched breathlessness he never lost. We used to hang out in the Village, eat burgers in the old Prexy's on Eighth Street. He remained the last person to call me by my boyhood nickname.

Until his perplexing, dismaying death, Ray's gifts came wrapped in a thin skin. Once, noting the names of artists who had receded from public view in the tidal drag of Pop art, I called Ray's collages "evaporations," a joshing (or so I thought) the effect of which no apology ever assuaged. Ray's next exhibition announced "Evaporations by Ray Johnson." Vigilant to offense, Ray was able to recast a passing slight, of a sort inherent to all artist/critic relationships, into a badge of honor. □

Robert Pincus-Witten, professor emeritus in art history of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, is an educator, a writer, and the exhibition director of Gagosian Gallery, New York.

**PAIK / JOHNSON** *continued from page 72*

Perhaps I quoted Hegel: "Sound is a voyage from nothing to nothing."

For Ray, the best way to make art yet not to possess it, or to grow rich and famous through it, was to give it away in the mail. William Wilson: "Ray Johnson plays the U.S. mail like a harp." So do millions of Internet lovers today, globally. And Ray sent out his time-consuming handmade objects and drawings not only to VIPs but also to losers, gadflies, eccentrics, scum.

What an entourage he had. When I arrived in the U.S. for the first time, in 1964, Ray came to visit me with a lady who was reputed to be a nurse at a clandestine abortion clinic, this at a time when abortion was heavily punishable (and when it was sometimes performed without anesthesia, and with rock 'n' roll playing to drown out the screams). He next appeared with a pretty belly-dancer who had a Ph.D. in mathematics from Yale and worked by day for IBM. After that, one of Ray's friends listed his telephone number under my name in the Manhattan phone book, and changed the nameplate outside his apartment to "Nam June Paik." Someone saw photos of me all over his apartment. He wanted to be my double. I got a little scared.

Shyness, an oriental habit, was manifest in Ray's daily doings. He'd never look you in the eye; he'd look at you from the corners of his eyes. When you mail something you don't have to confront the recipient, a curator maybe. You can't be turned down the way you can be on the telephone. Mail is strictly a one-way communication.

Shyness may have led Ray to the invention of mail art, but mail art led him to his critique of the art distribution system. He skipped over the gallery/museum complex. It was 1965 before Ray finally decided to have a one-man show in a legitimate gallery (Willard), allowing Grace Glueck in the *Times* to hail the debut of "the most famous unknown artist." By then, however, the art world's great game had settled for the moment and the territory was drawn. Ray's pioneering works from the early '50s (subtle, ambivalent, profound) escaped the wows of camp followers; the layman confused the teacher with the taught. I remembered a Korean proverb: "The scariest thing of all is the tiger's tail." Paraphrase: To see a tiger's tail sticking up from a bush is far more frightening than seeing the whole body, because you can't size the creature up. Soon Ray went back into self-exile, from Suffolk Street near Delancey—in a studio where the walls, painted shiny white, were bare, the artwork be-

ing neatly hidden away—to Locust Valley, Long Island.

Where better to pay tribute to Ray Johnson than on the Internet? Here's the on-line address for Fluxus: <http://www.panix.com/fluxus>. You'll need the viewer software "Netscape." E-mail can be sent to: [fluxus@panix.com](mailto:fluxus@panix.com). Don't minimize the impact: over 10,000 people from around the world checked in and browsed at our Fluxus on-line service between September 1994 and January 1995. □

Nam June Paik is an artist who lives in New York.

I am grateful to Alan Marlis for help with writing in English.

**CLOSE / JOHNSON** *continued from page 73*

the museum's library would be accepted without question as property of MOMA—and therefore as part of its collection. This made it possible for me to select one of his "bunny" portraits of Willem de Kooning for my exhibition. (Years earlier, it had been Ray who had introduced me to de Kooning for the first time.) In the middle of all those valuable paintings, drawings, and photographs, Ray's humble 8-by-10-inch Xerox was the only piece that had made its way into the Modern's collection by completely bypassing the curatorial process.

In the summer of 1972 or '73, my wife Leslie and I were house-sitting in Garrison, New York, a very conservative and WASPy area across the Hudson from West Point. Ray came to visit. Leslie made BLT's with tomatoes she had grown that summer; these sandwiches became the source of endless BLT pieces over the next twenty years. Ray was fascinated by the fact that the house abutted a golf course, and nudged me to go with him to play. We sneaked onto the course. What a wonderfully incongruous image Ray made with his shaved head, black leather jacket, and motorcycle boots, playing golf among all those Republicans in green pants. He scared the shit out of them. □

Chuck Close is an artist who lives in New York.

**JOHNSTON / JOHNSON** *continued from page 74*

buttons under which are printed the words: "Ray Johnson's/ New Book/Ten Buttons/Send for Your Free Copy." And under that more print: "A Ray Johnson New York Correspondence Sch/Paloma and Claude Picasso Fan Club Meeting/November 1, 1991 6–8 pm/Goldie Paley Gallery Moore College of Art/Philadelphia 19103." At the bottom, in red ink with large letters, Ray wrote to Geoff: "Please send to Jill Johnston." At the top, over his photo and stack of buttons, is his message: "Jill—Ronald Feldman sold the *I'd Love to Turn You On* work which has my hand-lettering of your words in it—to a charming California art dealer or something." Included in those 452 words written in 1969 was this line: "Then, at some age or other, for lack of any good reason to go on living, he committed suicide." And this one, at the end of the quote: "You've gotta have something to be dismembered by." In keeping with my failure to correspond with Ray, I had no plan to answer his message about the sale of his work, but by fate I happened to send Ray an (unrelated) communication sometime in December. Along with the sheet sent to Geoff meant for me, Ray had enclosed another sheet with various images and words requiring additions. One side had three bunny heads on it with a superimposed profile of Gertrude Stein, a balloon coming out of her mouth, and these words underneath: "The Butler Didn't Do It." Geoff gave me a copy of the sheet, thinking I might fill in the Stein balloon. Then Ingrid, my partner, urged me to do it, so I wrote in this line from chapter 4 of Stein's *Blood on the Dining Room Floor*, her only detective story: "It is *continued on page 113*

**JOHNSTON / JOHNSON** *continued from page 111*  
very strange how everybody occupies your time, very strange and very difficult and very hard and very much as it is," and sent it to Ray. When I heard Ray offered himself, I regretted it. He hadn't even asked for a quote. Way back in the '60s, after surviving a seemingly life-threatening episode, I remember David Bourdon telling me that Ray had sent messages around reading, "Save Jill." □

Jill Johnston is an author and critic who lives in New York. Her most recent book is *Secret Lives in Art: Essays from 1984-1994* (Chicago Review Press).

**ROSENQUIST / JOHNSON** *continued from page 75*  
On his I.D. card it said: "Ray Johnson. Religion: None." Ray crossed out "None" and drew a picture of a snake. Another time Ray and Larry Poons popped into my studio on Coenties Slip while the Dutch artist Karel Appel was visiting. I had some of Ray's work there and Karel saw it and asked, "What is it?" Ray said, "It's something like Cubism. I put things in the mailbox and they get spread out all over."

The last correspondence I have from Ray is dated September 30, 1994. It's an almost unidentifiable cover of the New York telephone book, looking as though it's been sandpapered or run over. There's a rip in the middle, right where, on the back, the phone company has printed the large numbers 911. At the top it says "Call for Emergency." I didn't know and couldn't realize Ray's feelings at the time. I miss Ray because when I find something unusual I have no one to send it to. □

James Rosenquist is an artist who lives in New York and Florida.

**HAINLEY / WEBER** *continued from page 80*  
what the public knows and will pay for or not, what will and will not be remembered, and has everything to do with basket.

Weber's most recent work, formally a study in whites, grays, and noirs, consists of photographs of dogs, mostly grand jet Newfoundlands, romping among handsome youths, young young men and older young men. Weber accomplishes such study by watching boys and not knowing exactly where this might be going: taut abs, cute butts, dazed eyes—fucking's embodiments. Dylan tries to communicate to Inde by tapping his chest with both hands and sticking out his tongue, as if boy had become dog, dog boy. This becoming-dog echoes the becoming nature of life and desire, the flux we are all dogged by but somehow adore. Displaying in swift succession these pups and boys and dogs and men, Weber comments on how strangely bred we all are—that we are all bred, and this breeding is what creates the fleshy surprise of beauty, whether or not we are all breeders—as casually as Eadweard Muybridge in his "Animal Locomotion" series of 1883-87 commented that man is a locomotive animal. By "breeding" I mean no more than the not-quite-random result of copulation. Though in the "Gentle Giants" show Weber is fixed on the pedigree, not all his work is so—*Broken Noses*, 1987, for example, and his photographs for Banana Republic. However pedigree some are in their attractions and others winsomely mongrel, the variousness of it all makes up (human) beauty. Humans do it again—weird, wow.

Accompanying these photographs of man and his best friends was a new short film, *Gentle Giants*, "for River Phoenix," in which Weber tells the tale of how he came to admire what he admires; how he was at the Stonewall the first time a man asked him to dance and when he did finally dance, next to him he imagined he saw "Jean Cocteau dancing with Peggy Lee, Willem de Kooning hugging

Julie London, Anna Magnani kissing Dirk Bogarde, Dirk Bogarde kissing Montgomery Clift, Montgomery Clift kissing Luchino Visconti, and Doris Day swinging around with her favorite dog," among others; how, for his 16th birthday, he wanted a car but received a camera. Weber speaks while scenes of ursine Newfoundlands, newsreel clips of young Elizabeth Taylor with her tiny poodle Bonko, film clips of Guy Madison (archetype for many of Weber's sleepy men), and swirling shots of Weber's childhood "Tough Ones" scrapbook—pics of young Clint Eastwood, Clint Walker, Errol and Sean Flynn, James Dean, Steve McQueen, Sterling Hayden lifting weights, Sal Mineo in the shower, young Warren Beatty, Raquel Welch, and more—combine in an exuberant, bittersweet rush.

Perhaps *Backyard Movie* and *Gentle Giants* will make up two parts of an eventual triptych about silence, the cuckoo vocalities of desire and embarrassment, and the complex thing abbreviated as "family." The triptych would acknowledge how certain film-watching and star-collecting displace the parental, since Elizabeth Taylor and Montgomery Clift, or James Dean and Sal Mineo—their movies and stills from their movies—are as responsible as any biology for the look of Weber's photographs. A movie-star aura surrounds the often-not-famous boys and men who populate Weber's worklike possibilities. These men exist as they are and as they never were, since a photographer can remember just what is not there. Weber invents his men, which means he employs whatever he requires (hair, makeup, styling, lighting, etc.) to have them radiate as they do in his head. In his work, as in his namesake Bruce of Los Angeles', the real nuzzles the fantasy of the body.

*Backyard Movie*'s silence—its narrative appears handwritten on the screen, accompanied by zizgane violins—has the payoff of the racy, oceanic splendor of Ric Arango; the movie is as much for the ginger of Arango's daunting ease as "for Mom and Dad," the movie's explicit dedications. In *Backyard Movie* and an autobiographical piece related to it, Weber writes about how his father, while making a salami sandwich, discussed the facts of life: "beating off" was "good because it cleared your head," and his two favorite sexual positions were women "straddled on top of him or 'doggie style.'" A response to his dad's lesson and to his mom's query, "Which way are you swinging?," Weber's movie answers with Ric Arango—jumping and frolicking with dogs—and ends with little boys among garden flowers marching off toward some new masculinity there is no word for.

*Gentle Giants* goes doggie to say even more. Margaret Willmott's big big dogs remind Weber "of tough guys with hearts of gold, like the gentle giants I used to paste into my scrapbook," but *Gentle Giants* has no "live" boys, only scrapbook stills of gorgeousness now old or dead, and canine familiars—stand-ins for Weber and those he loves. It is a work of mourning, for the luxuries of silence—even of the closet—and the necessary definitiveness of voice, for loved ones gone who caused the silence and its breaking. The tonalities of these facts of life are heard when Weber says "I made a lot of friends then, but sadly most of them aren't around anymore."

Weber's project encourages one to be obsessive and, still more important, wrong as possible, and in doing so is a reprieve from so much that is dogmatic. And what remains? This mongrel life we are already leading, the shaggy possibility that when someone asks, Make love to me, another will respond, I want to fuck you until you howl and tremble and grin like a beautiful dog. □

Bruce Hainley is a writer who does not live in New York. He contributes regularly to *Artforum*.

**RIMANELLI / WEBER** *continued from page 80*  
party at Cinecittà studio in Rome with Elizabeth Taylor and her kids Michael, Christopher, and Liza. She was partly dressed in her Cleopatra costume and capri pants . . . Gardner McKay was there in jeans, surrounded by starlets and drinking beer—looking just like he did when he appeared on the cover of *Life* magazine . . . Pasolini arrived alone, wearing a baggy suit and sunglasses. Everyone wanted to wear sunglasses at night, get into their sports cars and drive down the Via Veneto and flirt with—oh, I don't know who. . . ." In Weber's dizzy evocation of his own fantasized *dolce vita*, nostalgia for movie-star glamour is crosswired with a strategically unfixed sexuality. The perfume of desire is everywhere; flirtations lead anywhere.

The film *Gentle Giants*, the only source of "artistic interest" in this project, purveys a similar bisexual nostalgia kick. A paean not only to canine overachievers but to bygone stars, it's filled with archival clips from movies and news stories of the '50s and '60s, clips that obviously filter Weber's memories through the screen of his desires. Weber juxtaposes shots of his beloved Newfoundlands frolicking in a field with images of the sorts of '50s-era movie-star studs he obviously craves. It's weird, as if the dogs functioned as ciphers or analogues for more overt homoerotic content. The darling doggies have sad, introspective, inviting eyes—the eyes one might imagine for one's dream lover. Sometimes they pose with a certain dignified goofiness, their massive wet tongues hanging out like obscene leeches. You might want to hug them, but only the profoundly perverse would find this a turn-on. (We're straying here into the territory that Xaviera Hollander mapped out so memorably in the South Africa chapter of her book *The Happy Hooker*: Ms. Hollander, starved for manflesh, does it with the family German shepherd.)

Comparison with Robert Mapplethorpe, who was nothing if not candid about his desires, shows Weber as a hypocrite about homosexuality, even in his most explicitly homoerotic work. But to use big lovable dogs as stand-ins for big lovable studs is truly to go one step beyond. Speculation on the reason for that step is inevitable, as is, probably, its connection with the film's function as a kind of coming-out narrative. The heart of *Gentle Giant* is the story of Weber's first time at the Stonewall Bar. A friend asks Weber to meet him there; another guy asks Weber to dance; he panics and hides; he recovers his courage, finds the guy, and sweeps him onto the dance floor.

This simple narrative is clouded by Weber's fantasy of the Stonewall's habitués on that special night: "All the guys were dressed like the Supremes, and the girls were dressed like the O'Jays, and everybody was real friendly," he recalls, but that friendly everybody isn't just anybody: "I imagined Jean Cocteau dancing with Peggy Lee, Willem de Kooning hugging Julie London, Anna Magnani kissing Dirk Bogarde, Dirk Bogarde kissing Montgomery Clift, Montgomery Clift kissing Luchino Visconti, and Doris Day swinging around with her favorite dog." This peculiar art/pop/celuloid/camp party is all the stranger in its celebration of guiltless bisexuality. It's as if, in the course of confessing his love of dogs—sorry, his love of men—Weber found it necessary to underscore his love of women.

Perhaps Weber's inclusiveness would be endearing if that were truly what it was, but the problem is that all of the women he apotheosizes here are divas, gay icons, perhaps even gay hags, of an antique era. Early in the film, Weber warbles a love song to Elizabeth Taylor. After this monologue, we can only wonder, So where's Maria Callas? In *Gentle Giants* as in actual history, the Stonewall Bar marks a generational divide, but rather than *continued on page 116*