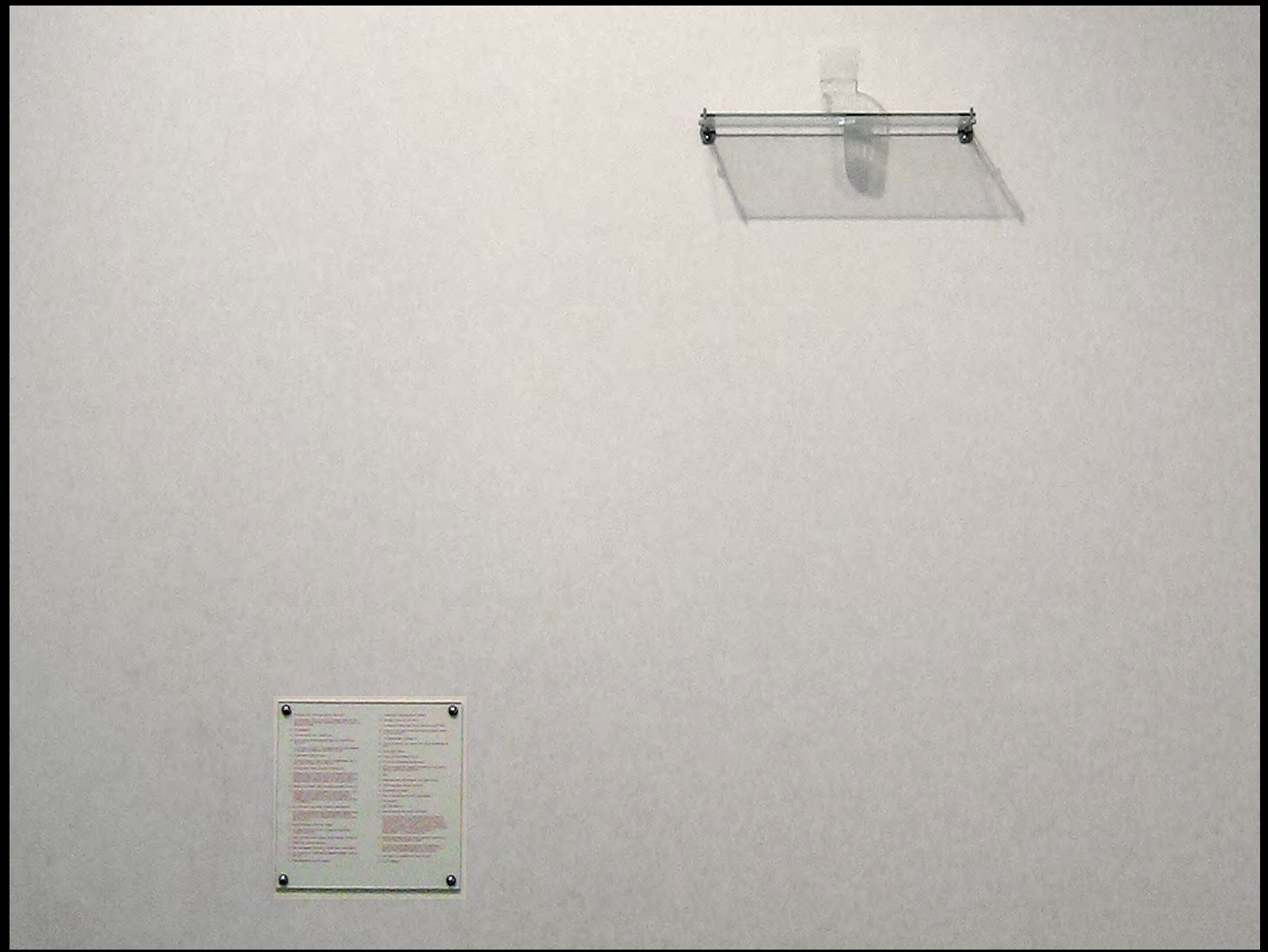




Q: To begin with, could you describe this work?
A: Yes, of course. What I've done is change a glass of water into a full-grown oak tree without altering the accidents of the glass of water.
Q: The accidents?
A: Yes. The colour, feel, weight, size …
Q: Do you mean that the glass of water is a symbol of an oak tree?
A: No. It's not a symbol. I've changed the physical substance of the glass of water into that of an oak tree.
Q: It looks like a glass of water …
A: Of course it does. I didn't change its appearance. But it's not a glass of water. It's an oak tree.
Q: Can you prove what you claim to have done?
A: Well, yes and no. I claim to have maintained the physical form of the glass of water and, as you can see, I have. However, as one normally looks for evidence of physical change in terms of altered form, no such proof exists.
Q: Haven't you simply called this glass of water an oak tree?
A: Absolutely not. It is not a glass of water any more. I have changed its actual substance. It would no longer be accurate to call it a glass of water. One could call it anything one wished but that would not alter the fact that it is an oak tree.
Q: Isn't this just a case of the emperor's new clothes?
A: No. With the emperor's new clothes people claimed to see something which wasn't there because they felt they should. I would be very surprised if anyone told me they saw an oak tree.
Q: Was it difficult to effect the change?
A: No effort at all. But it took me years of work before I realized I could do it.
Q: When precisely did the glass of water become an oak tree?
A: When I put water in the glass.
Q: Does this happen every time you fill a glass with water?
A: No, of course not. Only when I intend to change it into an oak tree.
Q: Then intention causes the change?
A: I would say it precipitates the change.
Q: You don't know how you do it?
A: It contradicts what I feel I know about cause and effect.
Q: It seems to me you're claiming to have worked a miracle. Isn't that the case?
A: I'm flattered that you think so.
Q: But aren't you the only person who can do something like this?
A: How could I know?
Q: Could you teach others to do it?
A: No. It's not something one can teach.
Q: Do you consider that changing the glass of water into an oak tree constitutes an artwork?
A: Yes.
Q: What precisely is the artwork? The glass of water?
A: There is no glass of water any more.
Q: The process of change?
A: There is no process involved in the change.
Q: The oak tree?
A: Yes. the oak tree.
Q: But the oak tree only exists in the mind.
A: No. The actual oak tree is physically present but in the form of the glass of water. As the glass of water was a particular glass of water, the oak tree is also particular. To conceive the category 'oak tree' or to picture a particular oak tree is not to understand and experience what appears to be a glass of water as an oak tree. Just as it is imperceivable, it is also inconceivable.
Q: Did the particular oak tree exist somewhere else before it took the form of the glass of water?
A: No. This particular oak tree did not exist previously. I should also point out that it does not and will not ever have any other form but that of a glass of water.
Q: How long will it continue to be an oak tree?
A: Until I change it.



<1 of 20> Street Life, 2008. Dockland Light Railway station, Woolwich. Screen printing on ceramic tiles





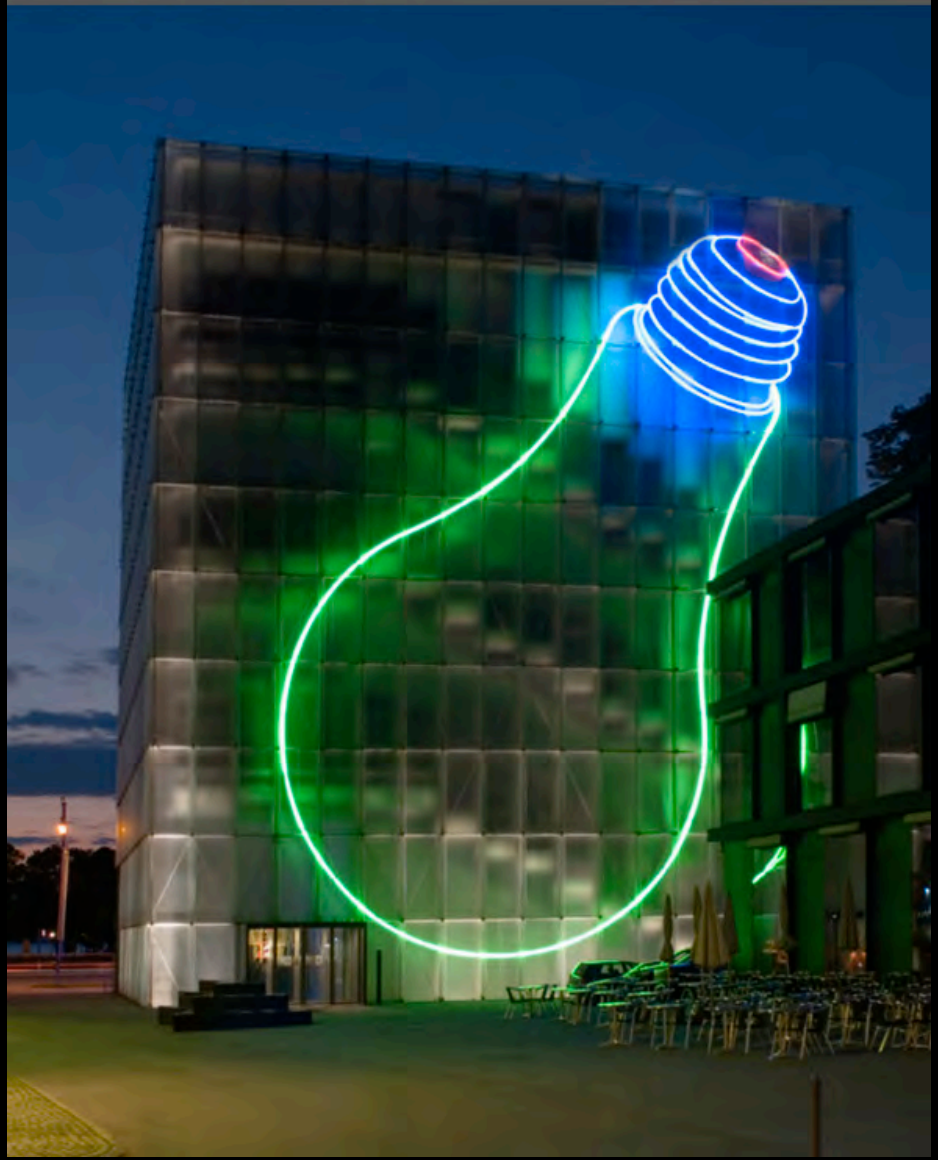
<11 of 24> The Fan, 2003. Regent's Place London. Ultralon, vinyl films and aluminium. 2000 x 2000cm



<22 of 24> The Johanniterkirche, 2006. Feldkirch, Austria



<20 of 24> The Signs of Life, 2006. Kunsthaus Bregenz



<3 of 20> Cascade, 2008. Nice, France

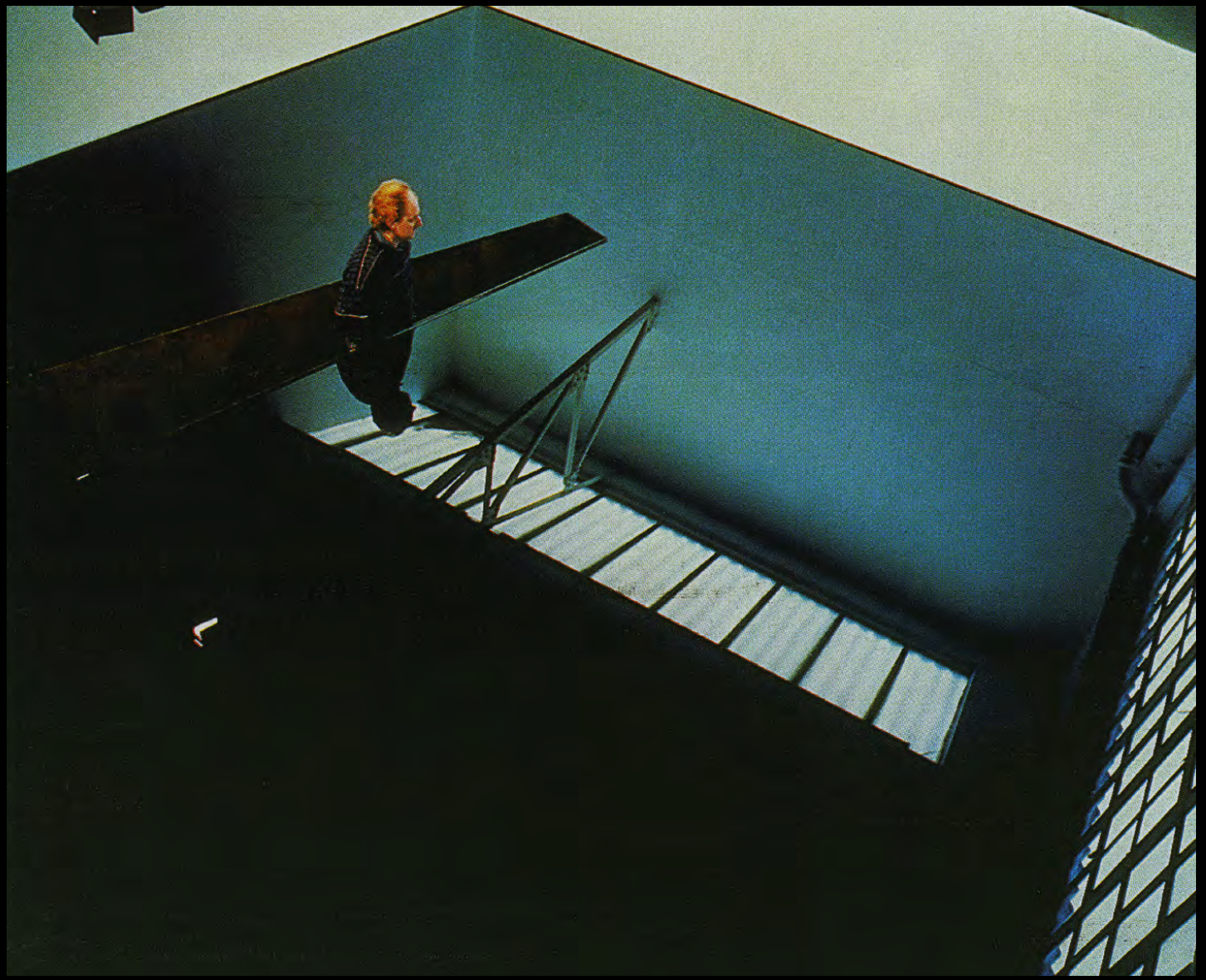




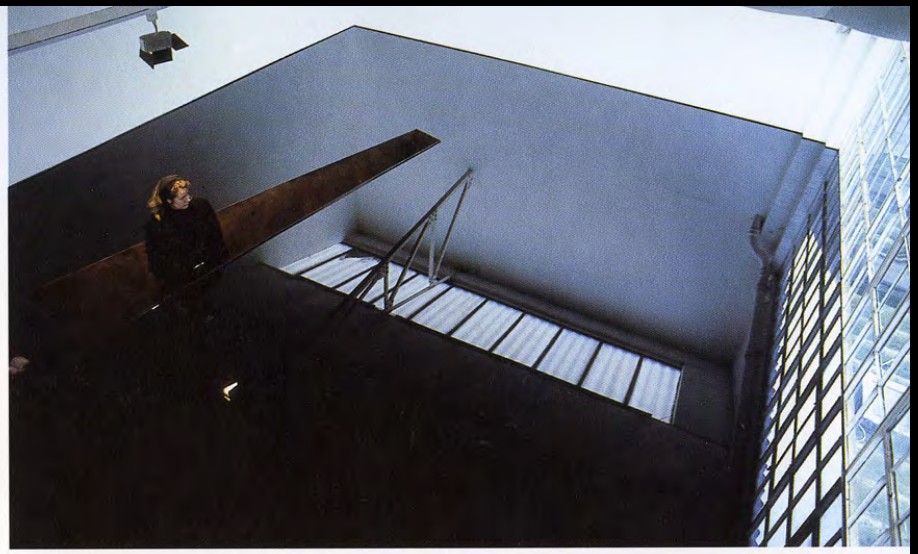
























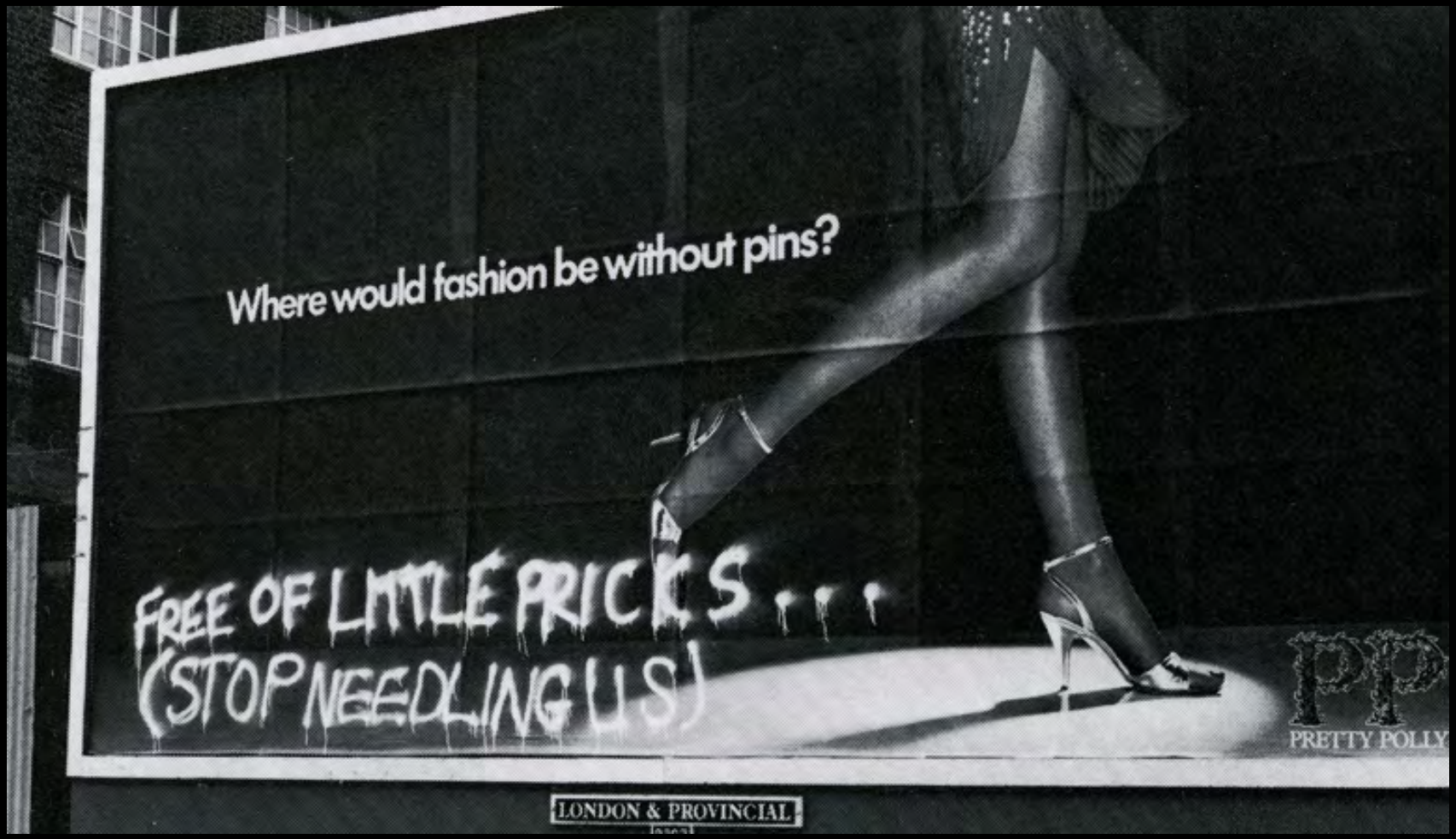


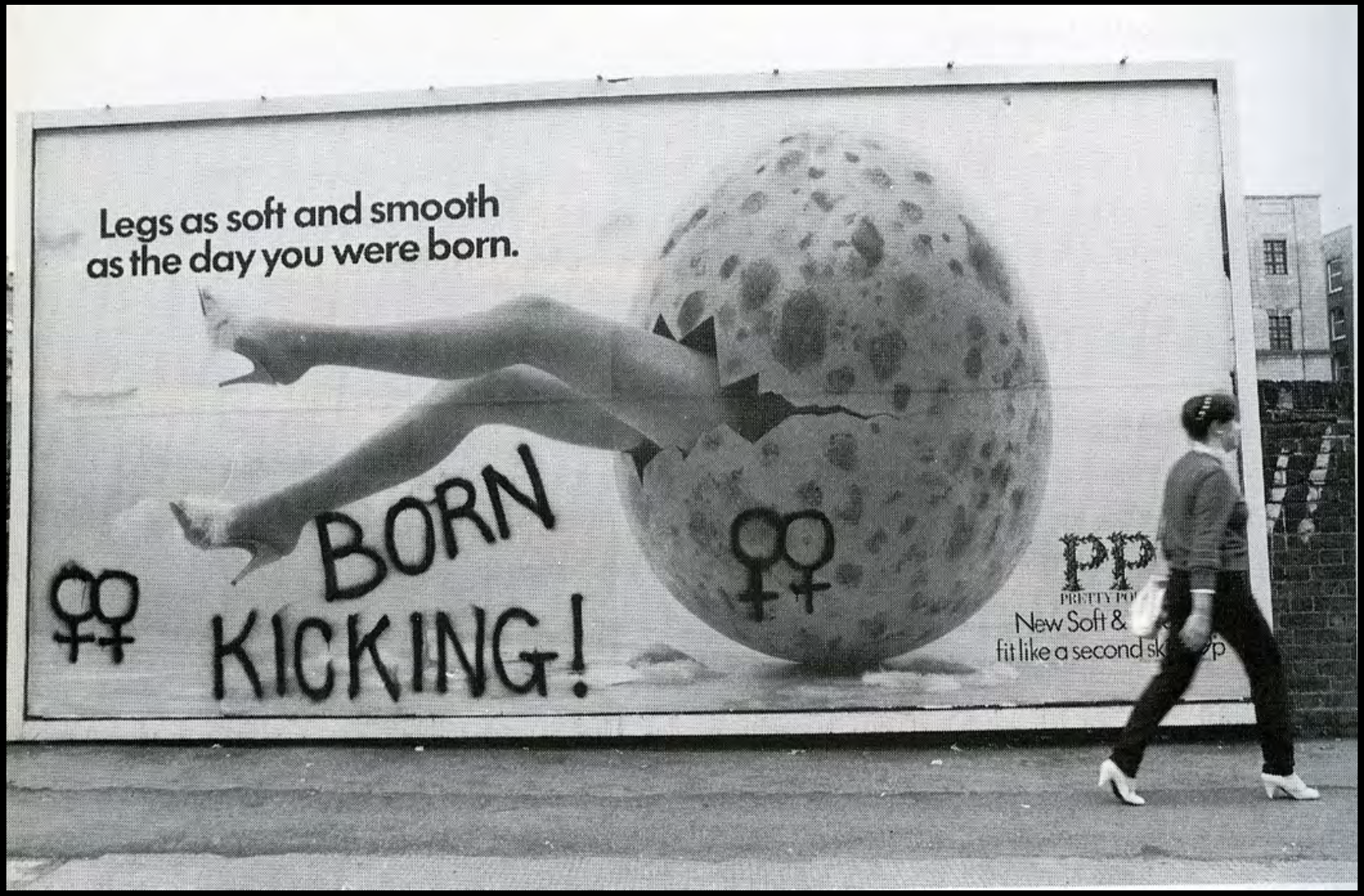

RESTAURAN
HAUS


MAIDEN
We don't need another hero
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ILLUMINATIONS/CHA
STATE OF THE ART:
INFORMATION PHON


We don't need another hero


If it were a lady, it would get its bottom pinched.
If this lady was a car she'd run you down.
JLA 116V
The beautiful 127 Palio.
FIAT


Where would fashion be without pins?
FREE OF LITTLE PRICKS...
(STOP NEEDLING US)
PP
PRETTY POLLY
LONDON & PROVINCIAL

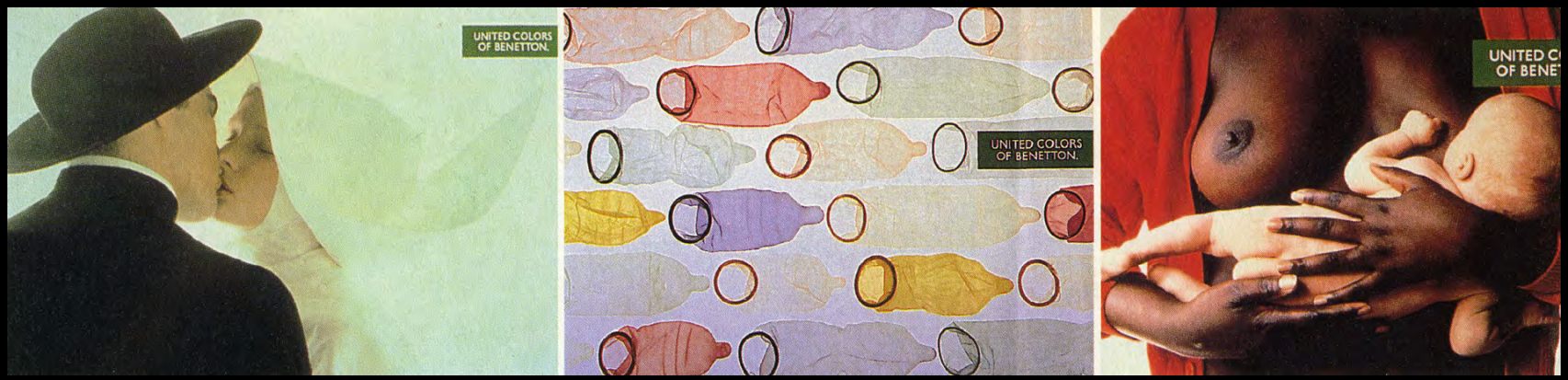

Legs as soft and smooth
as the day you were born.
BORN
KICKING!
PP
PRETTY PO
New Soft &
fit like a second sk
p

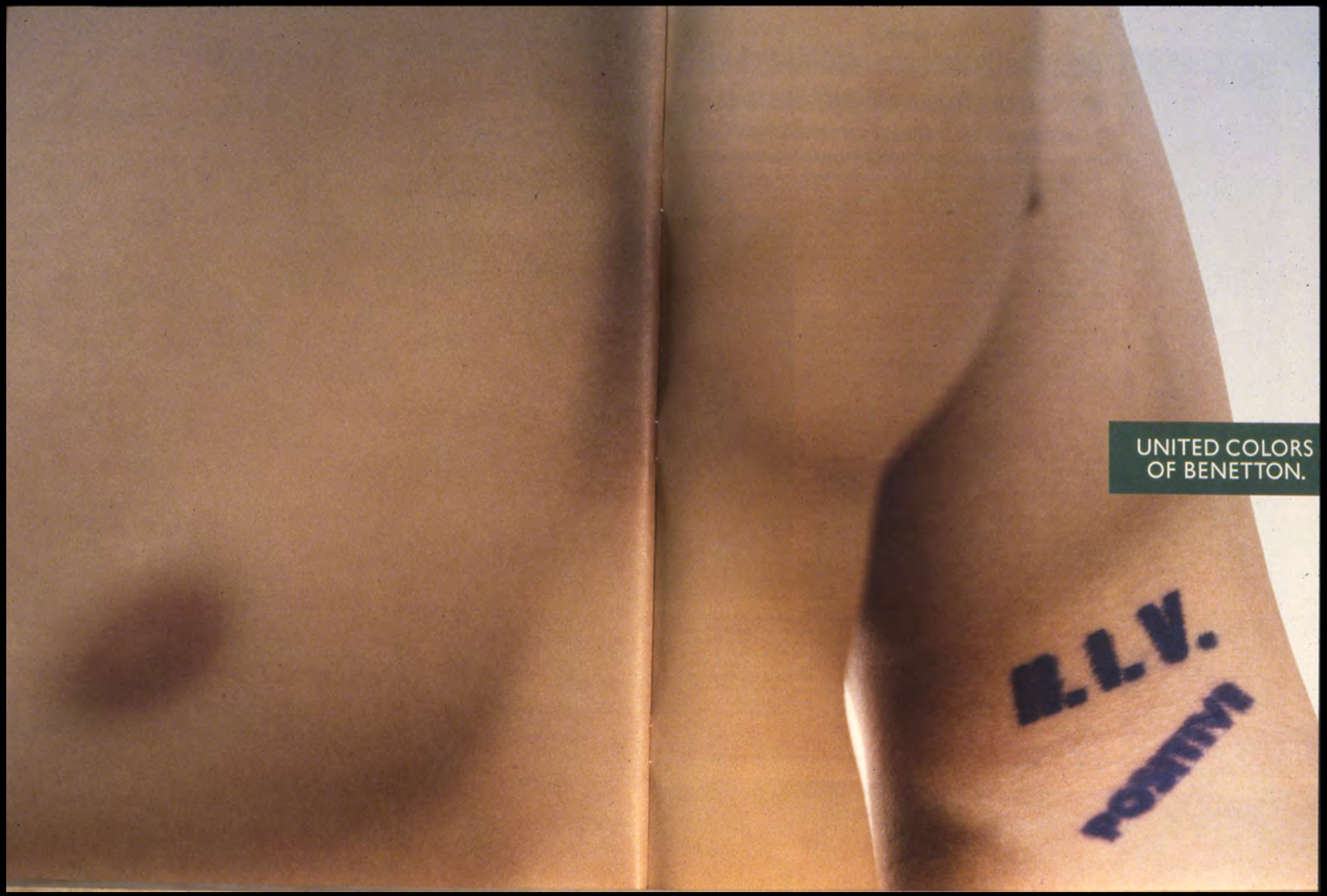

We can improve your nightlife.
JOIN
LESBIANS
UNITED
♂♀
Rest Assured Beds

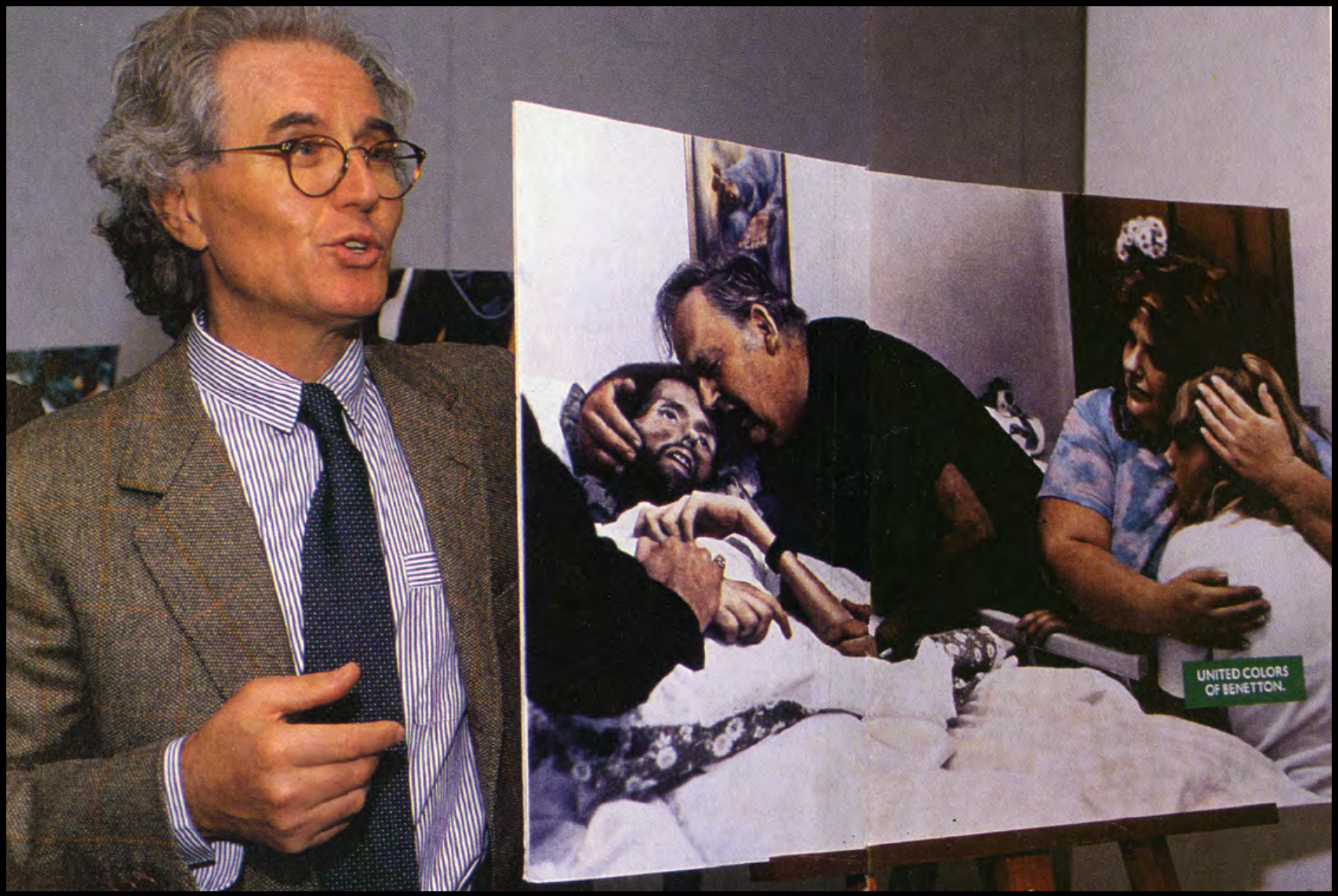

primesight
We can't go on like this.
I'll cut the deficit, not the NHS.
FUCK OFF BACK TO ETON
Read our plan for change at conservatives.com
YEAR FOR CHANGE
primesight


Sorry!
The lifestyle you ordered is currently out of stock


Impotent
WARNING: SMOKING CAUSES IMPOTENCE
California Department Of Health Services © 1999 California Department of Health Services
OUTDOOR SYSTEMS


UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.
UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.
UNITED C
OF BENE


UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.
H.I.V.
POSITIVE


UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.

SEXISM REARS ITS UNPROTECTED HEAD

MEN

USE CONDOMS
OR BEAT IT



AIDS KILLS

WOMEN


WOMEN
DON'T GET
AIDS
65% OF HIV POSITIVE WOMEN GET SICK AND DIE
FROM CHRONIC INFECTIONS THAT DON'T FIT THE
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL'S DEFINITION OF AIDS.
WITHOUT THAT RECOGNITION WOMEN ARE DENIED
ACCESS TO WHAT LITTLE HEALTHCARE EXISTS.
THE CDC MUST EXPAND THE DEFINITION OF AIDS.
THEY JUST
DIE
FROM IT
Gran Fury

Les Levine

BILLBOARD PROJECTS

BLAME GOD



Billboard LA Highway *1984*




ATTACK
GOD
TORTURE
GOD
CHALK FARM
ROAD


TORTURE
GOD
KILL
GOD


EXECUTE
GOD
STARVE
GOD
LONDON & PROVINCIAL


NO SMOKING
ATTACK
GOD


HATE
GOD
SUMMIT


HATE
GOD
SUMMIT


YES, YOU CAN FIND A EUROPEAN CAR MANUFACTURER WHO DOESN'T FIT OUR TYRES.
UNIROYAL
BLOCK
GOD


YES, YOU CAN FIND A EUROPEAN CAR MANUFACTURER WHO DOESN'T FIT OUR TYRES.
UNIROYAL
DOMINANT

Dublin artist upsets pious London

by **DAVID ORR**

A CONTROVERSIAL poster art exhibition by Dublin-born artist, Les Levine, currently on show in London, is to come to Derry next month and to Dublin early next year. The project, which consists of a series of huge images bearing messages such as "Kill God", "Blast God" and "Starve God", has caused a storm of protest since it started last week. A number of the 10 feet by 21 feet outdoor pictures have been defaced.

"These images are essentially about the trouble in Northern Ireland," Mr Levine told the *Sunday Tribune* yesterday from London. "They're based on the concept that what's happening there is not a religious war and that God and violence are totally separate. "I'm a very religious person and I believe that by saying things positive to human life you're acting on behalf of God. I'm very upset by the way my work has been received in London."

The 50-year-old artist is a brother of best-selling author June Levine. He grew up on the South Circular Road in Dublin and now lives in New York where the exhibition is also to be mounted.



• *HATE GOD: One of Les Levine's controversial billboards*

"I might be coming to Dublin for the show," Mr Levine said. "It may cause more public controversy in Ireland but I don't expect any individual will take it upon themselves to censor it. The thing I'd like is that people can have open, reasonable discussion about what they see in the images."

The London project is being funded by the Institute of Contemporary Arts, whose visual arts organiser is Derry man, Declan McGonagle, and by Artangel Trust, a foundation specialising in outdoor art events. The images are displayed on 18 outdoor billboards and in the ICA gallery.

Mr McGonagle told the *Sunday Tribune* that the ICA was considering legal action against the two main billboard companies responsible for pasting up the advertisement-like pictures. Both companies stopped work during the week because of alleged complaints from the public. They agreed to re-commence pasting following instructions from the ICA's legal advisors but, according to the ICA, have not yet fulfilled their contract and have censored some of the images.

Irish Tribune 8.9.85

Statement by Les Levine 7th September 1985

My original reason for producing the billboard work entitled "Blame God" was to point out how ridiculous it is to assume that acts of violence can occur in the name of God. My hope was to create the possibility of public discussion and new thinking on the subject.

I have produced many works of a similar kind in major cities throughout the U.S. over the past few years without difficulty. My work has a long history of considering social issues. I am both surprised and depressed by the actions of the billboard companies which have chosen to illegally paste over my works of art.

Although they claim various reasons for doing this, none of which have been clearly defined, it seems obvious to me that their main reason is that they are pro-violence, anti-discussion and anti-God. Instead of taking a reasonable attitude of discussion they have taken an attitude of illegality and belligerence. By destroying my art they have attacked the possibility of non-violence and replaced it with aggression and censorship.

While it is depressing that the work has been destroyed before it had an opportunity to be seen by the public, it also must be born in mind that this is not censorship by any government body, more so it is commercial vandalism, private corporations deciding to destroy an individual artist's work simply because they disagree with the possible opinions that may arise from that work.

Although these companies may feel they are simply chastising an artist, it is my opinion that in reality they are infringing upon the very premises on which this society is held together, which are freedom and justice. If these companies were permitted to destroy the work of any artist they disagree with, the precedent in fact would be the willful destruction of any future progression in art.

This form of commercial vandalism could eliminate the possibility that reasonable discussion can solve problems and would turn Britain into a society of censors and permit the willful destruction of private property. One is only left to wonder whether these same companies would paste over a Picasso if they disagreed with its content.

Poster art 'destroyed'

By Andrew Moncur

THE Institute of Contemporary Arts is threatening legal action over the disappearance of at least seven 10ft by 20ft works, in a limited edition, scheduled for display on billboards in London.

The ICA believes that two of the bill-posting companies contracted to display the works of the American artist Les Levine have now obliterated his billboards with out-of-date posters for Christian Aid.

Mr Declan McGonagel, exhibitions director at the ICA, which originally planned to show 18 posters on outdoor sites, said yesterday: "Several thousand pounds' worth of art work has been destroyed."

London & Provincial Poster Group Ltd, and Arthur Maiden Ltd had claimed that they received complaints from the public about the billboards which, among other things, comment on strife in Northern Ireland.

GUARDIAN 9/9/85.

The Guardian 9.9.85



Two of Les Levine's billboard works in Borough Road, Elephant and Castle

God posters censored

THE HEAVY hand of censorship has struck again — this time against an artist and the gallery trying to put up his work in various places in London.

Les Levine, an artist from California, is in London sponsored by the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) and the Artangel Trust. His poster artworks were to be shown together with an exhibition at the ICA.

His work is about political issues and shows soldiers and protesters with slogans such as 'Kill God', 'Starve God' written on them. Levine says he is against killing people, and wants to make people think.

He told News Line yesterday that he was amazed at the speed with which billposting companies began to cover up hoardings, after putting up his pictures on Wednesday.

The ICA's solicitors met with representatives of the London and Provincial company and after considerable discussion it was agreed that the posters would go up on 18 hoardings in Chalk Farm and Elephant and Castle — but with a sticker saying the ICA took responsibility for them.

Levine said he tried very hard to ask what the objections to his work were.

'They said the police had complained, but we could never get the name of the person who complained. They also said they had a complaint from the Advertising Council, but we phoned up and found this wasn't true.

'So we suspect it was righteous indignation on their part.

'Part of the reason, they said, is that they don't feel they can put God on billboards. But I'm sure that if my posters said "Give me a Guinness, God", that would have been all right.

'If it weren't art, we would not have had this kind of problem.

'They are expressing how this thing affected them psychologically, and they responded.

'If it were not effective, they would not have done this. The information is so blatant and so clear they were afraid that people would get the message.

Newsline 9.9.85



Photo: Harry Chambers

Kill God billboard Camden Town, London *1985*



Photo: Stephen White

Kill God pasted over *1985*


STARVE
GOD
EXECUTE
GOD


Harvest appeal. We need more green stuff.
Christian Aid P.O. Box 1, London SW9
Harvest appeal. We need more green stuff.
Christian Aid P.O. Box 1, London SW9
ANT
LONDON & PROVINCIAL


LONDON & PROVINCIAL
STALLONE
is back as...
RAMBO
FIRST BLOOD PART II
No man, no law, no war can stop him.
Starts AUGUST 30







Steve McQueenBy David Parry, 2009 - Filename: NPG_440_661_SteveMcQueenBy.jpg -Copyright: David Parry



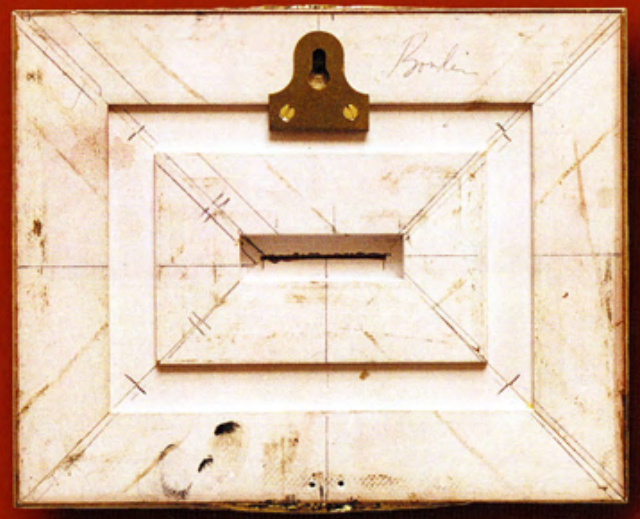






ELSEWHERE

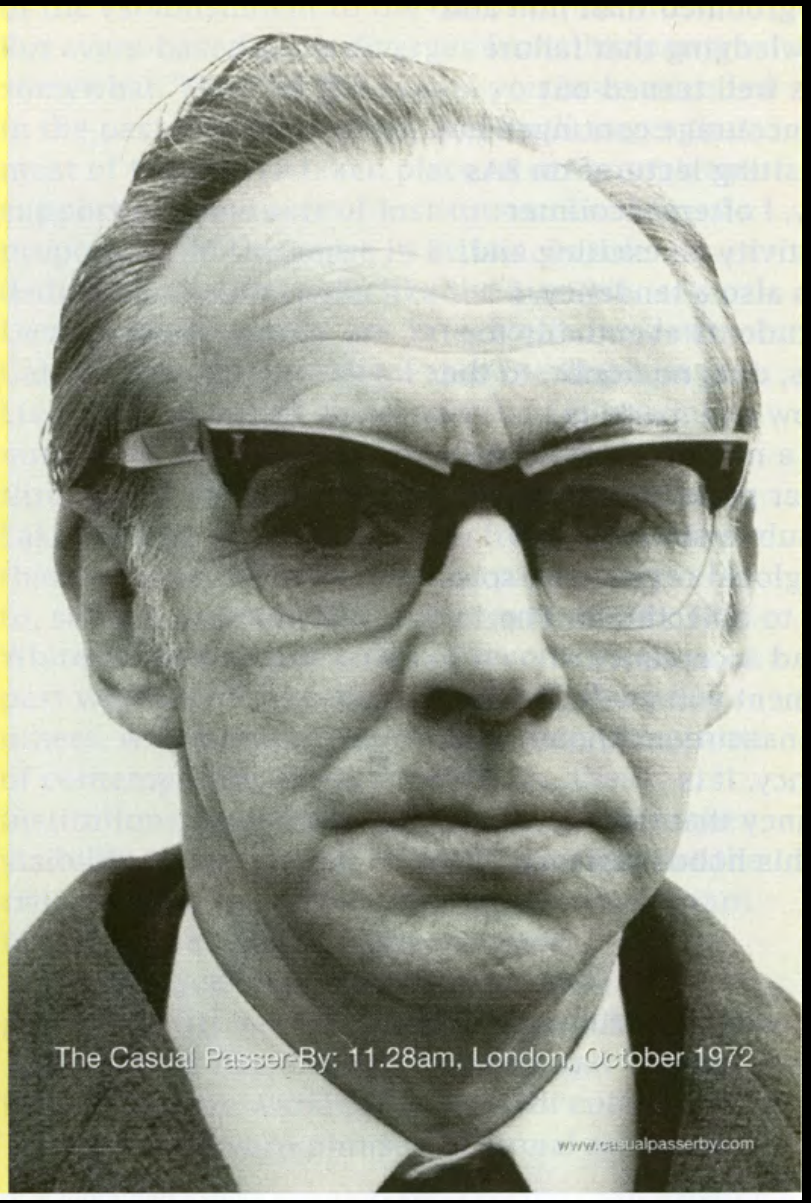
SUSAN BUTLER







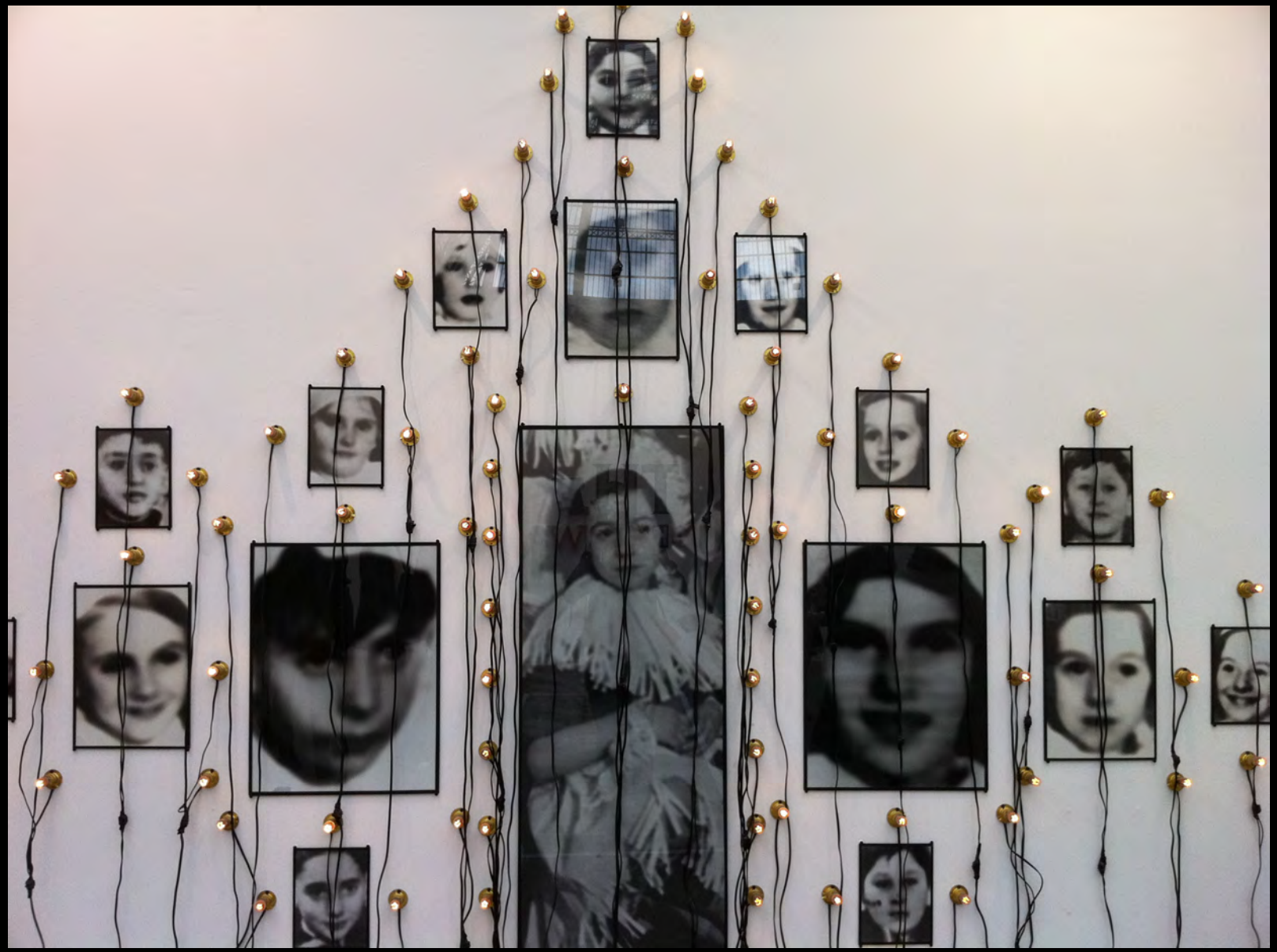

The Casual Passer-By: 11.23pm, Chelsea, May 2005
www.casualpasserby.com


The Casual Passer-By: 11.28am, London, October 1972
www.casualpasserby.com














TRACE











Self Burial (Television Interference Project), 1969
(courtesy of the Tate Gallery)

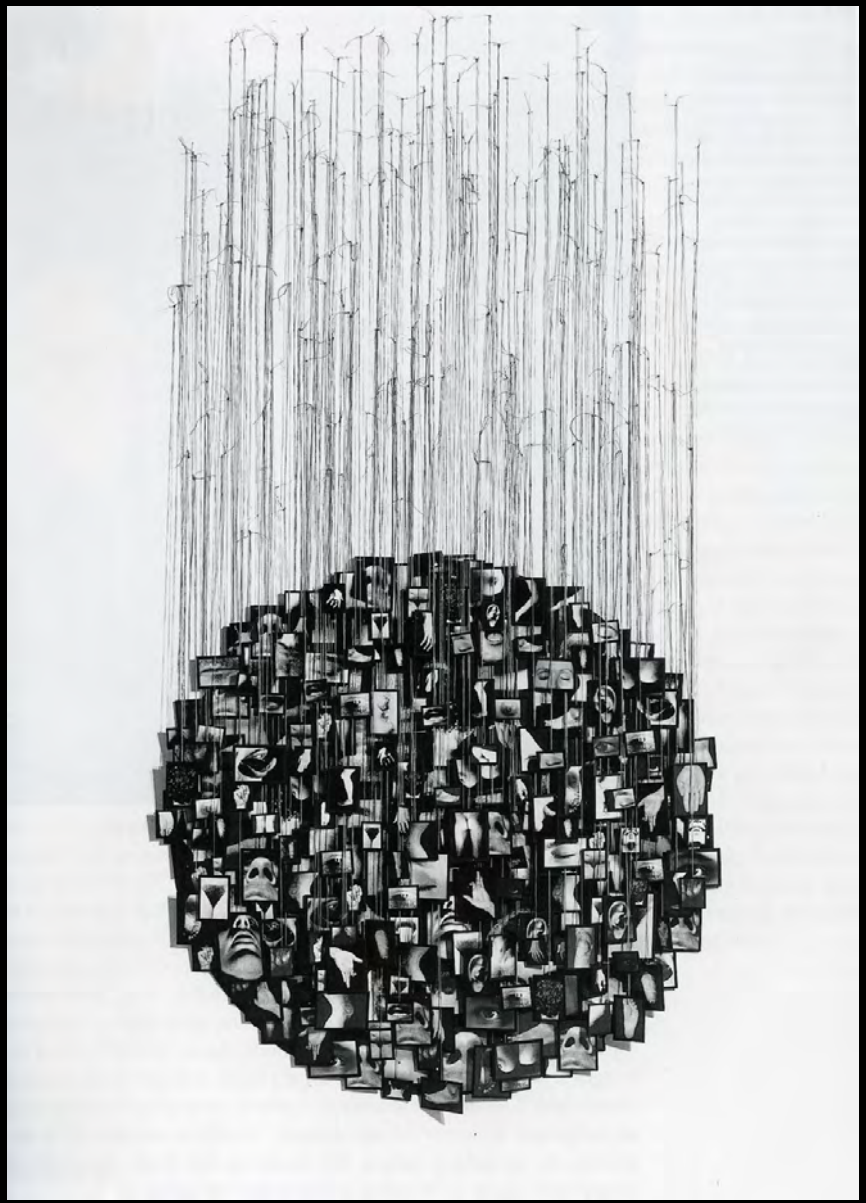


Hayward Security Guards, 1972 (installation shot)









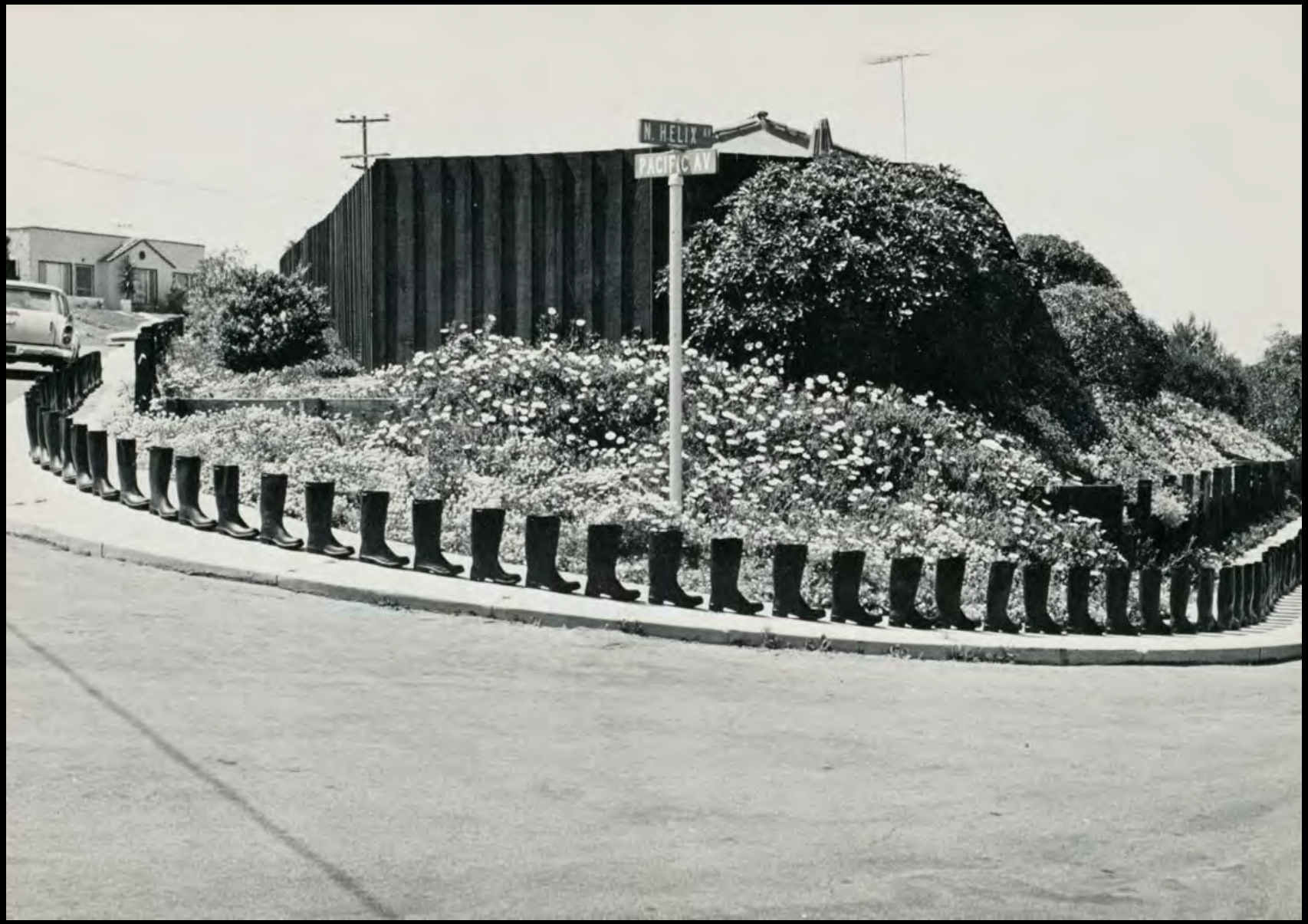





ORL






N. HELIX
PACIFIC AV









Fiery end Huge sculpture burns



Waste Man, a 25 metre (80ft) sculpture made by Turner prize-winner Antony Gormley from recycled material, was burned as part of a day of art projects at Margate, Kent, on Saturday. Review, page 35 Photograph: Dylan Martinez/Reuters

THE GUARDIAN OCTOBER 2 2006.



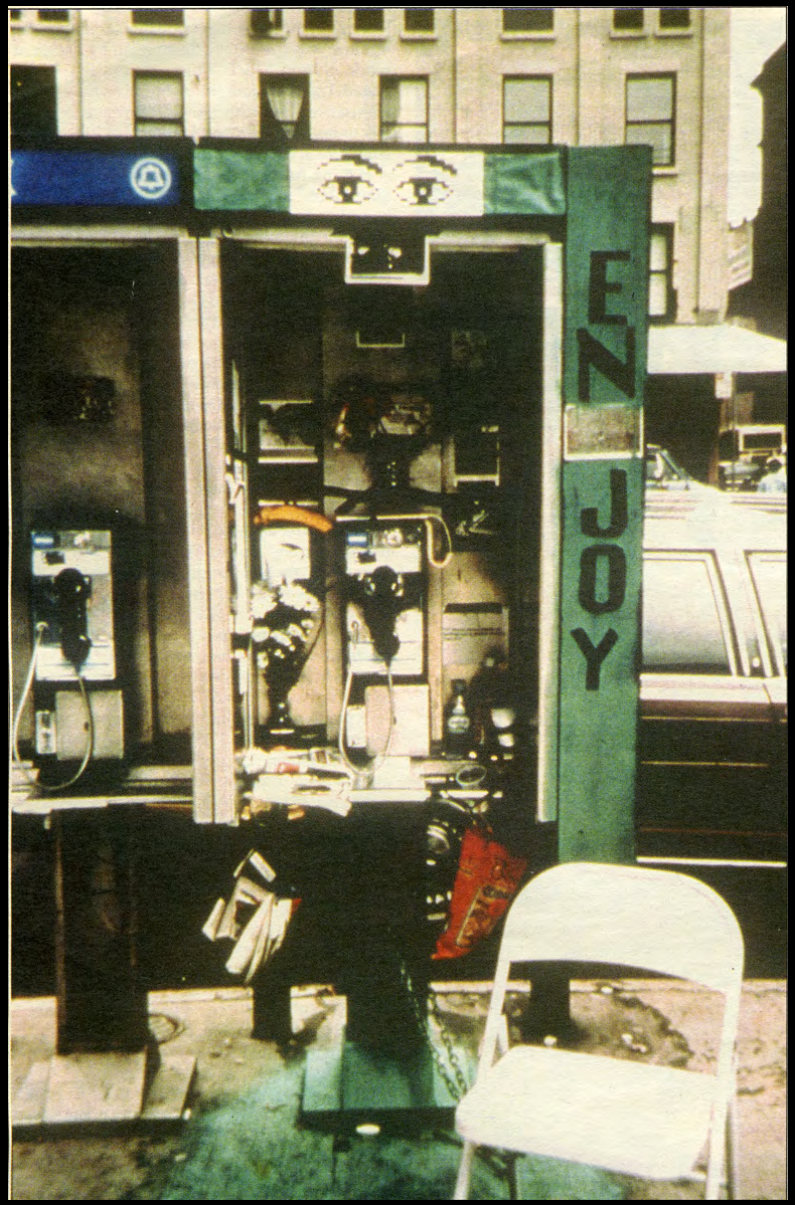











EN
JOY



SPIDER THAT DIED IN THE TOWER OF LONDON
'Over the years I've been collecting spiders which have died in famous places - at the Alamo, or at Mark Twain's house. I like the idea of these grandiose spots and these humble spiders. This spider, which I've put in a 35mm slide and projected onto a wall, was given to me by the head of armouries at the Tower, so it met the same death as kings.'








J.RANK LTD
BALTIC FLOUR MILLS
THE
BEGINNING
OF THE
WAR WILL
BE SECRET


METAPHOR
APPROPRIATE RESPONSE
TO MOST SITUATIONS
SBB CFF FFS
SBB CFF FFS
15




SOUTH AFRICA




ALLEGHENY COUNTY SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL



















A fine and frothy day

Upon a timeless strand

A goddess was blown by humid winds

Onward to the land.









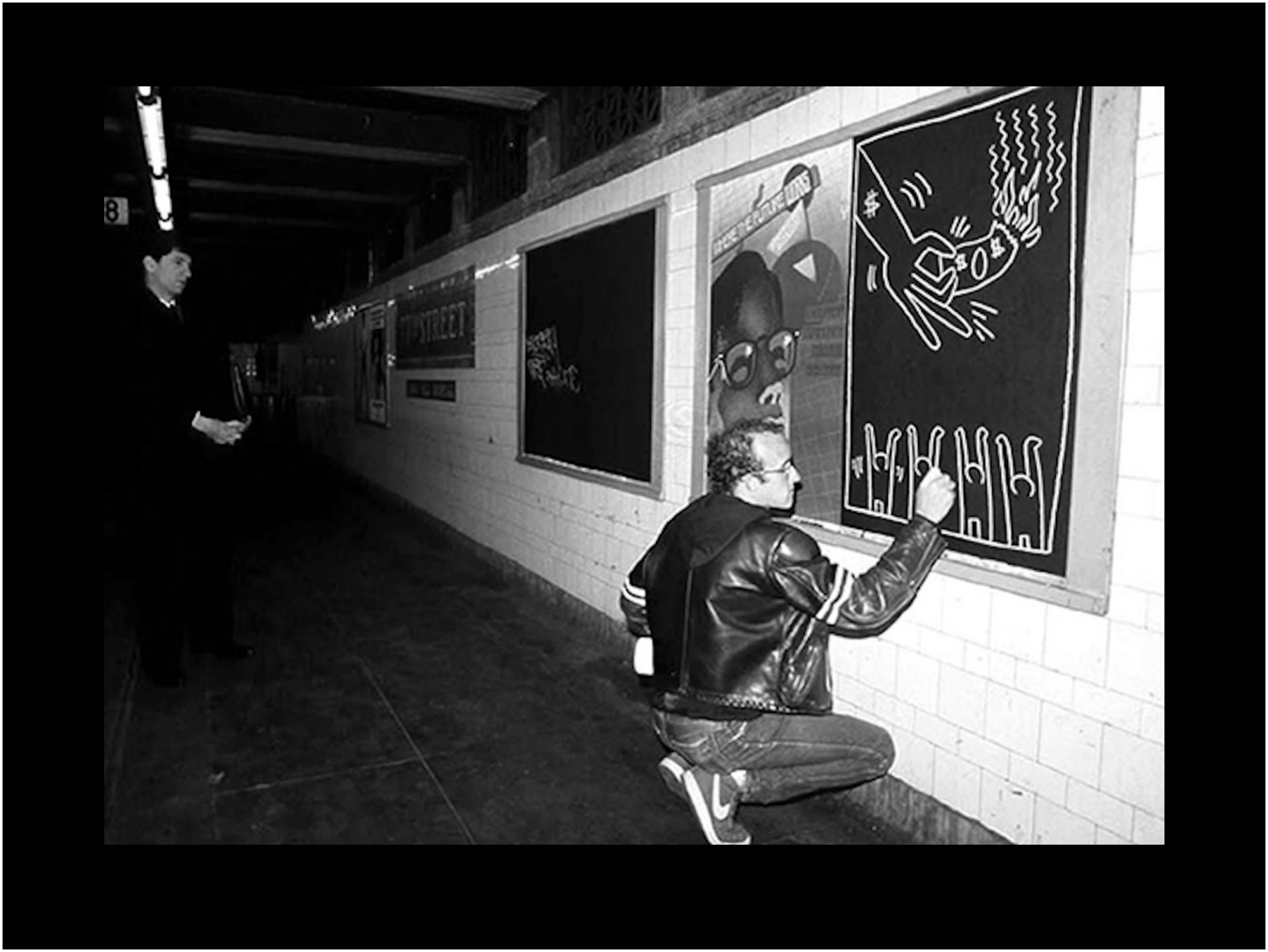

PARIS








ONCE UPON A
TIME------
K.Haring
5.27.
'89

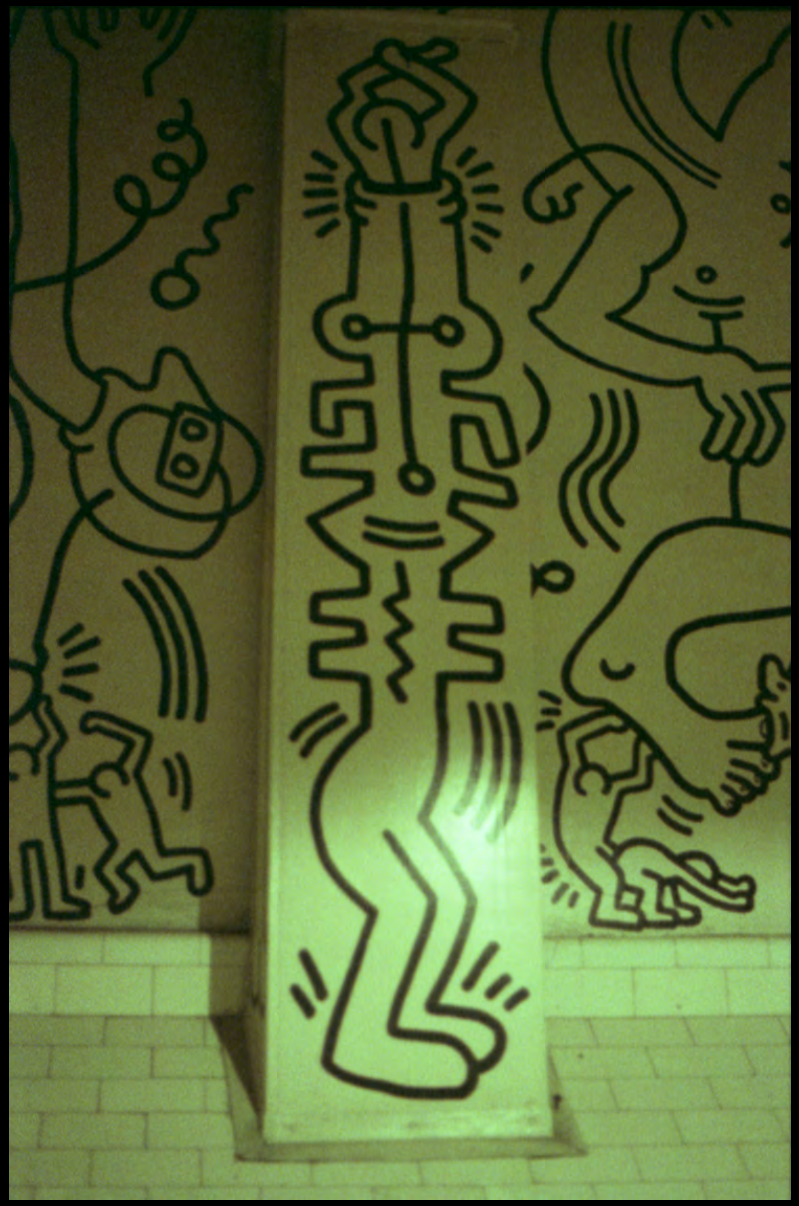







ONCE UPON A
TIME------
K.Haring
5.27.
'89









Cisterns of oppression

"Gay artists are losing faith in organisations like the Arts Council and local councils, because gay art is not being represented outside London. If we're not careful, it will be left off the cultural agenda." Nottingham-based gay artist Jordan McKenzie is pissed off. After commissioning his latest installation piece, *Cubicle*, for its Now '93 art festival, Nottingham City Council has decided it might, after all, have to withold funding for the project. Some council members fear that Nottingham might not be ready for *Cubicle*, a site-specific piece that McKenzie hopes to locate in a disused male toilet in the city centre – one that 15 years ago was the city's most infamous cottage. McKenzie wants to turn the building into a unique piece of living art that details the lost personal histories of the city's gay men and draws attention to what he feels has been a largely-ignored section of the community.

Should *Cubicle* get the go-ahead, the toilet will be kitted out with infra-red movement detectors which activate UV lights. These will illuminate, written in UV ink on the urinal, interviews with men – revealing in a very literal way part of the city's hidden history. Video monitors will show stills of male heads in the state of orgasm – copied tenth-generation from porn movies – while programmes will be dispensed from a special condom machine. "I wanted to avoid the crass, obvious gay art," says McKenzie. "Y'know, a big dick with glitter on it. This is about people, not sex. Here's a place that's taboo to straight people, but which elicits such a sense of nostalgia from gays – some people met their first boyfriends here!"

Nottingham Council has been understandably wary of "sexual" art following its Now '92 exhibition when another artist turned a shop window into a sleazy Amsterdam club and earned it the title Nottingham Festival of Porn. The *Sun*, clearly, would have a field day with *Cubicle*: Kinky Council's Cottage Fiasco; Robin Hood and his "Merry" Men, etc, etc. If the council does lose interest in *Cubicle* – the decision will have been made by the time you read this – McKenzie is willing to take the project wherever there's funding, but in the meantime hopes to provide finance via a new fund he's set up: Radical Image Makers (RIM). "We want to provide a platform for any artist who gets censored. It's important that radical art like this gets seen." Whatever happens, McKenzie – ever the optimist – is pushing things on. "We want people to come and have their own orgasms filmed for the exhibit, although the camera will just be trained on the head. The only thing we ask is they don't fake it." So who's gonna check? *Danny Scott*

Cheque contributions to RIM can be sent to PO Box 121, West PDO, Nottingham NG7 6BH. If you send £40 or more, you're entitled to a limited-edition RIM T-shirt

detail of McKenzie's proposed installation photographed by PATRICK HARBRON

