Jack Goldstein and the CalArts Mafia

Jack Goldstein and the CalArts Mafia

by Richard Hertz

With reflections by

John Baldessari

Troy Brauntuch

Rosetta Brooks

Nancy Chunn

Meg Cranston

Jean Fisher

Hiro Kosaka

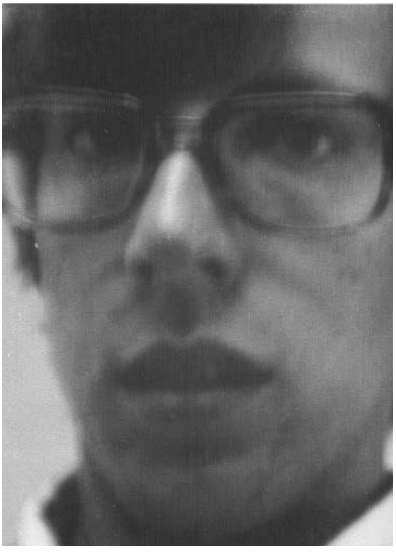
Robert Longo

Matt Mullican

James Welling

Tom Wudl

Minneola Press



The Calarts Mafia,
clockwise, from left:
James Welling
David Salle
Jack Goldstein
Matt Mullican
Troy Brauntuch

A Minneola Press Book
P. O. Box 1796
Ojai, California 93024

For book orders, fax 310 459-2682
www.minneolapress.com

Library of Congress
Control Number: 2003100930

ISBN Number 0964016540

Printed in China

First Minneola Press edition
November 2003

Contents

FOREWORD BY **Richard Hertz**

The first years of Walt Disney's California Institute of the Arts are already legendary, not only because of the remarkable artists who taught there but also because of the remarkable students who graduated and went on to have significant careers. In the area of fine arts, some of the people who studied at CalArts between 1970 and 1974 and subsequently went to New York include Ericka Beckman, Ross Bleckner, Barbara Bloom, Troy Brauntuch, Eric Fischl, Jack Goldstein, Matt Mullican, David Salle, and James Welling. The nucleus of the group—artists whose primary mentor and influence was John Baldessari—consisted of Brauntuch, Goldstein, Mullican, Salle, and Welling.

This group became known collectively as the "CalArts Mafia" because of the way they together brainstormed, worked, played, and became successful artists. A mystique developed about the early years at CalArts and the "boys" who went there and later supported one another in New York. This book revolves around Jack Goldstein, arguably the most talented of the group but not necessarily the most successful, depending upon how "success" is defined.

Jean Fisher, in her 1985 catalogue essay "Jack

Goldstein/Feuer/Körper/Licht" for the Städtische Galerie, Erlangen, Germany, writes:

> Within the art that has emerged from America during the past decade, Jack Goldstein's work has occupied an enigmatic position that perhaps can only now begin to be understood or recognized as central to the shaping of those concepts that constitute present art practice. Each time the work has traversed a different medium—performance, film, phonographic record, written aphorism, the photographic or painted image—it has radically disturbed our experience and understanding of the language of representation, of language as representation, and of the means by which the subject finds identity within it.
>
> It is work, moreover, that is cognizant of the essence of American cultural history itself as the search for identity; Goldstein's visual speculations on the metaphysics of the sublime, of Hollywood cinema, of space technology, are wholly consistent with the image of a culture from whose landscape of infinite horizon emerged an aesthetic of the horizon of the infinite: an exploration of both the vastness of possibility and the limitations of man's existence.

Jack's story is a contemporary morality tale, a very personal story of passion, ambition, and excess. In telling Jack's story, and the intersecting narratives of some of the artists and dealers with whom he was close, we also paint a dynamic, complex, and nonlinear picture of the Los Angeles and New York art scenes.

In this book we tell the story of the artworld in the 1970s and 1980s as Jack lived it. Jack was part of the rise of successful art dealers like Helene Winer and Janelle Reiring at Metro Pictures, Mary Boone, and Larry Gagosian.

Jack was in the artworld as cocaine became an

everyday part of so many people's lives.

Jack was a seminal part of a scene that saw the rising importance of collectors, auction houses, and the unbelievable acceleration of prices of artworks.

Jack was part of the fundamental change from conceptualism to pictures, a change that imported popular culture—not like Pop art, which romanticized it—straight from the television tube, straight from the photo lab: Pictures of anything that had ever been recorded.

Jack was part of and contributed to a fundamental shift from East Coast "high" culture to West Coast "entertainment" culture.

Jack was part of the rise of art schools, their importance in educating artists, their emphasis on theory as well as production, and the eventual dominance of West Coast art schools like CalArts, Art Center, and UCLA.

In their work, the CalArts Mafia represented a fundamental break from the art of the past. While it can be argued that it shared many of the traditional concerns of picture making, including even "beauty" and "representation," those concerns were deferred and deflected beneath a rhetoric and stance that minimized that content and emphasized representational conventions.

Told from multiple perspectives, this is art history before it has been sanitized, censored, and idealized. It is an invigorating story of, among other things, motivation and competition; at the same time it is a disturbing story of obsession and paranoia. Emphasis is on Jack, a visionary artist who lived in constant mental turmoil but in his films and paintings created sublime imagery.

The oral, audiotaped reflections byJack and his friends (with the exception of Jean Fisher's) were transcribed by me from the recorded interviews and dramatized by me into first person narratives. Jack and the contributors then made any changes or additions that they

wished. A number of other people were invited to share their reflections, but they declined to participate in the book.

Those interviewed, including Jack, are recalling events that occurred ten, twenty and thirty years ago. While every effort has been made to verify their memories and statements, I disclaim responsibility for any inaccuracies that may be contained in the book.

We especially thank Rebecca Donelson, Hiro Kosaka, Helene Winer and James Welling for giving us photographs for reproduction in this volume. Thanks to Jeanne Marie Wasilik for copy editing the manuscript.

Jack and I began working on this book in January, 2001. We finalized the contents, images, and layout on March 3rd, 2003. On March 14th, 2003 Jack took his life by hanging himself at his home in San Bernardino, California.

Jack, Pacific Building, Santa Monica, 1977, © James Welling

From History to Memory: The Missing Link

INTRODUCTION BY **Rosetta Brooks**

The Pen versus the Brush

It seems fitting that in a country where people aspire to two of everything—cars, kids, and homes—we should have two histories as well. As we do: a public chronicle or "Disney" version, so widely available as to be unavoidable, and a second one that remains secret, buried, and unnamed.

Jim Houghton, *Spooks: The Haunts of America: The Private Use of Secret Agents* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1978).

It should come as no surprise to the majority of readers that facts and objectivity bear very little relationship to one another when we apply them to a definition of history. Most histories are stories, narratives told from a given perspective, using information selectively and ignoring salient events and situations that might ultimately lead us to disregard or question the "official" line.

In establishing a history of art, the same dictates apply: Selections, omissions, and deliberate distortions of interpretations have left us with a "grand narrative," one in which art criticism and critics have been complicit. The critical process is intimately concerned with making

links (sometimes forcing them) between styles of expression and cultural concepts, establishing patterns of thought and processes in an attempt to make some kind of narrative out of art that, in turn, becomes our official art history. Indeed, art criticism has played an integral role in both consolidating and destroying certain beliefs about the history of art as well as the careers of those artists who comprise the status quo. Critics have done so, often under the guise of presenting themselves as having no agenda, offering seemingly objective criteria for evaluating works of art and occasionally applying emotional responses to works under the cover of neutrality.

As a result of art-critical intervention, the history of art is riddled with conflicts over the validity of the position in history held by any given artist. Artists and critics have long been engaged in battle, and their wars have peppered the landscape of our understanding of art history. There were famous conflicts between John Ruskin and James McNeill Whistler in nineteenth-century England, between Denis Diderot and Francois Boucher in eighteenth-century France, and the list continues right on throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries.

About eight years ago, a casualty of this ongoing battle occurred in London over the work of American-born, but British-based artist R.B. Kitaj. Throughout the summer of 1994, a large retrospective of this well-established artist's work, organized by the Tate Gallery, attracted large, enthusiastic crowds. But it also earned the ire of one English critic in particular, whose words sparked a shouting match of epic scale within the artworld community. "It's been a shooting war of proportions I didn't expect," said Kitaj. "You get used to that, though you never really get used to it. I felt like fighting back but friends like David Hockney would say, 'Don't do it. You don't want to make a third-rate hack into another John Ruskin.'"

When successful, the relationship between artist and critic and their contributions to an official art history can be a meeting point for two independent but equally valuable creative processes. But all too often, art criticism is merely destructive, reducing artworks to labels and lines: Lines of argument, lines of art history, and lines of political affiliation. Pragmatized and channeled, art is reduced to labels and lines, and artists—if they want to gain any recognition—often feel coerced into the perpetuation of those lines that are deemed by outside forces to be "successful." Critical overviews often seem to take the form of a stance, perpetuated and characterized by professional possessiveness. In addition, the language of art criticism is frequently hostile to its audience, degenerating into the jargon of deconstruction, theoretical positing, and sounding increasingly hollow to the public at large.

The 1970s: Art. History. Yawn.

For many within the artworld, art of the 1970s felt tired and jaded. But sometime in the middle of the decade, an exhilarating period began and continued through the 1980s, during which it seemed that the arenas of fine art and popular culture were beginning to merge. It appeared that they were developing an interaction that lay beyond the formalism of modernism and the crassness of consumer capitalism, based on the idea that the best in fine art might co-opt the best in popular art, and vice versa. Pictures art in particular embraced these ideas, emerging in New York, the noisy center at the hub of this new kind of art. At the end of the 1970s, artists like Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo, Cindy Sherman, and David Salle, to name just a few, deliberately contaminated that separation between the consumer commodity and the artist's appropriation of it, between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic, and between the role of the artist and that

of the popular-image maker.

It was as if a new cultural unity existed between the media and contemporary art. On the one hand, there was a tendency in the media to aspire to new levels of aesthetic consumerism. Conversely, there was the propensity in art to adopt images of consumer culture and to see their adoption as inhabiting that culture as well as the more restricted lineage of art history.

The voices of two critics, Tom Lawson (also an artist) and Douglas Crimp, aptly defined the context within which Pictures art was born. In a number of seminal essays, Lawson claimed that throughout the 1960s and 1970s, art had in some ways withdrawn from the sphere of representation and had been replaced by commodity culture. In the postwar period high art had only been interested in the ontology of modernism. Postmodernism, in the form of Pictures art, was trying to escape from that position through the lightness of the commodity, through the transience of the image, and this, argued Lawson, was how representation was re-entering the realm of art.

As Lawson pointed out in "The Uses of Representation," originally published in 1979 in *Flash Art:*

> The artworld is getting tired of the monochromatic, the systemic; getting bored with process and conceptual purity. As a result, the last few years have seen increasing attempts to unearth novelty, no matter how muddle-headed. Unfortunately, this has meant little more than a heyday for the eccentric. The idea of "personal" art has become intellectually respectable, a "new subjectivity" desirable.

If Lawson appeared to disapprove equally of the old and the burgeoning new "personal" art (although he named no names), he did at least acknowledge that "the one encouraging thing about this trend is that it's given a

certain credibility to a renewed interest in the problem of representation." A little later in the same article he explicitly defined the new art he supported:

> It should be understood here that this essay is, in essence, a manifesto. And it's at this point that I want to make a preliminary set of important distinctions. It is possible to make art-making use a variety of representational conventions without resorting to a confessional impulse. It is possible to make art with a psychological content not dependent on narcissistic exhibitionism. It is possible to make art about personality while remaining indifferent to self-expression. It is possible to make art addressing itself to affect and sentiment without losing a sense of irony and detachment. I know this is possible because a group of my friends and myself have been making such art.

History, so far, has demonstrated that Lawson's words were prophetic. The artists to whom in the late days of the 1970s he specifically referred have, for the most part, taken their places in the hallowed halls of contemporary art history as the young bloods of the 1980s: Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo, Richard Prince, David Salle, and Cindy Sherman were amongst the chosen few.

It was not only Lawson, of course, who wrote Pictures art into existence with texts like "Last Exit: Painting" (1981), which became a seminal document in the creation of the movement. Douglas Crimp was equally influential. His most significant text was entitled "Pictures," which was originally printed in 1977 as a catalogue introduction for an exhibition of the same name at Artists Space, an alternative gallery in downtown Manhattan. When this essay was reprinted in 1979 in *October* magazine, Crimp expanded on some of the key issues he wished

to examine in relation to the development of a growing number of artists not originally shown in the exhibition:

> In choosing the word "pictures" for this show, I hoped to convey not only the work's most salient characteristic—recognizable images—but also and more importantly the ambiguities it sustains. As is typical of what has come to be called postmodernism, this new work is not confined to any particular medium; instead it makes use of photography, film, performance, as well as traditional modes of painting, drawing, and sculpture. "Picture," used colloquially, is also nonspecific. A picture book might be a book of drawings or photographs and, in common speech, a painting, drawing, or print is often called, simply, a picture. Equally important for my purposes, "picture," in its verb form, can refer to mental process as well as the production of an aesthetic object.

Crimp's text and its content were to become the bible for the Pictures movement. Developing his theory further, he claimed:

> To an ever greater extent, our experience is governed by pictures, pictures in newspapers and magazines, on television and in the cinema. Next to these pictures, firsthand experience begins to retreat, to seem more and more trivial. While it once seemed that pictures had the function of interpreting reality, it now seems that they have usurped it. It therefore becomes imperative to understand the picture itself, not in order to uncover a lost reality, but to determine how a picture becomes a signifying structure of its own accord.

The choice of the label "Pictures" to describe the approach to the image laid out by the likes of Crimp and Lawson was in some senses an odd one, since the work of many of the artists represented an approach to the image

that could be considered old, or second-hand, rather than new. They were familiar images from television and movies with which these artists had all grown up. Newness, for them, was more a matter of recycling, as Andy Warhol had recognized in the 1960s, albeit in a somewhat different way.

The Pictures artists were united by their strategies of taking or producing a picture of a picture. Yet they did it for different reasons and towards different ends, each tending to focus on a single element concerning the appropriation of consumer images. Jack Goldstein, for example, was pursuing the American sublime. But it was a unification of the two cultural versions of the American sublime: The sublimity of the color field artists (like Newman, Noland, et al.) and the sublimity of the cinema which, in turn, came out of the earlier American pictorial sublime of the landscape tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Goldstein's work is quintessentially American, addressing itself to the simplification and unification of the aesthetic experience. He brings together the opposing terms of the sublime in a transcendence of the Greenbergian dialectic of high and low culture.

Whose Story Is it Anyway?

So far we have mentioned two kinds of history—the grand narratives of art historians and the often prescriptive histories of art critics. But in fact there is a third kind: Oral history. Oral history is the systematic collection of living people's testimony about their own (or others') experiences. When we think about our lives as a whole, we have already transformed them into narratives by organizing our memories into a story or multiple stories. Oral histories illuminate the personal and interpersonal experiences of the worlds we inhabit in our day-to-day lives—how we experience our lives.

The last few years have seen a renewed interest in oral history. Increasingly, a new breed of movies, television, and books in the form of unauthorized biographies have been created as the media has transformed itself yet again from the sleekness of commodity fetishism to the "real life" clunkiness of shows like *Ozzie Osborne* and *Survivor.* Even Anna Nicole Smith's empty life has been turned into grotesque entertainment.

But the trend has also begun to creep into the staid old world of academia. Susan Sontag and Edward W. Said, two of our most illustrious writers on contemporary culture, covering post-structuralist philosophy to post-colonialist theory, have both felt compelled to move away from the rigorously intellectual academic stance we have come to expect from them. They have moved into a world closely aligned to oral history—the subjective realm of autobiographical writing.

In 2000 Said's memoir *Out of Place* (New York: Vintage Books) was published. He wrote:

> Before I started the memoir, my mother had just died the year before from cancer, and I was very aware that in a certain sense the last sort of organic or living link I had with the world I grew up in had disappeared. I felt also that it was time for a different kind of investigation into myself. I had just finished a long series of books about imperialism. So I wanted to do something that was in a certain sense not only personal but could have in it elements of the world I had just been describing—the world of empire, the passing of empire, and the enormously important events in which I had been involved without really realizing it.

In similar fashion, discussing how becoming sick changed her life (*Talk* magazine, April, 2000), Sontag recalls her struggle with cancer as having had a great

impact on her writing:

> I have just gone through a second bout of cancer. I had it twenty-two years ago—I was supposed to die in a few months. I decided at that moment that what I most wanted was to write an essay about something that I'd learned about, and it became a long kind of novella-length essay called *Illness as Metaphor.* At the time there was a taboo about cancer, and people were made to feel guilty or responsible for their illness. I thought, I want to do something very selfless that would be a gift to other people because I felt so much identification with those who were ill.
>
> I'm thinking now of writing something much more autobiographical about this experience of being ill a second time—how different it is to be a cancer patient twenty years later. And how everything has changed for better and, in some respects, for worse.

Not only the cultural writers and critics were feeling the desire to move into a more personal realm as a way of more concisely communicating an element they felt had been missing from their work. In the last two or three years, a spate of books has brought together recollections in the form of behind-the-scenes glimpses into significant institutions and figures in the artworld, knowledge that still now only the insider-elite have had access to.

Challenging Art: Artforum 1962–1974 (New York: Soho Press, Inc., 2000) written by Amy Newman and published in 2000, brings together the reflections and memories of founders, editors, and writers for *Artforum* since its inception in 1962 until 1974, when, Newman claims, the cultural moment that had impelled arguably the most influential international art magazine of the twentieth century irretrievably collapsed. Eminent writers of the older generation like Michael Fried, Rosalind Krauss, Max Kozloff,

Lucy Lippard, Annette Michelson, and Robert Rosenblum join prominent art historians, art dealers, artists, and curators to reminisce, argue, gossip, and speculate about *Artforum's* glories and crises during that momentous period.

In similar vein, *Groovy Bob: The Life and Times of Robert Fraser* (London: Faber & Faber, 2000), by Harriet Vyner, uses many of the techniques of oral history to examine the life of Robert Fraser, a British art dealer who championed both American and British Pop art in the 1960s till his death from AIDS in 1984. The book's fascination lies in its compilation of events, stories, rumors, and the depictions of Fraser's glamorous, wild, drug-crazed lifestyle. The aura of the swinging sixties is evoked with recollections by the likes of Peter Blake, Patrick Caulfield, Jim Dine, Gilbert and George, Richard Hamilton, Dennis Hopper, Mick Jagger, and Paul McCartney, among many others, who remember Fraser as a remarkable art dealer and an enigmatic character. Their accounts of Fraser's contradictory personality and strange mix of traits—upper-class background, sense of inadequacy, brilliant ability to recognize quality in art and display it accordingly, along with his wholehearted embrace of sexual proclivities and his indulgence in self-destructive behavior—provide provocative reading. The host of pop culture celebrities, artists from around the world, and the melting pot of upper- middle- and working-class characters, whose lives intersect restlessly with Robert standing at the crossroads conducting the traffic, creates an offbeat book, a slice of time, that contains a different, and at times much more authentic, feel for the historical moment it explores.

Both books share the common belief that what is at stake is the excavation of a significant cultural moment and that the use of oral history is a means of expanding, restoring significance, and somehow adding a much needed

personal ingredient to moments in history that we are in danger of losing—or at least distorting—as a result of a single-minded methodological approach to history and the past that is, at best, partial.

Oral history has taken a battering in the past because of its obvious limitations. It depends primarily upon memory and the spoken word, both of which are difficult to verify. We all know how hard it is to find the right words to express our thoughts. We all know the tricks memory can play on us, even when we are trying to recall something that only happened yesterday. In recalling memories from years ago, how closely do the memories of the narrator approximate a rendering of the actual experience? Memories combined with other persons' memories as well as artifacts from the time—books, photographs, magazines, film and video footage, public records—can combine to come up with various versions of the "truth," depending upon which perspective the narrators take and what set of values he or she wants to promote.

In participating in *Jack Goldstein and the CalArts Mafia,* I have discovered that through the techniques of oral history, something has been created that transcends the pragmatized lines of conventional history and art history; that the very limitations we take to be an integral part of oral history actually transform the text into something richer, more powerful, and ultimately more enduring than the neutered texts that would have placed Jack Goldstein and his art in a seemingly objective box in which it can now no longer be placed. The journey embarked upon by each of the contributors to this book has compelled them to reassess themselves and their own activities in a different light. Whether they realize it or not, it has taken them to a place from which they cannot return.

Memories, suffused as they are with affect, have a form other than linear time, and I have learned to respect

nonlinear time. The boundaries between truth and fiction, our public masks and our private selves—as well as myriad other barriers we set up around us to protect ourselves from I'm not quite sure what—all tend to collapse to varying degrees as we grow more seasoned. The power—even magic—of this book is the unfolding of the memories of years and events gone by; the varying degrees of reserve, editing or free-falling we observe with each contribution; and the unintentional inaccuracies, as well as the overlapping of stories, each with their personal spins (maybe even personal agendas).

But the most tantalizing, seductive, and ingenuous aspect of the book is Goldstein's own contributions, with their candid, naked, unique intelligence, and his refusal to edit or censor any inaccuracies, false speculations, or potentially harmful rumors about him, recorded by some of the other contributors. Ultimately, we are left with a sense of catching and holding something valuable from the receding tide of the interpersonal dynamics of the lived past, which would otherwise have been irretrievably lost.

●

Jack and Hiro Kosaka, Los Angeles, 1969

1

I am always disappearing in my performances—
it's strange how personal my work is.

At Hamilton High School in Los Angeles, Tom Wudl was the big star in the art department; he knew how to draw and had the rap down, even then. When I was an undergrad, he used to say that I reminded him of Jackson Pollock. A lot of people think I have a violent side to me because I'm remote. Even though I had a violent childhood, because my father beat me all of the time, I'm not violent at all. Considering the kind of childhood I had, I've done a lot.

First the Catholic boys would beat me up and then my father would do the same thing. Thank god my mother got in between us and took half the blows. But it seemed to me that my mother always stood by my father. After that, I never trusted women; that's why I never got married. When we moved into a Jewish neighborhood in Montreal, the Jews didn't accept me either. Because I had not had my Bar Mitzvah, I had to wait outside my friend's front door. It's amazing what we go through. The way I grew up is not how most people grow up. I have never been violent

towards anybody else—only myself. I never learned how to fight; I just walk away from confrontation. I was such a timid and sensitive kid; in my family, I felt like an anomaly. I felt as if I had been born in a basket and dropped on the doorstep. There was nothing I could relate to in my family. My work is very refined; I really don't know where that refinement came from. Maybe I got some of it from my father's military uniform, which was impeccable; everything lined up. You could see your face in his shoes; he spent hours cleaning his shoes. Maybe there is some sensibility I got from that. Whatever medium I work in, I always want a wonderful surface.

I didn't see any art at home and never saw art any place else either. At Hamilton High, to be masculine was to do your own thing; for me, that meant doing art. But I never took many art classes there; I was in a class and then would drop it, so I barely got into Chouinard. I still have no idea why I ended up in art school. I worked hard putting my portfolio together, making lots of drawings. I came in not knowing what an idea was but after three short years I was exhibiting. I didn't want to concentrate on making films—film seemed too commercial. Art was philosophical and introspective and that is what I wanted.

This was an era that was dominated by Bob Dylan and the Beatles—an era that suggested that you were to do your own thing outside of the system. Prior to the rise of the hippie revolution, there were three things that a young male could be: A greaser, a jock, or a surfer. That didn't leave much room for someone who didn't fit into those categories. It made growing up during high school a very lonely time.

Between 1966 and 1970, I was introduced at Chouinard to the complexities of the artworld and to the artists who would become my friends and competitors. All of a sudden, I was part of the L.A. community of artists, which

was evolving rapidly.

The instructors I remember most at Chouinard include Emerson Woelffer; Mike Kanemitsu, who died recently; Don Dudley; and Guy Williams. Compared to CalArts, it was a nothing education, but I learned some skills there. My classmates included Chuck Arnoldi, Michael Balog, Ron Cooper, David Deutsch, Guy Dill, Laddie John Dill, Jim Ganzer, Allan McCollum, and Tom Wudl, who formed a group.

My best friend was Hiro Kosaka. Hiro was a Japanese art student, several years younger than I was; nobody at Chouinard paid much attention to him. I sought him out since I was always very good at knowing who had it or didn't, art wise. He was the one who introduced me to Conceptualism at a time when the school itself was ignorant of anything outside of Billy Al Bengston, Bob Irwin, Craig Kaufmann, and Kenny Price. During the late 1960s, Chouinard oriented itself to craft—learn your materials, develop your methods, and then you are an artist. This was a very different sensibility from the one that CalArts was to offer me.

Diane, the librarian at Chouinard, was good looking—very good looking. She packed my lunches everyday, which she then brought to me. I was with her for a couple of years, even though I was an undergrad and she was a lot older than I was. She provided me with the domestic continuity that I never received from my own family.

A lot of the students I knew at Chouinard, like Laddie Dill and Chuck Arnoldi and people in their group, wanted to be important artists. They became more like decorators, but that was not their intention. They were striving to be famous artists. I knew them all during my four years at Chouinard, which was downtown near MacArthur Park, close to the old Otis Art School, and later they were real disappointments to me.

During the 1960s, Plexiglas was the rage. Everything was framed in it, even little resin knickknacks. Chuck Arnoldi and Laddie Dill framed almost everybody's work in L.A. I happened to learn, or perhaps I should say, they instilled a sense of craftsmanship in me. Hiro and I opened our own little place at my studio and called it GK Frames (Goldstein and Kosaka). We primarily framed Mike Kanemitsu's work. Quite frequently, when we built one of his frames, I remember that the canvas didn't quite fit, so without his knowing it, we would crop it for him. Since he was a leftover Abstract Expressionist, he never did notice what we had done.

When Chuck Arnoldi found out that we were making frames in competition with him, he called me up and told me very bluntly that he would ruin my career. The funny thing about that remark was that I didn't have a career yet, while he and Laddie John were already on their way locally. In my thirty years as an artist, he was to become the first among many enemies to come. I had to get used to having enemies.

The Dill brothers, Arnoldi, and Balog would hang out with Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns when they came to Gemini G.E.L. to make their silk screens and prints. Since Johns and Rauschenberg were gay, they enjoyed hanging out with young, pretty boys just getting out of art school; they were crucial in supporting the four of them as the next generation of California artists. Laddie John Dill was picked up by Sonnabend and Michael Balog was picked up by Leo Castelli. At the time, around 1970, they were making pretty interesting art; with the rise of Conceptualism, there developed a rupture between what was in and what was out. I dropped what I was doing, went to CalArts, and completely reinterpreted myself.

My third year as an undergrad, Chuck Arnoldi dropped out of school because Sonnabend was picking

him up. Because of Frank Stella, who got out of Princeton and became an immediate success, everybody wanted to have a one-person show at the Whitney by the time they were twenty-five. We believed that if you hadn't made it by then, you were finished. And by the time you were thirty, you should have your retrospective, a retrospective that traveled. My friends really believed this scenario. Of course, it is pretty much nonsense because it takes some years to mature.

Around 1969–70, when Michael Balog was picked up by Castelli, he did resin paintings that came out of Ron Cooper's work—the early work of Cooper was quite interesting and Michael did similar work. He made resin sheets that were sand blasted; color upon color would come through. There would be holes in the works and they would be hung up on nylon.

Around 1984 I had dinner with Diane Keaton and Woody Allen; they used to hang around the artworld in New York, and she was wearing her Annie Hall outfit. She told me that she had met Michael on an airplane and was with him for a number of years. They were boyfriend and girlfriend. When Michael finally came back from New York with little success to show for it, he blew his brains out. He believed he was a failure in New York, but the truth is that he wasn't ready to show there and couldn't live up to his reputation as the "next Jasper Johns."

David Deutsch was a student who had lots of money because his father started the Deutsch Tool and Die Company. With his money, he was able to bring a lot of people around him. At that time, he made drip paintings like Morris Louis, but he did them with plastic that he would pour directly on the wall. Because he was so wealthy, Deutsch would pull up to school in his XKG, but after a few months he realized that wasn't a cool thing to do.

Bill Leavitt was assistant to the Dean. He was about five years older than I was and had come from the University of Colorado. By the time I met him, Bill was a mature artist; he was out of school and doing a lot of work, very much like the work he is still doing—very kitsch, cliché West Coast sets with big palm trees. Helene Winer picked him up at Metro Pictures, but his work never went over and he got dropped. He was a real comer and then he backed off. I don't know if it was because he had too much integrity; I can't put my finger on what the problem was. I parted ways with him; he was somewhat distant, but we still remained friends through the years.

While I was an undergrad at Chouinard, there were different groups. There was the Arnoldi-Dill group. Another group included Bas Jan Ader, Bill Leavitt, Al Ruppersberg, Wolfgang Stoerchle, and Ger van Elk. This group felt like it was the most elite because they went to Europe a lot and were hooked up with Artt Projects, in Amsterdam, and with many European galleries. Artt Projects was a gallery in Amsterdam that put out a newsletter every other week discussing approaches to Conceptual art. Bas Jan Ader was very close with Bill; they were best of friends. While Bill was already assistant Dean at Chouinard, Bas Jan pursued his graduate degree out at Claremont.

Bas Jan took off in his boat on a journey around the world; he went everywhere in his boat, until he was lost at sea. He left on the boat trip but never arrived because the boat blew up. The difference between Bas Jan and me is that I wouldn't have to take that boat trip; a flyer would have been enough. He came out of a time when the artist had to be involved in making a piece; he physically had to make the journey, while I would have treated it as pure theater, so a publication would have been enough.

Bas Jan was very close with Bill and with Ger van Elk, who came over from Amsterdam and was a friend of

John Baldessari's; they did something called "Joke Art," a term thrown around at the time. Van Elk did a lot of air brush and photowork and had some early success. He would walk into a room with his leather jacket on and think he was on top of the world, but then he sort of faded out. Wolfgang Stoerchle was part of the group and later, when I was his teaching assistant at CalArts, we became good friends. Sonnabend had picked up Ruppersberg, so it looked like he was going to make it big.

I knew Tom Wudl very well at Chouinard; he was from South America of German Jewish extraction, but he could be so sentimental! Tom was married to a Japanese girl, which didn't last too long. He hung around and hung around and wouldn't let go. He had some early success, showing at Riko Mizuno's in the early 1970s, but remained local and never went to New York.

Barry Le Va was in L.A. earlier. There was a famous incident when Le Va did a show of his scatter pieces at the Arco Gallery; the janitor came in and cleaned up the space, not knowing that what he was cleaning up was the art. The janitor swept everything up and threw it away; it's a funny story that I still remember vividly.

Barry did very well; he was part of a Minimalist group whose art had similarities with the work of Richard Serra. At that time he was one of the few artists to come out of Otis to have any national success. The first year out of art school as an undergrad, he was on the cover of *Artforum.* Barry went to New York; he taught at the School of Visual Arts when I was teaching there. He had a lot of trouble selling his work at Sonnabend, where he showed for years; he couldn't sell work, he couldn't make money. Years later I got to know him just as I was beginning to do well. It's really nice when people come up to meet you and treat you like an equal. I view him as a precursor to a lot of work that was subsequently made in L.A. His stock

is still very high.

Michael Asher, Mary Corse, and Doug Wheeler were involved in white-on-white kinds of paintings. I'll always remember being with Michael in Europe, where we had been invited to show, all expenses paid. We would have breakfast together and Michael would ask for a receipt for the trolley ride; then he would ask for a receipt for his cup of coffee. I said to him, When they said all expenses paid, I don't think they had in mind a cup of coffee or a trolley ride. But Michael just kept saving every one of his receipts.

I remember when Richard Serra and Dennis Oppenheim came to see my shows at Metro Pictures; the gallery would tell me that Serra had come in a couple of times, and that Dennis had come in a couple of times. Because I had known about these people since I was a student, it was awesome and made it all real.

I learned very quickly that the art community is closely linked with the art dealers who promote your work and that you had to have the right connections for your career to go anywhere.

In 1970–71, while I was at CalArts, I hooked up with Helene Winer. We met because she was director of the gallery at Pomona College and did some writing for the *L.A. Times.* She lived in L.A. and commuted to Claremont a few days a week, but otherwise wrote about art and visited lots of studios. She curated a show at Pomona with my work and Bill Wegman's, who was living in L.A. at the time and who was already doing the photographs of his dog. Bill came out and became friends with Chris Burden, Robert Cumming, Richard Jackson, and John White. When he left to go to New York, he gave his studio on Main Street to John Baldessari.

At Pomona I showed big beams of wood spirals, using the post-Minimalist vocabulary of Richard Serra.

Guy Dill built a career for himself using that vocabulary. That's one reason I stopped doing work like that; I figured a lot of other artists could pick up and run with those ideas. Helene and I got together within a couple of months of that show; she had done a tour of L.A. artists because she had come over from London, where she worked at Whitechapel. She thought she was into people like Gilbert and George, Baldessari, and Kosuth. Years later, she found out that they were not her generation. Generations are set by sensibility, not by age.

Because I was with Helene, I met a lot of people. Helene was one of the most important catalysts for bringing the different groups of L.A. artists together. Without her I would not have known many of them because some were so snobbish. Bas Jan wouldn't give me the time of day. Helene created a remarkable series of shows out in Claremont. She was the only curator interested in new work in L.A; among others, she had shows for Baldessari, as well as Bas Jan Ader, Chris Burden, Ger van Elk, Bill Leavitt, Al Ruppersberg, Wolfgang Stoerchle, and Bill Wegman.

Irving Blum passed through my studio; he was another liaison with the East Coast. After Ferus Gallery closed, he was trying to create a new L.A. art scene, so he picked up on Guy Dill and Michael Balog; he exhibited them and pushed their careers when they were just out of Chouinard. Laddie John Dill didn't go to CalArts—he was already showing with Ileana Sonnabend. He was accepted into the CalArts grad program but never enrolled. I got the spot when Paul Brach asked me if I wanted to take his place; that was the best thing that could have ever happened to me.

Nick Wilder was showing the so-called salon painters—Agnes Martin and Helen Frankenthaler—exhibits of big salon paintings. I eventually ended up showing with

Patty Faure, who was Nick's director. At first it was the Asher Faure Gallery, but then Betty Asher, Michael's mother, dropped out and it became the Faure Gallery. I remember delivering art to Nick Wilder in the 1960s; it seemed to me to be a decadent scene. Nick could be so rude, but he was smart about art and he had a very good eye. I often went into his back room and looked at the paintings in storage; I would see all the great stuff he had back there—work by Joe Goode, Agnes Martin, Ed Ruscha, and a lot of others.

Before she flipped out, I asked Eugenia Butler to my studio; she had a mastectomy and then started hanging out with Paul Cotton, who wore a pink bunny outfit with a pink peeny hanging out. Eugenia left her husband, Jim Butler, for Paul. Jim was a big-time lawyer who specialized in litigation arising out of airplane crashes and they had lots of kids together.

Morgan Thomas ran FAR—Foundation for Art Resources—and in 1979 I had a show there. I remember when Morgan and Jim Butler got together; Morgan told me she was going to marry him. I got the feeling that in part it was because Morgan considered it a good move financially. Jim was going to be good to her and she wouldn't have to worry about anything; she could go back to being an artist. They moved to Northern California. Morgan once said something insightful about my work; she said it was "hit or miss."

Riko Mizuno was an unusual dealer. Her gallery was at 669 North La Cienega, before it became Rosamund Felsen's space. Riko would sit in the back and drink coffee. I could never figure her out, but everyone wanted to show at Riko Mizuno and everybody did. She showed Billy Al Bengston and Ed Moses and Tom Wudl and a whole series of performance artists. In the early 1970s I did a performance in her gallery, and in the 1980s she showed Chris

Burden, Jill Giegerich, and Mike Kelley. She must have sold some work because she had her gallery for a long time. She never did anything; she sat in the back and drank coffee. She had an interesting persona, somewhat inscrutable with her broken English, and was very laid-back. She was smart enough to show a lot of great artists early on in their careers. Dealers work by manipulating secrets; their business is all about obtaining information.

As students we worked for a lot of different artists. I worked for Ed Kienholz and then for Peter Alexander; it was the way we got to know well-known artists. Much later on in my career, during the 1980s, I was in a few museum shows in Europe with Kienholz, and I remember the difference in his attitude towards me. He didn't even recall that I had worked for him, since by then I was an equal with him.

A lot of people didn't think that the early CalArts graduates were going to make it in New York; they thought we were going to come back empty handed, so I think they were a little shocked when it eventually did happen. It seemed like a long shot at the time; few people had made it big from the West Coast. Maybe Diebenkorn, but he had already been around so long, went back so far, he was another generation. By the mid-1960s, Ed Ruscha had also made it big. Of course, Ed Kienholz had been around for some time. But the others had to settle for teaching jobs elsewhere; they gave up making it big on the East Coast.

A lot of the L.A. artists left the artworld—Ron Cooper ended up in New Mexico becoming a cowboy, while Jim Ganzer ended up selling clothes in L.A. using the Malibu surfing mystique. At the time, it seemed that the L.A. artworld had room for one of everybody—one Conceptual artist, one sculptor, one painter, but only one star in each category. The artworld was so much smaller in L.A. that anyone who was ambitious had to get away, had to go to New York.

2

When I was at Chouinard, most of the art I saw told me about the artists. Western art tells me who the artists are; but in Japanese painting you are taught to understand who you are.

At Chouinard, there was Mike Kanemitsu, Nob Hadeishi, Emerson Woelffer, and Funk, a printmaker who worked for Gemini and Tamarind. Mike Kanemitsu and Emerson Woelffer were the older guys; they were contemporaries of Pollock. After the war they both went to the Art Students League. Kanemitsu helped me out, financially and with his support. I had been influenced by my father, who is a student of Buddhism. At Chouinard I was very influenced by Jack's energy. Jack and I had a business called GK Frames—Goldstein/Kosaka Frames. We made Plexiglas frames. That is how we got by. For Minimalism, Plexiglas was the name of the game. Chuck Arnoldi had his own framing business but could give it up because he was making so much money from his art.

Galleries were the community meeting ground for artists. I remember especially Ace Gallery, Eugenia Butler, Dwan Gallery, Riko Mizuno, Nick Wilder. Mizuno's gallery was called 669 Gallery, which is the space that Rosamund

Felsen subsequently moved into. Riko spoke English, not fluently, but she spoke English. Everyone wanted to show with her. Larry Bell, Robert Irwin, Ed Moses, Kenny Price—Riko was the goddess. All of those artists have become very famous. She kept lots of their work and now, finally, she is selling the objects and is financially secure. At the most, she was ten years older than we were.

Tom Wudl had a show at Eugenia Butler—the gold-leaf bags. After that, I did map pieces there. It was an interesting time—La Cienega had Monday night openings. L.A. is where it all started, and then the scene moved to Japan and New York.

Willoughby Sharp edited *Avalanche* magazine, which came out around 1967. I bought *Avalanche* regularly; I went to the newsstand when it arrived. The first issues had Vito Acconci and Bruce Nauman on the covers and then Lawrence Weiner and Dan Graham; I still have those magazines.

In 1971 one of the most important events was the exhibition of performance art organized at Pomona College by Helene Winer. On the walls of the gallery were pieces by Bill Wegman; I think we all knew him. There were also pieces by Bas Jan Ader, John Baldessari, Jack Goldstein, Bill Leavitt, and Al Ruppersberg. Then came the performances by me, Chris Burden, Wolfgang Stoerchle—three of us did performances, some of the first in Los Angeles. Every week there was a different one. We were not known by anyone; we were separated from the Venice artists. There was a real bifurcation in our sensibilities towards life. Bas did a crying piece and a falling piece.

Before I left, Jack and I shared Ron Cooper's old studio. In 1970, while still at Chouinard, I did a performance in which a musician improvised depending on which postcard I chose. I built a music box and played it in the tunnel on First Street. Another piece was called *Hunt-*

ing Ground for Scholars Only, influenced by Joseph Beuys. This was called a "condition piece," where people stayed in one position for a long time. Recently, I have been turning back to that material again. Another performance was *Five Hour Run,* in which I ran for five hours and then the door was opened and I could leave.

I understood Wolfgang Stoerchle really well because of his German sensibilities. When I lived in Japan, we wrote to each other. He was interested in me because I wrote about Buddhist theories of art. After returning to Japan, I went back to my cultural traditions, especially to my childhood training in archery. I decided to train myself again in Zen archery.

In 1973 I did a purgation piece—a purifying performance—in which I walked a thousand miles. During my nomadic walk, I did a gypsy work in Kobe, a flamenco piece. I had razors on my two fingers and blood was pouring out on white paper while the flamenco guitarist was playing.

In 1983, after a period of time in Japan, I returned to L.A. and started to do some big performances, using a hundred people on the stage. I brought my archery back again into the performances. I did performances at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center and some at the Museum of Contemporary Art. I had become a minister at one of the local temples, so I had a lot of access to the community. It usually takes years to get access to that kind of staging, with so many people in a performance.

At MOCA, I brought together hundreds of suitcases that people had taken with them when they immigrated to the United States. I collected them from all over the area. In two years, I found around three hundred suitcases; they had a musty smell from having been stored away for so long. In another piece I brought together many electric

blankets, all sewn together. They were hung up, all of them hot; they gave off a lot of heat. In one piece I had dancers dancing on top of copy machines, and the machines would copy their feet and their bodies. In another piece I had two seventeen-mile, twelve-million-candlelight searchlights blazing into the theater. The light was projected through the audience and onto the stage. When the target came out, the searchlights hit it.

I think all of these pieces came out of my archery. The copy machine piece was called *In Between the Heartbeat.* In order to make a perfect shot, you have to take immediate action without intermediate thoughts. When I am almost ready to shoot, I have to listen to my heartbeat and reduce it to forty beats a minute. I have to shoot in between the heartbeats because if I shoot on the heartbeat, the arrow blurs. That is the whole notion of that piece—it is about the in-between.

The English language and the Japanese language are so different. In English we have the word "and"—a conjunction. In Japanese we have no conjunctions. When you say, for example, "space and time," you have a conjunction and that separates two entities. In the Japanese language, we have no conjunctions separating entities. Things are intertwined already, harmoniously. In English grammar, everything is separated and so you ask questions about what exists. I think the difference between West and East is the conjunction.

It is like a haiku poem; it doesn't give you an answer. There is a certain architectural space in the traditional Japanese house called the veranda. The veranda is a Sanskrit word; it means "to meet." It is like a porch. It is in-between space, neither inside nor outside. It is a buffer zone. It is not black, it is not white. It is infinite areas of gray space. That is the area I am trying to find and explore in my art. Art does not need to be "yes" or "no," it can be

"maybe," like the veranda. Meeting Jack and my classmates at Chouinard, I had a conflict; I was coming from the gray space where there is no conjunction. But everyone else insisted on "yes" and "no." I had a hard time. In all of my works, I am living in a buffer zone.

In the 1950s, the Japanese Gutai group was active; they had all experienced the Second World War. In Western books, artists always look for a "yes" and a "no"; Yves Klein was an exception because he was a judo master. In his comments about art, his judo comes first. His blue paintings came from his judo; after he had finished his practice, he was all sweaty so he took off his shirt and lay down on the mat. When he got up, there was the imprint of his body. From that experience, he decided to saturate human bodies in blue pigment and pull them over canvases. The technique he learned is the technique he is trying to ignore.

I teach archery to about fifteen students; for over twenty-five years I've been doing this. Students learn about self and the egoless mind. Release the arrow without self. You learn to shoot your self because you are the ego.

Everything is conjoined. It is the veranda, the buffer. Void is not so much empty; it is everything. Western grammar and Western philosophies are very different from Eastern grammar and Eastern philosophies. So it is difficult to explain in English.

When Paul Schimmel did his "Out of Action" show, the Gutai group was displayed right at the entrance, which I thought was a gutsy thing to do. The Gutai group always was in the shadows, but at that moment they were brought forward. Jackson Pollock was very interested in the Gutai group. Of course, in the fifteenth century, Japanese monks were already splashing ink: Circles, triangles, squares. All of the monastic gardens, they were so abstract.

I don't see myself different from those monks. Even today, I go back and see Zen gardens. My father is the twenty-first generation of landscape gardeners in my family. The tradition goes back five hundred years. At different ages, I have been given special viewings of celebrated gardens. I have seen almost three thousand gardens in my lifetime. Some gardens are very meditative, as well as a learning experience for the disciples. A garden I saw recently is called *August 15, 8:30 p.m.* It is a secret garden. It was built around the sixteenth century on Shikoku Island. I went there with my father, and we were given lodging in the monastery. August 15 came, and around 8:00 p.m., we were sitting on the veranda. There was white gravel and some large rocks; at night it is very beautiful there. It was hot sitting on the veranda, and my father said, Give it five more minutes. The monastery was built on bent axial orientation with the cleft of the mountain. A full moon came out of the crevice onto the garden. I said, It is very beautiful but I have seen other gardens which are much more interesting. My father said that I had to look at it longer. After about twenty minutes, the moon had risen up from the crevice. Suddenly, a shadow was cast from the protruding rocks and it wrote in Chinese characters "spirit."

The sixteenth century. How do you create art after seeing something like that? We talk about the avant-garde but this piece was from the sixteenth century. I come from that lineage; meeting Jack was so different! Now I can bring the two traditions together.

In the early 1970s, there was suddenly a space for the kind of work I was doing; before that there was the work of Chuck Arnoldi and the Dill brothers. Art in L.A. was about making objects that were beautiful and that you put on the wall. Decoration. All of a sudden there was space, a small space, for a different kind of work that dealt with more important issues. There were just a small number

of people doing this new kind of work: Bas Jan Ader, John Baldessari, Chris Burden, Jack Goldstein, Bill Leavitt, Bruce Nauman, Al Ruppersberg, Wolfgang Stoerchle, Bill Wegman, and New York artists who were promoted by *Avalanche* magazine and Willoughby Sharp.

There were maybe a dozen people, you could count them on your fingers, and we were outcasts, complete outcasts; that is why Jack and I could move into Ron Cooper's studio. Ron and his friends gave up their studios and moved down to Venice. This was the same split that took place at CalArts, between those students who worked with Allan Hacklin and those who worked with John Baldessari. There were the painterly beauty artists and there were the Post-Studio Conceptual artists. The two sides didn't cross over. Some people like Tom Wudl straddled both worlds, only to be dropped by both. It was like Viet Nam—there were the long hairs and the short hairs. It was a cultural and social dynamic that we may never see again.

Allan Kaprow was someone who seemed to straddle both worlds, but when he was at CalArts he was like a footnote; he asked me about the Gutai group and I gave him some magazines and some photographs.

My work was not intended to be art; but some people saw it and I was fortunate to be invited to the São Paulo Biennial. I was invited to Berlin and big dance festivals like the Colorado Dance Festival and then to Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts, which was very beautiful and where Martha Graham danced. Now, I mostly write and make drawings, performances, and installations, using the whole stage. The Whitney called me for a performance show, but it is very expensive to do big performances—$30,000 to $40,000. I've become really good at grant writing, so I write grants to help me out. For eighteen years, I've been at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center; I think I'll bury my bones there! They give me a great deal

of independence. For a long time I was a minister here on First Street, so a lot of the people know me as "Reverend."

●

Helene and Jack, Paris, 1971

3

In 1958 I came to Los Angeles from Bolivia. I was put back a grade and became a notorious underachiever in my schoolwork. I always did very badly on the tests they give students in order to place them in classes for the coming academic year. All of my friends were in the honors classes; during recess and after school I would hang out with people who were overachievers, many of whom went to prestigious universities and became esteemed professionals. Then, after recess, I went back to my classes with other low-achieving students.

Before I came to the United States, and by the time I was ten, I knew that I was an artist. When I went to museums and saw paintings, I knew that what was important about the picture and a good deal of the content of the painting was how it was painted, much more so than what it described. I was not a very good draughtsman as a child; I was not one of those precocious kids. The drawing and the discipline my work is known for didn't come until much later. However, I had the emotional aptitude and understood art in ways that many of my fellow students didn't.

At Hamilton High, I don't really remember knowing

Jack, but that tells me that in those days Jack was already his stealth self. Regarding the art program, I felt very fortunate because I had a real guardian angel in one of my art teachers; her name was Dale Peralta. She had been the art teacher at my Junior High School; she saved me because from the very first day, she acknowledged my gifts and did everything possible to cultivate the freedom to allow me to go as far as I wanted. In later years she told me that she would have conversations with other faculty members in the faculty lounge to try to explain to them that I was not really a moron and in fact had some intelligence.

Dale Peralta helped me get into summer programs at Manual Arts High School, at Otis, and at UCLA Extension, where my first, and probably only great, art teacher was Charles Garabedian.

I had a very low grade point average so going to a university was out of the question. At that time Otis was run like a tight academy: The place was spotlessly clean, and they would give students drawing exams before allowing them to go into the next year. Upstairs was called the "Ivory Tower" and was where only the most highly trained, academically oriented draughtsmen would be allowed to work. The core faculty consisted of Joe Magniani, who was illustrator for the film industry and a technician in the manner of Rico Lebrun, and an old black guy named Charles White, who was a respectable academic draughtsman.

I found Otis to be utterly intimidating because I was not only an underachiever academically, so far as I was concerned I really didn't know how to draw. I chose Chouinard because when I went to visit, it was a dump. I knew that I could fade into the place, and I was correct. When I got there I realized that Chouinard was the last place for anyone to have even the vaguest respectability; it was below being respectable, and everyone there was a n'er-do-well or had fallen short in life. All the instructors, all the

administrators—it was a tattered place, but interestingly enough, all of the important artists came out of Chouinard rather than from Otis.

I received a partial scholarship handed to me personally by Walt Disney. Walt was a friend of the late Mrs. Chouinard; she was not a good businesswoman, and he used to bail her out and funnel money into the school before he finally bought it.

The faculty members were, on the one hand, retired animators from Disney, and on the other hand, they were like Jepson, who had run his own art institute at one time and was completely senile. Even in his senility, he could draw every bone in the body. Then there was Watson Cross, who was a cripple; he clearly had some tremendous deformity and could scarcely negotiate the steps to his classroom, which was upstairs. His was the most interesting beginner's class because we got to make immense murals the size of a large wall. He was not a great artist nor intellect, but because of his personality, and because of his handicapped state, he permitted his students great liberty, which was an important component of each student's early education.

So far as I can remember, Jack was not in any classes with me. The students in my classes were more in my age group; I believe that Jack was a little bit older than I was. Some of the students were people I had met in the gifted kids' classes: They included Hiro Kosaka; another was Jesus Cortez, who was tremendously talented and ended up being an animator.

At Chouinard, my first impressions of Jack were that I should be very wary of him. I believed that there was something diabolical about him. I felt that every time he was talking with you, he was not being sincere; he was taking advantage of you and trying to get something from you. I can say about both Chuck Arnoldi and Jack that they

seemed like sociopaths, people who had absolutely no conscience and were utterly untrustworthy. Chuck could on occasion be generous and gregarious and very giving; there would be an interchange. With Jack, I always felt threatened, perhaps because he knew he had the capacity to project a sinister aura and would exploit that ability. Not that he didn't have charm, but I always had to be on my guard with him. He had a kind of personality that in my sheltered life was new to me. I had never come into contact with an individual like that before.

Jack would not make any work and then would come up with stuff. In those days he was making extremely Minimalist, polished Plexiglas and resin objects. There was a previous generation of artists who were forerunners in the use of plastics. That generation included Terry O'Shea, who had quite a reputation early on, showing lovely little lozenges made out of polished acrylic; and Doug Edge, who had a very impressive show at Riko Mizuno's. Edge made huge pieces of furniture out of Plexiglas, like a bus bench, which were stuffed with rice and other substances. Ron Cooper had just graduated from Chouinard and was making plastic pieces. Also Doug Wheeler, but Doug traveled in more elite circles. Doug had managed to insinuate himself into various museum shows. He wouldn't get his hands dirty just having a gallery show.

A story going around about Wheeler was that he was making some pieces with resin in the manner of Bob Irwin and that he sprayed resin with a spray gun. The story was that he wasn't careful and had to go to an ear, nose, and throat specialist to pull plastic out of his nose. If the story is true, it is a miracle that he is still alive.

I remember being surprised that Jack's work had that extremely designed quality, which his work has had since. In his typical way, he rarely made the work himself; it was true even then that he had it made by someone else.

Charlene Narita was a very sensuous American student of Japanese extraction who was crazy but who very much enjoyed the attention lavished upon her by all of the male students. She had liaisons with many of them; I think Jack was one of them. I had a Platonic relationship with her, but she had a strong sexual relationship with another student named Michael Maglish, who in my opinion was one of the most gifted students there. It was through Charlene that I remember getting connected with Jack. It was hilarious, though, that by the time we left Chouinard, she ended up with a black butch lesbian and they became vicious, militant male-bashers. It was a turn of events no one would ever have predicted.

Paul Drake was a student at Chouinard who was very influential. Long before anybody knew anything about Duchamp, Paul had read all of his writings and begun to do superconceptual work. He looked like Brahms had stepped out of the history pages, a big guy with a big beard. He worked in the library and for some time went with Diane, the librarian, who eventually was Jack's girlfriend. Diane would do anything for Jack. She used to buy him blue jeans; he hated them when they were new, so she stonewashed and then ironed them. It was interesting because she was such a middle-class woman, with a small son, and they had a torrid relationship. They accommodated each other well because he was able to benefit from her affection and domesticity while she benefited from his insanity.

Within the first year I met everybody at Chouinard, including Raul Guerrero and his cousin Valo, two of the most gifted young people I have ever met in my life. Raul is still around and lives in San Diego; I don't know whatever happened to Valo, but I remember going to visit them. I was very innocent and naïve concerning the world; in every way, I had a lot to learn at Chouinard. In those days I already had a certain arrogance born out of insecurity.

Raul and Valo made my head spin because they were especially gifted. To me it looked like they knew what was going on and what it took to be an artist. They were engaged in issues about which I was completely ignorant, including how to comport oneself as a creative person. I was immensely impressed and respectful of them while at the same time I was competitive with them. Raul manufactured a full-scale working replica of one of Duchamp's machines.

I never declared a major, even if I was supposed to; I was a tremendously spaced-out person and never paid attention to any of those things. I finally did graduate in fine arts, but not in any area of fine arts. I never had an advisor who told me what to take; or, if someone did, I was unaware of it.

John Canavier taught a class called "Materials and Methods"; we were never allowed to finish anything but were required to experiment with a variety of different materials. I think everyone looked forward to the class because it was hands-on and you were pretty much left on your own to cast fifty pounds of plaster and do something with it. The only memorable painting instructors were Mike Kanemitsu and Emerson Woelffer, but they didn't really teach anything. They were also has-beens, alcoholics for whom this was the last stop of any respectability.

Woelffer did eventually teach at Otis and became an esteemed senior citizen in the art community, deservedly so because of his ties to the history of modern art in the twentieth century, in particular with the Abstract Expressionists. He was not, in my opinion, a great artist. He had connections; at one time he was good friends with Robert Motherwell, but he was also an extremely bitter person who once confided in me that Motherwell stole all of his ideas. One of the most interesting classes at Chouinard, which was not even an official class, was offered by

Emerson; he used to give art history lectures, which were mostly anecdotes of all the people he knew. As a young man, he had been at the Bauhaus in Chicago and actually had a tape recording of Triztan Tzara reciting one of his Dada poems. These were very memorable moments during our education. His contribution in that regard was invaluable and is where the affection and respect of many of his former students reside. He directly illuminated, in a very human way, a period of time which is usually taught in a dry and academic manner.

When he first arrived Kanemitsu was dressed in a tailored, brown-almost-crimson-colored suit, a fuchsia-colored shirt and a red tie, with pointy shoes; he smoked cigarettes in the most affected way, speaking with a marked Japanese American accent. He was incredibly condescending; in retrospect one can see his immense insecurities. For a short while he had taught at Berkeley and would tell us that we were worthless shit and New York was where it was happening; of course, we didn't know that he couldn't open one door in New York.

I actually worked for Kanemitsu at his studio on Clifton. I appreciated the fact that he allowed me to make a little money. We would go to his house afterwards, where often there was Ivan Hosoi, a gifted Hawaiian who painted interesting Pop art paintings. Ivan never went anywhere; he was another of those burnt-out cases. Kanemitsu ended up teaching at Otis for a very long time; we even spent time team-teaching a class together. My memory of him is infused with difficult and tragic feelings. One of Graham Greene's novels is called *A Burnt Out Case,* and that pretty much describes the faculty members at Chouinard.

I was on work-study and one day found myself getting a mop and a broom; that is when I met Chuck Arnoldi, who was also on work-study. We befriended each other

sweeping and mopping the floors together. Chuck was rooming with Michael Balog; eventually Chuck and Laddie John Dill teamed up and they became inseparable. Among other things, they formed a serious business partnership; they rented a loft together and had a business making plastic frames.

Chuck and Laddie had the street smarts and know-how to get along with people, especially women; before too long they were showing. Laddie was first. Through Rosamund Felsen and the parties at her house, Laddie met Rauschenberg, who took a real liking to both of them because they were indefatigably charismatic. They were good-looking, smart, and worked hard at becoming successful artists. They showed everybody else what it took to make it—the kind of ambition and determination—and made heads spin, including my own.

Chuck and Laddie had an immense studio at Pico and Olive, upstairs, where they started their business making Plexiglas frames for people. Chuck was doing plastic pieces in the manner of Ron Cooper, with a little different twist to them, and also somewhat like Doug Wheeler's work. Meanwhile, Laddie was making his sand pieces; when Rauschenberg brought Ileana Sonnabend in to look at the work, that was it. Laddie had the first big coup, especially over Chuck. His first show was at Sonnabend's and was a big success. He had piles of sand through which he stuck neon tubes; there were more neon tubes on the wall. The tubes were fragmented so they almost looked like bamboo; they were very elegant.

All of the art ladies would come around to Chuck and Laddie's place to order Plexiglas frames, to get laid, and to buy their pictures. It was a one-stop shop. I had taken over another place that was tiny but very cute, which Jim Ganzer was vacating. At that time I was gilding sandwich-sized paper bags; I made a set of ten and put them on

a Plexiglas shelf. Then I decided I would make ten shelves; I didn't have a wall large enough to install them, and Chuck and Laddie were kind enough to let me put shelves up on a wall in their studio. They were generous, even if there was a price to pay here and there. I don't think of them as having been selfish; they were possessive of their successes, but if there was an opportunity to help someone else along, they would.

Chuck wanted to have a show with Nick Wilder. Joel Bass was always saying that he was going to have a show at Nick's; Joel was a rich trust-fund kid like David Deutsch and Jack Barth. I remember going to Joel's studio and he would tell me that Nick was about to come over. In the early 1970s, there were only two galleries that anyone would want to show in and they were Nick Wilder's and Irving Blum's. Then Eugenia Butler and Riko Mizuno came along and opened 669 Gallery, 669 North La Cienega, which suddenly became a very hot place. After they split up, both Eugenia and Riko had their own very respectable establishments. Riko began to distinguish herself by having shows of Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, and Ed Moses; in 1970 or 1971 Chuck had a show at Riko's.

One day I was having lunch with David Deutsch, who was also at Chouinard, and from whom I eventually sublet a studio. He said to me, What are you going to do for your show at Eugenia Butler Gallery? Apparently Eugenia had made a visit to see Chuck and Laddie and saw my piece there; she was curious about it. Without my even knowing it, she started telling people she was going to give me a show. This took place before I had graduated from Chouinard. I had my first show at Eugenia's, and the following year I had my second show at Riko's.

At one time Riko had the most pristine, beautiful space anywhere because of all of the artists who contributed to it. Bob Irwin would come in and say, We have to

take this ceiling out and put it up over there; Larry Bell would come and say, We have to put a wall over here and some skylights there; then Ed Moses would come in and make another suggestion. Within a five-year period, they made this gorgeous box. Riko lived upstairs. She sold very well; my first couple of shows with her were total sellouts.

By the time Riko came along, Ferus Gallery had been established, so the three good places to show were with Riko, Nick Wilder, and Irving Blum. Riko was never a salesperson; she was successful because of her good eye and her charm. She was always a person of some means, although it was a little mysterious where she got her money. She was capable of making very extravagant sales to Japanese clients; they would want a Jasper Johns or some other blue-chip art and Riko was their contact. She wasn't into the day-to-day business of selling art and was a semi-aristocrat. She wasn't going to deal with the riffraff and as soon as the art business became competitive, she realized that it was too low-brow for her. She left 669 North La Cienega to Larry Gagosian, who passed it on to Timothea Stewart, who passed it on to Rosamund Felsen. Rosamund's first show was work by Guy Dill. Riko proceeded to find other elegant quarters, which became progressively smaller. First she moved to a place that Arata Isozaki renovated for her on Robertson Boulevard; after she left, Jan Turner had it for a while.

Claire Copley was a long-time girlfriend of Al Ruppersberg; she was a trust-fund girl and her brother Billy was an artist. It wasn't until years later that I understood her background. Her father Bill Copley was a wealthy person who had run a gallery in Beverly Hills in the fifties, where he showed Man Ray and Duchamp, and the Arensbergs bought from him. Claire inherited enough money for her to have a gallery on La Cienega. I didn't know her well, but I knew that she showed Minimalist-Conceptualist-ori-

ented art. She showed Michael Asher, for instance, and seemed like a smart, nice, genuine person. At some point she moved back to New York.

Then this stranger called Doug Chrismas came into town, who opened up an immense space in West Hollywood. Subsequently Margo Leavin opened, but that was some years later. At one point in the late sixties, the situation was symbolized by the Nick Wilder Gallery on the one hand, and the David Stuart Gallery on the other. Vija Celmins, Laurence Dreiband and Sam Francis all had shows with David Stuart, who had what was like a salon, selling contemporary art as well as Southwest Indian pottery.

In 1970 I graduated from Chouinard, the last year of the institution and the same year Jack graduated. I applied to grad school and was going to go if I got a scholarship and a job. I only applied to CalArts; they accepted me, but they didn't give me a scholarship or a job. Paul Brach was running the program in those days, and he reminded me of Kanemitsu all over again. It seemed to me that he handled the transition between Chouinard and CalArts in a most unprofessional manner; it was like a circus spectacle. In the spring of 1970 he and his cigar made it very clear to us that he was part of what amounted to a corporate raid of a legendary art school.

I decided that if CalArts was not going to give me a scholarship and not going to give me a job, and since I already had had my first show, forget it. I didn't want to have anything to do with those guys anyway. By the time Jack went off to CalArts, I had pretty much aligned myself with Chuck and Laddie.

David Deutsch came from an extremely wealthy family and never let anyone forget about it. Not that he was without talent or intelligence and sincerity; he was capable of intellectual reflection and intellectual dialogue.

But I found him intolerable and condescending. One thing that never endeared me to him was that we would go out to dinner together at a time when I really had no money. In order to be able to support myself, I worked every day after school; after I graduated I worked full time as a shipping clerk at an optical company downtown. We would go to dinner and David, who was literally, not figuratively, a millionaire, would say when the bill came that he didn't have any money. There were dinners for which I was never reimbursed; on top of that he would finish his meal first and then reach over to my plate and help himself from it.

David would only associate himself with people who he thought were going places. It didn't matter to him if you had substance; he didn't want to deal with people he thought were underdogs. For a time I was pretty good friends with him and sublet a studio in the building he leased. David was friends with Guy Williams, an instructor at Chouinard who later taught at Santa Barbara. One day Guy brought John Baldessari to David's studio; John was introduced as someone from San Diego who made paintings that had text in them. John had the glib sense of humor which he still has to this day.

David Dixon was making monumental Minimalist sculptures, which were very impressive; he was one of the world's great craftsmen. At an early age he mastered woodwork, and even got a show out at Claremont. It was at that point that David Deutsch decided that I was not going places. Deutsch decided to put all of his chips on David Dixon, so I got the pink slip and needed to move out of his hoity-toity studio. Today, few people have ever heard of David Dixon.

Michael Balog used to have his studio in the 2001 complex on Main Street in Santa Monica; Bill Wegman got it from him and passed it along to Baldessari. There was nothing to know about Michael because he was a crazy,

wild, motorcycle-riding drug-zombie guy, who was a force. Before Chuck teamed up with Laddie, he was with Balog; Balog and Chuck would make the rounds of the parties.

Balog had a show at Irving Blum that blew everybody away. He made huge sheets of resin, just like Ron Cooper used to make except that Cooper made transparent lightboxes. Balog did the opposite; he made them opaque. He would color the resin, lay a sheet on top, color it again, then sandblast holes into them and hang them by hooks from the ceiling, away from the wall. They were very macho and attractive and looked like art; they certainly caught the viewer's eye. Through Rauschenberg, they caught Leo Castelli's eye.

I know he had a show with Castelli and that he eventually committed suicide, but I think that he just flipped out. He was always out there, on the edge; if I am not mistaken, he had been institutionalized already once. He didn't strike me as being an introspective type, or a shy wallflower for whom one bad show, for example, would have been reason to commit suicide. He was clearly already suicidal in the way he used to ride his motorcycle, and the kinds of cocktail mixtures of drugs he used to take. I do remember that Michael and Diane Keaton had gotten together; for a while she had also been with Doug Wheeler.

Michael Balog, Natalie Bieser, Ron Cooper, Guy Dill and Jim Ganzer moved to Venice, and they lived in some of the stores at the abandoned Pacific Ocean Park amusement park. Chuck and Laddie followed, and eventually I went to Venice as well. Jack took over Ron Cooper's space after Ron moved to Venice, and then I took over Doug Wheeler's space.

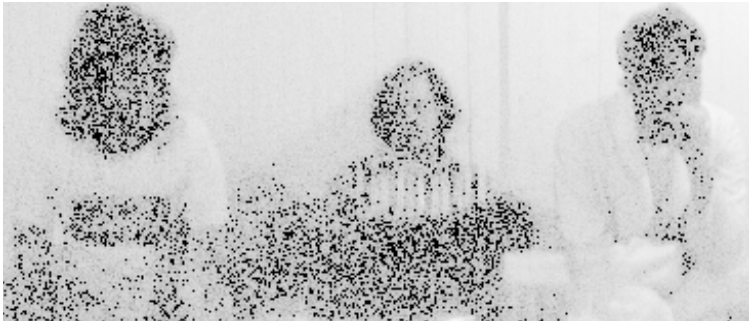
Years later, after we were all in Venice, Chuck befriended Billy Al Bengston, also working for him for a while. Anybody who met Chuck was ready to give him the shirt off his back because he showed promise and he

performed. Chuck eventually moved to New York and Janet Webb, who is now married to Larry Bell, was very generous; she let Chuck and many others, including myself, stay in her loft.

Through Jack, I remember meeting Bill Leavitt; at that time Bill was married to a woman named Nancy, I believe, and they had a son named Matthew. He was a young boy then, and Bill and Nancy had an apartment over a garage on Beverly Boulevard; it was intriguing going there because you had to go down a long driveway to get to their place. I had the sense that Nancy may have felt put upon but she always cooked nice dinners. At that time Bas Jan Ader and Bill Leavitt were extremely affected and feigned to be Duchampians.

Bas Jan Ader went to the extremes of wearing corduroy pants like Duchamp did in those late photographs of him. They wore European-style slippers and would both be sitting on chairs, smoking big, fat cigars. The most interesting thing I remember is that they edited a number of small publications; I don't know how many editions there were, but there were a couple of them. I found Bas to be intolerable because he was so affected; but Bill had some substance to him, and I thought that he was down-to-earth. Then a terrible tragedy ensued; Bill and Nancy had an infant child who died suddenly in his sleep. That was very difficult, and I think led to the dissolution of his marriage. After that Bill disappeared and only once in a while would reappear. Out of all of the quasi-conceptually oriented artists, I had a great deal of respect for him because his work had qualities other than his telling us how smart he was, or his being deliberately confrontational.

●



Jack, Paul McMahon and Matt Mullican, New York, 1974

4

In spring 1970 I learned about the CalArts program through Paul Brach, who rented a studio of mine in L.A. Since Laddie John Dill had dropped out of the program, there was a spot available; Paul asked me if I wanted it. I became a grad student at CalArts and that changed the course of my life.

In 1970 Chouinard became CalArts; when CalArts took over, we didn't know that practically none of the instructors from Chouinard would go to the new school. I'm one of the few people who bridged both places. In classes on perspective, we would make drawings of the new studios. Few other students had the opportunity to see what they looked like when they were just completed. I went from being at Chouinard, in the last year of its existence, to CalArts, in the first year of its existence at Villa Cabrini in Burbank. Chouinard Art Institute and the Music School combined were always called CalArts, but in the early days of the merger fine art students usually said that they went to Chouinard.

John Baldessari was there the very first day; he had tremendous influence over all of us. When I was in grad

school at CalArts, each of us was handpicked and it was all paid for. There were twelve of us in the fine art grad program; there weren't twenty or thirty people running around, there were twelve students and that was it. I was in sculpture, someone else was in video, someone else was in painting. In a class that John was teaching, I remember showing slides of my sculpture; I looked over at John and realized that he was not impressed; I was not getting any encouragement. I figured that if he wasn't impressed, then there wasn't anything to be impressed by. If you're going to be an artist, you have to be the best at what you do. Some people settle for a slot in between. I have always been oriented to the idea that if you're not on top of the pile, there's no reason for doing it at all.

When I first arrived at CalArts, John said I had to drop my "fuck you" attitude. I knew what he meant by that. In different ways, I've had a lot of dealers and collectors tell me the same thing. They would tell me to hobnob more, show up at openings, to be more social. I was told that it would hurt me if I didn't sharpen my social skills, so I tried to rise to the occasion but it was never enough; I couldn't satisfy them. I'm a loner and that has allowed me to maneuver more easily, to cross over into different groups, but also to become isolated.

I knew there was something going on in the artworld other than what was going on in L.A.; I didn't know what CalArts was going to be, but it turned out to be awesome. Mimi Schapiro and Judy Chicago started the Feminist program at CalArts; Ravi Shankar would play the sitar in the cafeteria during lunch; they tried to bring Herbert Marcuse up from San Diego—even though he never came. The school was founded by the Disneys and for those white Republicans from Orange County, we were all raving lunatics. By 1976 CalArts had given itself an identity, but when I was there in the early 1970s we didn't know what it

would become. Paul Brach brought in Baldessari and then Allan Kaprow, who at the time seemed to be the token well-known artist. I remember Kaprow giving a lecture, and for all of us he became an image of what we wanted to become.

Kaprow took on this image because Baldessari had not yet had the kind of success that was to come later. Allan Hacklin wasn't very influential for me because the grad school was divided into two halves, and he was in charge of the painters, which included Ross Bleckner and Eric Fischl. There were the painters, and then there were those in Post-Studio Art headed by John; the earliest students included Matt Mullican, David Salle, Jim Welling, and me. There was a real bifurcation between the painters and the Post-Studio artists. There was no connecting the two.

Hacklin was almost the only painter and Baldessari was the catchall for everything outside of painting. Michael Asher wasn't there yet, John Mandel came later, so it was a really small program. Because Baldessari was so social, he would bring in lots of artists from New York and Europe. All the New York artists would stay with John, either at his studio on Main Street or at his home on Beethoven. Lawrence Weiner stayed there, Richard Serra and a lot of others; John would invite them to speak at CalArts. It was partly self-serving, but it benefited us because they made studio visits with students. This was the early 1970s and John wasn't making a lot of money then; by the late seventies, we were making money. John really didn't make it big until the middle eighties. His work was too sophisticated and witty and also scary because often he is so humorous. If you could understand it, his work was funny or ironical or seditious.

The artists Baldessari brought out really expanded the information available to us. At first artists came and

thought they could adlib a talk, but that attitude changed quickly because we would ask tough questions. Word got around that if you came out to give a lecture, you had better be prepared because the students would tear you apart. Students didn't get very much hands-on education, but we learned a whole new attitude about what art could be—not expression but investigation, investigation of picture making by mimicking movies or cartoons or propaganda or advertising.

John would have magazines on the floor open to the ads, to the news photos. He was saying, Here, all of this stuff you can use in your art. I don't remember any other instructor who ever treated art that way, so tongue-in-cheek. He plopped the materials on the floor and there they were, pictures we could use. I was subsequently heavily influenced by John's open attitude, not knowing at the time I would be. It was around then that John began appropriating images from movies and posters and magazines. His work always seemed very didactic; there was always something to "get" in his work, as opposed to my work, where there was nothing to get. He played upon language—puns, parables, allegories—so there was a big difference between my later work and his.

As mentioned earlier, John seemed to disapprove of my early sculpture work; I didn't get the nod from him, which bothered me, so I dropped that work. He didn't say anything negative, he just didn't give me the nod. There was a sensibility in the early work that continued, but it was difficult for me to shift gears and go from sculpture to performance, then to films and records, and then to painting.

I was in post-studio and would do sculpture and performances and make movies, anything I wanted, but I didn't want to paint. In the mid-1970s David and I decided to take up painting. He thought it would be interesting to

paint precisely because it was a "used-up" instrument; we would see what we could pull out of it. Another factor was that paintings were much more commercial, meaning you could make more money from them. I came late to painting as a result of what I learned at CalArts. Consequently, I got a lot of flack because by making canvases, it looked like I was being self-serving. However, I had to address the gallery system; I had to plug into the gallery scene if I was going to make any money at all or become known as an artist.

After I left CalArts and lived in New York, I spent a lot of time with David because we both taught at Hartford. He was a very smart guy, a very bright guy, the kind of guy who would have made a good lawyer or a good doctor. I think that he would have been a success at whatever he chose to do. He came to CalArts with a book of Nietzsche under his arm. He wanted to be a philosopher-artist; at the beginning, he was very taken with Diebenkorn. He would make Diebenkorn-ish figurative paintings, uneducated work, sort of Figurative Expressionist, but that changed very quickly once he was at CalArts. John made him rethink what he was doing. What makes John so influential is that he is one of the smartest people I know—and insightful. He has that wonderful sense of humor.

I seem to recall that one day at school John had heart failure. Maybe it was a dream, because John denies that it happened, but I remember John coming out on a stretcher at CalArts; I was standing there, staring at him in shock. Every time I came to L.A. I'd ask, How's John? I never told people what I meant by that.

Paul Brach put himself out on a limb by bringing in unusual people. He had a good eye for bringing in artists who he thought would be helpful for the students. Paul was a nice person; he would smoke a cigar and tell stories. He did a great job, but once he left the department became

more and more politicized. Allan Hacklin had a brief moment in New York when he was well known; I remember sitting in the cafeteria listening to his stories but that was it, that was all he could give me. He wasn't really that much older than any one of us. He was selling work and he was teaching; to a grad student, it looked like he must be making a lot of money.

Another instructor in the early days was Wolfgang Stoerchle from Germany, who later died in a car accident. John knew him really well, and I was Stoerchle's T.A. I only met Jon Borofsky in New York; he came a few years later to CalArts. He is an interesting person, a very smart guy. A very nice guy too. He brought his students into the cafeteria and had them painting murals; no one could figure out if he was a genius or mentally deficient. He was a real hippie; he was the kind of guy who would smoke a bowl of herb before he began teaching class.

I was Nam June Paik's teaching assistant and taught him how to drive. He would fall asleep in faculty meetings. He adored me and would say, You have to meet Beuys. I said, I don't want to meet Joseph Beuys; he's not my generation. Nam June didn't even know how to turn a TV on. He had a Japanese technician who did all of his technical work for him. In New York, Nam June bought a top-floor loft in a building next to Donald Judd's. I remember taking the trash down for Nam June and accidentally pushing a garbage can onto Judd's property. Judd almost had a heart attack. He seemed like a vindictive person; he was a good artist so he had no reason to be bitter, certainly not about how the artworld was treating him.

During and after Salle's and Schnabel's successes in New York, Judd wrote lengthy editorials in which he criticized their work. He said that that they did not deserve all of the publicity and support they were receiving.

I read a book called *The Party Is Over,* which was

about another generation of artists, like Larry Rivers and Jackson Pollock. Paul Brach was in the book as well. It was anecdotal and wasn't art history, but it gave a lot of insight into the personal tensions that shape careers but don't show up in art history books. I remember very clearly how Paul and Mimi documented for posterity everything from their younger lives together. They collected photos of themselves at different parties, just in case another book like *The Party Is Over* should come out.

After we graduated from CalArts, John received the announcements about us, about our shows, and would laugh about them. We were in New York and wanted to impress him, but it seemed to us that he didn't take us seriously. He once suggested putting together a show with all of us recent grads, but he wanted to put it in a really uninteresting space, nothing of any importance. To me, it seemed as if he were being too cautious. But he had never before produced such successful students. Everyone was surprised because this was the first time that a group of grads had gone back East and had such startling success.

At one point John made silk-screened paintings of photographs; he would hang up his work with thumb tacks. He made work in a low-tech, low-gloss fashion; two years after I graduated, when I came back from the East Coast, I was making films in 16mm with a cameraman. This was completely different from what John was doing and from what his students were doing. I also put all of my work in big frames; for me, presentation was everything. My work was contrary to Conceptualism as it was practiced at that time. I think that my work may have helped change John's thinking about presentation. His Super-8 films were often very funny and deliberately had a distinctly amateur feel to them, while I was trying to do just the opposite.

●

5

In 1968 Paul Brach began teaching at the University of California, San Diego, and was the first chair of the art department there. When he came to La Jolla to head the new department, we met socially. Later he interviewed me because I was teaching in the University of California Extension Program. The two of us hit it off, and he decided to hire me full time at UCSD. I think politically he thought it would be good to have someone from the local community on the faculty. He said, I'll give you a studio and a better salary and fewer teaching hours. Allan Kaprow came later; he hired Kaprow at CalArts. The original art faculty at UCSD was myself, David Antin, Harold Cohen, Newton Harrison, and Mike Todd, the sculptor, as well as Paul's wife Mimi Schapiro. Paul and Mimi were both painters. Later, when Eleanor Antin and Helen Harrison were hired, all of sudden there were three married couples teaching in the department.

Paul was offered the job at CalArts and asked me if I wanted to go up there with him. I was the only one he chose from San Diego. He fired almost the entire art faculty from Chouinard with the exceptions of Mike Kanemitsu, Stephan von Huene, and Emerson Woelffer. They were

token appointments and didn't last too long, except for Stephan, who became an assistant Dean. I got along really well with Paul; he gave me free reign. He also brought in Fluxus people like Dick Higgins, Allan Kaprow, Alison Knowles, Nam June Paik, and Simone Wittman.

In the early days of CalArts, it seemed like complete chaos. Now, looking back, I can see a lot of order to it.

Right away we started the Post-Studio program. I was actually hired as a painter but hadn't painted for a couple of years; in 1968 I had burned all of my paintings. I said I would teach painting but that I wasn't overly interested in it. Paul asked, What do you want to teach? I said, I want to teach students who don't paint or do sculpture or any other activity done by hand. I didn't want to call it "Conceptual Art" so I called it "Post-Studio Art." I assembled a lot of equipment—Super-8 cameras, video cameras, photographic equipment—and supplied tapes and film.

Essentially, my idea was that you can't teach art; there should be a lot of artists around rather than just a lot of people talking about art. I thought we needed as many artists from Europe and New York as possible because there seemed to be a stranglehold on the kind of art that was being supported in L.A. In order to lessen that stranglehold, Paul curated a show at CalArts called "The Last Plastics Show" because everyone was working in plastic. It included Peter Alexander, Ron Cooper, Ron Davis, DeWain Valentine. That was followed with a Roy Lichtenstein show.

The idea was to create a program which would transcend the local art situation. We pretty much only hired from New York; I was on the road a lot and when I found an interesting artist I said, Come out to CalArts and give a talk. Paul said to me jokingly, I'm going to fire you if you bring in one more of those invisible artists. Meaning, artists who didn't make visual art! His idea was that now and then

I might invite a painter. I thought it amazing that Paul, being a painter—and Mimi, being a painter—would hire people whose ideas were completely antithetical to his own. For example, he hired Kaprow as assistant Dean. It seemed to me like hiring someone who might destroy you.

Allan Kaprow somehow discovered Wolfgang Stoerchle, who was a very important influence in those early days. Later Allan moved down to San Diego, because CalArts paid notoriously low salaries. Allan and I had gone in together to see the President and asked for a raise. His answer was, Hey, I could hire four guys for you two! Allan said, Well, that's it. He had an offer as full Professor at UCSD. But I decided that I wasn't going to go back to San Diego; it would be the kiss of death. I decided to tough it out.

Meanwhile, Judy Chicago and Mimi Schapiro started the Feminist program; I was fine with that, but while they were running it, I was told by students that they wouldn't let any of the female artists study with any of the male artists. I thought it was unfortunate, if that was truly the case.

I would go into class with catalogues from my travels; while I didn't think you could teach art, you could supply information. We were creating a lively community of artists. We were essentially getting information about European artists into our students' hands faster than students in other programs were getting this information, and that turned the students' heads around. I was constantly returning to New York, which I kept on urging students to do. I said, Nothing is going to happen in L.A!

During those early years at CalArts, there was the feeling that everything was possible, not only at CalArts but in art; it was a great moment.

I taught one summer as a replacement for Robert Barry at Hunter College in New York, and they inquired

about the possibility of my coming back, but my wife didn't want to raise our kids in New York. That was that, otherwise I would have gone. I would have quit CalArts because in 1971–72, New York was where it was happening, more so than in Europe. At that time no Europeans could get shows in New York except for Beuys and Rückriem; Americans had a stranglehold on Europe. But then the invasion of the Europeans started, especially the Germans and Italians.

In my VW bus, I would take students out to see Helene Winer's shows at Pomona College. In London she had worked for Whitechapel, and in L.A. she worked for the *Los Angeles Times* before taking over the Pomona College gallery. She would show work no one else was interested in. For every one of her shows, I would load up students and take them out to Claremont. She was in L.A. from 1970 to 1974, when she went to New York and eventually took over Artists Space. Hal Glicksman took over running the Pomona College gallery and he had great shows as well.

Helene did a print show I really loved. At the time, I was into police photography and when she came to the door I gave her a bowl, which she grabbed. I dusted it for prints and said, Here, show this, which she did. I had burned all my paintings and had the ashes. I gave them to her and said, Scatter them in the corner; after the first person walks in it, rope off the area.

So many people went on to success from that first class at CalArts; those who did well had been good students. There were no surprises in that way. I was somewhat surprised how fast they became successful. I never worked with Ross Bleckner nor with Eric Fischl, who were both painting with Allan Hacklin and Paul Brach. The students who worked with me—Barbara Bloom, Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Matt Mullican, David Salle, Jim Welling—didn't paint. My theory is that the ideas that were

around then—borrowing freely from popular culture, documenting ideas and processes, exploring the relationships between words and images—these ideas were subsequently applied by some of my students to painting. Instead of using film or video or performance, they used the ideas and made paintings out of them. All of sudden there was a lot of interesting painting going on and that possibly might have been one reason.

I don't want to take too much credit, but I think I had a good vision of what artists needed: They needed to talk to other interesting artists. If you had enough good artists around from all over the world, the students would come and they would teach each other.

In 1981 I was in the exhibition called "Westkunst" in Cologne. I was doing a show at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and went with Jan Debbaut, who was the assistant director and now runs the museum; he didn't want to drive back to Eindhoven so we got a hotel. All the hotels were booked, and we had to stay in an expensive hotel across from the cathedral. In the morning I came down for breakfast and said Hi, David. Salle was there having breakfast with Leo Castelli. I said, Oh, I get it!

I was first introduced to Mary Boone by Gary Stephan at the Spring Street Bar, where everybody hung out. It was always crowded after six o'clock. Gary said, I want you to meet Mary Boone; she sells more for me than my dealer. This was before Mary had her own space and it was pretty high praise. Later, Connie Lewellan was working at Klaus Kertess's Bykert Gallery; I was staying with Connie and she came back one night and said that she was leaving Bykert and Mary Boone was replacing her. Klaus showed Chuck Close, Dorothea Rockburne, Brice Marden, as well as other important artists. He had a legendary gallery.

My first show in L.A. was at Molly Barnes, but I felt

it was not right for me; Eugenia Butler had a much more interesting gallery, so around 1969 I showed with Eugenia. She was showing Doug Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Dieter Roth, Al Ruppersberg, Tom Wudl, and Paul Cotton, who went around in his penis costume; the people's prick, they used to call him. Eugenia left Jim Butler for Paul; the story was that she went berserk and destroyed all his work. Another story was that during the riots at Berkeley, there was a big demonstration and Paul was running around in his penis costume; when he wanted to grab the microphone, the organizers said, No Way! The people started chanting, Let the prick speak, let the prick speak. Eugenia had the best gallery and after that Morgan Thomas and Connie Lewellan had a great gallery. David Salle's first show was with Claire Copley; Copley also showed Ken Feingold, who was at CalArts and had shown in New York at Postmasters. Ken taught digital media at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where he brought in Dorit Cypis, Jim Hayward, and Mike Kelley; then he went to New York, where he taught at the School of Visual Arts.

CalArts had a connection with Nova Scotia School of Art and Design. I was invited to have a show there when they were bringing over various Europeans, like Beuys; we hired some of their instructors and they hired Eric Fischl. Benjamin Buchloh and Gerhard Richter were also teaching there; it was the counterpart to CalArts. They had a great publishing program as well. The program was run by Gary Kennedy and Gerry Ferguson, who both eventually came out and taught at CalArts.

With all of the artists going East—the CalArts invasion—my good friend Lawrence Weiner would say, John, it's all your fault; you called them artists. New Yorkers have always been territorial. I was told to my face by some New York artist that California artists were resented because they didn't suffer enough.

There were a couple of artists before me who never moved to New York permanently and became internationally well known. Bruce Nauman, I was told, did live in New York for a little while but didn't like it. There is a great story about Ed Kienholz; they were moving Dwan Gallery, where Ed showed, to New York, and John Weber, who was running it here, went to run it in New York. Ed said he would exhibit in Dwan Gallery in New York, but with the proviso that John Weber not be in town when he showed. Virginia Dwan honored that proviso; Weber was never in town when Ed showed. I have no idea if it was true.

Ed Ruscha has always lived in L.A. Billy Al Bengston showed very early in New York, but all L.A. artists would get clobbered; they would get terrible reviews. Another story: Ed Moses was going to show at Sonnabend, but they wanted to have a contract with him, which, I was told, he refused to sign. The show was canceled, even though the ads were already out. It was Charles Cowles, who ran *Artforum,* who picked up most of the L.A. artists.

The work of Jack's that sticks in my mind is when he buried himself underground and got his air from plastic tubes; it was one of the most risky pieces I have ever seen. It took place at CalArts and Wolfgang Stoerchle was there; it was in the evening. The sun was setting, and Jack had a stethoscope, which measured his heartbeat from about twenty feet away. It was connected to where he was buried and where he was symbolically dead. What a terror being buried like that must have induced. Jack said he was trying to give up something organic to make a symbolic statement.

I remember having lunch with Jack and Natalie Bieser at Villa Cabrini; Jack had silver sunglasses on. Natalie said, Jack, I bet you would do anything to be a success, even cut off your arms. Jack said, Yes, I would. I always remember that. Jack didn't crack a smile. I said to myself,

There is one dedicated artist.

I think the first generation of successful students was the result of an amazing stroke of fate; the times were right because the whole world was in upheaval with the Vietnam War and its social consequences. New art schools were being built and students were going to the hot school of the moment. Some students were going to one school for a year and then switching to another school for the next year. CalArts wanted to mimic the defunct Black Mountain College in North Carolina, mimic its interdisciplinary character and openness and emphasis on bringing in well-known artists and designers.

CalArts hired a lot of good faculty, which attracted a lot of good students; at that point the students taught each other through sheer competitiveness. Where they came from, they were all the best; but when they got to CalArts, they were at the bottom of the heap. So they had to fight and claw their way to the top again. It was like gladiators; when you came in, you were no longer the best, you were just an artist. David and Jack, for example, were extremely competitive; neither would have done as well had they gone somewhere else. Because they worked against other students, they each became stronger artists.

One of the reasons I wanted to teach was because I wanted to correct all of the things I had been taught wrongly. I wanted to open up the possibilities for the students. I don't think you can teach art; but you can sure have a lot of good artists around.

I do think a lot about the students who were really good and who fell through the cracks or gave up being artists. I think the reason they quit is because at a certain point, talent is cheap. We brought together a class of the one percent of people who were especially talented, but after that in order to succeed, you need to have sheer obsession. If you are not obsessed, you are going to fall

away. I think Jack was obsessed. You can be gifted and do nothing; talent will only bring you to a certain point. You have to be obsessed as well; you have to be dogged; you have to be stubborn and not give up.

I was happy I could contribute, I was happy I could help, I was happy I could speed things up for some of my students, but no one is a Svengali. I was adamant and fought very hard to bring in visiting artists to CalArts. I thought L.A. was out of touch with the rest of the world. I wanted the students to have a space where they could do something other than painting or making objects. I tried to make room for something new; they didn't necessarily have to make things by hand. It's just common sense, but common sense in art education is really rare.

I understood that there was more to art than what was happening at the time in L.A., which was primarily working with molded plastic. One of the reasons Paul wanted to hire me was that when he came into my studio, he saw that I was a citizen of the world; I had books and magazines all around. I could see pretty clearly that a lot was going on in the world that wasn't happening in Los Angeles. It was very provincial. Good teaching is giving students a vision. I wanted to ignite a fire in their eyes. That was it. Then they were gone.

In 1985 I showed with Margo because I figured she would always be around. Larry Gagosian had been after me to join his gallery; Jim Corcoran had done one show with me. I wanted someone who was going to stay in L.A., so I chose Margo. I remember Margo taking me to lunch. She said, I don't know what I'm going to do with you. Nothing sold in that first show until the last day, when someone bought two pieces.

You have to be happy with others' successes in the artworld, especially your own students. Art is often all about who sold what, and how much was sold. New York

is the toughest town in the world; everybody is there to make it. You can compete with your students about the work you produce, but to compete about money is a losing proposition. You can't use money as an index of quality; that is a fallacy. That will drive you crazy.

●

Jack's studio wall, Pacific Building, Santa Monica, 1978, © James Welling

6

I was a disturbed kid. I had a lot of emotional problems and wasn't even going to go to college. The only place I wanted to go was Reed College in Portland, but I couldn't get in because I failed my College Board Exams. They wanted me to take the tests again, but I never retook them. I loved the idea of going to a college where it wasn't about grades but about participation and discussion under a tree. I had heard about Pratt, but my parents wouldn't let me go there because it was in New York and during my junior year of High School, I had fallen desperately in love with this guy who lived in New York City.

I went to Montreal, where my parents were from, and visited a cousin there. Once I got there I received a check from my father for one year's college tuition and was summarily sent to the University of Arizona in Tucson. Although it was considered a play school, it actually had incredibly good professors who were there for health reasons. It was sort of an out-of-body experience. I don't remember the experience very much, but I do remember that there were some very interesting teachers and that I studied art history.

After two years I returned to California. I had

always been interested in painting and drawing; I decided I would study art. That is when I decided to go to Chouinard. Because I hadn't taken any studio art courses at Arizona, I submitted drawings that I had done on my own and had been more or less compelled to do. I was admitted to Chouinard on probation, with the understanding that I would never do those kinds of drawings again. The drawings were like doodling, they were beautiful doodles and to tell me that I couldn't make them any more was very damaging. It was like telling a person not to use red or pink. As a result, I had the most horrendous experience at Chouinard; I was terrified all of the time. I graduated with highest honors but I had no self-confidence at all. I was so impressionable and gullible that I didn't have the where-with-all to say, Screw you!

I kept starting and stopping my studies at Chouinard, running around the country and getting married, so even though I started in 1962, I graduated in the late 1960s. I don't remember very many students because I wasn't a very social person. I was not in any scene, not a hotshot nor part of any social group. I wanted to learn and I couldn't understand why I was getting all of those high marks.

I do remember Jack and loved his work; his sensibility and taste were so much like my intuitive sense of what was drop-dead gorgeous. His work had some of the same qualities that I associate with Japanese art: A sense of minimalism and taste and absolute perfection of placement. In his later work he could balance a simple piece of glass on carpet tacks and make it look gorgeous. Everything he touched was beautiful, although the word "beauty" was never quite used. He was a master of taste. You can see that in his films—for example, the lacquered chair with the falling white feathers on the black background.

I was in some classes with Terry Allen. He was hysterical; he was so funny. Terry would sit at the piano banging out Tex-Mex-type songs, "Big Balls and Cow Town" or something. I was a very, very nervous person. I worked with Ron Cooper, who was making plaster casts. I remember that he took me to his studio and covered me up with something; it dried while I sat on the back of his motorcycle.

I ended up being a dual major in painting and ceramics and studied a lot with Ralph Bacerra. My whole life is about compensating. I wanted to be a sculpture major but the instructor said I was not coordinated enough to use the equipment. I became a ceramics major but I was not allowed to use the pottery wheels, because the older students would not let me anywhere near them. They said I was not coordinated enough to throw anything. I needed the credits so Ralph put me in the corner and said, Just do something. I didn't know what to do so I started rolling clay coils.

For some bizarre reason, a lot of people became very interested in what I was doing. I even started to win awards and was offered shows in galleries but I thought I was a fake. I didn't understand what was happening; it came so easily I thought I was cheating. All I was doing was sitting there, rolling all of these coils. Now, when I teach, I always make sure that students know their self-worth, unlike me who went through such hell. Adrian Saxe was the star and turned out to be an amazing ceramicist. It was a dynamite ceramics class because Ralph was an outstanding teacher.

I didn't have any women teachers; not only that, I didn't realize that I didn't have any women teachers. That's the way it was. Unless the guys wanted to fuck you, they didn't pay any attention to you. I wasn't one of the more beautiful young girls so I didn't get very

much attention.

I graduated in 1968; by then my marriage was over and I began to date a person named David Chunn. David was going to Otis and ended up going to CalArts. I was looking for a job and couldn't find one anyplace. People would ask me what I had been doing for so many years. I tried to explain that I had been going to art school and then moved to New York; I returned to L.A., finished art school, and really was an incredible worker. I became aware that a new art school was starting.

I found out that CalArts was hiring and the person who was hiring was the Dean of the School of Theater, Herb Blau. He had a secretary by the name of Sherrie Tcherepnin, who was married to a Russian named Serge Tcherepnin, who worked in admissions. I literally went down on my hands and knees and begged her for a job. I said, Listen, you will never be disappointed; you will never meet anybody who is going to work so hard. She said, It's yours—and placed me in the admissions office. That is where I started out, going through applications and answering the phone. I was the hardest worker in the business.

One thing that was so remarkable about CalArts was that everybody was starting out at the beginning. I could say, I think we should do it this way—and they would listen to me just as much as they would listen to anybody else. I was taken very, very seriously; as opposed to my whole art career, I believed that I was really good at what I was doing. I ended up being involved in a lot of things. For example, I was a recruiter; I would go around the country in my little mini skirts and high-heel shoes looking for students. At that point, in 1969, the school hadn't started and hadn't even broken ground. The first class started in the fall of 1970 at Villa Cabrini while the campus in Valencia was being built; it was then rebuilt

because of the Sylmar earthquake of 1972.

Serge and I were in charge of admissions to all six schools, so we divided them up: I was responsible for the art, design, and film schools. He was responsible the music, theater, and dance schools. When applications came in, we processed them and interviewed applicants. People would come into our office to find out about the school; then we were sent out all over the country to recruit. We were supposedly recruiting graduate students, but in truth we were stealing students from undergraduate programs.

Since he was a theater person, Serge was the first person to tell me how to speak in front of groups of people. He said, The first time you are going to do this, your knees are going to shake and your arms are going to shake; you have to admit what is happening and then it will stop. My first speaking engagement was before two to three hundred people in a huge auditorium. I waddled up in the tightest skirt imaginable, which was the shortest skirt imaginable, in the highest heels imaginable, and I said, Listen, I am absolutely terrified; my knees are shaking, my arms are shaking . . . and everybody started to laugh. I have never stopped since.

We would go around the country recruiting and interviewing students, and we saw a great number of kids. We had such great graphics, such a great catalogue; no other school had them. We even had course-support money; each teacher was given thousands of dollars to spend to support their courses. One person sent his class to New York. Another bought a grand piano. The sky was the limit; it was everybody's dream, which then became quite a few people's nightmare. We accepted a dog; we accepted groups of people. It was an amazing thing to be part of this venture from the ground up.

As CalArts started to grow, each school needed

special help, and since my expertise was in art, I was chosen to go to the art school. As the admissions person, I had sat in on all of the slide reviews. At that time there was no art faculty; there was Paul Brach, who was the Dean, and Allan Kaprow, who was the associate Dean, and me. Both of them listened to me; they would say, Nancy, what do you think? I was not totally intimidated because I had no idea who these people were. After a while, they began to trust my opinions and I even got a vote in the admissions process for undergrads. At that time, we were admitting around one out of twenty-four applicants; we could be incredibly choosy because we had so many applications. Even Paul and Allan admitted that they never could have gotten into the school.

The graduate program was limited to ten or twelve students; although we said it was open for portfolio review, each of the students was handpicked prior to that review. The one exception was Jim Morphesis, who came from Tyler School of Art. One of the instructors with whom Jim had studied knew Paul Brach. Everyone else was handpicked by one of us. Kaprow picked some, and I picked David Chunn. They all came in as teaching assistants, they taught their own classes, and they were given stipends.

CalArts was not very kind to the Chouinard faculty. There was an incredible rift between the old school and the new school. In fact, the only two people who CalArts ended up hiring were Stephan von Huene and Emerson Woelffer. Emerson had a bitch of a time at CalArts; he was not there very long. He was the kingpin at Chouinard and ended up being trivialized. I was so conflicted about Emerson; he never paid any attention to me when I was a student, but I felt terrible about the way he was being treated. He was like a legend; then at CalArts he became a fool. With his costumes and his antics, it seemed as if time were going in another direction.

The entire L.A. art community, which I wasn't really privy to and didn't know on a professional basis, was aggressively anti-CalArts because of the way their colleagues were being treated. They were all marginalized. We even had Bob Irwin teach for a term or two at CalArts, but it didn't work out. The whole idea of the school was so different from Otis or Chouinard; it was like oil and water.

It was not until Mike Kelley decided to stay in Los Angeles that CalArts students remained in L.A. Prior to that time, almost all of the more ambitious students moved to New York. Once the students remained in L.A., the rift was healed between the art community and CalArts.

Paul Brach and Allan Kaprow were both Easterners, although Allan was one of the many people who had migrated out to Arizona for health reasons. There was an East-West kind of craziness. Allan and Paul assumed that all of our better students were going to come from the East Coast because they didn't think very much of the West Coast. Well, they were dead wrong. What happened is that we found students from all over.

One of the best was this kid named David Salle, from Wichita, Kansas. I actually called him up on the telephone to find out how he knew as much as he did, and wrote the way he did, coming from Wichita, Kansas. He just about dropped dead when my scrawny little voice on the phone, nasal as it is, called up and said, I'd like to speak with David Salle; I'm Nancy Chunn from the School of Art. He sounded like he was fifty years old on the telephone. The kid was seventeen, and when we met him we found out that he was mature, making sophisticated work, reading all of the art magazines. He was from an out-of-the-way place but he was very knowledgeable about what was going on at the moment.

Jack was a graduate student and taught Nam June Paik how to drive. It was during the first year at Villa

Cabrini. Jack had a little red Beetle while Nam June was as crazy as a loon. As part of his duties, Jack was assigned to teach Nam June how to drive. As soon as Nam June learned, he promptly had an accident. The musician David Tudor was in the front seat and went right through Nam June's windshield. Nam June always said, whether it was true or not, Well at least that cured David of his headaches.

I remember being in the car with Jack, perhaps we were coming back from a meeting of the grad students, which I could attend. Somehow or other we were talking, and I got the impression that he felt overwhelmed by the intellectual abilities of a lot of the other students who were at CalArts. At the time everyone was reading Wittgenstein. By doing an incredible amount of reading, he was trying to teach himself a lot of material that he hadn't learned before, certainly not at Chouinard. His strength coming in was not intellectual, academic discussion. There was a rigor and intellectual underpinning to the studio practice at CalArts, which at the time a lot of the people from the West Coast were not used to. I don't remember any theoretical or critical discussions at Chouinard, ever. We didn't even read Greenberg on Pollock. It was straight studio art. None of the instructors at Chouinard couched their work within the context of theory.

Matt Mullican had the most unusual support structure, something no one else had. His father and mother were artists. They were incredibly supportive of Matt; art was considered the highest of the highest and that attitude built great confidence within him. Matt knew he was an artist at the age of two. He was constantly supported emotionally and financially, while everybody else was struggling to survive. Matt was accepted from the get-go. He had his inadequacies in other portions of his life, but he never doubted his calling. I know he supports his children in the same way.

Matt has a place in upstate New York, and I have a place in Massachusetts, which is about a twenty-minute drive from his. One night Matt said we should come over for dinner; Jim Casebere and Lorna Simpson were also included, and we all went up to Matt's. His kids were making drawings, and I looked at what they were doing. Matt was beaming over them, but what was amazing was the paper he gave them to work on. I said, Matt you give them such great paper. He said, Yes I am intimidated to work on such good paper—with the implication that he didn't want them to be intimidated in the same way. It was so revealing how he was teaching his children. They didn't even have to think about what they were drawing on. You can't buy that kind of unconditional support.

David Salle and I started going out together and having an affair; we began living together in West Hollywood on Curson Street, between Fairfax and La Brea and Melrose and Santa Monica, in that little Jewish area. At one point, we decided to move closer to CalArts and rented a place in Newhall. It was a little expensive so we took in Matt and all lived together.

I knew the first time we looked at David's portfolio that he was going to be an amazing artist, which is why I called him up on the phone. He was the only undergraduate who was allowed to study with Max Kozloff in his graduate art history class. His knowledge and capacity for connecting the dots and ability to dissect ideas were amazing. He came in as a painter and studied with Allan Hacklin and Paul Brach and then turned himself around to work with John Baldessari, but he always kept his connection with the painters. He tried to work with everybody and make their ideas his own. David was very Machiavellian, and I say this proudly. He could see that the artworld was headed in the direction of Baldessari and not that of Allan Hacklin. But he kept up his connections with both sides.

David's artwork was not as brilliant as some of the other work at CalArts; that happened later. David was always enormously aggressive. In the Elaine May-Mike Nichols routine, aggressiveness need not be hostile; this is something that David needed to learn. He was so young; he was eighteen years old. Of course, I was much, much older than he was. I believe that I taught him some stuff; he needed a little bit of softening up.

I sat in the art office and my job was to deal with the paperwork and to counsel students and sit in on the portfolio review meetings, as well as to recruit. I saw the students on a social level so I got the students' opinions from all sides. Some people say that my work looks as if I had graduated from CalArts; but of course I was never a student there. I got a lot of the prevailing ideas by osmosis.

John Baldessari was an incredible resource. What John did was to present everything that he could find, without judgment. He gave the students permission to do whatever they wanted. More than anyone else, he had connections with all of the European artists; no one hit L.A. without coming up to CalArts. His students were fortunate because they were provided with access; what the kids did with that access was up to them. He presented written material and visiting artist material and constantly threw it at them. He dispensed invaluable information and let the chips fall where they may. That was the greatest thing that he did. But he never played the game of setting down criteria for good or bad art or for anything else. He never played that game at all. I don't think he was judgmental. A few of the students said they wished that they had an idea if what they were doing was okay. They wanted to know where they really stood, but that is not what John was about. At the time we had no grades, so there was no emphasis upon that kind of evaluation. Students were assigned mentors; the mentors and review committees

were supposed to write evaluations of the students.

As interesting as CalArts was, it was not for everybody, and there were a number of students who fell through the cracks. There were also a number of students who wanted, and ended up demanding, more traditional classes. For example, David Chunn was pressed into teaching a traditional drawing class with models, which was something we never thought we needed. There simply were no life drawing classes, even in the first year of undergraduate fine art education. Wolfgang Stoerchle taught a first-year drawing class; he gave the students bricks and some string to work with. This approach worked for some of the young kids just out of high school but not for others.

John Mandel was teaching then; he had a different kind of sensibility. Maybe that is why he was there. There was a lot of nepotism at CalArts. Jim Starrett was there; at the time, he was going out with Pat Steir. He had been teaching for a term or two when the money ran out, so we had to let him go. The students liked him, and I organized the students to organize. I was always telling the students, Listen, you don't understand the power you have. If you weren't here, we wouldn't be here. Who do you think pays our salaries? Grow up and start using the power of the money you are spending. They organized; they got a petition together; they said they would drop out of school if we didn't somehow find the money to hire Jim back. The CalArts library contributed some funds and we kept him. Hello! The students adored him. They wanted the attention and the dialogue that someone like Starrett brought them. In a teacher, feedback and support are as important as talent and fame.

Eric Fischl and Ross Bleckner didn't interact very much with the Baldessari group; they were in the painting group.

We brought in some very talented female students; one of the most interesting was someone from Yugoslavia called Branca Milotinovich. She was an amazing artist and poet and video maker. She despised the boys, the CalArts Mafia, because she wasn't really let into their circle, although she did work with John. She was not given the prestige and credit that the Mafia received; after she moved to New York, she gave up art altogether. Now, after twenty-five years, she is secretly doing it again. After studying at CalArts, many of the women artists dropped out of the artworld. Many students did not want to be in the Feminist Art program with Mimi Schapiro and Judy Chicago because they were so dogmatic. For some, those two were really frightening. It was especially difficult for many of the female students who were neither embraced by the Feminist group nor found a home with the Post-Studio people, which was so male dominated.

Among them was Dede Bazyk, who I think was renting part of the studio space of Roy Dowell and Lari Pittman. There was Susan Davis, who lived with David Salle after David broke up with me. Susan was very close with John and also with Barbara Bloom, who went to Holland and became an art star there before going to New York. There was Kathryn Bigelow, who now directs big, powerful Hollywood films.

Judith Stein was a very smart woman; she was from New York and we accepted her at the age of sixteen. She studied with Gerry Ferguson, from the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design. Those people from Nova Scotia were so strange; they literally all walked around with lab coats. Jerry treated me like shit, like a work-study person, even though I had some power there. He was always saying, Do this and do that—so in revenge I would spell his name wrong; I would spell his last name "Pherguson" with a Ph. I couldn't stand him. Either he and Judith Stein were

screwing, or else they had this "simpatico" thing with Art and Language.

To make a long story short, Judith applied for grad school at CalArts and we didn't take her. At that time, we had a policy that we would not take our own graduates because we thought that it was important to bring in new blood. We also thought that it was important for our graduates to go out and teach the CalArts approach to art. In this particular situation, we made a big mistake. When we rejected her, Judith was so crushed that she stopped making art and became a midwife.

The filmmaker Ericka Beckman was in that crowd too. Ericka was in more Whitney Biennials than you can count; she was supported by the grant system before the grant system crashed. But she was never strongly embraced by the artworld. I am surprised that more of the Mafia boys didn't help her out.

In my own case, all of the people who knew me at CalArts had an incredibly difficult time realizing that I was an artist even before I started CalArts. When I quit CalArts, I went back to making art and received some renown, but they didn't look at me as a peer or colleague. There seems to have been incredible resentment on the part of some people. One former student went out of his way to tell a dealer not to look at my work.

The fact that so many of the female students in those early years did not go on to have successful careers may have had something to do with the way Baldessari taught. At least some of them felt marginalized in the program; there was no reason that they shouldn't have been up there with some of the guys. Certainly there were many female students who were as gifted as the guys. Of course times were different then, and the artworld was different.

My theory is that once the students graduated, the men were more used to struggling to survive and were

ready to do menial-type work. They were able to survive in much less comfortable situations, while the women were very, very bright and didn't take jobs as artists' assistants and didn't take plumbing jobs. They got jobs in retail and then became managers; they got caught up in the real world with real money and wanted more comfort for themselves. This is only my theory. At least that is what happened to Branca, who became the manager of some very successful clubs. Now I hear she is doing underground video. I remember distinctly that David, for example, loved Branca's work.

The very first year CalArts was in business, we had a special category called "Institute Students." There were five of these students, primarily at the graduate level, and they were admitted to the entire Institute, not just to one school. These were students who would combine film and music, or dance and theater. Tom Radloff was one of those rare students. As it turns out, during the first year they were not really embraced by anyone. Tom studied with Mort Subotnick and with a lot of the Critical Studies faculty but he found a home in the art school, which is where he switched for his second year. He was Baldessari's teaching assistant as well.

Troy Brauntuch was considered by Paul Brach to have been the best student they ever took at CalArts. Troy was incredibly good-looking; he looked like Jim Morrison of the Doors, with long, exquisite black hair, which fell to his shoulders. He wore tight jeans, cowboy boots, and swayed when he walked. He seemed very mysterious, a personality trait that he and Jack cultivated. They both posed a lot. Troy's drawings were as gorgeous as he was; because he was incredibly skilled, he could make them himself, without assistants.

Years later, I saw his show at Mary Boone; he had made eight-foot by three-foot drawings with white pencils

on black paper or material. They were mysterious images, dramatic yet also seductive; you weren't sure what you were looking at. He framed these drawings in huge mahogany frames, six inches wide, with glass over them; when you looked at them in the gallery, at first all you could see was your own reflection. You had to fight to see the work. After seeing one of Troy's shows, I went home and literally destroyed a ten-foot painting because it wasn't fine enough.

Jim Welling had a highly developed persona when he came to CalArts. He had a look; he was barefoot, carried a lot of twigs and carrot sticks, and wore a knit stocking cap. He was a nature boy even though he was from the East Coast, which made it rather strange. His persona didn't look like someone from the East Coast; he was more of a West Coast hippie. I had trouble getting past his persona to know who he really was. As affected as David Salle was, it was easier for me to get past his affectations than it was for me to get past Jim's affectations, because Jim's affectations were so foreign to me. He was always carrying twigs around and always trying to make something out of them; no one knew if he was constantly doing a performance. Just as Julian Schnabel, who is actually very generous, did things because he wanted them to be written about—they seemed to be choreographed for a book—so one could say the same thing about Jim Welling, but it would be a totally different kind of book. You would make a movie about Julian; you wouldn't make a movie about Jim Welling.

I had so many connections in Los Angeles. Then I fell in love with a guy I met in L.A. named Paul McMahon. I thought Paul McMahon was incredible. As it happened, Paul McMahon knew my work from some slides I had sent somewhere. At the time I met Paul, I was married to Tom Radloff but invited Paul over to the house; I don't know

what happened but we had a little affair. I got it into my head that I was going to move to New York.

I quit CalArts and became a waitress. Most people do waitressing when they are in their teens; I did it in my thirties. I started to do a series of little paintings. I never knew what I wanted to paint, so I came up with the idea to create what I called "List Paintings." I had Tom tell me what to paint but he couldn't tell me size or color; I made hundreds of these paintings and got a show at the Woman's Building in downtown L.A. For some reason, the show did really well. It was after the show that I decided to quit my job as a waitress, move to New York, and work full time as an artist. Tom and I were not getting on, and I still had this incredible, passionate interest in Paul McMahon. I was very unhappy; I was tired of putting students through CalArts and wanted to be an artist myself. Can you imagine how many years it took me finally to come to that decision?

At the time, Paul was also married; I went to New York and called Paul. He said, Sure, come over. I called Matt and he said, You can stay with me. Apparently Paul's wife found out about our affair, and although Paul had no intention of breaking up his marriage, he didn't really have a choice. All of a sudden Paul and I had no place to stay; for a while Paul and I ended up in Matt's tiny little apartment. Paul and I became a unit, partly out of default and partly because I adored Paul. Since Paul occupied a similar position at Artists Space as I had occupied at CalArts, we brought together our two social groups. Paul was much more developed as an artist than I was; of course, he had his own demons to fight.

Paul and I moved into the building at 182 Grand Street; Matt moved in around the same time, and Troy came in very shortly afterwards. Troy and I had little lofts while Matt had a big one, which he shared with Jim Welling. The place Paul and I had became a crash pad; people

would always be over there. Everybody was into music. Paul had a band and we frequently had entertainment and parties; people would hang out and compete in the Battle of the Bands. At Franklin Furnace, Paul set up a space where he created a nightclub that brought together music, art, and film in order to blur the definitions between the disciplines. Cindy Sherman was the hat check girl; she made our dog Max winter clothes. We have a nice collection of all our friends' work.

Every member of the CalArts Mafia would give Paul credit for being, at the time, one of the most interesting artists around. I believe that they all took ideas from Paul. The reason that they may be generous to him now is that Paul never threatened them; he was never in competition with them because he really never made it to the next step. Paul was a total force, but I don't know why his influence and presence didn't translate into artworld success. He knew everybody. He could have been in Metro Pictures. Jack and Troy were always encouraging to Paul. Jack told him, Work bigger, work bigger. Of course Paul was always between the art and music worlds. We wrote a lot of songs together and he became a troubadour. We did spoofs on art criticism; for example, we made some paintings that we showed at Artists Space and all around the country called "Soft, Cute Little Animals and Vicious Art World Gossip." What happened is that everybody got famous except Paul and me.

For years I did my "secret work," black- and-white ink drawings on paper napkins. One day Troy came downstairs, probably to ask Paul something; I was sitting at the table making one of these drawings. I tended to make them when I was upset. Troy sat there and asked me what I was doing. I was hunched over, trying to hide the drawing. He insisted on seeing it; then he asked, Can I have it? I told him not to be ridiculous, it was a private drawing. I gave it

to him anyway and didn't think much of it, but I did wonder why I gave it to him, of all people. Weeks went by and there was a knock at the door. Troy handed me a wrapped package; inside was my little napkin drawing in the most beautiful frame imaginable. He said, Nancy, I want you to put that on the wall and look at it; that is art. To this day I tell students about that experience. It was so selfless, and I have never forgotten it.

Both Tom Radloff and Paul said that Jack did a lot of things before anyone else. He was the first to live at the Pacific Building in Santa Monica. When he came to New York, he was the first person to live on the Lower East Side. Helene and Jack were among the first people to live in Tribeca. Tom remembers counseling Jack at the Pacific Building, when Jack was depressed and said he was going to give up art. Jack always lived very strangely. He had no creature comforts. His work was minimal and so was his life. His room almost looked like a cell—a little bed and maybe one little lamp, like Arte Povera taken to the extreme. Tom got Jack his first assistant in New York, a female illustrator, before Jack hired Ashley Bickerton to be his assistant.

Paul knew Jack at Pomona College, where Paul did his undergraduate work. We had admitted Paul to grad school but we didn't give him any money so he couldn't go. Jack always came by and hung out; Jack and "Jack the Dog." We can't forget Jack the Dog. Jack was the most ill-behaved dog imaginable; he would shit in the house and Jack wouldn't lift a finger. I have a picture of Jack that looks like a Jordache ad. No one wore jeans as well as Jack Goldstein except maybe Troy Brauntuch. Jack was gorgeous and he wore these incredibly tight jeans; we have a couple of pictures from the waist down of Jack lounging on the couch. Jack and Troy should have been jeans models.

Jack was always anorexic; he only ate candy bars.

At CalArts I wasn't aware that there was heavy drug use; maybe a little pot but nothing much more. They were in an intellectually rigorous program; it wasn't laid- back at all. Many of the students felt an incredible amount of competition. It was fun, but a lot of people were doing a lot of work. In the 1980s Paul and I were not into drugs; we weren't even into the cocaine mania because we couldn't afford it. I already have an addictive personality—I am the type of person who ate egg salad sandwiches every day for ten years—so I didn't even want to try it. When I was in Haight Ashbery in the 1960s, I did get into speed and it really screwed me up.

A lot of artists used drugs recreationally, but I don't think in the same way that Jack used them. I don't know if anybody knew Jack; he had a different kind of persona. He reminded me of someone like Montgomery Clift—the dark brooding guy in the background. You were attracted by the physical surface, but there was a much deeper stream beneath it. There seemed to be much more there than I could ever know. I was interested in some of that deeper stuff but I never got to know him in that way, and I don't know if anybody did, except perhaps Helene. A lot of girls found him as attractive as I did; he was always fucking around. I am sure he was cheating on everybody at one point or another. He appeared to be so much in control with his ideas of taste, but I think he also suffered greatly from depression. I always thought that there was more to Jack—that he ran much deeper than we knew. On the other hand, his work was so much about image and surface.

●

David Salle, Jack the Dog, and Jack, New York, 1975

7

> I was always a little crazed; and I knew there was no safety net for me.

In 1974, after Helene quit her job at Pomona, we went together to New York; after a few years she became the Director of Artists Space. Since graduating in 1972, I had been going back and forth between L.A. and New York; that continued for another couple of years. Artists Space was a nonprofit place where many of us exhibited before we went to commercial galleries. I did my first performances in New York there, as well as showed my films. Irving Sandler was on the board of Artists Space, and Helene used to argue with him; he was an art historian who was extremely conservative in what he considered good art. Even so, it became the most important conduit for work of young artists until the new commercial galleries opened up. Metro Pictures opened in 1980, and that was the big cut-off point.

Douglas Crimp and Craig Owens would come over to the place where Helene and I lived. They were into post-formalists like Agnes Martin, Robert Ryman, and Richard Serra, but slowly they came around to what the CalArts

crowd was doing. They formed their careers around our work. It was first defined by Crimp in "Pictures," which was a show at Artists Space, and an influential article that announced a new sensibility. At first Doug would hardly even speak to me. On different occasions, I showed him a number of my films, but it took a long time before he understood what I was talking about. He slowly accepted the fact that you could borrow and recontextualize images from anywhere, not only popular culture but from political ideologies and history books and fashion magazines.

"Appropriation" became the catch phrase; some did it well, while pretty soon most started copying and repeating themselves. Baudrillard became an art guru for five minutes with his idea of simulation, where what is pictured becomes more important that what you are supposedly representing—it takes on a life of its own apart from any apparent signifier. We learned that we weren't representing anything, or at least nothing stable and fixed. It was just like the television screen.

We were playing with the signs and images of the commercial world, which had formed all of us as we grew up watching television. We were the first generation of "raised on TV" artists, so the art changed from being something weighty and formal and self-important to art that was more playful and decorative, fast, ironic, even cartoon-like.

Around 1976 I found and lived at the Pacific Building on Santa Monica and Fifth. It was $60 a month; I put an old mattress into the office and slept on it. I went to Santa Monica to shoot films and work while Helene kept the fort in New York. I could make my films and get my props cheaper in L.A. than in New York. For example, the barking dog I filmed was found in a special place. He was a trained dog, a TV dog, a star; so was the bird. I hired them. The guy who had the bird and the dog trained all the rats for the movie *Ben.* He used peanut butter to get them to move.

The bird going around and around the bone china was done with an animator in L.A.

Regina Cornwell, who is a film critic, said that I had to meet a filmmaker named Morgan Fisher. I met Morgan at Pratt, where he was giving a lecture, and he subsequently interviewed me for the *Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art Journal* [the LAICA *Journal*], where my work was on the cover. When I first met him, I thought he was so pedantic; when you get to know Morgan, he is the nicest guy, but if you don't he is real snooty. I gave Morgan a lot of room just because I thought he was so smart; as an artist, I was always careful to know when to back off. Egos get in the way of being an artist. But it's your superego that is important, not your ego. The superego represents your ideal, and that is what whipped me, that is what destroyed me. I never measured up to what I wanted to be.

During the twenty years I spent in New York, I lived in funky warehouses and sweatshops in all the boroughs. I could never afford to live in Manhattan like my peer group. My first studio was under the Brooklyn Bridge, on the top floor of a building next to the "Watchtower." At night it was empty, since all of the sweatshops were closed, so I had my dog Jack run in front of me in case someone was hiding to mug me. The studio was over the water, where the Mafia would drop off dead bodies. The only other artist working nearby was Vito Acconci; sometimes at night I heard the squeaky wheels of his suitcase and I knew he was coming home from a trip.

In the seventies, I spent five or six years living and working there. Troy Brauntuch always ribbed me about living in such strange, out-of-the-way places. He had not hit on hard times yet; they were to come for him, but I was not about to gloat over them. "You see, it can happen to you as well!"

In 1979 I started painting; by that time I had already

made the films and the records. Metro Pictures opened up and I knew I had to make two-dimensional work. Helene would have shown a film here and there, but I knew it would have received very little play. I didn't want to be known primarily as a filmmaker. Collectors don't care about films and wouldn't want to come over to my studio. That's why that work got lost, and that's why it's coming back now. Another reason I started painting was because of David Salle. David and I both were teaching at the University of Hartford; one day when we pulled into the parking lot and he said he was going to stop teaching and devote all of his time to making art, I knew I had to do the same thing.

I stayed on at Hartford for another year and a half because after I quit, the Dean called me back and told me that the students were in an uproar. The students said that if I were gone, they would not be returning. Ed Stein was Dean at the time and begged me to stay; I didn't want him to beg, so I said, Okay I'll come back. The school had to wait a couple of years until the students who were upset graduated, and new students came in who didn't know what they were missing; then the fuss would die down. That is exactly what happened.

The early paintings I made in the 1980s were in black and white because that is how I found them in the history books. Another consideration was that no one since Franz Kline had made large black-and-white paintings. My biggest problem was how to get a flat black background. I went to all of the museums in New York to study the paintings of Ellsworth Kelly, Barnett Newman, Brice Marden, and others. When I got up close to their surfaces, they had surface incident. They were not flat at all since they were painted with a paintbrush, while, coming out of California car culture, I was using a spray gun. I always said, Presentation is everything. That irritated lots of peo-

ple, but for me content and presentation are inseparable.

I remember calling up Chuck Close, Gary Stephan, even David Salle; no one knew how to create a surface without incident. I finally figured out that when the painting is finished, you need to put down a matte medium. It's a white varnish but sprays on clear. It took me so long to figure that out. I worked from early in the morning until midnight to learn tricks like that. To make the lines in the tracer paintings from World War II, I again turned to car culture and the way pinstripes are made. I used a gravity-fed bottle with a wheel at the bottom; the wheels come in different sizes to determine the width of the line. For the burning city series, I discovered that I could spray paint through cotton to depict smoke.

I directed all of my work; my performances, my sculptures, my records, my films, the choreographed pieces, the burial pieces. When it came to my paintings, I was the one who had to figure out how to make them. I didn't call someone and say, Make me a painting and I'll see you at four o'clock. I had to figure out all of the methods of making the paintings, not to mention what was going to be painted.

On the other hand, it is also true that I tried to disappear by hiring actors and by hiring others to manufacture my paintings. The movies and performances and paintings became symbolic of my disappearance, just as in my final show at CalArts I was buried. All anyone saw was the blinking light, which was symbolic of my heartbeat.

In the early 1980s, when I went out to CalArts for a lecture, Ashley Bickerton came up to me after the talk; he said he was graduating in a few months and wanted to work for me or Robert Longo. A couple of months later, he knocked on my studio door; he said he had a lot of experience with airbrush and could speed things up for me. The process of making the paintings did speed up, and I could

even turn part of it over to him. He argued continuously with me about using tape and paper templates for the Neo-Geo work. He said the work would have a graphic look and I'd reply, So what? What's wrong with a graphic look? That's what I want!

When I received my $25,000 NEA grant, I bought him a car to get to work on time and even found him a loft not far from me. Ashley told me that he used to paint for Pat Steir. I said, What? I couldn't believe it because she is a semi-Expressionist painter. How could you paint for her? She has such a personal style. Pat would tell Ashley that she wanted some lines that "looked like this," waving in the air. So Ashley would try to paint some lines. She'd say, No, I want lines like this—waving some more in the air—lines like this, not lines like this; lines like this. Ashley would laugh hysterically and I would be rolling on the floor as he related the story with appropriate gestures.

After some time we had too much ego conflict. Besides, Doris and Charles Saatchi started to buy his work; he went to Sonnabend, after a while making more money than I was. From then on I hired people who were not artists, mostly Puerto Ricans, who would work hard and needed the work. They also went withme or went for me to get drugs. They didn't argue with me and they didn't need to know anything; I could teach them airbrush. I could tell by how they touched things, how their nails looked, how clean they were, how they turned the pagesof a book and spoke whether they would be helpful. At the high point in my studios, I had six or seven assistants taping for me; it was like knitting. It took two people a complete day to get all of the tape off one painting. It was like opening a Christmas present: I didn't know what it was going to look like. My colorist mixed the colors in jars; we started taping from the edges. By the time we got to the center of the painting, it was completely taped. It was like working blind. The

results were stunning to me. But I only looked for about a minute and then had them wrapped; I didn't want to become too attached to them. The paintings did not look like anyone else's; as a consequence, no one knew what to think of the work.

I learned very early that as soon as you start being attached to a piece of work, your productivity will go way down. You swoon and worry over every detail. That's what happened with Troy; he didn't produce enough. He fell in love with getting the perfect black. In my paintings, you can see that you don't need the perfect black. You just need black. Troy gets the perfect black. It doesn't make the painting any more beautiful; it just makes it more like a fetish.

David Salle began by taking his images from "How To" books, later from porno magazines, but at the beginning from books on how to draw the figure. I think Eric Fischl painted an entire show of David's; it was a series of headshots of blind people. David liked the way Eric Fischl painted. Eric was very supportive of me, and people would say that Eric loved my work, but I didn't like his work. I couldn't control myself and say something nice, and it obviously got back to him. Eric said nice things about me but I didn't say nice things about him and that wasn't good blood.

David didn't like Eric's work very much either, but he would never say that. Besides, he liked the way Eric could paint; not what he painted but the fact that he was a good painter. David wouldn't say he disliked Eric's paintings; his career was more important to him.

David had people working on his paintings, but he wouldn't say who they were or give them credit. Often they were his former students from Hartford. I remember being in the parking lot at Hartford speaking with David about the work of Neil Jenney, which was going for $30,000. I said,

At those prices, if you sold one painting a year you could live off the income. David looked at me and said, You have a very pedestrian sense of money!

At Hartford, David and I taught a class together. Once, we showed a film and he asked me to go first and discuss it. David is very articulate; when he started talking, he attacked me. It seemed to me he set me up so that he could criticize what I said. After class I grabbed him by the collar and said, If you ever do that to me again, I'll kick the shit out of you and we will both lose our jobs.

At one point Robert Longo was doing a show at Leo Castelli because Metro was having exchanges with Castelli. I was a big supporter of Troy Brauntuch, who by that time had left Metro for Mary Boone. Troy would put Robert down behind his back; but when he was with Robert, he would kiss his ass. That was the difference between Troy and me. I am the way I am; I am uncompromising. And that is precisely the first line of Jean Fisher's essay about me.

Troy and I were very close, but Troy wouldn't let me into his studio; he made me wait for him downstairs. That's how competitive we were.

Once I was in the car with Troy and David Salle and Julian Schnabel and Julian's future wife; every time Julian told a joke, Troy would laugh. I never forgot that incident because I couldn't stand to be in the same car with Schnabel. But my attitude didn't serve me well. People don't like it when they hear the truth; they don't want to know what you really feel. And because I was a loner and isolated, it looked like I was a snob. I was shy; that's why the gossip came in, why people said things about me when they didn't know anything about me. They filled in the wrong information.

David stopped teaching, and Troy was reproducing Hitler drawings on paper; for ten years painting had been

considered dead and the question was how to invigorate it again without being a Neo-Expressionist. I chose to continue the sensibility of my films and records. I chose artificial spectacle, which I represented as World War II; natural spectacle, like the lightning and volcano paintings; then I went into computer-generated images, the celestial paintings. At the end, I went back to the body and used photos of skin and body heat as my jumping-off points.

Photography was my landscape; it was my reality. I knew the world through photographs, while someone like Lichtenstein knew the world through cartoons. I didn't take photographs because photography is already about appropriation and I wanted to comment on the nature of appropriation. Appropriation was the backdrop or landscape for the "facticity" in my work.

I made close to five hundred paintings. In the beginning I worked with science and history books that are based upon facts. They had some facticity, some factual basis to them, as opposed to most movies, which have no factual jumping-off point. I stayed away from Hollywood films because they are already "made up" by the cinematographer. Even the double lightning photographs from which I made my paintings were documentary photos. Many of the images I used were from the Third Reich. I was interested in spectacle and war is spectacle; the Third Reich was pure spectacle. They certainly understood media, didn't they? I would have made a good Nazi! I had someone make my drawings; they were computer animated, and I would select the drawings I wanted to use and project them.

All through the eighties, I was up against Neo-Expressionism as represented in the work of Clemente, Chia, Kiefer, Salle, and Schnabel. This group disregarded me as a painter; I was literally blocked from entering the so-called painting elite in New York because the politics of

the situation left me out in the cold. Levine, Kruger, Longo, Prince, and Sherman were working in media outside of painting. Their media-based work was not considered a threat to the painters. I heard that collectors like the Saatchis and Illeana Sonnabend would turn their backs on my paintings when they saw them at Metro. After hearing this information, I would go back to my studio and cry. This rejection did hurt my career since to be in their collections meant that you had made it; outside of their collections, and others like them, you were just one of the pack.

I always remember being in the exhibition "Westkunst," which was a show of the best art from 1945 to the present. At the opening David Salle had a bad cough; all of the important collectors and dealers surrounded him to see how he was doing. Are you okay, David? Are you sure? If need be, we'll send you back home to get better. What a difference compared to me; nobody cared if I had a cough or not. David represented a lot of money, and at the time I did not.

All the way through I had trouble selling work while I was making it; sometimes sleeping with someone would help sell it. I had the most amazing machinery going. There was a full-time colorist; he made Josef Albers's colors look faded. The colors were intense. I had the most ideal conditions going for me, and even then I had trouble selling my work. I didn't do very well, even though the work eventually got placed. I went from show to show. If a show didn't sell, then I was stung; I had just squandered money, ruthlessly. My very last show at Weber didn't sell at all. My stretcher bars alone cost $1,000 each; they were deep, about eight inches off the wall. They folded and they were huge. They were very expensive paintings to make. At the end I brought down the scale of the paintings but they were still difficult to sell.

After 1980 Doug Crimp and Helene had a falling

out because Doug became a Marxist and Helene started Metro Pictures with Janelle Reiring. Metro Pictures was a commercial venture, which made her a capitalist in Doug's eyes. Doug's famous line was "The destination of a work of art determines its politics." This meant that if one made a work of art that ended up hanging on a living room wall, then one was still a bourgeois artist. It was difficult to argue with. That was when I had a falling out with Crimp as well.

Craig Owens wrote two articles on allegory that were very influential at the time. They gave artists license to go beyond Minimalist and formalist emphasis on surface and materials and think about what the work means, what it was implying about the larger social and political worlds, not to mention the artworld. Craig was a little faster in picking up on our sensibilities than Doug, who mulled over things very slowly, but I think Doug was the more precise writer. They were working on their Ph.D.s at Hunter College with Annette Michelson and Rosalind Krauss.

I met Krauss, who was promoting the work of Robert Morris and an older generation; Morris never had any influence on me at all. Crimp and Owens wrote regularly for *October,* a journal that Michelson and Krauss had founded with Lucio Pozzi and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. They all became aware of our new way of thinking. This was important, if only negatively, because Krauss didn't like the new work at all—I believe she thought it wasn't serious enough.

Of course, a lot of our sensibility had its genesis at CalArts in the work and influence of Baldessari, who for a long time had been appropriating images from movies, starting with his *Blasted Allegories* series. In that sense John Baldessari was the father of us all.

After Helene left me, I lost my mental anchor; I was

never the same. I became a wild man. Periodically, Helene would pack my bags and put them on her doorstep. She packed my bags and I wouldn't leave, I just wouldn't leave. I felt so close to her I wouldn't go. Finally she would back off and say, Okay, just stay. She wanted me to leave well before the time I departed. Finally I had to go because I ended up having a relationship on the side, which she found out about. She's the kind of person you don't betray, and it was a betrayal.

I had an affair because for many years I didn't have any kind of fun. We were both working so hard, so constantly. We were compatible because we had moved together to New York and had an influence in shaping the art scene. It was always about work and I was always worried—I am the kind of person who is always in turmoil, I can never relax, so it became a relationship of roommates, which is not so unusual. I was twenty-nine but had almost given up thinking about sex because my work became so all-consuming for me. There wasn't room in my day to day relationships for my sensuous side to come out.

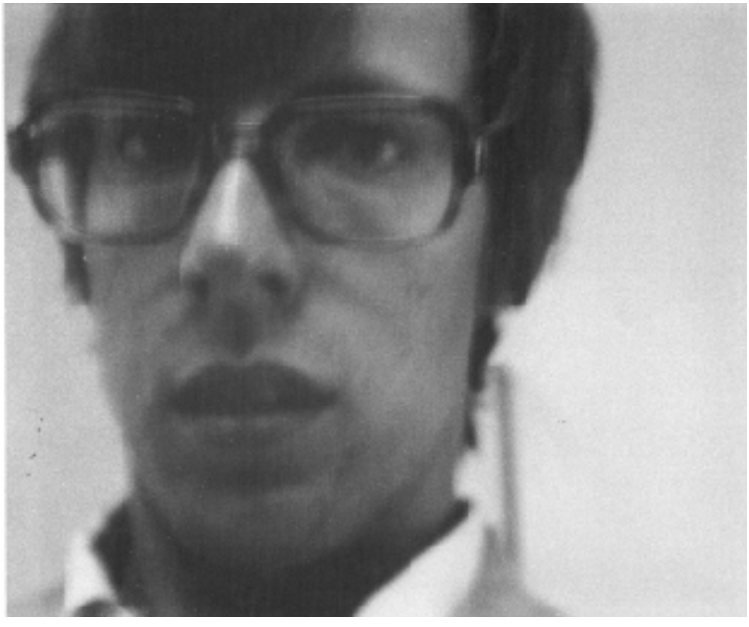
When my relationship with Helene ended, I almost had a nervous breakdown. She was the only person who understood and believed in my work. I constantly spoke with her about it; I think that I nearly drove her crazy because that is all I wanted to do—talk about my ideas and my work. She would say, I don't want to hear about that work any more. But I couldn't shut up about it. I was very fortunate to have been with her for so many years.

About three years after we broke up, I received a phone call from Helene. We hadn't been speaking and I think she was still quite angry with me; she told me that Metro Pictures was opening up. Metro Pictures got formed through our living together; most of the people she was interested in showing hung out with us and she had met through me. The gallery got formed because of all of those

younger artists who didn't have a gallery. I brought into her life the CalArts crowd, and these were the people she supported for many years.

David resented Helene because he was not included in the "Pictures" show and because his work seemed to be going somewhere else—it was more about painting than pictures. Rather than going with Helene, David ended up with Mary Boone; there was a real bifurcation in sensibilities between the two galleries. Boone represented big dollars—cherries dipped in chocolate and champagne—while Metro represented integrity and hard work and whatever you sell is how much money you make. Troy also ended up leaving Metro for Mary because money spoke. Mary offered money and stipends and was able to pull a lot of people away.

●



James Welling, self-portrait, Venice, California, 1976, © James Welling

8

In October 1971 I hitchhiked from Connecticut to California to attend CalArts. For two years I had gone to Carnegie-Mellon in Pittsburgh and was sick of painting and sculpture. CalArts looked amazing, so I transferred.

The first semester I took an earthworks class with Jack Goldstein, who was a second-year graduate student. He looked at you intensely and asked a lot of questions. In our first meeting I started quoting something I'd just read in *Artforum* and I think he liked that. We both spoke in non sequiturs, which Jack loved to repeat back to me at odd moments. The second or third day, the class took a field trip to the desert. Matt Mullican was in the class, and Matt, Jack, and I drove in Jack's pickup truck to Mirage Dry Lake. We dug trenches in the lakebed and took photographs. Coming from the East Coast, I thought it was fabulous. CalArts was very loose and the classes were crazy. Most of the time I walked around barefoot and wore a blue ski cap. That first year I became friends with David Salle, who even though he was two years younger than me, seemed much more together. Barbara Bloom and Jill Ciment were students as were Eric Fischl and Ross Bleckner. Troy Brauntuch arrived a year later, fresh out of high school.

When I came out to CalArts, I really didn't know who was teaching there. There was a faculty show and John Baldessari hung some small photographs at crazy angles. I took a class with John and liked him immediately. The next year I became a grad student and in one class was John's teaching assistant. John's teaching consisted of returning from Europe with a suitcase full of catalogues. Matt Mullican and I would pore over them for information. We saw the *Documenta 5* and *When Attitudes Become Form* catalogues as well as issues of Benjamin Buchloh's magazine *Interfunktion.* A lot of artists went up to CalArts to do talks, probably because of friendships with John—the Bechers, Daniel Buren, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Joan Jonas, Yvonne Rainer, Richard Serra, Keith Sonnier, Pat Steir, Bill Wegman, and Lawrence Weiner.

During the spring of 1972 I met Paul McMahon, who was an undergrad at Pomona College. Paul knew Helene Winer, who was running the Pomona College Art Gallery and going out with Jack. Later, Paul worked at Artists Space in New York when Helene was the Director. Helene organized a series of performances; I drove with Matt to see pieces by Chris Burden and Wolfgang Stoerchle. Jack was then doing performance pieces as well. In one piece he drew a quart of blood out of his arm. In 1972 artists were exhibiting piles of dirt in their studios, but Jack was already interested in theatricality and beauty.

Matt and I spent a lot of time together marooned up at CalArts. We were undergraduate students while Jack, even though he was technically a grad student, was doing shows in his studio and was much more out in the world, so we didn't see him that much. Jack had a great studio on Figueroa Street, where he lived with his dog named "Jack," a black Lab. The place had an exhibition space in the front and a hole in the wall you had to hunch down and crawl

through in order to get to the living space. This studio is where Jack did performances and shot some of the early films. Jack's M.F.A. show at CalArts consisted of being buried on the edge of the school parking lot in a coffin, with a light blinking to the beat of his heart. Maybe ten people saw it. Later, he did a similar piece at Riko Mizuno's gallery on La Cienega, with Jack inside a wooden box set on sawhorses and the same blinking light.

In 1972 Paul McMahon moved back to Boston and started a gallery in Cambridge called Project Inc. Douglas Huebler and Jack did shows there. It felt like very few people apart from Paul's family went by the gallery. I remember Paul premiered Michael Asher's only movie at Project Inc. and the audience consisted of Paul and his wife, Paul's brothers and their girlfriends, and me. In the summer of 1973, before my last year at CalArts, Paul found me a job working in a Cambridge gas station near his apartment. There was hardly any business at the station, so I spent much of the summer reading *Gravity's Rainbow,* which David Salle had lent me.

Before I left the East Coast, David called to tell me he needed someone to share a studio he found in Venice. I moved in and we were roommates for a year. When the other floor in the building became free, for a while David lived downstairs with Susan Davis. They met when David cast her for a shower scene in a short 16-mm film he was making. Later that summer, they landed the ultimate job: Writing pornography by the page. In 1975 they moved to New York, driving Susan's Pinto.

Jack graduated in 1972, and in 1974 he went with Helene to New York. When Helene started working as the Director of Artists Space, she hired Paul McMahon. By this time Matt had also moved to New York. Through Matt, I heard that Jack had gone to England to shoot a film and had returned to New York. Matt stayed in a brownstone on

King Street in the West Village that belonged to Mia Agee, James Agee's widow. Mia was a writer who had come to New York to escape Nazi Germany. I would visit Matt in this incredible house with lots of Walker Evans photographs on the walls. Matt was very good friends with Troy Brauntuch, who had moved to New York at the same time. Troy and Jack started constantly hanging around together.

By 1977 Jack was making short 16-mm films and 45-rpm records, going back and forth between New York and L.A. because L.A. had better labs and technical services. I remember Jack lugged his projector upstairs to my place in Venice; I first saw his film *White Dove* there. When he was in L.A., Jack would live for a month or two in the Pacific Building at 506 Santa Monica Boulevard. After I broke up with my girlfriend, I moved into the building too. The rent was $60 a month. Out the bathroom window was a view of the Pacific Ocean. It was an incredibly fun few years, and I spent a lot of time with Jack when he was in town. When I moved in Jon Borofsky had a studio down the hall. Later Raul Guerrero, John M. Miller, Allen Ruppersberg, and a few other artists and friends moved in because of the inexpensive rent. Those of us who were living in the building took showers at the YMCA across the street.

I worked as a cook in a place called "The Feedbag" on Wilshire and Twelfth in Santa Monica. I got Jack a job working with me as a fry cook. Jack made his film *Bone China* while we were working there. We laughed a lot: Flipping burgers and omelets, talking about art, and joking with the bus boys, the Luis brothers from Oaxaca. At night we would eat cheap Chinese food around the corner and talk some more about art.

Jack would usually start a conversation saying, Jim, I've got this great idea! Then he would describe something that more often than not became a film or a record. He

would suggest taking a drive to do research for a piece. We drove down to see the Queen Mary in Long Beach because he wanted to do a piece about an ocean liner. Another time, we went to the circus. I would tag along as Jack's sounding board. Later, Jack started working at Dolores, a drive-in coffee shop on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Los Angeles, and I began to see less of him. When we got together, he would tease me by saying that he was a better fry cook than I was.

Before 1976 I had made a lot of different types of work. At CalArts I had so little money, I hardly made anything except video—videotape was free in Baldessari's class. After graduating I made hermetic pieces using snapshots and drawings, work that Jack once described dismissively as "kitchen-table art." The way Jack made films was to hire professionals and work like a director, making a completely slick and professional film. I was too intimidated to work that way, so I began to teach myself photography, which I figured I could do myself. I found I really liked taking pictures and working with cameras. When I showed Jack an expensive light meter I had just bought, he told me that he made films and didn't even know how to use a light meter. For him it was a matter of pride that he knew nothing technical about filmmaking.

Matt Mullican was always interested in what everyone was doing; I would receive reports from Matt about what was happening in New York: David is doing this and Jack is doing that and Troy Brauntuch is doing this and there is this new guy Robert Longo and his girl friend Cindy Sherman, who started a gallery called Hallwalls in Buffalo, and you have to check their stuff out and when are you coming to visit? Jack would send me a postcard or two, but Matt would send me long letters, scrawled on about twenty sheets of paper with lots of drawings and diagrams. Matt had developed ideas about how the artworld worked.

It was like a triangle, he said, and you had to wait for the people at the top to die out. Matt was like an alchemist, with his various theories about how things worked.

In the summer of 1977 I heard about a show called "Pictures" that Helene was putting together with Douglas Crimp at Artists Space. I got the inside scoop from Paul. Jack, Robert, Troy, and Sherrie Levine were in it. Matt was enthusiastic but wasn't in it; neither was David, which probably pissed him off. In 1978 the show traveled to L.A. Jack had records, films, and a photo piece called *The Pull.* Sherrie Levine had grid paintings of Washington and Lincoln, and Robert Longo had weird cast sculptures. Troy Brauntuch was represented by impressive photoworks in expensive frames. Needless to say, I was extremely excited to see the work by my friends I had been hearing so much about. I realized that it was time for me to move back to New York.

In 1978 I was working at the Brandywine Cafe in Venice. Baldessari, Jimmy Hayward, and Michael Asher were regulars. The same wonderful, hilarious Luis brothers from the Feedbag were at the Brandywine—they had convinced me to move with them. When he was in town, Jack worked at Dolores because he didn't like cooking for the art crowd. In October the Brandywine closed because of a fire. This was a good omen: I could receive unemployment checks for six months.

When I arrived in New York, I stayed at Paul's loft on Grand Street. Since there was a floor available upstairs, Matt left King Street and we divided the space. When my unemployment checks ran out, I got another restaurant job. Working in restaurants in New York was a lot more difficult without Jack or the Luis brothers. I cooked in a couple of restaurants and it was awful. At the time, Jack was working as a janitor at the Guggenheim Museum and he helped me get a job painting the galleries at night. Our shifts would

overlap but it wasn't the same. The shit jobs were no fun in New York, rent was higher, the stakes were higher, things were more tense. The job at the Guggenheim ended and I began to see less of Jack.

When David Salle was at CalArts, he created amazing performances, installations, video pieces, and photographs. Still a graduate student, he had a one-person show of photographic pieces at Claire Copley Gallery. Later David had a show at Artists Space of photo pieces he had begun in L.A. I remember a series of 16x20 c-prints in which he had outlined women's assholes with brightly colored paint. At the opening, a friend went up to David and, without thinking, said to the woman he was standing with, Oh, you must be the girl in these pictures. She turned to David and said, You told me no one would recognize me! In 1977 David visited L.A. and I took a portrait of him smoking a cigar in the Pacific Building. That summer I went to New York and saw David a few times at his place on Nassau Street. He began making paintings on large sheets of Arches paper. When I arrived in 1978, David started to make paintings on canvas; he had spent the previous few years in New York writing art criticism and doing a few installations in Holland. In 1979 he had a show at Larry Gagosian and Annina Nosei's private space on West Broadway. While the show was up, we interviewed each other, and the piece ("Images That Understand Us") was published in the LAICA *Journal.* It effectively captured our obscure and somewhat pretentious ideas.

By the time I moved to New York, a scene was already forming, largely because of David's tremendous social skills. Through David, I met or first heard about Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine, Mike Smith, Julian Schnabel, and Carol Squires.

This scene involved Jack only slightly. Jack was comfortable one-on-one, but he steered clear of social situ-

ations. He was living in the East Village and then got a loft under the Brooklyn Bridge. When David and Jack began making paintings, I was surprised. Suddenly it seemed that the artists I knew, including me, began going off in new directions with their work. The year 1979 was the Pentecostal year: We began speaking different languages. Jack was making airbrushed paintings; Matt was making bulletin boards; I was making abstract photographs; Paul McMahon was doing stand-up comedy; Barbara Bloom was making a 35-mm film in Holland; Barbara Kruger was making photo pieces in red frames; David was making really weird paintings; Sherrie Levine was rephotographing photographs; Troy Brauntuch was making large drawings; Eric Fischl was painting on glassine; Susan Davis was writing; Ross Bleckner was painting figuratively.

In 1980 Helene Winer left Artists Space to open her own gallery. When Metro Pictures opened, thanks to Jack, I was in the gallery. Helene was ironic and sarcastic, smart and tough. I found her intimidating, but in 1979 I had the arrogance to turn down a show at Artists Space because I wanted the big room, despite the fact that my photos were tiny. Luckily Helene thought enough of my work to include me in the gallery. Helene's business partner in the gallery was Janelle Reiring. The parties for the gallery were often in Janelle's loft on North Moore Street. The name "Metro Pictures" came as a total shock; it seemed so weird, but it was also so Helene. Something you might see on a truck: Metro Lumber. The opening of the gallery was tremendously exciting because it all seemed to happen so quickly; immediately, there was a lot of press and critical attention. I think Helene wanted to have all the CalArts people together at Metro, but everyone had petty grievances and the gallery ended up with more Hallwalls artists than CalArts artists.

In the late 1970s, the downtown music scene was

very important to me. I wasn't interested in the punk/CBGB scene so much as in musicians who were playing in galleries and alternative spaces, people like Rhys Chatham, Jeffrey Lohn, and Glenn Branca. The Mudd Club was located in Ross Bleckner's building on White Street, and Tier 3 was right around the corner. Matt and I would walk down from our loft on Grand Street, hear some music, and at 2:00 a.m. get a knish at Dave's Corner on Canal Street. Artists Space staged an important two-night concert, which Brian Eno later turned into the record *No Wave.* He selected the top five or six acts, but left off Paul McMahon's band Daily Life, with Barbara Ess and Glenn Branca. Barbara was a former filmmaker who was then doing photo-based work and music. She and Glenn were a couple. In 1979 Glenn did an installation and was just beginning his ensemble guitar pieces. *Light Field* and *The Ascension* were two early works he performed at Tier Three; they reminded me of some of Jack's films and first paintings—intense, beautiful, terrifying, totally out there.

Before Metro Pictures opened, the Kitchen did shows with many of the artists later associated with the gallery. Robert Longo worked as a curator and Eric Bogosian organized performances. The exhibition space at the Kitchen was weird but Troy Brauntuch, Robert Longo, and Sherrie Levine did great shows there; Barbara Kruger organized a gigantic group show "Pictures and Promises." Just before Metro Pictures opened, Jack showed *The Jump,* his last film, at the Kitchen. Jack's LP *The Unknown Dimension* played in the side room. That show was probably my favorite of all of Jack's shows. *The Jump* is Jack's most spectacular film: Slow-motion footage of a diver rotoscoped out against a black background. The diver's body glistens with unreal scintillations of colored light.

When I think back on this period, it feels like I was following behind Jack in the tremendous wake he created

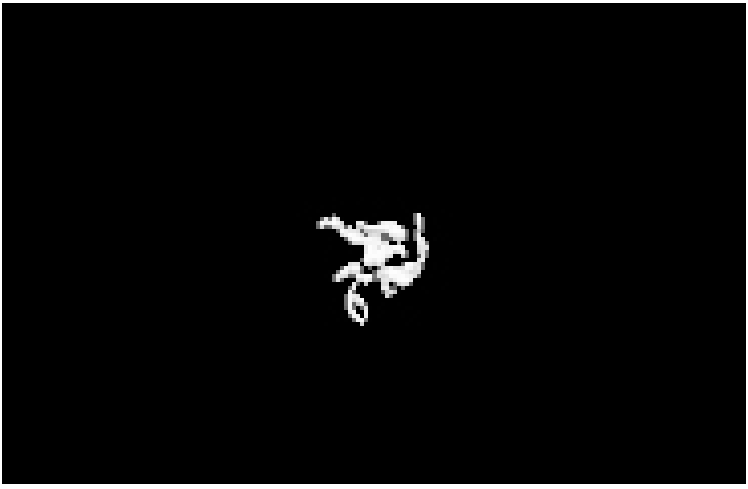
by his person and his work. Often we joked and laughed at the absurdity of working in ridiculous restaurants to be able to make art. Jack was a trailblazer. He helped me by his example of being someone totally committed to making his work in his own way and doing whatever it took to finance it. Jack was both ironic and totally sincere, and I picked those qualities up in my work. When I made my first abstract photographs of aluminum foil in 1980, they were strongly and unconsciously influenced by Jack: Glittering, emotional landscapes of an unknown dimension. Later, Jack influenced me very specifically in a group of photographs. When he made his first large black-and-white paintings, I was blown away by their matte blacks and chalky whites. I bought some high-contrast film and made a series of very severe abstract photographs in homage to those paintings.

When Jack had the studio in the Pacific Building, he would type one-sentence epigrams on single sheets of paper and pin them in rows on the wall. During slow periods, he composed hundreds of them. I would come in from my room down the hall and Jack would slowly recite them to me. My two favorites went something like this:

> "The buzzing of the fluorescent lights bothers me, but if I turn them off I won't be able to see."

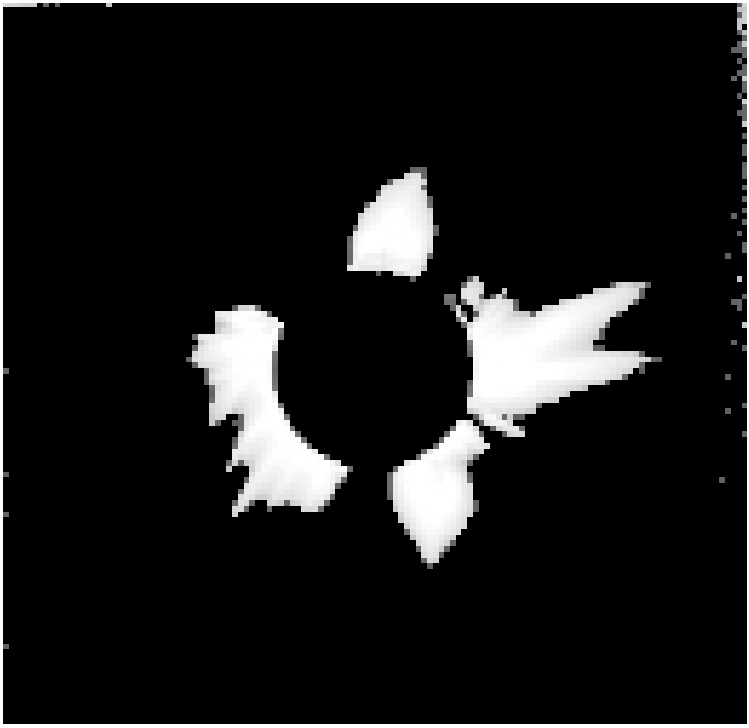
> "The man committing suicide controls the moment of his death by executing a back flip."

●



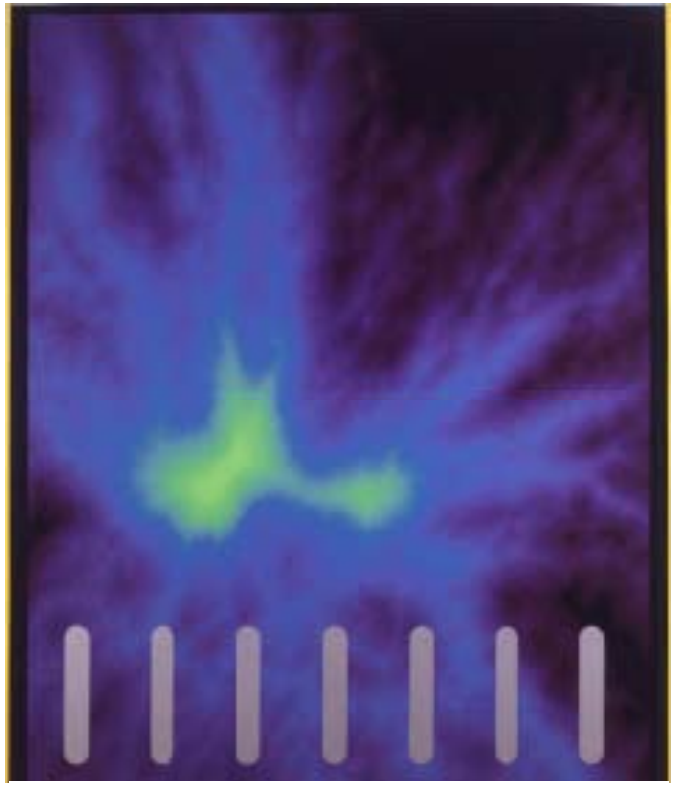
Untitled (detail), 1979, oil on masonite (triptych), 84½" x 133"
Collection Brian D. Butler, Los Angeles

Untitled, 1982, acrylic on canvas,
34" x 64¾"



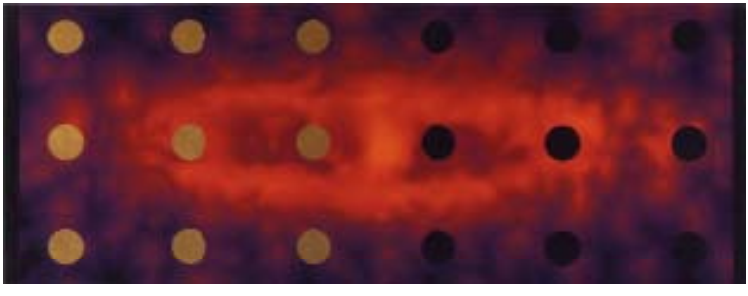
Untitled, 1983, acrylic on canvas, 96" x 96"
Collection Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles

Untitled, 1989, acrylic on canvas,
96″ x 24″ x 8″



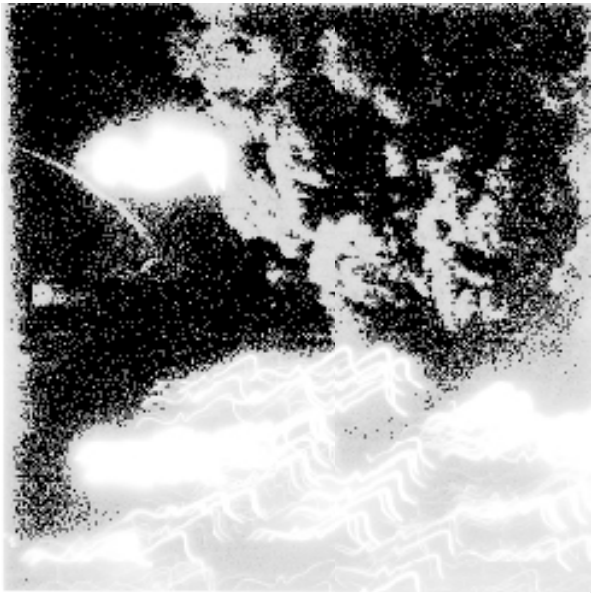
Untitled, 1988, acrylic on canvas, 84" x 72" x 6"
Collection the Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled, 1985, acrylic on canvas, 82¾" x 130"
Collection B.Z. and Michael Schwartz, New York

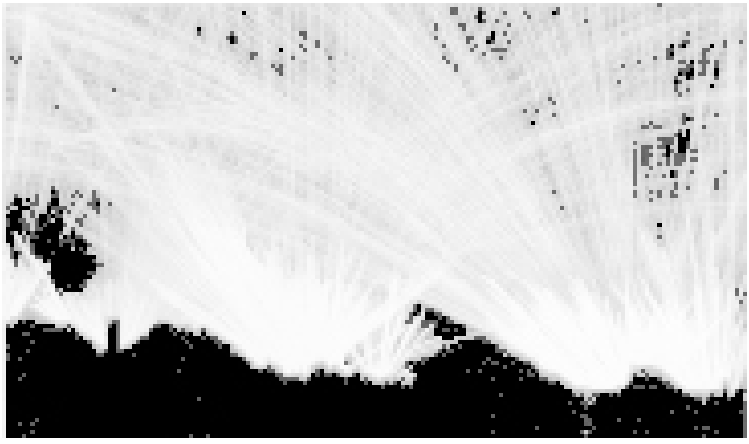


Untitled, 1988, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 120" x 8"

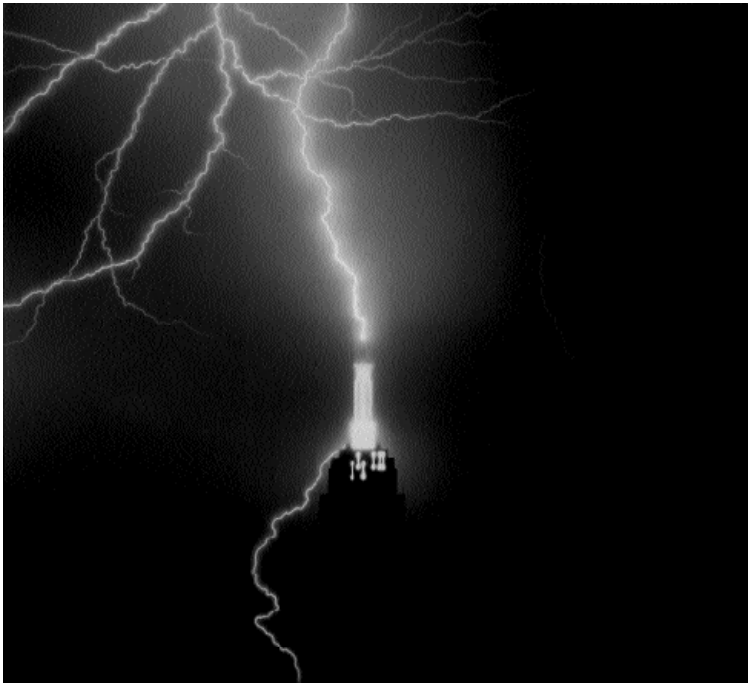
Untitled, 1991, acrylic on canvas, 96" x 96" x 8"



Untitled, 1984, acrylic on canvas, 72″ x 72″ x 2″



Untitled, 1982, acrylic on canvas, 84" x 144" x 2"



Untitled, 1984, acrylic on canvas, 96" x 72" x 2"

9

In some strange way, you might say I came to live in America as a result of Jack Goldstein's art. Maybe that's a bit overly dramatic. To be more specific, my interest in the art that was coming out of New York City in the 1980s, my desire to move to America from my birthplace in London, and the fact that I was the founder and editor of a magazine called *ZG* and wanted to publish a New York issue, all conspired to make America my home.

In 1980 I started *ZG* because, though I wrote for a number of international art magazines, the writing in almost all of them was extremely convoluted, dense with theory, and just plain bad. The majority of the magazines felt stuffy, not at all reader-friendly. By contrast, in the early 1980s I was teaching at St. Martin's School of Art in London and people like Boy George, Sade, and John Galliano (now the head designer for Christian Dior) were students of mine. Because we were all roughly the same age, in the evenings we would hang out together at the trendiest night clubs, dancing to music by groups like Spandau Ballet and George Michaels, talking with David Bowie, the Sex Pistols, and a plethora of other celebrities from all areas of the arts and media who wandered into the club.

We would sit around drinking and talking about everything under the sun: Fashion, music, movies, sports, commercials, art, photography, art theory, and who was fucking who.

It was about that time that I began putting together an art magazine that could bring together all of these elements under the same cover. The idea was that someone could pick up a copy of *ZG* and read an art article in the same magazine that was addressing ideas about fashion, current theoretical concepts, and just about anything else that fit in with the rest of the content. I wanted to make explicit how the artworld was being influenced by the pop-culture world, and vice versa. I think it was one of the first magazines to do that. These days, it just seems commonplace.

In the early to mid eighties, New York City, specifically Lower Manhattan, was a hotbed of art, drugs, and gossip. While visiting London in 1980, Dan Graham—who became a friend and fan of the magazine—suggested I do a New York issue. I thought it was a great idea. At least a year prior to publishing the issue, I traveled back and forth from London to New York and met a lot of people in the New York artworld. Before even setting foot in New York, I had seen a lot of the artwork in reproduction and was knocked out by much of what I saw, especially Jack Goldstein's paintings. Pictures art certainly seemed to be the most interesting art at that time. When in 1984 I finally moved to Manhattan, I had become friends with many of the artists, art dealers, and musicians who appeared in the New York issue of the magazine. A few months after the issue was published, New York City became my new home; in the 1980s I felt very much a part of the art scene.

During my first summer in the city, I lived in a loft without air conditioning or a ceiling fan. It was unbearable. When Jack found out, he gave me a huge ceiling fan. Who

would have thought a ceiling fan could be so greatly appreciated? "Hot town/ Summer in the city/ Back of my neck's getting dirty and gritty." I remember the words to that Three Dog Night song buzzing endlessly around in my head. Every ten minutes or so I would jump into a cold shower, get out, and stand under the fan, soaking wet. The ritual helped cool me down for a while.

Jack often phoned me when I first arrived in the city and would ask me to go to a lunch or dinner party he'd been invited to. I used to think then that he was too shy or nervous to go by himself. Thinking back on it now, it may well have been that he was reticent to go by himself because he wasn't feeling high enough. Drugs seemed to give him the self-confidence he needed to attend social events, such as parties at the home of prominent art dealers like Gene and Barbara Schwartz, which he knew would be helpful for his career. I remember catching cabs to many of these affairs. Before we arrived, Jack would always stop off some place, leap out of the cab, disappear for a few minutes, then we would go on our way to the social function. He always seemed more talkative and at ease after these stops!

Of course, Jack was certainly not the only one doing all kinds of drugs. At that time, it was hard to find anyone in the artworld who wasn't using something, or in any other "world" for that matter. I guess in many ways, drug-taking was the glue that bound the 1980s together. That and money. Coming from England, where money was never very plentiful in the artworld (unless you knew the people who gave out government grants), the whole New York scene was fascinating to me. There was an edginess to everything—behavior, attitudes, the art, and even friendships. It was a different exploration of "the edge" than the one with which I was familiar in London. Unlike in England, the green-eyed monster kept on rearing its ugly

head in the New York downtown art scene as artists vied for the millions of dollars within arm's reach. There seemed to be a never-ending flow emanating from museums, government bodies, and private art dealers and collectors, old and young. Art critics, too, wanted in on the act, agreeing to write blah articles for blah artists whom they believed might one day be famous. After being paid by the magazine or institution, artists would often give critics kickbacks in the form of artworks, hoping that the critic would write more articles about them. In some cases, critics expected kickbacks. Everybody wanted a piece of the pie and a chunk of celebrity status. Everything was frenetic. Paranoia ran rampant among the "haves" and the "wannabes." It was the art scene at its worst and best. *Art in America* celebrated "Capitalism and Celebrity." Looking back on it now, the stories we could all tell are probably too good to be true. But then again, I doubt most people can remember even a third of what happened or what they did.

Jack was probably among the most paranoid of artists. He always said that people weren't paying enough attention to his work, not as much as they did to other artists of his generation. Yet he was—still is, in my view—a terrific artist. I have always had a tremendous respect for his art. So did a lot of his peers—artists, critics, and friends alike. But it was as if Jack couldn't see or hear the accolades. He was always angry that people appeared to be doing better than he was. I still don't understand why he kept on shooting himself in the foot all the time. It seemed like such self-destructive behavior because of all the artists around at that time, he was one of the best. Jack was doing everything: Performance, videos, records, and fabricating his paintings. Everything he did—his spacemen paintings, his sky paintings, his videos and records—all had a feeling of both neutrality and spectacle about them. Maybe the key

to a lot of Pictures art, and in particular Jack's art, was how we learn to control our self-control. Seeing the imprint of popular culture in ourselves meant that we had to take a distanced vantage point from ourselves. We had to see ourselves as culturally formed objects. It felt like a new kind of objectivity, grounded in the collective subjectivity of popular culture, was taking place everywhere. The vantage point never felt absolute but always culturally provisional. Because he captured that feeling so well, his work felt disturbing, which is what made Jack's work both powerful and challenging.

It was also probably the case that his take on and interpretation of the zeitgeist, coupled with the drug-taking, conspired to make his journey through the artworld the tough one it was and still is. The idea of producing art as spectacle because the world had become only spectacle was probably exaggerated and emphasized by using drugs. Phew! What a world to have to inhabit all the time. No relief. Ever. No wonder he seemed so paranoid.

Despite his difficult disposition, Jack always had faithful supporters, not only because he's a good artist but also because he is who he is. His charm is mysterious. In the mid to late 1980s Jean Fisher, an art critic from London, came to New York City and for about two years ended up writing about Jack's work and living with him. One was never really sure whether they were dating, and neither one would admit or deny it. But Jack has always regarded her both as a friend and an equal. Not bad, considering Jack's overly critical and overly sensitive reaction to most people. Jean is smart, very serious, and also very political. Though she stopped living with Jack after a while, she continued to live in New York, and to this day they have remained good friends. Many people speculated that she, like many other women in Jack's life, finally left despite her feelings for him because living with him and his drug habit

proved too difficult. I lost contact with Jean after she returned to England, but I know she continues to write about art and keeps in touch with Jack.

Jack's support system has always been strong. When he taught in Hartford, for example, Annette Lemieux was one of his students; she became a well-known artist in her own right. There were many more young students who both liked and respected Jack and his art as well as his teaching skills. When Annette left college, she became David Salle's assistant, which didn't please Jack too much, given the competitive animosity among all the Pictures artists like Brauntuch, Longo, Sherman, Prince, Salle, Goldstein, etc.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Metro Pictures opened its doors and had a terrific stable of artists. Before the gallery opened, Helene Winer had been the Director of Artists Space, the well-known, downtown alternative art space. Her gallery was well received, and for a while she and her partner Janelle were the hottest ticket in town with the best artists on the scene. But they weren't allowed to be exclusive for long. As I said before, the competitive spirit throughout that decade was strong and often brutal, with people caring little about anything but themselves and making lots of money.

The quintessential example of the above was Mary Boone, small in stature but huge in ego. She decided to stake her claim on some of the Metro Pictures artists; it wasn't long before she succeeded. It was rumored that David Salle was going to be a Metro Pictures artist and that Mary Boone basically bought him off. There was a lot of speculation about where she got her money, but rumor has it that she told Salle that if he came with her gallery, instead of selling his paintings for $10,000, she'd sell them for $25,000. Furthermore, she would buy three of them immediately. He agreed. She sold them! Talk about an

offer you can't refuse—especially having been out of art school for only a few short years.

The competition raged between the two galleries and their artists. I remember being at art openings where if you were spotted talking with an artist from Metro Pictures, you'd get the cold shoulder from the Boone brigade, and vice versa. It was hilarious. So childish.

At the beginning of Metro Pictures and prior to its opening, Helene and Jack were good friends. After the gallery opened, however, their friendship was stretched to the limits because he frequently complained that Helene and Janelle were doing more to promote Cindy Sherman and Robert Longo than they were to promote him. It always seemed that he was criticizing the gallery because he thought that people weren't taking his work seriously enough, or because the gallery wasn't selling enough of his work. Finally, he split with Metro Pictures. Perhaps, though, as many seemed to suggest with hindsight, Metro Pictures couldn't deal with him any more because his habit was causing too much stress and tension and was wearing them out.

I was always intrigued with the way Helene and Janelle played off of one another in terms of running the business. People had the impression that Helene made all the decisions about artists and gallery choices, but in reality I think that was a front. They were equal partners. Janelle always did the talking, yet seemed to imply that she deferred to Helene. They played the good cop-bad cop game to perfection and I think they worked well together. They were good friends, and I liked them both very much. I enjoyed their company and their business style immensely.

Which is more than I could say about Mary Boone. I doubt that I was alone in my opinion. I don't think she liked women much at all, unless, of course, she could use

them for her own ends. Her dislike for me, though, resulted in a very sad situation. Moira Dryer, who was a very good artist as well as a very good friend of mine, was part of Boone's stable of artists. Moira died in April 1992 from cancer. I believe I was one of the only people to whom she confided that in October 1991 her doctor told her she would probably live no longer than eight months. Boone knew Moira was sick but had arranged for her to have a show in January 1992 with an accompanying catalogue. Moira asked that I write the essay for the catalogue. Boone refused Moira's request. Moira insisted, so Boone decided that there would be no catalogue for the show after all. It was Moira's last show before her death three months later.

I had always found Mary's behavior in the past to be pretty funny and pretty silly. This time, I found it not only silly, but heartless.

In retrospect, our behavior in the 1990s was a clear product of the kind of behavior everyone in the 1980s had tolerated, even reveled in. By the 1990s, most of the shine had worn off the fool's gold that formed in all its aspects the rather rickety foundation of 1980s culture.

In terms of Jack's career, after leaving Metro Pictures he went to the John Weber Gallery, but the move didn't help his career much. For a while he had also become part of Mary Boone's stable of male "dates." Towards the end of the decade, there seemed to be an upsurge of interest in Jack's work, when he joined a Chicago gallery owned by Rebecca Donelson. She was selling more of his work than anyone else had done for a while. The gossip machine in New York claimed that Jack had worked his charm on another female art dealer and that Rebecca had fallen in love with him. Whether or not that was true, she was obviously a good saleswoman. In Chicago she was able to sell a lot of his work. The speculation was that after a while Jack wanted his money for drugs.

Who knows how true that was either? I do know that during this period, Jack's paranoid behavior seemed to get worse. At one point he disappeared and all his friends worried about him. Nobody knew what had happened to him. Rebecca, though, wouldn't tell anybody what was going on. I remember calling and asking her if she knew where Jack was and if he was OK. She said that he was fine, but she wouldn't tell me where he was, or what he was doing. She merely said he was fine. I think that Rebecca, like other women before her, was looking after him, supporting him through the tough times. But hers seemed to go the way of other relationships with Jack. It seemed to fade away for the same reasons as the others had.

After the Rebecca incident, art dealers seemed to tire of Jack's behavior. It appeared that Rebecca withdrew her support because she believed that he was never going to clean up his act. I think a lot of people felt that way. Of course, there are always two sides to every story.

In the mid 1980's Jack showed his work with Josh Baer, who had a gallery in Soho and with whom I lived for a while. The eighties seemed to belong to the yuppies who invaded the art scene and had some impact on the market. They had money to throw around, and they threw it all over the place. Josh Baer was always thought to have been one of the rich kids, but in fact he really wasn't. When Josh was barely two, his mother, the artist Jo Baer, left his father, who was wealthy, and took Josh with her. But Jo never had very much money because, although all the male Minimalist artists of the 1960s were selling their paintings, she claimed that, being a woman, she didn't get treated like the guys. Josh's father remarried and had two more children.

Josh told me that when he reached the age of twenty-one, his father gave him one million dollars. He offered to help Josh invest it wisely, but Josh wanted to handle his money independently. His mother often told me

she thought he should become a professional gambler. Josh must have thought about it because he wrote the thesis for his master's degree on some foolproof gambling system; it was a system he said really worked.

After finishing university, he became the Director of White Columns, a downtown alternative art space, where he curated some good shows and was able to raise money pretty well. Raising money appears to have been a talent of his. When I came to New York, he helped me with *ZG* by selling ads and helping to find more distribution.

At one point he seemed very depressed and asserted that he might as well kill himself. I was so frightened that he was going to commit suicide that I called his father and told him what his son was saying. His father was distraught and I believe gave him a quarter of a million dollars so that the gallery might continue. Barely a year after his father had given him the additional money, the gallery went bankrupt. I believe that a lot of artists, including Jack, got screwed financially.

When I left Josh, I also left New York, having fallen in love with the desert, which I had visited on various writing assignments to the West Coast. For quite a few years, I lost contact with Jack. Then, around 1997, various friends from New York contacted me to see if I knew where Jack was living; they needed permission to show his older work in a large exhibition that was being curated about artists who had shown at Artists Space. Nobody seemed able to locate him. There were rumors circulating that Jack was dead. Then in 2000 I literally bumped into Jack at Art Center in Pasadena, where I teach. Richard Hertz, who was then the Department Chair of Graduate Studies, had somehow met up with Jack and given him some teaching hours at the college. As we talked, catching up on everything, it turned out that his absence from the art scene was explained by the fact that he, too, had moved out of New

York and been living somewhere in the desert of Southern California!

The 1980s were one of the most interesting times in the artworld. Had things been a little different, or had different choices been made, Jack could have been, and remained, at the top of his profession. But the first decade of the twenty-first century is shaping up in an interesting fashion. Maybe his time has finally come.

●

Jack, Pacific Building, Santa Monica, 1977, © James Welling

REFLECTIONS BY **Troy Brauntuch**

10

I was very naïve. I wanted to go to California and enroll at CalArts because someone told me it was a good school. It was by chance that it was such a cool place. My parents hated my guts because they wanted me to go to Cooper Union, where I could have gone for free. In 1972 I began CalArts, and after three years of study, which included one exchange term at Cooper Union, received my degree. I met Matt for the first time at Cooper Union and through Matt met Jack, David, Jim, and Paul McMahon. The first time I met Jack, he was at Helene's house, lying on the couch with Jack the Dog, watching television.

My friends at CalArts did not end up being my friends when I moved back to New York. I was more in the painting department and less in the Post-Studio group under John Baldessari. Ross Bleckner was a graduate student; I was a young undergraduate. I didn't know him that well at CalArts, but in New York I got to know him very well. I met with John, but was not really part of that group; yet I received unusual respect from him, based upon my art. I was a second-year undergrad and all the grad students were talking the talk that was way over my head. I studied primarily with Paul Brach and Allan Hacklin.

John Mandel was my first teacher; he had a studio on campus and had the most beautiful surfaces on his paintings, which were of young boys with stigmata on them. That year Allan and John were both coming off of showing in the Whitney Biennial. I decided that I wanted to learn how to paint. However, CalArts was not about studying; you had a studio and you had to practice, you had to make art. I even stopped playing golf when I was at CalArts;I became very serious and started making art all of the time.

I went to every one of John Baldessari's classes that brought in artists. For example, I saw Robert Barry, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, and Larry Weiner; visiting artists came in on a weekly basis. As a result I knew everybody in the class. Matt was greatly influenced by John's teaching; in school I never had a real dialogue with him.

When I was at Cooper Union, Matt and I bonded. Every day we went to museums and to the Seventy-Fourth Street pizzeria by the Whitney; Matt's art talk led to Jack's art talk. Through Matt I met a lot of people who I respected; if I hadn't spent time with him in New York, I might have stayed in L.A. I had great ambivalence leaving Southern California; most of my friends were staying in L.A. But I was ambitious; the place to go and become famous was in New York. Since I was from the East Coast, it was easy for me to go back there. I never thought about what kind of job I was going to get, how I was going to make money, where my first show was going to be. While going to school, I assumed that I would eventually get a show.

In the early seventies, there were maybe ten galleries. They included Castelli and Sonnabend and Gibson and Weber, Bykert, Paula Cooper, and Ronald Feldman. Out of those, there were only three galleries: Castelli, Sonnabend and Paula's. The person who discovered lots of artists was Annina Nosei; she gave David his first show and was sell-

ing and promoting his work before anyone else. Bykert was dying. Mary Boone had worked there for two or three years; Klaus Kertess ran the gallery. Mary ended up knowing all of the collectors and starting her own gallery, bringing along some of the Bykert group. In 1980 she closed down her first gallery and started a second one, dumping most of the artists. This was an embarrassment because first she had sold their work to collectors, then she had dumped them. She started out again with pretty much a whole new stable.

When I was in New York with Matt, I got to know very well Mia Agee, in whose house he lived. Mia was a pretty amazing woman, the widow of film critic James Agee. She was a friend of Matt's family; his mother Luchita and father Lee knew a lot of people, as well as being in the artworld. Mia was like his godmother. Matt lived on the bottom floor of Mia's house on King Street; I went over all of the time and played cards with her. I gamble and she liked to gamble. For years I played poker once a week with Dike Blair, Frank Majore, Richard Prince, and Oliver Wassow.

Jack and I identified with each other's work. We also lived right next to each other on Duane Street in Tribeca. When Jack was working on one of his films, he would always ask me over to see it and tell him what I thought. On weekends Matt would drive Jack and me to all of the galleries in town; he would drive us uptown and downtown until we had to plead with him, No more! We received a great education from those experiences. Eventually, David and I were at Mary Boone's together, and I got to know him pretty well; but knowing David is not knowing David. In my entire life, I remember having only one conversation with him.

Beginning in 1976 I became friendly with Robert Longo, Cindy Sherman and Michael Zwack, who together

with Nancy Dwyer ran Hallwalls in Buffalo. My first group show was at Hallwalls with David, Jack, Matt, and Paul McMahon; it was an exchange with Artists Space. Matt and I were there at the same time; it was snowing and crazy. I smoked pot the whole time and laughed my brains out.

When I went back to California in the summer of 1976, Cindy and Robert sublet my loft; by the time I came back they had found a place on South Street. It was a neighborhood friendship; they were three or four blocks away. During that summer, I stayed with Jack in the Pacific Building at Fifth and Santa Monica Boulevard; we showered at the YMCA. Every day I went down to the beach and worked on my tan. Jack was quite jealous of my healthy glow; no matter how hard he worked on his tan, it only became yellow golden. I was much more of a rich Indian red.

Before going to L.A. that summer, Jack had been seeing Jenny Bolande, who worked at Artists Space and ended up being Helene's best friend. Jack had a relationship with Jenny and she subsequently had a close emotional relationship with Helene. What happened is that while Jack was in Santa Monica that summer, Jenny got the idea that she loved her friendship with Helene more than she loved being with Jack, so she told Helene that she was sleeping with him. In one day Jack got a phone call from Jenny saying, I'm not going to be the little figurine on top of the wedding cake for you anymore, and from Helene, who said, Get the hell out of here. For days after the phone calls, Jack would be sitting in the corner saying, Oh shit! I had to get out of there, so I went to Sylmar for a few days to stay with friends.

I did the show at Artists Space and then had one at the Kitchen. There was a huge community around the Kitchen, including Eric Bagosian, Rhys Chatham, Kim Gordon, Robert Longo, and Cindy Sherman. It was the place.

Before the new galleries opened, we all wanted to get a show at the Kitchen; my first real show was there, set up by RoseLee Goldberg. It brought in collectors and set up sales. Some of my work at the Kitchen was bought by Julian Schnabel. By 1979 Julian was already making good money; he was out there.

In terms of sales, Julian was a big supporter; he had collectors come to my studio and I sold my work to them. I met the Swiss dealer Bruno Bischofberger through Julian, as well as many others. I was selling work before I was with a gallery; I would have been a gift for any gallery. I carefully considered my options, which included Annina Nosei, Leo Castelli, Mary, and Metro.

Before I had made my decision, Mary came over to the studio. She had heard a lot about my work; people were talking about it. She said how much she liked it and that she wanted me to be part of her gallery. I said that I would think about it. Later that week, I saw her at the Mudd Club, which was on the ground floor of Ross Bleckner's building on White Street. It was post-Max's Kansas City; it was pre-Studio 54—the punk rock underground, artists-musicians scene. There was a very big music scene then, and the art scene was closely connected with it.

Mary came up to me and spoke about a piece of mine that she was buying. I said, What piece are you buying from me? She said, The piece I wanted and that I bought. I said, You didn't buy anything; the piece you liked had already been sold. She basically reprimanded me and said, Don't ever do that to me again—as if she represented me and I were already in her gallery. That exchange changed my mind, and I decided to go with Metro Pictures.

Time went by and I would tell the story to Matt or David or Julian; they said that Mary was different. The Mary whom everyone knew had changed.

In 1980 I had my first one-person show at Metro.

That show was extremely successful and got the gallery a lot of attention. I was then offered a split exhibition between Leo Castelli and Metro. I had to think about that offer; did I want to do a double show like Julian had done? In addition, the show was a year and a half away. It was a very crazy time; we should have had agents to negotiate for us. My friends at Mary's, like Matt and David, were saying, It's great; come over here. Meanwhile, Helene and Janelle were saying, We understand why you want to go with Mary, but don't do it. I decided to leave and show with Mary Boone.

Do I regret leaving Metro? No, because I wasn't good at negotiating and I had no money; Metro didn't give me a stipend and Mary did. A number of people had signed up with Metro and left before they even had shows because Metro didn't have any money. On the other hand, even though the Castelli exhibition was a year and a half away, I could have sold anything I made before the show. There were a lot of factors at work: Money, ego. I figured that if I left Metro, David, Matt, Julian, and I would be with Mary and Mary's gallery would be even stronger; I did a lot of weighing and balancing and thought that Mary's had more promise as a gallery. So I turned down the joint exhibition, which did not please Helene. As a result, Robert Longo got the double show and his career took off. By the time I left, Jack was no longer happy at Metro either.

In the early years the person who ran Mary's second gallery was Julian; he advised Mary what to do. He was the one who told her to get rid of some artists and to take on a whole new stable. Julian is the one who negotiated the deal with David Salle. At one point, in 1982 or 1983, Mary wanted to get rid of Ross Bleckner. He wasn't selling work and he was making crazy, funky-looking stuff; Mary refused to show Ross's Op paintings. Ross had been Julian's entrée into New York, so Julian went to Mary and

said, You're showing those paintings. Ross had been in New York longer than Julian and knew a number of painters from the earlier Bykert generation, like Jay Bertoh and Ralph Humphrey—abstract, post-peripheral Conceptual art, "back to painting" seventies painters.

I don't know where Ross and Julian met each other, but when Julian moved to New York, they were good friends and Ross helped set him up. I remember one occasion being in Ross's loft when Julian came back from Texas and showed what seemed like seven hundred slides of his work. Ross and I looked at each other as if to say, Oh boy. Julian had such chutzpah, but they were not very good paintings; they were pre-plate paintings.

Ross had brought Julian to Mary, and then Mary tried to get rid of Ross. Not only that, Ross and Mary were very good friends. Still she tried to get rid of him. I remember walking down West Broadway with Ross the very day Mary told him that she wasn't going to show the work. It was during a period of time that he really needed to do a show. As it turned out, the show was a bomb; the Op paintings bombed.

The East Village scene came and Ross hooked up with younger East Village artists like Peter Schuyff. In 1984–85, he did a show of his Baroque paintings at Nature Morte the same time he had a show in Mary's back room. That connection to the younger East Side brought in a new audience, people who he had befriended, which reactivated and gave new breath to his work. The paintings were a big success. Later he made the Op paintings again, putting birdies in them. He was always independently wealthy, so he didn't need the money; but I learned that for many people like Ross, there is a big difference between being independently wealthy and making your own money. Before his success, Ross always felt poor because he couldn't make money from his art.

During this period, I was at Mary's and had been ostracized by Metro. At Metro I had been making cool, minimal work, which was not like most of the other artists. Cindy's film stills were the closest in sensibility to the work Jack and I were making; the rest of the gallery was still kind of funky. But my minimal work got lost in the dialogue at Mary's. Mary brought in people who were Neo-Expressionists or part of the Trans Avant-Garde.

If things weren't selling, I take some of the responsibility; it may have been because of my own lack of productivity or my hesitations or my not participating more in strategizing. I would never make Mary responsible for my work not selling. I'm not sure we were compatible. I was a quieter, less aggressive, slower art-maker; Mary is very good with high-powered, "move it, shake it, let's get it out there" artists. That was not me. As the situation continued, it created behavior that, like in a family, is not in the best interests of anyone. I would go in the back and find one of my pictures, one of the best pieces I had made and that had been sold; it had been returned, traded for a David Salle. That art was my baby, and it upset me a great deal to see it returned.

Mary went where the action was. It wasn't a dialogue about good or bad work; it was a dialogue about business. When all of the external factors relating to dealers and galleries came into our lives, Matt, Jack and I stopped talking about art as we had in the 1970s. We would talk about money. We were our own worst enemies, not the collectors who we blamed.,

I was with Mary until 1987 or 1988; it was kind of a lingering death. It was unspoken; they knew I wanted to go, and I knew they wanted me to go. What happens is that they leave you alone; Mary stopped showing me, she didn't offer me anything. Michael Zwack was at Metro for four years and never had a show. I remember telling

Michael, You've got to leave this place! You're not doing any shows!

Mary's success came about when she linked up with Michael Werner, and vice versa. Showing some of the Germans like Baselitz and Kiefer had a weird ricochet effect for the work of Eric Fischl; it made him look like the cool American painter. Somehow he jumped on that Expressionist ship. No one expected Eric to come down from Nova Scotia and suddenly become a hot star. I still don't know how it happened.

I had dinner one night with Michael and Mary, probably around 1984–85. We were talking about galleries and American art. Michael was fascinated by the amount of money being spent by collectors. I respected Michael a great deal; I was impressed that for twenty years someone would work with the same artists, many of whom, like James Lee Byars and Markus Lupertz, were scarcely noticed. Once he hooked up with Mary, he and his artists experienced a huge boom, a market boom. Those times were about an incredible new art market opening up. Michael came to my studio and immediately bought one of my pieces. I had worked with Mary for years; she had never bought a piece of mine.

During this time, Jack disappeared because he was in his studio in Brooklyn all of the time. I would go over to Jack's loft and there would be some nice stuff on the table.

After I left Mary's, I went to Doug Walla's gallery uptown called Kent; Doug was great. He had money, but he had no connection to the downtown scene. It was not the place to be part of the scene, but I felt like I was alive again; I had someone supporting and helping me and loving the work. When the art crash happened around 1991, he crashed too. I haven't shown in New York since then; I show in Zurich at Mai 36 Galerie.

After Kent collapsed, for one and a half years I sold

bread and coffee. I never wanted to teach. One day I ran into Allan Hacklin, who was at Columbia. He asked if I ever thought about teaching; he said I should think about teaching a class at Columbia. He gave me a class; they really liked me so he gave me another class and then another class. I realized it was cool. I got a divorce and decided to get out of New York; I started looking around for universities where I could teach and went to Austin. It was a very easy decision; I really wanted to go. I went down to Austin and thought it was exotic. I have always loved the sun and a healthy glow. Ever since, now that I have a steady income and no dependency on the artworld, I am making more money from my art than ever before. When you live in New York, you forget that there is something outside of that place; it's for young people.

I probably should be more ambitious, but I never thought I would make art all of my life. It is very hard to be creative. I don't like it as a practice; I don't like going to my studio. I don't like making things. I like thinking about making things and seeing the work when it is done, but I hate doing it. In one sense, I am always working; if I'm not doing it, I am thinking about it. Making art is a ball and chain. Life would be much simpler without it!

People look at my work and think that I must have been so passionate when I made it; I love to talk about it, but it would be best if someone else could take my brain and make it for me. It is a very hard thing to keep doing. I go to faculty meetings and colleagues tell me, I really want to get to my studio. I respond, You do? I like to go to the golf course, I like to take a swim, but I don't really want to go to my studio. Only in the end, when the work is in front of you, do you know why you did it.

●

Jack painting bottom of canvas, New York, 1985

11

At a certain point, it doesn't matter what you do.

When I left Metro in 1986, they had not sold a painting of mine for two years, even though they under-priced them at $5,000. Helene told me to make work only when a show came up. I was outraged to be asked to become a part-time artist while my friends were full-time artists. On another occasion, she suggested that I look for a teaching job outside of New York. To me, her recommendation to leave New York implied that I was not an important part of the "Pictures" generation of artists. New York artists don't consider anybody outside of New York to be at their level.

Helene told me that she couldn't sell my work, not because it wasn't important, but because collectors weren't interested enough. I lived from day to day, not knowing when things around me would collapse. I had no idea where I would go, what I would do, and who would be there for me. At the same time I was being included in many of the large museum exhibitions in New York and in Europe. Because of the beauty and importance of my work, most people thought that I was doing very well. However, the shows did not increase my sales.

Another reason I had to leave Metro was because I had ego problems with Robert Longo and Cindy Sherman. When I walked into the gallery, Helene and Janelle would turn over all of the catalogues on their desk; they didn't want to upset me. It became "so and so is doing this, so and so is doing that," all about how other artists were so successful. At that time, Robert was selling a lot at Metro. Another factor was that they took on Mike Kelley; his work was not my sensibility at all.

At the end, Helene threatened to take my work from the storage space at the gallery and put it on the sidewalk. I was completely freaked out and didn't know if she was serious or not. I remember calling Robert, asking him to intervene on my behalf. Calling Robert made it even worse.

I was able to leave Metro Pictures because of Rebecca Donelson, my Chicago art dealer, who was good at selling my work. When I left Metro Pictures, I didn't know where I was going; I had no gallery to go to. Rebecca would tell me, You have to get a gallery because I can't sell this work unless you have an important gallery behind you; collectors are going to want to know who represents you in New York; when we are asking that kind of money for your paintings, you can't be an artist who used to show at Metro Pictures.

I made a list of galleries I wanted to go to. I couldn't go to a less esteemed gallery—I had to move laterally to a gallery at the same level, or higher. I couldn't go to Mary's gallery because of all of the politics going on there, and at any rate David wouldn't allow it. If you made the kind of money that David brought in, you could control certain things. He could control the month he showed in and to some extent even who showed and who didn't show in the gallery. I called Paula Cooper, who said that she had too many artists. That was embarrassing!

I asked Rebecca to feel out the other galleries. Annina Nosei said I should go back to Metro since I was a Metro artist. That was impossible since they weren't talking with me. Blum Helman didn't consider what I did painting. I thought, What about Elsworth Kelly? Sonnabend hated my work, and if I had a painting up, Ileana would turn her back on it. Willard Gallery on Fifty-Seventh Street was closing soon. Barbara Gladstone was never interested. I was out in the cold for about a year.

Finally Rebecca walked into John Weber's, a gallery I had never even considered. He got excited about the prospect and took me on. It probably was the only gallery that my work fit into since I was doing what was called "Neo-Geo" and was on the cover of Art in America as its central figure. Being on the cover didn't do anything for my career, but as a result people came up to me all of the time very impressed.

In the mid 1960s, John Weber was the Director of Virginia Dwan Gallery in Westwood, which showed Minimalists like Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Smithson. In 1971 when Dwan decided to get out of the business and close down her New York gallery, John started his gallery with a ready-made stable of artists to show. John opened up in the 420 West Broadway building and became to Minimalism what Leo had been to Pop. By the mid-1980s, my work fit into the Weber gallery very well. Having left Metro Pictures, it made perfect sense to go to Weber.

In the beginning, John and Joyce were overly nice to me. I was the best thing that had happened to them. They even received letters from their artists saying how cool it was that I was part of the gallery. My paintings immediately went from $5,000 to $35,000. John and Joyce would invite me to their farm for dinner; in the middle of the day, we would stroll around Soho together.

There were two problems in my relationship with Weber. First, I felt a generational gap between me and his other artists. John's artists were not my generation, whereas the Metro artists were my generation. I had ego problems with the Metro artists, and I had age problems with the Weber artists. The second problem was that John had the feeling that Rebecca did such a good job selling my work in Chicago, he didn't try very hard. At one point, John wanted to photograph all my paintings as they were being produced so he could keep track of them. In the end, I just locked the doors, closed the blinds, and wouldn't answer. At the same time, he thought Robert Smithson was God and put all his efforts into selling work from his estate. The only way I could produce work for John was for Rebecca to sell my work. I couldn't have produced work for him if it hadn't been for her. My work cost so much to produce, every show I had to sell two paintings just to break even.

I sold most of my work through Rebecca and privately; I was making most of my money in Chicago because a great number of the big collectors there would buy the work of New York artists. Will Hokin was one of those collectors. He was so wealthy that he owned one of the biggest resorts on the Virgin Islands. Once a year he would invite his art and movie world friends down to the islands. I went down, all expenses paid. Everyone would laugh at his jokes; Will loved it. His friends, like Martha Baer, Richard Gere and Margo Leavin, had a wonderful time but I felt completely out of place.

Between 1986 and 1991 I had a large loft in Brooklyn with six, seven, eight assistants working for me. I ran the studio with an iron fist. I took care of having my work photographed, shipped, and wrapped. Joyce wanted to do these things for me, but I always did them myself. Finally, I started to do really well; but I couldn't stop because I was

always driven by fear of failure. David went after money and now he is a multimillionaire; he was working class, same as Julian Schnabel, and they both made a lot of money. Compared with them, I never made much money, so I could never buy lofts and real estate.

It has always been important to me to have the guts to make monumental work, to make a big, grand statement. The art you make has to be yours; you stand behind it and it's real sturdy. It leans against the wall and it belongs to you.

When it did turn around, when I had success, I didn't end up trusting it because I had spent too many years sitting at the Spring Street Bar with Troy Brauntuch, then going home alone on a Friday night.

I was successful and the phone was ringing constantly. Everyone wanted to come over to my studio. At that time the only two good places to hang out in Soho were on Greene Street and on Spring Street; they were always crowded. Suddenly, the owner of the Spring Street Bar was in my studio and wanted to drink coffee. There were beautiful women constantly trying to seduce me. They would ask me to come over, but how could I trust any of that after so many years having been in the opposite situation? Once you've seen the other side of the coin, you end up trusting nobody. New York is a really cold town in that way—everybody wants to know who you are and what you're doing and who you're with. If they don't know that, then they don't want to know you.

At one point I paid $20,000 cash for a car that looked like a 1956 Porsche. It was practically the only thing I ever bought just because it was so beautiful. I am usually so non-materialistic but this car was awesome. The only thing I am materialistic about is cars; this is because I grew up in California.

I also had Corvettes in New York. I used to drive

them two hundred miles an hour over the Brooklyn Bridge. I had Corvettes that I fixed up because I would race them, going through three or four motors. The last Corvette I had, I left in the street and walked away with the license plates. It wasn't worth putting a fifth motor in it, so I figured, let someone else take it—it had leather seats and all the goodies.

I was making money off my work, even though that never felt real to me. I had three different cars and was paying $600 a month just to park them. I always drove in New York. Once I parked my car at Canal and Wooster on the Lower East Side; driving to the studio, the alarm wouldn't go off. I was driving with the alarm on and had a trail of five or six police cars following me because they thought I had stolen it.

In Europe I worked with Adelina von Fürstenberg, who had a gallery in Geneva. She was one of the first to work with Clemente, as well as with Phil Glass, Steve Reich, Robert Wilson, and others; for four or five years I went back and forth between New York and Geneva. Mary Boone was connected with many of the wealthy dealers like Anthony d'Offay in London and Bruno Bischofberger in Switzerland, people who would spend $100,000 to buy a chair. Compared to Metro Pictures, it was a different kind of clientele; the European collectors were interested in big salon paintings. Jean Michel Basquiat got pulled into that scene through Larry Gagosian.

In the early 1970s, Ealan Wingate was the Director of Sonnabend; Ileana had hired him because he could sell art and he knew all the artists from Gilbert and George to Baldessari. He subsequently opened up a gallery in the East Village, which didn't go anywhere. Then Larry Gagosian hired Wingate, not because he needed him but because Ealan gave him a certain respectability, which he could afford to pay for. It comes out of your payroll, but it

gives you credibility and integrity. It is really about the desire to be respected.

One day I was in a bar with Gagosian, and he told me how he could live off of one Brice Marden painting. He knew when to sell it and when to buy it at auction again. It would be the same painting; he knew when to let it go and when to bring it back. At that level the art game becomes like trading stocks and bonds. It was like fishing—put the bait out on the reel and then bring it back in. I was amazed at his ability to maneuver the market. He had a loft in New York in which he had a swimming pool on one floor. A swimming pool—how many floors does that take up? It has to go down three floors. He has that kind of money but he still wanted respectability.

I've seen so many people wanting respectability in New York. I've seen Jewish collectors who at a certain point wanted to become WASPs. They would do anything in the world to hide what they were. I've seen it over and over again, because I'm one of them. I was at a party for Henry Ford's granddaughter; that society was at another level. It's old money, and that's what everyone else wanted to be part of. You can't buy into old society; you have to be born into that degree of pedigree.

At some point I heard about an art dealer who made dirty phone calls. Apparently, he would masturbate at the other end of the phone and everybody would recognize his voice and say, There he is, doing it again. The one thing about most of the people I knew in New York was that they had no sense of shame. That really surprised me because I have a sense of shame. For example, if someone knew something unfavorable about me, I would be embarrassed to walk into a room with that person. But most people had no sense of shame. That someone could ostensibly make those kinds of calls and think nothing of it is something I can't comprehend.

People can be enormously successful selling houses or computer software or making movies; when they become art patrons, they acquire a kind of respectability they didn't have before. I remember watching entertainment people become big collectors; overnight they could become top dogs in the artworld because they had the money to spend. What they spent in the artworld would be peanuts compared to spending money in the movie world. These people get the red carpet treatment. Michael Ovitz or Norman Lear—when they started, they knew nothing about art, but once they got into the art business they were treated with respectability. All they had to do was to spend so many millions a year on art.

I often saw people like Steve Tisch, who produced *Forrest Gump.* He owns a number of my paintings; sometimes, he would bring one painting back when he wanted another painting. It was like trading in one car for another. At that time I was the only artist he was buying—he wasn't buying Cindy or Robert. Metro didn't want to lose him. I remember Metro taking back a painting and storing it in the storage area. One day I was going through the area and said, What is this painting doing here? I thought Tisch owned this painting. They said, He brought it back. I asked, What happened to the painting in the front? They said, He traded for that painting. I would get so angry.

Metro didn't want to lose Tisch as a collector; because of his name and wealth he was too important. He was also building another home in Long Island. There is nothing you can do because you can't offend collectors. You can offend artists but you can't offend collectors.

In the middle 1980s Rosetta Brooks was living with Josh Baer. I've had a lot of problems with him. Josh wanted to show me simultaneously with John Weber; he became very aggressive about it. Ultimately I cut him out of the picture altogether; from that time forward he

became an enemy of mine. You can't say "yes" to everybody but if you say "no," that's the end of that. As a consequence, I heard that he did a lot of bad talking and told collectors not to buy me. The art world is that vicious.

After a while I couldn't stay above board; I couldn't be clean with anybody. I don't know how anyone can, because I couldn't. I'm not aggressive, I'm not a nasty person, but I couldn't stay clean. The only way around it was to rise so high that, like David, you are not under the bellies of the sharks any more. Even though they are snapping at you, they are so far below that you don't feel it. It's a microcosm of Hollywood. The artworld is all about money and deals; people don't mean anything along the way.

I did one show with Josh Baer at White Columns, an alternative space that he ran before he started his gallery. White Columns was a space on the outside of Soho; it was a storefront with big windows, and I had a double lightning painting in one of the windows. As you drove by you could see it. There is a little bit of a jock in Josh; he runs every day. He wears tennis shoes. He is a very charming kind of guy. He has always liked the Metro Pictures people; he has always liked that kind of work. For a long time he was a supporter of mine, but I believe he didn't pay me everything I was owed.

My double lightning painting was appraised at over $200,000; it is owned by Michael Schwartz, who is the son of Eugene and Barbara Schwartz. I remember when that painting was exhibited at White Columns. Holly Solomon wanted to buy it; we said fine, Holly can have it. Later the Schwartzes came by; Barbara Schwartz came with her son Michael, who was then twenty-two years old. She took me aside and said, You know Michael is really upset about that painting—speaking about it as if it were a train set—Michael wants the painting, Jack. Even though we had

already promised it to Holly, the Schwartzes were so influential that Josh was afraid of turning them down. And guess who he put the blame on? That was my first encounter with him and I watched him, I watched him wiggling like a worm. He put it all on me, out of nowhere; it wasn't as if we had spoken about it.

Josh just seemed weak. He didn't own up to Holly Solomon that we couldn't offend the Schwartzes. Because that is all it was. Josh said to me, Jack you have to do something about that. We did do something about that; the Schwartzes own that painting today. It turns out that Michael has the best group of my paintings, and they will end up at the Modern or the Whitney anyway, so it isn't all bad. He has an amazing group of paintings.

Some years later, when I was living in L.A. and had no money, Michael took a $35,000 painting and gave me $1,200 for it. He knew I was down and out. That's exactly how some people are; they have no nobility. He knew I had no choice. It was a big painting, a gorgeous one, because he does have a good eye; that's one thing he does have.

One day in the late seventies, Annina Nosei came over to my studio; there was a painting she wanted to buy. I said, No Annina, I can't sell you anything because I have to build up quickly a reserve of work. If I had sold it, I wouldn't have had to work so much. At the time I was teaching and had two jobs; one of them was as a janitor at the Guggenheim. For two or three years I was teaching three days a week and working four. I hardly slept because I also needed to produce work. Annina didn't say, That's really strong of you—or—I'm sorry you have to work so much—or—What great integrity you have. All my hard work meant nothing to her; it just meant that I was a loser. I remember I was shocked at the time, and I am still shocked. There is no nobility in the artworld.

I could have sold that painting and not worked for

three or four months, but it was more important to me to work those four months. I needed to keep as many paintings as possible for future shows, so I could pull work out, so I had a group of them, because in painting I came out of nowhere.

Here we're talking about what I call salon art—art which ends up in the homes of the very rich. It is all about money and business. It is just like Hollywood, with the same kind of ethics; it is a microcosm of Hollywood, only there is less money going around.

●

Robert Longo, Troy Brauntuch and Jack at "Pictures" opening, Artists Space, 1977

REFLECTIONS BY **Matt Mullican**

12

I went to Palisades High School and in 1970 went directly from there to CalArts. I was at CalArts for three years, got my degree, and then left. The first course I took was Jack's course, which was called "Temporary Structures." The first person I met at CalArts, at the first class, was Jim Welling. Jim was the first artist I met who really scared me; he was the "real thing." Jim and I went in Jack's truck to Mirage Dry Lake; at one point Jack was driving on top of the lake and Jim asked if he could stand up in the back of the truck to get a clear view of going very fast. We looked back and could see the pressure on Jim's face; it was a remarkable sight. Both Jack and I looked at each other thinking, This is very strange.

Eventually the students landed in one little area of the lakebed; we dispersed to different parts, and Jack went in his truck from place to place. For example, David Trout, who was then in the band called The Weirdos, and another student put carrots upside down into the earth so there was this field of orange stms, which was quite beautiful. Dede Bazyk and I took a roll of string and walked in opposite directions until it ran out. Meanwhile, Jim went out in the middle of nowhere and measured two pebbles that

happened to be about a few inches apart; he was hunched up taking photographs of those pebbles. Jack zoomed out to Jim in his truck. Of course, Jack would never get out of his truck; he would lean out and talk to the students while staying in his truck. I asked Jack, What is Jim doing out there?—because it seemed pretty weird. Jack said he had not a clue, not a clue what Jim was doing. It was wonderful.

Jim proceeded to take out an orange and photograph it. After *Avalanche* magazine and Earth art, we all pretty much knew what was going on; but to take out an orange and to take a photograph of it seemed like a bizarre thing to do. It didn't make any sense at all to me. Later on I asked Jim why he did that. He said that he told a friend of his at Carnegie Mellon, where he went to school before, that when he got to California he would take a photograph of an orange and send it to him. The lakebed seemed like an appropriate place. I had read all of this stuff into what Jim was doing, and he had a very straightforward explanation.

I'll never forget Jack in his truck; he had his dog Jack too, but that was later on. "Big Shitter" is what we used to call him.

At CalArts there were no distinctions made between first-year and sixth-year students, so right from the beginning I hung out with Jack, who was a second-year graduate student. I became closer and closer to Jack and eventually got to know him in New York. He was our teacher; we all became fast friends because we related to each other's work. He was very respectful of everyone in the class and what they were doing. Of course, it was probably the first class he had ever taught.

John Baldessari was the most important teacher for me; my first mentor was Peter van Riper, who was a Fluxus artist, as was Alison Knowles, who was also teach-

ing there at the time. During my last year I switched to John as my mentor because it was clear I was studying with him the most intensely. There were other instructors, like Gerry Ferguson and Tim Zuck, who were visiting instructors from the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, and I was in a performance class that Harold Budd and Wolfgang Stoerchle were teaching together.

John's Post-Studio Art was really the class. We hung out together; John was a really fabulous teacher and took us to heart. John would come back from Europe with a suitcase full of stuff and we would devour it; it was all information. If he were in a publication, he would get twenty copies and give one to each of us, which was very generous of him. When anybody visited Los Angeles, he would bring them out to CalArts. Because he was so well connected, everyone would end up at CalArts. When he made new work, he would test it out on us; he would get our take on it. That told us that he trusted us; he wanted our pulse; he wanted our opinions. He still trusts us. The people in the class became close friends—including Barbara Bloom, Susan Davis, who now lives up the street from me, and Dede Bazyk. There was no regular schoolwork except for a paper in Critical Studies. The pressure was super high to produce original work.

David Salle was bright, brilliantly articulate, and tough as nails. We would kill each other in the crits; we were really tough on one another. That is what got our language skills up. If I am articulate about what I do, it is only because I learned how to talk about art through working with John Baldessari; from him I learned how to defend myself and to cope with the social pressure, which was extreme. It taught us a lot. You had to back yourself up. Energy and determination are the only things that will keep you going in the long haul. We are talking about stuff that happened thirty years ago. I have a retrospective of my

work that is traveling through Europe; the earliest work comes from that period. My first work was made when I was twenty-one and CalArts was the context.

I met Helene Winer at Pomona College; Paul McMahon was her assistant there and later on her assistant at Artists Space. The artists she was really involved with at the time included, as I remember, Bas Jan Ader, Chris Burden, Ger van Elk, Bill Leavitt, and Jack. We went out to Claremont a bunch of times; it was a long trip. I had an old BMW, which was breaking down all of the time and was pretty much a nuisance, so I would drive there with Jim. I didn't go many places; I liked hanging out and pretty much stayed on campus. I didn't have a studio but I worked in the print shop. I worked in my room and everywhere around the school. It was fantastic; it was a brilliant place to be. They said they wanted artists; I managed to get into the school and blossomed. It was the right time and I was old enough. I was almost twenty years old when I graduated from high school, which is why I could fit so well into the program.

David, Jack, Jim, and I were in the same class with John Baldessari; the four of us became close friends. Jim and David were roommates and later they shared a studio in Venice. At one point I shared a house in Newhall with Nancy Chunn and David. Nancy was Paul Brach's assistant and in the middle of everything. She was there the first year of CalArts. From all of the first-year portfolios coming in, Nancy chose who would be her own assistants; she chose Eric Fischl and David Salle. She ended up living with David for two or three years. I always thought David was a graduate student; he was third or fourth year, but I always thought he was a grad student. If anyone knew the score about the CalArts clique, Nancy knew it. Nancy held the school together in a weird way; she knew all the secrets. After a while she was married to Tom Radloff, who also

went to CalArts. Eventually, she moved to New York, where she lived with Paul McMahon for ten years.

In 1973 I left CalArts with Troy Brauntuch to spend a year in New York as part of an exchange program between Cooper Union and CalArts. Troy was really a painter who turned into a conceptualist artist. That year I hung out with Jack and with Helene, because they had already moved to New York. I went back to CalArts, received my B.F.A., and immediately returned to New York. When I went back to CalArts, it was to finish up my degree work. I had no intention of staying in L.A. I thought about getting an M.F.A., but I figured if I was going to get a teaching job, it wouldn't be on the strength of my degree. That was a different time. David went for his master's degree and so did Jim and Jack, but I didn't.

When I moved to New York in 1973, I wrote every other day to Jim and David. Jim would write me back. I sent them all of these scribbles, all about life and the world. In the later 1970s, it was Troy, Jack, and Robert Longo who hung out together. When they went to openings or parties, I always joked about it. They wore black and wouldn't take their coats off so you never knew if they were going to stay or not. I always felt victimized by that kind of cool behavior; I didn't know how to participate in it.

I was never into aesthetics in the way they were. I was never into the touch or the feel; I was less of an object maker, although I make lots of objects. I paid the price for that difference. How one feels in a group is very personal. I always felt a bit like an outsider with Troy, Robert, and Jack because they were so cool. In 1977, 1978, and 1979 they were the "in" group; they were it. They hung out a lot together. They were always very interested in movies, which were referenced all of the time in their work.

Helene and Jack supported one another; in New York she had her place and he had his. They were definitely

together. Jack was crazy and Helene was very patient; she was such a supporter. They were together for almost seven years; in New York Troy and I hung out with them. I knew them as a couple and we shared pretty much the same opinions about the artworld and the shows. We agreed about what we liked and what we didn't like.

At that time I met Douglas Crimp; he was a very bright person. Very articulate and very sharp. I've always had the feeling of being a little bit out of it with these kinds of people. At CalArts, for example, there was a Wittgenstein class taught by a Wittgenstein scholar. Jim Welling and Judith Stein were in the class, and David was in it; they studied the material and knew their stuff. The first time I heard Wittgenstein, I didn't know if it was Wittgenstein or Lichtenstein. My academic background was minimal, and I have always suffered from that. I invented a lot of my own philosophy, you could say, which of course mirrors many other people's thoughts. Douglas was someone who intimidated me because he was so academic and had such a thorough understanding of that world. I have always been more intuitive.

In 1976 I had an awful time and had to regroup; it was kind of a midlife crisis. It was part of growing up, is what it was. I had rented a place downtown on Nassau Street; it was only six hundred square feet but was almost all windows. It was a beautiful place. I liked being there; I signed the first legal document of my life. I had always lived hand-to-mouth so it was a big step for me to make that kind of commitment. But I flipped out. I couldn't take the pressure of growing up, and Douglas Crimp took over the lease from me. I got a place on University and a job at Barnes and Noble. It was the fall of 1976 that I got nutty, and I was okay by 1978, so it was a two-year period.

When I first arrived in New York, there was no pressure to be an art star and no pressure to join a gallery, so

primarily I worked in the studio. In 1979–80, I went to Europe for the first group show we were all in together. It was a show that Germano Celant curated in Genoa; it took place before Metro Pictures opened and was arranged through Helene and Janelle. They had all of the work up in Janelle's apartment. I was the only artist who went for the opening because you had to pay your own way. Beginning then, I started traveling and have never stopped. If I had stayed only in New York, my career would have died.

In 1980–81, David became a superstar and joined the Mary Boone gallery. From 1980 to 1986 I was in Mary's gallery as well. Later on Troy left Metro for Mary's. Not to go with Metro was a very difficult and awful decision to make. I knew Helene very well but felt that there should be a change, that things should develop; I would continue to know Helene but we didn't have to be together forever. Mary was new to me and the context was new; there was the impulse to do something different. There are so many ways of looking back and thinking, I should have done this, I should have done that. My decision was very hurtful for them, I think, and hurtful for myself. Only in the past six or seven years have I felt comfortable speaking with Helene and she has been over to our place.

Mary Boone is completely sensational and very unusual. She would be an excellent guest on the talk show circuit. Powerful and you knew it! Everyone knew it! She had a huge temper, which would just explode. At the same time, she was incredibly professional. She still sends me cards for her openings, which demonstrates dedication. I have been out of the gallery for fifteen years, but she still sends me invitations. When she had her first show downtown with Eric Fischl, I took along my kids because she had never seen them and I thought she should meet them. She was so crazed that I doubt she even remembers that I came up and said, This is Cosmo, this is Lucy, these are my kids.

She worked really hard but she could never sell my work. I was the only non-painter in the gallery. Maybe it would have happened with someone else, but the dynamic was such that David was in the gallery, Julian Schnabel was in the gallery, Ross Bleckner was in the gallery, and she was able to sell their work. She couldn't sell my work; it was very hard for her. She continued to show it, which I appreciated. Back then, the Leo Castelli model was still fresh; the gallery was loyal to the artists who weren't immediately popular. She followed the Castelli model straight away, even putting the "420" logo on her door and moving in downstairs as a way to get the vibes from upstairs.

When Mary opened up her new gallery in the fall of 1979 and the spring of 1980, she let go of almost everybody who had been with her before. She only kept Ross and Gary Stephan, who she was seeing. Then she took us all up—she took Julian; she took David; she took me. Because we were in the same gallery, I was friendly with David until 1984 or 1985. We would see each other at openings and parties and so forth. One really felt that he wanted to move on to another life. He become friends with Clemente and Schnabel and this other group of artists and collectors. At that time he was selling works for more money than I am selling works for now. In 1981, 1982, and 1983 he was selling works for $30,000, $40,000, $50,000 and $60,000 apiece. He was making an amazing amount of money.

I haven't seen David for fifteen years; I had wanted to go to his opening at the Stedelijk. Since I teach at the Rijksakademie, I am in Holland a lot; I tried to arrange the timing so that I would be there for the opening. I would love to hang with him for an evening just to reminisce, although I have heard that he is not at all into reminiscing. He wants to forget that part of his life, which is a little

strange. It is weird. But he is on the edge too. He's crazy, like Jack or me or Jim or Troy or Sherrie Levine. Cindy is more normal; she really has it together. She knew Jack through Robert Longo. Jack, Troy, David, Paul McMahon, and I went out to Buffalo together to Hallwalls, where in March 1977 we had a show called "Resemblance." There were drawings by Troy, paintings by Paul, paintings by David, a film by Jack, and I did an installation.

Of course, Jack and David had both taught at Hartford; Sherrie taught there too. Sherrie was a waitress at Magoo's in Tribeca, at a corner of West Broadway, not far south of Canal, and I got to know her there, mostly; we became close friends.

Before classes even started at CalArts, I met Ross Bleckner. He was actually the first person I met at school; I met him in the hallway. I didn't know Ross or Eric Fischl that well at CalArts because they were painters; I got to know both of them in New York. We hung around together because we were all fish out of water. I would go to openings at Cunningham Ward, where Ross showed. In the mid-1970s he actually had a gallery, which was exciting.

Eric was up at the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, teaching there with April Gornik. In 1975 or 1976 Eric invited me up to talk, which was wonderful; it was the first time I had been invited to a school to talk about my work. When Eric did eventually move to New York, music was a very important part of the scene. We would go out all of the time; somehow, everyone played in a band. There were parties at Nancy Chunn and Paul McMahon's house, which was a loft without windows, or very few windows. Everyone would come over; by the end of the evening different bands would be playing music and have a kind of contest. Eric would be playing something, David would be playing a vacuum cleaner—there is an image of him doing that—and Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman and April

Gornik would be singing chorus. It was a Who's Who of the artworld, all slumming it and having a grand time. I am not sure if Jack was there or not; he was too cool. He didn't perform in a band.

It was like the calm before the storm. It was really terrific that we had that open time. We hung out together a lot; we went to shows together. I remember in the mid-1970s going with Jack to see the Jannis Kounellis show at Sonnaband. We got out of the elevator and saw that the gallery had been painted yellow; we went in and there was a black horse in the corner of the gallery. It looked like a film by Jack. He was so impressed with the show because his work was already going in that direction. This was Arte Povera, so it was a different approach.

I remember seeing that show with Jack and talking a lot about it with him. Whenever Jack had an idea, he would call us up. He certainly called Troy and me, and maybe David and Jim. Perhaps Robert, when he got to know Robert. Jack would ask us what we thought about the knife or the ballet slipper or the dove or the feathers coming down off the chair. We would give him feedback; he was not working in a vacuum. We were doing different work but with a very similar approach.

In the 1980s, the men's room at the Odeon restaurant was pretty famous for the drugs one could get there; it was not something I participated in so much. Of course, we had our suspicions about Jack, who was always so speedy. He used to live on candy bars—that's all he would eat—and he was very thin. Jack always seemed very sharp but also very fragile. He was enthusiastic about his own work; he had to pump himself up a lot. That might have had something to do with the drugs. The scene was such that it was very glamorous to go downstairs at the Odeon and sniff a couple of lines during those fancy parties.

By the mid-eighties we grew apart; the only person

I hung out solidly with was Troy. We still hang out together whenever he comes. From that group, Robert has kids and I have kids, and that is almost all; it's funny because I was like a kid myself the whole time. I felt that people thought of me as a little bit of an outsider, partly because I didn't use drugs and partly, as I mentioned before, because I didn't have a strong academic background. Through Jack, I became hyper-aware of the craziness, the crazy behavior, we all indulged in.

I always felt pressure from Helene not to dump on anyone because if you let go and start dumping your feelings on people, it causes a real strain on a relationship. I learned from her to hold it in. Of course, at that point she had just about had it with Jack. Jack was dumping on her all of the time. He couldn't help it. Eventually I took on a lot of responsibility. I own a loft; I own a place upstate; I travel all of the time; I have the kids' tuition; in short, I have a life, a regular life, a completely different life than Jack's. I have made money consistently from my art but have never had a lot of money. Taking care of responsibilities is an ongoing thing, and I know how to do it. I had to learn and it has been a hard road. Jack has had a hard time in another way.

In 1993 I lost contact with Jack; I did not know where he lived. Valerie Smith, my wife, co-edited the book *5000 Artists Return to Artists Space: 25 Years* and the only artist she couldn't find to interview was Jack. We tried and tried and tried. We heard stories about what Jack was doing. We heard that Jack was living on Long Island, that he had a Sting Ray and was in a Sting Ray club; I heard that he had a Harley and was in a Harley club. Then I heard that he lived in Philadelphia, of all places. In the late 1980s, I saw Jack and he had blown up; he had become quite fat. After the speed, he had gone way up. I was worried about him because I had met Ondine, the Warhol star, before he died; he had been a speed demon. After he quit, he

became huge. If you take speed for so long, when you get off of it your metabolism is in shock and you blow up like a blimp. When I saw Jack out in L.A. a while ago, he looked like the old Jack. I was very happy to see that. He worked hard to get his metabolism under control.

We had all of these theories about where Jack was; then I found him. I had a show in Hamburg at the Kunstverein; it was a big show—an earlier retrospective from ten years ago now—and there I got to know Stefan Schmidt-Wolfen, a German semiologist and philosopher who is interested in contemporary art. He was curating a show of work by filmmaker Morgan Fisher; Morgan said he was living in the same apartment building as Jack's parents. That was the connection. Before I went out to L.A. to do a show at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, LACE, I got a hold of Morgan and said, Please let Jack know I am having a show so he will come to my opening. Jack shows up. He says, Only for you, Matt. He looks at the show and says, Donald Judd, it looks like Donald Judd. His entrance was wonderful because immediately there was Jim saying, Jack, Jack . . . Irene Tstatsos, who is the Director of LACE, went straight to him and asked if LACE could do something with him. You felt the emotion. When I came back, I told Valerie; she had tried for years to find him. We had heard so many rumors.

In L.A. I was showing with Richard Kuhlenschmidt; when he closed, that was the end of my career in L.A. until Irene asked me to do the show at LACE. She knew my work as a result of having been at the Whitney. She had seen some tapes I had done in Europe, was interested in those tapes, and asked me if I would do a performance out there, and I did. Yet I feel that L.A. has completely forgotten me.

As artists, we are all on the edge, and I feel it as well. I have sleepless nights dealing with my own demons; that is what Jack had to go through. It is not only the pres-

sure of coming up with the bucks, it is the pressure of being an artist, especially the creative part, which is the most important part. When we get down to it, that is what I want Jack to get back to.

●

Jack and Jack the Dog, Los Angeles, 1972

13

In 1975, I was going to a mediocre art school—Buffalo State College—located in the cold, boring, blank reaches of western New York state. At that time I was living with Cindy Sherman, who was an art education major at the same school. I was looking for my own studio and found one in an old ice factory (ice factory in Buffalo—an oxymoron, eh?) where a small number of artists had built studio spaces. There I met my first "real" contemporary artist—Charlie Clough.

After a short time, Cindy and I moved with Charlie into a big, old, loft space above the studios in the ice factory. Four months later Charlie and I decided to create an alternative art space called Hallwalls. The name came from the hallway space between our studios. Our idea was to create a place where we could show our own work and that of other local young artists; more importantly, Hallwalls would become a place where we would invite "important" artists up to Buffalo to do exhibitions. They'd live with us for a chunk of time, and thereby see our work; we would sap their brains for art and artworld knowledge.

At first, while I was still in the college, I used the art department's money to pay for these visiting artists, who usually came from New York City. The artists would come

to Buffalo, get paid for a lecture, do an exhibition at Hallwalls, and live and party with us in that big, old, funky loft. Charlie and I curated all the individual and group exhibitions at Hallwalls. We did shows with our heroes at the time: Acconci, Baldessari, Benglis, Hesse, Nauman, Serra, and Smithson. Many of these artists came and stayed with us in Buffalo. Some, like Jon Borofsky, even got snowed in. A year later we received funding from both the New York State Council on the Arts and the NEA. Hallwalls attracted a number of young, interesting artists. We became a tight-knit group doing everything (installations, press releases, dinners, etc.) for Hallwalls. We created and maintained a busy schedule of events. Then again, what else could one do in Buffalo? Charlie and I basically ran the show, with artists like Nancy Dwyer, Cindy Sherman and Michael Zwack helping out.

At that time Artists Space in New York City was one of the leading alternative art spaces and an institutional role model for Hallwalls. Charlie and I had met up with Helene Winer, then the Director of Artists Space, on one of our many New York sojourns to see new exhibitions and artists. We hung around Artists Space so much that Helene eventually invited us to do a Hallwalls group exhibition there. During this time, Helene was talking about a group of young artists she was close to and felt very strongly about. She thought that it would be interesting for us to meet them. The group included Troy Brauntuch, Matt Mullican, David Salle, and Jack Goldstein. She was right.

In late 1976 I organized what was to be the last show I would curate at Hallwalls. It was a group exhibition with work by Jack, Troy, David, Matt, and Paul McMahon. This was the first group of visiting artists with whom I shared a strong kinship. I felt like I had met my generation. They were my colleagues, and furthermore, they were living in New York City—"real" artists in the "real" arena.

This vital artistic connection would become one of the main reasons I moved to New York.

Like most artists showing at Hallwalls, Jack came up to Buffalo to install his work and hang out. I had planned to show a number of his photo pieces, films, and records in the group exhibition. The films were going to run end-to-end as an installation in their own room. When he arrived, his films were on separate reels. We needed to put them all on one reel; to my surprise, Jack didn't know how to splice them together. This seemed very strange to me. We went looking for help at Media Studies, the film school in Buffalo. No one was able to help us. I think they looked down on us; "art films" were low brow. However, I was working for Paul Sharits, the filmmaker and a professor there; he gave us some equipment and a room to work in. Having had no real experience doing this kind of work, I ended up splicing together Jack's films while he sat there watching, smoking cigarette after cigarette with those long, thin Nosferatu fingers of his. I spliced the films together while he talked to me about his work, concepts, and general art psychobabble.

To have an artist's work in my hands while simultaneously being let inside the artist's head was extraordinary. It was a great moment for me. Jack was articulate, charismatic, funny, edgy, and, of course, cynical. He didn't have opinions, he had convictions; this impressed me.

Aside from the fact that I was profoundly affected by the films, which I thought were brilliant, what I learned from Jack was the idea that one can direct work being made rather than physically making the work. It was very intriguing and important to me that he was working beyond the limitations of the individual. When I first met him, he was very important and had a large influence on me.

Ultimately, I was profoundly affected by my experi-

ence with Jack and his work. It opened my eyes to many new things: Ways of seeing and, perhaps more importantly, ways of working. I thought much of his work was extreme and brilliant. Shortly after I met Jack, Troy came to Buffalo, and I discovered that Troy shared many of Jack's sensibilities. Both Troy's and Jack's work had a huge influence on me. My initial response was that they almost seemed like brothers—dark and mysterious brothers who were making amazing work that was fresh and new. It moved me.

In the early spring of 1977, Cindy and I finally had the means and a reason to move to New York. She had received a NEA grant, and I'd been asked to be in the upcoming "Pictures" exhibition at Artists Space that would include Jack, Troy, Sherrie Levine, and Philip Smith. We were finally moving to the center of the universe and my work was being put into a context with my new friends. When we got to the city, we were subletting Troy's studio down in the financial, seaport district of Manhattan. Jack and Troy went on their ritual summer trips back to Southern California. When Troy returned, Cindy and I found a funky cheap loft on South Street just around the corner from Troy. During this time Tom Lawson, David Salle, and Douglas Crimp, the curator of the "Pictures" show, moved into the area. We were all within hailing distance of each other. It wasn't SoHo. It was a new place for what we thought was a new generation. Jack, of course, had to be different; he moved to some weird place right across the river from us, a place called "Williamsburg."

Once in New York, my fantasies about the artworld (the white bright galleries, wooden floors and the art that filled it) began to die. The most interesting things were happening at night: The music scene, the rock clubs, and movies like the Godard films at Bleecker Street Cinema. Night had replaced day; my days didn't start until 4:00 p.m.

Some of the more memorable times were with Jack, Matt, and Troy. I saw for the first time the Ramones at CBGB's. What a rush. I remember walking out of CBGB's—ripped, ears ringing, wanting to rush back to the studio to work.

My ritual consisted of working in the studio and later hanging out with my friends, getting high, or whatever the order of the day was. No matter what, we always talked about our work, ideas, plans for the future, and taking over the world. Maybe it was only in my imagination, but I felt we were a group of artists who shared a sensibility, a style, and desire. We were going to take over the world—at least the artworld. Strength in numbers, I thought.

All of the artists in the "Pictures" show felt that this exhibition was going to be our launching pad. After the show, and what I felt was my financial failure, we ran out of Cindy's money and I needed a job. At the same time I was planning my scheduled upcoming performance piece at the Kitchen. The curator at the Kitchen, Carlotta Schoolman, told me she was leaving to go to India for a few months. She knew I was looking for a job and that I had experience curating and presenting exhibitions and performances at Hallwalls. Carlotta asked if I would consider taking on her job for a couple of months while she was gone. Her schedule of shows and performances was set; all I had to do was set stuff up, clean up, and maintain everything. I could postpone my gig until she returned. After three months I got a call from Carlotta in India. She had contracted some sickness and wasn't coming back for quite some time. She asked me if I could stay on. I said, No, No, I don't want to be a curator here in New York; I'm an artist. She said I could curate my own program if I wanted to—no questions asked. A light went on in my head. I realized that I could fill the upcoming schedule with the work of all my friends, with my gang of artists—artists

I felt strongly about and connected with. It was a great opportunity to get our work out, so I took the job.

The first show I did was with Jack. He showed a new work—the extraordinary film loop *The Jump.* I watched that film loop every day for three weeks and never got tried of it. I was hypnotized. I can still see it: The endless red and gold gleaming figure, rotating and tumbling in a non-space, outside of time and place. It was beautiful and miraculous. I still believe that it was one of Jack's greatest works; he made it long before the video effects that are available today. It was an absolute vision.

After Jack's show I scheduled David Salle to do an installation, which was hauntingly elegant. Next Troy did an amazing show of photoworks, which to this day are seminal. I set up a show for Cindy and her photographs. I took advantage of the opportunity to plug in as many of my friends as possible, which made me even more want to focus on my own work. I quit the job after six months.

I still hadn't sold any art and needed a job. I did pick-up work for artists, fabricating their work or installing it. One artist for whom I worked quite regularly was Vito Acconci. For lack of a better term, I was the foreman on one gig for Vito. I hired Troy, David, and Jack to help me with an installation of Vito's art at the old Clock Tower on Broadway. Vito's work was becoming more and more architectural; I repeatedly told him that he shouldn't hire artists any more. He needed to hire professionals to help with his installations. Vito, in his raspy voice, said, No, no, you guys can do it.

It was an elaborate project with taut steel cables strung throughout the space; they eventually went out the broken clock window high up top of the building. Since Jack had a car, his job was to find a gym that had old fashioned, one-piece barbells (like in the cartoons.) We needed a 150-pound barbell; then we had to cut the balls off of it.

All we needed was one ball. This 70-pound ball had to hang out the window by a cable. We were up in the tower lowering down the ball, which was connected to a steel cable. It was not exactly over the street, but close to the street. We moved slowly and with great difficulty lowered it out of the window; suddenly I realized that it was not connected to anything at the other end! We were like the Three Stooges at work with Laurel and Hardy.

Cut to 1979: Things started happening for us and our work. The artworld had reawakened—greed was good. Messy paintings and Europeans were busting out, and somehow the Pictures group of artists was also getting attention. It was an exciting period. Metro Pictures finally opened. Metro was trying to present something very different from what the rest of the art scene was evolving into. It was still my group of artists (with a few left out), with what I thought was a shared sensibility. By the early eighties, the art scene became gang warfare—like the Athenian idea of having combat over aesthetic issues. At one point it felt like we should have had leather jackets with the names of our galleries on the back; it felt like there should be street fights between artists of different galleries and sensibilities.

I think that for all of us, for the generation of artists I was hanging out with from Jack on down, there weren't any role models for us. We wanted to make work, but we didn't know how and what it was going to be. There was a perverse kinship between the one group that came from a high-powered art school and the other group that came from a black hole up North. It was bizarre how we connected up in New York and influenced one another. My friendship with the CalArts group was very important to me.

As things evolved in the 1980s, money flowed. The opportunity to make one's work superseded hanging

out. Generosity between artists and the aesthetic dialogue ended. Instead, drugs, sex, and business were the subject matter during the late nights at the Odeon, where we went instead of the rock clubs and the movie theaters.

In the beginning of the 1980s, Cindy and I (no longer a couple but good friends) got a lot more attention than the others, which was difficult. Friendships became strained. For a couple of years Troy and I didn't talk that much; then we connected together again. We are still very close now, and I consider him my best friend. But I never re-connected with Jack. Jack said something once which was really bizarre. He said that he was nostalgic for the future. Then he disappeared. He was like the Bas Jan Ader of our gang. The last time I saw Jack was at a show he had at John Weber's, his topographical heat sensor paintings. I think that our competitiveness was very destructive. I always thought that if Jack went crazy, I would be one of the first people he would kill.

I had my problems with drugs and, unfortunately, let success go to my head. I ended up getting lost too, but my disappearance was into my studio. With more and more people working for me, things got bigger and more elaborate. In 1986 I hit my first brick wall and took a break from making art. In 1989 I had a major retrospective of my work, which in hindsight may have been premature. The critical hammer came down on me and my ego. In 1990, when the art market crashed and the eighties ended, I did something that saved my life: I moved to Paris and lived there for two and a half years. Instead of being bitter and pissed off in New York, I left and started my career over again. That move has been the key to my continuing success. I realized that many of my heroes, like Nauman, Serra, Stella, Warhol, had experienced the same cycle. Suddenly one is not the flavor of the month any more, so one goes to a place where they actually remember what art and artists

are. It makes sense that it was the Europeans who woke up to the importance of Jack's work.

In 1992 I returned to the USA. In 1993, I made a movie, which is another story. In 1995, when I returned from finishing the movie, I went back into the studio and started making my own work again—alone. I find it very bizarre that Jack's working methods are not mentioned in connection with Jeff Koons's working methods.

Regarding Mary Boone, I didn't have much to do with her. With David, Matt, and Troy going to her gallery, it seemed like the spoils of war. They were her trophies. She took these artists away and into her gallery, but at the time it seemed that she had no idea who they were, or how truly and ultimately important they were. Both Matt and Troy seemed to be naturally gifted artists, something I admired very much. Jack and I used to joke about how we thought we were the ones who were supposed to suffer to make our work, while those guys had it easy. Now I know that, at one point or another, everybody suffers for their work.

The 1980s were a territory that was unmapped for me. This was a period of time when Reagan was talking about traditional values, bringing back the past. The artist's group that I was a part of was exploring not what art was but what art could be, and Jack represented that attitude. Having other people do your work was a very traditional model, prevalent two hundred or three hundred years ago, but not recently. Art was supposed to be the result of individual effort. A lot of us didn't know how to cope with the situation. The money and the drugs and the notoriety, the insane part of the 80s, was completely abstract; it was less significant than our working with a new model of art making.

In some ways, I became one of the poster children of the eighties. But I am here to stay; I am an artist—that's

that. I don't think I would trade in those times, but I wouldn't want to go through them again. Meeting Jack, Troy, Matt, and Helene was one of the most important things that happened to me in my art career. It is amusing talking to younger artists. I tell them, Sure, you need talent to make your work, but you have to realize that another major part of success is luck. You can't take credit for the luck. If there is a God, he's the guy who divvies up the luck.

●

Jack, East Tenth Street, New York, 1978, © James Welling

14

She saved my ass; she unloaded my work and she was awesome at it.

My two longest relationships were with strong, successful art dealers: Helene Winer and Rebecca Donelson. Of course, when I first knew her, Helene wasn't an art dealer. I like being in a relationship with a strong woman—we are both treated as equals. I became involved with art dealers because that is who I met—lots of art dealers. I don't go to bars to meet women. And I don't want to be with female artists because they tend to be a little masculine, and male artists tend to be a little feminine. It's an odd mixture that you find in the artworld.

I had a show with Rebecca at Dart Gallery in Chicago, drove out there for the opening, coked out of my mind, and almost fell off of the balcony of her gallery. Rebecca showed a lot of well known artists like John Baldessari, Lynda Benglis, and William Wegman.

It was great; she flew to New York and then flew out, back to Chicago; it was perfect for me. She worked hard and sold my paintings; she knew collectors all over the place and we could take trips together. Rebecca was

very well connected; compared with New York, there is so much money in Chicago that it's unbelievable. The collectors live in Chicago, fly to New York to buy work, and then fly back. I did a lot of work in Chicago, even stained glass windows; I made a forty-foot stained glass window in a temple and five glass windows elsewhere.

Through commissions and sales of my work, Rebecca made it possible for me to buy a hundred-acre farm in the Catskills, about an hour and a half from the city. She sold some work and I put $30,000 down on the place. I was so happy to get out of my old studio in Brooklyn, which was dirty and dangerous. I packed all my things in big plastic bags, walked downstairs, and there was Rebecca, waiting for me in a limo she hired because I didn't have a car and Rebecca didn't drive. I had all of my stuff in garbage bags and she was waiting for me in her limo to take all of the stuff upstate to my new home and studio.

On some weekends Rebecca would come up to the farm. She would drop into the back room, look at the paintings and say, They are getting there; Wow, this is it, you got it, you got it. They really were getting there. Out of desperation, I was making wonderful new work with all of my assistants.

When I first went upstate to the farm, I didn't know what I was going to do. I was cut off from familiar surroundings and from easy accessibility to drugs. Drugs kept me going at an unbelievable pace, but I was stressed and anxious. I became hysterical and had a nervous breakdown. I hired one assistant; we started working together, then I got more assistants and the work started to flow. I had seven or eight people working for me and was literally tripping over bodies when I got out of bed in the morning. I would trip over somebody here, somebody there. We were making work 24/7, all of the time. People think

New York is just a party town, but it is all work. All I did was work; there was nothing else. I had to make it, make it, make it, make it, make it. There was no time for anything else. No time for sex, no time for regular meals. If I did have sex, then I would stop in the middle and think, I have to do this, I have to do that, I wonder if my canvas is dry.

I operated from fear; I worried that other artists would get ahead of me and I would be left out. That is what kept me going. I produced more and more work so I wouldn't get left behind. I knew I would be out of the group if I didn't produce, if I was not up to par. This pressure kept me going until it made me crazy. Finally I went off my rocker. I was really off my rocker for a while. I was in car accidents, attempted suicide.

While I had the farm, I was going through detox; one morning I was driving home after a long night in the city and must have fallen asleep because I hit a series of guardrails. I hit sixteen guardrails—I know because I had my assistants go back and count them—I went back and forth, and then the car landed on its roof. I didn't have my seat belt on, but nothing happened to me because while I was detoxing, I was completely relaxed. I was on tranquilizers and my body didn't feel anything. The off-duty fireman who saw the accident thought I was drunk. He took me home, and the next day my assistants went back to the site of the crash; everybody blamed the accident on the air up there.

I had to put a lot of money into the farm and the pipes were always freezing. To make the art, I started sniffing heroin more and more. I had promised one of my assistants that I was clean and that we would share in the profits from sales of my paintings. I lied to him, and when he found out the truth he took off with the money I owed him, all the money I had in the world. I was unable to make the mortgage payments, so after a few years the bank repos-

sessed the farm and I went back to New York City.

Rebecca was from a prominent, old Southern family. She was well educated with degrees from two European universities and spoke several languages fluently. For many years, she had gone to school and lived in Europe. When we went to Paris and Edinburgh, she knew artists, curators and professors. In London she knew all of the best dealers. It made traveling much easier for me. She was outgoing and gregarious; she was quite funny actually. We complemented one another; she was comfortable with people while I distrusted everyone.

I liked her because she liked me. It's hard not to like someone who likes you. We got along even though we were on such different wavelengths. I felt resentment towards her, because I've had it so hard and it seemed to me that she had it so much easier. She was very social and Dart was a very successful gallery, in part because before opening it she had worked at the National Gallery of Art, the Corcoran, and the Art Institute of Chicago. She knew the major collectors and would sell paintings by me and other contemporary artists to everybody.

At that time, which was at the height of my success, I felt very vulnerable. I always felt a gnawing black pit in my stomach and tried to fill it up with hard work and drugs. I had boxed myself into a cycle of finding and taking drugs, making art, and hiding from everyone how much the drugs consumed my life. I figured that if I didn't discuss it with anyone, it didn't exist.

When you lay white powder out on the table, one powder might be called "cocaine" and the other "heroin," but what's the difference? You've got one line here and one line over there—it's all the same. You sniff them the same way.

Heroin or cocaine—you can sniff it, you can also smoke it. You don't have to mainline it. You don't have to

puncture the body with needles. You can lay it down and smoke it on tin foil. Years ago, when I had a show at Patty Faure, Bill Leavitt called and told me that he had heard I was a heroin addict. I was in a way pleased, because he was the only person who was willing to say that to me directly. From that point of view, his openness made him the only friend that I had. Because all of the people who said I was their friend shied away from me like I had AIDS. But I almost fell through my chair because he implied that I was an IV user. I said to him, I'm not an IV user, I'm a sniffer. To me that makes it a little bit better. That's what was harmful about the rumors; I was supposed to be an IV user, sticking needles in my arms. I wouldn't have been with any woman, if I were an IV user. It's common sense. I'm a sniffer, which I think makes it just a little bit better.

Rebecca disapproved of my drug use and we frequently argued about it. I lied to her about how much I used. I didn't want anyone to know the truth, but it was difficult keeping all of my lies straight. When she became suspicious, she used to go through my pockets, go through my wallet, looking for drugs. I would ask her where they went. She'd say, I flushed them down the toilet, Jack. Every meal we shared together in a restaurant finished with my getting up before the end and leaving the bill for her to pay. Without Rebecca knowing where I went, I would go away and search for drugs. Without drugs, I felt like at any moment I would explode. It was my secret life.

The only way I could get off the stuff was by being put in a straitjacket—Rebecca locked me up in an institution for two months. She wanted me to have the best help possible and sent me to a prominent psychopharmacologist in Chicago, who was very expensive. She said, You can afford him, just sell a painting! And I'd say, Okay, let's sell a painting.

Twice a month I would fly in to see the doctor. He

diagnosed me as having a borderline personality disorder which caused depression and which could be cured by legal drugs. I took so many pills that I needed a chart to list which pills to take at what time. I had to take the pills just to be normal, normal in my day-to-day living, but they turned me into a balloon. My weight rose to 225 pounds because they threw my system out of whack. I'm usually 160 or 165 but was weighing 225 pounds. I became a fat person. I said to myself, I'm fat! It's as if I had gotten my hair done in a certain way—it just happened to me and I accepted it as inevitable. So I'm a fat person, so big deal. When I walked into a room, people would point at me and say, There's a fat person. I thought, That's okay, I'm a fat person. That's just how bad those pills were for me. For a while I went along with it. Finally, I decided that I would rather die slim and depressed than die fat and normal.

I was in a hotel room in Chicago about to fly back to La Guardia, and Rebecca came in. I was distraught because I wanted heroin. I lined up the pills that the doctor had given me, and every time I felt irritated, I took a pill. I lined them up in a row and every few seconds popped another one. Pretty soon I had gone through a couple of bottles—all kinds of pills, mostly tranquilizers of one kind or another.

Suddenly I exploded and tore up the hotel room. I went crazy. I had gashes all over my arms from broken glass; mirrors were broken, furniture was broken, and when I had finished tearing the place up I said to her, I want to go back to La Guardia now. She said, Okay, Jack—but she had called the hotel detectives, which I didn't know. They came upstairs and said, Okay, you're flying back to La Guardia, Jack, you're going back to La Guardia. Here's a wheelchair, sit down, we're taking you to La Guardia.

I ended up in an institution for two months. I was locked down. For the first couple of weeks I was in shackles

and if the doctor tried to get near me, it was like *Hannibal,* I tried to go for him. After five days I was still in a kind of coma, but when I first got to the hospital, I remember the doctor putting his hand down my throat. Chicago is famous for its hospitals. I remember him in his white jacket; he put his hand down my throat, the old-fashioned way, to make me throw up all the pills I had taken. There was nothing high tech about it. There was no fancy tube work. The old-fashioned way goes back centuries; you put your hand down someone's throat, they gag, and everything comes up.

I remember waking up four or five days later, and Rebecca was sitting there with her legs crossed. I don't know how many days she had been sitting there; I could see out of the corner of my eye that she was waiting for me to come to. She came and visited me every day. It cost thirty grand a month, a thousand dollars a day, and Rebecca paid for it by selling paintings.

While I was a patient there, I called my assistants in New York and told them what to do because they could copy the drawings that I had made. I remember trying to break out, but they caught me and put me in cuffs and straitjackets—it was like *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest.* I would hear people scream, and then I would hear a moaning noise as they gave them a drug, which at first gave them a big bounce; then all of their muscles would relax. At some point I got scared; people told me that the higher up you go in one of those institutions, the harder it is to get back out. So I started to play the game. I started to give in to them because I wanted to get the hell out of there, especially with the $60,000 bill I had to pay. Sell a painting. Rebecca sold two paintings. By the time I was out, I was detoxed. I didn't feel great but I was detoxed.

After a time I started using some drugs again because I was in such turmoil and everyone and every-

thing around me was so tenuous. I felt that I couldn't trust anybody. I was trying to make it, but I didn't know what anything was—was it real, was it not real? How could I feel stable about anything? How could I feel good about anything? I was always worried and realized that I was risking my life through my art. My life was already at risk; I was going for broke, so for me to cross over and take a few drugs was no big deal. I didn't have a drug problem; drugs were the only way I had of feeling better about myself.

If I went out in the morning and sniffed some stuff, I could handle anything. I was walking a tight rope and never knew when I was going to fall. It wasn't a shock to me when I did fall; sooner or later, I expected it. I was waiting for it. Rebecca expected the art system to take over and support me, but it never happened.

Two weeks before my 1991 show with John Weber, Rebecca called me up and said, Jack, I can't sell your work any more. I asked her why not. She said, You're having a show with John; I can't sell your work while your show is up in the gallery.

It was around that time that Sandy Simpson, my art dealer from Toronto, called to tell me that her accountant went over the books and discovered she owed me $35,000. She sent me a check two weeks before the show; otherwise I would have been in terrible trouble. I put the money into the show, but my last Weber show went nowhere. That's when my career collapsed.

The end of our business relationship in 1993 didn't end our friendship; I still spoke with Rebecca about everything. But I had no gallery, and no dealers; after my experiences with galleries, I didn't care if I had another one or not. I had no support from the art system, nothing to fall back on. I ended up at Fort Apache in the South Bronx. That was the only place in New York that would rent me a space without a background check. It was $150 a month; I used to

trip over dead bodies. One week, I flew out to give a lecture at Art Center; when I returned, my place had been robbed. In the middle of the night I realized that I had to get out of there. They wanted to sell my stuff back to me. I had no money for storage, so I gave all my paintings to Rebecca to keep for me; she had all of the paintings that didn't sell at Sandy Simpson's. Until 1995, she regularly sent me money when she was able to sell my work, and from small sales gave me half the down payment for my place in East L.A.

I never look at the last thing someone did for me; I look at the big picture. The big picture is that she saved my ass.

●

Jack, New York, 1985

REFLECTIONS BY **Jean Fisher**

15

Jack Goldstein was one of the most uncompromising and ethical artists I met during the 1980s in New York, both in the rigor of his work and in his relations with the artworld, tolerating neither ignorance nor the creepy social games that some artists engaged in to gain influence and success, a perspective that did not win friends among those with overblown egos who then held the power of legitimization. There was something sheepish about the way most collectors, dealers, and magazines followed the dictates of a handful of power brokers. Jack did not meet with their approval. Jack had attitude.

However, the more Jack withdrew from the social sphere of the New York artworld, the more he became the object of ill-informed and destructive gossip; the more he was isolated, the more he withdrew into his own world. Aside from wherever enigmatic place he was in his head, this world consisted mainly of the studio and the car; his constant companion was Jack the Dog, an elderly and cranky, but intensely loyal, black Labrador/Shepherd cross-breed alert to every nuance of Jack's moods, and who most of the time wore the doleful, doggy expression of long-suffering patience. When Jack was out of the car for

any length of time, Jack the Dog would grow restless and anxious. He was not the only one. The most tense occasion was parking on East Houston while Jack went off for a ten-minute errand that stretched to an hour and a half. It took no more than twenty minutes for all the worst-case scenarios to start plaguing the imagination; when he finally reappeared, it was to tell us that he had been held up at knifepoint and it had taken him a while to talk his way out of it. I don't know what it's like in New York post-Mayor Giuliani, but at that time artists had no difficulty engaging one way or another with the whole spectrum of New York social life. However, continuous confrontation with the dangerously chaotic can be quite exhausting, and Jack eventually moved to a studio on one of the East side avenues and also had a brief flirtation with the natural landscape of upstate New York.

Jack was not the best time-keeper when it came to appointments, but he had an extraordinary intuition for disasters, and not only his own! An example of this occurred when a couple of us were subletting his other studio in Brooklyn between the river and the projects. It was in one of those old, dangerously decrepit factory buildings typical of the undesirable real estate the less well-off among us rented during the 1980s. Vito Acconci's studio was located a block over, but there were few artists there at the time. One evening I had a call from Jack at the Area club, where I was then working in the office; Area was one of the hottest venues at that time, but not the kind of entertainment that interested Jack. He had come by chance to the Brooklyn studio for a quiet break to read at the very moment that the sweatshop on the floor above caught fire and set off our sprinkler system. Although a lot of our books and bedding were ruined, we nevertheless managed to salvage stuff thanks to his timely arrival.

As an outsider from Europe it was clear to me—

and a few discerning others—that Jack's work was among the most significant and influential to emerge by the late 1970s as Neo-Conceptualism (it was only tangentially related to the "appropriation" debate, even though it had partly inspired it). But the times were so fraught by a near-paranoid—and cocaine-driven—greed for celebrity, money, and success that few fellow artists had the generosity to acknowledge his influence. As a consequence, Jack's work was unfairly marginalized by both the artistic community and the market, a situation that was clearly painful to someone who admitted that his greatest fear was to disappear without a trace—the trace was virtually his signature image—and whose life was intimately identified with his work.

Part of Jack's marginalization over the past fifteen years by the "establishment" (but not in the minds of those with an interest in serious art) may be due to the fact that he was an artist-philosopher in a North American climate that, while it began the 1980s with a love affair with French Post-Structuralism, ended by valorizing the banal and superficial at the expense of intellectual rigor. Jack's enthusiasm for ideas was insatiable, his mind like quicksilver. We would spend all night in the studio in Williamsburg, which had little in the way of sustenance except coffee, rapping about the French philosophers and postmodern theories, sessions that would end in the early hours with Jack fetching a tray of doughnuts to replenish our diminished sugar levels. Nonetheless, for the most part these philosophers merely confirmed an acute understanding he already had of the ethos of contemporary art and culture. I remember Chris Dercon, then working for Belgian TV, coming to Williamsburg to interview Jack for a program that also included the philosopher Paul Virilio, and it was uncanny the extent to which their thoughts on representation and spectacle corresponded.

Given that, in contrast to the traditions of European art, mainstream US art tends to articulate popular culture and mass consumerism, the parallels in Jack's work with philosophical thought always struck me as more European. This is not to say that Jack dismissed popular culture. His preferred studio working music was country and western—most particularly Patsy Cline—a genre mystifying to a lot of Europeans who frankly tend to regard it as symptomatic of American sentimentalism. However, as we all know, Hollywood cinema, as the most significant image-producing machine of the twentieth century and, along with 1930s Fascist display, the epitome of spectacle, was one of Jack's primary references. Many critics chose to misunderstand Jack's interest in spectacle as itself an expression of fascistic tendencies, but it was paradoxically an intensely ethical inquiry into the nature of the image and its relation to questions of subjectivity. Jack would gravitate to those filmmakers who showed a similar concern; by the mid 1980s primary examples would include the equally notorious Brian de Palma (with such movies as *Blow Out, Dressed to Kill,* and *Body Double),* Ridley Scott (specifically, his quintessential postmodern movie *Blade Runner),* and Alfred Hitchcock (whose classics *Rear Window* and *Vertigo* had recently been re-released).

The fact that Jack's work was capable of provoking antagonistic responses—valorized as groundbreaking, or dismissed as aggravated assault—was complemented by similar misunderstandings about his working methods. It was sometimes hard to understand the vitriol generated by the fact that he used a studio assistant to lay on the image of the paintings when this was a common practice among established artists at least since the Renaissance. As it happens, Jack himself meticulously prepared the ground of the paintings, applying and sanding down each successive layer of gesso to achieve the desired surface

body. Having selected the image and how it was to be presented, he would then instruct the assistant to spray it on the surface while he either sat down to read or watch the afternoon soaps on TV, or went off to do errands and walk Jack the Dog.

It was sometimes as if he himself wanted the buzz of encountering the image in its fully materialized form. Indeed, he would often say that what drove him to the next work was the anticipation of seeing a fresh image—one rarely encounters a clarer expression of the elusiveness of desire as it is articulated through an unending flow of images! I heard later that one of his assistants, Ashley Bickerton, had been claiming that Jack's work was really his since it was he who "made" the image, a rather stupid attempt at self-aggrandizement, typical of the time, clearly misunderstanding the difference between a technician and an artist, and failing to grasp the nature of artistic thought, especially of a practice that was always testing its own limits. As in the work, so in life; Jack trod a fine line between the extremes of the possible and the impossible, between appearance and disappearance, between tragedy and comedy, between life and death. As a consequence, for those with lesser talent and an impoverished sense of irony, there was always something threatening about Jack's presence—even in his absence.

●

16

> Now you know what I meant when I repeated what David Salle said: "It's absurd out there."

In the end, I want my legacy; that's the most important thing for me. As it is, I went much farther, I did much better than I expected. I keep remembering Matt Mullican, who had some real wisdom; he was always telling me that the thing we had to do was to wait for the previous generation to die out.

Matt said that it's like the base of a triangle: It gets narrower as it reaches the top. As those who are at the top die out (if not literally, then at least their reputations), there will be room for people like us to push in, and that's what happened. With the opening of Metro Pictures in 1980, a new decade began; all of a sudden there was an upsurge of galleries, and those of us who had come from CalArts, with our ideas about pictures and appropriation, got a lot of attention.

After I returned to Southern California, I lived for ten years as a failure. What had I done wrong? I had made so much work but didn't know what would happen to it. Now it is being kept alive again. Some people are keeping

alive what I did, but for so long I worried it had been lost and forgotten.

Myths about my drug use have been following me for over thirty years; someone who was involved peripherally with the artworld came in to see my April 2001 show at Brian Butler's, someone I hadn't seen for years. Even she knew about my alleged drug use. If you can't say anything about the work, go after the artist! It's important to know that I am entirely responsible for myself. I never borrowed drugs from anybody; I never begged; I never hustled anybody. I was a one-man operation.

I have nothing to feel embarrassed about, nothing to feel uptight about. I never had stable teaching jobs, which don't make you a better artist. In fact, they make you a worse artist. It is all too easy to rely on that monthly check and to lose your ambition to succeed as an artist.

In New York teaching was a no-no; if you were teaching, it meant that you were not making it. I still remember when David and I pulled into the parking lot at Hartford and he told me that he was quitting his teaching position so that he could work full time as an artist. He made a point of saying "working full time as an artist." That meant to me, if you're teaching, you are not working full time as an artist. That's why there is that snobbery. Now it is difficult for me to get back into teaching because the same people are at the colleges and universities and art schools who were there when I didn't need to teach. They resent me for it. Then I didn't need to teach and they resent me for it.

I don't have enough fingers and toes to count the number of times people tell me that my work has been a strong influence on them; instead of having art careers they had teaching careers. A teacher might think he or she has an art career, but usually it is stuck somewhere in the middle of the pack. As I have always said, schools are

about mediocrity; art is about excellence.

In 1993–94, Richard Hertz at Art Center hired me to teach a class on recent art theory and to have studio visits with the grad students. You can see how desperate I was! In New York I received a lot of good offers for teaching jobs, but I always had to turn them down because I never had the time. For six years I did teach part time at the School of Visual Arts, but finally they had to let me go. One of the things about Jeanne Siegel and Paul Waldman is that despite the fact that they brought you in because of your reputation, no matter where you were exhibiting, you still had to show up for your classes. The truth is that half the time I had to ask friends and students to take over because I had to go somewhere. It was part time, and I had to come in one day a week, but it paid decently. Through teaching at SVA I got to know Joyce Roetter, who had gone to grad school at Art Center. She suggested I go out to L.A. to teach; at first I took a rain check, but a few years later I moved.

In 1993 I almost got the University of California, Riverside teaching job. I had a meeting with the Provost, that's how close I was to getting it. He said that based on my resume, I would be underpaid if I took the position. There was no comparison between the quality of my resume and the resumes of those on the faculty. At the last minute there was a big fight about my appointment. Apparently a faculty member who had been there for a long time said that he didn't want some hot shot New York artist on the faculty. They ended up choosing Jill Giegerich. It was during this process that I met Uta Barth; she was the one who informed me that I was not going to be hired. She said that because it's a very small faculty, they didn't want to get into a big departmental fight. It's a small department, there's little pressure, there are no graduate students, and you get top dollar for being there. Uta complained that she

has to fight the traffic driving out from the west side of L.A. I had to laugh when she told me that.

A lot of people say that Jack Goldstein is a real legend—reclusive, brilliant. A loner, shy and uncomfortable. I just wish those fans of mine would come forward. I may be a legend, but for eight years I was living in a trailer in East L.A. without electricity or running water. A broken-down trailer that leaked. No refrigerator. No eating facility. Barely a toilet. Eight years! I had no choice; I had to take shit jobs. I bought a little piece of land where cholos lived. There were gunshots going off all around me. I got along with those cholos; they fed my dogs when I was gone. On Friday nights they would steal automobiles and strip them in front of my gate. Finally, I had to tell them to strip the cars several feet from my gate so I could get out, which they did. In spite of their criminal behavior, I generally liked them as people better than those I knew in the art-world. The only time I got a little frightened was when they turned eighteen years old, when they became aware of their Mexican heritage and realized that I was white. I would have conversations with them and then go inside and write poetry. I grew up understanding extremes and oppositions.

I was no longer a New York artist. No one knew of my past and no one asked. I picked up stray dogs, like myself, and ended up with five. That was my family life and still is. What kept me going was writing my autobiography as a series of aphorisms. I read Heidegger and Kafka backwards and underlined the parts that excited me. I spent from eight to twelve hours a day reading books backwards in order to break the narratives and mimic the lack of continuity that existed in my own life.

My family worried I was going to hurt myself and had me locked up for three days in a psycho ward. The police showed up and couldn't believe I was living with no

electricity or running water. When they turned on my kitchen taps and no water came out, that did it for them. They told me to turn around and handcuffed me. I can still remember sitting in the backseat complaining how tight the handcuffs were and that I wasn't crazy, just down on my luck! It was as if I were a criminal for being myself. I kept telling them that I never learned how to live like most people; I am a self-exiled pariah. No one wants me around, so I retreat more and more. The locals in the area fed my dogs while I was gone. These were the same local hoods who gang-banged and fired their guns in the air at night. Whenever they killed someone, they would come over to my fence and yell my name to brag about it.

Since my trailer was on a cul-de-sac, there were drugs all around me. One person who lived ten yards from my gate sold heroin out of his broken-down van. That was convenient for me, but increasingly I worried about my safety and that I would be robbed. For two years I pleaded with him to sell drugs further away from my trailer; finally I covertly called the police. After two years he returned from prison and asked if he could stay in my place for a week until he returned to a half-way house. On the Thursday prior to leaving, he overdosed in my trailer. I went to touch him in the morning and he was frozen.

I used to go at 5:00 in the morning to places called the "American Labor Force." I would sit there for three hours waiting for someone to hire me. First come, first served. You get there at 5:00 in the morning, and if a job comes in, they send you out on it. Anything from wrapping boxes to construction. You get $50 a day and bring home about $38 a day. I worked for Marie Callender; I used to bring a receptacle along that had food in it. "Marie Callender is here." They would get a third of whatever I made. I delivered newspapers for two years and threw *USA Today* into Johnny Carson's Malibu driveway. I put signs

on car windshields for Bally's, a workout place; after paying for gas, I might bring home $30 a day. I washed dogs; I tried to train dogs. For almost two years, I did these kinds of jobs.

For a while, I lived in Venice with the friend of one of my assistants. We decided to cultivate marijuana, which I never used, and I invested a lot of money in fans, a generator, growing lights, the seeds, and a watering system. I was desperate and it seemed like it would be profitable, a good cash crop, and an easy way to make money. Suddenly I became a farmer. Day and night, we watched over the plants and after a few months had a great crop, which we processed. My friend took the marijuana to New York, where he was going to sell it and then return to divide the proceeds. He left and I never heard from him again. I was worried the cops would raid the house because the smell alone could make you high. One day I packed up and moved, leaving behind all of the growing paraphernalia.

Then I owned an old second hand ice cream truck that I bought for a few hundred dollars. Every day after buying ice cream, I went to different clinics all over L.A. to get methadone; if I tested positive for drugs at a clinic, they wouldn't give me any, so I had to go to another one. I stood in line in my white pants and white shirt, my white hat in my pocket. After a while I learned to take along a bottle of someone else's urine, in case they wanted a urine sample. One day, it took so long at the clinic that my ice cream melted; I re-froze it as best I could and sold it to the Chicano kids. I sold ice cream in East L.A. so that during the day I could buy the drugs I needed.

My parents would help me out a little bit to get by, but they couldn't understand my situation. If I didn't go out on a job, I spent most of the morning feeding my dogs, then going to clinics for methadone. If I couldn't get any, I spent most of the rest of the day looking for drugs. The

ritual of feeding my dogs, writing, and finding drugs organized my life. I was at the bottom of the barrel. My resume meant nothing. What else could I do? I had no money to make art, and anyway the auction prices were horrible. That is why I disappeared. I lost most of my teeth because of all of the heroin I was using and had to have temporary ones put in at the UCLA Dental Clinic, where they have a free clinic for indigents. I was embarrassed by my situation. Am I going to hang out with Jim Welling and Morgan Fisher and then say, I've got to do menial labor while you go off to UCLA to teach? I just disappeared.

I took awful jobs and came home in the pitch black, so I had to light candles in my trailer. Turn on my battery-powered radio. I went back to what I used to do when I first got out of school, only worse. I can't tell you how many times I wanted to swing by a rope. There was no one around; anyway, who would want someone in my situation? I have a very dim view of people. I don't trust people; deep down, I don't trust them. It wasn't like me to write to Art Center for a job, but I was at the end of my rope.

In 1993 I overdosed on pills. That night I stayed at my sister's. I told her, I'll see you in the morning; I'm going to bed. I wasn't hysterical at all. I went to the bedroom and took ninety-seven Tylenols; I counted them as I took them. They looked like footballs, green footballs. I said to myself, I'm going to check out. I've had my time here; I've created a body of work. As I was taking them, I was talking with Rebecca on the phone; Rebecca had the feeling that I was up to something. She called my sister, who found me. I went out cold in a matter of one minute. After that I was in the hospital for a week. They gave me a fifty-fifty chance to make it. I don't remember anything until a week later. I was out for seven days, out cold; it was totally black. If anyone tells you that there is light at the end of the tunnel, or that you see something, they are wrong; there ain't nothing. It

is black. When I woke up, the first thing I heard was nurses saying, God, I could never do that to myself. I should have gone down to my car before I took the pills and then it would have been over.

If I had some savings, if I knew I was guaranteed a check each week, then I might paint again. It is such a gamble. Who knows if people would be lining up to buy a painting? The work didn't sell under optimum conditions; it makes me wonder. I don't want to run scared any more.

What Brian Butler has done for me recently is more than all of my previous dealers combined. I had dealers all over the world and they never worked for me like that. Recently, Daniel Buchholz and Christopher Müller in Cologne have also worked very hard for me. My art was ahead of its time; the digital, computer-generated language that Koons used in his 2001 Gagosian show was a language I had used in my paintings fifteen years earlier. Hiring other people to apply the paint was a no-no for me but it isn't a no-no for him. Koons doesn't physically make those paintings, and that is okay, but I was severely criticized for doing that.

In 2001 I had a show in Germany; Jim Welling had the next show. People grow up—they have kids, they teach, but I still remember the CalArts days. I'd go over and say, Jim let's do a record. What do you think? But he wasn't interested. I ran into Matt and it was the same thing. I said, I heard your dad died; what was that like? I knew he was really close to his family. He said, I'm a dad now; I have twins. That was it; he's a dad. That summed it up—he has replaced his father by becoming a father. I understood exactly what he meant. In a way, he has gone beyond that earlier relationship so he can be wrapped up in being a dad. He's not little Matt anymore; all of a sudden Matt has grown up.

Troy Brauntuch is teaching at the University of

Texas, Austin. Whenever I was at Sotheby's or Christie's, I would look under "B" to see if one of his paintings had come up for auction; his prices were pretty low. He had been a boy wonder, joining Metro at twenty-three, and was hot for a good five or six years. He was going to make it before David, and bigger than David. Annina wanted him, Leo wanted him; he just backed off, like Bill Leavitt. Too many artists end up backing off. Troy wasn't hungry enough. To me, making art is about being competitive. If it is not about being competitive, I don't know why you would want to make art. Would you go into acting so that you can have a comfortable life? No, of course not, you want to make it to the top. The same is true of being an artist.

Bill Leavitt would never let his shield down. It was like pulling teeth trying to get something out of him, even for me, and I have known him since 1966. He's been a good friend over the years; he has remained consistent and loyal, and I've always liked his work. I can't put my finger on what the problem is. I don't know if it has to do with some Midwestern work ethic, but he seems to be ambitious and then he doesn't seem ambitious.

Years ago he told me that art making is a process, something unfolding in time; I think that sums up our differences because I don't see art as a process or a lifestyle. I see art as something you put on the firing line or you don't do at all. It's a complete commitment. He sees art as a process—you make work, then you don't make work, then you make work. I told him that Brian Butler just bought a piece of mine at auction. He said, Nothing of mine ever comes up at auction because I'm not in that league. It was difficult for me to hear that. I've known him a long time and he is a genuine artist; I have great respect for him. One reason his work never comes up at auction is because he doesn't make monumental work. He makes

these tiny things, but he should be making big pieces which say, Come and get me, come and fuck me—or something. That's why his work never comes up for auction. He's too reserved. Jim Welling has a little bit of that as well. This attitude and lack of passion is so anti-Jewish, so contrary for us. A lack of passion rather than "do it," "do it," "do it." It was funny for me to hear Bill say that his work doesn't come up at auctions. I wouldn't have expected him to kowtow in that way; it's true, he's not in important collections.

I have always felt out of place. I never grew into anything I became along the way. I never took on new roles. I always remained the same guy from CalArts, waiting for the nod from Baldessari. He became my superego, my father figure. All I could think of was that I should make more work. I never grew into other roles like that of being a "famous artist." What I noticed about all of my friends is that they seemed to grow into what they became; they could take on the roles they were playing. They could be relaxed with the collectors, but I never could; I always felt that I shouldn't be there.

I was always in turmoil. I did more work than I needed, overcompensating because I was afraid I would be caught empty handed. I'm always biting off more than I can chew. When I have meetings with students or artists, I can tell by their persona if they have it or not—if they are motivated enough, hungry enough. I am interested in ambitious artists, whose heads are screwed on right. You can smell success.

Success in the artworld as well as with my friendships and in my personal life seemed to elude me. I couldn't marry anyone because drugs had become my lover and mistress. I gave up everything for my art and my career. And the only way I can make art is by taking drugs to ease the pain of the emptiness in my stomach, the emp-

tiness of my life. That was the choice that I made over twenty years ago. I have the kind of personality that things either work out for me or they don't work out at all. I am not a David Salle, so that wherever you go, all over the world, everything falls into place. I went all over the world, but I didn't live all over the world like he does. I didn't want to screw anyone else's life up. To screw up your own life with drugs is one thing, but to screw up someone else's life is something else.

It's scary for me because I am alone; there is nobody, only me and my five dogs. They don't ask any questions and are completely loyal. I have a mother who is eighty-five; a father whose brain is half gone and is ready to go. It's the end of the line and it's very frightening for me. I finally understand that people have families so you always have someone to look after you. About five years ago, when I was in the hospital after a motorcycle accident, no one came to visit me. My sister wouldn't even call me. She wouldn't call me because it was a motorcycle accident and so it was my fault. She said I shouldn't be driving a motorcycle, even though that was only way I could get around when I couldn't afford a car. I still have a plate in one leg; I had to take a taxi home by myself. It's scary because I realize that when you are living alone, you can't live dangerously; if something happens, there is no one to care for you. There won't even be someone to push me in a wheelchair.

I listen to Christian preachers on the radio and television because what they say is so foreign to me; I always like to hear things I can't understand. For example, I spend hours watching shows in Japanese and Chinese. I like to be thrown into situations where I'm the outsider; I am so familiar with being in that kind of situation that I gravitate towards them, even when I am watching TV. My girlfriends would come over and get mad at me: What the hell are you

doing? That's precisely why I watch those Christian programs; they are so foreign to me. There's a lot of paganism in Christianity; they had to appeal to all of the pagans, and so there is almost no Judaism left.

I was very depressed after my show at Brian Butler's in April–May, 2001 because even though everyone told me how great I was, Jim Welling was buying a house around the corner from UCLA, where he teaches. I don't know what I did wrong; I've done more than most people. I should have saved and invested my money, but I always put it back into the work. I wouldn't trade places in that way—I wouldn't trade my career for anyone else's.

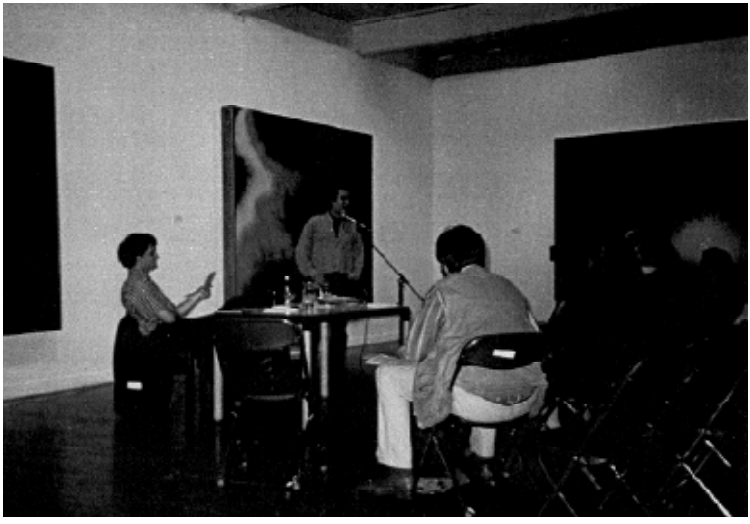
My fortune cookie says, "It is easy to think but difficult to act." I called Brian up and he said, You're on the cover of *Artforum.* I said, You have got to be kidding. It's bittersweet. When I don't care anymore, then it happens.

I am typing my book of aphorisms, not writing it by hand. I can't stand to look at anything that my hand does. When I had studio assistants, I had them sign my name on the back of the paintings. I almost had to fire them to sign the paintings. They wouldn't sign them; they wouldn't do that. So I said, Okay, you're fired. I had so much trouble with the signature on my paintings.

I was naïve compared with David; one of the last things he said to me was, It's absurd out there; it is ridiculous. I didn't get it then, but I get it now. At a certain point it doesn't really matter what you do. You are at the mercy of the collectors, the dealers, even other artists. Some artists squeeze themselves into the triangle through sheer force. But how that happens—why one artist becomes a star and not someone else—is a mystery.

In a way, I ruined my life, but I did a body of work, and for that body of work it was worth ruining my life.

●



Jack giving presentation during his exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, 1988

Haunted by the Ghost: Jack Goldstein, Now and Then

POSTSCRIPT BY **Meg Cranston**

For the last ten years, Jack Goldstein has been no more (or less) than a mythical presence on the art scene. Artworld people between the ages of thirty-five and a hundred more than likely know his work. Artists and scenesters younger than that, more than likely, have never heard of him. The short story is this.

The once ubiquitous Jack Goldstein has spent the last decade living in what he described as a "burnt-down trailer up on this hill, with no electricity and no water." He made no attempt to contact anyone beyond his immediate family because as Goldstein puts it, "I couldn't see my friends because what would I say, Come visit me?"[1]

During that period of monk-like asceticism, Goldstein produced by his estimate over a million pages of writing. The texts, which are culled from a wide variety of unnamed sources, are all structured as three-part aphorisms that read together, according to Goldstein, form his autobiography—albeit written by someone else.

Structured in a more conventional way, Jack Goldstein's biography goes something like this: From 1971 to 1976 Jack Goldstein made performances, records, and films, which were all high-concept pieces shown in simply

beautiful, if remarkably polished, form. In 1977 Goldstein was one of five artists included in the exhibition "Pictures" organized by the critic Douglas Crimp. The essay for the show was printed (in a revised version) in *October* magazine in 1979. Every art student in America read it. The same year Goldstein, along with other post-Conceptual artists (David Salle, et al.), quit making films, performances, and records and started to paint. From 1979 to 1990 he made over five hundred paintings of firefights, explosions, lightning, and body heat. The paintings were described as having "no gesture, no signature, no authorial signifier that would interfere with the autonomy of the painting as object." They, cast in the language of the day, were "representations of what is already simulacrum," having "nothing to deflect from the viewers' experience of the image as pure spectacle."[2]

Then, in 1991, Jack Goldstein disappeared. According to Goldstein, the fear of disappearing has always been part of the subtext of his work. "I always felt like I was saying, 'Hey I'm over here, I'm over here'—in my painting. I used to say I wanted to blow everyone off the wall but really it was, 'Hey I'm over here,' because I always worried about disappearing."[3]

That confession is corroborated by a story John Baldessari tells about Goldstein. "It was the first year that CalArts started, 1970. We were in the cafeteria. I was sitting with Jack and another student. I remember Jack wearing these impenetrable mirrored aviator glasses, plus he had that Clint Eastwood–like smirk. I don't know what we were talking about but the other student said, 'You know Jack, I think you would do anything to be a successful artist, even cut off your arm.' He didn't smile. He just said flatly, 'Yeah, I would.' I had never heard such a dramatic declaration of mission."[4]

The dramatic clarity of that exchange is typical

of Goldstein and how he conceives his work. Cause is made implicit by effect. The desire to be an artist is staged as an event: An amputation, which produces a bloody stump. Like Oedipus gouging out his eyeballs at the end of the play, the climactic effects in Goldstein's work are so precise, so exuberant, so viscerally spectacular, that to ask what they mean is, well . . . did you somehow miss the bloody stump?

All of which makes Goldstein sound like Damien Hirst, and while there are some similarities in terms of sheer audacity, Hirst has yet to top this: In the spring of 1972, while still a student at CalArts, Goldstein had himself buried alive. There was no audience for the work, but people became aware of it because on top of the grave there was a red light which flashed on and off to a rhythm set by a sensor keyed to Goldstein's heartbeat.[5]

That was only the beginning. The most concise explanation of Jack Goldstein's work was offered by Goldstein himself very early in his career. He said, "I am interested in the gap between Minimalism and Pop art: The objectness and autonomy of Minimalism and the subject matter from our culture that is in Pop art."[6] Add to that a relationship to Conceptual art that is both fraternal and Oedipal and you get the rough outlines of Goldstein's work, as well as possibly the most compact description of art practice in the postmodern era.

If there is a single strand that connects Jack Goldstein's work, it is that in all the work, psychological resonance is staged by the orchestration of physical actions or the image of those events. It is in that sense that all of Goldstein's work is theatrical. Goldstein's records are an example. How might you sense the ferocity of two brawling cats? Record the sound of them wrestling. How powerful is the wind? Listen to this recording of a tornado.[7] Goldstein doesn't suggest he has the key to some elemental

truth. In fact, quite the opposite. His records are merely sound effects, the sounds of actions, of events, that conjure and confound speculations of character.

In the performance *Two Boxers,* (1979) loud Prussian marching music heralds the appearance of two professional boxers dressed identically in white. A bout is fought in silence, illuminated by a white strobe light. When one boxer is knocked out, a red light comes on and the two figures freeze. The performance ends; the martial music is played at a lower volume.[8] The performance is an act and the act is the performance. The fighters are professional boxers doing their usual shtick. Many of Goldstein's performances and later films are structured in that same way: Professionals simply doing their act. The single character in the performance *Body Contortionist,* (1976) is a body contortionist doing a contortionist act. The act is not motivated by profound ideas; profundity (such as it is) is generated by the effect of the act.

In Goldstein's film *A Ballet Shoe,* (1975) the foot of a ballerina is shown standing on pointe. It looks like a stock shot, but it isn't. The foot seems drilled into the wood floor—like it could stay like that forever. There is no quiver, no shake, from foot or camera. Then two hands come in from either side of the frame and pull the ribbons on the shoe. The shoe dissembles and the foot flattens. The film lasts twenty-two seconds. Carl Andre had it right when he said, "Artworks at their best spring from physical, erotic propositions."[9]

Goldstein's films are as lean (and often mean) as any work by Andre or Serra. The difference is, Goldstein's works explode with the force of Pop.

In a catalog essay for Jack Goldstein's exhibition at Hallwalls in 1978, David Salle wrote: "More than most Post-Conceptual artists who come to mind, Jack Goldstein's work seems directly related to fears and anxieties

about living in the world, and yet, significantly, the look of the work is almost antiseptically divorced from any cliché notion of the language of angst. There are no smudge marks or erasures; there is no hesitancy of execution. On confronting the work for the first time, most viewers will be struck by how closely it mimics the slick presentation of commercial art. The images Goldstein uses are presented in a way which links them to media with a greater sense of complicity than one finds in the work of the Pop artists."[10]

Unfortunately, Goldstein didn't take that as a compliment. "I thought it was a put-down. My interpretation was that Salle was asking, 'Why would I use the devices that basically enclose you, that trap you,' which is what I do." In Goldstein's view it wasn't a matter of choice. "You go along with technology because there's no choice. You have no choice. You go with it or you fall into oblivion—you disappear."[11]

According to Goldstein, there were filmmakers who suspected him on similar grounds. "They would ask, 'Did you shoot those films?' and the fact that I had a cameraman, well they walked out. They were so upset that I didn't shoot the films because somehow that was an important criteria for the success of the work."[12]

Filmmaker Morgan Fisher outlines the problem:

> In Jack's case, it wasn't just that he worked with technical people as hired hands or with Hollywood technical people that was held against him by some people in independent film. What was also held against him was that that the films were beautiful. Jack was interested in beauty and the beautiful image. He said so, in so many words. I think part of what he was in reaction to was the non-pleasurable aspect of much of independent filmmaking, just as he might have been in reaction to similar qualities in Conceptual art.

> At the time there were a lot of films that were very long and relatively austere. For some of the filmmakers, the withholding of easy pleasure was a badge of honor, so a lot of the films had to do with making the audience feel it was having to earn the reward of the film by there not being a lot to look at, and having to look at it for a long time. Many of the films were of course radical and important, but their pleasures tended to be more cerebral than visual. And length itself was understood as a sign of ambition. Jack had no use for any of that. It wasn't a chore to look at any of Jack's films, you didn't feel you were performing a duty. His films for the most part are very short and are absolutely stunning.[13]

James Welling, who was at CalArts at the same time as Goldstein, remembers how Goldstein described his method of filmmaking: "His famous line to me was 'Jim I don't have a light meter.' It was very important to Jack that he was distanced from the creation of the films that, he wouldn't do anything except tell someone else what to do."[14]

An example of Goldstein's distanced technique is his film *Shane,* (1975). The German Shepherd who barks in precise rhythmic yelps for the duration of the three- minute film seems like a cross between the Great Sphinx and Lassie. The long-standing rumor, which turns out not to be true, was that Goldstein used a Hollywood make-up artist to give the dog its brilliant, if slightly nefarious, gleam.[15] In fact, the film was tinted gold to produce the effect. No matter, the result is the same. *Shane* has the cool luster of total control. Indeed, Goldstein hired the particular trainer used on the film because the trainer guaranteed he could get the dog to bark on cue. The need and capacity for that level of control is a standard in film-industry production, and Goldstein delighted in the ease with which anyone could have

access to it. "The thing I learned about Hollywood was that we all had access to the same thing that Spielberg has access to. Except he could go in and rent it for two months and I could go in and rent if for an hour."[16]

Goldstein's films are produced under the same conditions as Hollywood films, but, with the exception of the film *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer,* (1975) where he manipulates the MGM logo sequence so the lion roars more than once, Goldstein never recuts or recontextualizes films made by other filmmakers. Goldstein's films take the position vis-a-vis the media, not as the consumer and manipulator of a found product, but rather, as an active and equal filmmaker. It is a difference that links Goldstein's work more closely to the active power-hungry stance of Constructivism, Minimalism, and punk rock than to the defeated stance of the appropriation artists with whom he was associated. Indeed, what is striking about the films is that even after twenty-odd years, they have quality of being freshly minted.

Being associated with artists he has next to nothing in common with is a situation that has plagued Goldstein throughout his career. He is, in a sense, an artist in search of a generation.

Richard Serra and Jack Goldstein are close in age. Serra was born in 1939, Goldstein in 1945. Goldstein's film *Bone China* and Richard Serra's film *Railroad Turnbridge* were both made in 1976. Serra's film is a long take of the action of a railroad turnbridge. (Turnbridges don't go up and down; the two halves turn to allow boats to pass.) Goldstein's *Bone China* is a two-and-a-half-minute film in which an animated bird flies in one direction around a China plate, then makes a turn. Discussing *Railroad Turnbridge,* Serra says, "You don't have to understand what sculpture has been in this country to have a love affair with American bridges. You grow up in complete wonder of

them, especially in this city [New York] with Roebling's Brooklyn Bridge."[17] Goldstein says, "I did *Bone China* with Spung Buggy (a film animation studio). They did *Yogi Bear* and things like that."[18]

Serra talks about bridges as being an "important psychological icon.[19] The content of the film isn't related in any literal way to the construction of the film or even to being a film at all. In *Bone China* the connection between the icon and its construction is literal. *Bone China* is an animated film produced in the identical way as the animated films we remember from childhood. It is made like *Yogi Bear.* Douglas Crimp wrote: "The psychological resonance of this work is not that of the subject matter of his pictures, but of the way those pictures are presented staged; that is a function of their structure."[20] Whereas Serra, like Andre, worked in steel mills that provided "a source of material inspiration, fabrication and construction,"[21] Goldstein's audience, if not Goldstein himself, knew filmmaking from the living room floor. That familiarity affected the reception of the work, especially the way artists viewed Goldstein's film *The Jump.*

The Jump (1976) is a rotoscopic animation of four sequences of the movements of a high board diver. The athlete's movement looks natural, but his appearance has been so obliterated by special effects that the figure looks like a diamond-studded ghost leaping into a void. Larry Johnson describes his reaction to the film: "A lot of us worked doing freelance film work, doing things like rotoscoping, and ink and paint, matte cutting. So we could see Jack Goldstein's films as examples of a certain kind of production. We talked about them in that way. What did we talk about in *The Jump* except its relationship to how it was produced. It doesn't seem to exist outside of that production."[22]

Richard Serra admired the films of Eisenstein

because "They were the first films I saw that connected with that working experience [working in the mills]."[23] The attraction in Goldstein's film was also partly based on the audience's feeling of connection. Mike Kelley explains: "I really liked *The Jump* because he was doing a film special effect and nobody in the art world had really worked with film special effects. Of course, growing up in the sixties, anybody of my generation would have a huge investment in a film's special effects. It would be almost like the height of beauty and nobody in the artworld had worked with that. I was glad that we could finally start to look at the culture that we grew up in, that means something to us, and that someone was going to try to do something with that. That was refreshing."[24]

The Jump was Goldstein's last film. Switching to painting was a fairly easy decision since, as Goldstein tells it, he had no choice. "I saw the writing on the wall. Galleries were coming back again. The alternative spaces were, for the most part, over. At the time [1979], I was teaching at the University of Hartford together with David Salle. One day we pulled into the parking lot and David said, 'Jack, I'm quitting. Annina, Larry Gagosian and Bruno Bischofberger are buying my work, and I'm now going to spend seven days a week in the studio. I'm involved in painting.' I went gulp, and boom, I had to make paintings quick. The writing was on the wall. I started to see it on the wall anyway but he set the pace. I didn't want to be this guy who did performances and films when all these other guys were painters. It was a difficult thing to go back to painting. There were ten years of no painting. If you look at the end of the seventies, there was Frank Stella. What was there possible to do?"[25]

Goldstein solved the problem by a making a decision that wasn't surprising given the focus of his earlier work. He decided to make paintings of phenomena, usu-

ally the phenomenon of light, which would always be based on information from factual sources. It was a singular decision that made all subsequent determinations a matter of procedure. The paintings, like the films, were directed by Goldstein but executed for the most part by assistants. Goldstein painted according to a clearly defined strategy, but Goldstein's strategies didn't overwhelm the effect. The work of other Post-Conceptual painters like Matt Mullican, Thomas Lawson, and Troy Brauntuch could be lauded as "intelligent" and "thought-provoking." The most common adjectives applied to Goldstein's work were "spectacular" and "gorgeous." Of course, some critics saw complex philosophical issues at play, but what really sold the work was that, as paintings go, they were total knockouts.

A group of the paintings from the early 1980s were black-and-white acrylics based on images from war. They are images from the Second World War, to be precise, but few felt that was really important. As Goldstein said, the idea was to blow everyone else off the wall. It worked pretty well. The focus of most criticism avoided the subject matter of the pictures and focused on the fact that the paintings were beautiful.

Goldstein surprised the audience by making "real" paintings. Mike Kelley summarizes a common sentiment: "World War II imagery? What does it mean? Now? It means nothing. I just saw a certain way of using airbrush to produce light effects. It's just an effect to produce beautiful silhouettes and splashy lights. The thing about it was, the paintings were really beautiful. He was actually good at it."[26]

Goldstein surprised people by making "real" paintings, and the paintings became more like painting as time went by. By that I mean they became increasingly hermetic, self-contained, and interestingly more colorful,

as the distance from the factual source of the picture got more and more attenuated. Goldstein says the later works were based on images of body heat; critic Ronald Jones describes them as excerpts from computer generated specters.[27] Either way, the alleged presence seemed to be slipping from sight. The ghost was slipping back into its grave.

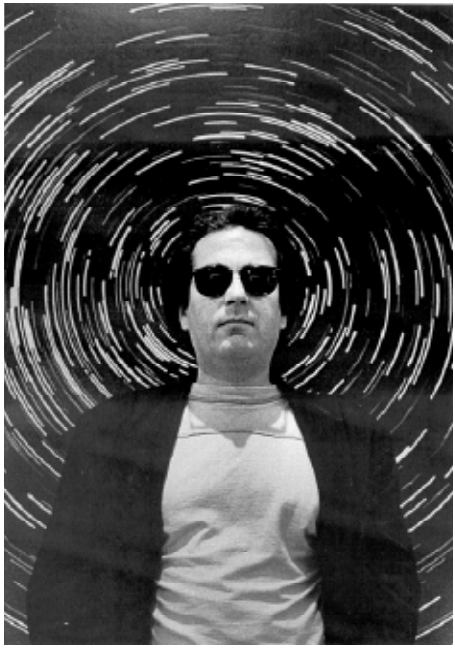
●

Notes

This article was first published in *Artext,* Los Angeles, number 75, November 2001–January 2002.

1. Conversation with Jack Goldstein, May 2001.
2. Jean Fisher, "Feuer/Korper/Licht," in *Goldstein* (Erlangen, Germany: Stadtische Galerie Erlangen, 1985).
3. Goldstein, May 2001.
4. Conversation with John Baldessari, July 2001.
5. Conversation with Jim Welling, July 2001.
6. Morgan Fisher, "Talking with Jack Goldstein," Laica *Journal* 4 (April–May 1977).
7. See Goldstein's *Two Wrestling Cats,* 1976, 45 rpm record, yellow vinyl; and *The Tornado,* 1976, 45 rpm record, purple vinyl.
8. Jack Goldstein, "Two Boxers," in *Portfolio of Performances* (1976–1985/2001); silk-screened text and color photograph mounted on paper (Los Angeles: 1301PE/Brain Multiples, 2001).
9. Carl Andre, as quoted by Anna C. Chave in "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power," in *Art in Modern Culture,* ed. Francis Frascina and Jonathan Harris (London: Phaidon, 1992).

10. David Salle, "Jack Goldstein: Distance Equals Control," in *Jack Goldstein* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Hallwalls,1978).
11. Goldstein, May 2001.
12. Ibid.
13. Conversation with Morgan Fisher, July 2001.
14. Conversation with James Welling, July 2001.
15. The rumor likely started when Goldstein claimed, "I put white make-up on him," meaning the dog. Fisher 1977.
16. Goldstein, May 2001.
17. Annette Michelson, Richard Serra, and Clara Weyergraf, "The Films of Richard Serra: An Interview," *October* 10, fall 1979.
18. Goldstein, May, 2001.
19. Michelson, Serra, Weyergraf 1979.
20. Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *October* 8, spring 1979.
21. Richard Serra "The Yale Lecture," in *Art in Theory 1900–1990* ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).
22. Conversation with Larry Johnson, July 2001.
23. Michelson, Serra, Weyergraf 1979.
24. Conversation with Mike Kelley, July 2001.
25. Goldstein, May 2001.
26. Kelley, July 2001.
27. Ronald Jones, "A Witness Can Be Trusted To Never Tell the Truth," in *Jack Goldstein* (New York: John Weber Gallery 1987).



Jack, Edinburgh, 1988

AS LONG AS IT REMAINS DISSEMINATED - SENDING OUT, REPRODUCING ITSELF, I CAN GO ON, I CAN CONTINUE TO PRODUCE DEFERRALS AND EFFECTS
''what is absent is spoken, and even written, rendering what's absent present"

"A ghost who refuses to play dead;

Extract from *Selected Writings* by Jack Goldstein

Index

Z

Designer: Joe Molloy; mondotypo@earthlink.net

Typesetter: Mondo Typo, Inc., Los Angeles

Type composed in Univers fonts

Printed in an edition of 2,000 by Asia Pacific Offset, Inc.

Jack, Los Angeles, 2002