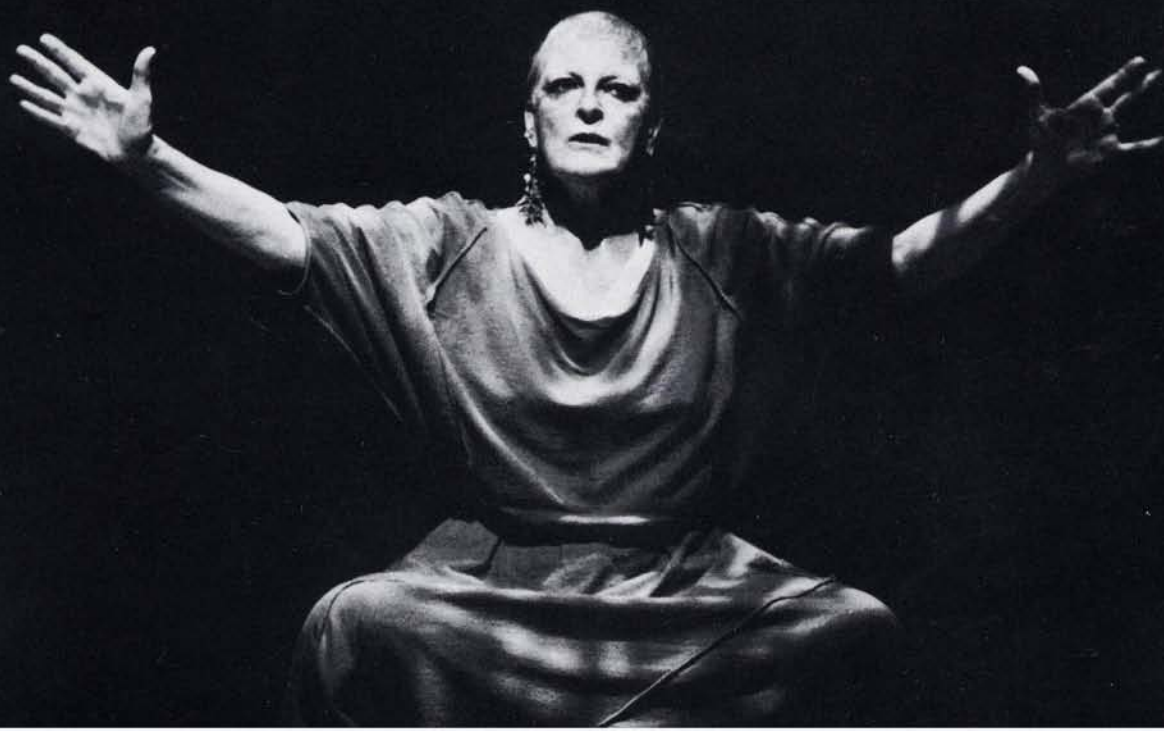


Gaia, Mon Amour

***a performance by
Rachel Rosenthal***



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GAIA, MON AMOUR

A Performance by Rachel Rosenthal

THIS PERFORMANCE IS DEDICATED TO THE EARTH

Set: Upstage Right: an old rocking chair, a beat-up ladder, a floor lamp without a shade or bulb, stacked together as though they had fallen. A box of kitchen matches.

Upstage Left: a pile of garbage, concealing a three-way frame, 7' x 3', painted black.

Upstage near the wall: a black meditation cushion and a drum, three joss sticks.

Downstage Right: what seems to be a prone figure covered with a black shroud, and just downstage of that and parallel to it, two long bamboo poles, one green, the other painted black, on the floor.

A djellaba hangs on a nail on the Left wall.

ROSENTHAL'S Costume: a red dress, black pants, green socks, black wrestling booties, lots of earrings.

BLACKOUT

SLIDE: a mauve Tantric triangle (symbol of the Goddess) and "To Her" written under it.

SOUND: three gongs.

SLIDE: "Journeys into space did more than present the Earth in a new perspective. They also sent back information about its atmosphere and its surface which provided a new insight into the interactions between the living and the inorganic parts of the planet. From this has arisen the hypothesis, the model, in which Earth's living matter, oceans, and land surface form a complex system which can be seen as a single organism and which has the capacity to keep our planet a fit place for life."

— J. E. Lovelock

SLIDE: a dead ant with a fungus sticking out of its neck.

VOICEOVER: This ant was killed by a fungus. In her death throes, she bites a leaf, lashing out at anything within reach, because of the agony within her. With its host dead, the parasite emerges triumphant, from the ant's neck. But its triumph will be short-lived: a successful parasite never kills its host. This fungus is done-for.

VOICEOVER (spoken by JAMES AVERY, with drumming by ROSENTHAL):

Gaia Gaia Gaia Gaia
Planet Nature Mother Earth
Better shape up better snap shit
be real good and be a sport

We can kill you we can do it
stop you dead in your tracks
We're the masters we can do it
and who needs you Mother Earth
If you fail us we can leave you
in a capsule in a dome
Up way up there in the starlight
where there are no tides or seasons
night or day or hot or cold
We can do it we can leave you
so snap shit Earth is that clear?

Bear the brunt grin and bear it
when we rape you Mother Earth
Learn to love it Don't fight back
We've got sky gods so who needs you
We've got heaven everlasting
He's our father not you Mother
We will conquer even Death!

But don't punish us you Mother
when we're naughty when we're bad
Don't you tremble and turn tables
or send lava sand or stones
Don rain blood or salt or acid
Don't erupt or spew up steam
Clean up your act when we befoul you
kill your ozone fuck your genes
Dont stop raining when rain forests
are no more Don't stop feeding
us with fishes when the sea-chain
has been snipped Who needs micro-
organisms they're so small and
we're so big We don't need you
We don't love you You're our Mother
mothers suck We're the Earth gods
we're the sky gods we look upward
to the stars.

But don't fuck us we still need you
don't act up or try to punish
We can strip and cut and maim you
We can masectomize you
So lay back open your legs
or we'll blast you so watch out

We'll chop your tree down Evolution
No mutations no more beasts
We're the only ones deserving
to exist on Mother Gaia
We can do it we can do it
So watch out you Mother Earth
Just be good to us keep giving
Give give give give give give give
Give give give give till it hurts

Love ya Reagan love ya Watt
We love big pricks MX missiles
we love silos we love bombs
We love handguns Kill your neighbor!
We love radioactive waste
Who needs lions wolves and hippos
Who needs you orangutans?
Can we eat you can we wear you
Do you have ivory or musk?
Let's get them now let's get them all
We won't be here in the morning
Let's have cake and eat it too

Stop whining Gaia stop your crying
and don't dare put up a fuss
We're the masters we can do it
so roll over and play dead
Kill the Mother kill the Goddess
Gaia's dead long live the sky
Gaia's cold and dry and shrivelled
The shuttle goes one-way to Mars
Mars is our god red and warring
we don't give a shit for Earth
All that blue and green and water
That's too sissy that's too soft
We love power we love violence
When we march it's Earth beware!
We can do it we can do it
We're the masters so beware
Just look at us the test-tube babies
don't need mothers don't need wombs
We can do it purely phallic
We can cut and slash and burn
Can renege on every treaty
so we can skin the Indian lands
flay live seals for their "fun furs"
and torture animals in labs
Deploy the Cruise our love-boat
brandish swords talking won't do
We've got the faith they're the Devil

We can blast 'em to kingdom come
If nothing ever grows again
we know we're right and that's what counts
We are egos we are heroes
and we die for our beliefs
Funny no-one's left to witness
Not as much fun anymore But

we can do it we can do it
for we are the Master Race
So shut up Gaia shut up Mother
or we'll plug you in the face
Stop that whimper or we'll mace you
for we are the Master Race!

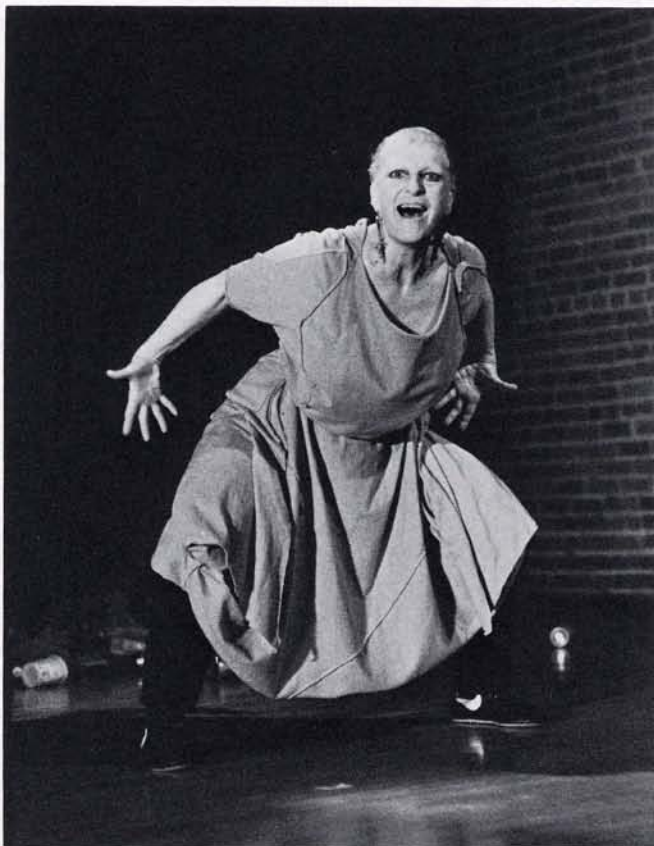
During this speech, SLIDES are shown of war toys and atrocities committed against animals, people and the Earth.

Prolonged SOUND of the Bomb. It's a nuclear holocaust. BLACKOUT.

SILENCE AND BLACKOUT

SOUND of a Geiger counter gradually drowned out by flies.

LIGHT up on the garbage pile. ROSENTHAL emerges from under it, fighting a swarm of flies. Finally only one is left. She swats it. SILENCE. She rises, scratches and cleans herself. She turns around. She's wearing a clown



nose. She adopts a few fighting stances, notices that she is alone, sees the garbage and dives in to find food. There's little. Mostly dog food. She's disgusted.

"What a dump!"

ROSENTHAL walks around, observing the space. Notices the "body".

"Tread softly here . . . Whisper in corners."

She picks up an old beat-up tire and some dead branches from the garbage, goes to the "body".

"Deposit a wreath, a basket of nasturtium and clematis, a stone."

She puts it all on the "body", takes a stone out of her pocket, and deposits it too.

"Is this a cemetery or a hospital? Is it a morgue? There is pathology here, but (sniffs) no: not yet death. Death, however, is what it's all about, you know . . .

We're always talking about Death. We're walking death-tapes. You know . . .

Death. Since — oh — a long time ago. Since — you remember — the Fall? Death travels on our shoulder like a parrot. Old Thanatos . . . "

SLIDE: "The human condition is the fallen condition of time and fragmentation."

— William Irwin Thompson

"And it's hard sometimes to know if Death has capped pathology for the smell of dying is always in our nostrils. Is she dead? (referring to the "body")

There was no tolling, no keening, no extreme unction, no pyre . . . Perhaps the whole thing is just being postponed.

Anyway, I brought some flowers. Nothing much. Just a little something to mark the spot."

ROSENTHAL sets the branches on the "body". Sits.

She opens wide her eyes and suddenly falls asleep. She wakes up with a start.

"What's the matter with me? The Unthinkable! You stub your toe on it and then you go OUT! Funny how you can't *think* it but you can *do* it. Performance SI, conception NO."

SLIDE: "Gigantic, insane crimes are not prevented from occurring because they are unthinkable."

— Jonathan Schell

"I must try not to go unconscious. See if I can tidy up a bit. Woman's work is never done."

She feels the "body".

"Ech! Look at that! Limp. Clammy. Feverish. What's the matter? Can't you pull yourself together? God I hate victims!"

She smacks the "body" with a branch.

"Come on, do something . . . Fight back! Don't take this lying down! — Cliches sometimes work — Nothing. That pisses me off! DON'T DIE, MOTHER! I was so angry I was breaking my bones. (Breaks the twig with a snap with each "rage".) RAGE! Now the little finger! RRAGE!! Now the big toe! RRRAGE!!! And now the rib! Rage shmage. She dies anyway. And even then I couldn't kill her."

She takes off the clown nose.

"Shit. I got off the track . . . "

She tries to go back a few lines but fails.

"I think I better start over again. Stick to the topic. Please bear with me . . . (Ad libs like: Damn deconstruction . . . !)
(To the crew) Sorry guys, let's take it from the blackout!"

She goes to lie down next to the garbage, places a paper on her face. BLACKOUT.

SOUND: a shorter version of the Bomb and of the Silence. Geiger counter goes right into the sound of Whales, with chanting by ROSENTHAL. She gets up on all fours and crawls through the garbage and down Left where she stands and makes movements that suggest a series of animals during the GAIA speech. Behind her are a series of slides of Paleolithic and Neolithic Goddesses, and of stone arrangements by ROSENTHAL, reminiscent, or in the spirit, of each sculpture.

"You know me. I'm the One you haven't named. I'm the One you've never bothered to name. You've named all the others, and you capitalize them. Yes. a capital V, a capital M, a capital J . . . But Me, it's a small e and I'm synonymous with dirt. When you say 'soiled' you mean filthy. You mean besmirched. Do you hear that? Do you hear the enormity of that?"

earth. with a small e.

I, the first and most powerful of the Gods.

Even after you saw my loveliness from up there . . . my comely blues, my wisps of clouds, the generosity of my life-giving waters . . . Even then you didn't name me.

I had a name once.

In this culture's genesis I was Gaia.

I engendered the Sky, Ouranos, and married my Son.

And my Sky inseminates me continually.

I brought forth the Titans and the dreaded Monsters.

I am a cosmic body born out of cataclysm and catastrophe.

I was seeded and, alone among the Bodies, was willing.

I nurtured the seed in my awesome womb. Through fire and solar wind, through the abomination of oxygen, through the invention of sex and death.

Through it all with one obsession, one dynamic, one action, one prayer: to succeed in sustaining Life!

I don't emit light. But I eat it, and with that food, I create. I am an entity. A self-regulating cybernetic system.

All of my biota, plants, fish, micro-organisms, bees, and even you, all work unwittingly together to sustain optimum conditions for all life on my Body.

Even the flow of rivers, the tides and the weather all contribute to maximize my metabolism.

I am the Matrix.

You are in and of my Body.

I am the Mother

I am the Daughter.

I am the Lover.

But scorned, I am also Lilith, the Maid of Desolation. And I dance in the ruins of cities."

ROSENTHAL puts on the clown nose again.

"Oooooo! Females! They're intolerable. Exasperating! Aren't they? They don't just end like normal human beings. No. They're cyclical! You know, menses, the moon, the tides . . . The Eternal Return . . . All that stuff. They're circular. Uroboric. They talk in circles, they make round things, they're soft and spherical. They remind us of something . . ."

She goes through some Kung Fu moves. With each one, a SLIDE flashes. They are of the most horrendous symbols of the Feminine: gaping mouths of snakes, holes, volcanoes, etc. . . .

"Anyway. Mothers are the worst.

You all know about mothers. Your own, other people's . . . They are DE-VOUR-ING. Right? They just don't know when to quit that nurturing shit. Or else they don't nurture enough. Too much tit, not enough tit. Mother are always wrong.

Take mine, for instance. Never there when I really needed her, when I was born, and stored upstairs on the third floor with a crazy nanny while Mother was busy being beautiful on the first two floors. (ROSENTHAL is eating a picnic from the trash on the floor.) Then when the Paris life was no more, 'snatched into oblivion like Eurydice,

suddenly Mother noticed she had a child. But I was *thirteen!* I needed my body. I needed my femaleness and seductiveness to live through it all. But this she amputated. Chopped off my sexuality and, with the kind of magic only mothers know, she turned me back into a little baby and kept me thus, like Snow White in her crystal coffin, for one hundred years!

Oh boy! I am deeply injured. 'Une grande blessée' . . . (she rocks, hugging a pile of garbage). I am mutilated. I despise my body. In French, injury is the word for insult: 'injure'. I am insulted. I am self-insulted. I spit on myself. How can I restitute the dead woman inside?"

She stands.

"Mothers. The KILLERS!"

ROSENTHAL sings a little song as SLIDES of the Devouring Goddess are projected:

"In the mouth
of a lioness
I travelled once

Sitting comfy on her tongue
as on a cushioned sofa

Through the porthole
between her teeth
rushed the world
past the teeth past my eyes past my exhilaration

All that time I knew
that behind the cushion
the soft tongue
the warm tongue
was a gaping hole
hot abyss
dark inviting gaping black hole
to engulf me

Swallowed up
broken down by enzymes
muscled downward for digestion
for malaxating stomach
for the end of me

Mothers demand the dissolution of the Self!

God, look what happened. You know, when Mothers reigned, in the ancient days of the Goddess, of the first sense of Time? Time to grow things and the blood needed to ensure that growth . . . They were there. With their blood, their power, their smugness. They knew it all. And the men?

Joseph Campbell says they were one jot away from insignificance! Hee hee!
The women initiated everything we are and have become.

I'll give you an example. Take estrus, for instance. Remember estrus? Way back when we were groping our way through Eden? Ramapithecus boys hunting together, paying attention only when the female backside grew pink and inviting? Well, we changed all *that*! We became pink and inviting *all* the time.
And the guys had to (by golly) shape up, grow bigger cocks, fuck facing, fight among themselves to show off, PAY ATTENTION!

All the time.

Time was eroticized.

And the males stayed close and thus were the babies protected.

And thus were the males bound, no longer free, bonded to each other — but enfolded into a new social structure.
Ta-dah!

We did it to them.



Ah, the nostalgia of the free roving bands! Boys together. Guzzling beer, smoking cigars, bagging a Thompson gazelle . . . No more! SLAVES OF A PIECE OF ASS!

It didn't happen all at once, you know, but probably more like menopause. On and off. Now you see it now you don't. Will she or won't she. Keep 'em guessing. Kept them close. Kept them crazed with sex! All the time. None of the time. Some of the time. Like Skinner's poor pigeons.

Finally, when sex was there always, available, ubiquitous, how did it go? Did it mean power for one or the other? Rape? Or both? Just like now?
Did it mean love?

Shift from estrus. A revolution. The women did that!"

ROSENTHAL goes to the "body".

"Hey, how ya doin'? Need your bed pan?

She's not as sick as she says. They're always laying it on . . . Okay. Estrus. I'll give you another. (Picks up the broom to sweep. Gestures with the broom.) We won't even speak about medicine. That's old hat. Herb wisdom and all that . . . BUT WHAT ABOUT ASTRONOMY!"

SLIDE: line drawing of hands doing the Yoni Mudra.

"We all know that women in dorms all have their periods at the same time. You can bet your bottom dollar that women in small bands of gatherer-hunters did too, and that it was entrained on the Moon. Bleeding all together now, to the light of the silvery Moon! What a roundelay! Oh yeah.

You know what those witches did? They got a stick. And every time they bled to the Moon, they notched the stick! So much for 'bâtons de commandement'!

From that to observing the heavens, to counting Suns and Moons . . . From that to inventing the Calendar . . . a skip and a jump!

And who would benefit from such an artifact? The men don't need a calendar. They watch the reindeer go by and track them. But the women *keep track* . . . of the seasons, for plants and the time of birthing . . . of weather cycles, for moving and setting up camp. They can count, probably before they can speak. Those bitches know it all.



But they ain't talkin'!

Goddess! They know how babies are made long before the guys. And they ain't talkin'!

And one day they discovered cereals (shows a box of cereal from the trash pile in TV commercial style). And then they invented pottery to store the grain (same business with a can). And then the men had to defend the stores. And from defense to raiding other people's grain stores, a skip and a jump. And Bam! Warfare! The women invented agriculture and the men invented war. And from defending the women to defending *their* women, also a skip and a jump."

ROSENTHAL picks up the bed pan.

"Well looky here! Nice shit!"

She takes off the clown nose.

"Good girl!"

She holds the bed pan with one hand and sifts the earth it contains with the other.

"Shit. Pee. Entrails. Blood. Dark, wet humid things. Goopy and clammy. Marshlands. Bogs. Caves. Places to sink into. To get trapped in. Labyrinthian deaths. The EARTH! With its maws. Its chasms. Its maggots. Its seductive surfaces to drown in. Its forests with no landmarks, no signposts, in which to lose oneself, far from camp. The Wilderness that we prodigal daughters and sons seek to return to, yet we keep going forward never to turn back.

SHE knows these things. And more.

The magic of lifting a limp cock. How does she do it?

And the tremors of pleasure. The erection of stones in the middle of the plain. And the geyser of love. And the prestidigitation of bringing forth new life!

She knows. She does. She must be pleased. She MUST be placated!

Mother. You will never know how much I've hated you (caresses the "body"). All you will feel is a vague uneasiness. A sense of mild dread.

Instead there are presents: a new carpet, a big party, a dog. You will not hear the howling.

But you are ill at ease. You must be placated. You must be made happy. Comfortable.

Another pillow?"

ROSENTHAL places the bed pan under the black shroud, near the "head".

"You must be made to feel loved. You mustn't say that you want to die. That it's all my fault. I will set myself on fire. Yes. Over the kitchen stove. With all my broken bones. I will howl. But you won't hear it.

Oh Mother!

Oh Gaia.

Did you have to demand blood?"

ROSENTHAL lifts the shroud off the "body". The figure is sculpted from earth. The head, breasts and stomach are fashioned with human skulls. She unearths each skull as she addresses the Goddesses.

"Yes, you old Baba-Yaga! I remember you! And you, Turandot! And Kali the Murderous. And you, Ereshkigal! Vampires, one and all.

Feeding on blood to make new blood. Law of nature, right? But who was the literal-minded schmuck who was into 'playing out'?"

She stands and walks backward diagonally toward the garbage pile.

"Yes. The Moon is buried three days and then pops out again. Yes. The grain sleeps in the sod and greens out the following Spring. Yes, yes. That's science, metaphysics. STORIES.

Okay.

But the real blood?

The dismemberments, the flayings, the cannibalism (she punctuates each word by throwing some garbage at the figure and skulls), the sex that turns sticky red in its own ritual blood epiphany? And the potlatches of live burials, of beast butcheries without count, of chopped balls, of split cocks, of split stallions?

Yech.

Collective madness. Folie a deux. A trois, A mille . . .

No one gets it . . . the esoteric teaching. Too subtle. Like high art. Instead, literal blood ritual. Norman Rockwell of the Neolithic.

Someone fucked up. Who? The girls? The boys? Both? Excès de zèle. Mother must be content at all cost or SHE'LL TURN OFF THE TIT.

Shit. People. People. All the people. They always put their foot in it, you know.

Gaia."

SLIDE: ROSENTHAL'S Mother at the time of her birth. A very beautiful young woman.

ROSENTHAL goes to the slide and hugs the wall, her back to the audience.



"It took me five decades to realize she was mortal and made boo-boos. And to accept not loving her. And to weep no more."

She turns around. She begins to arrange the furniture Upstage Left, and makes a cozy corner.

SOUND: a Bach fugue that is eventually drowned out by a Geiger counter.

"Well. That's more like it. I like things to be neat and tidy. Clean. To know where everything is. Now I can relax."

She sits and rocks. She lights a candle that is stuck in the bulb socket. She looks at the audience pleasantly.

"Tell me something. What makes you feel content?

A good book? A full stomach? A-1 sex? All of the above? None?

Don't tell me. I know.

Everybody should love us.

We should always be young. And thin. And we should have a lot of hair.

Then we can shave it off.

We should be successful. And have a lot of pretty things. And we should lay them out so people can see them and feel envious. We should be happy. Like this. Like this little moment. Forever. In other words, we should be omnipotent, immortal, eternal, and cosmocentric.

Yes. Omnipotent, immortal, eternal and cosmocentric."

ROSENTHAL suddenly takes a meditative stance, closes her eyes, and chants like a Mantra.

"OMNIPOTENTIMMORTALETERNALCOSMOCENTRIC . . ."

She trails off and falls asleep.

SLIDES, accompanying the SOUND, depict a cozy room in a house, the house seen from outside, a suburban neighborhood of homes and swimming pools shot from a helicopter, a shot of the city from an airplane, a photo of the coast from a satellite, several views of Earth from further and further into space, a view of the earth from the Moon, a closeup of the Moon, several shots of stars, nebulae, clusters and galaxies, finally a slide of a time exposure of the North Star, with the other stars forming concentric circles around it. This slide dissolves into a quote:

"The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophies."

— Albert Einstein



SOUND: (to the slides) whales, chanting, drumming, and VOICEOVER by ROSENTHAL as Gaia:

"I created a cozy place. I adorned myself in myriad ways. And I provided. My children were shielded from the terrors of the Cosmos.

Because I knew.

The most devastating of Monsters I locked in an inaccessible place: the nucleus of matter, guarded by the Herculean Strong Force.

And for eons the secret was kept.

That power, the cosmic power that creates and kills the stars, has no business here in My realm.

Gaia is not a star.

I am a planet. I am a home. You can live your lives here. You can make your children here. You can die and be reborn here. You can go on here. This is a safe place for these things to occur. And this is the *only* place.

I am not a star.

The power that has been pried out of the nucleus of matter is STAR POWER.

It can lash out in Sun flares. It can fuel a supernova. It can beam out a quasar. But it is inappropriate here, over my meadows, irradiating my deserts, exploding my oceans.

It has no business eradicating my cities and annihilating my children, human or not.

This, the greatest of all powers, the One before the Gods, the terrifying, all-devouring CHAOS!

Even if we survive this terrible knowledge, we will never be the same.

We have come of age. The Age of Chaos!"

After the Einstein SLIDE, ROSENTHAL wakes up as if from a nightmare, screaming. She careens about the space, finally falling Center.

"Oh how it hurts to be here and to know as I do that I fell, and to dimly remember Bliss, and to yearn for it! The One, the All, the Being who is Non-Dying."

SLIDE: "Man cut the umbilical cord to the Great Mother with a sword, and the sword has been hanging over his head ever since."

— William Irwin Thompson

ROSENTHAL gets up, goes to the djellaba on the wall and puts it on. Then she goes to the pile of garbage, picks up the three-way screen, and sets it Down Left, like a booth. She steps in it, holds the front of the screens, and becomes the MOON BULL.

"When I was a young boy, my Mother made me watch the immolation of the Year King. It was a great feast and everybody came out for it. There was no toil that day. The town was unrecognizable. Decked out with banners, poles covered with vines and flowers, the women wearing all their gold and precious stones, their hair free, even the old ones. It smelled of burned offerings, sweet spices, and cooked flesh. I watched the procession. The King was resplendent. A beautiful man. He was very young, barely older than I was. He had mounted the Queen for a year and the people knew him well. He was the son of one of the Mothers of the Circle. He had been



chosen, they said, because of her influence with the Queen. What an honor! I envied him all year and wondered if I too might be chosen when I grew up. He no longer had a name. He became the Moon Bull like all the other Moon Bulls before him. I watched, one of a huge crowd, just outside town where the sacred platform had been erected on a small height. The Moon Bull had spent the night in the Temple, purifying himself. When the procession stopped at the platform and he climbed the steps, a huge howl went up from the crowd. I couldn't tell whether it meant pain or desire. I found myself yelling too and my spine trembled in anticipation. It was noon. The shortest day of the year. It was the Great Death Day. I and everyone knew the seriousness of the event. If the Moon Bull failed to perform the rite correctly we would all starve, for the angry Goddess would withhold her bounty, the Earth Mother would squeeze tight her thighs and refuse to release the next year's growth. The Moon Bull slowly took off his crown, his cloak, all the attributes of kingship, and made the last ablutions and salutations. The crowd was silent. You could smell the sweat. The Moon Bull took everything off. He was completely naked, down to his organs. The precious organs of his service to the Queen. He sat cross-legged on a mat. Before him were many knives: many because they had to remain sharp. The crowd began to moan softly and rhythmically as the young King raised one of the knives and made the Goddess sign over it. He then proceeded to cut pieces of himself and to throw them around the platform, down into the crowd. His penis, his testicles, his nose, ears, fingers. Every time he cut, the roar went up, the rhythmic sound grew faster, and the people fought to catch and grab the pieces. There were flies all over him and some of the blood gushed, and some of the blood caked. The cymbals, the horns and the yelling were deafening. The Moon Bull was like a piece of shapeless butchery meat and was still carving. Finally, he began to keel over, but straightened himself one last time and, with obvious effort, slit his throat. The howl went up to the sky. I reeled. The smell of blood, the heat, the screaming, the rhythm of the instruments, made me lose my sense of being. But worst of all, I felt guilt. Guilt because, as I watched, I realized to my horror that I had wanted to stop all that, to run and climb up on the platform, and throw away the knives, and pull my cloak over the beautiful body of the Year King and save him from this dreadful fate. I couldn't understand it. How could I have felt that way? How could I not have put the guilt of cutting the Earth with a plow first and foremost in my heart, as the sole, the original guilt, only to be lifted and the sin cleansed by the willing sacrifice of the King? I looked at the King, and instead of seeing the fertile and bountiful flesh that would insure my people's survival for yet another year, I saw a man. A particular man. I called him by his name — not the sacred name of the anonymous and faceless parade of Year Kings, but *his* name. The name that made him a person. A person like myself. Like the separate and distinct person that I am. What is this I feel, and what abominations will this feeling precipitate? For I, Sacred Moon Bull of this Year of the Scorpion, am the first King who will refuse to die."

ROSENTHAL replaces the frame against the Left wall. She drops the djellaba on the floor.

SOUND: drums getting closer, guns, rockets, war.

She looks off-stage Right, runs to the ladder, picks up field glasses and climbs up the ladder as she begins to speak.

"They're forming battalions.

The Chthonic Mothers under the red and black banners. The sons, armed with their brand new, sharpened egos, under the sky-blue flags. The Mothers shoot first. They have their dragon flame-throwers. The men are singing. The Mothers have brought out their Bestiary: the many-headed Hydras, the Kundalini Snakes, the straight-shooting Centaurs, the hundred-armed Hecatoncheires and the one-eyed Cyclops. The men are outnumbered. They'll be torn apart. But wait . . . The men are rallying. They advance in geometric progression. They are brandishing their Euclids and their Gödel-Escher-Bachs! They hack the Hydras' heads to pieces as they spout

theorems and subjunctive verbs! They are vivisecting Cerberus! They gaze up at the heavens as they trample the Mothers in their own blood like grapes in the wine vats. It's a rout! The Jericho trumpets are blaring. The army of young, polished bronze egos is firmly established and has consolidated and systematized. The Mothers can't rise again. A heavy grid has been dropped over them and they creep and crawl under the shining cities hardly glimpsing the light of day.

The ME generation is born, some time in the Neolithic."

SLIDE: *"Wherever there is Other there is Fear."*

— Ken Wilber

"When the smoke lifted, there were corpses strewn all over. The heroes had killed the Titans. But they had thrown out the babies with the bloodbath water. Everything connected to the dreaded and hated Great Mother was destroyed."

ROSENTHAL makes physical contact with various members of the audience.

"The Feminine chopped to bits.
Women subjugated.
Animals feared and despised.
Nature made hostage and exploited.
The body, cast off and put down.
The Goddess, eradicated.
The Earth turned into a foe to be vanquished
Blood sacrifice to the Great Mother became blood sacrifice of the Great Mother."

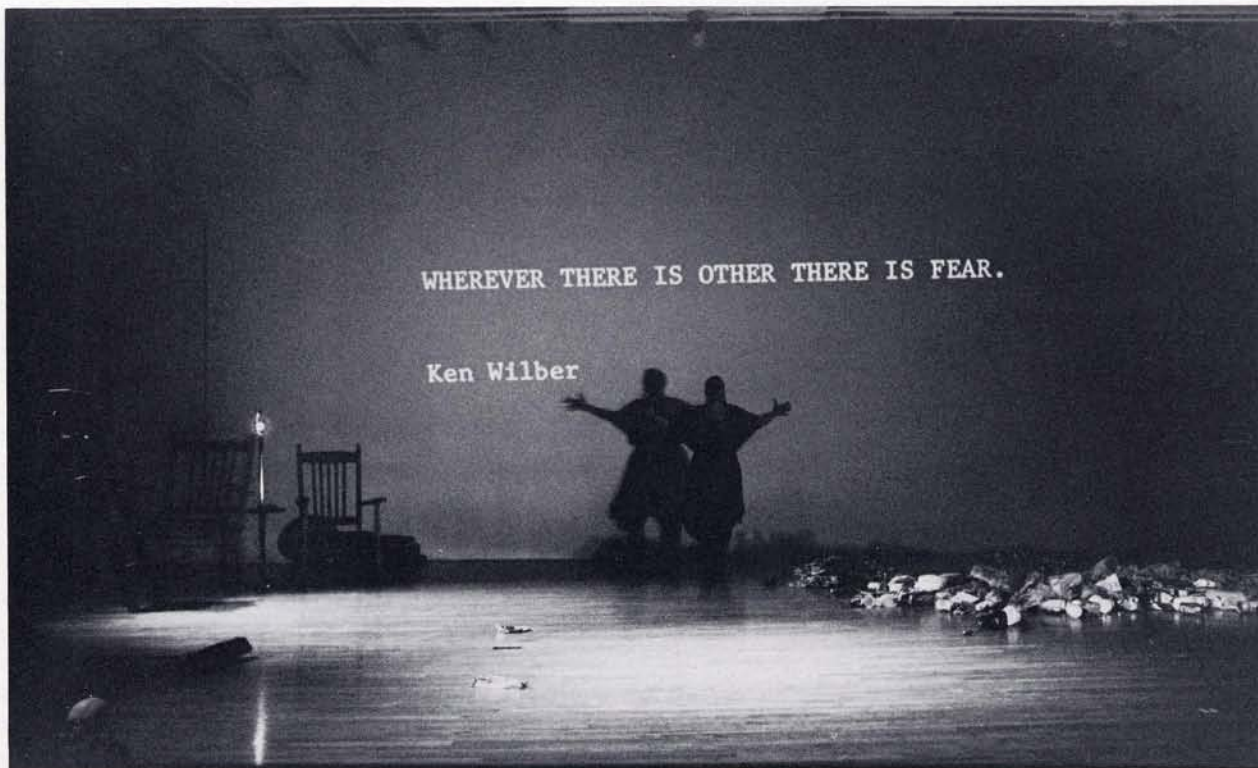
She walks backward to the Upstage wall.

"We were separate at last.

But it didn't stop them."

She comes forward again, and addresses the audience.

"The battle still rages.
We've been at war for thousands of years. There's never been a truce. The same campaign is fought over and over again. Only the weapons change. They become more lethal with each new bout.



WHEREVER THERE IS OTHER THERE IS FEAR.

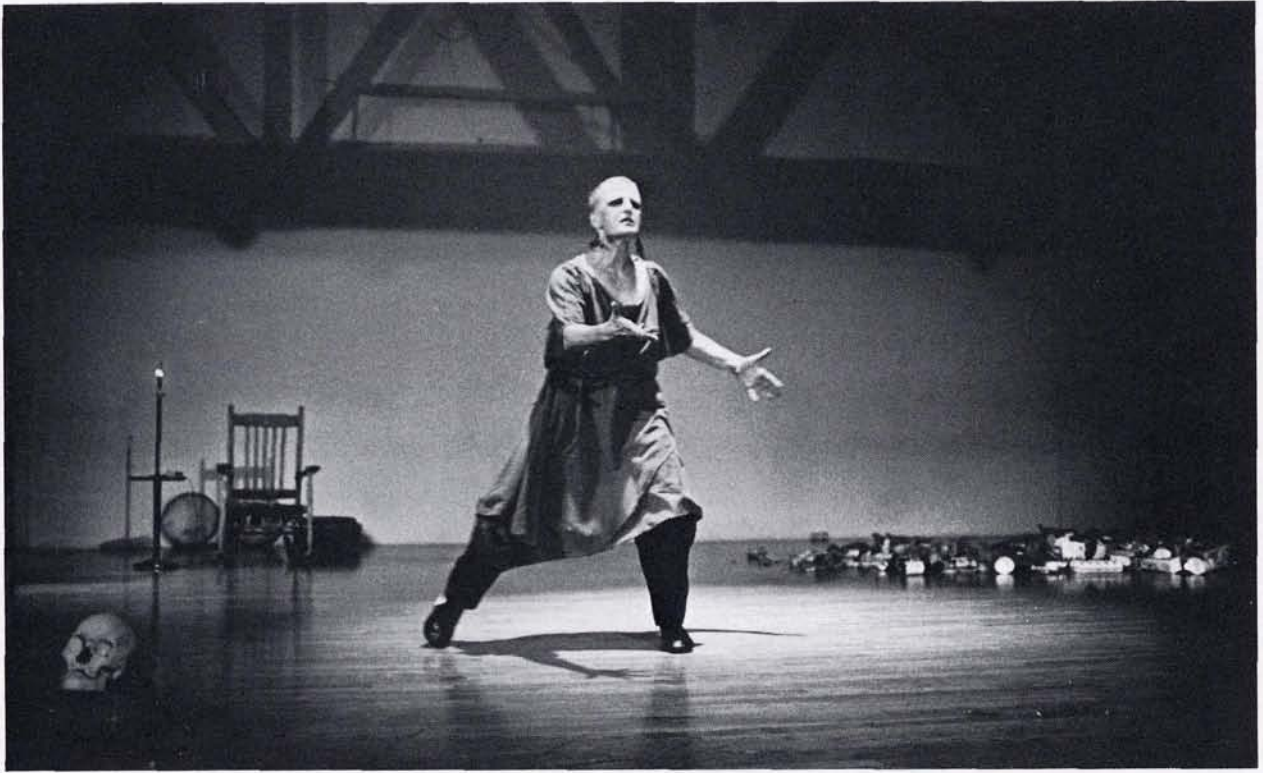
Ken Wilber

Enough! Enough!
 An end to holocausts!
 Stop raping, maiming, gouging!
 Revenge came long ago. We've killed a thousand times over — far more than an eye for an eye ...
 But we keep hitting.
 Evolution is as good as dead.
 Genetic material is disappearing at the rate of three extinctions a day!
 Soon only we and our cattle will be left.
 We are Gaia's parasites and we are killing our host.
 We will poach her to death if we don't blast her first ...
 What do we want? A dusty, pock-marked, sterile, dead world, like all the others?

Danger! Danger!
 Attention! Achtung! Astarozhno!

Oh God. I can't go back to Eden. Innocence, undifferentiation, bliss ...
 I've fallen with a thud. Rude awakening.
 I want *more* light, *more* life. More Eros!"

ROSENTHAL is by the "body" and skulls.



"I want closer to Oneness, to Allness, to Eternalness, to Voidness, to Samadhiness, to Atmanness . . ."

She has her back to the audience and tosses earth into the air with each name.

"But every time I chin myself a little closer, old Thanatos grins in my face."

She picks up the two bamboo poles with her back to the audience.

"Eros. Thanatos. The two coordinates. (She crosses them.) The crucifixion (turned toward the audience). Yin Yang wheel of torture (she makes a circle, holding the crossed bamboos, and places them in the center of the circle).

Sometimes I feel that all that holds me together is surface tension."

TWO SLIDES: "Lilith has returned. To effect a reconciliation with her, man must not seek to rape the feminine and keep it down under him. If he seeks to continue his domination of nature through genetic engineering and the repression of the spiritual, he will ensure that the only release from his delusions can come from destruction."

Lilith will dance in the ruins of Western civilization. But if man can accept initiation to see that Lilith is his long-lost primordial wife, then the energies of destruction can be transmuted and taken into the creative destructuring of the old civilization, the industrial civilization that humanity has already outgrown."

— William Irwin Thompson

During the projection of these slides, ROSENTHAL lights the joss sticks at the candle and places them in the earth. She then blows out the candle and brings the cushion and the drum forward and places them within the mandala of which the bamboos are the two axes. A light completes the mandala effect. She sits on the cushion and drums and chants while a series of SLIDES project views of the red rock formations from Arches National Park in Utah behind her. When the chanting and slides are over, ROSENTHAL puts down the drum.

SOUND: whale songs, chanting.

ROSENTHAL, still sitting, becomes GAIA again.

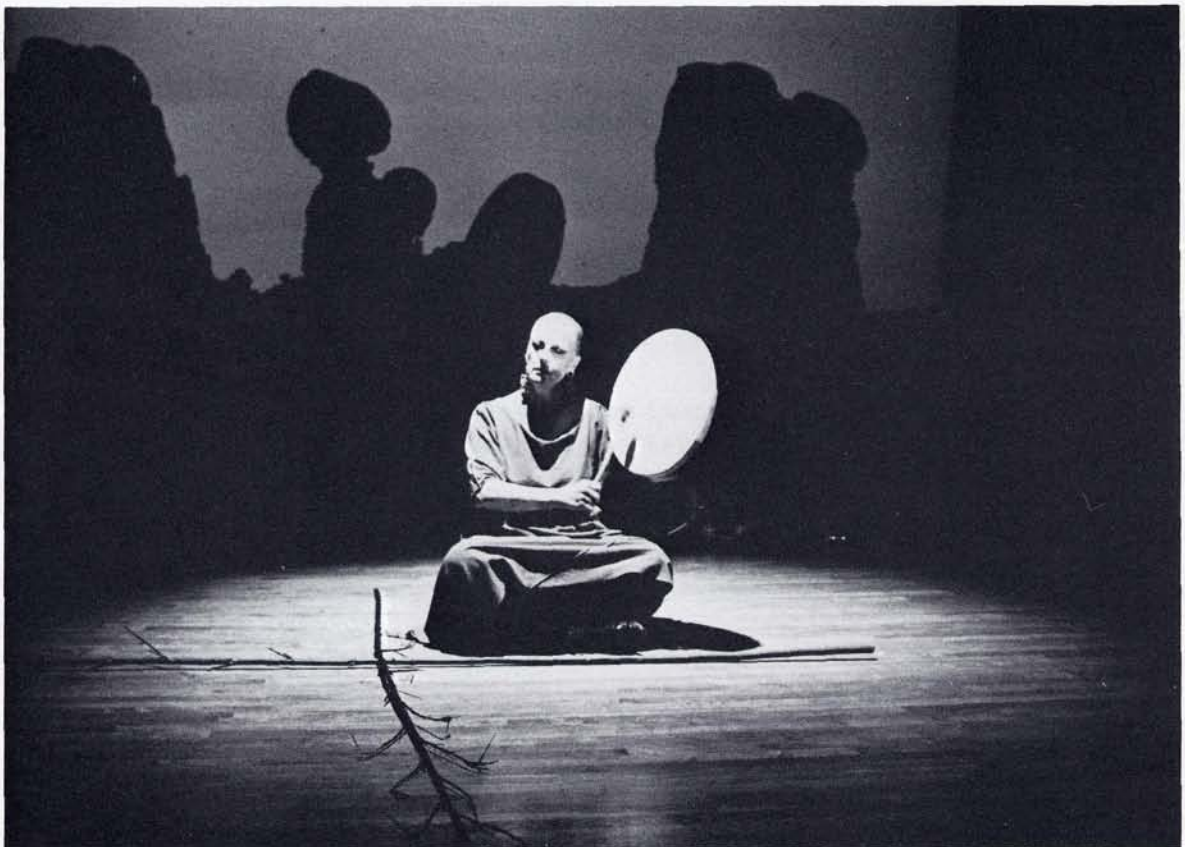
"I am sorry.

I tried.

I am sorry for you. I am sorry for me.

But then, it's the same thing, isn't it?

For now *you* have the power, and with the power, the responsibility. If you cripple me beyond repair, I will retreat back into the muds forever and you will find yourselves my masters at last. But you will be masters of a dead Spaceship Earth, and at the same its slaves. For you will need to put all your technological resources to work to maintain your life-supports, a task that I willingly performed for eons.



You do me violence but you hit blindly.

You don't know how to avoid my vital organs because you haven't discovered where they are. You are fighting a match that has no rules. There is no referee to stop you when you attack my liver, pummel my kidneys, puncture my lungs.

You ignore the warnings.

I howl but you do not hear.

And yet, the ultimate irony is this:

Willy-nilly you *have* reintegrated the Feminine.

For you yourselves are now in the role of the dreaded and hated Great Mother with all her powers of selection between Eros and Thanatos!

The choice is yours!

You have assumed the conscience of the Earth.

You who have moved so quickly, and who have altered me so radically in such a short time, must now make the greatest quantum leap of your species. You must learn, for your own survival, that to hurt me, Gaia, is to hurt yourselves. And to love me, Gaia, is to love yourselves. To observe Nature is the same as introspection. To revere her works is the same as self-respect.

To do violence to the Earth is like the hands of the body attacking its own throat.

Stop destroying me!

Stop thinking of yourselves as separate!

Stop believing that this is none of your concern!

I will howl and you will hear me!

Let your hands caress me. Let them soothe me and stroke me for there is healing in them and I am in need of healing. And in healing me you heal yourselves. For *you* are in need of healing.

Pet me and I will pet you.

Embrace me. It is the same as holding yourselves.

It is all ONE.

I am you.

YOU ARE GAIA NOW."

SLIDE: a Tantric mandala in blue and magenta, with the Goddess triangle in the center.

SOUND: the tape ends with three gongs, as in the beginning.

Slow fade of lights and projection.

RACHEL ROSENTHAL

Rachel Rosenthal was born in Paris on November 9, 1926, the daughter of a wealthy gem merchant. She grew up in a culturally rich environment. Her family's home was decorated with paintings by Chagall and Monet, and great musicians such as Menuhin and Horowitz performed in the living room. Her family left France during World War II and, after several months in Brazil, took up residency in New York where Rosenthal studied painting with Hans Hoffman, acting with Lee Strasberg, dance with Merce Cunningham and was introduced to Zen Buddhism by friends John Cage and Alan Watts.

In 1956, Rosenthal moved to Los Angeles and founded the Instant Theater, an ensemble company which combined Zen Buddhism, chance/improvisation, Artaudian cruelty and "arte povera" techniques in an effort to synthesize the spontaneity of collective ritual with the discipline of modern dance, abstract art, and poetry.

In 1975, after several years of directing plays (including an offshoot of the Instant Theater for young people called Instant Fairy Tales), acting in film and television, as well as producing a body of sculptural work and participating in the founding of the Women's Art Movement in Los Angeles, Rosenthal began to present art performances. In these works, she has sought to integrate her unusual autobiographical experiences into a ritual presentation which can be universally understood. In 1980, in her Los Angeles home, Rosenthal founded Espace DBD ("Doing By Doing"), a space for non-static art which she continues to direct. She has performed widely throughout the United States and Canada and has lectured at the University of California at Los Angeles, California State University at Long Beach, University of Colorado, University of Southern California, among many others.

SELECTED RECENT EXHIBITIONS

- 1972 National Small Sculpture Show, University of California at San Diego
- The Cup Show, David Stuart Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1973 Womanspace Invitational, Womanspace, Los Angeles
- 1978 Artwords and Bookwords, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art
- Copy Art, Hansen Gallery, New York
- 1979 Books As Art III, Fendrich Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- 1980 A Decade of Women's Performances, Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans
- Sculptures, Space Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1981 Performance Art, Tortue Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1982 Soul Sale, Espace DBD, Los Angeles
- An Artist's Living Space, LAVA, Japanese-American Cultural Center, Los Angeles
- 1983 At Home Exhibition, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

- 1975 Replays, Orlando Gallery, Encino, California
- Thanks, Wilshire Plaza West, Los Angeles
- 1977 Charm, Mount St. Mary's Art Gallery, Los Angeles
- The Head of O.K., Institute for Dance and Experimental Art, Santa Monica, California; Center for Music Experiment, University of California at San Diego
- 1978 Grand Canyon, California State University Dominguez Hills Art Gallery
- The Death Show, Space Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1979 The Arousing (Shock, Thunder), Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, I.D.E.A., Santa Monica, California
- My Brazil, I.D.E.A., Santa Monica; Wordworks, Inc., San Jose, California; University of California at Irvine; Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla, California
- 1980 Bonsoir, Dr. Schon!, LACE Gallery (Public Spirit Festival), Los Angeles
- 1981 Leave her In Naxos, University of California at Santa Barbara; Downtown Gallery, Los Angeles
- Soldier of Fortune, The Chicago Art Institute; The Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California; Tortue Gallery, Santa Monica
- Taboo Subjects, Espace DBD, Los Angeles; Sushi, San Diego; Vehicule Art, Montreal; Metromedia, Vancouver

- 1982 Traps, Women In Focus, Vancouver, S.A.W., Ottawa; Espace DBD, Los Angeles; Target LA, Los Angeles; Intersection Theater, San Francisco International Theater Festival; Sushi, San Diego
- 1983 Center for Idea Art, Denver; University of Colorado, Boulder; Weber State College, Ogden, Utah; University of Wyoming, Laramie; Crossroads School, Peace Seminar, Santa Monica; University of Wisconsin, Madison; Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago; Franklin Furnace, New York; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio; On The Boards, Seattle.
- Gaia (first version), Caught In The Act, University of California at Los Angeles
- Gaia, Mon Amour, The House, Santa Monica; Film In The Cities, St. Paul, Minnesota; Boston Film and Video Center; HALLWALLS, Buffalo, New York; S.A.W., Ottawa; Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, Oregon

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"Leave Her In Naxos," High Performance, vol. 4, Summer 1981, p. 65.

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HALIWATIS