PAUL McCARTHY
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Introduction by Lisa Phillips
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Paul McCarthy is one of the most influential yet least recognized artists working in the United States today. It is rare indeed for such an accomplished artist to be so little known outside of a small group of devoted fans. This long overdue survey provides an opportunity to understand his historically important and enormously inventive work in depth. Few viewers are familiar with McCarthy's artistic evolution over more than three decades and will be surprised by the range of his work and the consistency of the preoccupations that have shaped what may at first seem shocking and incomprehensible.

In Los Angeles, McCarthy has had a considerable impact on at least two subsequent generations of Los Angeles artists, from Mike Kelley to Jason Rhoades. Lastly, McCarthy's work has been embraced in Europe where difficult American conceptual work has long been warmly received. Artists like John Baldessari, Joseph Kosuth, Dan Graham, and Bruce Nauman, for instance, received two decades of critical support in Europe when Americans weren't taking notice. As a measure of McCarthy's success in Europe, he was recently invited to design a project for the World EXPO 2000 in Hannover, Germany.

Well-known both in Europe and on the West Coast, McCarthy is the latest example of an artist who makes New York look provincial. Like older West Coast mavericks, such as Bruce Conner or Ed Kienholz, whose work was similarly ignored back East for years, McCarthy has worked in and across a variety of media — photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, video, performance, installation, environment and various combinations thereof, in a range of scales from intimate to monumental. Though McCarthy, at 55, is just a few years younger than fellow artists Nauman, Baldessari, and the same generation as Chris Burden, in New York he is still mistaken for a "young" or "emerging" artist and lumped with the artists he has influenced. This is partly the result of New York's woeful ignorance of important artistic developments in the rest of the country and partly a consequence of the unorthodox, visionary, and radical nature of McCarthy's work which, not unlike that of Conner and Kienholz, shows the brutal effects of society on human nature.

McCarthy's work is "in your face," raw and visceral. It is unrelenting and obsessive in its anxiety and violence lurk. In a city like Los Angeles where dreams are sold and fantasies packaged for consumption by Middle America, there is considerable tension between those glossy images of perfection and the destruction of apocalyptic upheavals like fires, earthquakes, gang warfare, mass murders, cults, and freeway shootings that also characterize L.A. It is these contrasts of contemporary life (intensified in a city like L.A.), between the real and the imaginary, the revealed and the hidden, that has fueled McCarthy's work. He makes plain the dysfunctionalism of the American dream using L.A., the entertainment capital, "as a paradigm." Things are never what they seem to be on the surface.

Beginning in the early 1970s, McCarthy's work centered on the creation of archetypal performance images in settings in which a dynamic tension is set up between the audience and artist through his use of rubber masks, toys, and food-based props to create a ritualistic tableau from which the audience is unable to maintain a comfortable distance. In works such as Hot Dog (1974), Meat Cake (1974), Experimental Dancer-Rumpus Room (1975), Tubbing (1975), and Grand Pop (1977), the imagery is violent, macabre, and bitterly comic — a marriage of the spectacle of consumer culture and the empty wasteland of apocalyptic turmoil. The dysfunctional adult world is blatantly apparent in the disassociation, alienation, antisocial behavior, and vulnerability that McCarthy's characters and narratives display. The extreme nature of his characters and scenarios are often humorous in the farcical sense as images of perfection are exploded.

Not since Joseph Beuys, perhaps, has an artist produced such powerful and psychologically charged work about his culture. Playing out allegories and narrative commentaries on American dreams and values through such archetypal characters as Santa Claus, Cowboys and Indians of the Wild West, Pinocchio, Heidi, Mr. Potato Head, Popeye, and Olive Oyl, cherished childhood icons are reinvented and adulterated with a unsettling ambivalence about the innocence of childhood. Through his extreme characterizations, McCarthy shows both the family and the media as intertwined twin tyrannies in American culture, wreaking their own particular violence through social conditioning.

In McCarthy's theater of the body, the human body is a social body — a metaphor for social conventions. In works like Hot Dog, Meat Cake, and Death Ship (1983) among others, McCarthy subjects himself to multiple punishments, humiliations, immediations, mutilations, transformations, in the process of exploring trauma, abuse, and impermissible acts. Social taboos are challenged through the presentation of a weirdly comic spectacle. The work and its content have proven deeply disturbing and threatening, as they challenge American core values and reveal underlying sinister forces.

Stepping back from a narrative reading of McCarthy's work — the first level of content — one can see remarkably consistent underlying concerns and interconnected strategies used to explore, embellish, and intensify the central issues. These concerns, which have permeated his work from the beginning and continue to the present, include: (1) plays on perception and illusion, (2) the fusion of body, architecture, and object, (3) violating boundaries and inverting polarities such as inside/outside, animate/inanimate, male/female, real/virtual, natural/artificial, and (4) the use of repetitive, obsessive, and expressive actions. All of these interests are already evident in his first body of work completed between 1968 and 1972, many of which are photographs or photographic documents of performances.

Perception and illusion — the tension between what the eye sees and the mind knows — was a prevalent interest of many artists in post-1968 America when accepted truths were routinely questioned. To McCarthy, a product of that period, this became familiar terrain. Mountain Bowling (1969) records the action of McCarthy rolling balls down a hillside. One only sees the balls hurtling downward against trees and sky—a kind of obsessive, loopy, and irrational activity. Another uncanny series is Use a Shovel to Throw Dirt in the Air (1972) — images of dirt temporarily suspended in space. These task-oriented images are not unlike the pun-
ing actions in the early conceptual photographs of Bruce Nauman or William Wegman, or the simple repetitive action gestures in Richard Serra’s film Hand Catching Lead, (1968) or the performances of Judson Church dancers, Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown.

**Inverted Hallway** (1970) and **Inverted Room** (1970) shows institutional architecture turned on its head, giving the viewer the sensation of walking on the ceiling. The idea of reorienting (or disorienting) the viewer is a practice McCarthy has taken to greater extremes in later installations such as **The Box** (1999) — his entire 20 x 50 foot Los Angeles studio re-presented so that it is turned on its side — or the box and tunnel structure of **Pinocchio Pipenose Households dilemma** (1994) and dislocated space in **Santa Chocolate Shop** (1997) where doors, windows, roofs, etc., are repositioned so there is never any “grounding” as we know it. Inverting space was also literally enacted in **Updown** (one of **Basement B/W Video Tapes, 1973**): a videotape shot by holding the camera upside down. Inversions, mirroring, and butterfly vision are among the techniques McCarthy has repeatedly invoked to create illusions and change viewers’ perception of their own bodies in space.

The relationship between body and architecture is suggested in another early work, **Fear of Mannequins** (1971), a series of photographs that capture artificial figures and their reflections in glass storefronts. The sense of containment, entrapment, and discomfort caused by confined spaces is another recurring motif experienced throughout McCarthy’s work. In performances like **Plaster Your Head and One Arm into a Wall** (1972), the artist has literally placed his head and arm in holes he created in the wall and then plastered them in. In **Inside Out Olive Oil** (1983) he uses a butter-coated mask, crawls through a tube, and eliminates on the floor. In **Santa Chocolate Shop** (1998), the performances and viewers are forced to assume regressive or submissive positions of crawling, squeezing and slithering through narrow passageways, their bodies merging with architecture, a situation that Mathew Barney has also more recently probed in his *Cremaster* films.

McCarthy has referred to the mask as a space of containment for the head, while also functioning as a “window” with a view out through two holes, as in **Looking Out, Skull Card** (1967).

McCarthy has used the mannequin and the mask and other props repeatedly as surrogates as well as vehicles to explore the dichotomy between animate and inanimate, real and virtual, natural and artificial. The earliest mannequin sculpture (and a relic from his first public performance) is **Mannequin Head and Squirrel** (1967) — a stuffed squirrel inserted head first into the side of a mannequin’s head forming a hybrid of artificial and (once) natural; human and animal. In later installations such as **The Garden** (1991-92), **Yaz Hoo Town**,

Saloon (1996), and Cultural Gothic (1992), mechanized mannequins have replaced performers, raising the specter of the posthuman period we are possibly entering and all the attendant fears and conflicts such a prospect provokes.

If mannequins and masks are prevalent in McCarthy’s art, liquids are a quintessential material. As a metaphor for the primal substances of life — blood, pus, urine, feces, sperm, milk, sweat — these fluids erase the boundary between the interior of the body and the exterior world. One of McCarthy’s first use of liquids occurred in an early performance work **Ma Bell** (1971), in which the artist obsessively and manically coated pages of the phone book with motor oil, creating a viscous object as well as a work in anticipation of the birth of his first child in 1973. This was followed by another performance, **Whipping a Wall with Paint** (1974) in which the artist dipped a blanket in motor oil and paint and proceeded to slap it against the wall of his studio in a gesture of barely concealed violence and a parody of action painting. In the slightly earlier **Face Painting — Floor, White Line** (1972) McCarthy slid across the floor on his stomach pushing a bucket of paint with his head to create a linear trace of his movement, not unlike Nam June Paik’s Zen for Head or Kazuo Shiraga’s earlier body paintings.

This use of liquids was taken to further extremes shortly thereafter when the artist began to focus on foodstuffs as emblematic of American family life as hamburgers, hotdogs, mustard, mayonnaise, catsup, and chocolate. These basic materials, have over time, become McCarthy’s signature palette, as loaded with associations and alchemical possibilities as Beyoncé’s felt and lard. In such performances as Hot Dog, Meat Cake, and Tubbing, he smashes these substances on his and others’ bodies to simulate penetration, childbirth, castration, elimination, and a host of other primal joys and horrors.

The narratives generally begin with a mundane activity — such as cooking or painting — and quickly devolve into “uncivilized,” infantile, violent, or sexual behavior. Exacerbating the sense of the primal and bestial are the moaning, cackling, and grunting noises that accompany the rapidly degenerating scene. The ensuing carnality and carnage is reminiscent of the comic artificiality of many horror movies and alludes to a latent insanity which we all fear. By giving form to primal and hidden impulses, McCarthy’s pop expressionism makes the comic and tragic effects of our social conditioning all too vivid.
It is impossible to overstate the achievement of the American artist Paul McCarthy in the past thirty years or to name another artist more persuasive in articulating the brutality and dehumanization that underlie the social equilibrium of this country. McCarthy’s unenviable role as purveyor of difficult truths has made his work shocking and incomprehensible to a wide range of viewers, including segments of the artistic community. This notoriety has put McCarthy in an unusual position: he is a well-known mid-career artist whose evolution is heavily shrouded in myth and innuendo. As a result, the innovative aspects of his work, as well as its roots in conceptual art, have been overlooked. For the organizers of this exhibition, McCarthy is central to certain artistic developments that only in the past decade have drawn the attention of the mainstream art world. For these reasons, this first survey exhibition of his work in the United States focuses on several well-known installations of the 1990s while giving long-overdue exposure to his performance, sculptural, and photographic works of the 1970s and 1980s.

McCarthy has consistently occupied the radical vanguard with respect to the way that artists since the early 1970s have deployed the human body as both subject and material: it is hardly surprising that his work inspires confusion on both sides of a critical fault line. The most common response to the work by those unfamiliar with his practice is shock and revulsion, a reaction usually accompanied by the inevitable postadolescent-revisited response, which sees a kind of cultural redemption in the work’s visceral integrity. Lost in this back-and-forth is the fact that McCarthy is deeply committed to exploring the effects of media and consumerism on the subconscious. To properly assess his achievement, it is important to distinguish McCarthy from the many younger artists whose embrace of issues related to the body enshrines the values of a society in which virtually all forms of personal and public expression are subordinated to the goal of manipulating the consumer. McCarthy by contrast holds up a mirror to a range of taboos that American popular culture coyly circumscribes and never takes seriously.

Because the majority of American artists have little or no interest in excavating the ills of society in terms of deeply buried ruptures of the psyche, it has been easy to interpret McCarthy in almost folkloric terms, as a previously marginalized figure whose work languished in near-obscurity until a surge of international interest in southern California art some ten years ago. However, McCarthy’s sardonic and highly critical vision is not merely an offshoot of the ethos of recent Los Angeles art. On the one hand, McCarthy has deep ties to the artistic tradition of the American West, from Jackson Pollock all the way back to a popular culture based on the so-called taming of the frontier and the excesses of the Gold Rush. At the same time, strong lines of influence extend to McCarthy across a number of international boundaries, from the Japanese Gutai group and Vienna...
Actionism is pioneering individual artists like Wolf Vostell, Yoko Ono, Piero Manzoni, Yves Klein, Allan Kaprow, Gustav Metzger and others.

Born in Salt Lake City in 1945, McCarthy has been associated with another socio-historical paradigm that looms large over present-day American culture: the idealistic child of the 1960s. Although his first forays into art took place at the agricultural college in Utah where he did his undergraduate studies, by 1966 he was fully familiar with the work of a range of artists, like those above, who would later figure large on his list of influences. From the beginning, McCarthy showed a strong interest in issues of perception, especially the discontinuity between an object and a perceiving subject. Inspired in part by the burgeoning cultural and literary interest in the use of psychotropic drugs, McCarthy assumed the role of an artist as a semi-mystical figure, compelled to explore meanings and forms ignored or drastically-simplified by society. Although initially trained as a painter, he began experimenting with film in 1967 and produced a large number of photographs through the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In these photographs, McCarthy explored themes that would come to dominate his work during the following decades. Mountain Bowling (1969), which illustrates how such a perilous hobby might be practiced in the wild, begins with a performance-like action in the near wilderness, captured by a nearby camera. The resulting image, showing a bowling ball suspended in midair against a placid backdrop of trees and sky, reveals a droll naturalism that downplays the obvious physical danger inherent in this pseudo-sport. Many of the works that followed deploy the motif of a slight adjustment within a given context to drastically throw off the viewer’s perception of that context. With Inverted Hallway and Inverted Room (both 1970), McCarthy, wanting to create the perceptual experience of a room with its roof underneath and floor overhead, found that the way to achieve this effect was photograph a space in which the orientation was already somewhat ambiguous, and then hang the resulting prints upside-down. A series of six color photographs entitled Fear of Mannequins (1971) plays with the distortion of reality caused by reflections in a store window that enhance the lifelike quality of the mannequins within. In different ways in each of these three examples, McCarthy probes the fissure between what the eye perceives and what the brain deduces to be the truth of a disorienting situation.

In his sculptures from the same period, McCarthy developed variations on the minimalist practice of incorporating the human body in ways that undermined the apparently objective rationalism of the geometric vocabulary. His Dead H (1968), one of the earliest objects included in the present exhibition, was originally constructed as a relatively small, inert object that one could see into, but which had a center that was always invisible. In its larger version (1999), it became an enclosed space that invited viewers to crawl through either of its narrow passageways, dramatizing the element of limited visibility through a kind of contained trap. As is the case with the photographs cited above, certain sensations that Dead H Crawls (1968/99) produces in the viewer are carried over into later works: the psychological implications of the act of crawling, the continual slippage between object and human status, even the discomfort caused by confined spaces. A related work from a few years later, A Skull with a Tail (1975-78), converts the quintessentially non-referential cube into an almost cartoon-like form. By attaching an appendage which is also a form of tunnel, the work can be read as an attempt to degrade the sanctity of the cube, in favor of a culturally loaded interior space which is visually cut off from us. In both examples, McCarthy’s emphasis on contrasting interior and exterior spaces becomes a kind of staged psychodrama in miniature, forcing us to reconsider the meaning of the object in terms of our interaction with it.

The evolution of McCarthy’s art from gesture into performance passed first through an extended period of events or interactions within architectural spaces. Some, like Cotton Door and Dream Room/Interior Room/Tire, Cotton, Water Room (both 1971), were based on the sculptural transformation of the spaces in which the work was presented, often by means of a labor-intensive activity based on merging two materials or objects into a single space. Other variations on this idea include actions or instructions carried out by the artist as a test of the boundaries between his body and the outside world. A fairly intimate example of these instructions, such as Help an Apple in your Armpit (1970), envisions the piece of fruit as a literal extension of the body — a motif that returns with a vengeance in the 1994 installation Tomato Heads.

Somewhat more typical of this period in McCarthy’s development are pieces in which the human body is deployed like an object or machine, a literal sub-entity compelled to carry out an irrational order to the letter: Master Your Head and One Arm into a Wall (1972) centers, as the title implies, on an activity that literally merged the artist’s body and the room containing it. The resulting documentation, incorporating both front and rear perspectives, show the artist “magically” emerging from the wall in one image and trapped in a submissive position on the other side. A very different kind of activity propels Whipping a Wall and Window with Paint (1974), which took place in a storefront space transformed by McCarthy’s frenetic behavior into an action painting cliché rendered in three dimensions. From one perspective, it is possible to consider these works as extending, but not yet breaking with, the traditional vocabulary of painting and sculpture, since both involve an activity of making something that becomes located outside the body’s limits. Still, there is a surprising degree of consistency between these early experiments and the works that constitute McCarthy’s mature development. In particular, the compulsive, repetitive movement that drives both of these works is an element of McCarthy’s art that continues to evolve through the present day, providing the distinctive rhythm that makes 1990s works like Painter and Pinocchio Piperose Householddollima so hypnotically compelling.

In the works Face Painting – Floor, White Line and Face, Head, Shoulder Painting – Wall, Black Line (both 1972), McCarthy’s body becomes a virtual paintbrush, its deliberate movement through space tracked by the swath of paint left behind on the wall and floor, respectively. Performed within an art gallery, these two works extend the artist’s interest in the physical evidence of paint, at the same time that he labors to transform his own body into a kind of objectified tool. A related work from same period, Penis Brush Painting (1974), is the first of McCarthy’s works to focus attention on his genitalia as the source of acting out the masculine prerogative. For this reason, penis painting serves as an artistic turning point, following which McCarthy began to consciously develop the persona that would become central to his later installations and performances. As in the later installation and video Painter, the emphasis in Penis Brush Painting is not on the finished object, but on the process employed in producing it. Given this point of departure, the links between McCarthy’s practice and the ethos of abstract expressionism emerge even more clearly. Following in the surrealist footsteps, the action painters maintained that their art provided a direct link to the subconscious, so that the value of what was not depicted became more important than what was. In McCarthy’s case, a glance at the title of the work reveals the fact that his anatomical interaction with the materials, motivated by a similar principle of bringing the inside out, is not simply the vehicle for the work. It becomes the work, and everything else serves as a kind of residue.
McCarthy’s most concentrated period of performance work covers roughly ten years, from 1974’s Heat Cake through the 1984 piece entitled Fingers, Olive Oil. In the nearly fifty performances staged during this period, McCarthy moved steadily away from the objectivity, Punt of his physical self to embrace the spec-
tacle of the body as a repository of society’s most closely guarded mores and taboos. As part of this process, McCarthy developed a narrow range of stage personalities, each of which served as a kind of distorting mirror in which the individual’s inability to conform to social mores produces a clash between the free flow of the imagination and actual behavior. Typically donning a mask for these performances, McCarthy carefully pro-
longed the tension between his position as creative agent and that of a seemingly unhinged personality who expresses himself, simulates penetration and childbirth with plastic toys, and forcibly inserts viscous and/or organic materials to suggest a primordial state of consciousness. Maintaining an unbroken attention to his
obsessive activities, this persona is incapable of resisting the flow of his own impulses as he is of rendering the motivation for these actions comprehensible to viewers. In their time, these works gained for McCarthy a reputation for shocking his audiences. Our current understanding of these performances revolves around the
notion of an individual who subverts the socially conditioned subject by embracing a form of “unicorporal” behavior in which the emergent political dimension of watching a fellow human being enter the state of provisionally nonhuman invites a sense of the uncanny, wherein the standards of distin-
guishing between person and thing, or between living and dead, are rendered temporarily inoperable.

Although Paul McCarthy has always been a sculptor at heart, the turning point between his more
ephemeral performances and the installations for which he become widely known is the 1984 work The Trunks. In this piece, McCarthy brought together the accumulated props from his 1972-84 performances, all of which are in the degraded or semi-decomposed state caused by the actions to which he subjected them and their stor-
age, for years at a time. The Trunks became for the artist a way of capturing certain essential characteristic of his performances in a relatively permanent state, while opening up possibilities for making objects as effective a tool for expressing his ideas as events and images had been before. In chronological terms, the Trunks also closes the
lid on an entire phase of McCarthy’s artistic development; it marks a point in his life when he stopped per-
forming, turned much of his attention to family and teaching, and subjected his artistic ideas to a protracted gestation. The performance-based works that did emerge from this period, such as Family Tympany and Cultural Soup (both 1987), were staged and edited for video, and reflect the theme of family life at the same time as they provide the way for the video-based installations to follow. Other developments during this period include his first
motorized sculpture, Bavarian Kick (1987), in which a pair of beer-drinking stick figures hoist their steins while their primitive metal legs jerk them toward each other.

The world at large became aware of Paul McCarthy at a pivotal moment, 1992, with the exhibition Helter Shelter at Los Angeles’ Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA). McCarthy’s contribution to that survey of the dark side of Los Angeles art was a full-scale stage environment entitled The Garden (1991-92). Realized in part thanks to the artist’s serendipitous discovery of the prop trees made for the 1960s television show Bonanza, the piece discloses its “secret” only after the viewer is in close proximity to the raised grove of trees and rocks. Life-sized, mechanized father and son figures, whose pathetic efforts at copulating with a tree and a patch of ground, respectively, are both humorous and frightening discoveries and become archetypes for a primal vi-
ability that is uniquely American. Left by themselves in a wilderness that is implicitly understood as the fragment of paradise, the figures defile both the landscape and the sacred bond between generations. Not only has McCarthy’s use of complex mechanical structures has been limited to architectural and inanimate forms, in particular the very large Mechanized Chalet and Picabia Love Bed, Dream Bed (both 1991). In the first, a stereotypically Swiss cottage planted onto a motor-
ized conveyor track systematically turns itself inside out through the use of hydraulic cables, its walls advancing on the viewer as they collapse, while the roof flips upward and flattens itself against the ceiling. After a brief pause, the disintegrated cottage reassembles itself, and the cycle starts from the beginning. Echoing the para-
bolic design of a roller coaster, the main elements in Picabia Love Bed, Dream Bed are a pair of motorized platforms that are rigged to move in any one of a number of configurations. One of the platforms holds a circular bed (appropriated from Francis Picabia’s 1940-43 painting The Idol), and the other of which functions as an elaborate overhead moving camera device for an actual film shoot. When fully functioning, the piece requires two or three people to operate the platform controls, while another is behind the camera, and at least one more is in the bed. Because the bed platform and the camera platform are able to mirror each other’s movements, or move in opposite directions from one another, the resulting footage may show the bed not moving at all (even when it is), or moving at twice its actual speed, or any one of a multitude of variations that fluctuate wildly depending on the degree of coordination between bed, platforms and camera.

As the first installation that relocates McCarthy’s performance methods inside the place where the
action occurs, Bossy Burger is one of McCarthy’s most successful works and a milestone in installation art of the 1990s. Constructed using cast-off sets from the defunct television series Family Affair, in which the focal American values were delivered with saccharine sweetness, Bossy Burger is first encountered as a seedy, open-ended struc-
ture in which decomposing carcass mutely testifies to a strangely comic, even, violence. Destroyed furni-
ture and walls, violated appliances and rotting foodstuffs can be easily viewed through each of the set’s windows

With The Garden, McCarthy was able for the first time to transmit the ephemeral qualities of his perfor-
men into a permanent construction that could be experienced without the artist’s presence. This break-
through also paved the way for the ideological shift in the artist’s productivity. During the next few years he would create an impressive number of mechanized works, some freestanding and others installation-based, which combine his commitment to the idea of performance with the expanded sense of site that video and installa-
tion artists had brought about. As McCarthy’s technical capacities expanded, his subject matter became more focused, resulting in freestanding works like Cultural Gothic (1992), as well as highly complex installation works like Bossy Burger (1991). A kind of sequel to The Garden, Cultural Gothic extends the father-son theme into a psychoanalytic territory that zeroes in on the horrifying violence of a suburban-looking father in the company of his young son, and a stuffed goat stand in ascending order on a raised platform; the father’s hands are placed protectively on the child’s shoulders, as the boy’s hands rest on the animal’s hooves. At the beginning of the
cycle, the father looks around, then signals for the boy to begin. The boy looks at the father for approval (as does the goat), then, after nodding to the goat, begins thrusting his hips repeatedly at the goat’s ass while the father looks on. When the boy has finished, the father’s head bolts up and down in approval; after a pause, the cycle begins all over again. As with previous mechanized movements of the figures, while emphasizing their absence of realism, actually work to heighten the quality of horror transmitted by the action. By revealing the concealed violence implicit in American family life, McCarthy eliminates the possibility of psychologically distancing oneself from what is taking place; the viewer laughs and recoils at the same time.

While The Garden and Cultural Gothic were a springboard into a radically new phase of McCarthy’s
career, his use of mechanized characters has been comparatively limited since the early 1990s. Setting aside
beds such as MoCA Man (1992), a by-product of the making of The Garden, McCarthy’s most significant inven-
tion into this area occurred with the installation work You Hoo Town, Bunkhouse (1996), Saloon (1996), and Indian and Tee Pee (1996). While Bunkhouse and Saloon are considerably more ambitious, all three works incor-
porate moving animated figures that mimic the wholesome, low-tech aesthetics of Disney theme parks to
express the irreverent conflict between American frontier myths and the predatory violence, continuing today,
barely concealed behind the illusion of manifest destiny. More recently, McCarthy’s use of complex mechanical
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ture and walls, violated appliances and rotting foodstuffs can be easily viewed through each of the set’s windows
and doors, but this rubble only seems real in relation to the action in the accompanying video, which plays continuously on two monitors. The artist, wearing a chef's uniform, clown shoes, and a mask of the grinning face of Master Magician icon Alfred E. Neuman, stars in a riveting hour-long video performance, beginning as his babbling but jolly persona prepares to demonstrate how to cook a meal. McCarthy's methodical transformation of the mundane ritual of a cooking show into an incoherent sequence of increasingly violent and erotic stunts becomes a hypnotic exercise in applied madness. As he drags a Styrofoam container of hamburger meat, a turkey leg, a gallon of milk, and huge quantities of mayonnaise and ketchup into the action, along with furniture and cooking utensils, the apparent fact that McCarthy's character is thoroughly deranged does not seem to diminish the sense of focused self-possession, which in turn lends the video a strangely relaxed pace. In fact, the most surreal aspect of _Bossy Burger_ stems from the chef's oblivious pleasure in the chaos he creates, as if everything is unfolding just as it should in some parallel universe where he is the sole inhabitant. Drawing out this aggravated clash between decorum and madness, McCarthy returns to the fundamental distinction between outside and inside: the ordered world that we inhabit, which operates as a sort of perch from where we gaze transfixed into the opposite realm of fantasy run amok. We feel safe in part because we know that the chef cannot escape the confines of his set (although he does make repeated attempts). But this safety is challenged by the character's howling buffoonery, which strikes a disturbing chord of familiarity in a society where unspeakable acts of brutality and violence are increasingly committed by individuals with little or no awareness of the consequences of their actions.

Channeling the energy of his 1970s and 1980s performances into an installation format has enabled McCarthy to overcome the most demanding technical and aesthetic hurdles found in his earlier work. The first and perhaps most important of these involves the evocation of a specific place. Although a number of artists working in video have successfully transformed the viewing environment through the use of expanded projection or installation techniques, and others (including McCarthy) have created powerful statements with no more than a single monitor, very few have been able to merge the video's content and its viewing conditions with such intensity as McCarthy. As we watch McCarthy's installation videos, our viewpoint constantly oscillates between what is taking place on screen and the charged aftermath that serves as backdrop for its documentation. Despite the fact that all our senses indicate that the scene we are witnessing took place in this same environment, the degree of transgression embodied by each character's behavior is so extreme that it is difficult to assimilate this awareness. Our natural disappointment at not having been present at the actual performance is tempered with relief over the buffering effect of video, which may well be the main reason we can bear to watch the performance at all. This charged ambivalence in turn imbues the set with an acutely surreal sense of place, overflowing with equal degrees of violence and comedy.

Another important obstacle overcome by McCarthy's distinctive variation on site-specific video installation in the 1990s involves his use of props to amplify the power of the accompanying narrative. While the set in _Bossy Burger_ functions as a way of anchoring the activity to a quasi-naturalistic place, succeeding works like _Heidi_ (1992, in collaboration with Mike Kelley), _Pinocchio Pipenose Householddilemma_ (1994), _The Painter_ (1995), and _Santa Chocolate Shop_ (1997) use settings in which the specificity of the location does not take on the same degree of importance as the lingering presence of the objects that have been left behind. The double-decker domestic setting of _Heidi_, based on a generic image of a Swiss cottage on one side and Adolph Loos' American Bar on the other, seems tame in comparison with the gruesomely cluttered box-and-tunnel structure of _Pinocchio_, which is predicated on the rambling narrative of the video, enables the transfer of identity from masked actor to life-sized Pinocchio doll to take place symbolically, in part by giving the absent human an escape route which the abandoned doll (also in bed) cannot use. The assumed role of the artist as perpetrator, who has fled the scene without covering up his traces, partly explains why, in both examples, the charged presence of the props offers such a marked contrast to the less dramatic design of the set itself. As the narrative complexity of the accompanying videos increases, McCarthy no longer requires that the setting be recognizable or functional, merely that it suggest an easily transgressed barrier between the spectator on the outside and the artist's disturbing activities within.

With his more recent works, _Painter_ and _Santa Chocolate Shop_, McCarthy shifts the spatial emphasis even further, in the first example permitting viewer access to the darkened studio set to view the video, and in the other bringing spectators into close proximity of the set while projecting the previously recorded videos onto the perimeter walls. Both works also involve multiple performers, a development that seems part of McCarthy's current incursion into films created for multiple projection within customized settings (1997's _Saloon Film_ being his most ambitious creation to date). With _Painter_, we enter the disheveled studio of a third-rate abstract expressionist painter, littered with half-finished canvases, where we sit and watch a video that has been recorded using the same paintings as props. As we behold the degrading and fetishistic behavior carried out by the characters (artist, dealer, collectors) in the video, it strikes us that it differs from the sharply defined hierarchies of the art world more in degree than in substance. Also, because _Painter_ is that rare example of McCarthy's recent work in which the performance artifacts are also art objects of a sort, our inability to examine them closely only serves to emphasize that the myths McCarthy is exploring are much more important than their more celebrated by-products.

The opposite effect takes place with _Santa Chocolate Shop_, in which the set for the previously recorded action also functions as a projection box. As with _Bossy Burger_, the viewer is able to peer inside the structure, but the absence of a video component invariably places the viewer outside the center of the action. We are not trapped in the aftermath of _Santa Chocolate Shop_ as much as we are put in doubt as to whether the activities on the accompanying video really occurred in the same place.

With the gradual introduction of new possibilities for linking spatial and behavioral concerns, McCarthy's work over the past few years has achieved a conviction and acute grasp of psychic trauma which few if any of his contemporaries can match. There is no shortage of artists willing to peer closely at the dark underside of the American psyche, but McCarthy does so from a unique perspective; he does not believe himself to be separate from what he perceives. The images and texts that suffice his art are drawn directly from both media-generated ideals of behavior and the depths of his own psyche; his characters and settings are a universal repository of the fears, obsessions, and conflicts that face the human species at an evolutionary crossroads. The irony made clear by McCarthy's art is that we have reached a point where people can be instantly in touch with the furthest reaches of the planet, yet we are beset by increasing sectarian violence, prejudice, intolerance, and mutually assured ignorance of what makes us different from one another and from other species.

Without parroting the triumphalist call that has brought us repeatedly to the brink of extinction, McCarthy lets us know how seductive the call to cultural entropy really is. He shows us sides of the American character few of us can endure at sustained close quarters, and he does so at enormous risk. Rather than offer yet another vision of liberation through attainment, he reveals the horror that lies on the other side of the mirror of American strength and prosperity. One of the key implications of his work is that this entire façade of well being and harmony must be shattered before we can ever articulate a credible vision of who we really are. It is a far from impossible task, but it requires coming face to face with a reality that is as terrifying as its opposite is seductive.
SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Note: An asterisk indicates an accompanying publication. (See “Selected Bibliography” for more information.)

2001
* “Paul McCarthy,” New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY

2000
* “Paul McCarthy,” Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

1999
* “Tokyo Santa•Santa’s Trees,” Blum and Poe, Santa Monica, CA
* “Dimensions of the Mind,” Sammlung Hauser and Wirth, St. Gallen, Switzerland

1998
* “Héritier, Video and Drawings,” Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna, Austria

1997
* Santa Chocolate Shop,” Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, Switzerland

1996
* “Paul McCarthy,” Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
* “Saloon,” Air de Paris, Paris, France
* “Yaa-Hoo,” Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York, NY
* “Video Works,” Galerie Drantmann, Brussels, Belgium
* “Videos and Drawings,” Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark

1995
* “5 Photographic Works, 1980-1994,” Blum & Poe, Santa Monica, CA
* “Tomato Heads,” Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany
* “Ferrocarril Pintoresco Huesca–Alto Aragón,” Travel to: Air de Paris, Paris France; Galerie Antoni Estrany, Barcelona, Spain; Luhring Augustine, New York, NY; Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark; Escher Schipper Gallery, Cologne, Germany; Studio Guenzani, Milan, Italy; McKinney Art Center, Dallas, TX; Auckland City Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand; Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum, Linz, Austria

1994
Air de Paris, Paris, France
Frau, Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême, France
Air de Paris, Nice, France
Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Galerie George-Philippe Vallois, Paris, France
Studio Guenzani, Milan, Italy

1993
* “Video,” Ynglojungatan 1, Stockholm, Sweden
Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna, Austria
* “The Dead Viking,” Buchholz und Buchholz, Cologne, Germany
Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York, NY

1991
Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

1987
Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

1986
Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

1985
AAA Art, Los Angeles, CA

1983
Cirque Divers, Liège, Belgium

1982
* “Human Object,” Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA

1979
* “Contemporary Cure All” and “Deadening,” Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2000

“Le jeu des 7 familles,” Musée d’art Modéré et Contemporain, Genève Switzerland, in collaboration with Fred-Nord-Po-de-Calais “Dialogue avec la photographie,” Galerie Goleddah Lorenz, Madrid, Spain


“In Between, Hansero World EXPO 2000,” Hannover, Germany

“Proposed Insouciance,” Musée d’art contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France

“Carnation,” Show by Independent Curators International, Los Angeles, CA

“The Olden Possible Memory,” Lokremir, St. Gallen, Switzerland

“Biennial of Sydney, International Festival of Contemporary Art,” Sydney, Australia

“Around 1984: A Look at Art in the Eighties,” P.S.1, Long Island City, NY

“Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy,” Collaborative Works, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada

“Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

“Recent Acquisitions,” Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA

“Kunstsammlung, Diisseldorf, Germany; Munich, Germany; Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf, Germany; New York P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA

“Scene of the Crime,” Arand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA

“Halsey de jen art contemporain,” Halle Tony Garnier, Lyon, France

“The Other Side of Zero: Video Positive 2000,” Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool, UK

“The Fashion Show,” George’s, Los Angeles, CA

1999

“Subjectivity and Narcissism,” Castello Di Rivoli, Turin, Italy

“Proposition Propposal,” collaboration with Jason Rhoades, installation, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, NY

“Let’s Play Risk,” juice, London, England

“Well and Sadlock,” collaboration with Mike Kelley, Seattle, WA

“Mise en Scene,” Grauer Kunstverein, Graz, Austria

“American Playground,” The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada


“Konstnattstugan Holsholm,” Holsholm, Sweden

“Double Trouble,” Museum of Modern Art, San Diego, CA

“Pop Surrealism,” The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT

“Baltimore,” Thomas Schaller Gallery, New York, NY


“Crossings,” Kunstverein Wer am Kranpol, Vienna, Austria

“Anti, Forg, McCarthy, Miyuki, Merzlen, Oulis, O раздел, Rie, Tung, Whistler, Wolfe, Wolff,” Lachem Augustine Gallery, New York, NY

“L.A. Times,” Foundation Sandretto Re Rebaudengo: Art and Architecture, Turin, Italy

“Acquisitions Rétros,” Fred Nord-Po de Calais, Doncaster, France

“REMARK ‘auricular’ appropriation strategies,” L’Escofet De Grenoble, Grenoble, France

“L.a. on Paper: 1 Real-life,” Galerie Kunzinger, Vienna, Austria

“Figureative Sculpture,” Patrick Painter, Inc., Los Angeles, CA

“Beyond the Peak Performance Festival,” The Cortical Foundation, Los Angeles, CA

“Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1940-1970,” Travels to: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; MAK, Vienna, Austria; Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona, Spain; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan

“Provision Impromptu,” Virginia Commonwealth University, Anderson Gallery, Richmond, VA

1997

“Art Cali,” Galerie Niki de Saint Phalle, Copenhagen, Denmark

“Johannes,” Kunstverein, Vienna, Austria

“Dramatically Different,” Centre National D’Art Contemporain, Grenoble, France

“Kunstverein,” 40 Positionen, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Germany

“Display,” collaboration Mike Kelley/Paul McCarthy, Charltonesque Exhibition Hall, Copenhagen, Denmark

1996

“Body,” The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

“Paul McCarthy & Benjamin Weisman,” Christopher Grimes Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

“Kvangju Biennale,” Kwangju, South Korea

“Deep Storage,” Travels to: Haus der Kunst, Munich, Munich; Nationalgalerie SMKP, Berlin, Germany; Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf, Germany; New York P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA

“Scene of the Crime,” Arand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA

“Halsey de jen art contemporain,” Halle Tony Garnier, Lyon, France

“Foire 92 Berlin,” Galeristiques Parijse, Berlin, Germany

“Cruising L.A.,” Soledad Lorenzo Gallery, Madrid, Spain

“Meg Cranston, Paul McCarthy, Barry McGee, Raymond Pettibon, James Siena,” Galerie Thomas Zums, Houston, The Netherlands

“Observations & Observers,” Idania Henders Art Foundation, Toronto, Canada

“Suzanne & Noise,” Travels to: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humleber, Denmark; Kunstmuseum, Wellington, Germany; Castello di Rovio, Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Torino, Italy; UCLA at the Armad Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

“Fabulous,” Travels to: Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami; Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, TX


“Natural Habits,” The Tannery, London, England

“Performance Anxiety,” Travels to: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; SITE, Santa Fe, NM

“Implication,” Ecole nationale superieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France

“Rooms with a View: Environments for Video,” Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York, NY


“Forum and Funktion der Zeichnung, Kunst,” Art Fair Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany

“Jay Boy,” Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland

“Making It Real,” a traveling exhibition organized and circulated by Independent Curators International, Travels to: The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT; The Reykjavik Museum of Art, Reykjavik, Iceland; Portland Museum of Art, Portland, OR; Body Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

“Popocultural,” Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton, England

“video (desnudo);’ Trans Hudson Gallery, New York, NY; Galerie Peter Cachet, Athens, Greece

“BodY,” The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

“Paul McCarthy & Benjamin Weisman,” Christopher Grimes Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

“Kvangju Biennale,” Kwangju, South Korea

“Deep Storage,” Travels to: Haus der Kunst, Munich, Munich; Nationalgalerie SMKP, Berlin, Germany; Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf, Germany; New York P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA

“Scene of the Crime,” Arand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA

“Halsey de jen art contemporain,” Halle Tony Garnier, Lyon, France

“The Other Side of Zero: Video Positive 2000,” Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool, UK

“The Fashion Show,” George’s, Los Angeles, CA

1995

“Attri-ope xporte,” Ispaan Eramus Brea, Milan, Italy

“Sweet It Sour,” Art & Public, Genoa, Switzerland

“radical past: contemporary art & music in Pau, 1965-74,” The Armory Center for the Arts, Pau, France

“Propositions,” collaboration with Jason Rhoades, installation, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, NY

“Let’s Play Risk,” juice, London, England

“Tod and Sadlock,” collaboration with Mike Kelley, Seattle, WA
“New History of the Infancy,” Franc Avenger, Montclair, France
“Franco UMI 90,” curated by Giacomo Di Pietro, Associazione Culturale di Torre, Pesaro, Italy
“La Milla e una Volta,” Galeria d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Repubblica di San Marino, Italy
“Identità e Alberi,” Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
“Collection, fn. £X,” Two separate locations, in conjunction with Francesco Zorzi, Angers, France, Italy
“Mike Kelly and Paul McCarthy,” Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany
“Mozart,” Bergamo Station Art Center, Santa Monica, CA
“The Reflected Image,” Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Prato, Italy, 1994
“Coca-Cola,” Museo Nazionale Centro de Arte Renia Sofia Madrid, Spain
“Les enfants terribles,” Galeria Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain
“The Ride to Savag: The New Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
“Extreme Limites,” Galeria dos Olhos, Lisbon, Portugal
“Hans Elfenbein,” Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d’art moderne, Paris France
“Transformers: The Art of Multiphrenia,” a traveling exhibition organized and circulated by Independent Curators International, Travel to Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Muyinah Gallery, Maryland Institute, Baltimore, MD; Herbert E. John Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; Museo Contemporanea Art Center, Manta, CA; Art Gallery of Windsor, Ontario, Canada; Hirschhorn Kerr Gallery, Alberta College of Art, Calgary, Canada
“Investigations into the Physical and Metaphorical Hole,” Gallery 2, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
• “Oh boy, it’s a girl!” Travels to: Kunsthalle Vienna, Vienna, Austria; Kunsthalle München, Germany
• “Altger Eger,” Santa Monica Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
“Opera Prima, Fumio Uki 94,” Associazione Culturale Arte Novas, Pesara, Italy
“Kaa Me Kaa Zeeman;” De Vishal, Haarlem, The Netherlands
“Collection, fn. £X,” Two separate locations, in conjunction with Francesco Zorzi, Angers, France, Italy
“Transformers: The Art of Multiphrenia,” a traveling exhibition
“Cocido
“The Reflected Image;” Museo d’ Arte Contemporanea, Prato, Italy,
“Identity and Home,” Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
“Nex, One-person show, Rudolf Schwarzkogler and Paul McCarthy, Austrian Cultural Institute, Rome, Italy
“The Reflected Image,” Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Prato, Italy, 1994
“Coca-Cola,” Museo Nazionale Centro de Arte Renia Sofia Madrid, Spain
“Les enfants terribles,” Galeria Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain
“The Ride to Savag: The New Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
“Extreme Limites,” Galeria dos Olhos, Lisbon, Portugal
“Hans Elfenbein,” Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d’art moderne, Paris France
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“Opera Prima, Fumio Uki 94,” Associazione Culturale Arte Novas, Pesara, Italy
“Kaa Me Kaa Zeeman;” De Vishal, Haarlem, The Netherlands
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“Nex, One-person show, Rudolf Schwarzkogler and Paul McCarthy, Austrian Cultural Institute, Rome, Italy
“The Reflected Image,” Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Prato, Italy, 1994
“Coca-Cola,” Museo Nazionale Centro de Arte Renia Sofia Madrid, Spain
“Les enfants terribles,” Galeria Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain
“The Ride to Savag: The New Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
“Extreme Limites,” Galeria dos Olhos, Lisbon, Portugal
“Hans Elfenbein,” Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d’art moderne, Paris France
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“Investigations into the Physical and Metaphorical Hole,” Gallery 2, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
• “Oh boy, it’s a girl!” Travels to: Kunsthalle Vienna, Vienna, Austria; Kunsthalle München, Germany
• “Altger Eger,” Santa Monica Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
“Opera Prima, Fumio Uki 94,” Associazione Culturale Arte Novas, Pesara, Italy
“Kaa Me Kaa Zeeman;” De Vishal, Haarlem, The Netherlands
“Collection, fn. £X,” Two separate locations, in conjunction with Francesco Zorzi, Angers, France, Italy
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“Identity and Home,” Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
“Nex, One-person show, Rudolf Schwarzkogler and Paul McCarthy, Austrian Cultural Institute, Rome, Italy
“The Reflected Image,” Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Prato, Italy, 1994
“Coca-Cola,” Museo Nazionale Centro de Arte Renia Sofia Madrid, Spain
“Les enfants terribles,” Galeria Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain
“The Ride to Savag: The New Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
“Extreme Limites,” Galeria dos Olhos, Lisbon, Portugal
“Hans Elfenbein,” Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d’art moderne, Paris France
“Transformers: The Art of Multiphrenia,” a traveling exhibition organized and circulated by Independent Curators International, Travel to Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Muyinah Gallery, Maryland Institute, Baltimore, MD; Herbert E. John Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; Museo Contemporanea Art Center, Manta, CA; Art Gallery of Windsor, Ontario, Canada; Hirschhorn Kerr Gallery, Alberta College of Art, Calgary, Canada
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• “Oh boy, it’s a girl!” Travels to: Kunsthalle Vienna, Vienna, Austria; Kunsthalle München, Germany
• “Altger Eger,” Santa Monica Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
“Opera Prima, Fumio Uki 94,” Associazione Culturale Arte Novas, Pesara, Italy
“Kaa Me Kaa Zeeman;” De Vishal, Haarlem, The Netherlands
“Collection, fn. £X,” Two separate locations, in conjunction with Francesco Zorzi, Angers, France, Italy
“Transformers: The Art of Multiphrenia,” a traveling exhibition
“Cocido
“The Reflected Image;” Museo d’ Arte Contemporanea, Prato, Italy,
SELECTED PERFORMANCES, VIDEO TAPE AND FILMS

1968
PERFORMANCE: "Sad and Solitude Taco-Camp O.S.O.," collaboration with Mike Kelley, Siesmans, Vienna, Austria

1969
PERFORMANCE: "Santa Chocolate Shop," Los Angeles, CA

1970
PERFORMANCE: "Sad and Sadie Sack," collaboration with Mike Kelley, P-House, Tokyo, Japan

1972
PERFORMANCE: "Tokyo Santa," Totten Keyuma Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

FILM: "Satan," Los Angeles, CA

1975

VIDEO TAPE: "Freddy Accounut," collaboration with Mike Kelley, Los Angeles, CA

1976
PERFORMANCE: "Procesaht Puprreat Housewhiddlestam," Villa Arcon, Nice, France, Sponsored by Air de Paris, Nice, France

1977
PERFORMANCE: "Hindu, Nilidal Crises Trauma Center and Negative Media-Ingrained Abreaction Release Zone," collaboration with Mike Kelley, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna, Austria

PERFORMANCE: "Booby Burgers," Roamused Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

VIDEO TAPE: "A House," Los Angeles, CA

PERFORMANCE: "Ding Dong Diner," Los Angeles, CA

PERFORMANCE: "Family Tyranny," Los Angeles, CA

VIDEO: "Dress," Los Angeles, CA

PERFORMANCE: "Scissors," Los Angeles, CA

1983
PERFORMANCE: "Inside Out Olive Oil," 84 Langston St., San Francisco, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Peeper," Cirque Daws, Lienge, Belgium
PERFORMANCE: "King for a Day," Espace Leutarien, Compartment Environment Performance, Lyon, France
PERFORMANCE: "French Patisses," Galerie Art Contemporain, J. et J. Dregui, Paris, France
PERFORMANCE: "Peeper's American," Midland Group, Nottingham, England
PERFORMANCE: "Peeper's Lodge and Jery," Utara Polytechnic Art and Design Center, Belfast, Ireland
PERFORMANCE: "Peeper's Driving School," Trudier Arts Center, Cork, Ireland
PERFORMANCE: "Peeper's Automobile," Dartington College of Arts; Totnes, Devon, England
PERFORMANCE: "Mother Pig," Soho Gallery, San Diego, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Gardener of Death," University of California, Los Angeles performance series, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Avenue Death Ship," San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Death Ship," University of Southern California, Fine Arts Department, Performance Series, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Baby Boy, Baby Magic," A's Bar, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "God Bless America," Exile Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Death Ship," Soho Gallery, San Diego, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Death Ship," Performance Art, Chicago-Los Angeles Armonica Gallery, Chicago, IL
PERFORMANCE: "Pennis Painting," University of California, Irvine, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Pennis Painting," San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Pennis Painting Appreciation," American Hotel, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "A Tale to Two Cities, Rome Against florenze," American Art Performance Festival, Theatro Cuvio Srutpe Zone, Rome, Italy
PERFORMANCE: "Pig-Man Pig Pipe," American Art Performance Festival, Theatro Cuvio Srutpe Zone, Rome, Italy
PERFORMANCE: "Pig-Man," American Art Performance Festival, Theatro Affinamienta, flame, Italy
PERFORMANCE: "A Tale to Two Cities, Rome Against Rome," American Art Performance Festival, Theatro Affinamienta, flame, Italy
PERFORMANCE: "Dreadliving," Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
1978
PERFORMANCE: "Contemporary Cure All," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "UN," Close Radio, KPFR FM, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Doctor," Anna Canepa Video Distribution, New York, NY
1977
PERFORMANCE: "Grand Pop," University of California Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Grand Pop," University of Southern California Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA
1976
PERFORMANCE: "Class Feat," University of California, San Diego, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Bum," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Political Disturbance," American Theater Association Convention, Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Paid Stranger," Close Radio, KPFR FM Radio, Los Angeles, CA
1975
PERFORMANCE: "Experimental Dance-Rumpus Room," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Sailor's Meal," Pasadena, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Dipping," Pasadena, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Basement B/W Video Tapes," Pasadena, CA
1974
VIDEO TAPE: "Graffiti Painting," Pasadena, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Herring Ketchup Sauce," University of Southern California Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Explo Dog," Pasadena, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Mint Cake," Espace Lyonnais, Lyon, France
PERFORMANCE: "Mint Cake," Pasadena, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Basement B/W Video Tapes," Pasadena, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Mint Cake," Pasadena, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Basement B/W Video Tapes," Pasadena, CA
1973
PERFORMANCE: "Basement B/W Video Tapes," Pasadena, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Stomach of the Squirrel," B/W Video Tapes, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Omm," B/W Video Tapes, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Cow," B/W Video Tapes, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Slow," B/W Video Tapes, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Slow," B/W Video Tapes, Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Face, Head, Shoulder Painting, Black Line, Wall, B/W Video Tape," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Four Painting, White Line, Floor, B/W Video Tapes," Los Angeles, CA
1972
PERFORMANCE: "Red Poster Video Tapes, B/W Video Tapes," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "E.V.," University of Southern California, Art Dept., Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Two Sleep, Too Fast," Hollywood Hills, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Mountain Bowling," Los Angeles, CA
1971
FILM: "Outside Circle Run," Los Angeles, CA
FILM: "Indoor Circle Run," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Mia Halo," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Broadway Building, B/W Video Tapes," Los Angeles, CA
VIDEO TAPE: "Fellowship Parlorway, House B/W Video Tapes," Los Angeles, CA
1970
PERFORMANCE: "Spiriting," Los Angeles, CA
VIDEO TAPE: "Fellowship Parlorway, House B/W Video Tapes," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Dine Drop," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Too Sleep, Too Fast," Los Angeles, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Mountain Bowling," Los Angeles, CA
1969
PERFORMANCE: "Mountain Bowling," Salt Lake City, UT
1968
PERFORMANCE: "Long," University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT
PERFORMANCE: "Too Sleep, Too Fast," Marin County, CA
PERFORMANCE: "Black Fire Paintings," Salt Lake City, UT
1967
PERFORMANCE: "Save," Little Theater, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT
PERFORMANCE: "Too Sleep, Too Fast," Salt Lake City, UT
VIDEO: "Bones," Salt Lake City, UT
VIDEO: "Girl and Boy," Salt Lake City, UT
PERFORMANCE: "Black Fire Paintings," Salt Lake City, UT
1966
VIDEO TAPE: "Fellowship Parlorway, House B/W Video Tapes," Los Angeles, CA
PROJECTS – ACTIVITIES

1997-98

1996
Curator, "Gravity." Center National d’Art Contemporain de Grenoble, Grenoble, France. Artists included: Bas Jan Ader, Lil Picard, Adrian Grenier, and Wolfgang Stoerchle.

1994-95
Guest editor, Documents d’Agora, Paris, France.

1994

1993
Curator, "Sample: Southern California Video Tape Collection, 1970-1983." Artists included: Bas Jan Ader, Eleanor Antin, Skip Arnold, John Askren, John Baldessari, Meg Cranston, John Containers, Allan Kaprow, Hija Kreading, Mike Kelley, The Kipper Kids, Peter Kelley, Paul McCarthy, Susan Mogil, Tony Oursler, Raymond Pettibon, Patty Pedro, Alan Ruppersgosch, Elzer Segalove, Jim Shaw, Nina Sobell, Wolfgang Stoerchle, Chris Wilder, and Bruce and Norman Zambrano. Travel: to David Zwirner Gallery, New York; Galerie Gmurzynska, Mulf; and David Buchholz Gallery, Köln, Germany. Sample was also a part of "Sunshine and Noir" in 1997.

1990

1981
Guest editor, High Performance, Issue 13, Spring 1981. Contributing artists included: Paul Cotonen, Lé Picard, Adrian Piper, Mike Emtage, Wolfgang Stoerchle, Wally Churchill, and George Maciunas. Each artist was given six to eight pages for their work.

1980
Chairperson, Performance Art Committee, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art.


1979

1976-79
Co-producer, with Nancy Buchanan and John Duncan, "Close," a radio program on KPFK in Los Angeles, an access program for performance/ conceptual art. Over 100 programs were produced.

1976
Produced and distributed Cross Cut Double Cross, a publication of thirty-seven conceptual and performance artists living in Southern California.

WRITINGS BY THE ARTIST

"Erotic Mummery, Guo Van Sui," afterall, Issue 1, 1999
"Turning Points," a tribute to Dieter Roth, Artforum, October 1998
Interview, (first French), Interview conducted in 1979.
"Dead Mirror," Body Object Image, catalog of the work of Elaine Stevan.
"Vendol," Drawnings, Human Sciences Press, Volume 1, Number 3, Fall, 1980

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Blond on the Camel," Sydney Morning Herald, June 6, 2000
"Mikko, Sarah," "That's not funny, that's sick – or is it?" Toronto National Post, April 8, 2000.


Istrail, Giovanni, "Repression is Dead," Artforum, February-April, 2000.


Cameron, Dan, "Best of the 90s," Artforum, December, 1999.

Cooper, Donna, "Sausalito," Spin, Vol. 15, No. 12, December, 1999


Eldings, Marthe, "Hi, New York Art From Warch to New," 1999


"Damenwallfl, FAZ, August, 22, 1998.


Borg, Andreas, "The Exhibition that Wasn't," Uni Zurich, Perspectives, 1998.

Hoyt, Elizabeth, "The ultimate will lôse", Elle, June, 1998.

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LISA PHILLIPS AND DAN CAMERON

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The lenders to this exhibition have been extremely generous with their permission to let us exhibit their works, and we would like to thank them here. They include the Fundacio 'la Caixa,' Barcelona, with special thanks to Maria de Corral, Madrid; Frac Languedoc-Roussillon, Montpellier; Galerie Hauser & Wirth, with special thanks to Iwan and Manuela Wirth and Ursula Hauser, Zurich; the Flick Collection, Zurich; Dakis Joannou, Athens; Rubell Family Collection, Miami; Eileen and Peter Norton, Santa Monica; Tom Patchett, Los Angeles and Track 16 Gallery, Santa Monica. In addition, the artist's New York and Los Angeles dealers, Lawrence Lubiak, Roland Augustine, and Patrick Painter have given outstanding help and encouragement. Thanks also to Jeffrey Deitch for not only lending The Garden, but also for providing the space in which to exhibit it.

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We are very appreciative of the thought and energy that went into Amelia Jones' and Anthony Vidler's deeply insightful texts regarding different aspects of McCarthy's work, while Tim Yohn has provided excellent guidance in shaping and editing all of the essays. William Stover has done an outstanding job managing this book from conception to final exhibition. It has been a pleasure to collaborate with Markus Hartmann and Cantor Verlag on what we hope will be the first of many successful publications. Last but far from least, we would like to recognize the superb graphic design provided by Linda Nietsche-o.