



*Painful but  
Fabulous*

**The Lives & Art of Genesis P-Orridge**





"If this is art God help us!"

—London Evening News comment on Genesis P-Orridge

"Genesis P-Orridge is directly connected to a place few of us have the courage to visit (certainly not on a regular basis, and certainly not over the course of an entire life). His life and work constitute a fierce, sustained act of willful imagination, an uncompromising personal insistence on keeping open a mainline flow to the magic hidden just beneath the surface of daily quotidian existence. Most of us buckle under and leave this place behind sometime in late childhood. Genesis has made a life's work (and a life's play) out of it, revealing in the process something we should have known (or remembered) all along. As such, he's an heroic figure in his refusal of everything banal and soul-crushing the lies, identity traps, and control of modern mass media culture he points the way laughing."

—Michael Gira, Young God Records, Angels of Light, Swans



"I have known Genesis P-Orridge over a period of years and I consider him a devoted and serious artist in the Dada tradition. He instructs by pointing out banality through startling juxtapositions."

—William S. Burroughs, author of *Naked Lunch*

"Genesis has been an invaluable pioneer in developing a new language, a tremendous influence."

—Dr. Timothy Leary, 20th Century Cultural Explorer



"Genesis P-Orridge will go down in history for his art inextricably entwined with his life which aggressively advocates respect for dreaming, surrealist creativity, astringent cultural activism and the permanent refusal to accept status quo—implanted notions of 'reality'."

—V.Vale, RE/Search Publications founder/publisher

"Our 21st century's version of a Renaissance man. One high step ahead of pop culture and all-ways game to go where others fear to tread—sometimes gracefully in stiletto heels."

—Miss Jackie, Aesthetic Nutritionist

"When I heard Throbbing Gristle's *Hamburger Lady* as a young, blossoming man, it scared the shit out of me. Eventually I matured enough to be able to handle it. Genesis P-Orridge, by his very existence, challenged me to grow and become all that I dreamed I could."

—Barry Bliss



"Genesis P-Orridge, however unconventional his form of art, is thoroughly serious in his intention. He is a man whose actions are motivated by sincerely held and carefully considered views of his role as an artist in society, and he has shown courage and dedication in pursuing his career in the way he has, rather than opting for more conventional and perhaps rewarding alternatives."

—Gerald M. Forty, Director, Fine Art Department,  
British Council

"Genesis is like a child genius that never grew up. I wish I had a penny for every person he's scarred."

—Bee Bankok, Sonic Pandroginist

"Genesis P-Orridge is an artist and not a pornographer."

—William S. Burroughs, author

"Genesis P-Orridge has been selling Britain with putrid 'art'... his putrescence is squalid rubbish. Mr Orridge is prostituting Britain."

—SUN Newspaper, editorial, London, 1976

"His postcards are obviously designed to highlight the banal by the juxtapositioning of well known artists such as Magritte, Duchamp and Man Ray with images drawn directly from 'popular' culture. I consider the cards to be humorous, satirical, and ironic commentaries."

—Ted Little, Director of Exhibitions, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

"The public looks at Genesis and thinks he is a devil or a saint. He is not either. But he is a little bit of both. Like a kaleidoscope, the pattern the audience would see, 'good' or 'evil', is really the reflection of themselves turning into the angels or monsters that THEY are! So is the icing on the cake sweet or bitter? Take a taste and judge for yourself. But unless you really know the baker, don't confuse him for the cakes."

—Monte Cazazza, Cultural Mortician

"Genesis is a modern cultural icon and a not-easy-to-emulate Anti-Naturalist. His music, art and writings arouse the loud unruly shockingly silver thoughts in all of us who have been lucky enough to be exposed to his vast lifetime of works."

—Kembra Pfahler, Anti Naturalist,  
Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black

"Mr P-Orridge has gained worldwide renown as a performance artist, musical innovator and new wave mixed-media performer and is one of the leading new purveyors of alternative fusion music and art. It is the opinion of this union that this artist is one of extraordinary ability, based on his distinction in the arts."

—Wade Alexander, Office of the President,  
American Guild of Variety Artists

"Genesis P-Orridge is the most interesting example I can think of to illustrate the notion of an artist using their life as the medium for their art. He has made it his consistent mission to obliterate not only the lines between art and life, but those which separate fantasy and reality, low and highbrow and even gender."

—Skot Armstrong, Contextualist

"Genesis P-Orridge is not only equipped with a lot of know-how but he is also a very powerful person in person. A very colorful and effective teacher. He is developing new methods of communicating, new forms of art. We're friends and we're brothers and we learn from each other."

—Dr. Timothy Leary, Psychedelic Pioneer

"Satan knows what a great relief it was to discover the work of Genesis P-Orridge at an early and impressionable age, and with it, a collision with synchronistic, apocalyptic orbits that have never left me since."

—Adam Parfrey, Feral House





"Genesis P-Orridge is the master (mistress) of self-reinvention."

–**Timothy Wyllie, author,**  
*Dolphins, Angels, Extra-Terrestrials*

"His work as COUM realises new approaches of making art, theatre and dance. Genesis is indefinable, characterised by a total and indiscriminate open-mindedness towards ideas. His performance uses ambiguity and transformism to touch on the surreal aspect of modern man."

–**Giancarlo Politi, publisher, Flash Art**

"Genesis, I'm glad you're still writing though I must admit I found difficulty in connecting with some of the more loosely constructed pieces. You seem not to value construction, coherence, and form and to care less about the communicable meaning of words and more about the rush of momentary emotion and the dislocation of the senses."

–**Richard Murphy, Professor of Poetry, Colgate University**

"Dear Genesis, I should have written to you last year. I liked your poem 'From the Cold Stone Cottage.' I'm sorry you couldn't transfer to the English Dept. Professor Brett and I regreted that they had very little time to give to an exceptional person such as yourself"

–**Richard Murphy, Professor of Poetry,**  
**Hull University, UK, 2 June, 1970**

"I am proud and privileged to have helped bring the world this book celebrating the art and lives of Genesis P-Orridge. It will be an inspiring, fascinating, and important tool for artists or at the very least a great thinker's syllabus."

–**Don Goede, Soft Skull Shortwave, founder/publisher**

"Genesis P-Orridge started and destroyed cults, spawned artistic movements, got banned from his home country, played with heads worldwide, including his own, invented instruments, destroyed barriers and still is not recognized enough for his accomplishments outside of hardcore industrial and noise followers."

–**David Dodson, Nau-Zee-auN, Zero Times Infinity,**  
**Voidstar Productions**

"Genesis has offered an insight into the unattainable, opening up a space to think in sound, voice, word and deed. A cultural renegade battling through customs, his ideas have graffitied over conventionalism. Hovering on the precipice of popular culture, he has esuriently deflowered and devoured the mainstream, conjuring up strategies that consistently question and provoke."

–**Robin Rimbaud, a.k.a. SCANNER**

"Becoming familiar with Genesis's work was for me a good lesson in the importance of unentertaining people."

–**Diane Cluck, musician/artist**



"A rare and extreme opportunity to read the extraordinary method, theory and insight into the genius of Genesis P-Orridge. So please take advantage of this exotic rare creature since this breed of individuality and originality is only one of a kind."

—Karen Finley, performance artist, writer

"I have no doubt that Genesis P-Orridge is a serious artist. It seems entirely consistent with his way of working that the use of the mail service should form part of his art activity, and from my own impressions of his seriousness I would find it extremely hard to believe that his intentions could be interpreted as serving a pornographic end."

—Sir Norman Reid, Director, Tate Gallery, London

"Genesis P-Orridge is a riveting live performer who through his status as an underground cult figure can build a bridge out beyond the usual spoken word audience. He makes a deep connection with his audience and always handles them with grace, humor and encouragement."

—Chi Chi Valenti, founder/editrix, Jackie 60/Verbal Abuse/Mother



"Genesis P-Orridge has done what all artists should, but few achieve: He's dived headfirst into the forbidden regions of the human soul and come up with revelations of the unspoken and the unimaginable. Like van Gogh, Picasso, and Stanley Kubrick, he has added richness to the vocabulary of Western culture."

—Howard Bloom, author of *The Lucifer Principle: A Scientific Expedition Into The Forces of History and Global Brain: The Evolution of Mass Mind from The Big Bang to the 21st Century*

"I deplore Genesis P-Orridge and his recent event at the I.C.A. and the attitude of mind that has led to the presentation of art that included chains and items of blood-stained women's clothing."

—Lord Gibson, Chairman,  
Arts Council of Great Britain



"Huckster shaman, lunatic savior, Genesis P-Orridge is undoubtedly a bold visionary mind for the new century. For thirty years he's been dancing a mighty few steps ahead of the rest of us, and now this book shows us why: For all his imposture as a rock star, Genesis has always been something else, an artist."

—Carlo McCormick

"Mr. P-Orridge is an artist of integrity and dedication. I do not believe that it is his intention to subvert, deprave or corrupt. I am sure that his aims are those of an artist."

—Bridget Riley, artist



"When Genesis had spoken for a while, I found myself thinking 'Why is he talking to ME?' And I was deeply moved by that thought. I think he reached a nerve or soft spot in me that I forgot that I had. At first I was proud to be his sound-engineer, later I found myself being a part of his message. Proud of being me."

—JOHAN, the sound guy at Fylkingen, Stockholm  
& Kemikaze Electronics

"We're only just getting a look at the maggots in the nest. It is clear this person has been using the excuse and pretence of art to swan around the world undermining decent values."

**-Mr Nicholas Fairbairn, Q.C.,  
Member of Parliament**

"Knowing Genesis P-Orridge and his work for more than twenty years now, I find myself still as refreshed and touched by his work as I was when I first had, many moons ago, the privilege of receiving one of those wonderful postcards by this true guerilla art visionary. He intrigued me then and has held my intrigue ever since."

**-Little Annie (a.k.a. anxiety)  
Multimedia Artist/Chanteuse**

"Genesis P-Orridge is a musician and entertainer of extraordinary ability who has received sustained international acclaim and distinction in the arts."

**-Stephen R. Sprague, Secretary/Treasurer,  
American Federation of Musicians**

"In his Transmedia Discourse Genesis left the audience begging for more after 3 hours. It was amazing how he captivated the entire audience and his life story is fantastic. His work ethics are uncompromising."

**-Cathee Shultz & James Healy, owners,  
The Museum of Death**

"Throughout his career, Genesis P-Orridge has relentlessly and ferociously given himself to the deepest levels of self-expression. He has put his life on the line for his art."

**-Timothy Wyllie, author**

"Genesis P-Orridge's actions are an attempt to break down the barriers between audience and performer; between doers and watchers; between the ordered and the free; between fun and ritual and between cynics and the young at heart."

**-Mike Walker, Director, Hull Arts Centre**

"Genesis has the same spirit of humanism as the Beats in the 1950s, and there's a great sense of humor there, as was true of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones as well. That sense of irony and fun."

**-Dr. Timothy Leary, Harvard professor/author**

"Genesis P-Orridge's work performs a merciless investigation into the horror of the human situation, which is just the kind of mercy we need right now. He's a mind fucker, a psychik deprogrammer in the lineage of Gurdjieff, Crowley and Leary, and it all comes packaged in this lovely sort of Brian Jones-ish fop/pop style. Long may he wave."

**-RU Sirius, Under-the-Counter Cultural Commentator  
and Techno Geologist**



"Never a cheap substitute, Genesis's experiences open up new worlds that are remarkable, both synchronous and genuinely leading you to a new sort of existence in the most enlightening journeys imaginable."

—**Brian K. Evenson, author**

"My recollection of Throbbing Gristle ramrodding the paradigmatic state of Punk Rock in the late seventies in Los Angeles gave me fodder and an ethic that I still apply to my own work today. Rail and investigate pop culture but don't be too lenient with the alleged underground. So we all need to be challenged."

—**Kembra Pfahler**

"Genesis has been described as the William S. Burroughs of his generation and has the ability to entertain for an evening and provoke serious thought for the weeks that follow. He is truly a unique individual whose love of challenging establishment values inspires us all and brings meaning where there is none. In short he is a celebration of life."

—**Martin Atkins, owner, Invisible Records**

"Genesis P-Orridge is a professional and wholly committed artist with a serious approach to his work, and if at times it has a mischievous and provoking quality, this is an essential element in an art which is designed to stimulate and to call into question many of our accepted attitudes."

—**Gerald M. Forty, Director,  
Fine Art Department, British Council**

"With their performances designed to perplex and involve the audience in something other than the traditional responses some might say that Genesis and COUM were madmen, but constant exposure to mankind forces me to believe that we need more madmen like them."

—**John Peel, Radio One DJ in London, UK**

"Genesis P-Orridge heard the telepathic call of the dolphins and responded with an act of love and freedom."

—**Timothy Wyllie, author**

"Genesis really believes in his own propaganda, but his metamorphic work is a paroxysmal stimulant to destroy all the PUTREFACTS of this world."

—**Jordi Valls, Vagina Dentata Organ**

"The trajectory of G. P-O's career in the arts reveals an unrelenting avant-garde sensibility, combined with the instincts of a shamanic showman and the passionate detachment of a Learyan Change Agent. He has stirred the planetary porridge through a series of revolutionary challenges to our moribund art forms. His life's work stands as an antidote to the current post-psychedelic malaise."

—**Michael Horowitz, Flashback Books**







"All I knew about Genesis P-Orridge when I first met him in 1992 was that he was '666-the Beast'! Who is this fallen angel whose name merges biblical emergence with cut-up stutterings of hot cereal? As it turns out he became a splendid collaborator in sonic explorations as well as a very sensitive, adept human being who is a beloved brother and dear friend. In working and living with Genesis I have observed that he doesn't build constructs of ideologies from which he then generalises. He actually works very hard at breaking down these inner walls of fixed formulas and ideas and allows information and energy to filter through the pores of his being. Genesis's genius is that he asks the right questions instead of projecting some portfolio of accumulated answers. Genesis is interested in whatever process gets him closest to the dawn of Truth, he is interested in recognizing the Truth and he is interested in living the Truth. His art and music of twenty years and more are mere droppings of evidence of this process left behind like old skin and it can't possibly gauge the inner giant steps. Genesis has made on his journey towards the Absolute. Genesis P-Orridge is free to follow new insights on vistas of longing for the Truth because he doesn't hold on to nostalgic self-obsession. The art and music world needs to follow his lead."

**-Larry Thrasher, ex-Psychic TV;  
current member of Thee Majesty**

"Genesis P-Orridge has been a cornerstone for the Industrial music movement, always growing, mutating and staying on the very edge of creativity inspiring such artists as *Skinny Puppy*, *Nine Inch Nails*. His diverse thought-provoking ideas have continually questioned the very foundations of the house he has helped to build."

**-Martin Atkins, Pigface, Invisible Records**

"Gen—you must be a retarded person—or maybe you're in another universe!"

**-Charles Manson, musician and social scapegoat**

"It is difficult to find the words to describe the activities of Genesis P-Orridge. ...But we will try. VILE, EVIL, SICK AND DEPRAVED are just a few that come to mind."

**-Editorial, *The People Newspaper*, London**

"Genesis P-Orridge is a trickster in the truest sense of the word. Repeatedly hurling himself into a dangerous psycho, sexual and social territory, he's overshot the binaries of straight/queer; ethical/perverted; shaman/scientist; male/female; wild/wise. For his pains, this gorgeous creature has spurred some of the more crucial cultural trends of the 21st century."

**-Scott Treleaven, writer and filmmaker, *The Salvation Army***

"I have always had huge admiration for Genesis. Working with him is an invigorating and inspiring experience and it's great that he continues to really live it. He's had a massive influence on contemporary culture and is one of the very few artists who can truly subvert the liberal agenda."

**-Daniel Miller, Mute Records**

## PAINFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This book has required unceasing and meticulous attention to detail. As a result I have been immersed to the exclusion of almost everything else, existing in a strange form of voluntary sensory deprivation and socially disconnected isolation. To all whose appointments I missed, phone calls I left unanswered, emails unread and birthdays and weddings misplaced, I apologise and thank you for endless and sincere forgiveness. A fond farewell to Don Goede, with whom I have become bonded in a most intensely personal creative process, often working until the dawn garbage chorus. Finally, and most important of all, it is then, with happy contrition and sincere appreciation at her patience and understanding at my prolonged absences, that I thank, with all my heart, my soulmate and artistic partner in crime, Miss Jackie Breyer P-Orridge.*

## FABULOUS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Delving into one's life and creative output from the early '60s until the present is a most peculiar and intimidating venture. There were times that I questioned my sanity as much as some of the tabloid press! There has also been a great deal of joy and self-discovery. Much of the joy has been due to the readiness with which disparate people offered support, and the reliability with which they donated their valuable time and writing skills to make this book possible. I will never forget the generosity of all those who wrote especially for the "blurbs." Their incredible kindness of intent and observation that I experienced as a result has been overwhelming. Thank you all so much. Please, dear reader, note their names.

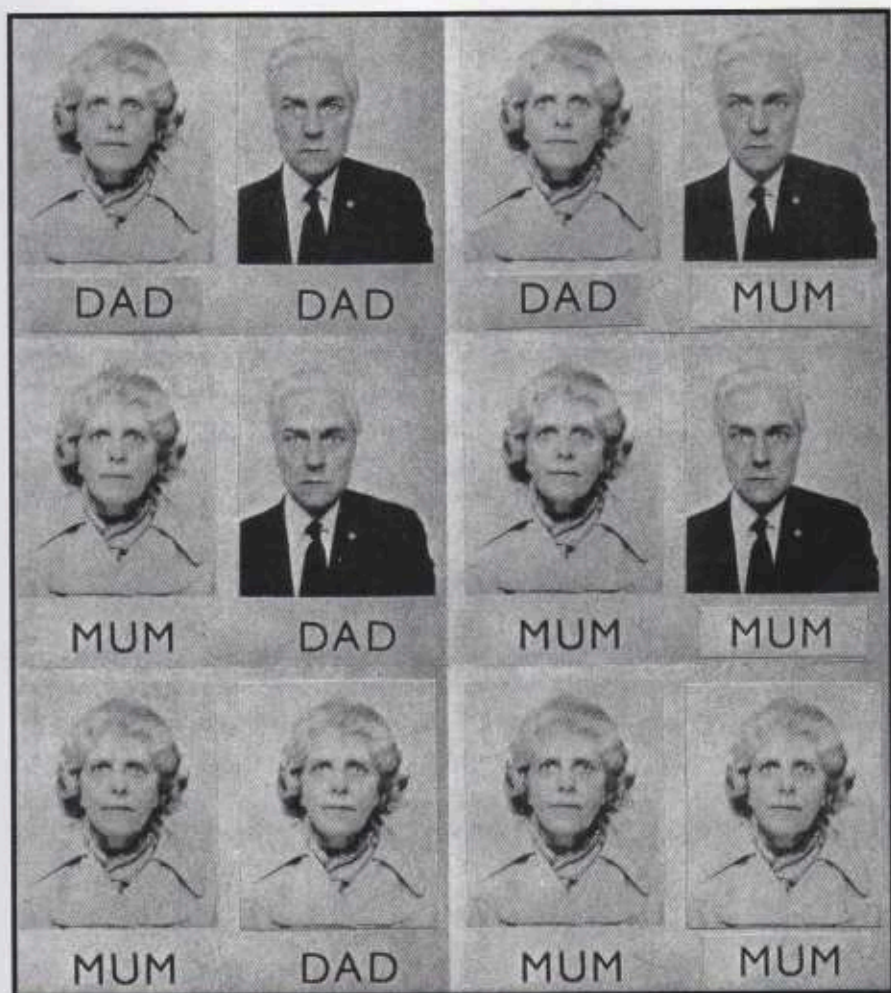
More gratitude is due Jean-Pierre Turmel and Michael Horowitz for loaning key material from their collections. To Monte Cazazza; Skot Armstrong; and Michael Gira for their initial encouragement. Ken "Url" Court for stepping into the day to day process of scanning and cataloguing. To Larry Thrasher; Carl Abrahamsson; Richard Metzger; Paul and Jackie Cecil; Miss Jackie; Douglas Rushkoff; Don Goede; Nick Mamatias; Maggie Balistreri; Ellen Moynihan; David Janik; Bengala; Scott Treleaven, Carol Tessitore, John Brien and David Dodson for their ongoing input as to structure and direction and/or the inspiration of their writings. In particular I must gratefully extend my indebtedness to the central text by Julie Wilson on which I know she lavished unstinting dedication and thought.

To all the photographers, both those I was able to credit, and any I missed (to whom I apologise in advance) I offer my boundless gratitude for documenting seminal, unique and occasionally reckless explorations into moment and beyond identity. I have been blessed with a most wonder-filled L-if-E, and now, through the vision of Soft Skull, at last, a fab and kinky book.

Cari Saluti,

Genesis Breyer P-Orridge,  
New York, 2002





This book is dedicated to  
Mimi and Ron, Brion and Miss Jackie.

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tion to this collection celebrating and acknowl-  
*edging the tremendous efforts of GP-O.*



Published by Soft Skull Shortwave,  
a division and art imprint of  
Soft Skull Press, Inc.  
71 Bond St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11217  
[www.softskull.com](http://www.softskull.com)

Cover and book design by Don Goede  
Design assistance by Genesis P-Orridge  
Layout assistance: David Janik  
Editorial: Nick Mamatas, Maggie Balistreri,  
Ellen Moynihan, Don Goede  
Picture editor: Jackie Breyer

First Printing Fall 2002

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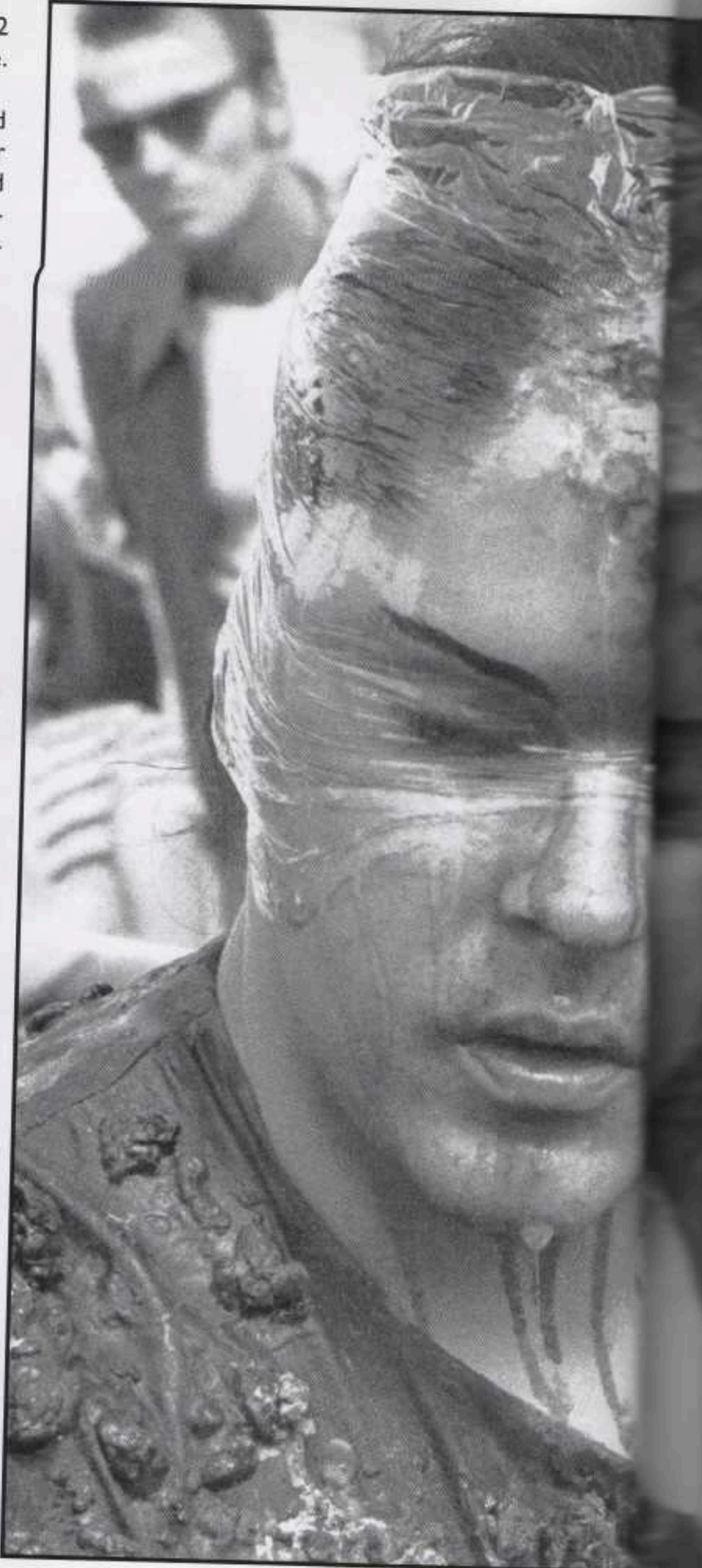
ISBN 1-887128-88-3

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Hong Kong

Distributed By Publishers Group West  
1700 Fourth Street  
Berkeley, California 94710

800-788-3123 toll free  
[www.pgw.com](http://www.pgw.com)  
[info@pgw.com](mailto:info@pgw.com) general email





2-3-06  
\$13.00

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Genesis P-Orridge

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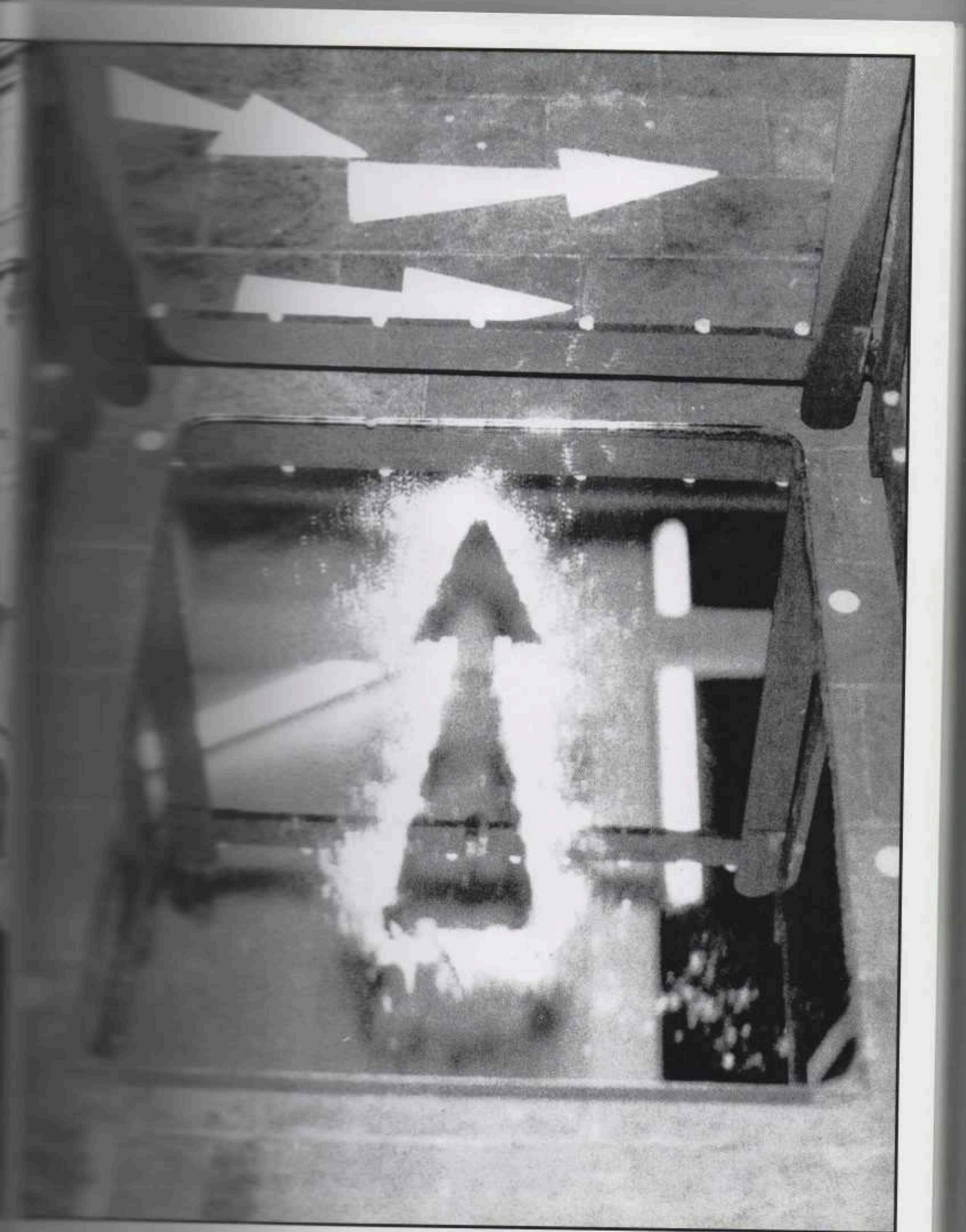
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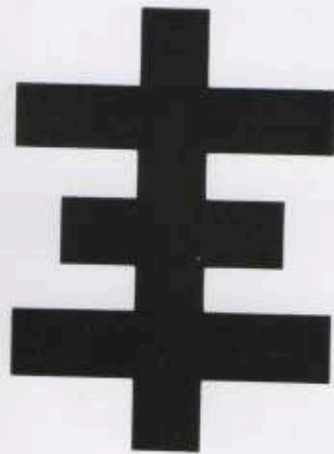
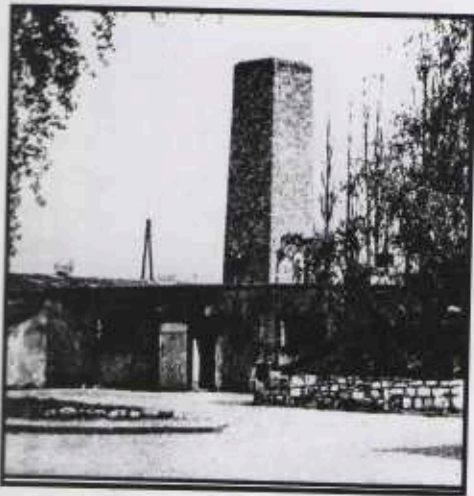
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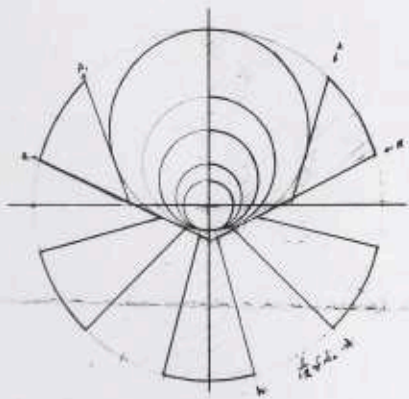
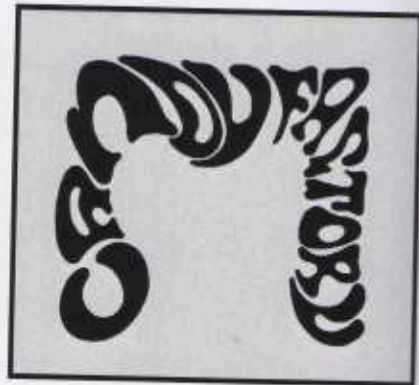
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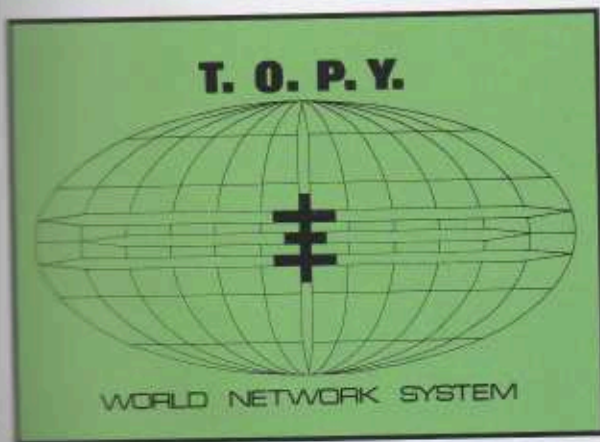
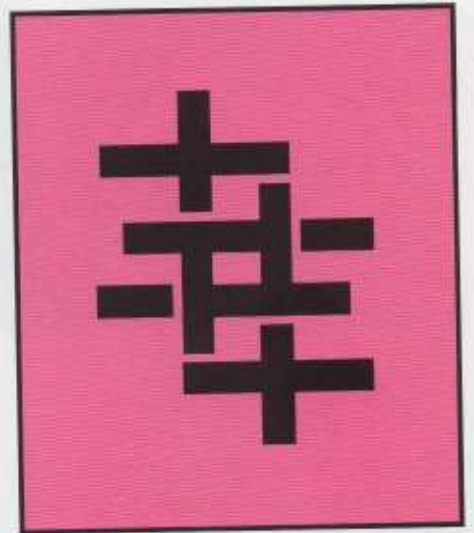
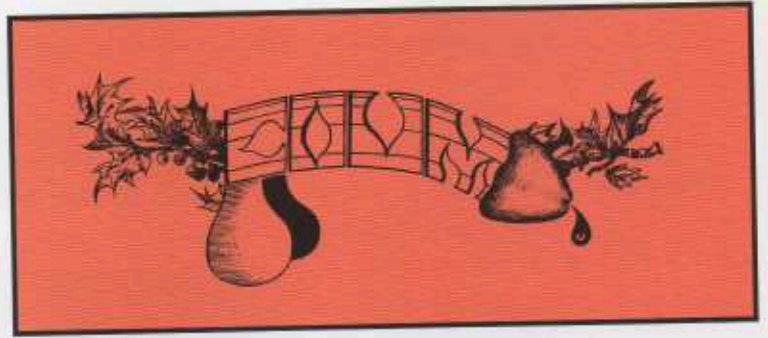


*room symbol*



Various project symbols of Genesis P-Orridge.





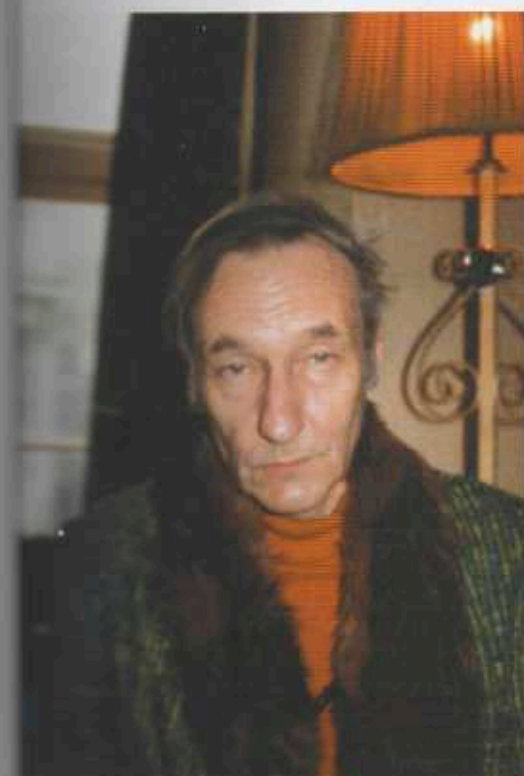


"Omissions," COUM Action, Kiel, Germany, 1975.

**GOOD TRIP OR BAD TRIP?  
THE ART AND HEART OF  
GENESIS P-ORRIDGE  
BY DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF**



"Portrait of Brion Gysin," 1986.



"Portrait of William Burroughs," 1986.

Genesis P-Orridge's work defies objective analysis. So I won't even pretend that this little essay can accurately summarize or, dare I say it, codify his varied adventures in music, literature, art, magick, cultural engineering, and performance. Genesis's expressions are characterized, at least in part, by a breaking of conventional boundaries, a challenging of expectations, and a blurring of the usually polarized relationship between artist and spectator, performer and audience. To speak about Genesis's work is to speak the way a person projects oneself onto his work. Nothing more.

But if one man's experience of Genesis P-Orridge can serve to illustrate something about the shape of Genesis's intention—much in the way the tire treads across one's chest can be used to infer something about the car and driver that ran him over—then let me be of service. I have been impacted by this man, and I've lived to tell about it.

I first learned of Genesis while studying the history of the cut-and-paste aesthetic. I was devouring one of those great, early RE/Search books out of San Francisco, in which the lineage between William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin had been painstakingly chronicled. But who was this third man being added to the mix? Genesis P-Orridge? Wasn't he the lead singer for UK industrial band Throbbing Gristle?

Yes, but he was also the man who turned cut-and-paste from an experimental art form into an act of conscious defiance.

In the 1950s and 60s, Burroughs and Gysin had seen fit to turn post-modern deconstruction into a new kind of self-expression. Instead of merely deconstructing texts, they had the bright idea of recombining the many parts to see what came up.

Like the music of John Cage, it was a somewhat random process. The artist gets out of the way and allows the myriad of mathematical possibilities to unfold. The text of a newspaper article, for example, recombined into as many possible word orders as time, space, and probability will allow, yields strange results. We begin to understand the world of the article from a new perspective. Sometimes it feels as if secret codes have been unleashed (Burroughs was a rejected applicant to the CIA, after all). Other combinations give us an emotional overview of the newspaper's reality; or a political template. Sometimes, it even sounds sexy.

Genesis was fascinated with the cut-and-paste process too. He eventually tracked down Burroughs and Gysin, and became something of a protégé to them. But Genesis saw a different kind of voltage in the deconstruction process. To him, it was an appropriation. An opportunity to seize power that he'd been looking for all his life.

Genesis was born into a working-class English family, and, despite his station and some illnesses as a child, managed to earn a scholarship

to an exclusive public (what we Americans would call private) school. There, Genesis learned firsthand which membranes of society were permeable and which were not. Often the victim of the worst mental and physical humiliations that privileged upper-class schoolboys could evolve in 20 generations of dormitory domination, Genesis learned that he was living in a world in which power was not earned—it was a birthright to the few. The pain and embarrassment he was forced to endure was meant solely to confirm their own sense of superiority in themselves, and to ingrain Genesis's inferiority in him.

But, as a child growing up in such an environment, Genesis couldn't help but wonder if there was more to it. Do these quasi-sexual acts of depravity have some intrinsic power? Are these boys doing something more than it appears? Is the power they will one day experience as the Lords of England somehow dependent on creating this fear and pain in others? Which comes first, the torture or the power? Genesis was participating, albeit unwillingly, in one of the oldest rituals practiced by some of the most powerful men in the world during their highly impressionable adolescent years. And these rituals were allowed, if not absolutely encouraged, by the headmasters charged with training and educating the power elite of the future.

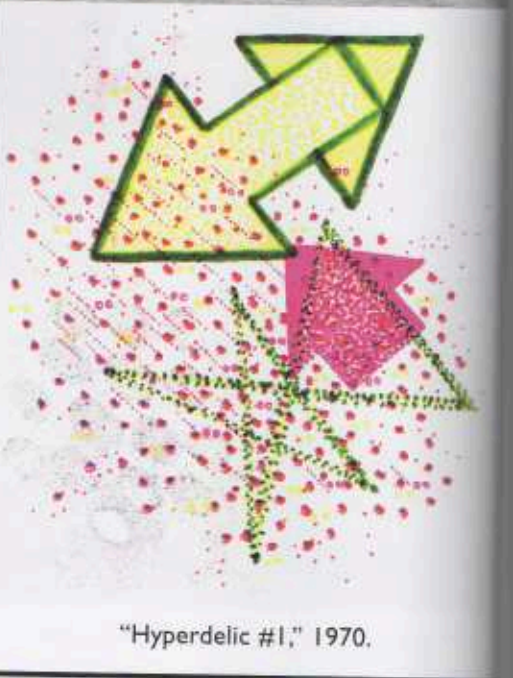
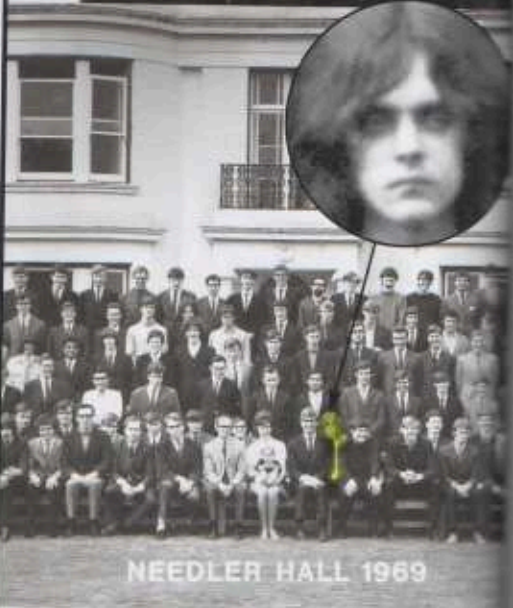
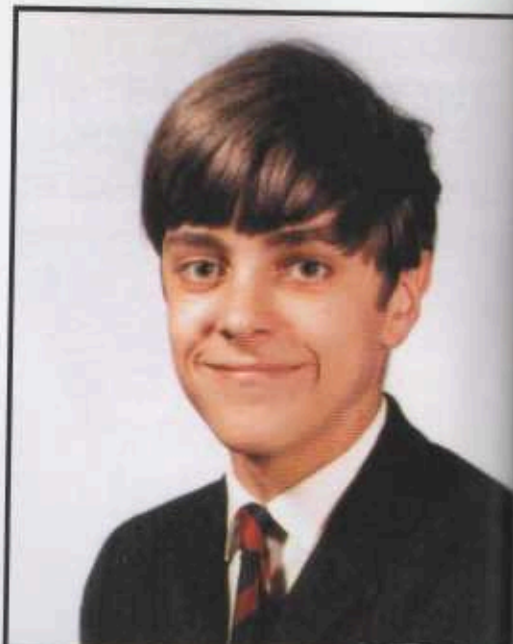
Understandably, young Genesis developed a worldview that saw power as a kind of evil, maintained through ritual and protected by institutions. The rest of us were imprisoned in their world, incapable—or at least led to believe that we were incapable—of doing anything about it. They own the land, the buildings, the money, the media and the sex.

But maybe not the language.

Why were words like fuck so forbidden? What threat did they pose? Where did all these words we speak come from, anyway? Does anybody even remember that *good-bye* means "God be with ye"? How much else is going on in the language we use—in the language we are taught not to violate? When was all this agreed upon, and by whom, and for what purpose?

To Genesis, Burroughs's cut-and-paste process was not simply psychedelic beatnik art. It was revolution. To deconstruct the language of the establishment is the first step towards appropriation. Whose language is this, anyway? Why are we speaking "King's English"—especially if it benefits only a bunch of sick, rich fucks who flush your head down the toilet?

Genesis reveled in the appropriation and recombination of language, but sought to take it further. Deconstruction is the first step towards disempowering the masters of language. Demystification is the next step. Once you take apart the words, you can toy with them purposefully—not just randomly. A student of language, Genesis discov-





"Journal Poem #3," 1969.



"Psychodelic Pink Penis," 1966.

ered the origins of words, as well as the assumptions underlying their common usage. Once the language itself could be questioned, so, too, could be the assumptions they are designed to enforce.

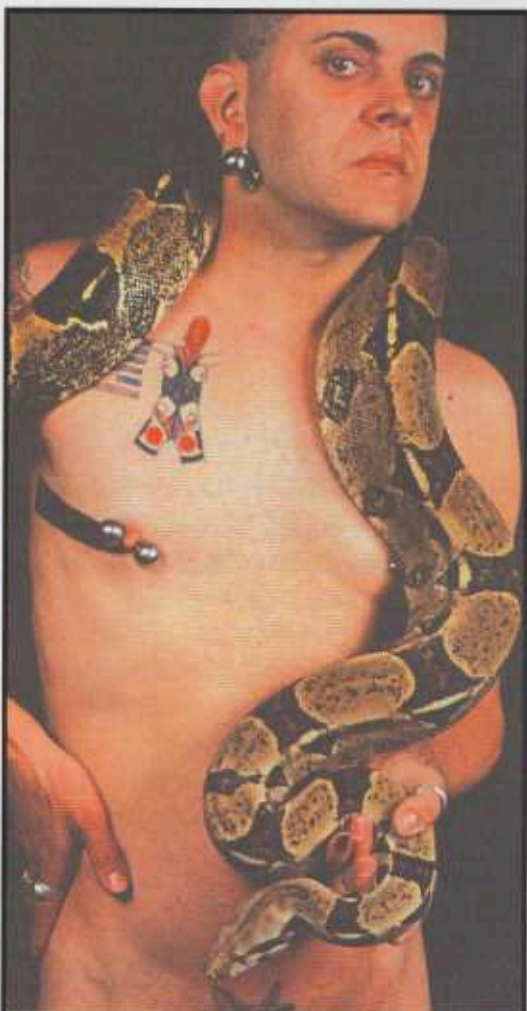
Finally, the words can be recombined, re-engineered to tip the balance of power in another direction. Why and when did thee become the? And what happens if you bring the origins of language back into play? Genesis moved from the deconstruction of language, through the demystification of its sources, to the engineering of new language that better stated the reality that he wanted to create. Do-it-yourself language.

Genesis's first word-poems in this vein were not aesthetic experiments, but magical sigils. The words themselves, and their placement on the page, were conceived in trance states and with the conscious intention of creating a new reality based on the deepest workings of mind and spirit. He was tapping language for its power, uncertain of what he would release, but daring enough to believe that if it made people uneasy, he must be onto something good.

A sigil is really just a focusing ritual, in which the magician concentrates on the object of desire or the state he wishes to create, and then places words or objects in a certain relationship to one another. Like a child who lays out the stones or shells she has collected over the course of a day, the magical artist arranges his words on the page in accordance with an intuitive psychic template. The resulting image contains, or represents, the thought structure that the magician is trying to bring into reality. The more mental and spiritual energy he can invest in this process, the more power the sigil will contain and, finally, release.

Genesis soon saw the value this process could be to his collage art. He had been developing the techniques of cutting and pasting pictures and images for years—since he was a young child. Now, those practical techniques could serve him in his translation of cut-and-paste language to cut-and-paste imagery. In a sense, they were the same thing. Like his word poems, each of Genesis's postcards and art pieces was a sigil, appropriating images that had been generated in one context for a certain reason, and recontextualizing them in a new context, for a very different one.

As Genesis expanded into other media, like music, he brought this same ethic and aesthetic of appropriation, demystification, and magical recontextualization into play. The "Industrial Music" that he and his cohorts in Throbbing Gristle pioneered takes the mechanized factory sounds of everyday life—the acoustic evidence of the working-class's subjugation—and recontextualizes it as a form of political art. His concerts and records were, themselves, sigils, in which the hidden powers of sound were explored and exploited.



Genesis with "Bela," 1982.



"It's a Dog Eat Dog World," 1982.

In doing so, Genesis came to learn about the effect of sound on the human body and mind. Certain frequencies create sexual sensations, while others can make one nauseous. Some noises make us feel weak, while others make us feel strong. Is this because we are conditioned to feel certain ways, or because the sounds have an intrinsic impact on human beings? Genesis would be the last to tell us. For, even if the body is programmed at birth to respond a certain way, who is to say we can't program it to respond in another? Everything is up for grabs.

This philosophy, alone, permeating through Genesis's work and lifestyle (or should we just say "life"?), may be responsible for his enormous success in mobilizing an army of young people into a youth culture dedicated to re-engineering the world in which we live.

Throbbing Gristle and, eventually, its successor, *Psychic TV*, generated a fan base unlike anything seen before. These weren't fans, exactly, but initiates. Young people who felt powerless in one way or another, and who saw in Genesis's work and ideas the opportunity to seize control of the language, images, and sounds of modern life.

By introducing so-called "modern primitive" aesthetics to the body ornamentation and dress of what had by then become the Industrial Movement, Genesis gave his audiences a chance to participate in forms of personal re-engineering they had formerly never thought possible. No, piercing one's nose or genitals in itself may not hold any innate magical power, but breaking one's own preconditioned aversion to body modification may just reprogram one's passive relationship to circumstance and existing power structures.

Genesis led the way, his own body a canvas and bisexual sigil. His multiply pierced genitals and deeply scarred and tattooed arms and chest served as ample evidence of his commitment to make the seemingly inviolable into plastic. He broke unquestioned sacred truths in order to reclaim that which was truly and individually sacred. And thousands followed suit. (Yes, from *Throbbing Gristle* right through to *21 Jump Street*, Genesis was responsible for the emergence of body modification in counter and then popular culture.)

His open invitation for anyone to join him in this re-appropriation of power, by any means necessary, led to unexpected results. *Psychic TV*'s "fan club," *Thee Temple Ov Psychic Youth*, despite being anti-hierarchical became something of a cult. It turned out that many young people, having disengaged from the official parent figures of their childhood, now felt the need to project a kind of parental authority onto Genesis.

And Genesis's provocations, though designed to promote autonomous thinking and unleash the power associated with breaking cultural repression, tended to create blind obedience in those

who weren't quite ready to embrace the implications of a magical lifestyle. Genesis invited fans to clip a few pubic hairs and then send them to him for his archives, and many welcomed it as a kind of surrender, rather than the shared community sigil that Genesis had intended. Genesis's invitation to join him in recreating by a series of conscious choices, an infinitely malleable, multi-dimensional consensus reality through group invocation and incantation was translated by the media and unfortunately by less realized fans as a one-dimensional dark power trip.

Things got out of control when Genesis and Psychic TV made a strange little series of films that included some deliberately ambiguous, ritualized erotic scenarios that were carefully designed to demonstrate the latent disinformational power of TV editing and the potential to generate hallucinations embedded in the core of that medium itself. His original intention was to show how real he could make the film seem; how video cut-and-paste had become a language in its own right capable of deluding and deceiving the viewer, and to create a program that tested the boundaries of decency. An extreme right-wing Christian propagandist seized upon the film as conclusive evidence that Genesis, "the most evil man in Great Britain," and his sick followers were engaging in genuine satanic rituals. In a moment of supreme irony, the same propagandist edited a national TV documentary that featured sensationalized outtakes from the original fictional footage, presenting them as fact!

So shocking, and effective, was this broadcast fabrication that a police investigation followed, along with a raid of Genesis's infamous archives. Whilst he and his family were in Nepal during the raid, working in the eastern equivalent of a soup kitchen feeding lepers and Tibetan refugees. Someone from Scotland Yard warned Genesis, off the record, that he'd be arrested, or worse, if he returned to England. He moved to California, instead.

Genesis learned the hard way that art which attempts to re-engineer reality often does so—but not quite as the artist expects. Entrenched reality has a way of kicking back, hard.

I first met Genesis shortly after his arrival in the States. I was driving to Los Angeles from San Francisco to spend a little time with Timothy Leary, who suggested I give Genesis and his daughters a ride down the coast. Genesis had planned to spend a few days with Tim, in the hope of getting a little counsel from the man whose own former countercultural adventures and media antics had led to "the most dangerous man in America," as well as a bit of jail time.

I found Genesis in a parking lot with his two young daughters Gammie and Genesse. He was positively delicate. Tiny and frail—not at all the pierced monster I had imagined when listening to his records and perusing the photos in his books. Sure, he had been through a lot,



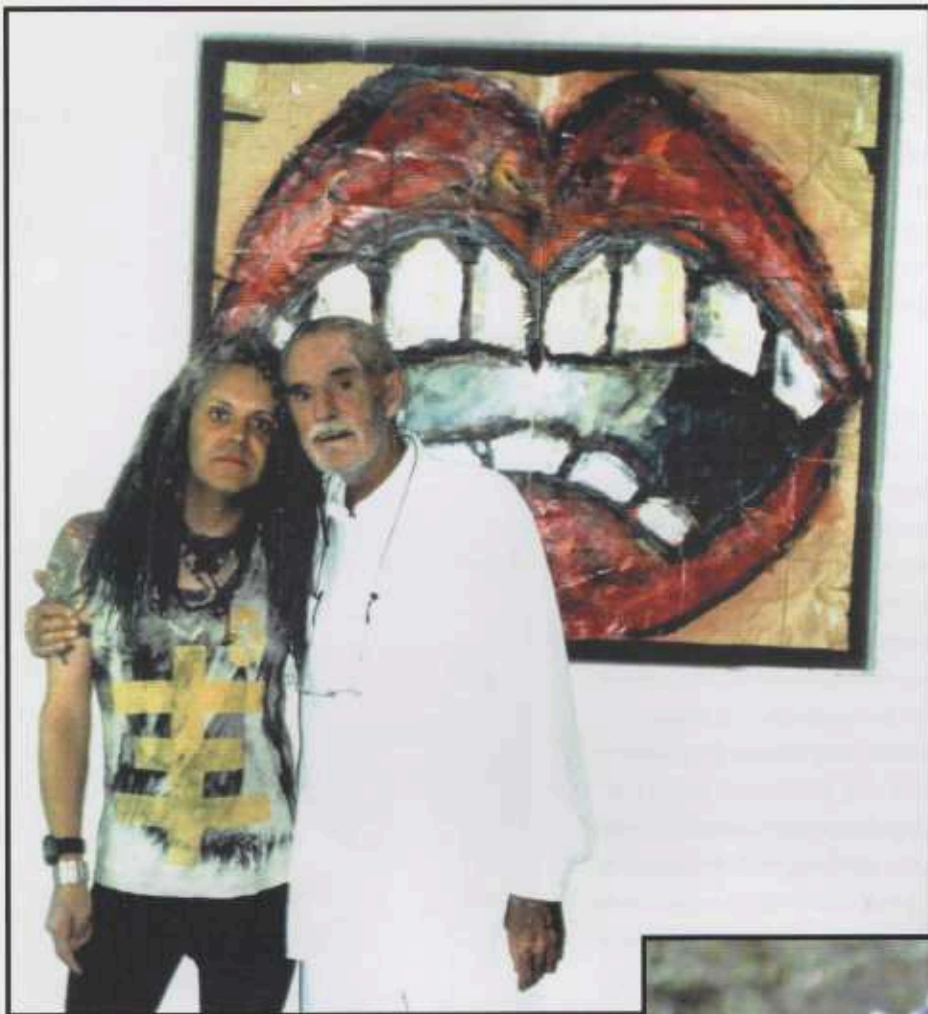
"Infrared Bucket," expanded poem, 1970.



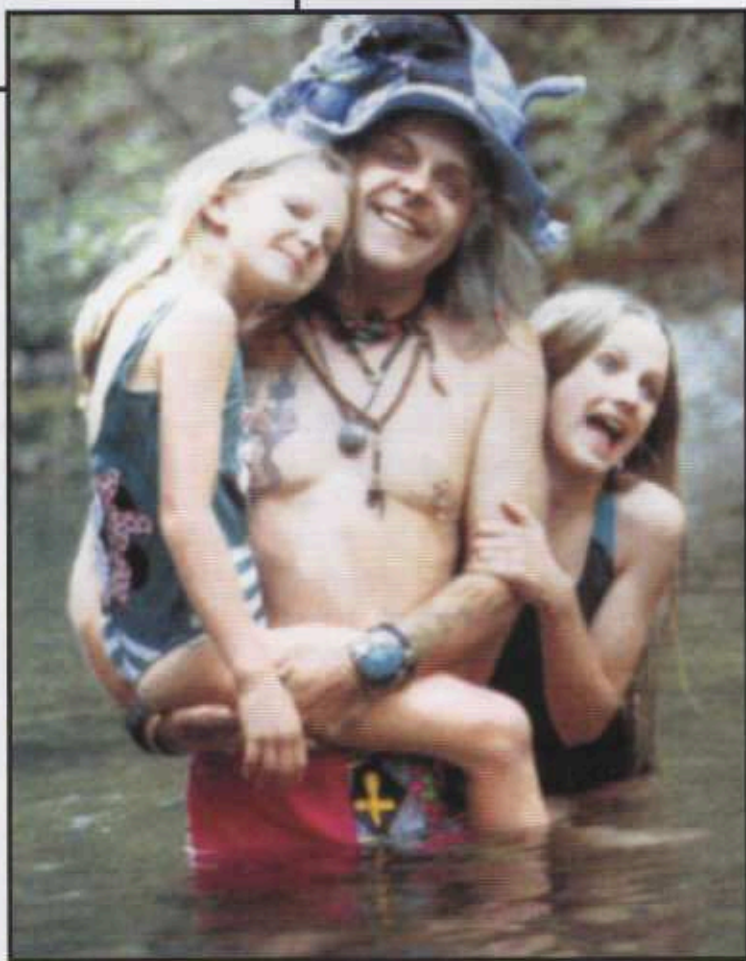
"Playing Cards" Collage, 1995.



"Alien Brain" sculpture, 1971.

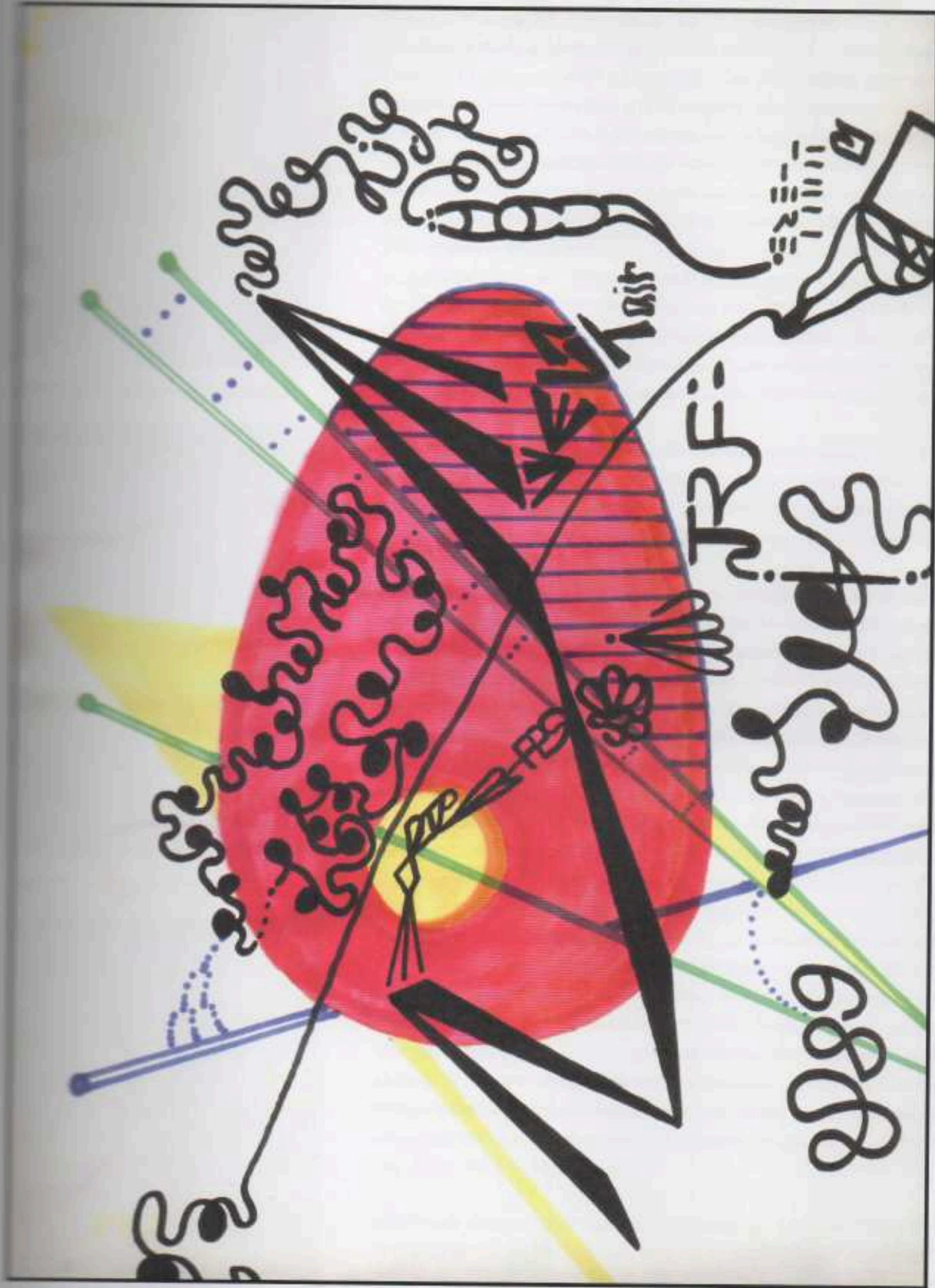


Genesis with Dr. Timothy Leary, 1994.



Genesse, Genesis, and Caresse, Cazadero, California, 1992.





"True Seed Poem #2," 1971.

and was a bit strung out as a result, but this was not a demonic magician. He was more of a little imp. A hippy-come-dandy.

We talked for hours in the car—seven hours, actually, because we took a few very wrong turns. And, as I listened to him recount his saga, I realized that Genesis was not a musician, a writer, or even a collagist any more than he was a performance artist. Gen's life was his art project. An experiment in finding the ill-defined margins or conflicting codes in our cultural scheme and then mining them for their untapped voltage. At the moment, he had been zapped by it.

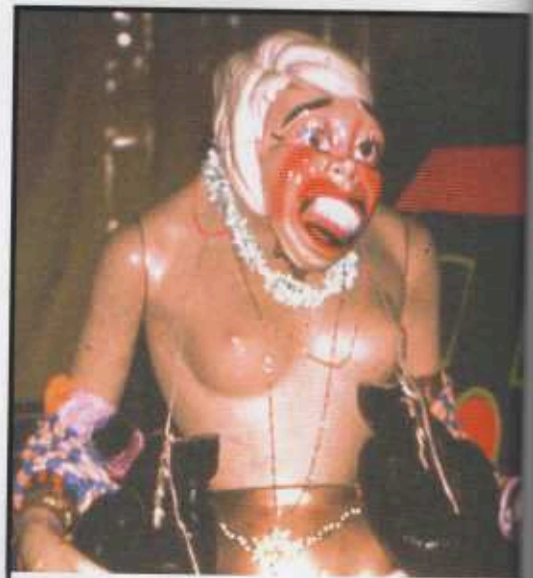
How very strange for me to watch him reconcile his art with his life. In between diatribes about the British monarchy's dependence on magic and language for its power, he'd ask me to stop the car so he could get a snack for one of his daughters, or to gently scold them for fighting in the back seat. He was a daddy, just like any other dad.

Most of all, I realized that Genesis P-Orridge is not scary. He's a sweetie. A trickster, for sure, but not a demon from hell. Just a guy on the edge—living there in order to show the rest of us where that edge is.

His forays into Industrial music were seminal not just for the sounds he found, but for his purposeful exploitation of those sounds for very new reasons. His commitment to appropriation was as important as the work of Andy Warhol in inspiring Malcolm McLaren to conceive of his meta-art band, the Sex Pistols. His notion of engineering sound to create physical, psychic, and magical responses in listeners was as important as the Acid Test music of the Grateful Dead and the electronic experiments of Kraftwerk in launching the rave movement. It was Genesis who reworked and applied the insights of Aleister Crowley to popular music gatherings, telling dancers to "revel in your bliss."

Of course such an invitation is absolutely contrary to the working order of a civilization in which the human impulse is not to be trusted. Genesis instructs us to break boundaries and create our own narratives, while our religions and governments insist that human beings, left to their own devices, will rape and pillage one another. Genesis challenges us to co-author the collective story. He insists that if we don't create reality ourselves, someone, somewhere, will surely do it for us. And that person will not have our best interests at heart.

This position itself is what has been known as "evil" for the past 2000 years. If Genesis is demonic, it is by this definition, alone. And if the autonomy he insists we take back is a sinful thing, then count me among the sinners, too. But for those who believe in absolutes—those who have accepted the arbitrary polarities masquerading these days as ethical truths—Genesis's almost Gnostic proposition that it is we



"Amplified Nude Lady," sculpture, Hull, 1972.



"Alien Brain's Telephone," sculpture, 1972.



"Alien Brain Sign", sculpture, 1972.



"Perfect #1." Expanded Polaroids,  
Breyer P-Orridge, 2002.



"Shoe Sculptures", 2002.

humans who are charged with creating reality amounts to blasphemy. For Genesis, it's the essence of creativity. That's why he renamed himself "Genesis," after all. (The P-Orridge part is a tribute to the breakfast food that he credits with curing his childhood disease.)

Genesis went on hiatus for a couple of years, and considered the other polarities he might next dissolve. He settled on sex, and announced to me that he had embarked on breaking the boundary between what we think of as "man" and "woman," again using his own body as a canvas. He underwent electrolysis on most of his face, and began cross-dressing so convincingly that most waiters referred to him as "ma'am."

He had decided, at one point, to have breasts implanted. "You're going to become a 'chick with dick?'" I asked. "No," he corrected me with a puckish grin. "I'll be a man with tits."

This is when Genesis embarked on his latest series of paintings and prints, variations and perspectives on women penetrating one another with dildos, his own pierced penis held between metallic fingers, and other images of sadomasochism, or bondage and domination.

These are not merely fetishistic titillations, but abstractions so removed from the context in which they were actually photographed as to be unrecognizable. The most extremely polarized sexual acts, obscured and recontextualized into soft, non-narrative landscapes of flesh and leather. Viewers must tilt their heads and squint to satisfy their trained expectations for content. Who is the man and who is the woman? We ask ourselves. Who is penetrating whom?

Genesis often augments these works with the props that were used to stage the scenes. The instrument that was once inside his anus, or a string of beads that were once inside a vagina rest on pedestals in front of the pictures in which they appear. Breaking time along with sex, these objects are elevated at once to historical artifacts and all-too-present reminders of what took place whenever it was the photos were first taken.

These objects also conflate mythos—the mythical realm in which the artistic moment occurred—and chronos—the historical reality of their objectified use in the real world. Are these sacrificial objects or the tools of this artisan's trade? Religious talismans or simply used sex toys? Or, God help us, both?

Genesis's paintings are also hung at various levels throughout a gallery space, so that viewers must crouch and contort themselves in order to see them. Only a few probably realize that the positions they are forced to assume mirror the same positions of the sex partners in the paintings themselves. The viewer recapitulates the kinesthetic of the artwork.

As the disruptor of accepted boundary conditions and, as a result,



"Putting Your Money where Your Mouth Is,"  
2001-02.



Vagina Dentata bag, 1973.

the generator of altogether new forms, Genesis will be fully understood only as his innovations are, themselves, appropriated by other artists. Only then—as when we watch multi-pierced and tattooed kids on Jerry Springer, or someone like Marilyn Manson or Trent Reznor, today—will we be able to reckon with the aesthetic upheavals and cultural violations that Genesis has perpetrated.

For now, we must content ourselves with the clues he leaves for us in the relationship between his own life and the life he portrays on stage and on the canvas. It is a seamless continuum—an internally consistent world where the only rule is that nothing is sacred. Appropriate, demystify, and then reassemble the component parts into a sigil that must be engaged with wholeheartedly in order to be understood. Such engagement requires us to abandon, at least for a moment, the dualities and boundaries we have been preconditioned to expect. And in doing so, we unwittingly extend his magick a bit further.

To interact with Genesis's work is to interact with Genesis, himself.

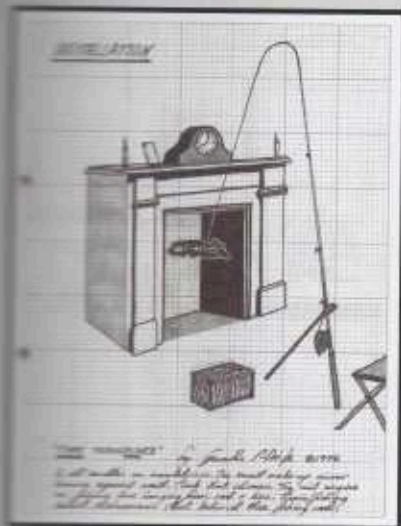
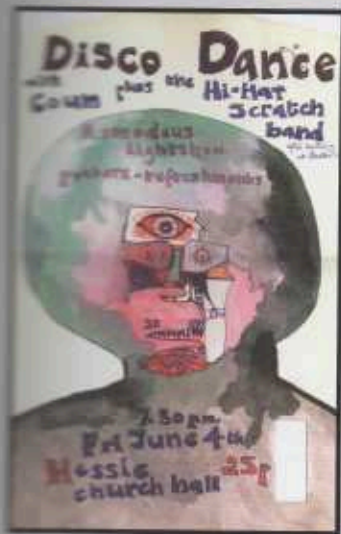
Late one night, in a particularly distressed and abstract moment, I shared with Genesis the contours of one of my own immediately pressing confrontations with what seemed to be the darker side of my consciousness. He leaned back in his chair and smiled, revealing a mouth filled with freshly gilded teeth. Priest or devil? I was unsure.

I feared for an instant I had confessed my vulnerability to a man who had the power to abuse me, if he wished. But I had lost my bearings, and Gen had no doubt once been right here, himself. I needed context from somewhere. Anywhere. The boundaries were all broken. What was up and what was down? Where did good and evil fit?

"Well, Douglas," he said in a deep, even tone. "There's something I remind myself of at times like this: The only good trip, is a bad trip."

Douglas Rushkoff writes about culture, values, media, and art. His most recent novel, *Exit Strategy*, was published by Soft Skull Press. His next non-fiction book, *Nothing Sacred*, will be published by Crown in 2003. For more information about Douglas visit [www.rushkoff.com](http://www.rushkoff.com).

# CHANGING COMPOSITIONS. BY CARL ABRAHAMSSON



It's impossible to evaluate the art of Genesis P-Orridge by simply looking at one field of activity, one set of tools. He is one of those rare artists whose entire life and career is one great, evolving artwork, and the specific activities but parts thereof.

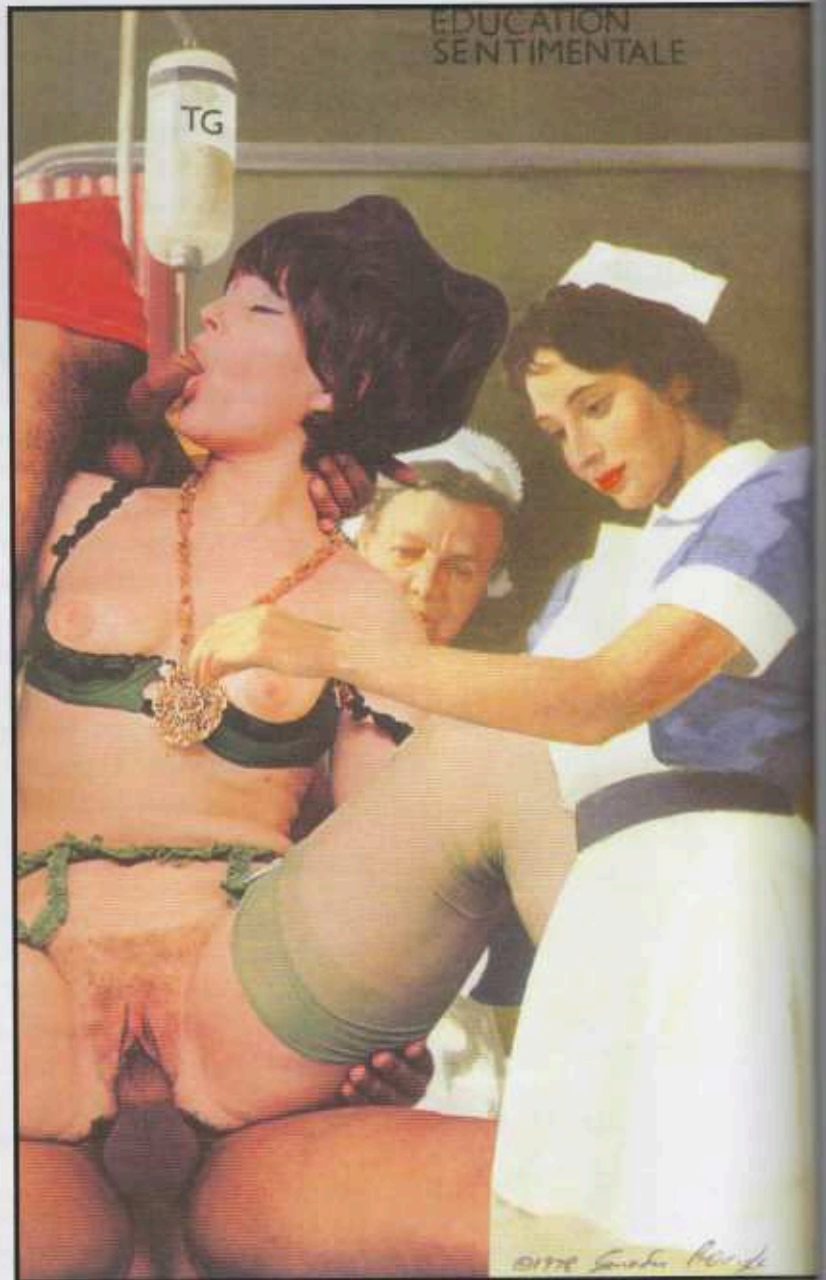
In essence, Genesis P-Orridge is a thinking man, a thinking artist, a philosopher. Although in many ways technically intuitive and often willing to cooperate with others, the spark is always a single, defined P-Orridgean idea—a reflection or an impression he feels a need to filter through and, most important of all, to recreate, to reshape. A thought most often takes shape through words, and it was in and through words he started out on his expressive and, one should add, impressively productive journey.

A tender teenage poet steeped in romantic fantasies about the artist's way of life, P-Orridge contributed to poetry contests and small publications. While at the University of Hull, the fields of romance expanded and, slowly but surely, some kind of general vocation grabbed hold of his creative essence. Together with friends, he actively embraced the lifestyle he'd dreamt about. They lived in freedom, in a freedom of impression and expression, and with a will to evolve by trial and error. Poor perhaps, but still free to define and refine themselves daily.

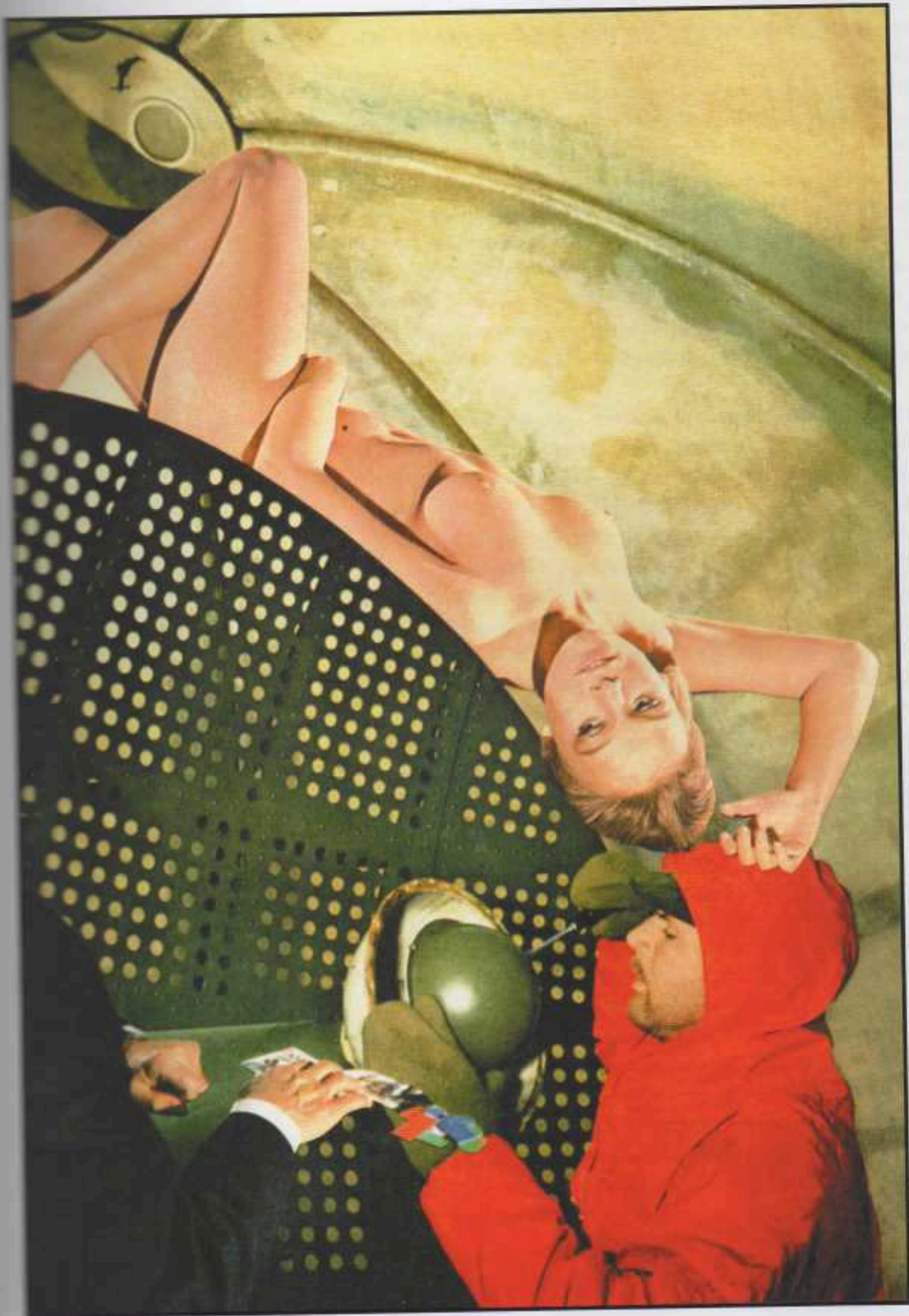
Spontaneous performances, mail art, collages, and redefinitions of sets of art history took P-Orridge on to new levels of realisation. The greatest realisation was never the manifestations per se, but rather the curious effects they had. All of a sudden things began to happen. There was an interest in his work and in his person. The synchronistic revelations dawned upon him at about the same time as an active interest in esotericism and magic did. He read and studied material on occultism all through his youth and was fascinated not so much by the lure and romance of medieval magicians, cloaked in robes and waving wands, as by the apparent changing ability the human mind and activities actually have.

In P-Orridge's mind, it wasn't enough to just work with self expression through various kinds of interesting media, as did other emerging artists around him. The Art in itself had to also be in touch with a higher essence, a sense of worth that transcends the current market value on the art scene. Without having fully realised it at the time, Genesis P-Orridge had formulated his vision, his quest, as pursuing a path of talismanic and transcendental art.

In synthesis, the esoteric awareness and the realisation that art can actually cause change, made P-Orridge focus more on collage work. He applied on photos from newspapers and weeklies the cut-up methods his mentors William Burroughs and Brion Gysin applied on writing and painting, respectively. With inexpensive materials readily at hand, P-Orridge started constructing and deconstructing his own graphic universe, often sending the results out to friends as "mail art."



left, Sigil Rituals, 1982–86.  
above, mail art collage, 1981, from the collection of  
Jean-Pierre Turmel.  
right, "Discreet Reflection of the Past," collage, 1974.



In being an active component in the UK mail art movement, P-Orridge learnt an invaluable lesson—that of the importance of networking, of sharing material and of letting go of the specific works of art regardless of financial interests. He knew they would have no “effect” if not sent out by will into the universe. The more he did this, the more he did receive himself from artists and groups of like mind. The willingness to share and leave seeds, “talismans”, for others became P-Orridge’s own fertile ground. Although agreeing at one point to work as an editor of a massive *Who’s Who* of the contemporary art scene, P-Orridge’s general disdain with career oriented chameleons increased. The Career Concept so indiscriminately cherished by later “postmodern” artists had found no resonance in the budding P-Orridge. Instead, form, method, illumination, will, experimentation and network feedback became the precious cornerstones of his own sardonic but loving canvas of psychedelic colors and fragmented existentialism.

As his performance-focused group COUM Transmissions merged with the musical Zeitgeist-mirror of Throbbing Gristle, the cut-up and collage modus operandi was woven into soundscapes ranging from chilling, cynical, fragile, horrifying to the primitively beautiful. In the stark but often subtle descriptions of everyday joys and horrors, P-Orridge’s collage methods were applicable on and in any medium. The success of Throbbing Gristle, in Genesis P-Orridge’s mind, was not as strange and unexpected a phenomenon as it was to the rest of the music world and art communities in Europe and the United States. His opening up to societal and cultural influences and tendencies as an active art antenna, and his churning and jumbling about of contradictory fragments of “realpolitikal” impressions, had undoubtedly created a platform of creativity on many tangible levels. As a result, he was curious to see where the process would take him next. Or, rather, where he would like to take it next.

A major influence on P-Orridge at the time (late ‘70s/early ‘80s) was the English artist Austin Osman Spare (1888-1956). Perhaps not so much in medium or form—Spare was a skilled draughtsman and painter of portraits and fantastic visions—but definitely in attitude and in using art to achieve specific results. Spare was an isolated fellow who wrote about, drew and painted magical “sigils.” The theory behind this was to construct a unique “alphabet of desire”, either through pictograms, entirely new words or paintings concocted from letters, images and visions from dreams. To then send the image or whatever graphical matrix was created “back” to realm of the subconscious, where, according to Spare, it begot a life of its own and manifested the contained desire.

Spare’s blend of psychological hipness, i.e., Freud and Jung (or “Fraud” and “Junk”, as he ironically called them), Nietzschean philosophy, prolific sexual activity and the recommended ritual, practi-







cal application through art had a great effect on P-Orridge. After having experimented more and more with Sparean techniques, he ventured on from Throbbing Gristle to Psychic TV and "The Temple ov Psychick Youth". A creation of leading minds in the P-Orridgean sphere at the time, the group, usually called "TOPY", grew in number and has since been academically recorded in the history of esoteric movements. Where most people and critics, especially in the music industry and in British media, regarded the operation as a sordid and sexually suspect framework within the sphere of the Psychic TV-collective, seriously inclined esotericists from many traditions nodded their heads in approval and thought of the fresh "magical order" as something bringing Austin Spare's ideas and techniques to a wider audience.

Although loose in structure and specifically encouraging individual initiative, TOPY-groups popped up all over the Western world. Main administrators, including P-Orridge, decided to move away from the (anti)structure in 1991, but groups still exist and new ones seem to be appearing. The ten-year span between 1981 and 1991 included arranging "occultural" events, concerts, publications, records, exhibitions and just basically sowing the creative seeds of those involved. P-Orridge's past experiences of hippy-esque openness and mail art networking with a free flow of information and art blended surprisingly well with the almost austere look and design that was presented in the early TOPY material. His past experiments with talismanic art now reached a pinnacle, in that it no longer just extended from Genesis P-Orridge to a specific receiver. The ritual technology and the philosophy behind it were soberly presented as matters of fact, so that anyone interested could try them out and see if they worked. The filter of a tangible "personal expression" was, temporarily, put on the shelf in the loosely knit group that, at times, resembled paramilitary units more than avant garde artists.

One of the uniting agents among those dedicated to the TOPY ideals was a distinctly Sparean activity: "Sigillising." At 2300 hours on the 23rd of every month (no doubt a sign of appreciation of the Burroughsian influence in P-Orridge's cosmos), several hundred individuals performed, individually or jointly, a sexual ritual. Focusing on something desired, the TOPY initiates used the energy of the orgasm to charge a "sigil"—quite frequently a piece of paper—"results" of the moment of "vacuity" (semen, vaginal fluids, even hair, pubic hair, blood, and saliva) were used to invest the self made artwork with a unique signature. Not only unique from the perspective of the creator, but also from that of the vacuous moment. Something that has been widely overlooked by scholars penetrating the TOPY phenomenon is that of the ritual art experiment. To make art has always been Genesis P-Orridge's main focus, but critics have seldom been able to leave the specific manifestation and instead see the phenomenon and its relation to the actual life of the artist. Basically P-Orridge wanted, in and with TOPY, to share found

facts that had been proven usable for whatever purpose for himself. In doing this, he also, both directly and indirectly, helped create a truly weird and unique collection of art, including his own. Currently archived at locations in Europe and the United States are thousands of charged artworks—cum-talismans sent in to TOPY administrative offices from almost ten years of monthly sigilisation by hundreds of individuals. If this is not a unique collection of individual expression, often dealing with the most minute and most intimate details of the specific persons' lives, it's hard to say what is!

P-Orridge's main channel of expression between 1982 and the mid-90s was the multifaceted music of *Psychic TV*. Although PTV carried on in the wake of an increasing interest in *Throbbing Gristle*, P-Orridge didn't want to hang on to or profit from the fact. Instead, he jumped head on into an experiment that would take him from fragile pop songs, dark, ritualistic, tribal soundtracks, rock'n'roll pastiches in the UK charts, acid house and other chemical derivations at huge raves to more subdued spoken word-ventures. There is, in this slightly fragmented PTV-corpus, a clear and visible path that existed before and has remained afterwards: Intellectual notions and ideas are cut up and filtered through divine, altered states of mind and the end result shared as both definites and indefinites—as both products and processes. One of P-Orridge's slogans during the PTV and TOPY-days was, fittingly enough, "Thee Process is thee Product." In this, echoing both the detached attitude of Andy Warhol and the ancient esoteric wisdom that the path is more important than the goal, the striving more important and ennobling than the achievement.

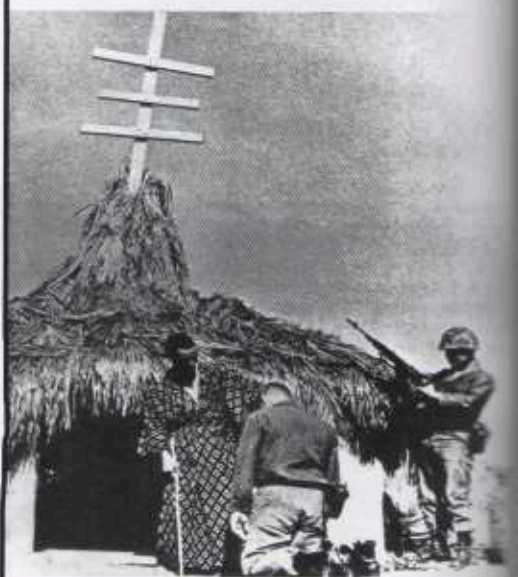
Music is a medium louder than most. In all of P-Orridge's aural work, from the morose, psychic soundscapes of *Throbbing Gristle*, over the subversion of pop and dance music in *Psychic TV*, to his most recent and perhaps most accessible project, *Thee Majesty*, there has also been a consistent theme of reassemblage. Noir historic references, conscious contextual contradictions and, more often than not, an intellectually based choice process have jointly created very influential experimental sounds and experiences. This also applies to his writings, expressed in a multitude of underground as well as overground art magazines. The mixture of esotericism, existentialism, cut-ups and a dark sense of humour has helped define him as both a writer of radical art theory and experimental occultism. The early obsession with words and language has followed P-Orridge all through his life and work and constitutes yet another fascinating thread of dynamic consistency. For more than two decades, circa 1970–1995, writing journals, poems, lyrics, articles, inspired litanies against the controlling forces of society and culture per se wasn't enough. The transformation of language through consciously altered spellings was a highly contributing factor to the fascinating qualities of the texts in themselves and to the



Alex Fergusson, John Gosling, Jordi Valls, Bee Genesis, and Caresse in foreground, 1984.



Sign sculpture, 1982.

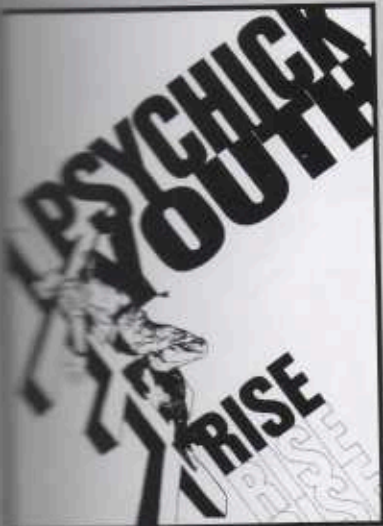


From "Thee Grey Book", 1982.

BRIAN JONES



Died For Your Sins



ever growing enigma of P-Orridge's person. Adding an e to the word *the*, changing the personal *I* to *E*, a year to *yera*, *but* to *butter*, of to *ov*, *sometime* to *COUM time*... To a certain extent these examples seem to be mere humorous alterations, but in many cases were very deliberate and talismanic changes. The word *Ov*, for instance, meaning "sperm" in Latin, was deliberately chosen not only for its similarity on a phonetic level, but for its inherent meaning.

"Everyone present was actively colluding in a ridicule *ov* bourgeois order and a celebration *ov* thee ecstatic. Those administering sound sources acted merely as catalysts to allow everyone present -themselves included- to become part *ov* a transcendental moment. Ego forgotten, thee situation transient, *butter* thee ecstasy and experience fixed in our subconscious forever."<sup>1</sup>

Most major TOPY texts, whether actually authored by P-Orridge or not, are permeated by these weird but effective changes. It's as if the enforced concentration needed reveals new layers of meanings and methods that simply wouldn't be there had everything been "normal". The "semiotic cut-ups" on these most minute levels aren't "syntax errors" as much as they are "memetic pathfinders." A new language was not invented, but rather a new way—a most revealing one—of regarding what has been handed down to us from previous generations and control structures. History gives that words and language have been the most powerful tools ever, for good or bad, and decidedly more so than technology or economy. *History*, by the way, in Genesis P-Orridge's pansexual mind goes by the name *Astory*, to even out the overt patriarchal flavour of *His Story*....

The written material, and most definitely the musical material, have quite unfortunately overshadowed P-Orridge's graphical work. His well renowned skill in visually mutating given messages and images echoes the gleeful Dada approach of Raul Hausmann as well as the piercing political statements of John Heartfield. In his transmuting everyday objects and reflections into art and thereby questioning the Sanctum Sanctorum—the contemporary art scene and its relentless commodifying and corrupting qualities—there is also a strong Duchampian current in P-Orridge's general *anschauung*.

"I believe that art is the only form of activity in which man as man shows himself to be a true individual. Only in art is he capable of going beyond the animal state, because art is an outlet toward regions which are not ruled by time and space. To live is to believe; that's my belief, at any rate."<sup>2</sup>

The above quote from Marcel Duchamp could just as well have been exclaimed by the soft Mancunian voice of Genesis P-Orridge. Although I think P-Orridge would hasten to "region" not ruled by

time and space. No wonder both these regions have been so successfully merged in his life, affecting each other to the point where no singular one is clearly perceived anymore.

"Art supplies all the material which Science exploits. Formula is subsequent to Inspiration.", wrote Austin Spare in his *Book of Pleasure*.<sup>3</sup>

P-Orridge most certainly agrees, as a long time and active enforcer of awakening "the third mind" by juxtaposing or clashing two minds, objects, phenomena, thoughts, feelings, etc. By standing in the middle of the own idea and its opposition, new ideas and inspirations occur. By using found facts and presenting them to both admmissive and restricting energies within, new inspirations and truths emerge in the creative genesis: "Within all thee stories, songs, metaphors, parables, archetypes and myths are actual descriptions ov all salient events and facts, formulae and processes. There is no possibility, in this sense, ov fiction, everything is true."<sup>4</sup>

In his collage works, P-Orridge has frequently and consistently "sampled" cultural history. By the new results, the actual finished works, he has represented both himself and "objective" history. An example: A woodcut-looking collage with a portrait of the Marquis de Sade in prison, transformed to a skull, side by side with the trademark "Psychic TV skull" and a person in bondage at a cross. At the bottom of the image is a photo of P-Orridge himself, looking up at the gruesome three human apparitions and being flanked by a feather pen the size of himself. It's both an intellectually and emotionally provocative image that reflects the moment of creation and the sum of his thoughts at the time. His own image is perfectly balanced with that of the PTV skull. The other diagonal is marked by the mutated de Sade and the bondage cross. Does this newly created cross of libertines and memento moris constitute a symbol of redemption or one of hindrance? Is the feather pen included as a kind of safety valve in the midst of a world of restrictions and inhibitions, the tool of liberation to use as de Sade once used it? As with all P-Orridge's collages, there are as many new questions as possible answers. This has, all along the way, been a conscious attempt of his: Never to impose, never to blatantly state, but always to present the possibilities, successes, failures and treasures of his own findings, in the hope that it will be of help, or at least act as an inspiration, to others.

Whether the collages or sigils are in black and white or taken from colour sources, P-Orridge succeeds to create a psychedelic impression that allows the viewer to, for the lack of a better word, interpret the overall image in question in more ways than one. There is always a theme, even if it isn't obvious at first sight to the viewer. The theme is here a central part of the "charge", the talismanic agent of the "hex" of his work. This is distinctly clearer in his graphical work than in his writings or music.



Tattoo design, 1985.



D.A.F. de Sade

Collage, 1978.



Throbbing Gristle, live, 1979.



"Come To Exist #4," LAICA, Los Angeles, California, 1976.

Not every artist active in collage work manages to more or less immediately short circuit the perception and the interpretation processes. Although always a champion of chance elements and chance meetings, P-Orridge learnt the cut-up lesson from Gysin and Burroughs well: It's important which specific sources you use, whether they be words, images, or musical samples. Although this could naturally be regarded as "editing" from a conservative Dada perspective (if there is such a thing!), the P-Orridgean mind works on in the tradition of specific, focused and active research.

His work is metaphysical, metapsychic, and meta-real in that sense. He learns not by simply absorbing but by absorbing and regurgitating, to watch the outcome and then integrate that, only to digest and present again, and so on, ad infinitum in one great associative webscape.

How this attitude relates to the actual times of his emergence on the art scene is an interesting question. Although most young artists of the late '60s, including P-Orridge, felt an admiration for the irony and detachment of the pop artists, many of them reacted by delving into deep psychic—some would say primordially primitive—strata. One interesting parallel to P-Orridge's attitude would be that of the Wiener Aktionisten, primarily Günther Brus and Hermann Nitsch. Nitsch's rejection of commodified "bourgeois" art by arranging ecstatic, pagan, and bloody performances of Roman proportions in many ways echoes the more subtle and poetic performances of COUM Transmissions. Nitsch's work with blood on canvas predates the TOPY concept of blood and semen in charged sigils. Also, in regard to the "regurgitation" process in P-Orridge's intuitive method, the filmed documentation of Günther Brus eating, vomiting, eating the vomit, etc. to the point of frenzy and complete exhaustion is not a far-fetched allegory to the modus operandi of Genesis P-Orridge. I would say this comparison is valid also in a more literal sense, as P-Orridge himself has always been an outspoken and controversial taboo-breaker and boundary-thrasher, even to the point of risking his own life.

"By investigating our blocks, inhibitions, real desires and motivations in preconceived moments of Time set aside to explore thresholds of perception and response to check exactly what one's limits are and decide if they are one's REAL limits, or merely convenient or coumplacent, we can re-assemble and discard as we wish."<sup>5</sup>

P-Orridge's conscious use of himself as tool is probably the most difficult aspect to pinpoint, but, at the same time, probably the most important. The greatest insights, those that have led him to new and further transcending and transgressing, have come through work on and with his physical body. In COUM, the performances together with Cosey Fanni Tutti opened up and acknowledged vistas of dreams and otherworldly realms. Sometimes brutal,

sometimes serene, the experiences always had something important to convey to him. In *Throbbing Gristle*, his mad, aggressive and unexpected performances echoed and accompanied the music sublimely, led to spontaneous trances and, on some occasions, to near death experiences. All fodder for new ideas and creations, no doubt!

In *TOPY*, P-Orridge and cohorts were champions of tattooing, body piercing and body modifications of unlikely proportions to most "normal" folks. That all of these primal, primordial and distinctly tribal trance experiments would lead to trends and fads surpassing even the wildest imagination of Genesis P-Orridge himself, goes to prove that his initial intention to make art that substantially affects the outer universe has indeed been very successful.

P-Orridge's American experiences in the late '90s paved the way for more overt experimentation with the final and most sacrosanct of boundaries—that of gender and sexuality. His will to eradicate sexual distinctions that, in his mind, only serve to keep individuals in gender-based line and thereby experience less faceted points of views and emotions, again brought himself and his own body to the center of experimentation. A collection of P-Orridge's poetry, published in Kathmandu in 2000, is aptly called *S/HE IS HER/IE*.<sup>6</sup> Not so much a punny play with words as a declaration of faith from someone who loves natural distinctions as much as he loathes oppressive use of them.

We can easily regard Genesis P-Orridge's entire life and his massive body of work as one single and dynamic *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The mastering of technical aspects has never been as important as the constant urge to try out new things, to move on into uncharted territory. The changing compositions and directions of P-Orridge thereby eloquently mirror our multifaceted and quite often confused culture and civilization in unparalleled intensity. Ancient ideas and theories are put into practice through the latest state of the art technology. Frequencies that knowingly affect the human organism are further filtered through high end samplers. Oils and acrylics are mixed with Polaroids and laser print-outs. The plastic and artificial united with blood and sperm. The art of the archive cabinets digitized. The classic and the modern fused in love by will, to give violent birth to new possibilities, new options and new paths regardless if they at first seem painful, difficult and threatening to convenient and comfortable status quos. P-Orridge's ability to sense where things are going and his almost childishly joyful subversion of given values have provided both anarchic and anachronistic angles in a multitude of provocative artworks. This in combination with an almost proto-Lutheran work ethic of discipline, and with an unusual honesty in relating feelings and thoughts about his own work (including things he regards as failures), constitute an artist who has constantly been on creative adventures since the late 1960s. As friends of his chose safer and more constructed and



"Airborne Spells"  
with Fizzey Paet, London, England, 1974.

convenient paths towards art-fame and art-fortune, P-Orridge would not, and still will not, accept anything but unrefined input and little output.

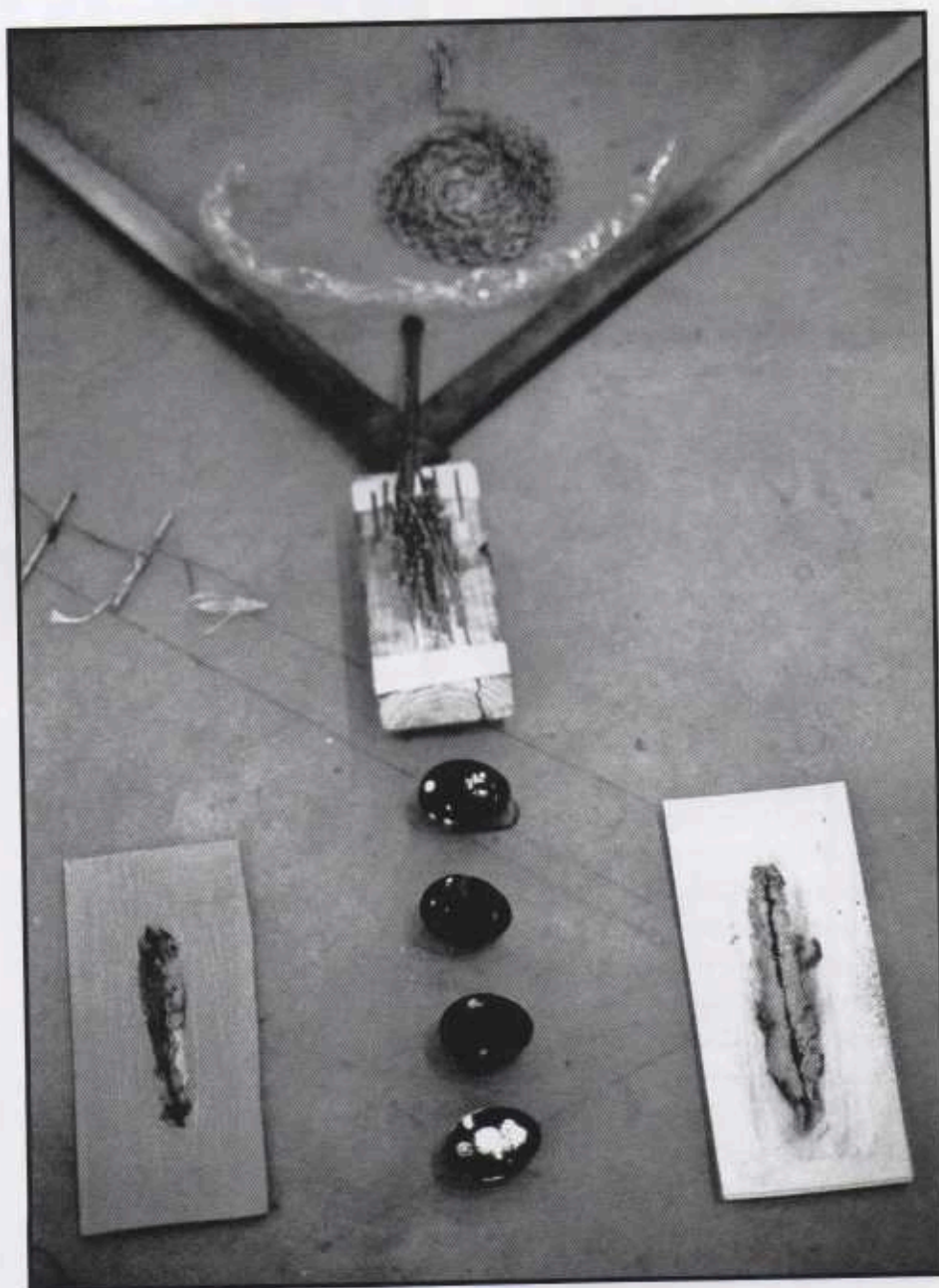
When someone daring enough will eventually produce his *Catalogue Raisonné*, we will again be struck by the multitudes of media and meanings stemming from the mind, will, voice, and vision of Genesis P-Orridge.

-Stockholm, 2002

Carl Abrahamsson is a journalist and photographer working all over the world. He is based in Stockholm, Sweden. He also plays music together with Thomas Tibert as "Cotton Ferox" and has recorded two albums with Genesis P-Orridge, ...At Stockholm (1990) and Wordship (2002). E-mail: carl@ubertext.se and/or websites: www.ubertext.com and/or www.kooks.com

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"Kiss of Nails" LAICA, Los Angeles, 1976.

**EXPOSED**

Evil cult thriving inside a temple

# THIS VILE MAN CORRUPTS KIDS

By SUE BISHOP

**TEENAGE pop fans are being exposed to Satanic rites, sadism and sex by the sickest man in Britain — greedy gutter guru Genesis P. Orridge.**

The leader of rock band Psychic TV models himself on cult murderer Charles Manson and is corrupting thousands of impressionable youngsters.

His self-styled "church", The Temple of Psychic Youth, lures followers into his web of evil.

To them he is a demi-god whose word is law.

But today The People can expose the sordid side to this self-seeking cynic who cares more for money than music.

The 35-year-old father of two:

● **INDULGES** in pornographic rituals with members of his temple.

● **EXPOSES** his two young daughters to sickening scenes of kinky sex, flagellation and ritual scarring. And

● **SENDS** similar video cassette scenes through the post to his temple "worshippers".

He encourages lads to beg for money on the streets and repeatedly demands funds from fans.

One recent pamphlet asked them to sell all their records and send the money to him.

Sex orgies with Temple members are filmed and shown on video screens of his concerts.

His two blonde-haired daughters, Gemma and Carina, aged around five and seven, were on stage at a gig a few weeks ago.

## Groping

They jumped around bestial air just feet away from the video and ten naked dancers who were pawing their father.

Orridge's weirdo wife Paula, a former Tesco check-out girl, was also cavorting on stage.

A music journalist, who was covering the event, said:

It was a sickening sight. Those kids could see sexual groping, Satanic images of Christ burning on the cross and a woman with a snake crawling over her naked body. He is sick.

Videos sent through the post to Temple members include First Transmission.

It shows scenes of a pregnant woman being

## Guru and band

Gutter guru Orridge, leader of the Temple cult, and his rock band Psychic TV



VILE: Genesis P. Orridge models himself on cult murderer Manson

**Demi-god feeds pop fans on sex, sadism, and Devil rites**

led to a dentist's chair and raped and a naked man being orinated on by Orridge.

The cult's initiation rites are stomach-churning.

Orridge, of Stoke Newington, North London, whose real name is Neil Megson, encour-

ages followers to tear their private parts with the double cross which has become the group's symbol, or tattoo it onto their bodies.

One ex-follower said: "He is on an evil power trip. Paula and he do a lot of sleeping around with the fans."

Teenage followers are

believed to have desecrated churches in a mindless "statement" against established religion.

Orridge's former lover, one-time Throbbing Gristle singer Cossey, said he also bootlegged records in his lust for money.

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## MENACE TO PEOPLE GIRL

PEOPLE Investigator Sue Bishop has first hand experience of the menace of Genesis P. Orridge.

She left her home telephone number with crannies of the pop star in a bid to get an interview with him.

A couple of days later someone claiming to be from a local newspaper tricked her boyfriend into giving Sue's home address.

### PEOPLE REPORTER

The next day, after various silent phone calls, a bouquet of flowers arrived — in a blatant attempt to make her boyfriend jealous.

With it came a loving note thanking Sue for a wonderful time.

Then Orridge turned up on Sue's doorstep at

1.30am, dressed in the gold top hat he wears on stage, and woke her up by persistently ringing the doorbell.

She saw he was accompanied by two cronies and rang the police.

They picked him up two streets away and advised him to stop.

The next morning Sue found the double cross symbol nailed to her door.

## Cage this evil pop monster

IT IS difficult to find the words to describe the activities of Genesis P. Orridge and his pop group Psychic TV, revealed on Page 11. But we will try.

Vile, evil, sick and depraved are just a few that come to mind.

The police should now visit one of his shameful shows.

TO PUT AN END TO THEM.



# ANNIHILATING REALITY: AN INTERVIEW WITH GENESIS P-ORRIDGE BY RICHARD METZGER

As the never-ending dialectic of pop culture marches on, neutering and commodifying "rebellion" and "outrage" for mass market consumption, some "rebels" manage to retain their artistic credibility by constantly reinventing themselves and finding new and improved ways of confounding the status quo. One such figure is artist, musician, writer and "cultural engineer" Genesis P-Orridge. For 3 decades now, as a performance artist, as a prime mover behind both "industrial culture" and the early "rave" scene, and as the anti-Pope of his own magicko-religious order, Thee Temple ov Psychic Youth, P-Orridge has infuriated the powers that be with his deliberately provocative and innovative body of work and ideas. His mutant "magickal children"—Marilyn Manson being a fine example—are themselves continuing his policies of mischievous media manipulation the way that P-Orridge himself once studied and enlarged upon the revolutionary templates provided for him by the likes of his own predecessors and heroes like William S. Burroughs, Andy Warhol and Aleister Crowley.

After a near-death experience left him determined to follow his notion of becoming a beatnik writer, the young P-Orridge's instinct for finding other "genetic terrorists" like himself led him to the psycho-therapeutic bootcamp of the Exploding Galaxy/Transmedia commune (which also included filmmaker Derek Jarman). Members were required to sleep in a different location every night, to take meals at different times during the day, and to act out assigned roles and attitudes, often in costume and with unerring earnestness, going so far as to have atypical sexual encounters (in character!) or risk getting badly beaten up if a situation warranted it.

The commune's anarchistic spirit and insistence on life as art and art as life inspired the performance art events of COUM (pronounced "coom") Transmissions. Staged primarily by P-Orridge and part time pin-up model Cosey Fanni Tutti (born Christine Carol Newby, 1951), COUM's outrageous "happenings" were parallel to the work of Viennese Actionist Otto Muehl and Hermann Nitsch's Orgies Mysteries Theater. COUM's shamanic improvisations involving enemas, blood, roses, wire, feathers, sexual intercourse, milk, urine, licking up vomit, crucifixion, maggots and self-mutilation were often not conceptualized until the very moment of the performances, if at all. Indeed, the point often escaped the performers themselves. For P-Orridge and Tutti it was about freeing themselves (and the spectators) of their own taboos by performing benign exorcisms of a sick society's malignancies.

COUM's ephemeral oeuvre was celebrated in an ironic "retrospective" at London's prestigious Institute of Contemporary Art in October of 1976. The show, called "Prostitution"—a wry, multi-leveled commentary on the artist's role in society—consisted of beautifully framed photographs of Cosey cut straight out of the pornographic magazines that she'd posed for; P-Orridge's post-Fluxus



sculpture which utilized her used tampons and photo documentation and props from past COUM actions. Most importantly, the opening night party featured the official debut of the "musique concrete" freakout of Throbbing Gristle.

Great Britain's self-appointed moral guardians, predictably, went apoplectic at COUM's decidedly avant-garde provocation. "Prostitution" became a symbol for everything that was wrong with the country and compounding the furor, the exhibit had been staged at the taxpayer's expense. P-Orridge and Tutti appeared live on primetime television after a week of media overkill with over 100 magazines, newspaper headlines, even cartoons (mostly) denouncing the duo. Tory Member of Parliament Nicholas Fairburn declared the show "a sickening outrage. Obscene. Evil. Public money is being wasted here to destroy the morality of our society. These people are wreckers of civilization!"

All of this, it should be pointed out, was a few weeks before the Sex Pistols swore their way into history at talk show host Bill Grundy's expense and long before Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ" or Karen Finley's yam-stuffed asshole caused similar firestorms in Reagan-era America. "Prostitution" was one of the most highly publicized art scandals of the 20th century and with it "the music of 1984," had arrived a bit early. Throbbing Gristle's "mission of dead souls" had begun.

For Throbbing Gristle, P-Orridge and Tutti were joined by Chris Carter (synthesizers, rhythms) and Peter Christopherson (prepared tapes, electronic percussion). Carter had constructed light shows for bands like Yes and Hawkwind. Christopherson designed album covers as a partner at the legendary '70s design firm, Hipgnosis. P-Orridge played bass, electric violin and fronted the group. Tutti played the guitar. The TG sound ran the gamut from soft (albeit doomy) improvised proto-ambient instrumentals (In the Shadow of the Sun), to punishing rhythms and electronic squall played at top volume layered with P-Orridge's psychotic screaming (Subhuman) to Carter's beloved ABBA influenced synthpop (United). "It was John Cage meets Stockhausen meets the Velvet Underground" P-Orridge says.

The group deliberately encouraged myth and confusion by titling its debut album *Second Annual Report* and its flirtation with quasi-fascist symbolism such as the now familiar red and black TG "electric bolt" logo reminiscent of the National Front symbol and the anarchist flag, further muddied the waters. Lyrically TG continued COUM's policy of not toning down the members' interest in the darker areas of the human psyche. The red light district of London's seedy Soho, deadly viruses, burn victims, mass murderers like Myra Hindley, Ian Brady, and the Manson Family were all grist(le) for the lyrical mill. TG's disturbing obsessions liberated the concept of



With Brion Gysin, Paris, 1980.



No more P. Orridge at the ICA

**YARD ACT OVER THAT  
P. ORRIDGE SEX SHOW**

**Porn squad makes sex show report**

**'Porn show' in £900 grant row**

**British Council attacked for 'porn subsidy'**

**Taxpayer puts the sugar on P. Orridge**

**Arts council head hits at exhibition**

**Protests at use of public money for Contemporary Arts exhibition**

**Sex show report for law chief**

**SEX SHOW REPORT AMAZING FREE TOUR**

**Show is disgusting says arts chief**

**No more state cash for the 'porn art' show**

Evening News

... report for law chief

# WARD ACT VER THAT EX SHOW



THE House of Lords is starting a public...  
... the London...  
... by James P. Strang...

TEARS STRIP OFF  
THE PORNY  
ART SHOW

... demand

... art show

... gallery

Evening News

... MONDAY OCTOBER 25 1976

READERS' LETTERS... THE VOICE OF LONDON

# If this is art —what will happen next

OCT 1976

Evening News

... P. Orridge around Europe

# EX SHOW MAN'S AMAZING FREE TOUR

Moors killer

# HOW SHOCKS EVEN A STRIPPER

It's sick, says  
Shelley as art  
rumpus grows



what could serve as thematic fodder for pop music for all time, yet it was difficult to tell if the group was endorsing their subject matter or just saying "Here it is." The group's dangerous ambiguity was meticulously calculated to force the audience to think—not so much conceptual art, rather it was "deceptual art" as P-Orridge friend, painter Brion Gysin described their work.

It's been said that "the legend of Throbbing Gristle was easily as important as the outbreak of punk," but other than a small handful of substantial articles (RE/Search, Rapid Eye), by and large, COUM and TG's histories are hazy and apocryphal. Now with the publication of books like this one and Simon Ford's authoritative COUM and TG history Wreckers of Civilization, Genesis P-Orridge—one of the last living links to the Beat Generation, it's worth pointing out—is finally getting his due. Not surprisingly it comes at a time when the "sickest man in Britain"—forced into exile by moralist hysteria like Oscar Wilde before him—is at a safe distance, far from England's green and pleasant land and living in New York City.

This interview, conducted by Disinformation's Richard Metzger was originally published in truncated form in World Art magazine.

**Subheading: Nothing Short of a Total War**

**Richard Metzger:** When "Prostitution" was held at the ICA in 1976, this was pretty far-out stuff for such a prestigious public institution or anywhere else for that matter. Not only is the ICA "owned" by the Queen, it's just down the street from Buckingham Palace, so I'm wondering...

**Genesis P-Orridge:** We were almost within spitting distance of Buckingham Palace when we were doing "Prostitution"...

**RM:** And you were spitting on it! The ICA obviously received money to mount the show from Britain's art councils, so the funding for "Prostitution" actually came from the Queen herself, in a manner of speaking, didn't it? Do you think she actually knew about the used tampons and the milk and blood enemas?

**GP-O:** Absolutely! She and I have had a longstanding relationship (laughs)!

She sent three Law Lords down... They tried to do the British diplomacy thing, you know "C'mon, you've had your moment of fun, old chap. If you just calm things down, behave nicely, we'll forget about this." And maybe you'll get more money! (laughs)

Basically, what I replied to these Lords—who were under the administration of the Queen, answerable directly to her—was "Look, you try to close this show down, we'll paint the whole place camouflage. We'll put sandbags outside and declare this a free zone. We'll have a war. You're not coming in, we're not going out. What do you want? Because I will not stop and I will not close



Psychic TV, live, Holland, 1985.



"Ceast To Exist," collage, 1976.

this show down for you, for the Queen, the government, the newspapers or a-n-y-o-n-e. If we have to live in here under siege, we will. And you won't like THAT publicity!" (laughs).

**RM:** Surely you knew what kind of reaction "Prostitution" was going to cause...

**GP-O:** I thought I did. Unbeknownst to the other members, I'd secretly assembled, then surreptitiously utilized, a list of "yellow" journals and journalists—around fifty or so names and addresses... I'd done this before and nothing had happened. I was thinking very much in terms of Dada and Surrealism. Sending out flyers to titillate and arouse. Where just the action of the mailing was an event in and of itself. A souvenir if you like. I've always viewed art as being much closer to sea-side merchandise and memorabilia than it likes to admit. I must confess though, I had no idea that the media would take it so seriously, or that it would turn out to be so serious. It started a cultural war in much the same way as the grievous grenade in Sarajevo did! Which caught all of us off-guard to be honest.

**RM:** Your public life and your art has always been very confrontational...

**GP-O:** No, self-indulgent (laughs). And prepared to have a confrontation as a result of a specific action. I try to be realistic in forecasting the inevitable, such that I can make a calculated decision that I'm aware that confrontation can or probably will occur and I try and have various backup plans in mind even before it occurs. I try to strategize carefully and remain aware that confrontation can occur. There have been times when I've been annoyed and incredibly angry at hypocrisy, but confrontation just for its own sake has never been something I've been interested in, funnily enough.

**RM:** How did Throbbing Gristle develop out of COUM?

**GP-O:** I'd been messing with tape recorders and sounds and raw noise from when I was 12, feeling there was a new way to make music as a band, so it was actually a continuous thread waiting to become a rope. What happened was that suddenly here was the unit of people who absolutely "got" how to do "it" and all of whom could realize it and contribute something that made it much, much better. It was a concept and a spectacle and detail. A lot of detail figured out, and a lot of resonance and reverberation. You still need the right people for it to work and be convincing. And of course, making the vehicle such that it had the ability to accept and to "mediumize" the information that came through.

### Music from the Death Factory

**RM:** Like a séance? How did TG go about preparing to "transmit" these energies?

**GP-O:** Well for a start we all slept together every weekend for a year. We used to make a joke and say "the band that plays together lays together" Here's the thing, this is also, don't forget, a reapplication of the early psy-

chodramas from the days of the Transmedia commune I'd lived with in the '60s. "Here's the uniforms, here's the concept, here's the name, here's the characters, here's the attitude, here's the objective." We will live it. We will live it and commit our lives and our bodies and our souls to it. That's the only way it will work. That's the only way we will find out (whispers) what it is. The medium is manifested by total immersion.

**RM:** Was this sex magick or an attempt to decondition yourselves?

**GP-O:** It was primarily deconditioning and building a sense of separate unity in order to be effective doing the alchemy with the music. I mean after all, you have to remember that we were basically redrawing the global perception of what popular music could be. As it turns out. I mean that was our intent, but it turns out that we actually were. Now that requires an amazing amount of focus and camaraderie and we achieved that.

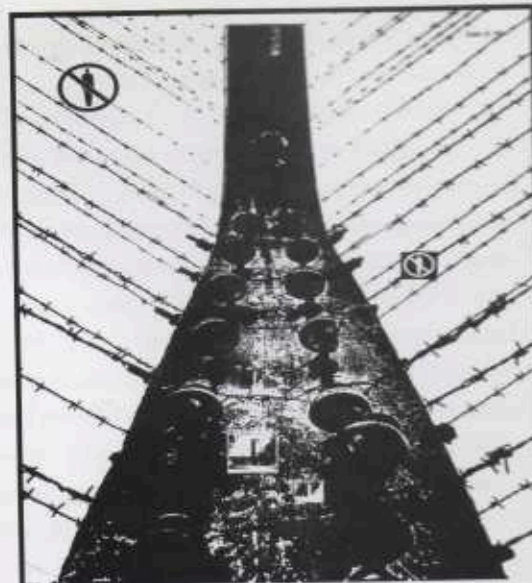
**RM:** How did the TG sound take shape?

**GP-O:** We spent about a year looking for it, waiting for TG to tell us how it sounded. During the weekdays Chris and I would build speakers. I would help him with that because it was kind of manual work, wiring, screwing, sawing wood. He would build effects and synthesizer modules. He rebuilt my bass guitar. And then we would experiment. I would use the space echoes and so on and we would just endlessly feel for noises or sonic effects or volume effects. He would keep on and on telling me all these ideas that he'd read about in electronic magazines and what they might mean and I'd say "Yes! Let's try that one!" or "No, that's boring." "Oh, very high frequencies, doesn't that mean that such and such would happen?" It would be trial and error, discussion, build, experiment. If it was something to do with the effect of the sound on the body he and I would use our own bodies as the guinea pigs.

**RM:** You were trying to break down pure sound in order to gauge its magical effects?

**GP-O:** Well it struck me that the original reasons for music were ritual reasons and that somewhere along the line, if we jump to rock and roll, people started to believe that if the audience got excited and leapt around and felt sexy and wanted to fuck the singer and ripped up the seats, it was because the band was good. Because the singer was sexy. And it was my feeling was that this wasn't what was happening at all. The sound and the resonance and the frequencies and the rhythms and the pulses and the lights and the group mind psycho sexual effect were actually as important, as vital, if not more so. That was what was interesting and no one had really looked at and explored that in an interesting way in so-called popular music. It was wide open to be explored and also relevant: there was no music that really seemed to reflect the disenfranchised, economically depressed, predominately white, Western European post-industrial revolution culture.

**RM:** But you were a bunch of rarefied, intellectual artists and theoreticians turned musicians. Throbbing Gristle were an archly "arty" band. Maybe the



T.G. flyer design, 1980.



Flyer design, "Riot Control," 1971.



Mixing Techno Acid Beat, London, 1988.

most intellectual pop group of all time. Are you saying that TG actually set out to be a sort of prole rock group?

**GP-O:** I don't see that there has to be a contradiction between comprehending what it was like to be living in England in 1975 and being an artist. I never considered myself to be different from most of the people living on my street. Somebody said to me during the peak of COUM, when it was so successful "That's all fine, but would you be able to do that in the local pub?" Believe it or not, that's what made me really determined to see TG work. So it could have lots of artistic intent, lots of intellectual theories and concepts and satisfactions for me as an artist. But it also could be simply visceral. In other words, you took what you wanted from it and that was an interesting change. Entertainment was not the focus, nor was music really. It was much more out of control in terms of the actual moment of live performance and it was the voluntary refusal of "control" to set up an alchemical musical environment and then be equally at its mercy to some large extent compared to the usual concert set up. Be equally barraged by the sound as the audience. The sound on-stage was as loud, if not louder, than the sound in front. I had huge bass bins next to my ear. Sometimes we'd even have a second PA at the back facing us!

My favorite times were when I'd touch the bass guitar and the wood on the stage would start to vibrate my feet. My whole body would kind of shake like a "Tom and Jerry" cartoon and that to me was the perfect acoustic to a TG gig because I was feeling it equally, if not more than, anybody else. My body was absolutely at the mercy of the sound. And THEN things would come through and then voices would come through and words would come through and dynamics and textures would come through...

**RM:** In some of the live TG recordings, you sound as if you're possessed or speaking in tongues. It's pure glossalalia.

**GP-O:** That's right. And in that sense there was a certain considered selfishness, which is "I want to find out what this feels like. I want to see what happens to me." The best way to finance and to execute this is to have live situations to do it. Plus, I'm curious to see what happens to other people. So hey, guess what, a gig is a great way to do that and that's why we did so few. Cause it wasn't the primary reason, it was just one of the reasons we did it. Chris and I, in particular, did that stuff, in the Death Factory, to each other a lot any way. He had moments when he had tunnel vision, couldn't walk or stand up straight and so on from certain frequencies we hit. And there were times when we left the equipment running itself, a bit like [Lou Reed's] Metal Machine Music (laughs) for two or three days to see what happened when it was just there and we came and went and did other tasks but the same loops were just going and going and going and going and going in order to see what happened to our brains. Or not. It was a chaotic, in the best sense of chaotic... a chaotic research lab.



## Assume Power Focus

**RM:** During the 30 or so TG concerts, which you'd dubbed "psychic rallies—the mood, the building of energies and the audience interaction...

**GP-O:** Is a necessary part of the magickal process, it's even the invocation. Which is why sometimes I can become very uncomfortable with having to perform because I would be happy to stay at home. There are some times when there is no way to make "it" happen except to interact with "a public" and with the society and the environment. Magick always works with the environment it's in and each form of magick is built from a reaction to its environment. And as the environment changes the magick should change, obviously and as my environment changes, so must my magick change. That's why I abandon personas, projects, magickal orders (laughs)!

**RM:** Did an aptitude for magick come naturally to you? Did you just "get" it?

**GP-O:** I've got a photograph that my mum just sent me where I'm one year old and I realized looking at it that I've made circles of stones all my life. I've been obsessive about making stonework. From a very young age I worked with stones to make symbols, circles, to make shapes, make tunnels and hidden chambers. And as soon as I knew how to masturbate I would use my sperm and I would eat it. Sex magick came completely naturally to me. It was like various flags were set there for me to find...And I didn't miss them. I was very fortunate. It was like a biological imprint. I could spot the flags. Whatever the interference that was going on around me, I could see the flags. And whether that is a gift, a fluke or a neurosis, who cares? That's what happened. That's the way it worked for me.

It's one of these things. It's a curse and a blessing to have hindsight. When I read "Magick in Theory in Practice" and I looked at the picture of Crowley I realized it was someone I'd met and talked to when I was younger. And that really was confusing...

**RM:** Someone you'd "met and talked to"?

**GP-O:** Yes.

**RM:** He died in...

**GP-O:** Yes.

**RM:** 1947.

**GP-O:** Yes.

**RM:** And you were born in 1950?

**GP-O:** Exactly.





California, 1992.



Orange and Blue, Art Meeting Place, London, 1974.



On Detour with Psychic TV.

**RM:** Huh?

**GP-O:** Well, I was living in Gatley in Cheshire, 1957, and I remember very distinctly walking along the road in a very ordinary suburban place in Cheshire, which is the dairy farming and the suburbs in Manchester combined. I started hearing footsteps and this old guy caught up with me and started talking to me. And I thought, oh, I'm not supposed to talk to strangers (laughs). He had a shaved baldhead and he was telling me stuff. And as he was talking to me all the streets started to change: the houses started to look like they were made of bread. That was how I remembered it at the time. And everything was very unreal and it was if the street didn't get any shorter or longer as I walked along with him. I was going fast but I wasn't getting anywhere. And then he patted me on the shoulder and left. And I went home. It didn't strike me as very odd and I had thought about it over the years, but it wasn't until I read that book that I thought, "Fuck, this is that person I was speaking to."

**RM:** I don't exactly follow what you are trying to convey...

**GP-O:** I'm not speculating. I'm saying that's what happened. One could argue that he turned up, that he somehow interdimensionally turned up and spoke to me for his own reasons or could argue that having never seen a picture of him or heard his name ever, anywhere, somehow I hallucinated him anyway. That's not very likely. Until I was 15 I'd never heard of him. Nor had anyone I knew. You couldn't get his books anywhere. So what did it mean? I had the shock of recognition, from which I drew no conclusions except that it was interesting. And then I read the book and realized it was what he'd told me.

**RM:** "Cultural engineer" is a term often used to describe you. There's a great moment on *Heathen Earth* when you say: "You should always aim to be as skillful as the most professional of government agencies. The way you live, conceive and market what you do should be as well thought out as a government coup. It's a campaign, it has nothing to do with art." Were music and art, when viewed as the propaganda platforms of popular culture, merely means to an end for you? Do you look at over 3 decades of your career and the various "movements" you've been closely associated with or helped birth—performance art, industrial music, rave culture—and see a fairly straight trajectory?

**GP-O:** Do you want to know what, for me, the goal is? It's basically a sequence: art, music, literature—divinity. The whole point of any project is to get to the point where some form of 21st century philosophical meta-PHYSICAL manual can be assembled from the detritus of all the work, that is functionally useful and inspiring to other people. I want to write a really, really good book of amusingly arcane ideas, that could help some people come to terms with and be blessed by the weird mystery of being alive. That's what I want to do. There's nothing else to discuss in life. That's the only point. Why we exist. What "being" is. Is there a purpose and if there is a purpose how do we achieve it? That's the only topic of interest. That's it. End of story. "Entertainment" has never been of interest to me, as such (laughs)!



I'm a fanatic, a compulsive fanatic. As far as I was concerned, commitment to the project is the most important thing at any given time. I think some people find that hard to live with, I think some people don't believe it. And I think some people just get tired. And that's all reasonable. Those are all reasonable responses, aren't they?

For me, being a romantic, the reasons for something and the long term altruism, the metaphysics, is the only thing that truly gives me creative pleasure and gets me feeling it's worth the effort and without that, it's just more... stuff. There are very few people who are prepared to truly give their life to an idea, come what may, and be prepared to fight countries and governments and global cultural imprints. Indefinitely. Maybe for no financial or egocentric reward, you know? There aren't many around. Not that that means there should be...

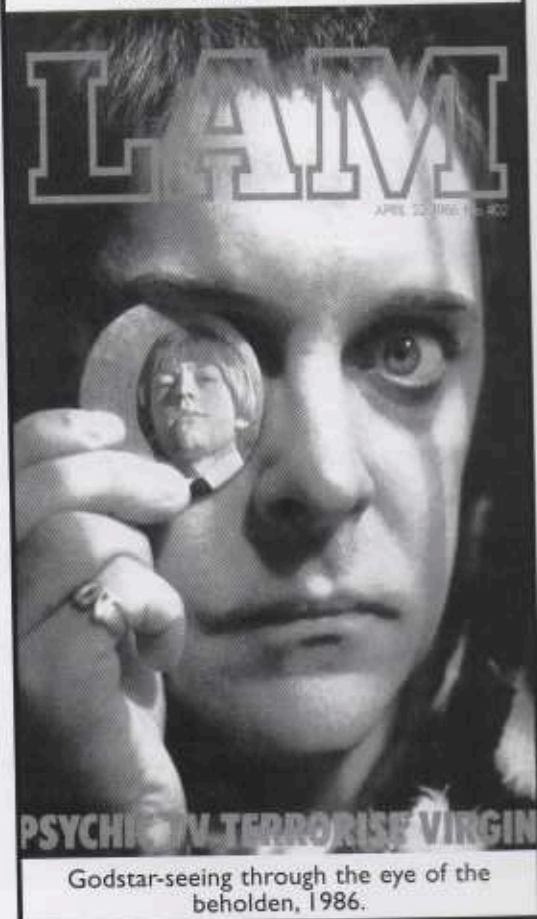
**RM:** You're sort of the grand old man of the counter-culture now that William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg and Timothy Leary have died. Higher evolutionary DNA has not seemed to produce many "rebel philosopher" types in any great number...

**GP-O:** Seems that way. Maybe that's just the balance of things. Maybe that's how the mutant gene pool works. I imagine that the next challenge will be becoming "beyond human." Working towards the next species and moving towards the portal of the inconceivable without fear or expectation. That's the door I wish to pass through. I'm up for change and adventure and I'm in it for the duration.

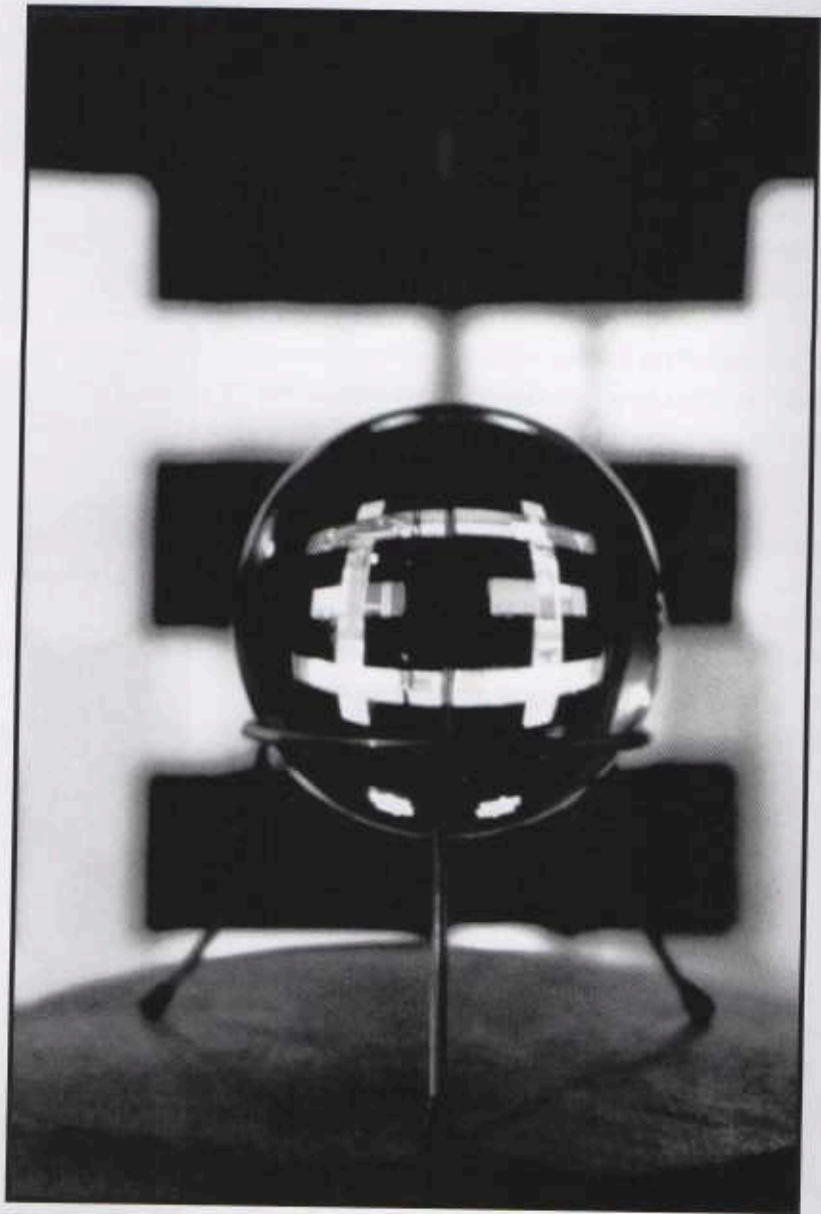
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"Breaking Sex Melded", Breyer P-Orridge. Polaroids, New York, 1998.



Godstar-seeing through the eye of the beholder, 1986.



"Towards Thee Crystal Ball," sculpture, 1975.

# AS IT IS BY JULIE WILSON

To those who would be "divine."

"When I gathered flowers, I knew it  
was myself plucking my own  
flowering."  
—D. H. Lawrence



21 June 1995

Julie

AS IT IS

It's called Stations Ov Thee Cross. It never quite worked before. E believe that thee respect we mutually have, and your deep skills, plus thee distance and platonic butter special attachment could lead to a great piece. E know you have loads on, butter there's NO deadline.

.... muse what is left ov myself, SELF, and other raw material. Begin to coumpose, and mix in, your reactions and understandings, intuitions, and extrapolations, relating to thee character(S) E am poor traying.

SO BE IT...

Brother Genesis

## ... an open invitation to participate in the process...

The project began with a name; Genesis P-Orridge. However, even before the name there was the thought, or more precisely a manner of thinking and an instinctive drive toward something as yet unnameable. It was derived from a particular sensation of estrangement and disassociation; a kind of awkwardness with the world and with himself, or the one who was named Neil Megson.

Feelings of dislocations, and his own perceivable state of estrangement, created a natural "distance" from people, objects and situations. It created a "space" from which to observe the world and himself. This was a state of affairs that the young Neil Megson immediately registered as something that set him apart from "normal" children. Although extremely traumatic at the time, later it became a creative asset, even a "gift" that not only drew his attention to the dynamics of "perceiving" but also proposed the possibility of other types and ways of perception and ultimately suggested the transmutability of the self.

I understood my lifetime's sense of disconnection. Disorder was not a flaw, rather a wondrous gift that described in a new way the true nature of BEING that may be experienced whilst trapped, mortal and confused, here in this desert that was once a theatre of all possibilities, and an exit to all impossibilities.

(P-Orridge:1992. AM)

As a child P-Orridge was prone to eating disorders and asthma. Excessive prescriptions of steroids resulted in the fast deterioration of the adrenal gland. Not yet a teenager, P-Orridge was locked into a program of drug therapy, dependency, and inevitably addiction. In one of my early interviews with Genesis P-Orridge in 1994, he talked for the first time about his childhood, saying "Steroids lead to addictive joys and elective deaths," a statement that was later incorporated into the highly autobiographic text of the Hollow

Cost. An early 1980 Throbbing Gristle song lyric makes explicit the sense and significance of his early childhood experiences.

Adrenalin, the edge is thin  
Fight or flight you never win  
Sitting here you make me shiver  
Sitting here I lose all fear  
Making love in different places  
Jealousy brings you so near  
All this energy destroys me  
Killing my security  
Yet it still helps me be happy  
And it still helps make me free.

Paper thin. Adrenalin.  
Paper thin. Adrenalin.

Some days I'm in a standard state  
Simply cruising on reserve  
Sleeping though I'm still alive  
Waiting for the life you give  
Absence is an awful cure  
Can I be alive once more  
Living on this simple plane  
They also wait who stand and serve  
Adrenalin creates this law  
And gives me hope for life again.

Paper thin. Adrenalin.  
Paper thin. Adrenalin.

Sitting here you make me shiver  
Sitting here you seem so near  
So I try to punish myself  
And through myself, someone else  
I am split in different places  
I am split from everything  
Here we are just sitting pretty  
Longing for security  
Yet it still helps make me happy  
Sitting with adrenalin.

Paper thin. Adrenalin.  
Paper thin. Adrenalin.

It is clear that later creative and ritual experimentations with drugs and activities involving auto-deprivation, scarification, and body modification were made available and even prompted by P-Orridge's childhood experiences. Indications of the "personal" as opposed to the culturally prompted significance of these activities





is evidenced by the fact that P-Orridge hardly ever frames such activities in the context of contemporary cultural movements or current ideology, although many journalists have interpreted his activities as such. Speaking about the early performance art activities of COUM P-Orridge said:

I was looking for some kind of devotion and holiness, but in a contemporary way, I was trying to rediscover what it is in our culture that's been taken from us. (CAZ: 1994)

Even during the rise of "Acid House" and the emergence of Psychic TV, P-Orridge rarely aligned his own explorations with the psychedelic fashion of the day. Later, his adoption by the Modern Primitives movement prompted him to positively distance himself from the idea of physical modification as a fashion accessory and to state even more clearly the motivations for his practice.

... this is all about the process of discovery and the evolution of the organism of the creature. It isn't about how to put a bigger needle through me than you can, which is what some people reduce it to. (Ibid.)

17 October 1995

Dearest Gen

As with anything that is important and worth doing, contemplation of it is both exhilarating and terrifying. I guess this is how I feel about the material you have sent me.

I've attempted this letter several times over the last couple of weeks—already the process has begun; the settling of images in my mind.

I would like to think that together we could produce something like a multi-dimensional "text"—cipher—a revelatory text—words/images/sound. A personal "Navigation Manual." Should not all authentic creative acts contribute to such a document.... a body of work ... a process...the archaeology of the SELF. The work has begun ...

Love to all

Julie

#### **What we have creates our need**

By the time Neil Megson had decided to "let go" of the person he was born as, along with the parental and societal expectations of what Neil Megson should be, he had already experienced a sense of being able "to be" something Other than what his immediate environment dictated, through naturally altered states brought about

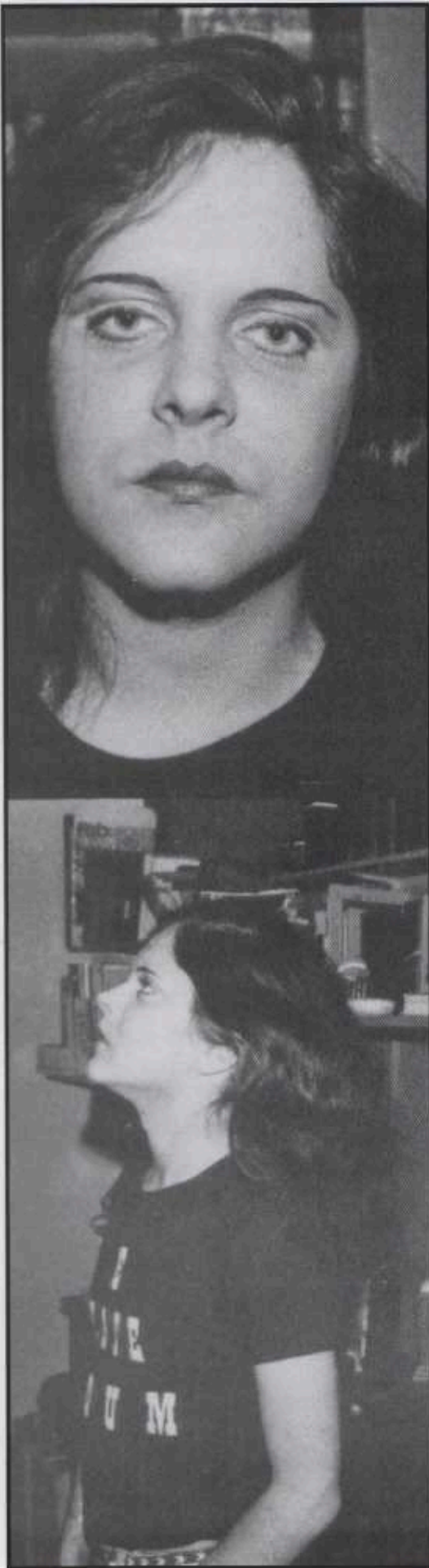
by starvation and prescribed medication. Attending public school and having that particular set of values and systems imposed upon him only strengthened his resolve to step out of those socially and politically predetermined networks, codes, etiquettes, and criminalities, and to seek a self-initiated, individually devised, and explicitly intimate sense of Being, and to put together a lifestyle wholly fashioned and driven by the Self. In order to do this the first step was to jettison the already fractured identity that, by his early teens, was finding it hard to keep up appearances. Neil Megson had to go, and with him the ties and bonds and expectations that patterned his behavior.

So the person who invented this creature Neil Andrew Megson who surrendered to Genesis P-Orridge in 1965 as an art project, he just moved away and died and left a character and a caricature and this is, in a sense, the beginning of that character learning again to be a SELF. That to me is a very sacred act. To give more credence to the universe and consciousness than to one's own inherited idea of Self. Because once you've decided to let go of Self you can start to look for other kinds of "Beings", you can start to play with them, and experiment with them and meet with them and try to communicate with them. You go into this whole other way of living that is, in the west, I suppose anachronistic and usually not very popular, and this of course means that if you are an "alien" being, then you have no recourse to the status quo, this mind-set, and these post-modern values. So you can set yourself free, and once you are free you can keep exploring the intersections to determine, to decide how to live a life, to try to live a life as "spirit" to try to live a life as ideas, to try and finally to find a number of languages for what appears to be there.

(P-Orridge: Preston, 2001)

At the age of sixteen, Neil Megson named the "object SELF" Genesis P-Orridge. This was the new "container" or "vehicle" that had the potential to exist outside of social and political conventions. There was an overlap period; Neil Megson was still around in 1969/70 named in the very earliest activities of COUM Transmissions, but disappeared completely off the scene soon after.

Genesis P-Orridge was a concept, an idea with no particular agenda or fixed notions of what it was, could or should be. It might seem like bizarre behaviour to re-name and to effectively re-assign oneself; certainly it is made more dramatic by the implication that there is a complete character shift and an annihilation of one identity and the instigation of another. However, this is an extreme example of a psychological reflex that is undertaken by most people to a greater or lesser degree. In the case of P-Orridge it took, and still takes, a very dramatic form.



Personality can never develop unless one chooses one's own way consciously and makes this an ethical decision. Not only is a causal motive needed, for instance an emergency of some kind, but a conscious decision must lend its force to the processes of personality development. If the first is lacking, then the so-called development would be merely acrobatics of the will. And without conscious decision the development would remain a dull, unconscious automatism. One can, however, decide on one's own way only when one is convinced it is the only right one. Should any other way be considered better, then it would certainly be preferred to the development of one's own personality. But the other ways are conventions of moral, social, political, philosophical, or religious nature. (Jacobi: 1967, p. 82)

With a name and no agenda other than to explore the possibilities of SELF, P-Orridge began a process of mythologizing, pathologizing, object manipulation and later the manufacturing of "cultural ecologies" in which to "grow" the object: Genesis P-Orridge.

Initially these processes were fuelled by an intuitive sense of playfulness; the basic premise being simply to play, and through playing to find a solid intention through which to shape the process of becoming.

Since there is no goal to this experiment other than the goal of perpetually discovering new forms and new ways of perceiving, it is an infinite game. An infinite game is played for the purpose of continuing play, as opposed to a finite game which is played for the purpose of winning or defining winners. It is an act of free will. No one can play who is forced to play. Play is indeed, implicitly voluntary. (P-Orridge: AM, 1995)

Playing with the notion of a SELF-learning through playfulness—finding ways to make the raw material of the psyche available for gaming, "discovering new forms and new ways of perceiving" through the implementation of physically grueling and psychologically dangerous processes—is not the kind of thing one enters into lightly. But, as I have already suggested some of the methods employed by P-Orridge to explore states of altered perception and different experiences of Self or Selves, had already been prompted by the physical and psychological circumstances of his childhood. This is not to say or imply that illness bred a predilection for such behaviour. P-Orridge's implementation of radical psychical and physical processes is too assured, calculated and framed within very clear programmes of research to be considered clinically abnormal. His work may be considered as a process of what the psychologist Carl Jung called "individuation" albeit in a very extreme form.



In the individuation process, as understood by Jung, the primary concern is the individual experience of "death and rebirth" through struggle and suffering, through a conscious, lifelong, unremitting endeavour to broaden the scope of one's consciousness and so attain a greater inner freedom. (Jacobi: 1967, p. 62)

Jung suggests that the idea of personal truths centres upon the exposition, understanding and individual acknowledgement of both conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche. Jung called this the "individuation" process; it is a means by which one comes to know oneself. Jung suggests that the methods of participating in the individuation process takes extreme moral and intellectual exertions to dissolve the contents of the psyche that can be exposed or actualised in a number of different ways. Jung put forward a methodology he called "active imagination": a strongly physical, emotional and psychological form of play which allowed the mind to engage in imaginative episodes through which the unconscious might throw up words, memories, gestures and images.

In this way we find that thoughts, feelings, and affects are alive in us which we would never have believed possible. Naturally, possibilities of this sort seem utterly fantastic to anyone who has not experienced them himself, for a moral person "knows what he thinks"... With these reflections one gets into an entirely new world of psychological experience, provided of course that one succeeds in realising it in practice. Those who do succeed can hardly fail to be impressed by all that the ego does not know and never has known. This increase in self-knowledge is still very rare nowadays and is usually paid for in advance with a neurosis, if not with something worse. (Jung: 1959/A: p. 19-20)

In 1913 Carl Jung began his own program of explorations that at the time must have seemed socially deviant and personally humiliating. It was a psychological experiment, the aim of which was to "bridge the distance from the present to my eleventh year" (Jung: 1995: p. 198) To make contact with the essence of his own childhood, Jung found that he had no choice but to "take up once more that child's life with his childish games"; to evoke through memory the sensation of being the child, and to literally become childlike through "symbolic play" or "active imagination." Jung spent days by the side of a lake playing with stones and mud and sticks. In the process of building a churchlike structure out of twigs and mud and things washed up on the shore of the lake, Jung caught sight of a pyramid shaped stone in the water:

It was a fragment of stone which had been polished into this shape by the action of the water—a pure product of chance. I knew at once that this was the altar. I placed it in the middle under the dome, and as I did so, I recalled the underground phallus of my childhood dream. (Ibid.)







Jung was propelled to the very core of one of his deepest complexes. The process of active imagination does not imply a total identification with the idea, image, or memory being evoked, but a creative confrontation with it that is nonetheless intense and involving and something from which it is possible to retrieve information about the Self and the fundamental workings of the mind.

30 June 1993

AS IT IS

Dearest Julie

... I personally suspect that if we do not investigate human behaviour, and reassess our species, we are a pathetic excuse for HUMANE...

30 June 1993

Dear Gen

...the most excessive artists ... those who put their life on the line— exposed, vulnerable, self effacing, are often the most humane. They are not monsters as the gutter press likes to make out, monsters can not be artists, they are murders and rapists, careless people who have no recourse to humanity. The artist that risks all, must by definition, stand on solid ground. The artist that risks all, knows what he is risking ... knows what he is putting on the line. On the point of crisis; emotional, physical, psychological we SEE and FEEL the SELF in a manner which is difficult to bear. An artist who puts him/herself in this situation on a regular basis for the sake of that authentic investigation into the fundamental nature of the SELF, must have a degree of resolve, purpose, discipline, will and control over all the circumstances surrounding the experiment that is absolutely crystal, calculated, and secure.

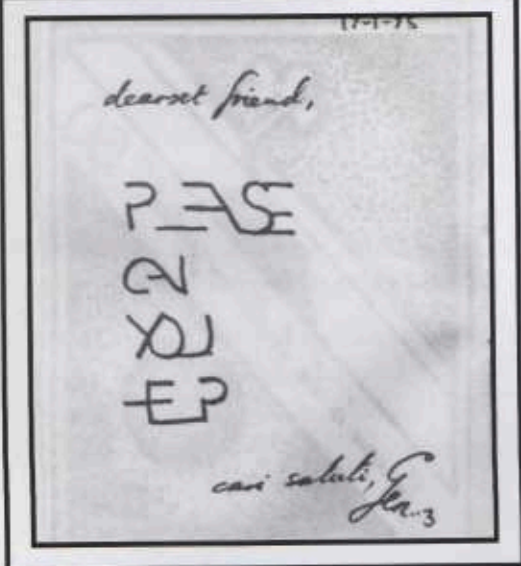
Such an artist has complete control over the form and mechanics of the action, even though the content, the confrontational edge, the point, the cut, if you like, of the activity, is a trauma one can not estimate or fully prepare for. The drive to articulate the deepest and most essential principles of Self is a humanistic crusade. The act or akion of investigation is heightened by the consequences and the materials in use ... the SELF ... the profundity of the central course of action, the instrument and the medium of the action, makes this devotional but not sacrificial.

I know you are a master of the method and medium.

Love to all

Julie

The substance of P-Orridge's being had already been challenged by the time he was a teenager. At the point at which he began to voluntarily engage in activities of self-harm in order to attain and/or return from altered states of consciousness, these events were motivated by the need to take control of these processes rather than to self-punish.



## Drop-Out

Having dropped out of a Social Sciences course at the University of Hull in 1969, P-Orridge found himself in London.

In that period 1968–1969, what was left of the Exploding Galaxy came up to Hull University. They'd been booked to do a "happening." and when they arrived they asked around the University for anyone to help ... everyone said you should ask Genesis, because he'd be into that, so they approached me and asked if I would help them with this happening, and I said sure. I'd already decided to drop out of University anyway. So I helped them out and they said if you're ever in London come and visit us at this commune in Islington. So later on that summer I went to see Pink Floyd at the Albert Hall. So I hitch-hiked down... and The Stones were playing Hyde Park, and Rene Magritte had a big retrospective at the Tate, and it was all the same weekend, and it was a great weekend. I went down the Kings Road to "Granny Takes a Trip" ... and at the end of the weekend I went and crashed at the Exploding Galaxy's place in Islington Park Street, and stayed. That was really intense... Exploding Galaxy... really intense. Gerald Fitzgerald was in charge, and the idea was that you had no identity, so you weren't male or female... this is where the threads begin ... the walls were just knocked out so that the toilet and the bathroom were completely exposed, so that anyone who wanted to go to the toilet or have a bath were doing it in public. There was nothing hidden ... and we were not allowed to sleep in the same place two nights running... In the morning when you got up, there was a big box in the centre of the room and that's where all the interesting clothes were. It was first come first serve, and if it was female clothes you pulled out, then you were female that day, or an Elf ... What ever you pulled out was who you were. You had to live that character while you were dressed that way.

You couldn't repeat anything... you couldn't do anything that had been done before. You had to make everything yourself ... everything you said was your own way of saying it. You owned nothing, including identity. You didn't exist, you were merely this strange energy which passed through everything and never repeated itself and didn't own or possess even a place to sleep. It was really rigorous... (P-Orridge: CAZ, 1994)

Although P-Orridge "hungout" with Exploding Galaxy for a relatively short time, the experiences he had there proved to be seminal. In my 1994 interview, P-Orridge suggested that his life as a performance artist started in Islington with the Exploding Galaxy. P-Orridge confessed "I think I'm still living off the energy I got, because it just left you completely and utterly self-reliant with no concerns about identity"(CAZ: 1994). On returning to Hull, P-

Orridge brought back many of the art/life concepts, house rules, and philosophies he had experienced in Islington. He came away thinking of himself as a "transmedia" personae; a transitory human form, a creative energy which had the potential to express and exist through, and in, any medium.

... so in the end, I just became Transmedia, I said, I'm going to leave, here's my sleeping bag, here's my journal, that's all I need, I'm off. I'm going to be the nomadic Transmedia person, and I will not sleep in the same place each day, I shall sleep under hedgerows and on beaches. So I decided to take it even further. I was happy, I wanted to go completely over the top. I had no limits. I was an anarchist. So that's when I gradually meandered back to Hull, and I basically set up COUM Transmissions which was a kind of extension of my interpretations of Transmedia and Exploding Galaxy, but pushing it... further.

I moved to 8 Prince Street (in Hull), to the big rambling derelict Georgian place. There we had the costume room, and that was the same idea as the box... there was one side of it that was just ridiculous costumes hanging up, and on the other side there was this big table with all the accessories. People could walk in and choose what character to be. That's how the Alien Brain began.

...the Alien Brain was a hat with a brain on it made out of bits of TV sets and stuff... and there was Harriet Straightlace, and others... there was a cast of characters... and mainly on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, you could become the Alien brain. The idea was that you didn't do it as a performance, you did it for the whole weekend, you were the character, and you lived it and spoke it and wore the character. You went shopping or walked the dog and of course you took the risk of being attacked... I think people thought that we were so completely crazy; to dare do that in Hull, right near the docks, if we were prepared to walk around like that we were either insane or dangerous.

To a great extent, early experimentations with costumes and alternate identities, or what we might call forms of disguise, were a way of dealing with what P-Orridge still regarded as his own physical and psychological weaknesses. The idea was that one attempted to "play" these weird characters so well that "the rest of society was afraid to confront you, even though normally you were the kind of person who'd get beaten up without being given a second thought" (CAZ: 1994), an insecurity which hung over him from his childhood. It was a typically extreme and proactive reaction to a perceived personal problem. It was a means of escape, although it was not escapist in the hedonistic sense of the word.

Please tell me,  
draw me, collage  
me, make me,  
photograph me  
whatever E  
need to know  
about thee  
crystal ball



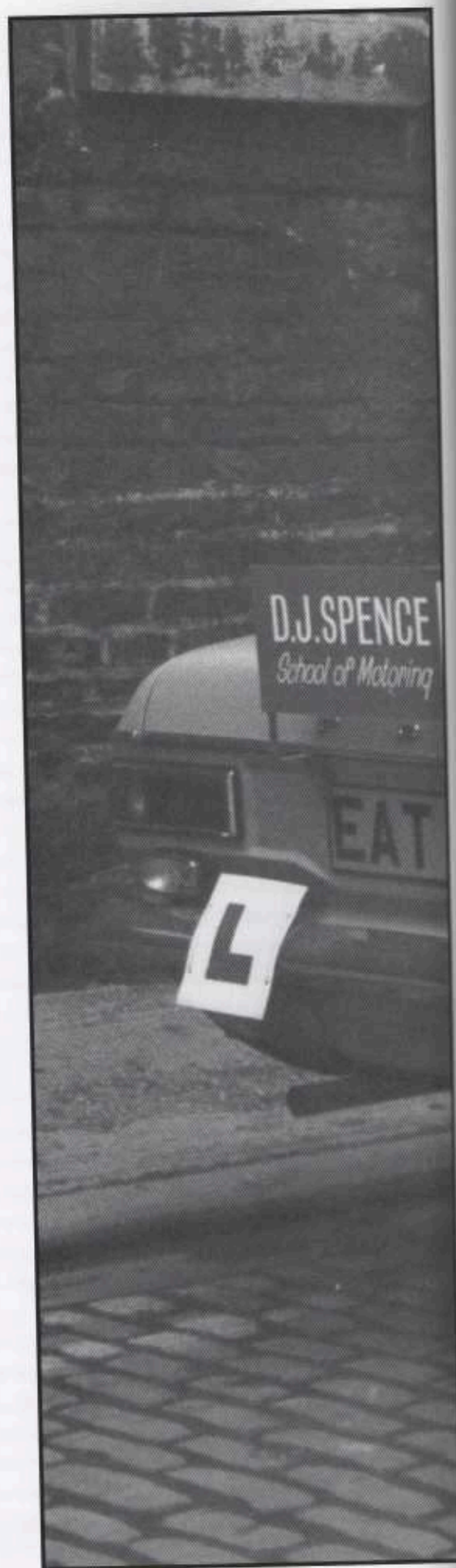
Shop window, Liverpool, 1971.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the performance group COUM came into being, mainly because COUM was an extension of activities that were already happening in private. COUM was a lifestyle taken onto the street, although it is clear that by 1971 COUM was consciously "staging" events on the street, in sites and venues throughout England. By 1972 COUM was being invited to perform at festivals throughout Europe. The group was gaining support from The British Council and receiving small project funds from both Yorkshire Arts and the Arts Council. In a rough statement written for the Milan Catalogue dated February 1976 Cozey Fanni Tutti described COUM as:

...a way of life, and if everyone would just relax they too would realise that Coum is true life. That is, as true as anyone can be to life, in its strictest sense. The constant pressure we are under to be pigeonholed for the safety of other people's principles and peace of mind is sometimes unbelievable. The lengths they go to, to justify why you are doing what you are doing is nothing less than tragic. You can see them grasping at anything that sounds intellectual enough to be the theory of our actions. You can't work out Coum, just like you can't work out life, and the more you try, the more you get confused. Then you think "damn them, what the hell do they think they are anyway?" Thus we have a hatred of Coum because of an inability to open up to it, no not even open up, just to take it as it appears to you. Not how it SHOULD appear to you. I can only put my feelings in front of everyone who may be present during an action. I find that usually people see my feelings in their own true way and then when they tell me what my actions meant to them, each person's vision is different but they are all the same, correct interpretations. This, I think, is the best explanation that could ever be found. (CD, 1973)

#### COUM LAND/ESCAPE Painting

Genesis P-Orridge met William Burroughs in the early 1970s and began a series of collaborations and correspondences that lasted up until Burroughs' death. The literary cut-ups, famously used by Burroughs, were in fact suggested to him by his long time friend and collaborator Brion Gysin. Although Burroughs made a number of propositions for both the written and extra-literary potential of the cut-up—he had, for instance, experimented with audio tape cut-ups - his interest was in the use of the cut-up as a literary tool which was first and foremost a means of accessing an "expansive" perceptual viewpoint through writing and of creating a déjà vu effect for the reader. For Burroughs the cut-up method opened up new creative avenues through collisions and linguistic accidents that occurred under the scissors. The cut-up provided poetic insights, colours and tones that were otherwise inconceivable. The cut-up technique allowed words to collaborate in the writing process, to the extent that there appeared to be a **THIRD MIND** working



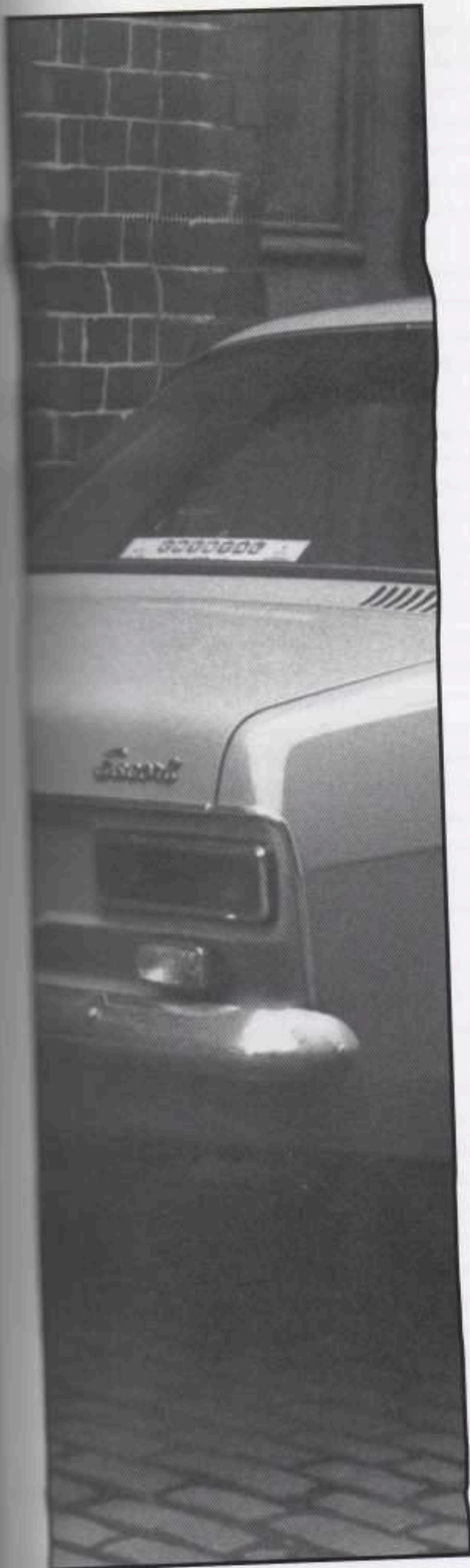
through the writing. In *The Third Mind—The Future of the Novel*, written with Brion Gysin, Burroughs writes:

In my writing I am acting as a map maker, an explorer of psychic areas, to use the phrase of Mr Alexander Trocchi, as a cosmonaut of inner space, and I see no point in exploring areas that have already been thoroughly surveyed—A Russian scientist has said “We will travel not only in space but in time as well”—That is, to travel in space is to travel in time—If writers are to travel in space and time and explore areas opened by the space age, I think they must develop techniques quite as new and definite as the techniques of physical space travel—Certainly if writing is to have a future it must at least catch up with the past and learn to use techniques that have been used for some time past in painting, music and film—Mr. Lawrence Durrell has led the way in developing a new form of writing with time and space shifts as we see events from different viewpoints and realize that so seen they are literally not the same events, and that the old concepts of time and reality are longer valid—Brion Gysin, an American painter living in Paris, has used what he calls “the cut-up method” to place at the disposal of writers the collage used in painting for fifty years—Pages of text are cut and rearranged to form new combinations of word images. (Burroughs: 1998, p. 272)

It was not the literary application of the cut-up method that interested Genesis P-Orridge at first, but what happened to “time” and the “real” and the notion of “space” when they were cut and sampled and rearranged. Burroughs played P-Orridge some of his audio tape experiments; these were cut-up tape recordings of riots and screams and police sirens.

He was very clear that not only was this a political thing, but you could change reality, you could make something happen; what would once be called magic. And that really interested me. That one could actually reprogram physical reality as well a mental consciousness. (P-Orridge:TM, 1996)

P-Orridge took the basic premise of the cut-up and applied it to sound, incorporating sound collage in COUM performance art events as early as 1970. In the unpublished COUM diaries written at the time, P-Orridge acknowledges “uncle” William Burroughs for his advice on the best tape recorder to purchase with the Yorkshire Arts Experimental Grant the group had received in 1972. In performance actions such as *Landscape Painting By Numbers* or as it was also known, *Coumceptual Landscape Painting*, both the creation and playback of cut-up tape recordings were an integral part of the “painting action”; a means of recording present events and playing them back as past “landscapes” into the present performance action. By rerecording and overdubbing in short intervals, present sounds were inter-cut with past sound recordings; re-





recording and playback intermingled past with present, brought the past into the present and sent the present into the past creating historical ruptures, prompting mishearing and misrepresentations and re-configuring present narratives, making the real time event readable in a new way. This process of **FRACTURING** and **SPLINTERING** material was to become a very important aspect of all of P-Orridge's future work across all mediums.

At the time, **COUM** viewed their work as extending from a theatre and fine art lineage, but acknowledged that they were interested in using new technology, together with new materials and concepts, to re-examine old aesthetic forms.

The old forms of Painting had palette, brush, canvas. **COUM** have started to realise that it is not Landscape Painting that is dying in fine art, it is merely a failure by many artists to jump across the technology gap and use the new materials and concepts to revitalise, and make relevant once more, the old form.

(P-Orridge: CD, 1973)

P-Orridge began to play with the idea of the artist's canvas. Traditionally the canvas could be viewed as a kind of recording medium upon which a record of the action of the painting, the artist's choices, the environment and the time frame(s) in which it was painted, was captured. Not only did P-Orridge observe that the tape recorder, and the playing back of cut-up sound landscapes, could metaphorically be seen as a form of "painting", but that it could also be used to relocate time frames and to create fluid, dimensional shifts in time and space; to literally unstick time and expand the conceptual space of the work and therefore the traditional painting form.

It is not a sweeping away of the old form, but an affirmation of it, and a restitution of it in its sensible contemporary terms...

Instead of a palette, a cassette, instead of a brush, a camera, instead of paint, stickers and string and spray cans & instead of canvas, the landscape itself and the people in it. But within this the rules of balance, subtlety of colour, shadow, perspective, concentration, still apply. (P-Orridge: CD, 1973)

Past, present and future/projected perceptual possibilities (those of the performers and the audience) became collaborative elements within the "space" of the performance. They were strategically incorporated and prompted through the use of audio technology. The fluid, often random or accidental intervention of different time zones, audio representations of different spaces, environments and historic events opened up new relationships in perception, creating a liminal, timeless space. On another level the performance action functioned as a magickal construction that drew attention to the

perceptual changes that took place not only in performance but in everyday life.

The landscape is actually made into a spell, a picture. One becomes aware of new perceptions of the place as pin-pointed by the odd changes made in it, and of its link with time passing, sunlight and chance activity. (CD, 1973)

Using personal symbols, idiosyncratic ideas, themes and concepts to structure and identify materials, colours and time frames, COUM developed a very particular art-based performance vocabulary that functioned on a number of different levels. Symbols and numbers became a fundamental element in these actions.

The numbers used normally are magick numbers, which relate to COUM specially, and are used as a basis for multiple editions, and action on important matters. Lucky numbers, if you like, though to COUM they are more important than common sense triggers to decisions. This is like the personal brush work of an old master, people should find their own formulae for deciding tape splices, but no acting up to the tape must occur, it must be random, and therefore honest, YET METHODICAL in structure.

(P-Orridge: CD, 1973)

In *Coumceptual Landscape Painting No 3* realized at Colmore Circus, Birmingham Town Centre on 12 July 1973, the numbers 3 and 4 were used to inform the time frames of the cut-up process.

...from the moment of leaving COUM studio in Hackney the Painting was being made. It being a sum total of everything that occurred to the activator throughout 24 hours. So every hour, on the hour, seven minutes of recording were made. No matter where or what sounds were occurring. Then when both hour-long sides of the tape were filled, every half hour 3 minutes exactly were then over-recorded. Then immediately afterwards 4 minutes played back at the same volume; as sound tends to reach your ears in gardens etc, so it is not intrusive. Therefore people hearing it absorbed it unconsciously as part of the noise around them. So if it is a piece of conversation they think forever someone said that then, not a few hours before in London, or on the train. And if it plays back a car going past, they'll think forever a car went past somewhere near them when they heard it. What also happens is a reversal of time. You get three minutes of the present before four minutes of the past, yet the past is simultaneously transferred into that present. TIMEWARP. (P-Orridge: CD, 1973)

The finding and implementation of a particular set of specific symbols that related only to the individual members of COUM was a fundamental part of the group's striving for personal relevance, honesty and an authentic creative language. It also became the basis of intimate, personal connections.



There were three of us who were close friends; Cosy and I and the Very Reverend Lelli Maul. He was a burglar... Eventually he was caught by the police and sentenced to prison.

When he was out on bail, all three of us decided to get a small tattoo so that when he was in prison... we would all have what we called our "telephone", and every time each of us looked at this mark we would think of the others...

So each of us designed a tattoo based on what we felt was our favourite or lucky number. I chose 3; Lelli had one which was a complex drawing of 16—it was 2 4's made into a grid (4x4=16). Cosey's was a small 4 that looked like a camping chair.

(Vale & Juno: 1989, pp. 165-166)

COUM activities strove to be "in tune with our times and lives." Connections between members of the group, their personal lives, the characters they "played" in performance, their elemental role in events, the principles and philosophy of COUM bound them together as a community which worked on "simultaneous, complementary levels." Fundamentally COUM was about "process" and the "discovery of intention."

In the process of discovering intention COUM occasionally issued manifestos, treatises or mission statement-transmissions—which defined the territory of the word and shaped the group's thinking at that time.

#### THEE ENEMIES OF COUM

Thee enemies of COUM are human.

Thee enemy of coum is dishonesty.

Thee enemy of coum is corruption of vision.

Thee enemy of coum is blindness to coum.

Thee enemy of coum is loss of purity.

The enemy of coum is ego, NOT to be confused with individualism.

Thee enemy of coum is belief in reality.

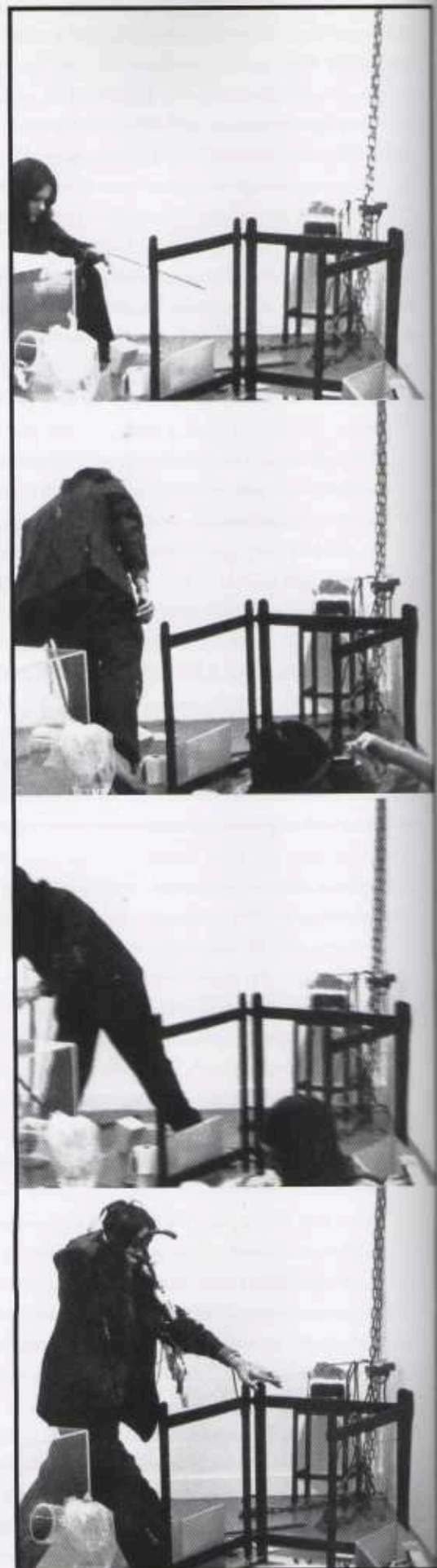
Thee enemy of coum is noncommitment.

Thee enemy of coum is explanation.

Thee enemy of coum is coum itself.

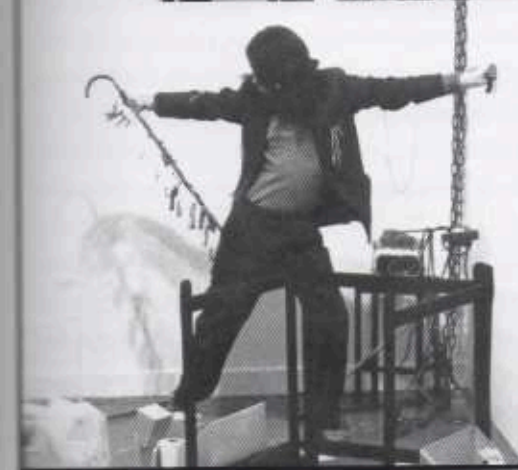
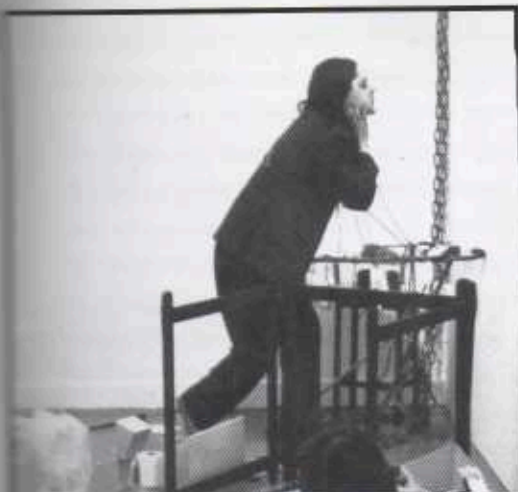
Thee enemy of coum is forgetting enemies.

Enemies of coum are its friends as well. (CD, 1972)



Paris Biennale, 1975.





The decision to use signs and symbols of individual members of the group in COUM performance events, was not an aesthetic choice, but was either consciously or unconsciously a means of empowering the visual, symbolic language of the performance with real identity, intimacy and relevance.

The colours orange and blue are also part of the COUM magick formula, being the two colours of its Directors, Cosy Fanni Tutti, Leader of COUM and Genesis P-Orridge her brother, permanent second in Coumand. The sequences of plastic letters and numbers used in the patterns, markings, and delineations during the event are all magickally linked in. The whole thing having therefore another, subtle level, of being an actual magickal ritual spell for COUM, a spell of good fortune, and precision, and vital to all art, CONTINUITY (coumcontinuity.) (P-Orridge: CD, 1973)

The simple intention of personal incorporation, continuity of connection and the articulation of a personal symbolic language, became the basic building blocks of a spiritual practice which underlined the performance and fine art practice which, for P-Orridge, would continue to underline all of his work up to the present day. In terms of COUM Transmissions, this took the form of what might be termed *sympathetic magic*.

GP-O What we used to do ... was actually define space with string and so on, and so we could make architectural sections... Here that's the shadow and that's the light—here we were building invisible architecture that we could work within. Actually building it was as much a part of the performance as what we would do within it.

JAW Were you thinking about magic at that time?

GP-O I was thinking about that stuff from nine years old! There had always been ideas like sand painting and Tibetan threads—not necessarily in a really conscious way, it was just there—it was innate. (P-Orridge: CAZ, 1994)

Not only did the “architecture” of the performance frame the real lives of the performers—their bodies becoming part of the fabric/material/substance of the performance—but performance and art practice grew out of a lifestyle in which every aspect of day-to-day living was consciously and strategically assembled. This was not a conscious attempt to create “artifacts” but rather grew out of a desire to control; to become the builder, author, and architect of a unique and deeply individual Life/Art practice.



Please let me  
know what  
music we should  
have at  
these  
crystal ball



You can now see that all of these things that were lying around in the house have been assembled into events.... Basically I began to experiment with placing things and moving things and putting my body and later on the bodies of other people into the environments that had once been houses and homes. So what I started to do in a simple way was to take the "home" on the road or on the street and see what happened. In a way that's all that art is and that's really what some people would refer to as magic. It is taking things from real life and from your dreams and vision and from your fears and from your memories and assembling them in almost any order. *The order in a sense doesn't particularly matter, what matters are the intention and the reverence of everything and anything that might happen.* (P-Orridge: Preston, 2001)

The reverence toward anything that might occur within the space—and here it is essential to think in terms of both the actual physicality of space and more conceptual notions of space—anything that might be evoked, created out of random collisions of ideas, images, sounds, became the central focus of the work, not the end product. **THE PROCESS NOT THE PRODUCT.** The "anterior" effects and "interior" reverberations of the performance action; the transitory and ephemeral, the perceptual and the psychological changes that took place, outweighed concerns for more visually aesthetic principles and notions of "entertainment". In the **DECOMPOSITION** account of Colliche Pastage performed on 9 January 1973 at De Lanteren Theatre, Rotterdam, Holland, P-Orridge writes:

As what we do is both intensely honest & personal; and simple, flip-pant & accessible people often have difficulty reconciling the conflicting levels and attitudes. We take what we do seriously, but we do not take ourselves seriously. And although we take our projects seriously we are permanently compromising & allowing the situation to rule final decisions and creations. Thus everybody is truly equal at the time of performance. *We might think we know exactly what we would like to do, but we will still assimilate any chance occurrences, audience involvement, or stipulation by entrepreneur.* (P-Orridge: CD, 1973)

The aesthetic form was considered by COUM to be merely a vehicle for the exploration of the natural reverberations, not only of the creative practice but also of the individuals taking part in that practice/event. P-Orridge states further "the stage is both useful as a centre of focus for images, and useless as a false mode. We therefore treat it as another medium but retain a level of contempt for it too" (P-Orridge: CD, 1973). In 1973 this conscious reflex of contempt for the inherited aesthetic modes, practices, and the creative formulae of theatre and fine art saved COUM's practice from becoming conventional, and preserved the originality of the work. It is this same level of contempt for inherited constructs and systems that has prevented P-Orridge from the wholesale reconstruc-

tion in terms of content and intention, of pre-existing rituals and shamanic/ritual practices in his work.

... all those rituals and all those techniques developed in a specific or geographical environment and that's not where we are now... so it has to be urban if we are urban, and it has to be about computers, and it has to be about cyberspace, and it has to be about what's coming next, about viruses, and language, and all the stuff we know has to be part of what we do next... And this pretence of ignorance and the recreation of what was is a bit like an orchestra learning a symphony; it's great that they can do it, and it's good that someone is preserving it, but I don't want to go there... I want to find something out I didn't know, something I wasn't told.

(P-Orridge: CAZ, 1994)

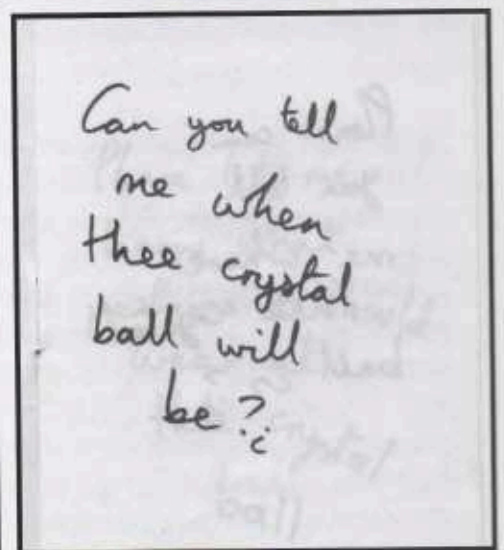
P-Orridge's concern for both ritual/spiritual and art form practice has always been to find personal relevance and a contemporary vocabulary and palette of materials. To some, this simple striving for relevance has been interpreted as vandalism.

A Coumcentrated art exhibition was put up on the walls. This consisted of Genesis P-Orridge, art vandal, putting a day-glow sticker dot where every picture had been. Showing he explained (understood?) the coumcentration of creative energy of each piece, and (that it was) far more economic and simple to display (this) than complete pictures. Some art lovers found this a little disrespectful. So it was! (CD, 1973)

It was at this time that P-Orridge began to explore the psycho-physical consequences of the cut-up process as applied to the individual within the frame of COUM performance activities. The concept of using the body as a material within the performance event naturally extended to the use of the individual psyche.

What's interesting is the line, the light and the shadows; the lines of the pavement and the sticks and the wand—and the geometry of this. To me that's a timeless use of body. The body is just really this weird thing. To me anyway it is ... this weird stuff, and all I can tell you about it is that it doesn't last too long, it carries around with it something that appears to live in here, that talks and thinks, etc. but it isn't me. And it's not you. But it is an interface between that which appears to be and that which disappears... The real mystery is "what goes on in here" (inside the mind) and "why" it goes on and "where" it came from. (P-Orridge: Preston, 2001)

P-Orridge increasingly placed the body at risk in performance in an attempt to feel and understand the internal workings of the mind; to challenge the mind, the Self, the psyche, through the medium of the body. He began to include props and materials that would harm, cut, pierce, poison and intoxicate, knowing full well that in



"Earls Court" photo series, 1974.

the semiconscious, trancelike mode he increasingly found himself working in, he would not be able to resist or limit the consequences for his mind or his body, from coming into contact with such props in performance.

What began with an interest in the restitution and re-interpretation of theatrical and fine art forms moved into a full blown exploration into the physical and mental "form" of the individual Self, by exposing the Self to real danger and trauma. In retrospect P-Orridge suggests that what he was trying to do was to recover information about the Self from the point of real, critical action; at the point of real trauma and crisis. As I have suggested previously, this was again a method of active imagination, a process of individuation. It began with a name and a conscious movement away from the identity of Neil Megson. The exploration and habitation of COUM characters allowed P-Orridge to take this process one set further, and to explore a pluralistic notion of Self. Now the processes demanded real confrontation with the very material of the mind and body. In a rough statement written for the Milan Catalogue in February 1976 P-Orridge writes:

Spit. My face is. Holes in bodies are only there to insert things in. If wire is twisted around a face using a knife as screw, tightening it across a mouth so that the face is distorted, knife threatening face, wire making channels of red on face. Matches burn fingernails, making them smell. It's all threats, secrecy, it's not enough to damage oneself, that's too easy. One has to lift information to the forefront and remove thee spectacle. People don't look into what you say if you distract them with obvious overload. There should be no safe path away from the information. They have either **NOTHING AT ALL** to grasp, or they have to grasp that you must be trying to discuss information. It's a vehicle to talk across, at cross purposes. It may alienate thee mass to inform thee few. Mass culture is diluted perception. Thee pathological murderer, sex offender is affirming identity through action, we are thee same, there's no gap anymore, art is high crime, high crime is art without theoretics.

(CD, 1976)

Moving further away from ideas of aesthetic form, P-Orridge's concerns increasingly centred on the affirmation, or exploration, of identity through "critical" action. P-Orridge began to devise more and more ascetic processes and performance set-ups that would literally afford no safe path for the mind or the body through the performance event.

"Snail Trail," Fluxshoe, Nottingham, 1973.





It is clear that the intention at this time was also to involve the audience in that journey into identity and crisis. By stripping down the visual aesthetics of the performance, by using a limited but dangerous selection of props, P-Orridge was attempting to strip away the illusion of the theatre, and the décor of fine art practice and therefore the safety-net "signifiers" of the unreal which provided audiences with a safe place and distance from which to view the action. These explorations came to a head in 1976 at a performance event at the University of Antwerp.

At that particular time I was very disenchanted with the context of art and theatre and I was trying to push the boundaries. So I went outside the University in Antwerp and noticed that there was an agricultural project going on which included poison plants and tree bark. So I collected the plants and bark and then I went to a building site and got loads of nails and a bottle of whisky and then ate the bark and the poisonous plants and washed them down with Whisky, and then began to cut patterns into my skin with the rusty nails. The reason why I was doing this was that I was trying to find out if the body really existed or not... and whether my theories were actually correct. Because I had noticed that in certain instances... that I would, to use a classic phrase, I would "leave my body" and that I would travel in dimensions as if one took very strong psychedelic drugs. The only way I came back into my body was to generate some form of pain or cut. I used to call this a re-entry zone. On different occasions I used to do this on a much more concerted way, and I started to speak in tongues, I started to speak in different languages, and prophecy in the Christian sense, but I would prophecy about things that didn't seem to be about this planet, and then of course I collapsed and was taken to the hospital. But I was actually still fully conscious, I remember being in the emergency room... one of those typical "near-death" experiences where the doctors were saying **THERE'S NO PULSE-THERE'S NO HEARTBEAT**. There seemed to be no reaction from the eyes, when they flashed a torch in my eyes, and I was thinking **BUT I'M FINE**. Then it occurred to me that while I was fine, they were not aware of it and they were starting to wrap things up and looking around for a sheet ... **I'M DEAD**. That was when I somehow managed to see the cut that I'd made in my chest, and by looking at the cut ... and the pattern of the cut, it was a very real mandala in blood, I found myself sucked back into my body at that moment. And then I opened my eyes and said **I'M OK**.

The problem with things like that is that I had absolutely no training in Shamanic practices or alternative medicines, and at that point I decided to stop doing performance art, and only work in private. I began to conduct similar experiments in a much more controlled way, always with somebody else there, with certain signals and times ... after three hours ring this bell ... after six hours



cut my arm...etc., so that I could get back. And I did that for something like fifteen years in private, once a month every month.

(P-Orridge: Preston, 2001)

By the time COUM officially disintegrated in October 1976 at The Prostitution Show event at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, to become *THROBBING GRISTLE*, P-Orridge had identified the prime material of his creative process as the Self. He had begun to develop a working methodology that could no longer be contained within the performance and fine art forms developed by COUM, however "real" "honest" and "relevant" those forms were. The personal processes that P-Orridge began to develop in the early 1970s became a life-long investigation into the nature and possibilities of the raw material of flesh, blood, bones and psyche, and the manner in which "it" might responded to external influences and changing environments. It became a project that was learning about the deep programming of the Self, and ultimately became a process concerned with making permanent alterations to the programming of the Self.

The processes were now about re-forming and the re-structuring of perception; about transformation and the investigation of the notions and artifacts of the Self: "I'm not trying to sell something ... I'm trying to learn something" (P-Orridge: CZ, 1994). The costume/disguises of *The Alien Brain*, and *Harriette Straightlace* and the *Dayglow Prankster Art Vandal* and others developed in COUM were still primarily exterior identities that allowed a certain way of being in relation to the world and provided the means of exploring both the behaviour and attitudes of the characters and their audience. COUM characters also provided an opportunity to assess, test, and monitor individual attitudes, impressions and feelings toward the characters themselves. In a sense the characters became exterior archetypes; dynamic creations that confronted, provoked, caricatured, poked fun at, tested, teased and thwarted genre and gender expectations. Crucially they provided information about aesthetic values, cultural identities and societal norms by challenging and exposing conventions within the confines of a performance art practice. They challenged the reality of art and performance conventions and of social behaviour, but they did not challenge the notion of "reality" itself, they did not disturb the deeper registers of the Self: and although they offered an opportunity for insight into motivation, fear, prejudice, and belief, they did not offer the means of exploring deeper flesh-bound, heart-felt, psychologically grounded sensations of reality. It is after all the physical, in the body, emotional and deep psychology of the individual, that lies at the heart of perception, belief and CULTURE.

Culture takes place in closed, even closeted places, involving the alchemical putrefaction, or decadence as the body of fermentation. Generation and decay happen together; and they are not always easy to distinguish. (Hillman: 1990, p. 163)

The great events of world history are, at bottom, profoundly unimportant. In the last analysis, the essential thing is the life of the individual. This alone makes history, here alone do the great transformations first take place, and the whole future, the whole history of the world, ultimately springs as a gigantic summation from these hidden sources in individuals. In our most private and most subjective lives we are not only the passive witnesses of our age, and its sufferers, but also its makers. (Jung: CW Vol. 10, p. 149)

COUM was an overture to a more profound series of explorations. It is true to say that the clues were all there even in the early works. The instinctive performance gestures pre-empted, and pointed to, a personal path of investigation into the notions and possibilities of the material of the Self. The dots and lines and day-glow stickers showed the way TO GO.

Because the stuff I wanted to do was just so... gruelling, and took me to such strange mental and physical places, it just seemed inappropriate to do it for the public. I had to come up with something that didn't involve me divulging the intimate side of what I do, because it would have been inappropriate and it wouldn't have achieved anything. So I had to build a metaphor for the experience of what I do. (P-Orridge: CAZ, 1994)

The metaphor was as much a means of allowing this work to enter the public arena in an appropriate form, as it was a method of structuring and isolating content from psychophysical processes in order for P-Orridge to make sense of them himself.

Without proper spiritual or psychological guidance, P-Orridge began to explore his own "depth" psychology. Under these circumstances, and if the processes being undertaken are not guided and fully understood, Jung suggested that both the method and the emerging content thrown up by the process has to build up to such an intensity that it literally breaks through and becomes something tangible for the individual. It is clear that by the latter part of the 1970s P-Orridge had reached a level of intensity, partly through accident, biographical circumstances, and partly through strategy that began to produce tangible results. While psychical experiences arising out of the traumatic states P-Orridge was experimenting with, according to how they are understood, affect different people in different ways, they are not without their dangers, since they are within the matrix of psychoses. Images, fantasies, symbols and archetypal experiences that arise in such states are not in themselves pathological, but this very much depends on the way in which the individual reacts, interprets and uses such images and information. Jung describes the nature of the pathological reaction as "identification with the archetype" and "inflation and possession by the emergent contents, so that they pour out in a torrent which no therapy can stop." Jung goes further to state that in all cases contact with the unconscious brings about a



weakening of consciousness, a fracturing of logic, belief, and "normal" perceptual processes that leaves the conscious mind vulnerable to seduction by the emergent content of the unconscious, "You do not "identify yourself," but you experience your identity with the archetype in an unconscious way and so are possessed by it" (Jung: CW, Vol 9 Part I, (621) pp. 67-68).

While *Throbbing Gristle* was an extension and a more formal organisation of music events that had already developed under the umbrella of *COUM* from as early as 1971, *TG* was a natural "artistic" genre shift; a means of carrying forward the "public" work into a new and more relevant container. For *Genesis P-Orridge* the more profound personal explorations that continued through the *TG* period, while being implicit in some of the song lyrics, the themes and socio-political concerns of the band, remained mostly hidden from public view. It took a while to develop the 'metaphors' for the processes he was exploring... to develop *Genesis P-Orridge*; the front man – the foreground metaphor. There were, however, a number of visual/thematic metaphors that were already in place.

**Is the house a metaphor,  
and if so what for?**

I have a house  
It is not my house  
I have a father  
I have a sister

I have a brother  
I have a mother  
**THE HORROR**  
They live in this house  
It is not my house

**THE HORROR**  
I have a room  
I have a door  
I need more

It is not my house  
**THE HORROR**  
It is not my sister's house  
It's someone else's house  
Someone else's house  
**THE HORROR**  
It's a horror house  
It's not my house  
(PTV:1990)

I am not satisfied with the programme I got. At all. I find it a crippling, inane, demeaning, outmoded, old Aeon programme. I didn't ask for it, and I don't want it, and if I can contribute to breaking the loop, then that's great, and if all I can do is question the loop, then that's pretty good... (P-Orridge: CAZ, 1994)

\*\*\*

I had to go to a bloody public school, I had to deal with that for four years, being physically and mentally tortured, quite literally, and I just thought at the end of it, I know the enemy. These people are going to run Britain in twenty years, these people are really ill, these people are brutal, stupid, violent, greedy, completely lacking in manners, etiquette or aesthetics... (Ibid.,)



"Jusqu'à la Balle Crystal," Paris Biennale, 1975.





This ultimately... this is where I live, this is where I still live. This is the ultimate home of the magician, and the ultimate place where we all are, which is... **THE MOUTH, THE EYES, and THE NOSE.** I've been drawing that particular house for over forty years now, trying to understand why it fascinates me so much...

(P-Orridge: Preston 2001)

the back cover of the little hand made book *Jusqu a la Belle Crystal* (1975) and painted into the set of a **COUM** performance installation. It is evoked in its negative in a *PsychicTV* song lyric, and here I have placed it against two statements from 1994 which illustrate what the house is not. It is a statement of intent, a sigil, a magical construction, the instinctive gesture of the child who conjures "ideal" representation of the *Self*, of home and completeness. It is the obsessive quest of a disenfranchised adult, it demonstrates both a futility and a vulnerability, it is naive and innocent—it is the dream of **EVERYMAN.**

### Culture & Culture

She and I function as a symbiotic team when we do rituals... We become fused as an androgynous being, or as we call it, a **Pandrogynous** being; **P** for **Power, Potency,** and also for the **Positive** aspects of being male-female. And also because it then makes it **Pan,** and **Pan** is also a good concept. **Pandrogyn**e is one of my ongoing investigations, and the other one is the idea that we're not an occult group, we're an **occulture.** Because my interest is culture, but I approach it through occult means, if you like.

(Vale & Juno: 1989, p. 171)

There is a clear distinction between the ritualistic, magickal constructs that are the public performance events and remain metaphors and signifiers, and the rituals that happen in private. The public arena is used as a "medium" in which to expose, explore and research the impact of certain images and ideas and to test its responses to the addition of external information, a concept or a caricature.

The private rituals are wholly concerned with evoking archetypal states, uncovering and challenging the deep programming of the *Self* and developing alternate states of consciousness. Out of the private rituals comes a great deal of material which is later presented in the public arena, partly as a conscious decision to re-seed the public work with the vocabulary of "nature's preciousness and depth" (P-Orridge/Rapoza: 1994, p. 52), and partly as a means of seeing how that material resonates, triggers a response, is absorbed, aborted or transformed within the medium of popular culture. The public space is as much a place of research as is the private space.



The series of designated private ritual explorations called the Stations Ov Thee Cross was a long-term ritual project that intensified through the later part of the 1980s. Recording of rituals were kept in a number of formats, usually photographic, video and audio tape recordings, written notes and graphic art.

As each ritual ended, P-Orridge usually took time to write or draw while still in a semitrance altered state. Much of P-Orridge's art works are sigils created as part of a ritual process that include blood, semen, hair and Polaroid photographs. Images lifted from video footage and photographic stills were included in a number of PTV music videos in the latter part of the 1980s. Heavily edited and manipulated video footage of private rituals were regularly used as projected backdrops at live PTV events.

### **Stations Ov Thee Cross**

A hood is placed over the subject's head. This stimulates sensations of disorientation which immediately changes the subject's state of consciousness. The sensations of disorientation and dislocation have strong biographical connotations relating to childhood and illness. The use of the hood is therefore a conscious attempt to relocate the biographical within the landscape of the ritual, moving through the biographical into the archetypal. The hood shuts out the domestic and enables the gaze of the subject to expand inwards, initiating the journey toward the unconscious, while isolation enhances the awareness of the internal dialogue.

The hood "projects" the psyche back into the circumstance of P-Orridge's youth; into the illness, and the dark underground places of instinct and intuition—the "spaces" which have been hallmarked as places of personal psychological development and training. By re-accessing the sensations and by simulating the circumstance that surrounded original moments of personal empowerment first experienced in childhood, something of the initial impetus toward self-actualisation is reintroduced into the present circumstances of the ritual. In addition, the ritual work is imbued with the sense of the child; with a childlikeness; a playfulness and an "original" state of consciousness that does not "exclude any aspect dark or light" held silent within the dark forest of the psyche. The restitution of the child represents a fundamental return to the origin, that corresponds to the reversion of the Universe of the organised adult self to a chaotic or embryonic state of the night before creation, before social and cultural programming.

Eventually Gen does not exist, only a body, its senses and ego kept occupied and engaged imprisoned and suspended, so that thee nameless spirit thee shaman is set free to wander and travel.

(P-Orridge: UNP)

The Anthropologist Mircea Eliade observed that in a number of tribal communities this repeated return or re-initiation into the sensation of the "original" through ritual, allowed access to a higher mode or perception of existence. Jung also noted that it was necessary for individuals to revisit the "hot depths of the unconscious," suggesting that there are definite moments in one's life when the need to undertake such a journey becomes paramount. The higher mode of existence arises, according to Jung's analysis, out of the new knowledge and understanding one acquires as a result of such a journey. In notes from one of the rituals in this cycle P-Orridge writes:

This is a spiritual journey more than secular. E am trying to integrate my body and brain (ego) and then lose them. Negate them to set thee deeper magical self free to travel into other dimensions and time zones to try and retrieve or locate information and revelation and bring it back. (Ibid.)

Echoes of this process of descent and corresponding ascent, can be found in a number of ritual practices. In Hatha Yoga and certain Tantric schools of thought, the mechanism of regression or descent is called "going against the current." This process is expressed allegorically in the annihilation of the Cosmos. As the subject descends through stages of consciousness toward the unconscious he/she visualises the corresponding stages in the creation of the Universe, and disassembles them within his meditative state, thus absorbing each state of disintegration into his own descendent journey. During the descent the subject not only sees the annihilation of the Cosmos, but also of the adult Self. There are a number of instances of the imaginal deconstruction of the adult Self in pictorial and written forms scattered across the entire range of P-Orridge's work, for example in this, in the fourth draft of the *World Preset Guardians* (1992); a text in progress that later became *Thee Fractured Garden*, P-Orridge envisions himself disintegrating such an imaginal space.

I lay in the desert, on my back, staring up at the stars. I could feel millions of rays of light entering my body, one from each star, infinite numbers, my cell walls broke down, my sense of bodily existence ended, I was illumination, a 3D projection of cosmic light, I could see the ancient shamans building sacred sites to fix their relationship with the stars, to solidify their connections and effects. I remembered the thousands of Holy Teachers, the idea of the Divine 'spark', the descriptions of white light, the myths and legends of our descent from the stars, I was not corporeal, I was a mirage, sealed within an inherited, apparently solid body by the weight of Thisstory, by the weight of Fear and Guilt. I shimmered like a ghost, ectoplasm, illusion, and all the puzzles I had heard, and all the limited descriptions of limitless transcendent experiences made sense. I knew I had to find a way to G.O., to leave this sealed



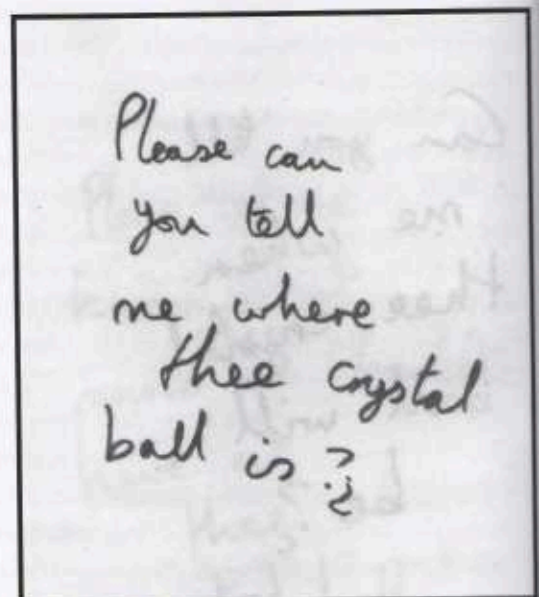
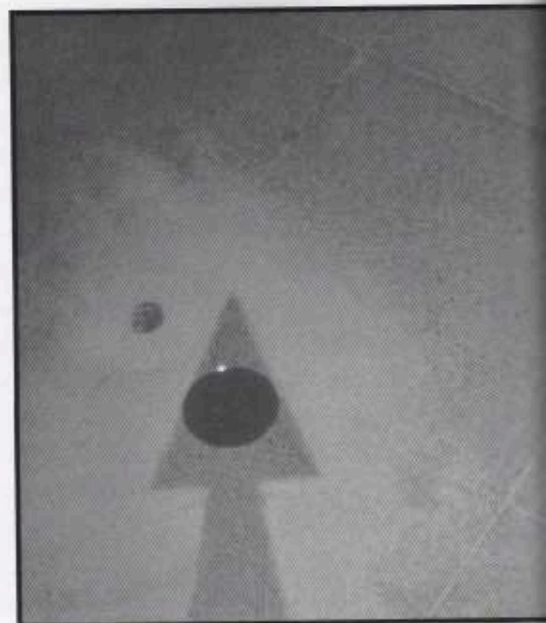
coffin that is my body, to find an accelerator to project my brain, bypassing the tedium of mechanistic evolution, into deepest omniversal space, into immortality, into the very fabric of myth and heaven. I was everyone, everything, and everything was here to G.O.

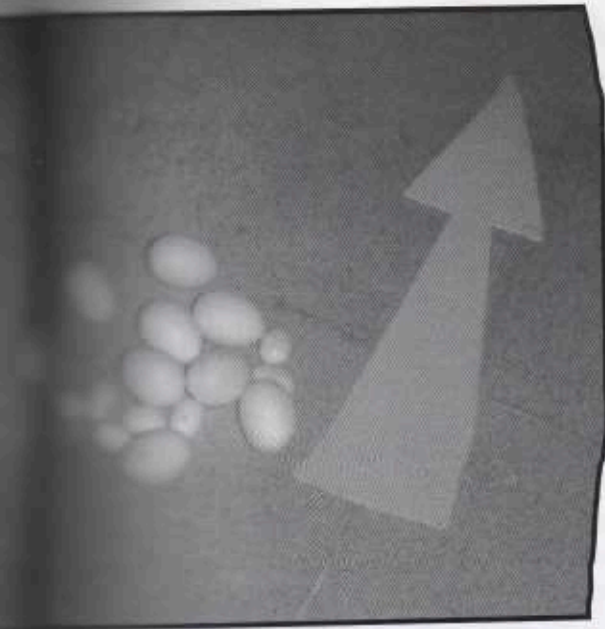
Descent, within the symbolism of a number of ancient religions, is synonymous with the process of decomposition and exhalation, while ascent is associated with assembly and the inhalation and renewal of life and self. "Embryonic breathing" (a meditative technique and a metaphor) used in Taoism emphasises the symbiotic relations of the individual to the Cosmos and the "tidal flow" of energy between the conscious and the unconscious evoked in the recreation of the "closed-circuit" respiration of blood which links the embryo to the mother. It is common in non-western spiritual and ritual practice to emphasise and through practice, solidify the link between the conscious and unconscious, and to observe the self in relation to the greater cosmos. To accept into the state of changed perception achieved through ritual, the creative and extended community of possible realities inherent within the cosmos of the unconscious. Integral within this form of dualism; the self and the cosmos, the conscious and the unconscious, is the symbolism and solid metaphor of the breath. Breathing is a continuous state of death and resurrection, the one dependent on the other.

Within the ritual circumstance of Stations Ov Thee Cross the hood translates into the hood of the condemned, the darkness before execution, and the veil of darkness before birth. The hood represents the journey into the unknown. The hood throws the subject toward the intuitive and instinctive—the authentic nature of the Self—by effectively forcing priority via crisis on the psyche. The subject is forced into an area of instinct beyond the socially engineered, and it is from this space that the authentic "Other" speaks and reacts.

Ritualisation fuses, with impulse and instinct integrated with intuition, an open-minded examination of my most deeply buried and normally inarticulate drives and desires, an approach devoid of preconceptions that re-educated my idea of what E was as an individual, what my real boundaries were and what it was possible for me to becom. (P-Orridge: TF, 1995)

Through ritualisation, P-Orridge attempts to open the door to spaces that exist within the unconscious. According to P-Orridge, this process has introduced him to mental states akin to trance and yoga, such states are treated and referred to by P-Orridge as "spaces", "places" and "rooms." The "place" or "space" of the altered state being a room in which one can explore notions of the Self and Otherness.





... to have space to grow and develop, it is also a physical place and like all words it is a metaphor too. Thee room is where you are and where you want to be. To go into the room is to choose to reclaim your self. (Ibid.)

The hood is used and sometimes combined with strong psychedelics that provide, in a sense, a second hood—a psychic veil that is combined with the physical. These “hoods” help to solidify a connection with the “place,” “space” or “room” at the heart of the psycho-physical process of the ritual, described in *Thee Splinter Test* in a more conventional Existential terminology as “Absolute Elsewhere.” *Inside the altered consciousness of the ritual, a state arises that P-Orridge calls ‘wakefulness’ in which possibilities arise from a state of changed perception and fuel the process of self-analysis, self-awareness and psychological individuation.*

The state of “wakefulness” is described as a magickal space that provides the practitioner with tools to reveal and describe and physically adjust the fundamentals of the Self. P-Orridge describes this space of wakefulness as an infinitude of perceptive spaces and points of observation, where “down,” “up,” “across,” “distance” and other faded directional terms become redundant as do the notions of fixed identity and of male and femaleness.

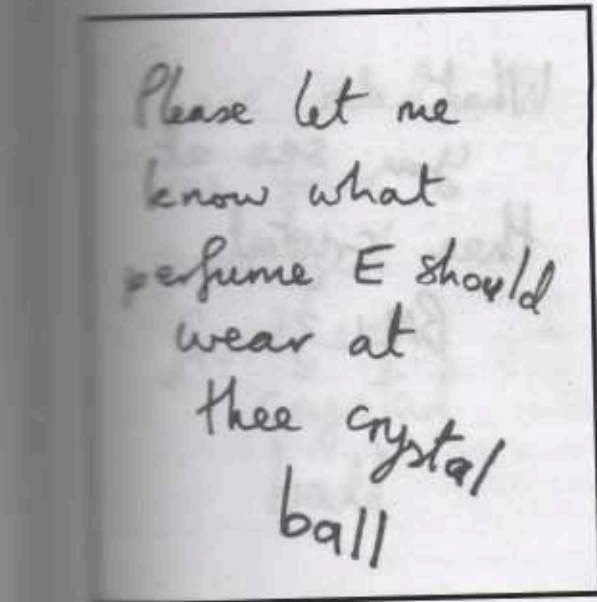
#### The Action of the Knife

The release of blood allows the release of the “wolf.” It also leads the “wolf” back to the HOST body when all journeys and hunting are over. (P-Orridge: UNP)

The knife cuts the flesh and in so doing the activity of cutting precipitates a kind of intervention to be deposited in solid form through the act of cutting. It hastens and evokes a separate state of affairs. The cutting brings the knife into a present significance, not as a signifier, but as a critical collaborator with flesh that now acquires a gravity beyond the domestic. In this moment of cutting, past, present and future conditions of flesh and knife are condensed; a timeless, liminal space that is nevertheless intensely physical opens as a state of affairs. At this point one does not speak of the separation of things; of flesh and knife and of time and space, past, present and future, one registers ALL in the midst of that state of affairs.

Julie  
1997

P-Orridge uses ritual in order to access deeper states of altered consciousness and to gain access to the fundamental workings of the mind. He is generally initiated into these states by cutting “I use the cut as a symbolic key” (Vale & Juno: 1998, p. 169). The process of cutting and “blood-letting” is for P-Orridge a doorway or “portal” into a heightened, altered state. The cut is also viewed as a Yoni, a slit in the skin which has significant feminine over-tones,





used to induce a periodic flow of blood which marks the decay of the old body in order to facilitate a renewal. Regular observation of this type of ritual instigates a powerful physiological as well a psychological cycle of renewal. Like the natural routine imposed on the female body through menstruation, P-Orridge instigates a regular "feminization" through ritual.

Apart from the demarcation of the physical space of the ritual, which denotes its separation from everyday space, the cut announces the body's change of use. The cut removes the body from the social and delivers it into the space of the ritual. The body becomes affirmative and is itself the sensual enclosure of the ritual.

*P-Orridge uses the cut not only as a portal, but as a means of reducing the hold of the ego. The ego is levelled and shut down by the trauma/anxiety of the cut; made humble under the knife. The cut acts on the mind and body to simultaneously polarise, expose and simplify the ratios that exist in both mind and matter. The cut defines and measures, and makes everything explicit.*

... it's all a matter of ratio, and that in any given moment in time, whether it's a second or a year, one has all the warring factions within one's self—all the emotions, everything, the totality of one's self, whether it's eating, shitting, or philosophy, or sex, or anything that's ever happened to you or is happening on any level—all those things are obvious in different ratios to each other; there's the whole, and then there's the ratios of all the bits.

(Vale & Juno: 1989, p. 169)

In the midst of the "place," "space," and "room" of the ritual, it is possible to ask the question, "How was thee negative conditioning done to me?" (P-Orridge: UNP) and to identify the effect of negative social conditioning in the balance of ratios.

Beyond the Self that is explicit, lie the fundamentals of the psyche; an unconscious imaginal ground which offers the prima material of creation to the artist.

### **Make Space In Order to Be Space**

For P-Orridge, "space" as a medium in which to explore ideas can mean the theoretical space inside the mind, the space of the physical body, or the geometry of the ritual space. It can also mean the stage space, or the larger space of people and ideas called culture. For P-Orridge it is important to "Make space, in order to be space." Making space means the demarcation of any given or imagined area, into which an image or an idea can be projected. So in terms of P-Orridge's work, the field of containment is any space defined, created or designed by the artist, whether it is part of the consensus reality or part of the internal imaginal ground and realities of

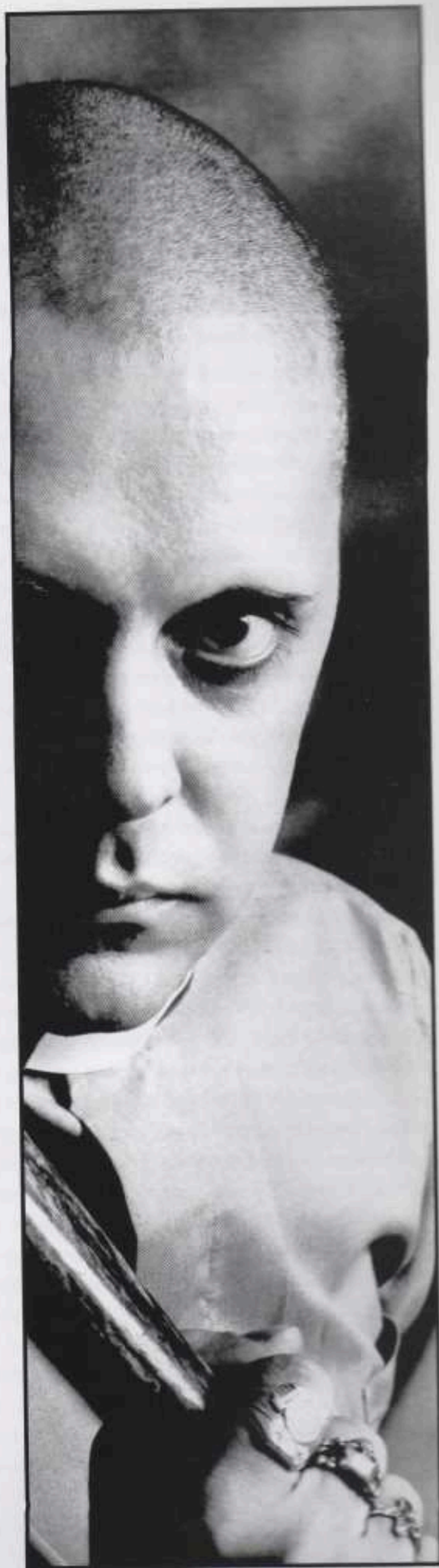
the Mind. To make space means to generate, engineer, manufacture, open and step outside conventional perceptual frames. To create or define space is fundamentally an expression of freedom TO BE according to one's own definitions. The spaces designated by P-Orridge as arenas in which to explore ideas, perceptions, roles and issues are, by his own definition, ritual spaces to a greater or lesser extent. They are therefore all devotional, and it is absolutely clear that the act of devotion is creative.

What fascinates me about P-Orridge's work is that it is the product of a real personal sense of woundedness articulated from the point of view of an individual standing on the outer edges of humanity. The voices that speak through P-Orridge's writings, come to us from the fractured ratios that make up the Self... they come to us from the outer reaches of the fundamental aspects of the psyche, from the margins of the unconscious. P-Orridge's work is characterised by a consistent sense of anxiety that come from dwelling within a permanent state of wounded transition.

It's easy to talk about the metaphors and analogies of "strippin" away the outer layer, and of "cutting" and levelling and defining ratios. But the consequences of actively applying processes of deepening and levelling and cutting to the Self-active processes which aim to de-programme the fundamentals of the psyche—are grave. After a while the underground remains open.

P-Orridge's statement that it is "thee imprint to respect everything as holy, as innately valuable with its own right to co-exist" (extract from a letter 26 November 1996) has become one of the ruling principles of his life. This is a principle that is perhaps the result of his own engineered value system that he has been consciously installing since the early 1970s. It is a symptom of the open wound; the not-so-metaphorical cut to the mind which allows every external agent into the body, that makes him sensitive to every sharp instrument, every tone, turn of phrase, and collision of images and ideas. P-Orridge speaks about the "noise"—the saturation of the Self by mediocrity, and the pull to succumb to consensus reality.

P-Orridge's work is the product of a sense of loss and abandonment, abuse and disorientation, on both a personal and an epic/mythical scale. It is mixed with an archetypal childlikeness (the likeness of the child) that produces a dynamic energy of play, invention, obsession, and the will to raise hell for the sheer sake of it. This highly volatile cocktail has produced an unorthodox angel of experience. The child within this constellation represents the necessity to experience the moment to the pit of its being. It is a dynamic of diabolical action, a thing that wounds itself to turn events into experience. It is the accusing child who points a finger at the adult world, the child that cries abuse, abandonment and betrayal.



For P-Orridge the social, cultural, political and racial abuse, which often surfaces in his writing, are all inflations and extensions of biographical registers and personal neuroses. This preoccupation with hurt and distress and its frequency in P-Orridge's work seems over obsessive, but is in actual fact symptomatic of the process of healing, the remedy being already present in the symptom itself. Such a neurosis is, according to Jung, an attempt at self-cure. As P-Orridge states "what we have creates our need."

It is an active venting and exploration of the courses of his own neuroses, and their forensic examination that fuels the process of individuation, the strengthening of convictions, and the affirmation of the complexities and possibilities of the Self. In the case of P-Orridge this has resulted in the explorations of methods of separation and the development of the practical means of connecting with ideas and alternative states of consciousness that lie beyond the fabric of society. Taking the notion of separation to its extreme, P-Orridge strives toward the separation of energy from the "sealed coffin" that is the body and even from his own imaginative ties to himself. Self promotion, the manner in which he promotes the many guises of Genesis P-Orridge in public, is not only a means of seeing how those guises and ideas of Self develop within the medium of popular culture but, to those who understand the intention of the gesture, it is an invitation for other people to propose, invent and reassemble who Genesis P-Orridge is.

This is a participatory process. Life, Art, Culture, individual relationships, the material of our ideas, imaginations, the mind and body of Genesis P-Orridge all become mediums for exploring what IS and what is possible. The metaphor of the crystal ball in *Jusqu a la Balle Crystal (1975)* is a timeless pool of invention, reflection, and illusion, a spherical world that encompasses everything that is, was and can be, an invitation for us all to participate in the invention of Genesis P-Orridge. For P-Orridge, the continuous "ritualization" of life is an affirmation of the desire to Be a Self that chooses; to develop the project of the Self as a process of continuous Self invention. A constant state of dissatisfaction provides the motivation. Social pressure to conform to a particular singular mode of being gives extra impetus to the activity of re-definition, invention and transformation. As two, three, four minds are greater than one, P-Orridge has recognised that this process can be accelerated by the involvement of a number of like-minded people, by the public, within a culture.

### I, My Self and The Child

In recalling memories of his childhood, P-Orridge reopens the wounds of his own lived experiences to see what is there at that present moment in time; to see what in the present connects with the past. He looks into the internal portions of those spaces of his







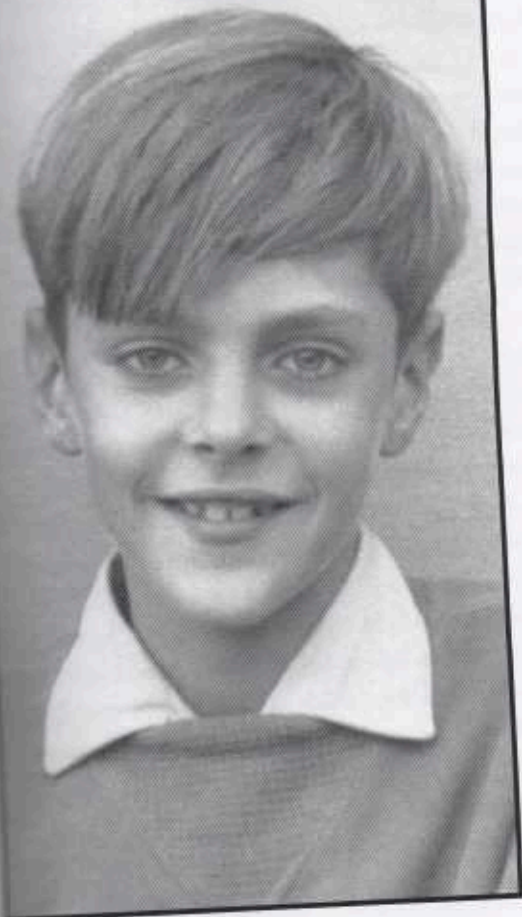
childhood, in order to decipher, to enlighten, engage and reaffirm and to expand those small memories into "cathedrals" of meaning. Re-located memories become loaded with symbolism in the present. Memories become mythologized. They are neither objective accounts, actual events or complete fictions, but exist in a hinterland between past personal biography, present psychophysical signification, and epic/mythic thought. Epic because the investigation of the Self is, in the case of Genesis P-Orridge, always linked to the notion of existence. The project of the Self is therefore synonymous with the project of existence.

In re-entering the space of memories, P-Orridge is re-entering an area of the "project" of the Self. A letter dated 26 November 1996 offers an illustration of how memories, present significances, and mythic motifs, merge and intertwine in P-Orridge's writing. More significantly, in this spontaneous piece of "informal writing" one can clearly see a series of perceptual shifts taking place. The narrative construction of the writing is testimony to the mental processes taking place; it is illustrative of the series of "lenses" through which memory is scrutinised.

Staples Road Infant School was a ten minute walk from our house in Loughton, Essex. The house we lived in was newly built. In fact, due to its late completion we had spent the entire, blizzard-filled and bitterly cold winter in 1963 living in a caravan parked in the street outside. Myself, my parents, my one sister Cynthia Helen Megson, and my grandmother Edith Swindells. We had a whole Christmas there, incredibly cold. One of my tasks was to help my father empty the chemical toilet in a pit, struggling on ice, nauseated by the stink. Toilet cleaning seems to haunt me throughout my L-if-E.

After this harsh winter we eventually moved into the house. There was a very old, very high holly bush hedge at the front but no gates, and a pretty wild meadow garden. I recall certain things very vividly about that house. I would eat breakfast watching wild deer grazing in the front garden. Epping Forest was still untouched across the other side of the street. Rabbits, squirrels, and deer were always around. In the mornings my mother would walk me to school, about ten minutes along a trail worn by footsteps and Deer through the forest. There were pools, frog ponds, deep shadows. It was a magickal place, and a favourite haunt, I learned later, for rapes, flashing, and the dumping of the corpses of the murdered.

This experience, with its contrast of Childlike awe, innocence mixed with an adult exploitation, pollution of that dream-space for sordid activities, inspired and charged the TG song EPPING FOREST years later. One of the very first lyrics I recorded.





What do  
you see at  
these crystal  
BALL ?



The theme of a place, a building, a symbol, or a phrase being neutral until combined with the individual and subjective information supplied and attached to it by the viewer/perceiver has been a constant through every phrase, project, and thread of my works. The forest is, of course, merely a forest. To the child (my SELF) it is a fairyland; to the murderer rapist it is a sanctuary and a sacred repository of the profane and unspeakable; to the consensus reality of the adult it is a place of beauty to be feared... a place tainted and spoiled by the mere possibility of aberrant behaviour. In fact, as ever, it is ALL the above, and together the full spectrum of perceptions and projections from all possible parties builds a "fairy tale" in all its glory. The child is correct, the child experiences awe which does not exclude any aspect, dark or light, of the "Grimm" tales held silent by the forest.

What is interesting about this piece of writing is the way the narrative moves from "I" to "My Self" to "The Child." This is a shift from the personal/biographical, through the notion of the Self to an archetypal sense of Child. Jung suggests that the notion of the child archetype emerges as a symbol of evolving independence, and that the symbol anticipates a nascent or original state of consciousness. Such a state of "original" consciousness does not "exclude any aspect dark or light" held silent within the dark forest of the psyche, but encounters such aspects in a state of "awe" as one seeing the world as if for the first time with a clear untainted vision.

The importance of the lens of the child as a means of exploring those aspects of the Self that lie deep within the psyche, is hinted at in an early statement made in 1994 during one of my first interviews with Genesis P-Orridge. Here, making a soft reference, in terms of imagery, to William Burroughs' notion of the prerecorded universe, P-Orridge makes an association that suggests that there is something in the archetypal mentality of the child that can be formulated as an attitude and a means of confronting the deep "programmes" of the Self.

...if you want to know where our programmes and our tape recordings come from... they go way back... and we've got to have a really intense and serious look, and we've got to have no fear of what we see... most fears are put in us by those who want to control us. Children have no fear. So children are given to us for a reason. (P-Orridge: CAZ, 1994)

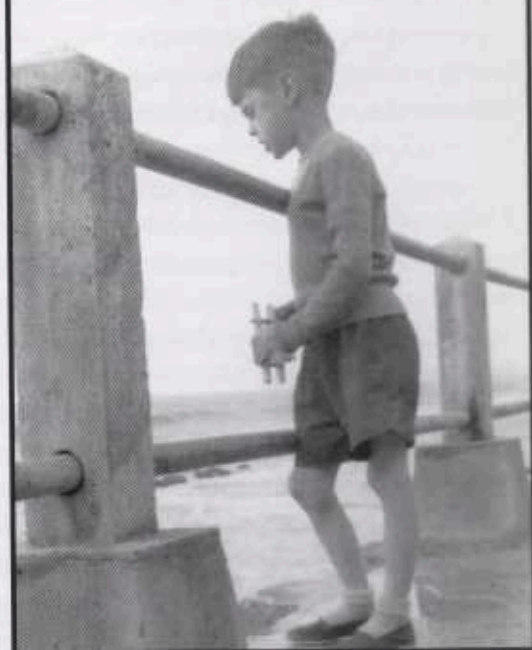
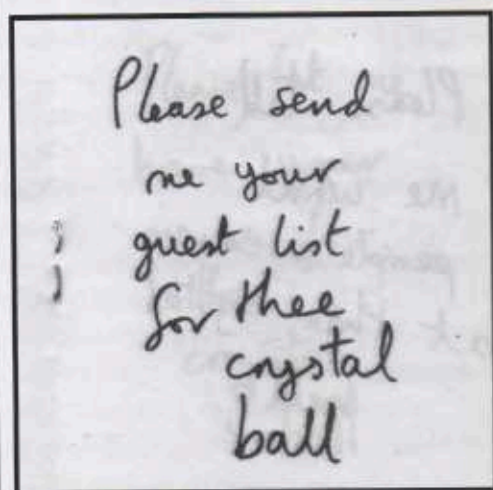
The archetypal child is a powerful lens through which to re-examine/re-encounter the world. The child archetype provides access to a psycho-physical state of perception which is pre-social and pre-cultural; an extremely dynamic state which is hypersensitive, playful, inventive, instinctive, intuitive, animalistic and innately organic and beyond the control of exterior forces.

P-Orridge's use of the archetypal child in his work is, I believe, first of all an instinctive and perhaps unconscious gesture which nevertheless indicates an attempt to redefine, re-investigate or re-initiate an "original" quality of perception which does not deny or shy away from the "light" or "dark" aspects of humanity. Furthermore, periodic re-examination of his own childhood and the common descent from biography into more archetypal utterances suggests that there is a periodic need to revisit the organic reservoir of the child, to strip away "received" identity and patterns of behaviour—the patterns of control—accumulated in the adult world and to seek the field of a presocial and precultural being—a distinct psychological originality. Furthermore, this also suggests that the biographic details and remembered circumstances of his childhood also provides P-Orridge with an access or a point of departure, through which to re-connect with something instinctively grasped as a child; an insight and intuitive understanding of himself and the world.

Jung suggests that the archetypal child is a kind of "corrective," particularly when it occurs in the adult. Its purpose is to compensate or correct what Jung calls the "extravagances" of the conscious mind; an over rigid intellectualised and moralised pattern of behaviour that can be seen as the common neurosis of socialization. The emergence of the child archetype is symbolic of the emergence of awakening independence, as a corrective against the stagnation of socialisation. In this instance the child implies instability and movement through emergence. As an antidote to adult rationalism, it is prankish. By implication the qualities of the archetype are incomplete and emerging. Such a dynamic is therefore often irrational and unpredictable. The child is "other" to the adult; the lens through which the archetypal child sees the world is a lens of total seduction—it is in-awe—it is in experience, there is no distance between it and the world. The intellectual rationale of the adult on the other hand needs re-affirmation that IT IS. The child is, in a very real sense, an agent that threatens to unmask the adult world as fraud, sham, and illusion.

The overriding feeling one gets from P-Orridge's work is that the likeness of the child is evoked out of a sense of frustration, and is a reflex which undermines, interrogates and unmasks the inauthentic aspects of the adult world, including himself as adult.

Jung suggests that while the archetypal child is primarily viewed and revered as a "symbol" in the lives of "normal" adults, it is nevertheless a mythological projection which requires renewal by ritual. Usually such renewals of contact or personal recognition of the archetypal child are formed in acceptable social activities, such as football, the periodic "night out on the tiles," the prankish misdemeanours and moments of self-indulgence. In this way most adults resist total identification with the archetype, which, according to Jung might result in a dangerous "possession" by the emergent con-



tents of the unconscious. While many artists have used the "lens" of the child to view the world, to draw something of the intuitive qualities of the child into their practice, few artists have attempted or have even needed to develop a deeper contact. The "likeness" of the child is generally used as a tool and hardly ever as an actual state of being. Total identification with, or possession by, the emergent content of the unconscious is generally viewed as a form of neurosis or a pathology.

### Industrial Music

The music/sound potential of the cut-up method was formalized within the framework of Throbbing Gristle. Here sampling and cut-up processes were used to "frame" and focus on an acoustic contemporary landscape. Industrial Music deconstructed, isolated and decoded the contemporary sound-scape of everyday life, offering testimonies, sound bites, stark juxtapositions of environmental noise, and ear-splitting audio symphonies that were visceral and expansive explorations of sound as pollution, political tool, as a weapon of control and its greater potential as a powerful emotive trigger and a means of initiating psychological disorientation. Sound as a cultural opium; muzak for the masses, an anaesthetic acoustic gas, and its polemic as a medium for inducing hallucination, insights and moments of individualisation. Sound was used to induce altered states of consciousness, ecstatic states of freedom. These were notions that were intensified and formalised within the auspices of Psychic TV pre-empting both acoustic explorations and the sociocultural concerns of the burgeoning English Acid House and Rave scenes.

Psychic TV are very much a LIVE experience. Aiming to create a liberating, ecstatic state of MIND and BODY through the use of LIGHT, RHYTHM and SOUND. It seems that a true TRANCE state, altered state, RAVE state requires LONG sections of sound with HOUSE speed heavy BEATS. These directly affect the audience physically generating a sensation of excitement and directly affect the brain generating a sensation of euphoria and loss of inhibition. If the looped RHYTHM is extremely loud, between 125-129 BPM (Beats Per Minute) and contains extremely low frequencies this effect is amplified. Any information PTV wish to disseminate is floated on top of this. Random Cut-Ups of Tapes mixed live from 6 cassette decks by Mistress Mix give an INFINITE number of possibilities that enter the unconscious directly short-circuiting CONTROL and EXPECTATION in a profound way. The content of these AUDIBLES can be absolutely ANY-THING. The more contradictory and irrational the better. The MIND reaches a state of NON-THINKING, switches off its filtering, valuing systems and becomes malleable, absorbent and de-programmable. In the same way the primary function of vocals is to TRANSMIT key Words and Phrases directly to the UNCONSCIOUS. (Rapoza: 1994, p. 50)



In essence, PTV was a metaphor for the kind of processes that P-Orridge was conducting in private through such ritual cycles as the Stations Of The Cross. In private P-Orridge submitted himself to a rigorous programme of psychological mind/body interventions. Trance and states of altered consciousness were initiated through ritual wounding and/or the use of heavy narcotics. Within such states of open mental and physical vulnerability, verbal instruction was given, predetermined statements of intention, interspersed with significant extracts read from a range of occult and mystical texts. In essence it was an attempt to re- or de-programme the personality via a process of positive reinforcement of intentions and insertion of random ideas and images. While these rituals were structured, often the content, what was said and done to the subject, was left to the whim of the instructor.

We are choosing **SPLINTERS** consciously and unconsciously to represent our own mimetic (DNA) patterns, our own cultural imprints and aspirations. We are in a truly Magickal sense "INVOKING" manifestations, and reliance upon "WHOLENESS." We are creating our own subjective and speculative descriptions of "OTHERNESS" (ST: 1993)

Although audio visual examples of the private ritual practice which underlined all of the work at this time was included in Psychic TV events in the form of stills, video footage and sound recordings, the deeper psycho-physical aspect of P-Orridge's work was not fully articulated or explicitly revealed. The founding of TOPY (The Temple of Psychic Youth) at that time, far from presenting explicit information about the precise "occult" practices P-Orridge was involved in at the time, should be considered as an extension of the "public" and therefore performative projects developed by the artist. TOPY was an exquisite piece of paratheatre, although this is not to say that it did not possess within and interlaced through its somewhat clichéd orthodoxies and practice models associated with most forms of organised religion, some valuable insights, cynical reflections on the gullibility and insecurities of human beings, and lessons in sexual freedom.

PTV events were a far cry from the austerity expressed in P-Orridge's 1976 COUM statement in which he insisted that "people don't look into what you say if you distract them with obvious overload," which implied a stripping away of non-essential costume, props and activities in order to expose the real intention of the action. PTV events were explicitly structured in order to induce a state of sensory overload. Through this mechanism P-Orridge found a means of creating a situation where there was genuinely "no safe path away from the information" the audiences were confronted with on both a conscious and unconscious level. Similarly within his own programme of Self-engineering, sensory overload, sampling, looping and cutting-up of materials opened the psyche to incursions.





The various visual guises and personae presented by P-Orridge at that time as the front man of PTV were reflections of the personal processes being undertaken. In a sense the visual representations of Genesis P-Orridge at that time were living totems that mirrored the themes and images being used within ritual processes. The public personae became a "fetish" object draped in the paraphernalia, the signs and symbols, of the ritual practice that created it.

At this point P-Orridge began to structure his ideas and expand upon the notion that it was (theoretically) possible to alter the structure of the mind, and the physiology of the body through methods that altered and/or interfered with the hereditary control imposed by DNA. This is a notion that strikes at the empirical centre of control; an attempt to short circuit the hereditary control mechanism of the mind and body—a theory which is an extension, and a natural consequence of using the cut-up to decode and debug control systems, be they literary, linguistic, or hierarchical. In the course of an interview in Berlin in 1996 during the Transmediator Tour P-Orridge makes the connection between the artistic application of the cut-up and its psychophysical consequences.

My interest in all of those things is less to do with social control and politics so much as individual abilities becoming more and more refined until you can change the internal programming. Brion (Gysin) and William (Burroughs) used to say "in a pre-recorded universe, who made the first recording?" But I think now we are in a time when it's easier to say who made the first software? And that's really important because software is designed by somebody and that somebody is limited by their own experiences and emotions. And their particular place in society. Our DNA is the software. And the only real way to change is to find a method to alter the programme in your own DNA, and that's one of the things I think you can do with noise and sound. And also sexuality and other things ... but that basic idea that somehow you can manipulate the very essential material of control, even in DNA, that's the thing to seek and work with. (P-Orridge:TM. 1996)

Sampling for instance, is never used solely as a musical compositional device, but is used as a means of accessing the hidden potential of carefully selected sound sources in order to build alternative audio realities, whose landscapes may encapsulate, suggest and evoke things that lie beyond their acoustic presence.

Sampling is potentially the most radical concept we have (for changing reality) and sampling equipment gives us the potential to take the raw material of anything that can be recorded as sound and rebuild it, or put it in a place it was originally never going to be in, we have the infinite possibility to rearrange reality. And sound is just as much a material as concrete or paper or skin, and the most exciting and modern aspect of life right now is that everything can be changed and rebuilt physically. (Ibid.)

Using the resonances between the cut-up method and ritual practice that P-Orridge had recognised in the early 1970s and put into practice in COUM and later in Throbbing Gristle events, P-Orridge took the cut-up method into areas of what one might call contemporary cultural mysticism with PTV. In *Thee Splinter Test*, P-Orridge writes:

It can be said, for me at least, that thee transformational implications inherent in sampling, looping, cutting-up and/or thereafter re-assembling both found data materials and infinite combinations of site specific sounds, is probably equivalent to, and as socially significant and profound as, thee popularisation and mass proselytisation of LSD and thee splitting of thee atom. All three involve thee cutting-up of thee essential "matter" of science, religion and language; thee basic, potential inhibiting, cornerstones of what has been coined, our contemporary "dominator" culture. All three are innately magickal processes giving thee initiate practitioner, tools to travel within their previously finite consensus reality container, thereby to reveal and describe and physically adjust a place both of IN "control" and OUT of "control." A place, quite literally, of infinite space. (SP: 1993)

Within the context of PTV events the raw materials of the cut-ups were "contradictory, jarring, and simple," they comprised of "society's refuge and superficiality Cut-up with nature's preciousness and depth." The inclusion of cultural "refuge" and "superficiality" was perhaps a leftover from the end-of-pier, vaudeville elements that were always part of COUM actions, nature's "preciousness and depth"—the stuff that came up from the depths of the unconscious. The collision between the two worlds opens a liminal space and creates the kind of psycho-physical confusion that forces the individual inward to relocate the self. Having uncovered the "intention," the aim was now to create a "UNITY of purpose," the basis of which was the search for the real "SPIRIT" of the individual. P-Orridge continues "Thee sensation is FREEDOM, Thee sexuality is POWER."

### Time's Up!

According to Burroughs, literary cut-ups propose that "all dead poets and writers can be reincarnated in different hosts" and, more importantly, that this "potency" can be freed from the confines of words. Similarly, in most ritual, practice objects and symbols are placed within the focus of the physical structure of the ritual space, the design of which is dictated by the particular intention of the rite. The collision of objects, acts, structure and intention evokes a third state—a magical aspect—that is the potent and sometimes unexpected "sum" total of intentions, contents and equation of the ritual.



Sampling, collage, the use of cultural icons, spiritually and historically loaded sounds, images and words, people, dates, locations and the circumstances of events, are carefully manipulated into multi-dimensional ritualizations, the intention of which is always to evoke the "hidden" Otherness. Each image, sound, word is carefully selected according to the particular resonance that it brings to the larger structure.

Anything that you sample contains everything that happened to the person at that moment, so if I sample John Lennon's voice, I also sample everything about the Beatles... it's all contained in the smallest piece of that sample... which is a very powerful thing. So if you are selecting sounds and samples, you have to really remember that it's like an iceberg or a hologram; if you take a hologram and you break it, in every bit is the whole picture, its the same with noise or the word.

If you know the biography, and the source of the sound, and the person who played it, or the era or the intention then that is relevant and that should always be included in the selection process because I believe that that message is included. So if you want to have a discussion about the right wing and right wing music, then you would sample right wing music in a specific way, and maybe have it collide with its contradiction, so you include that dialogue in the music. (ST. 1993)

This kind of focused selection of sounds, images and ideas, is a form of ritualising and a form of exploration. Like the cut-up, it is a means of seeing what is there; what remains after the random collision of sounds, images and ideas, and what escapes as a separate entity. The same processes can be applied to the "exploration into psychic areas," but within the context of the public events it is a means of colliding and re-examining cultural phenomena.

The most powerful expression of this kind of formulation of a ritualised structure of amassed material, images, sounds, symbols, cultural icons and people brought together with the specific intention of carrying out an exploration was the 1999 **TIMES UP** concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, in London. In **TIMES UP** P-Orridge assembled a cast of artists who brought their particular significances to bear in the larger structure of the concert. It encompassed pre-punk garage music of Billy Childish to Question Mark and the Mysterions, a seminal psychedelic '60s band, and the reformed line-up of Psychic TV and P-Orridge's current project Thee Majesty. However, the most potent contribution of the night was made by The Master Musicians of Jajouka, who brought with them an ancient ritual musical practice and the chaotic dynamic of the particular deity associated with that practice, Pan. Above and beyond this, Jajouka represented a seminal moment in contemporary musical culture; the moment when Brian Jones hearing their





music for the first time, recorded and sampled it, and incorporated it into his own particular musical perception. Jones effectively re-seeded the divine into popular music in the early '60s. As far as P-Orridge is concerned, this was the point at which the divine was returned to western popular music. It was a recognition of the sacred origins of music, and of how ancient musical forms very often encapsulate not only the devotional intensity of the musician, the cosmology and audible structure of the space of the divine, as in Tibetan music, but also the tonal and rhythmic dynamic of the deity being addressed. In essence, it was a recognition that ancient devotional music is itself a hologram which contains every aspect of its sacredness, even though our understanding of it may have been lost. For P-Orridge, Brian Jones's discovery of the sacred music of The Master Musicians of Jajouka was a seminal moment in the evolution of popular music. It was this that was consciously evoked and relocated, along with its sacred origins, within the context of his own concert in 1999. Predictably, the music press failed to grasp the point or the larger significance of the evening.

P-Orridge does not make a secret of what he is doing. It is very clear that each creative expedition is an exploration, or as P-Orridge puts it, "everything for me is research; there's no finished product, there's just the research and the curiosity to understand something that I felt..." It is the process, not the product which is important, and the process is always set-up as a Grande cut-up which is framed by the specific intention of wanting to see what is there, and what may be generated through the collision of images, words, sounds and the circumstances of a performance or working practice. P-Orridge states, "...I probably feel something... in a certain situation, and then I want to understand why I felt it." Feelings, sensations and intuition not only dictate the selection of images, sounds and ideas, but also the manner in which he perceives and manipulates their collisions from inside the process. Here we are confronted by P-Orridge's extraordinary faith in his own intuition, and in the authenticity of his own emotional engagement with ideas, images and sounds. Emotions and sensations are used as a seismograph; a means of targeting and hooking into a sensual, organic and chaotic realm, in order to gain a kind of non-verbal understanding from the inside out. P-Orridge states that "the medium is really not that important to me, just I find using several mediums at the same time is more satisfying, and allows for more surprises and for unlikely connections to happen which I learn from." It's a conceptual theory that is derived from the cut-up and has been developed by P-Orridge into a working practice, a performance modality, and a perceptual viewpoint that has its basis in neurology.

The most valuable information in society is basically non-verbal, and it's one reason why books are such a difficult medium for some people. Because until somebody like William Burroughs, books were very linear and it's only in the 20th century that peo-

ple realised that for literature to stay alive it had to reflect the brain, and the brain is not linear, and existence is not linear, everything is disassembled and reassembled constantly, and that has to be true of any medium you try and use to say something. So even a book that's good should really be a non-verbal message implied by the words, not the words themselves. And the central nervous system is really reacting to chemicals and non-verbal messages, and language has always been a barrier to that. Any linear form is a barrier to that. And that's why we have to keep changing, we have to keep changing ourselves constantly. (P-Orridge:TM, 1996)

How we edit and deal with the editing process from the inside out is part of the creative, psychophysical challenge, and is as much to do with the honing of one's own abilities and the testing of one's potential as it has to do with creating artifacts.

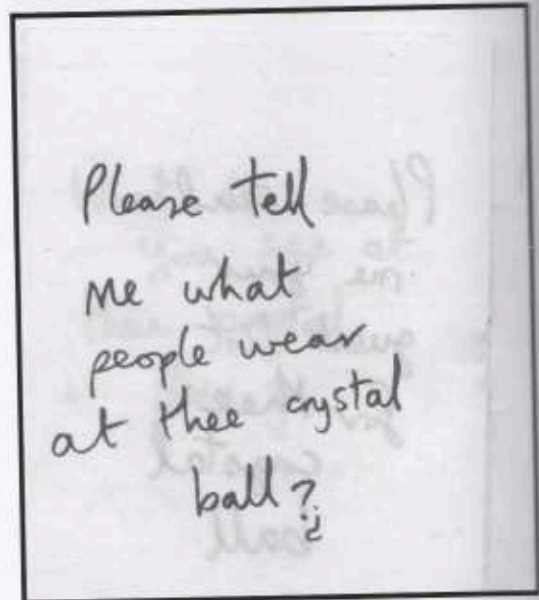
### Easy Assumptions

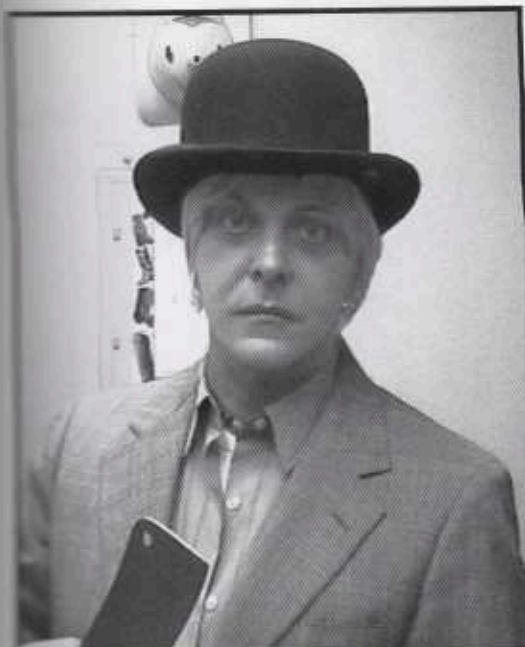
It is easy to assume that there is nothing behind the prolific artistic output and the chameleon-like personae of Genesis P-Orridge except an ego and a cultural hacker. Spurious, idiosyncratic, outrageous and licentious; the words, images, sounds and general personae of this artist seems at times to be completely detached from reality. Indeed his work often reads as an attack on the sane and the rational. But, as we have seen, the somewhat edited and consciously manipulated material of invention that does eventually find its way into the public arena has been derived from the imaginal ground psyche which, according to Jung "the general rational consciousness assumes to be worthless."

Such images are certainly worthless in the sense that they cannot immediately be turned to account in the objective world. The artistic is the foremost possibility for their application, insofar as such a means of expression lies in one's power; a second possibility is philosophical speculation; a third is the quasi-religious, which leads to heresies and the founding of sects; there remains the fourth possibility of employing the forces contained in the images in every form of licentiousness. (Jung: 1953, p. 37)

P-Orridge's work is and always has been an embodiment of the expression of the imaginal, and as a result, it has frequently been misunderstood, misinterpreted and perceived as worthless by many serious commentators and writers of cultural theory, or else it has been hyped and exploited by hack journalists.

Behind the masks of the PROJECT we have come to recognise as GENESIS P-ORRIDGE, the public personae of pop star, performance artist, vandal and cultural terrorist, enfant terrible, the child of the English occult movement, the sex magick guru, the fox tailed modern primitive; behind the grey suited and dangerously gold-

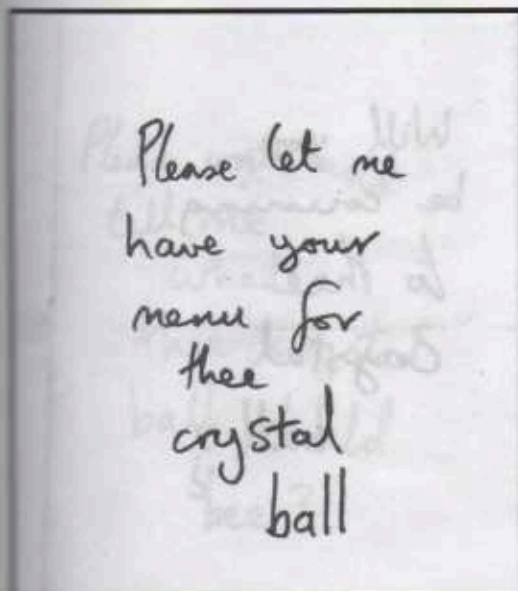




toothed smile of the deceptively dandy neo-psychedelic theorist, there is something more interesting than just a series of character projects. From the outside, P-Orridge's frequent "character changes" do appear inconsistent, even politically incorrect. From one character to another what seem absolute statements of belief are often contradicted. But what we are dealing with is not a person *per se*, but a mythological pattern that has been consciously constructed and placed inside the arena of culture in order to learn something about Culture and Self. As such, according to Lévi-Strauss, it functions as a mythological object.

The result is that when the pattern undergoes some kind of transformation, all its aspects are affected at once (Lévi-Strauss: 1964, p. 13)

So we see massive shifts and changes in identity, while the main processes and themes remain more or less the same. This, too, is an indication of the vein from which the work flows.



The constant recurrence of the same themes expresses this mixture of powerlessness and persistence. Since it has no interest in definite beginnings or endings, mythological thought never develops any theme to completion: there is always something left unfinished. Myths, like rites, are "in-terminable." (Ibid, p. 5-6)

As William James observed, it perhaps takes the strength of a psychopathic temperament to reach into and engage with such profound areas of the self.

In the psychopathic temperament we have the emotionality which is the sine qua non of moral perception; we have the intensity and tendency to emphasis which are the essence of practical moral vigour; and we have the love of metaphysics and mysticism which carry one's interests beyond the surface of the sensible world. What, then, is more natural than that this temperament should introduce one to regions of religious truth, to corners of the universe, which our robust Philistine type of nervous system... would be sure to hide forever from its self-satisfied possessors?

(James: 1994, p. 29)



P-Orridge's pathologizing is a natural organic consequence of a need to recover personal truths and a consequence of the inward journey proposed by fundamental concerns regarding existence and perception.

Such is the intensity, depth and consistency of Genesis P-Orridge's long-term explorations into such processes that it could be described as a kind of Yoga. I use the term in the broadest sense to mean an ascetic practice, a method of meditation, a system of philosophy that operates within structures which are innately spiritual. A path toward enlightenment. It is clear from his writing,

music and visual art works that P-Orridge locates his work within this essentially spiritual and devotional frame. While I have previously preferred to describe P-Orridge's practice as broadly spiritual in intention rather than religious, the work sits very happily within a model for secular religious experiences defined by William James. In his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James attempts to map out and explain "authentic" religious experiences as opposed to institutionally "directed" behaviour, and in so doing uncovers man's fundamental psychological propensities toward religious, mystical and what might be described as anomalous spiritual experiences. James reveals the basic traits and psychological dynamics of spiritual/mystical revelations and ecstasies, and defines religion as:

... feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine. (Ibid. p. 36)

In April 2001, speaking in a moment of exhausted clarity and with an air of simplicity which is extremely unusual to witness in public, Genesis P-Orridge described what he saw as the basic theme of his life:

Trying to gather my thoughts for a moment I just went around the back and puked. It wasn't nerves or something to do with being in front of an audience. But it's probably something to do with the point of why I do what I do. In a nutshell what I guess is the basic theme that might lead anyone here to some comprehension about what I've done with my life is, while it's a common idea to say that Life and Art is the same thing and that Life and Magick are the same thing, with all honesty I don't know of anyone else who has decided to let go of the first thing they were born with and actually become a piece of ART set free on a planet with no specific agenda except to reveal the mystery of being alive which is really the only thing worth thinking about, and the other is to "revel" in the mystery of being alive because it is the only thing worth being drenched in. So having said that, there's only ever one way to do anything; performance, art, writing, breathing, talking, living, walking down the street, and that is with a sense that one is part of something divine. (P-Orridge: Preston, 2001)

Jung argued that within the cosmology of the self the complete self constituted the divine in human terms, and the completion of the "hidden" mandala; the work of the soul is therefore the ultimate spiritual and psychological pilgrimage. In his book *Yoga Immortality and Freedom* Mircea Eliade suggests:

The visualisation of a divine image is followed by a more difficult exercise—identification with the divinity it represents. A tantric proverb says that "one cannot venerate a god unless one is a god



oneself" (nadevo devam arcayet). To identify oneself with a divinity, to become a god oneself, is equivalent to awakening the divine forces that lie asleep in man. This is no purely mental exercise. Nor, by the same token, is the final goal sought through visualisation manifested in terms of mental exercises... But in Tantric Buddhism, to realise the (divine) for oneself is no longer an intellectual operation: it is not the communication of an "idea" it is experiencing "truth." (Eliade: 1958, p. 208)

Make no mistake, P-Orridge's journey toward a confrontation of the Self has not been a comfortable or safe ride, nor does it continue to be. It has not been framed and secured within the sturdy architecture of an organised religious practice, but has teetered on the edge of psychological and physical disaster.

What drives Genesis P-Orridge psychologically may or may not be revealed in its totality in the work that he chooses to show in the public arena. While it is true to say that all the creative gestures are derived from deeper processes, they are spun out, thrown away from their point of origin through conscious selection, manipulation, abstraction and positive transformation into their opposite or contradictory sign. They are expanded or explored through the introduction of additional material that may flesh out an image, idea or narrative and/or position the original material within different areas of significance. This fracturing or "splintering" of images and ideas is a "model" of the dynamic processes, and synesthetic multi-perceptual procedures that characterise the working mind and a "re-minder" of the dynamic origins of pure experience. This demonstrates P-Orridge's earnest desire to reveal, however codified, the authentic basis of the work, suggesting that there is something more to the work than just the surface.

Often, a particular creative action set free in the public arena is designed to function as a cultural or political trigger that invites a response from the audience. Often the trigger expresses a contrary viewpoint to the one held by the artist, for the sake of provocation. An idea or seldom scrutinized belief is tested by taking it and deliberately turning it on its head in order to reflect and/or engender a deep-seated human prejudice. Images are taken out of the safety of their contexts and thrown up in a collage, or onto a stage to be examined in collision or in isolation as individual limbs severed from humanity. Again, a surface reading leads one to think that every statement, every image, and every sound framed by the artist is an expression of what he himself believes. Such gestures may however be psychological/cultural triggers; their function, an invitation to psychologise and even pathologies, to force us (the audience) to make contact with those deep seated areas of desire and prejudice in order to find personal and cultural truths. A swastika is flashed up during the course of a gig: does this mean that Genesis P-Orridge is a Nazi? Is he endorsing paedophilia



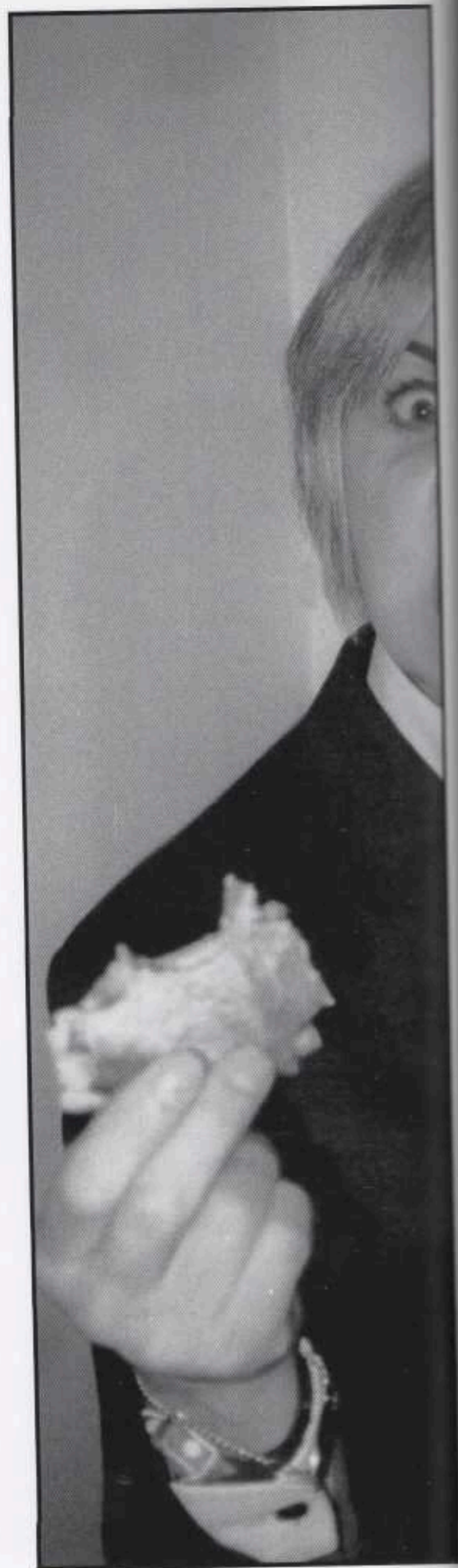
because there is, what some would consider to be a highly provocative picture of a young girl on the front of one of his album covers? Or is he asking us to question our perceptions? To explore our reactions to the imagery? Furthermore is he inviting us to confront our own perversities? Inviting us to tell the truth about our cultural heritage? P-Orridge invites us to make contact with our darker aspects; with what the depth psychologist James Hillman has called the "blood soul"; to explore it without denial, to enter into states of controlled pathologising; a strong bodily form of contemporary catharsis. The post-Psychic-TV performance events are without a doubt a solidification of that act of public pathologising, the spoken-word/music events providing a dynamic, yet highly structured framework in which audiences are invited, goaded, and shocked into participating in the examination of beliefs and identities.

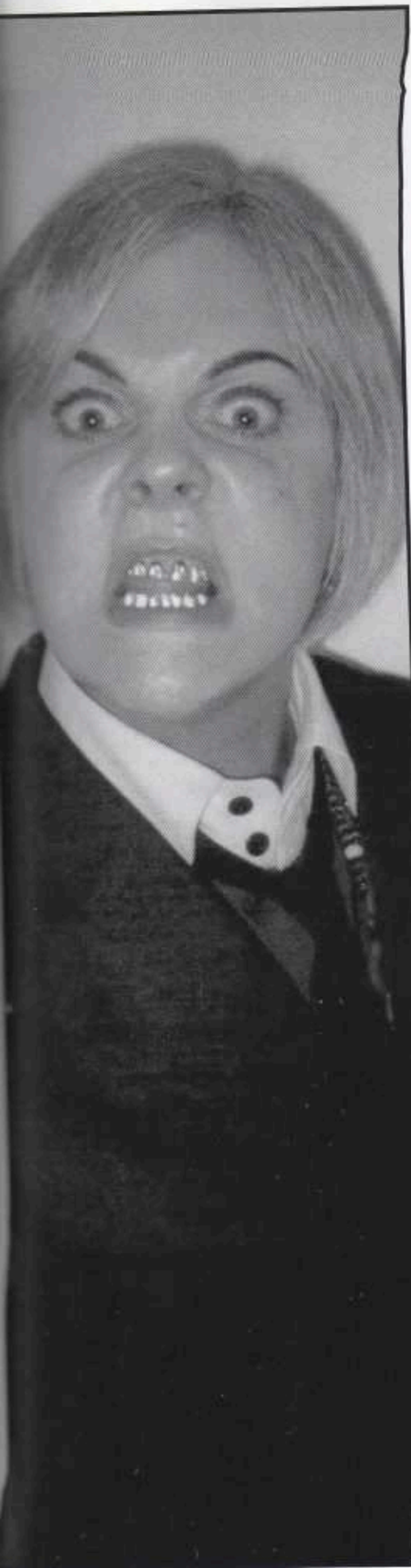
The avalanche of sounds, images, and words from the neurotic/pathological areas of humanity is precisely what makes P-Orridge's work so shocking and at the same time so seductive. From the very early days of COUM to the present project **THEE MAJESTY**, P-Orridge's ability to vomit up material from the underworld, from the underbelly of society, and from the humanistically spiritual realm, and to do this through the window of the self, is what for me makes Genesis P-Orridge's work important. Important not only in terms of what it contributes to the cultural landscape, but also in terms of what it demonstrates about the function and role of art in our society.

#### Words From the War Zone

The representational and abstract qualities of words presents both a psychological and a philosophical problem as well as a literary one. Through his writing P-Orridge continuously returns to the question as to whether it is at all possible for "experience"—the presentness of being—to be contained or encapsulated in words, and if it is possible for words to facilitate a "pure" exchange of feeling.

In *The Twilight of the Idols* and *The Anti-Christ*, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche suggested that words provided man with a tool with which he could set a world of his own creation over the natural, organic world, implying that words cover, create a distance and draw a veil across our real bodily experience of the world. In the text *At Stockholm* P-Orridge writes "we describe rather than feel" (ST, 1995), implying that the use of words provides humanity with an excuse for not feeling and experiencing. Nietzsche expands his argument by suggesting that the world of words, of names and definitions that man places over the nameless world of experience is a world manufactured by science. Nietzsche argues that science is responsible for a kind of tyranny or conspiracy that comes from the invasion of words. He suggests that humanity's view of the world is based on the scientific appreciation of things via words. P-Orridge





observes a similar tyranny. In *Thee Splinter Test* P-Orridge writes we "hunger for the death ov WORDS" (1994, p. 13) that imprison us and exert control over us and attempt to define who we are. P-Orridge predicts a time when the word will become "thee Museum ov Meaning" a place of antiquity in which the words will be exhibited as a rare example of a redundant form of communication.

Nietzsche talks about the "spell" of grammatical function in the same way that P-Orridge talks about the "naming sorcery that was both built and solidified within thee Process ov Control" (ibid.). This is the process of naming, that limits that which is named to a narrow linguistic determinacy. So in the case of naming a child P-Orridge writes:

They've named us. We have been limited absolutely now. No chance. Just stuck with working it through." (FG: 1996, p. 9)

The suggestion here is that the naming of things, including the divine, creates an abstract notion of that which is under scrutiny. This abstraction distances a person from the empirical nature of that which is named. Rather than summoning up the essential power and complexities of the original in its name, the abstract is a weak representation—a narrow simplification and an emotionless grave of meaning.

I am reminded here of the philosopher Henri Lefebvre's suggestion that the operation of abstraction via language amounts to an act of murder, and that humanity's preoccupation with abstraction through language is suicidal. Lefebvre provides us with a vision of humanity at odds with nature. In the same tone, P-Orridge states that humanity is "driven by a desire for ignorance" by a need to control things through simplistic language-based definitions, and that humanity builds the illusion of knowledge, ownership and security through words. Humanity builds laws, and defines the rights of individuals, and encloses them in institutional and constitutional nets of words in order to "destroy us and make us wholly unusable to change" (SS: 1995. p 4).

While P-Orridge pronounces the death of words, he recognises the opportunity to use words in a subversive, provocative, and contradictory manner. While acknowledging the predetermined nature of words and the manner in which words have been encoded with sociocultural meanings and moral values, P-Orridge characteristically plays with assonance in his writing, in a game of free association that decodes and explodes meaning to uncover the political and social determinacy at work in the prescriptive power of words.

Words have been degraded ov meaning; made void ov sense to encourage cynicism and lack ov self-coumfdence... Temporary. Temporality, Transcience, easily can mutate into Temptation. A

word that (authority) treats with horror, a state to be suppressed at all cost. In fact thee Full Fill Meant ov Temptation leads an Individual into ever closer unification ov their conscious and unconscious. (Rapoza: 1993, p. 20)

Words are deconstructed and reassembled and opened up to greater possibilities and collisions of meaning. Similar results are derived from the cut-up method, the difference being that this reassembly and collision process is executed in the mind of the author not with paper and scissors. In this small statement, the reconstruction of words and the degeneration of specific meanings echoes a process and a perceptual viewpoint which is in operation on a neurological level. The statement not only exposes the tyranny of words and highlights the politics of control, but reveals a method of insight and subversion via the transformation and the cutting up of words.

Elsewhere P-Orridge demonstrates how words can be used as a tool or a symbol for change. Words are used like so many individual nuts and bolts to hold together or frame a conceptual idea, which lies outside the realm of the written word. In much of P-Orridge's writing there is a call to claim language itself, to reassemble and reform it into a personalised system of expression. He suggests that an individual approach to the processing and handling of words puts the determinacy and control of things, meanings and definitions back into the hands of the individual. Perhaps this came to be achieved through the promotion of personalised writing systems similar to the one developed by P-Orridge in the late 1960's from which the words thee, ov, and prefix of coum are derived. And yet:

Thee sadness, thee awful, crying shame ov giving all this stupid fucking shit a bloody NAME. (SS: 1995, p. 9)

In *Thee Seeding Ship* P-Orridge expresses the extreme hopelessness of the profession of naming, of manipulating words, of attempting to alter the determinacy of words, the act of authoring, and in view of the fact that truth is not embodied in words, the absolute waste of energy in the mere concern for words. He writes:

It can't be true. It never can be true. How can anything this useless ever be true. (Ibid.)

P-Orridge states that for him the struggle with the determinacy of words, through their subversion and reconstruction, is a journey:

...through these blessed batterings ov impotent labelling. Naming. Naming 'till we drop exhausted. Gasping for forgiveness for ever assuming a name could be power. (Ibid.)





Condemned for ever assuming that language could contain and articulate a truth seeded there by the individual, he states "E choke on words and feel blessed by them" (Ibid.) but ends on a note of personal frustration.

E don't know to whom E am speaking. Maybe who E am. Speaking. So much strangeness suddenly. So much kick back by thee enemies ov LIFE. Useless. Within these circles ov fire, screaming out words to make thee sun rise each morning. Infesting thee moonlight. Infesting thee night. Animals breed. Men fall pregnant by most peculiar sorcery. (Ibid.)

For me this statement suggests the outcome of P-Orridge's thirty-year preoccupation with the processing and manipulation of words, and how far he has outgrown and become disillusioned with the literary, and to a certain extent, the possible revolutionary power of words. P-Orridge sees himself as suffering from a malignancy of words—an uncontrollable urge to express himself via words—but at the same time accepts the virulent quality of words. Here he associates his situation with the medical condition of pregnancy, which is rather a quaint image for a condition that he obviously views as terminal.

The depth psychologist James Hillman suggests words continually fall "mentally ill" with the polluted connotations produced by one hundred and fifty years of labelling, psychologizing, and pathologizing. Hillman suggests that words have become deranged by our attempts to give "names with a pathological bias to the animals of the imagination" (Hillman: 1990, p. 30). Of course Hillman is speaking from the point of view of psychoanalysis, so when he speaks about the "animals" of the imagination he is speaking about what society has labelled our delusions, neuroses and hallucinations. A word such as *pathological* for instance, may bring with it the perception that the pathology of which I speak is abnormal, when current research suggests that such strong pathological traits may developmentally precede "normal" ones. In other words, that pathologising may be part and parcel of every one's psychological makeup, though varying from person to person in terms of strength and individual significance. And while it is true that each person's psychological makeup shapes the particular manner in which that person experiences his/her Being in the world, sanity is still measured via a consensus rather than an individual understanding, and is very much based on the accepted vision of the world and on the "normal" social patterns of interaction. But it is the individual, and often the pioneering qualities of the psychopathic temperament that produce new insights and innovations as William James points out:

...the psychopathic temperament ...often brings with it ardour and excitability of character. The cranky person has extraordinary



emotional susceptibility. He is liable to fixed ideas and obsessions. His conceptions tend to pass immediately into belief and action; and when he gets a new idea, he has no rest till he proclaims it, or in some way "works it off". ...Thus when a superior intellect and a psychopathic temperament coalesce... we have the best possible condition for the kind of effective genius that gets into biographical dictionaries. Such men do not remain mere critics and understanders with their intellect. Their ideas possess them, they inflict them, for better or for worse, upon their companions or their age.

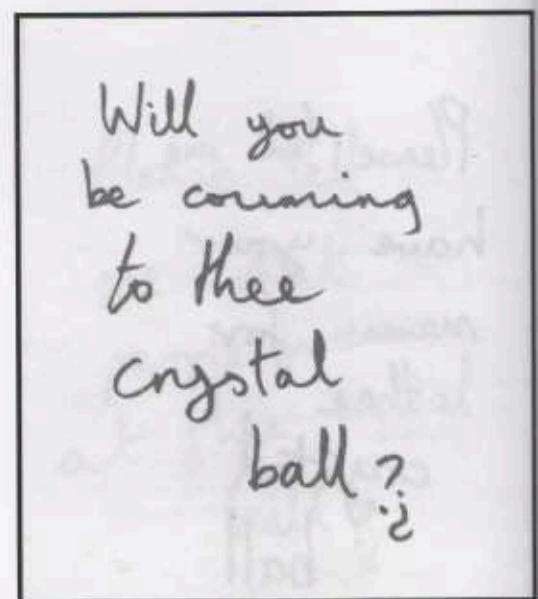
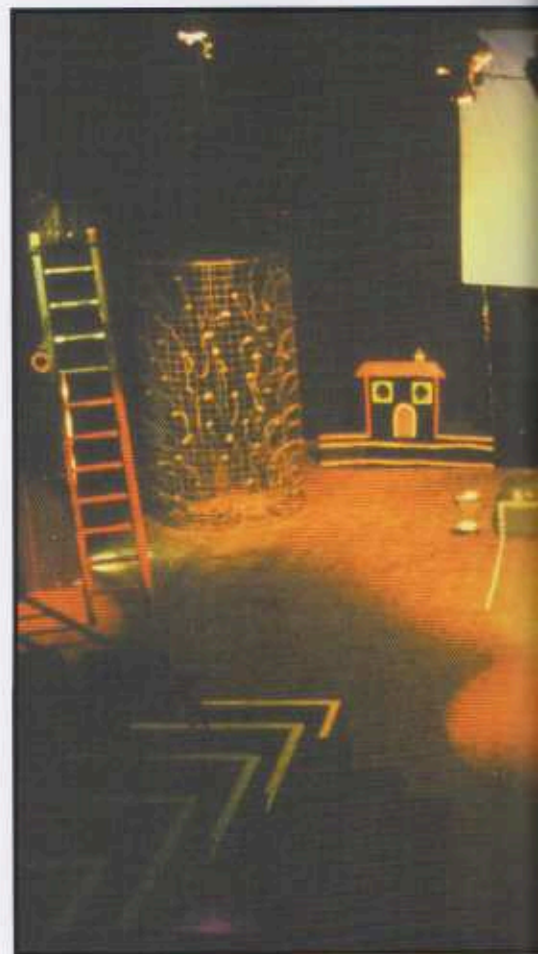
(James: 1994, p. 27)

However, we must be careful of the consequences of diagnosis, which in itself tends to pathologise the subject; delineating it, positioning it, and isolating it. Any kind of critical analysis whether we call it diagnosis or critical theory categorises the subject in one way or another, and when the categorisation is too general, or does not fit, the subject is affected. The words become a virus which poison the pure intentions of the subject. The subject disappears in a viral rash of medical materialism which undermines the authority of its creative and spiritual gestures. So although it is possible, for instance, to explain P-Orridge's propensity to hallucinations and trance as caused by childhood illness, auto-intoxication or calculated periods of deprivation, this should not be allowed to interfere with our appreciation, and the authority of the creative, spiritual gestures arising out of such hallucinatory or trance states. James warns us that unless this is the case "none of our thoughts and feelings, not even our scientific doctrines, not even our disbeliefs could retain any value as revelations of the truth, for every one of them without exception flow from the state of its possessor's body at the time." (Ibid, pp. 17-18).

In order to free language from its specific 'polluted connotations' Hillman proposes;

...a speech of ambiguities that is evocative and detailed, yet not definitive, not productive of dictionaries, textbooks or even abstract descriptions. Rather, it is a speech that leads to participation. (Hillman: 1990, pp. 30-31)

Such a quality of speech and language "evokes, calls forth, creates psyche as it speaks" and acts as an "imaginal agent" for the movement of the soul. In order to perform such an alchemy of speech, Hillman suggests that one must be "confirmed in imaginal durabilities" in order to transcend psychological perspective and "metaphorical implications" (Ibid., p. 35). He describes a state of transcendence within which the mind functions, or sees in images, and in which words slip out of their vernacular "removing ordinary things from their ordinary sense" (Ibid.) as the mind is drenched in the blue cosmology of the imaginal. P-Orridge takes a similar perspective on this state, saying:





Set for "Coming of Age," London, 1975.

Please write and  
tell me  
what  
thee crystal  
ball should  
bee?

We hear our own voice speaking and the words become thin and transparent like glass and we are at the place from where they come and they are like holograms floating, they are the essence of Mind like the voice of rain or the sandstorm, they are the voice behind our voice. (WPG: 1992, p. 8)

Within this state, words take the form of images "imaginal ideation" they become sensory on a number of levels. Hillman suggests that these word/images become physical, embedding themselves in the body, becoming part of the spine. Words become "things that crawl" up and out of the psyche. Such words, images, and speech arise from the depths of the soul, from the deepest reaches of the mind, and the mind is home to a variety of creatures.

4 August 1994

AS IT IS

Julie

Well, that WAS a fabulous letter, scary in a way, you see. E do know all that and more is, has been coumtained in my L-IF-e. E am still a proselytiser ov thee LIFE/ART stance. thee inseparability ov maker and made, and through that, E guess, thee PROCESS itself as being thee lineage.

In fact, RE:WILD PALMS, E chose not to do Harry, though they expected me to want to, and it was offered, butter, out ov perversity, and my own need to expand internal expectations and understandings ov my SELF. E actually fleshed out, and explained SENATOR KREUZER.

E am still reworking, and analysing, what E got from becomung him for a while. In such situations, E am thee equivalent ov a method actor.

**So are you telling me you engage in a form of Method acting?  
No. But there is method in the madness.**

In 1991/92 P-Orridge was invited by the scriptwriter Bruce Wagner to collaborate on the development of texts for Oliver Stone's *Wild Palms*. *The Wild Palms Reader* that was published in 1993 contains much of the subtext material upon which the script of *Wild Palms* was based. As his contribution to the fleshing out of the "occult" background of the movie, P-Orridge concentrated on the character of Senator Anton Kreutzer, writing a journal for the character that began in 1964 and compiling a prophetic collection of what Bruce Wagner called Kreutzer's "existential" writing. In so doing, P-Orridge both illustrated and described his own processes:

The Guardians rule the region of the unhinged Mind. They rule out sanity. Their people are those who have escaped blindness and chosen alternate realities denying preset values. They have delved into strange new areas of physical and psychic sensation, without the restraining limits of mental barriers. They have sought the

deepest levels of sensuality, carried indulgence of the body and Brain to their limits and left the logic of the Mind and protection of the "Soul" behind. They have plunged together into consensual madness, have unhooked their receivers completely from the dictates of a 'normal' Mind, followed an extra-terrestrial and extra-spiritual path that has neither judgement nor control for those who would travel and G.O. They rule the Mind-less cloud of lunacy... The Guardians seek to transcend the conflict of Mind, to raise beyond limitations of Human Values. They Will not sink into witless blindness but are aware, vibrant, and vision-satiated in the realm of Mindlessness, in the Space of hyperreal experience and immortal Dis-Order. (Trilling/Swezey: 1993, p. 47)

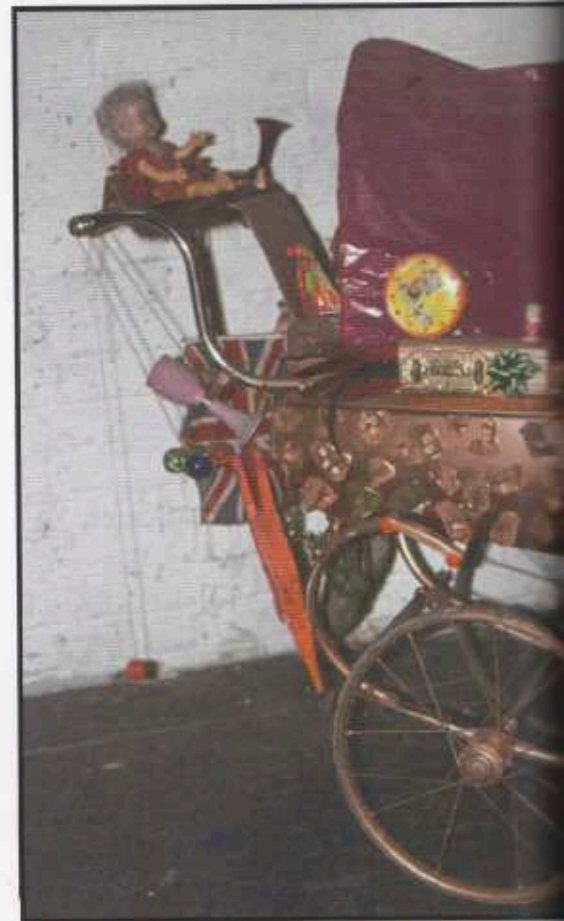
P-Orridge engages in forms of pathologising and psychologising in order to retrieve speech, words, images and information about the possibilities of Self from the imaginal ground of the psyche.

Pathologizing... the psyche's autonomous ability to create illness, morbidity, disorder, abnormality, and suffering in any aspect of its behaviour and to experience and imagine life through this deformed and afflicted perspective.

(James Hillman)

In the most extreme processes, P-Orridge writes from within the physical and mental state of his own "evoked" neurosis. To pathologise is not to become pathological, but rather it is to provoke the psyche into creating controlled departures into neurosis in order to touch the fabric of that 'suffering' and to view the world through its lenses. This is a model of creative thinking that is used by P-Orridge to engage with the imaginal ground of the Mind, and the "animals" and "characters" of his imagination, "creating archetypes; songs or containment for thee infinitely changing" (SS: 1996). P-Orridge has variously described his methodology as "self-hypnosis," "identification" and "connection" along a sliding scale from a kind of "method acting" approach, to total possession by a mental state, sensation, or idea either inside or outside a ritual process. This goes far beyond what one would consider a 'normal' approach to creative writing, but as P-Orridge professes through the text of *At Stockholm* (1995) "Thee search ov High Art and High Magick has been for processes ov retrieval."

It is possibly the similarity between the volatile environment of culture and the chaotic space of the mind that has sustained P-Orridge's interest in existing as an artist and has kept him from retreating from the public arena to conduct his work wholly in private. It is his conviction that art can still reflect, coerce and emulate the deep culture of what goes on in the mind that has kept his work public. The phenomenological link between social politics and the politics of the mind, its internal structures and complexes, its constitutions, its archetypal institutions and criminal underground, have found relevance and metaphor in the real social/political com-





above, "Wagon Train," 1972.



plexes of the humanity. In Giftgas four pieces of writing are edited, manipulated and restructured into four genre types: a children's story a medical casebook, a manifesto and a piece of political theory. In the first of the pieces, a children's story, P-Orridge offers the reader a window onto a mind swamped at the moment of writing with memories, desires, hurt, and neurosis. This is the most personal and biographical piece within the cycle of work that then expands through medical casebook, and manifesto to explore the wider neuroses of humanity.

## Memory

7 March 1995

AS IT IS

Dearest Julie

Yes. E did blend TERMINUS. Most ov my work is constantly in progress and subject to renewal. E don't really believe in thee product as such, thee PROCESS ov corsets.

Autobiographical, well, yes, butter memory is a flux, an infinite number ov possibilities and impossibilities. Bumper stickers in a traffic jam, so to speak. We actually hypnotise ourselves to be word perfect, until we could not save a life. These flickerings are an essential aspect ov emotional life, butter none have any particular substance, that is thee primary appeal for me. Thee absolute malleability ov everything, thee inevitability ov nothing...

So Be It

Gen

Memory and the mind's ability to construct memory is used as a means of entering into creative dialogue with a theme, idea or a character. The mind's ability to project and to perceive as if from the point of view of someone else's perspective is a unique human function which provides humanity with a basic means of grasping at least in concept an understanding of the reactions and circumstances of other members of the species, but it can also be harnessed as a creative tool, and a means of accessing new perceptual frames through which to view humanity. It is possible to see this working in Giftgas.

**"CHANGE THEE WAY TO PERCEIVE  
AND CHANGE ALL MEMORY."**

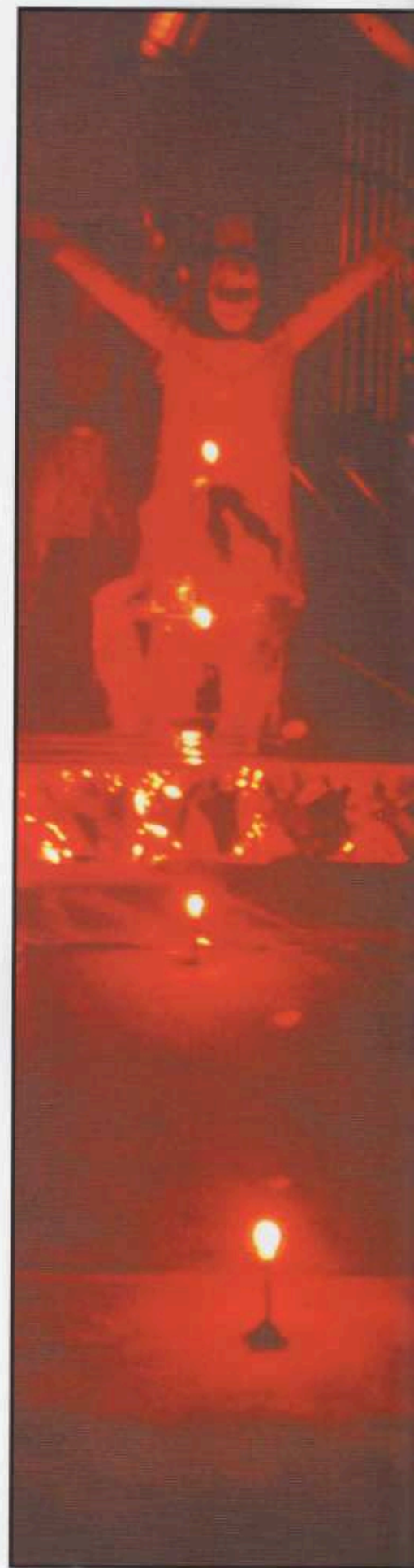
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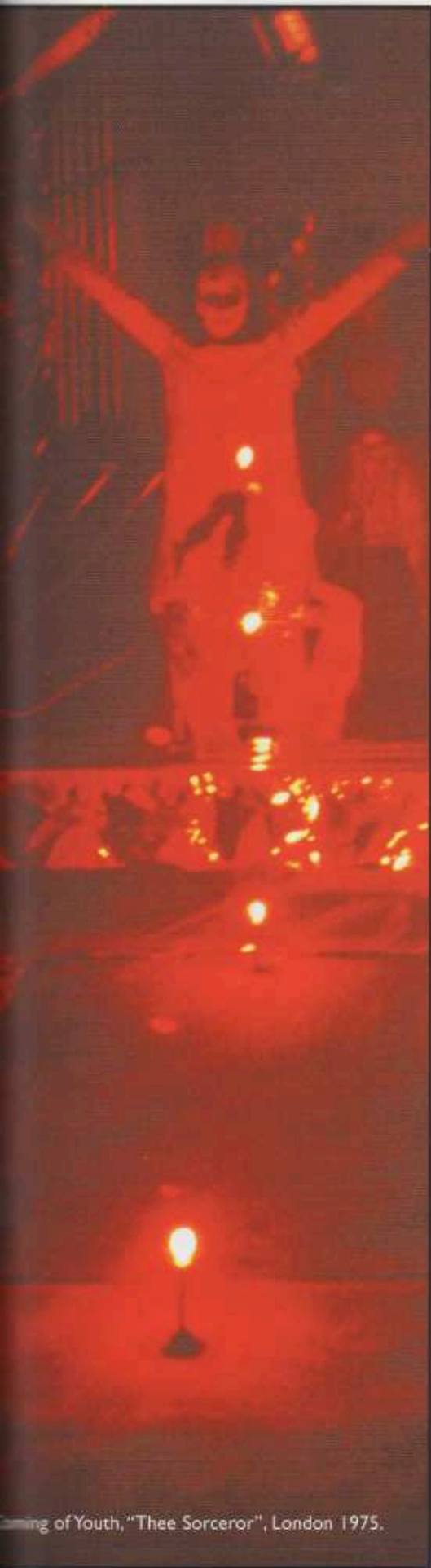
### A CHILDREN'S STORY

Every one of us has within us a dark and heinous shadow child. A child who was certain that these could not be their parents. A child who plotted lengthy executions and paramilitary torture, torch-lit under the covers at night. A child who fired wasps out of guns at photographs of foul and naked bodies. A child hurled screaming along a hallway by their mother. Ruptured wrists bleeding into the stainless steel sink of filial approval. Asthmatic voice drowning, child's lips sutured by absentee father, kissing an angry incision, held motionless for years in thee poisonous web of dominion. From this place of virulent rage we try to murder all parents, all family, to purge the betrayal. This story is for all these children; the abandoned, the hurt, the abused, the raped, the scarred, the ecstatic... (P-Orridge: GG. 1995)

Moving through biographical memory into a broadening imaginative state, language is found in that "place of virulent rage." This is not necessarily the actual sensation of the biographical memory itself, but a "place" that is opened by it. This is a place that is accessed by re-entering a memory and re-examining the details of that memory. Sitting with the details of the memory, other things begin to arise as the mind imaginatively engages with the perceptual space of that memory and begins to view it from different perspectives. This is a process on a par with various active meditative states. What is conjured in the space of memory through this kind of active/imaginative participation, are images, sensation, words and ideas that are often unexpected and surprising. What arises is the stuff of the psyche itself, the deep unconscious currents, the potent under-tow of memories, the subterranean swells of humanity. They rise up to meet memory like deepwater fish to bait. They are the fantastic possibilities, the contrary narratives, of unrestrained emotional responses and the siren voices of the archetypes. In *Giftgas: A Children's Story* fragmentary images of biographical memory give way to a richer vein of imaginal engagement. Symbolic imagery such as "child's lips sutured by absentee father, kissing an angry incision, held motionless for years in thee poisonous web of dominion" are symptomatic of the kinds of coded imagery; the poetics of the deep imaginal blood which rises to the surface from the deepwater of the unconscious. Acknowledgment of these "flickerings"—between personal biography, archetypal states and humanitarian undercurrents—are all essential elements of P-Orridge's work. These are both "the coded messages" of the neurosis of the self, and provide evidence of "the material of eternity" the fundamental workings of the world that is Mind.

The act of remembering provides P-Orridge with an entry point into the imaginal ground and dynamic landscape of the mind. Because of the quality of its ancillary interiority, its backward glanc-





ing from the standpoint of the present, and its link to the deep engine room of the unconscious which powers the selective re-visioning of memories, remembering provides us with a powerful tool not just for examining current memories but also for examining the constituents of past and present mental processes.

Memories are relics of something past, but they are also evidence of the “thing” that set them there—the fundamental curatorial process that selected that particular portion of an event as an artefact to be set within the museum of the memory. Some artifacts of memory seem to have been selected at random; sometimes we know why we remember something, but at other time we are not sure why such an image, idea, situation has stayed in our memory, while others have been forgotten. The artifacts of our memory often say more about the curatorial “character” that selected them than they do about the original event itself. Memory leads one into a dialogue with the curatorial fundamentals of the mind—the selection committee of the unconscious—the deep programme of the mind. Memories are the consequence of the actions of this curatorial committee that operates behind closed doors. In a sense, what we remember provides us with the material “trappings” the “taste” and “character” and therefore an indication as to the traits and possibly the rules and principles of the selection processes. In short, memory provides us with a key to understanding something about the deeper qualities of the mind, particularly those qualities that shape the personality.

P-Orridge’s interest in memory centres on his investigation into the deep programming of the mind. Memory provides P-Orridge with information about the construction of his own personality. Memory offers an oblique window onto the deeper selection processes at work in the unconscious regions of the mind; those inherited as part of a “collective unconscious” and those instilled in childhood, and bred in social patterning, repetition and imprinting coding. In a fragment from a notebook containing statements and intentions and instructions for one of the rituals in *Stations Ov Thee Cross*, P-Orridge states that one of the intentions is to understand “how was the negative conditioning done to me?” (P-Orridge: UNP).

Memory offers itself to the distance created by the act of remembering. This distance creates a space between the memory and the present position of the self. Distance; like looking down a road to the slant of a far off horizon. It is a tangible yet fluid highway, an element within the mental landscape that is a fundamental part of its composition and structure; it is a “flesh” (Merleau-Ponty: 1968) that connects the memory to the present situation of the one who remembers. The act of remembering spins ligatures of the fleshy body of the mind back across the distance... grasping with a sticky sensuality at the fractured bodies of memories. The grasping is tangible, visible; the mind that touches is “seen” as one standing out-

side of oneself, at a distance. Distance making explicit the sensuality of the touch. The quality and sensation of touching and being touched come into perspective and focus across the landscape of remembering.

At a distance, one becomes the spectator of one's own remembering. The vault of the mind is open and we are able to see and experience, in and through the flesh, the carnality of the mind... the sensuality of the imaginal landscape; the mind caught in the act... *in flagrante*.

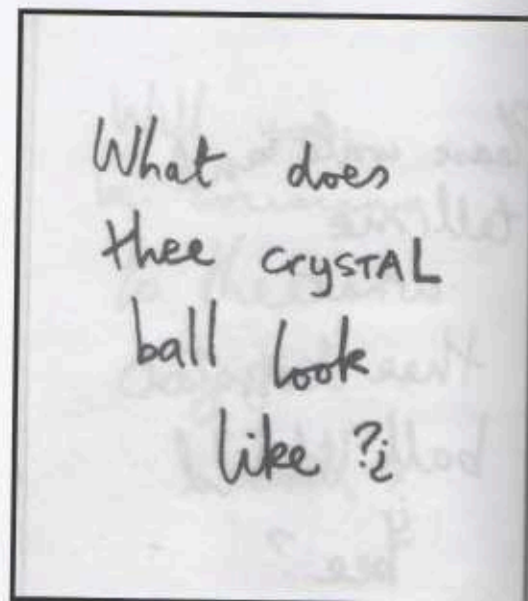
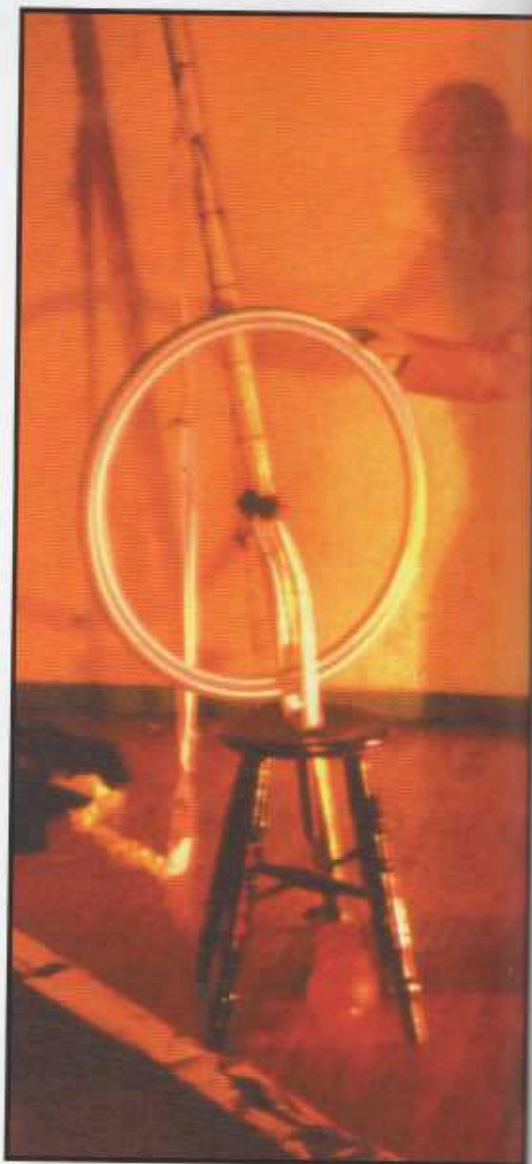
We hear our own voice speaking and the words become thin and transparent like glass and we are at the place from which they come and they are like holograms floating, they are the essence of Mind like the voice of rain or the sandstorm, they are the voice behind our voice. (P-Orridge: WPG: 1992, p. 8)

Remembering and the landscape of distance that this opens, objectifying both the memory within that landscape and the dynamics/construction of the landscape itself. Remembering opens the space of memory, bringing into view the vast continental drift of the historiography of the mind. It is in this space that we encounter the deep programming of the SELF, the internal architecture of the self; the cathedral in whose precincts stand the icons, statues, and altars to our own person.

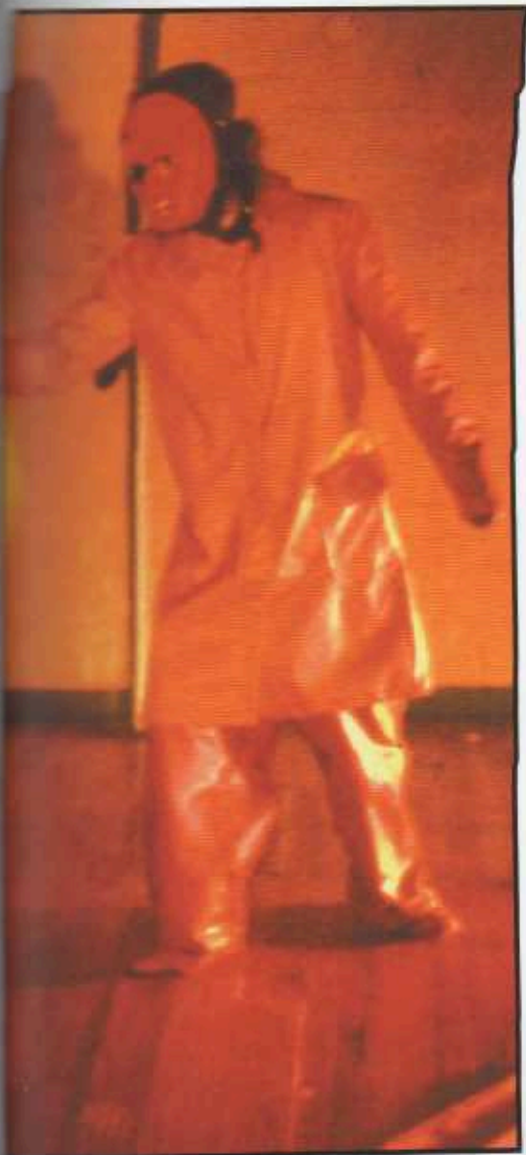
Memory also allows us to feel the aging of the mind; to sense the passage of time in the memory remnants of past events. In this way the act of remembering reminds us of the passage of time and the transitory nature of life. Memory reminds us that everything is in transition, everything exists within a temporary space and time, and that everything is eventually transcended. Memory is therefore important because it provides us with a window onto our own progression; our own biographical transcendence. Memory also connects us in a deeply personal way to the sensation of the velocity of transformation as we sense the remnants of past selves, past values, past emotions, and by comparison feel the newness of aspects of the present Self.

### Co-Respond-Dance

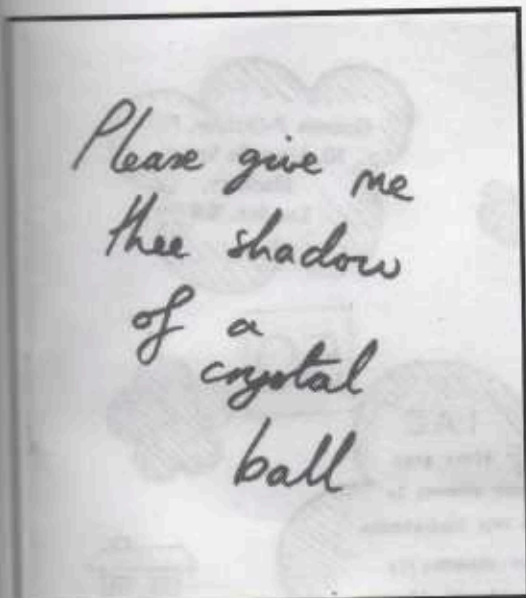
Early in 1993, I began a letter and e-mail correspondence with Genesis P-Orridge. Looking back on it now in 2002 I see that it is a paper trail of some significance. An exchange of ideas, information, practical jokes and subterfuges, that accidentally documented some of the key changes taking place in both our lives. As with all creative exchanges this correspondence is a dance of facts and of fictions. E-mail became a wonderfully flexible garment, a costume, a fluid medium, a screen through which to gaze at shadows and illusions and tricks of the light. The re-authoring and editing of our







"Marcel Duchamp's Next Work," 1975.



**TRANSMISSIONS** is, in the spirit of the original exchange, an act of performance.

September 2001

Words are dangerous. They should never be under-estimated. They are a Virus. A line of heavy narcotic. A seductive scented trap. A harness. A leather strap. The bit between your teeth. Their meanings are never solid, but they can be held against you. Words can be set in stone. A stone that sometimes ends up around your neck. It is not true to say that the word is a base material—there is nothing empirical about this bastard in whose mouth my meaning is contorted and my complexities are reduced to a single dull thread that bears no relationship to the garment from which it was pulled. Yet I am condemned to write, to speak, to shape those sounds that come up from the pit of my belly into words. Surely this is a curse. This book is a curse. I feel myself resisting the task, and at the same time the idealistic desire to reveal truths taunts me. Reasons to continue...the need to surrender to the fiction of it all...

Julie

In 1996 Genesis P-Orridge and I embarked upon a short tour of Germany—the Transmediator Tour—that became a series of improvised multimedia performances. The “unspoken” intention behind this cycle of events was to “expose” the perceived images of Genesis P-Orridge, to deconstruct them in public and to evacuate all the “stuff” of the many caricatures that had been hanging around and accumulating from 1969 to the present. Even though the events were surreal, sometimes cynical and burlesque, the process was painful and distressing. We both gave ourselves licence to “access all areas,” but my own moral sensibilities prevented me from consciously pushing into areas where I knew there were open wounds and information that has not been revealed in public before. But the space of theatre and performance is an unusually volatile medium; it is a space that knows no moral boundaries. In exploring Genesis P-Orridge through theatre and performance, I came to understand why P-Orridge came to choose this medium for the subtle exploration of identity and personae. Rather than offering a safe medium in which to submerge oneself in therapeutic self-indulgence, this open, improvisational form of performance, in front of, and often in the midst of crowds of “fans” who had very strong expectations about what they wanted to see, and clearly were not going to see, became a critical, confrontation space, which forced material out into the open.

## RE-MIND YOURSELF

P-Orridge: G.G. 1995

## Hamburg

I am upside down on a chair, staring up at my legs. Everything becomes unfamiliar and beautiful if you look at it for long enough.

I am speaking your biography... the one that is being exposed... the one that we are evoking... the carrion that we hang on the branches of our action. We are feeding the crows words of great importance, but they are unmoved, and my skirt is over my head! But the child is right... our first instinct is right. I am exhilarated by the naughtiness... adrenalised by being in the moment of the child.

You become the spectator of your own story told by an eight year old in a party dress captivated by the length of her legs... Alice IS in Wonderland. Playing with the memory of you, chasing you down the rabbit hole.

I know you have a lasting image of Alice... a memory of Alice's irreverent articulations and the way the world turned upside down... and the reflection in that beautifully distorted mirror.

This is not you... it can't be you, can it?

**Hamburg, later that night. We are standing in the street outside the venue surrounded by prostitutes and English football fans. The night is dangerous. The street drenched in red neon. The manager is drunk and we are fending for ourselves. There were no dressing rooms in the venue so we have literally walked off the stage into the street in our last costume. You are tempting fate ...you are on the edge of the abyss... you are wearing a tight red dress and stiletto shoes... entreating danger. You are bad for business—all the prostitutes think so.**

Taxis refuse to stop. You are drunk even though you haven't touched a drop. Perhaps we set you free tonight. We attempted to feed you to the lions and now we have a martyr on our hands. The scene is getting ugly. Pimps appear from doorways and dark alleys, they ride up in cars to check out the "problem." I can see the accident looming like an articulated lorry in the distance, and still the taxis refuse to stop.

There is nothing in my register that can stop this from happening. The danger of the stage has been taken out onto the street but I realise with horror that this cannot now be named as performance. Yet there are people around us who are clearly casting themselves in the role of spectator, unaware that you are not performing any more. Everybody is laughing except me, I'm concerned and horrified, and you are completely earnest, even suicidal.





9 October 1996

Dear Julie

Germany ...Very, very intense. You helped me so much, understood implicitly what E had to do. Mirrored all necessities ov L-if-E all niceties ov D-aath. E think a great series ov explorations happened. E was almost left for dead. Both intention and denial. E am still, very much, empty, emptied. There are threads snagged on personality that are binding thee ghost. So hard to kill off thee safe place one designed and built with much suffering. Chinese coolie me Oh! E wish thee artwork had arrived. They are closer to me, oh Lord, than most moments. Butter already, they seem so far away agen. E have an overriding sensation ov being expected to feel terminally and infinitely guilty for HAVING BEEN Genesis. There are those who would wish E never began, for I.T. brings with its SELF such a heavily weighted story. E destroyed all thee clothes, thee lovely shoes, everything after E returned. That too was hard, for they were alive. In thee end E even parted with your crown. Leaving it for thee street outside to devour like thee contents ov a brown paper bag in thee gutter at a crossroads. E was paralysed. Full ov a bizarre remorse. E guess E had, after all, coumitted murder. I.T. may well be that this was unappreciated. Like a Vietnam veteran returning, shattered and disorientated, shards of hell embedded like splinters ov glass in hands, arms, even face. E died each day a little more. Butter thee decay won't coum. Thee maggots, thee reduction to stinking fluids and rank tufts ov brittle hair. Very hard. No medals, only abuse ov spitting wives whose husbands and lovers didn't survive; thee chanted slogans defoliating self-esteem turning I.T. cancerous yellow. E can see thee death so close, butter thee blessed relief ov books and legend doesn't coum. Thee release. He still haunts this place. Inside and out. He hates to see his shadow self, for fear I.T. is more him than this spectral hope...

...Ov course, E am often delusional, fanatical, and contentious. Butter its my "job". So E want to practice what E preach (to my SELF) and perfect I.T. and then unleash thee memory to change thee way we perceive.

E was very damaged by all that was revealed I.T. gave me a renewed sense ov impractical futility. E have to build agen. OUTSIDE thee circles that recognise my story so far. E need a period at thee end ov each sentence.

In thee couming months, E shall rest easier, and rest. This, must lead to deeds and don'ts. Genesis won't let go ov me easily. Butter one day he must. Because new incredible stories are hidden in thee SPACE that was all ways within my secrets.

Thee healing process wills to be inexorable. I.T. wills to occur, EXACTLY on T.I.M.E... Tell me about I.T.?

SO BE I.T.

Genesis

It took me four years to respond to this letter, but as always there are no deadlines, the process of asking the question is more important, and the time taken to explore the possible answers, and the dialogue that one has with one's self and with other people.

**But eventually I did write.**

11 April 2000

I.T.

Imaginal Time—the time of the soul—linked to the space of the soul—  
the imaginal  
landscape  
make space in order to be space  
make soul in order to BE soul

Soul making is a painful process... death is always attached to the development, invention and reincarnation of the next phase of the soul. Realisation quickens death, realisation is the fire in which old guises, old energies, old priorities, past lives, deceit and denial are burned. Most depth psychologists describe this process as mythic... the linguistics do not help... the words imply that this is a wholly "fantastic" (fantasy) process... the intensity of the struggle, and its real implications are lost in the poetics. The struggle for the soul is a life threatening process. Contact at this level, with the true depths and dark labyrinths of the SELF can be wholly destructive. It can propel one into deep depression, destructive pathologies and areas of self-harm. I.T. is a FRACTURING GARDEN not of delights but of open graves, haunted memories and torturing sicknesses. When we walk naked in this landscape we are touched and infected, sliced and honoured by every sharp truth, and every pointed instrument of denial. This is a place of ACTIVE death that requires an equally ACTIVE response; a willingness to give oneself to death; to be kissed and caressed by it. To eat one's own flesh, to slice through the heart and drink its blood; to feast on one's own Being... to gnaw on it...down to the marrow bone. To consume and be consumed. To realise the self in taste. Only the warrior can survive this process; someone who has trained mind and body for this kind of confrontation. Our access is difficult, survival is miraculous, given that we exist within a culture that has lost the knowledge, the maps, the survival tactics, the belief and spiritual training to sustain an individual in this space/place... I think it is a miracle that you have come through it in one piece.

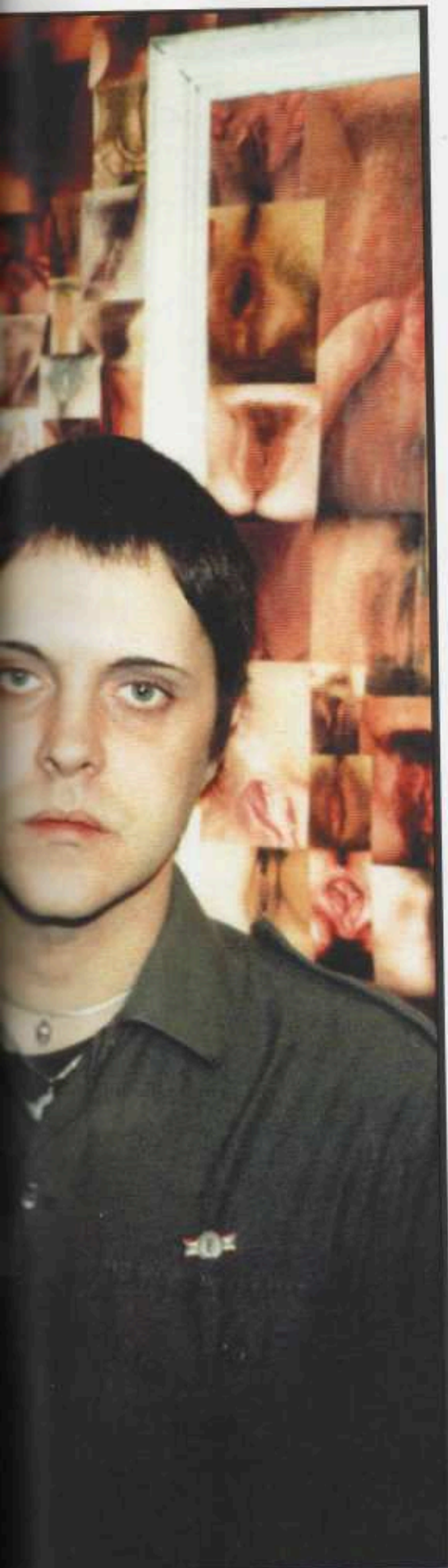
Love to all

Julie

"Pussy Door," London, 1974.

right, Detail from "Scenes of Victory," Antwerp, 1976.





*April 11, 2000, 6:16 pm*

*And now, my "mind" asks my soul, did we survive? Or did I burn my soul irrevocably trying to look into I.T.'s essence?*

*A period of contemplation and renewal. Yet ironically, my body IS tiring, slowing, moving into its next phase.*

*So that boy, he must surrender his throne to the chivalrous (we hope) knight, the mature man at last can pour his image over the boy like silicon and this wraith now pondering conspicuously has little substance, wonders, do my works, my thoughts, my intentions, balance out my driven youth and flesh me out with peaceful countenance.*

*Or did I use up a few lifetimes soul(s) and cast my SELF into a void dance of re-incarnation?*

*Oh, this is a hard transformation, and a hard place to look, back at the person, the lawful form we call personality, also not real, but revealing and in need of respect and consideration. And how to relate to others of this species, feeling so alien (brain)...dissociated to a point of fear...almost, truly...sometimes, then beauty, love, KINDNESS rekindle the cobwebs and tinder and the flame of idealised creativity, joy, and move-meant recur, breathing L-if-E FORCE into I.T.*

Djin

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- FG *Thee Fractured Garden*, artist manuscript, dated 1994.
- GG *Giftga*, artist manuscript, dated 1995.
- Preston Transcript of a Keynote given by Genesis P-Orridge at "Re-locating the Sacred in Contemporary Performance Practice," a conference at the University of Central Lancashire, England, organised by the author, April 2001.
- CAZ Transcript of interviews with Genesis P-Orridge conducted by the author, 4-6 September 1994 in Cazadero, California, USA.
- CD Extracts from the unpublished COUM diaries 1971-1976, artists manuscript.
- TM Extracts from tapes of interviews given by Genesis P-Orridge during the Transmediator Tour, Germany 1996.
- SP *Splinter Test*, artists manuscript, dated 1993.
- ST At Stockholm 1995.
- SS *Thee Seeding Ship*, artists manuscript, dated 1995.
- UNP Unpublished notes from a ritual (date unknown).
- TF Transmedia Foundation Broad Sheet No3, limited edition, hand produced, 1995.

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# THE INTUITIVE LURE OF FLESH: GENESIS P-ORRIDGE'S EROTIC MAILART BY BENGALA

There once was a time in the not-so-distant past when men and women sent postcards, and even letters to one another in order to express amorous intents. Often this exchange of images and words was illicit in nature, some would even say obscene. Others would say delicious. Yes, both love notes and erotic postcards have their place in history. Even today, walking down the street in any major city (especially those situated near a body of water and its fluid sexual nature), one undoubtedly comes across a variety of spicy postcards. Bountiful breasts straining against the moistly transparent "I Love New York" T-shirt, sand-covered Floridian asses all in a row, inebriated flashers lost in the over-stimulation of Mardi Gras. Sex to send still runs rampant.

Of course the Internet has done much to kill the exchange of paper and pen, envelope and stamp. Computers have become as accessible as books, if not in every home. Even travelers have no trouble staying connected to their long-distance paramours. Many upper-end hotels now offer Web access, and e-mail has become the rule in nearly every exchange. The chat room is the new realm of sex if not romance, immediate, vital. More often than not the mailbox is left holding only bills and unwanted offers for credit cards. Postal paramours are now a dying breed.

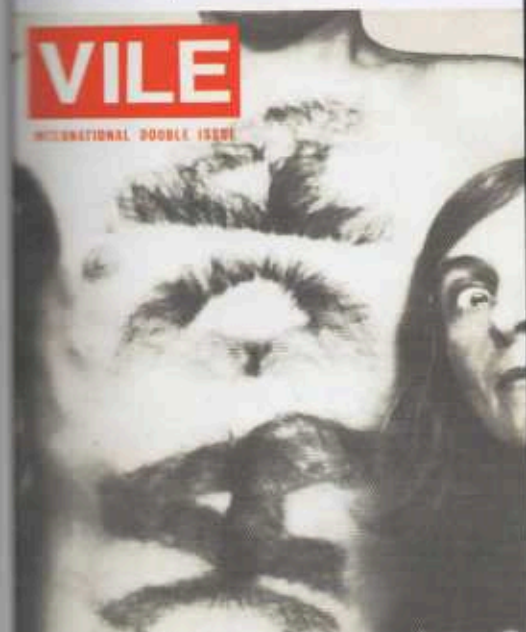
Another aspect of couriered communiqués left by the cyberdelic wayside is that of mailart. Though still existing, this inspired trend peaked in the 1970s, as a celebration of correspondence as community, of visual puns and formalist exercises in rubber stamp, of the crossing of borders without the strain of commercial intentions. It was art for an audience of one, a package both personal and unpredictable, yet populist by nature. Mailart contained no curator. Even during the height of the movement's popularity, mailart galleries had an all-inclusive policy. Famous artists such as Ray Johnson and Fluxus-ian Ken Friedman were shown alongside obscure sendings from Joe Schmo and his overseas pals. Mailart wasn't even about being an artist, stressing instead creative communication. Judgement was withheld. The same held true for numerous publications, most notably Toronto's *FILE* (published by the art collective General Idea) and then later *VILE* from San Francisco. All things sent were set to print.

It was this open-door policy that also allowed censorship no play within the mailart scene. Yet government agencies were crucial to the postal process. The mailman played the unwitting third in our correspondents' tryst, the ballast without which the transfer of image or info would prove impossible. And while political powers came into play in some Third World packages, indecency, especially in the case of the postcard, lay with the postman to judge.

Genesis P-Orridge experienced these bureaucratic prejudices firsthand. While his work both within and without the postal medium



Art Metropole and General Idea, Mail Art publication, 1976.



Bill Gaglione and Anna Banana, Mail Art mag, 1975.

has often dealt with erotic material, in the mid-Seventies he'd been combining images of pornography and royalty in his queen postcard series, citing "kitsch and the national sense of taboo" as his inspiration.

"Criticizing or manipulating respect for royal families was just ludicrous to me," states P-Orridge. "It fell naturally into place that the two things should go together. I had grown up liking the idea of Dada and Surrealism. I think it was just completely instinctive, just walking along the street in London and seeing queen postcards. I could see the altered versions even before I could pick them up. And it's historically much more accurate to reveal and illustrate the decadence and hedonism and corruption that's always been hand-in-hand with royal families of Great Britain—and that's not in any way a moral criticism or judgement. I just think it's far more exciting and interesting to actually reveal and illustrate more of the story instead of these completely trite and inaccurate representations. So that was there. And fun. Always the element of fun."

Revealing more of the story, tinkering with perception has always remained P-Orridge's *modus operandi*, often coupled with anti-authoritarian subversion. It should surprise no one that the English authorities found this artist's work problematic, though this was during what many consider the summit of mailart's popularity. *Rolling Stone Magazine* had included a two-part article on mailart in 1972, which was soon followed by a cover article in *Art in America*. Still, the high profile of this art form and its many supplicants did not prevent the British government from charging P-Orridge with indecency. In late 1975, he was summoned to appear before the courts. His queen postcards had been noticed.

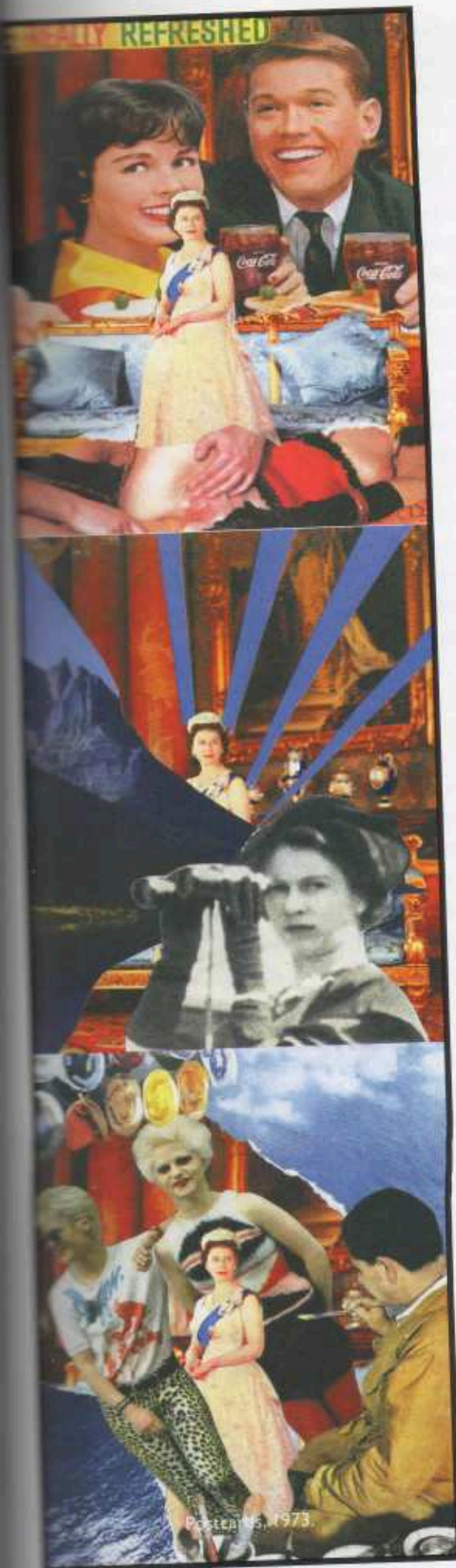
P-Orridge explains: "They couldn't prosecute me as being obscene because then I would have had a jury trial. At that time in Britain, jury trials on anything obscene had failed. The public had become more liberal. So they charged me with indecent mail, and the idea of indecent mail is that if one person anywhere complains that they are offended by what they have seen, it's indecent. One of the people working in the mail sorting office had seen one of my postcards and was offended. Therefore I was guilty."

During the proceedings, it was revealed that the initial complaint was registered not by one offended by the art itself, but by a postal worker who stated that others might be. The trial was based on the possibility of an offense rather than an actuality. The government agency also admitted to opening P-Orridge's mail without warrant. Despite this new information and the support of the art community, the charges were not dismissed.

"Far from it," states P-Orridge. "I was fined the maximum possible per individual card. My Queen's Counsel, who had successfully







defended Linda Lovelace and *Deep Throat*, was told if he spoke in my defense he would be held in contempt. I was given the minimum possible time to pay my fines—£400, which at that time as I was on the dole was a huge sum to find. If I didn't pay on time, I'd get 12 months in prison. If they discovered another "indecent" card, I'd be held in contempt and put in prison!" Nevertheless, P-Orridge, ever the showman, further lent to the absurdity of the proceedings by sending invitations to the trial to other mailartists, music magazines such as *Melody Maker* and *N.M.E.*, and even Charles Manson.

That the authorities prosecuted these collages abstractly, without any real complaint bears noting, in that his art often courts misunderstanding. Here, as with COUM's Prostitution Exhibit and his later cultural studies with TOPY, P-Orridge is seemingly persecuted for "pornographic" intent. Yet his work is more disturbing than arousing. One can hardly imagine a masturbatory effect on any viewer, as any lascivious content is neutralized by its placement within the larger picture. More interesting still is that the flesh and the compositions so effectively compliment each other, even from a strictly compositional stance. The success of the work as a graphic interface were perhaps largely to blame for their own suppression.

The 1975 trial was not to be the last time mailart would cause trouble. P-Orridge continued to work with sex and death as subject material, often including "maggots, used tampons, and pieces of dead animals along with erotic images." Eventually, in order to prevent his various correspondents from suffering from problematic legalities, P-Orridge had a rubber stamp made bearing the statement, "Unsolicited Pornography" so that recipients could bypass trouble. Sexual material was the exception rather than the rule in mailart. Looking through the Image Request Lists of old *FILE* magazines, this is evident.

"I used to just go through it and pick out mainly people who were mentioning things that had some kind of erotic or sexual connotations," says P-Orridge. "It was actually very few, surprisingly few. There was a certain coyness to the whole thing, and quite a lot of post-art college cleverness, which really wasn't very interesting to me."

*FILE*, of course, was the first major mailart periodical, a spoof on *LIFE* Magazine. Along with mailart, its pages held hundreds of names and addresses of contacts, along with subject matter each found most appealing. Among the contacts listed there was William Burroughs, with his request for "Camouflage for 1984". P-Orridge's listing was for "bodily fluids" and "human tissue." "I was crusading right from the beginning with COUM with the idea that street culture and popular culture should be raised up to the level of, or treated as, fine art and fine art should be reduced to the level of popular culture. It was one of my basic ideas from the very begin-



ning to use the tools that were already lying around: graffiti, postcards, magazines, pubs, pavement, the park, anything like that. I only used easily available [porn] magazines I could buy at newsagents, only things you could buy on the street. I was aware of the idea of postcards, flyers, rubber stamps and so on being a quick way to contact people and generate curiosity, or manipulate curiosity. It's always good to take something that exists and then corrupt it rather than trying to erase it with something else. Put stuff out there so they could contact you."

But art has a tendency towards osmosis, a give and take process that blurs borders and often leaves one wanting signifiers. In the case of Genesis's penchant for the pornographic became more complex. Cosey Fanni Tutti, member of COUM and Throbbing Gristle, as well as P-Orridge's lover at the time, began modeling for glamour magazines—softcore pornography in which penetration was inferred rather than explicit. That these images found their way into collage is hardly surprising. COUM members were never known for excessive modesty. But in this instance, a dynamic had changed. Whereas once P-Orridge sought out fleshy images to craft at his whim, now the pornography came to him as a lover's exchange.

"It became even more simple [when] Cosey started modeling for porno magazines," states P-Orridge. "I decided to archive them, always buying three copies so that I had the fronts and the backs if I wanted to frame them, and one extra to play with for collages. So it was opportunist or pragmatic. There was all this stuff piling up in my collage room and I was compulsively buying queen postcards and the two just went together. That was the raw material that I had at hand. And I always thought that one should improvise with that which was at hand."

As it is well documented elsewhere, P-Orridge is an avid follower of Brion Gysin's theory of the cut-up, where the true meaning of things is only revealed when disassembled and re-assembled. In his text, *Thee Seeding Ship*, P-Orridge states: "change is quite separate from control or any kind." The collage technique found throughout his postcards and art in general then illustrates this wresting of authority from its moorings, through shifting context and visual distraction. However, this theory applied to sexual content adds yet another possibility:

"The exploration of the erotic in a different medium. I didn't think the magazines were particularly erotic or sexy in themselves. They were very formularized. I was curious about what happened when you took one thing out of that context and placed it in a completely inappropriate one. Does it become more interesting? Does it regenerate its erotic quality? The naked body or sexual activity in an unexpected location or background without the

usual context in terms of how things evolve—would that surprise? Is that unexpected quality really the essence of what makes sex exciting?"

Another English writer and philosopher, Colin Wilson, refers throughout his work to Faculty X, his term for the mind's latent ability to intensify and expand consciousness, to achieve a mastery over time and to reinstate the "visionary gleam". One of his earliest observations on Faculty X is that it is somehow linked with the human sexual drive. A master of metaphor, Wilson often equated sex as a tool with which to access this higher concentration, therefore supplying the enhanced focus needed to perceive Faculty X.

P-Orridge's use of the erotic also draws on this energy, using the naughty as a gateway to larger concepts. Again, the pornography serves to distract from what's really there, an intuitive lure. "The actually grinding and wriggling around of naked bodies is ungainly and ludicrous more often than not," explains P-Orridge. "There are exceptions. I would argue that if you could spend a great deal of time and with careful lighting you could end up with this amazing smooth sculptural landscape in which you know the fucking is happening, that's the way that it becomes really beautiful. When it's abstracted by one."

Looking at his newer work, one can see where P-Orridge has put this observation into effect, reversing the camouflage. With his Candy Factory series with Eric Heist, intercourse is hidden within sugary pop art abstractions, just as the flesh of his mailart constructions distracted from the art's many critiques of power structures. Genesis has stated many times that the role of the artist is really "the explorer on behalf of the rest of society and the species." He continues: "The job of the artist is to go to the moon first, so to speak, or to climb the mountain first, or to go to the bottom of the sea to see what's there. That's the job of the artist or the poet—to find out what's coming next, what it's made of and what it might mean. And the actual art itself is just metaphors aimed at describing the research and the discoveries that we've made. That's why I call it cultural engineering."

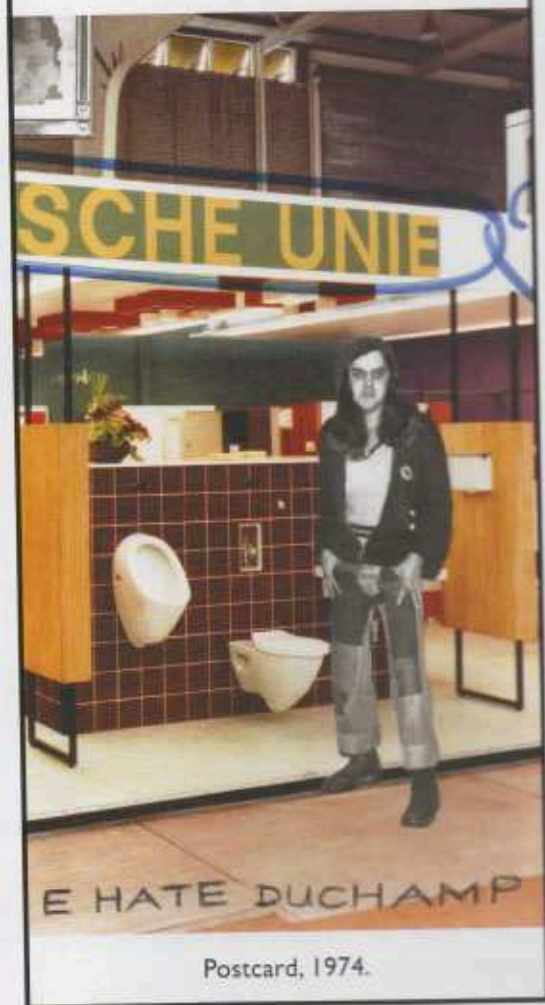
And how does this apply to the sexuality aspect?

P-Orridge here is quite clear: "I think we're going through a huge change in terms of sexuality. People are misunderstanding what is happening now that we have the world wide web and probably more so-called pornography available and live sex and sexual images and images of desire and even cameras inside dildos.

"My proposition would be on several levels. First, the real purpose of sex is to believe in the possibility of union with the divine. That it's a magical and spiritual metaphysical act. In a sense, it's poetry.



Postcard drawing, 1976.



Postcard, 1974.

Poetry is about leapfrogging consensus reality to some more incredible place where the world is revitalized and the vision is renewed. It's very sad that people don't get taught concepts of sexual magic and guided orgasm at school, [with] plateaus and techniques of looking and being that are about being something more than human."

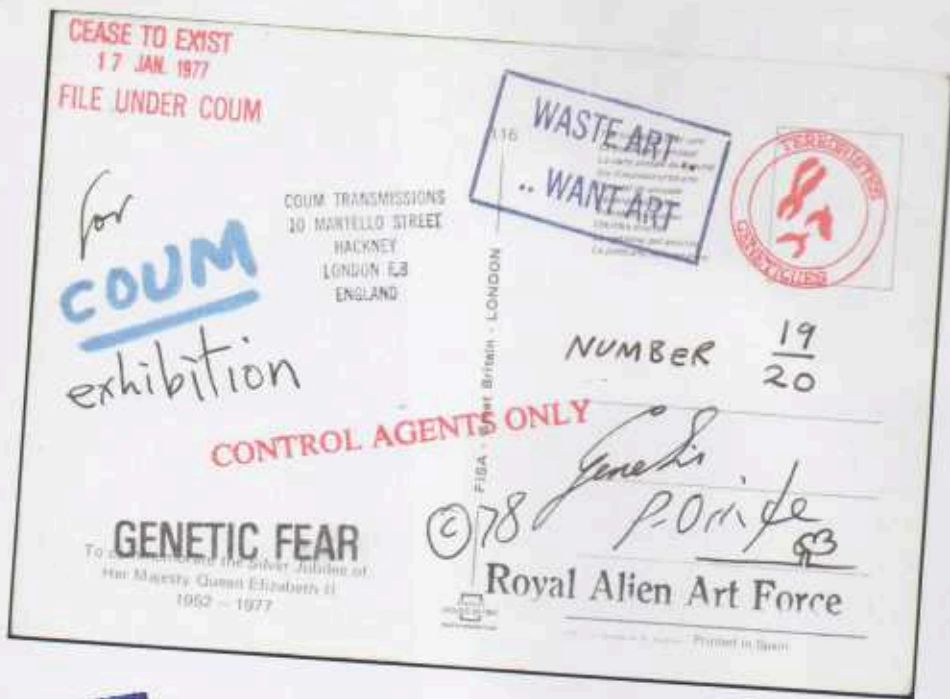
By re-posturing these images within mailart or other mediums, the artist is in effect bringing the mind back into the erotic process.

"Re-activating the mind and re-activating the whole concept of sexuality and sex and sex acts and the body and de-mystifying it," continues P-Orridge. "And at the same time enhancing it in a metaphysical way. All are small messages, small pieces of propaganda that in and of themselves I see as triggers. I think that's how culture works, and I think that's how culture gets changed, too. So while I'm happy to be seen as silly and fun, I also believe that there's an innate invisible impact that enables one to become actively involved with the direction that culture moves. And I would argue that the fact that I was suppressed and attacked vehemently so many times purely because I chose to work with sexuality and erotic images all the way through. All the things that I've done would suggest that the authorities actually know about it. And that's why they control and manipulate and inhibit people's sexual expressions, because they are very aware of the hidden power of the knowing use of the potential of sexuality. And one of the greatest services we could do for mankind would be to push them towards a place where they had a candid spiritual respect for the incredible potential and power of sexuality. It's very possible that the entire universe is breathing in a sexual way."

And so, while Genesis P-Orridge's mailart is often overlooked in this great briny sea of mysterious fluids and arousing imagery, one could argue that these simple constructions, dichotomizing queen with cock, were the nascent elements from which the persona of Genesis P-Orridge arose. At first glance, his collaged mailings seem light, especially in comparison to the extremity of his performances and subsequent projects. Still the cut-up technique honed within the medium is crucial in approaching all P-Orridge's later work. This is the key behind text, image and sound, left in plain sight for all to find. Sigils, P-Orridge's visual documents of his experiments in "sex magick," borrow both the collage and the transgressive imagery. Throbbing Gristle and later projects such as *Splinter Test* translated scissored visuals into aural hackery, layering and patching sound into sonic gems. Cut up, again and again.

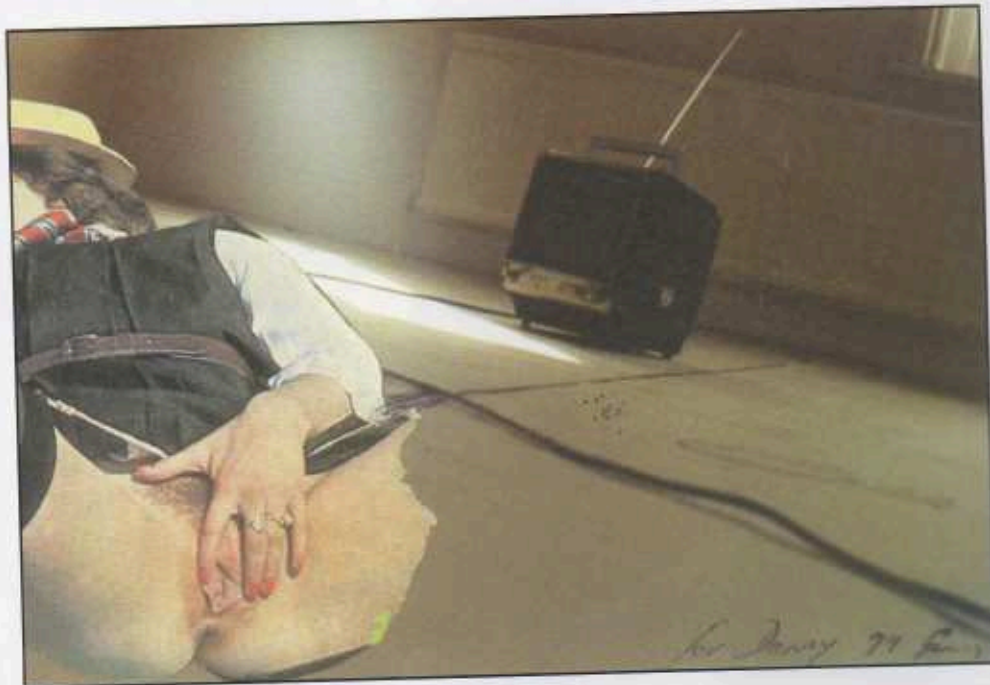
A look at P-Orridge's most recent work, that of the expanded Polaroid, is riddled with the same precision and erotic signifiers from a quarter century ago. They still work. Nothing grabs your attention quite like flesh and buttplugs. And that's still not what the work is about.





SEX UNE BONNE IDEE

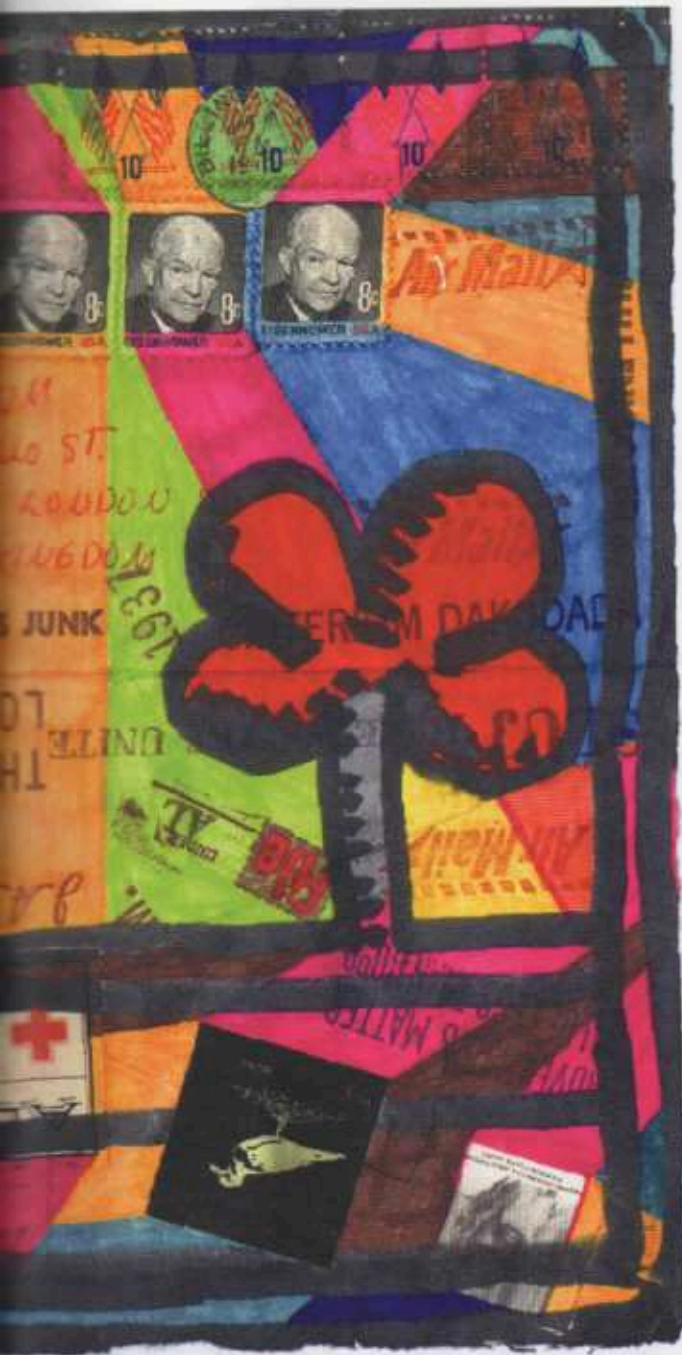
IT WOULD BE  
A MISTAKE  
TO THINK  
E WAS EVER  
REALLY ALIVE



Collage, "For Danny,"  
from the collection of Jean Pierre Turmel, 1977.



# E HATE DEATH



# E HATE ART

PAINTING BY  
*Genesis P-Orridge*

THIS IS NOT AN ATTEMPT TO SEND  
YOU ART IN THEE POST. MERELY  
GUM'S WAY TO TOUCH YOU AND  
LET YOU KNOW YOU ARE IN OUR  
THOUGHTS





# EVEN FURTHER: THE METAPHYSICS OF SIGILS PAUL CECIL

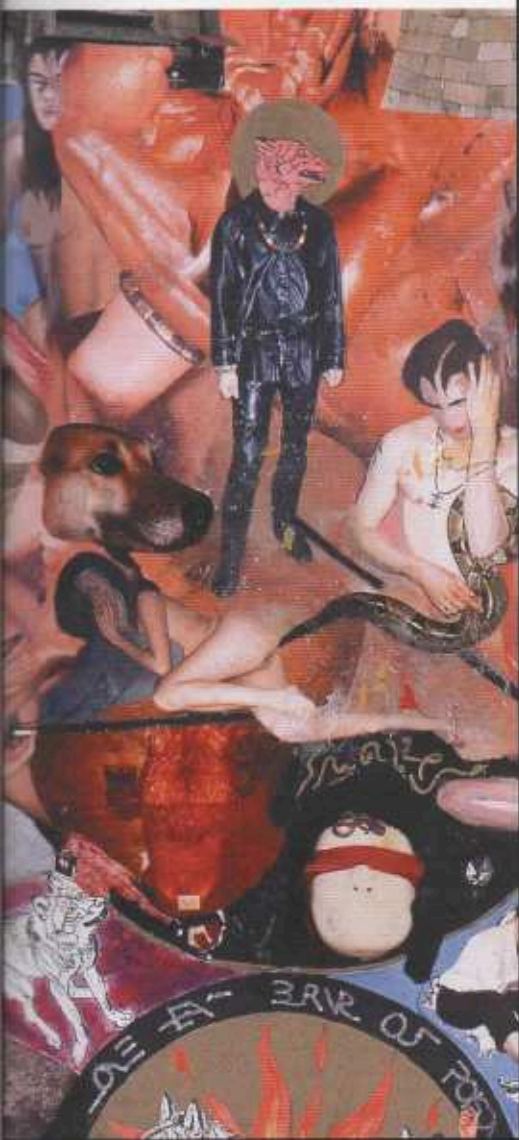
*The medium of process philosophy bears close resemblance to the artistic media of assemblage practiced in so many twentieth-century art forms.*

—Robert C. Neville,

*Reconstruction of Thinking*, p. 310

*The Product is the Process*

—Genesis P-Orridge, *Psychic TV*



Created neither for gallery nor audience, the sigil art of Genesis P-Orridge represents a deeply private and personal aspect of his extensive creative output. Ostensibly simple collages, these works document his explorations into magical consciousness, work which continues today and is central to his world view. Moreover, each sigil is essentially functional, centred on the initiation of agentive activity. That is, each was created as an intentional act of magic designed to modify the course of natural events. They are thus much more than mere representations of what magic might look like, and their existence constitutes a direct challenge to our understanding of the world and to normative models of causality, meaning and creativity.

This approach to art implies a rejection of intellectualization and scientific causality and, equally, it undermines the critical means by which we generally approach a body of creative work. P-Orridge today refers to himself as a Cultural Engineer, and in his collection of sigils we have the tool-box with which he carries out his work. He uses art as a means of influence, treating the magical act not as that of creating a likeness in the hope that life will imitate fiction, but as the initiation of a “mental push to get the impulse started and support it on its course...; it is the priming and starting of an act.” (Suzanne Langer, *Mind: An Essay in Human Feeling*, v. III, p. 61). In P-Orridge’s sigils we meet a prioritization of process and action in which the aesthetic and the theoretical are secondary to the integration of intention with a wider reality.

To consider these sigils in terms of conventional art-criticism, in terms of aesthetics and form, would thus be to remove them from the context in which they were created and to place them in a frame antithetical to their purpose. Art for P-Orridge serves a sacred role: the integration of consciousness with the fluxion of universal pattern. Art is not simply to be looked at, dissected, and critiqued; but to be experienced.

Such radical non-conformity places boundaries of how best to discuss his work, and generally forces a shift to anthropological, psychological or philosophical approaches. Within this broad framework, the current discussion will explore some of the techniques employed by P-Orridge in the construction of sigils, but will do so from the relatively uncharted perspective of the metaphysics of process. It concludes with a speculation on how sigils actually work.

## Trans-modernity

It is clear that P-Orridge does not conform to the conventions of the contemporary artist. True, he works from and within a tradition of iconoclasts (and the art-world remains a central target for this), and his method owes much to postmodern and deconstructionist

theory. This is readily borne out by his use of apparently random and found elements which he montages into sometimes didactic and occasionally confrontational pieces. He adopts the posture of the outsider, attacks social norms and celebrates the art of diversity and the extreme. Yet for all this, the currency he works in is constructive. His focus is on the creative process in the development of his work, and especially (and unusually) on the work's creative effect. The language of P-Orridge's art is therefore not that of representation and challenge, but of invocation and change.

The sigils he presents to us are intentionally "active"; that is, embedded within them is a principle of mediated agency. He seeds the future (both personal and public) through his art, leading us into unknown and unformed future possibilities. This goes beyond the postmodernist trick of "making us think" (a wholly traditional value), and can instead be seen as a literal attempt to "affect the real." His work does not so much change the way in which we see the world, but rather "changes the world in which we see." This transformative focus places P-Orridge outside the modernist and postmodernist tendency to teach about reality (or to teach how to interpret that reality according to cultural context), and aligns him with both magical and iconographic traditions. He thus reaches across time and can claim as much to be working from an ancient tradition as to be forging new modes of thought and new ways of living. His art in these senses extends beyond the aesthetic, beyond the didactic, beyond the confrontational (though it shares references with all these) and emerges as the documentation of an engagement with the universal process of creative advance. The future is uncertain; and it is the future which P-Orridge invokes and explores.

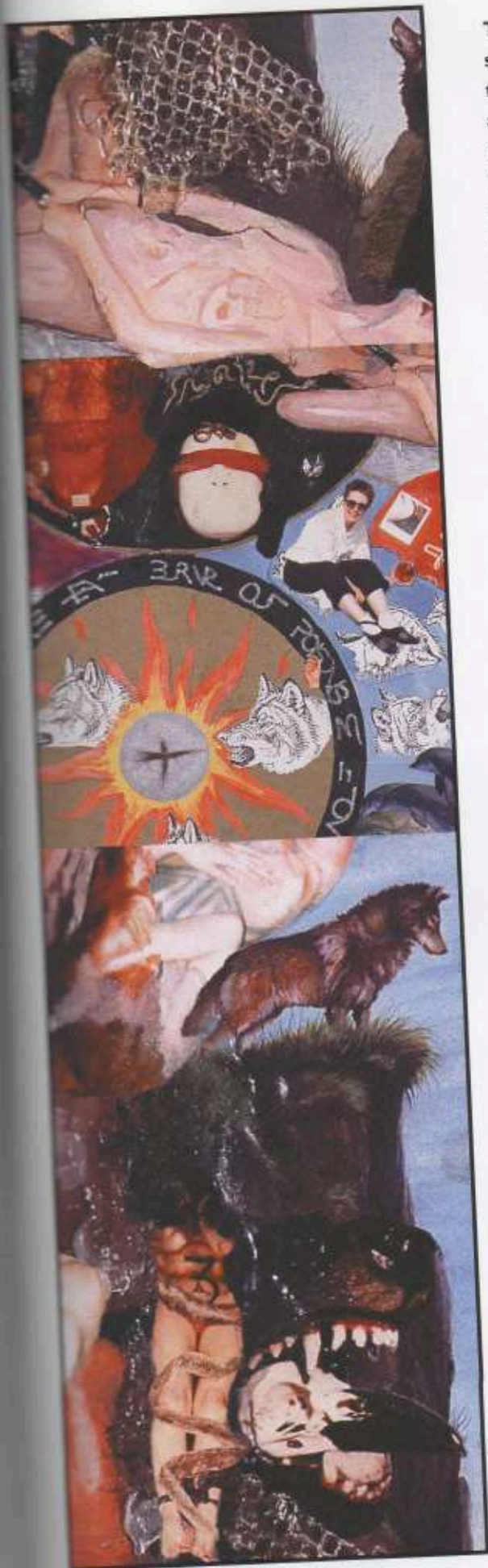
### The Art of Sigils

*The Laws of reality are also the laws of thought*

—Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, p. 63

Technically, sigils are simply signs or marks designed to effect a magical purpose. They are constructed from symbols and letters drawn from the wide lexicon of astrological and related symbolgies, and understanding and creating them is largely a matter of intellectual analysis and translation. The operator or magician generally works to predetermined formulae and systems. Such was the predominant view of western occultism in the late part of the 19th century. This belief in "system" generated much scholarship in the area, but it also fuelled in large part the somewhat obsessive search for ancient secrets and the resurrection of supposedly "lost" magical orders. The aim was to resurrect—and then claim ownership of—the authority of what was regarded as a hidden tradition. Authority was thus located firmly in the past.





The artist and occultist Austin Osman Spare stands as a break with such developments through his radical use of intuitive approaches to magic. A fine and respected artist (his work as an official war artist can be found in the Imperial War Museum and has been the subject of several retrospective exhibitions), Spare attacked both the frame and the form of the then contemporary magic. He rejected the traditions of the past in favour of a highly personalized metaphysical map, alongside which he developed a system of word collage which represented a shift away from the formulaic methods of magic promoted by groups such as the Golden Dawn. It is the method that is of interest in our present context.

Taking the notion of “spells” at its most direct, Spare would simply identify his intended outcome in the form of a word or phrase and work to eliminate each repeated letter so that each appeared only once. A phrase such as *To meet the Angels* would thus be written:

TO MEET THE ANGELS — TO MEET THE ANGELS — TOMEANGLS

The resultant distillation would then be structured in a stylized pattern, breaking down the relationship with textual linearity so as to present an abstract image in which the letters qua letters disappeared.

Spare’s work is influential on P-Orridge in several ways. Firstly, as an artist Spare rejected the gallery conventions of his day, treating the art world with Nietzschean disdain. Secondly, in his rejection of traditional magical orders he emphasized the transfer of authority from the “other” to the “inner” thus paving the way for P-Orridge’s wholly intuitive and asystemized approach to magic. Finally, in his methodological approach he specified a process of distillation through which complex structures can be taken down to their elemental form thus enabling a clarity of purpose to be achieved. This process of constructive deconstruction, of elemental binding and combination, emerges in a highly developed way in P-Orridge’s sigils.

### Collaging Reality

*Intention is the work of envisaging and enacting will.*

—Ray L Hart, *Unfinished Man and the Imagination*, p. 148

P-Orridge’s sigil art is amongst his most private work, but it is also provides the clearest indication of both his method and purpose. The harmony of the work provides its tone, the elements its direction. The process is one of a continual refinement so that everything that is necessary is included, everything that is unnecessary is set aside, and a balance of what remains is achieved. If Spare’s work serves as a transitional moment in magical art, P-Orridge takes that moment into new territory, setting aside Spare’s ultimately system-driven approach and emphasizing in its place a wholly intu-

itive and naturalistic process. The focus of P-Orridge's work is eminently practical.

P-Orridge's sigils are invariably mixed media collages, incorporating both found and created material. P-Orridge also makes extensive use of photography, often manipulating the image to mask both form and identity. In this way he generalizes the particular. The aim is to draw out the essential characteristic of the target image, to purify it, and to intensify its affective potential. Images are over-painted and textured. Text is added. The combined effect is to mutate the commonplace and to unify the divergent. In addition to this, images created during the process of ritual are frequently incorporated into the work, a strategy which mythologizes location and space. And finally, by the ritual embedding within the sigil of the present moment of creative activity, P-Orridge creates a dislocation in the linearity of time. He becomes genetically joined to the sigil. It becomes impossible to distinguish between the artist and the art, between the creator and the created. The emergent sigil can thus exercise its own creative agency over and against the artist in a full-fledged intersubjective dialogue. It signals its own completion, in its own time. It is this radical disruption of the spatial and temporal modes of being which transforms the sigil from "art as art" to "art as agent."

### Some Metaphysics

The English process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead wrote:

*[N]o two actual entities originate from an identical universe... The nexus of actual entities in the universe correlate to a concrescence is termed "the actual world" correlate to that concrescence.—Process and Reality, p. 22–23*

What he was getting at is the idea that what we think of as a single "universe" is in fact a relational network of infinitely varied universes, each of which is centred in its own subjective being. Thus the universe I perceive at any moment is a unique creation, as is the world I perceive a moment later. And each is my unique creation. What is more, Whitehead argues that the future is open to subjective manipulation; that is, even though we inhabit a realm where a vast array of fixed (or to be more exact, relatively consistent) laws apply, the future is ultimately "open." In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead explores how his vision of inter-relating but atomized universes presents the kind of coherence which enables us to exist in the day-to-day manner to which we are so accustomed. The metaphysics is complex and controversial, but at its heart offers a view of reality in which process is the true stuff of reality, and in which "matter" is little more than the documentation resulting from the activity and process of continuous becoming. It is this idea which lends itself to a more coherent and rational theory of magic since it proposes that the fundamental stuff of reality is a process of creative emergence; "matter" is simply the outcome of that activity.





In discussing his own work P-Orridge has consistently focused on "process," describing the resultant artifacts as "documentation." The creativity is centred in his own activity of 'making' and engages the whole person. It is largely an interiorized mode of creative action, and in this sense is wholly subjective. This work is private in the most fundamental sense of that word, since it is located in the interior conceptual and structural arrangements of his modes of thought. The art emerging from this interiorized creativity is simply the documentation of his ritual engagement with Present Time.

## II

### A Process View of Present Time

*[The process] involves a reversal of our ordinary understanding that causes produce effects. The cause must precede its effect in time, yet it must be presently existent in order to be active in producing its effect.*

—Lewis Ford, *The Lure of God*, p. 5

In the previous section the process of sigil-construction was characterized as essentially one of engagement with Present Time. This needs some explanation. The concept owes much to Whitehead's process metaphysics and his idea that reality is made up not of substance (objective matter), but rather of "events" or activity. In developing his thought, he implied a concept of time which, whilst recognizing the formal flow of physical or perceptual time, treated its content somewhat unusually. In his scheme the "past" is entirely "objective," by which he meant inactive and unchanging. The future, in contrast, is indeterminate, a realm of potential possibilities. The "present" is entirely subjective and is the sole point of activity. Nothing in present time exists physically since to be in the present is defined as undergoing a process of becoming determinate; but nothing outside this process of active determination is fully real. As an entity begins to emerge it becomes more defined, more and more definite in its form, until it achieves a satisfactory shape and emerges into being. At this point it becomes fixed, and triggers a new creative process. Our world is, in these terms, a series of successive and radically inter-related processes, each informed by its predecessors and each informative of its successors.

It is instructive to explore the notion of present and future time posited by Whitehead in the context of ritual engagement and magical act. A key element in Whitehead's system is that the future is open to subjective influence. Reality is not the result of physical causal chains, but rather of the imaginative invocation and manipulation of contexts. If we treat the process of ritual interiorization (such as that undertaken by P-Orridge) as the maximization of subjective being (the objective world "outside" disappears from the ritual space to be replaced by the manifestation of a mental arena of the artist's own making), by entering a ritual space we are in



effect escaping the linear flow of time. Under such conditions we are related neither to the Past nor the Future. We are conscious only of the Now. Present Time is thus extended and provides a space in which we self-consciously construct the form of our future emergence into reality. Whitehead termed this process "concrecence" and it was effected by a subjective "prehension" and harmonization of elements under the direction of a "subjective aim." In less technical language we can represent this as the organization and "making concrete" of what will emerge into physical existence by a means of "gathering" together diverse elements into a single reality.

Whitehead further suggests that in the process of concrecence, the subject (operator) draws on past information (objective fact), distils and orders it according to an initial aim, and harmonizes its elemental components until it reaches a state he terms its "satisfaction." The subject then transforms from its active transformative or non-temporal state into a "superject," essentially a moment of observable reality in the flow of physical time. It is the emergence of the superject which seeds the future.

This idea of Whitehead's (which applies to all the stuff of the universe) bears comparison with the state of mind achieved during ritual, where connection with the external world is lost. In the apparent timelessness of ritual activity, the operator is free to construct out of just those elements he chooses. The construction is effected both mentally and physically. This reflects a further requirement of Whitehead's system which insists on all entities having both a mental and a physical pole. As above, so below. The process of creation is fundamentally a selective process of "combination"; that is, it requires bringing the diversity of available data together with the subjective imagination of the present aim in order to create a unified and concrete whole.

### III

"Creativity" is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively. It lies in the nature of things that the many enter into complex unity. (*Process and Reality*, p. 28)

When a non-conformal proposition is admitted into feeling, the reaction to the datum has resulted in the synthesis of fact with the alternative potentiality of the complex predicate. A novelty has emerged into creation.... [I]t is new, a new type of individual, and not merely a new intensity of individual feeling. That member of the locus has introduced a new form into the actual world; or, at least, an old form in a new function. (*Process and Reality*, p. 187)

## Sigils as Agents

Immersed in Present Time, P-Orridge creates a ritual space which he inhabits with consciousness. He steps forth into a sacred space, outside the linearity of time and becomes in a literal sense the architect of his own universe: the magician conjuring and shaping the elements to his will.

He identifies his aim, expressed by invocation and empowered by intensity of experience. And then he works, his energies brought to bear on a single purpose. He brings a new form into the actual world. A sigil emerges into reality.

But how does it work? How does the sigil take effect? How can a product of human creativity change nature from its course?

What follows is speculation, but it is grounded in the metaphysics of process, some of which has been touched on in the context of the ritual construction of sigils. The key is in a radical restatement of our notion of "time."

### A Speculation on Time

Our normal understanding treats time as the strictly linear measure of successive moments or events. This is the forward motion of time's arrow. Relativity theory suggests that it is bi-directional; the mathematics work equally well in either direction.

But what is time? P-Orridge coined the phrase "Time is that which emits," and this provides a clue which I propose to explore. Time is significant to P-Orridge, and its significance lies in his intuitive grasp and ritual experience of time's thickness.

We can restate P-Orridge's phrase as a simple equation:  $\text{TIME} = \text{EMIT}$ . The one is the mirror of the other. We can take this a step further and propose that 'time' is the expression of energy (an emission). It is important here to note that this is not the same as saying that expressions of energy take place in time, but rather that what we consider as the movement of time is an expression of energy.

### Now for Some Proposals

The first proposal is that there is a relationship of identity between energy and time, and that when we consider what we mean by time we are considering the function of energy under another form.

The second is that we can consider our thoughts or mental activity as constituting high-energy states in contrast with physical existence or activity which occurs in low-energy states. All physically manifest objects (including atoms) are to be considered "low-energy."



Blood Sigil, 1980.

I leave the third step to Alfred North Whitehead, noting first that he requires that every entity has both a physical and a mental aspect (or "pole"):

The mental pole is the subject determining its own ideal of itself by reference to eternal principles of valuation autonomously modified in their application to its own physical objective datum. Every actual entity is "in time" so far as its physical pole is concerned, and is "out of time" so far as its mental pole is concerned. It is the union of two worlds, namely, the temporal world, and the world of autonomous valuation. (*Process and Reality*, p. 248)

The "world of autonomous valuation" is, for Whitehead, "out of time." We need to take this to mean "out of linear time," since the process of valuation necessarily effects some degree of change in what is being valued. We cannot under a process metaphysic consider the possibility of timelessness since that would imply a lack of process, a lack of change. And any change must be an expression of energy and thus of time.

If the mental pole exists outside linear time, but cannot (because of its inherent activity) be "atemporal," it must therefore be expressing time in some other way. We know from physics that the addition of energy increases the level of activity of atoms (they move faster), and that in the physical plane a large increase in energy alters the physical state of materials (solids melt, liquids vaporize). We also know that time is relative to the observer, and that rapid movement slows the passage of time relative to a fixed or stationary point. Atomic clocks run slow at altitude, and someone orbiting the earth in a satellite ages marginally less quickly than those on earth even though an hour or a day feels the same under both sets of conditions.

What this is leading to is the suggestion that our sense of linear time is simply the result of relatively low-energy existence. In order to retain physical coherence there are limits (even at the atomic level) on how much energy we can express, and this limit is directly linked to our notion of linear time. But if time bears a relationship of identity with energy, and energy (which is simply activity by another name) is increased, then it becomes possible to imagine that at high levels of energy the physical limits are broken and existence emerges outside the tight constraints of linear time. This suggests that "time" as fully conceived has thickness or extension.

I propose that mental activity (thought) is simply the emergence of entities into high-energy states. This goes beyond what Whitehead claims but is arguably implicit in his position. We should also note here Whitehead's description of the non-temporal world as one of "autonomous valuation", and take care to distinguish between the physical brain activity through which we engage with thought and







the thought itself. But if we make the conceptual leap, we can begin to see how, for example, the mystic is able to transcend the limits of normal temporality and reach both into the past and the future. In the language of the magical traditions this is the realm of hidden or occult activity. The aether. The astral plane.

### How Sigils Work

It was suggested earlier that ritual space constitutes a move into the extensiveness of Present Time, and that the primary characteristic of Present Time is its prioritizing of the subjective. Present Time is where actuality is defined and shaped. By choosing to operate within this conceptual arena, P-Orridge is able to immerse himself in the fullness of his own subjectivity. His imaginative world becomes fluid and tangible, constrained only by the limits of future possibility. As he shapes his mental map of the future, isolates and defines his intention, he begins to construct. The emergent sigil shares his temporal and (non)-physical location, and thus shares also in the prioritization of subjective experience which is the nature of Present Time. As Whitehead puts it, it is born into a "world of autonomous valuation." A sigil so created is essentially a denizen of that world.

As with all entities, the sigil has a mental and a physical aspect, but because of its unusual beginnings, the mental aspect is significantly heightened. This is in sharp contrast to artefacts created in the framework of physical time and primarily as objects of physical appreciation. In such cases the created work is bound by its own objective beginnings. It is the heightening of its mental aspect which enables the sigil to exert agency. Upon its release from its ritual space it is able to sustain its link with Present Time even while it exists in the linear frame of physical time/space. It is this inborn access to continuing creative expression which constitutes the sigil's magical potency.

For P-Orridge, the key to a sigil's effectiveness is his management of its constituent elements. The environment of Present Time provides the potential, gives the sigil its nature, but it is the artist who provides and defines its function. That the sigil enjoys autonomy of valuation means that the process remains always somewhat open or indeterminate with regard to its ultimate completion. It follows from this that the artist can never be certain of how the sigil will "behave" and it is for this reason that P-Orridge incorporates a genetic link. The uncertainty does, however, serve an important purpose. Although it is possible to construct and control ritual space, the same cannot be said for the temporal everyday world which is subject to innumerable competing imperatives. The sigil must await its opportunity to act, influencing and evaluating the patterns of physicality until such time as its encoded intention can be brought to fruition. It is a seed planted into the uncertainty of future time. It awaits only the conditions of its germination.

### Closing Thoughts

In making public his sigils, Genesis P-Orridge has afforded us a rare opportunity to explore new worlds. Currently operating under the banner of *The Next New Way On*, he is inviting us to challenge our modes of thought and to develop new ways of engineering our futures. He once travelled across America in a yellow bus reminiscent of that used by the Merry Pranksters in the '60s, but on which the destination was now declared as "Even Further." It was a declaration of his intent to push the boundaries of human experience into new territory, to unchain the limits of imaginative creativity. The sigils he has created over the past 20 years or so are part of this broader goal.

We can if we wish treat his sigils as art, as objects to observe and admire. But we might also take them as an injunction to step over the line and explore the limits of our imagination. The only restrictions are those we place on ourselves.

23 January, 2002,  
England

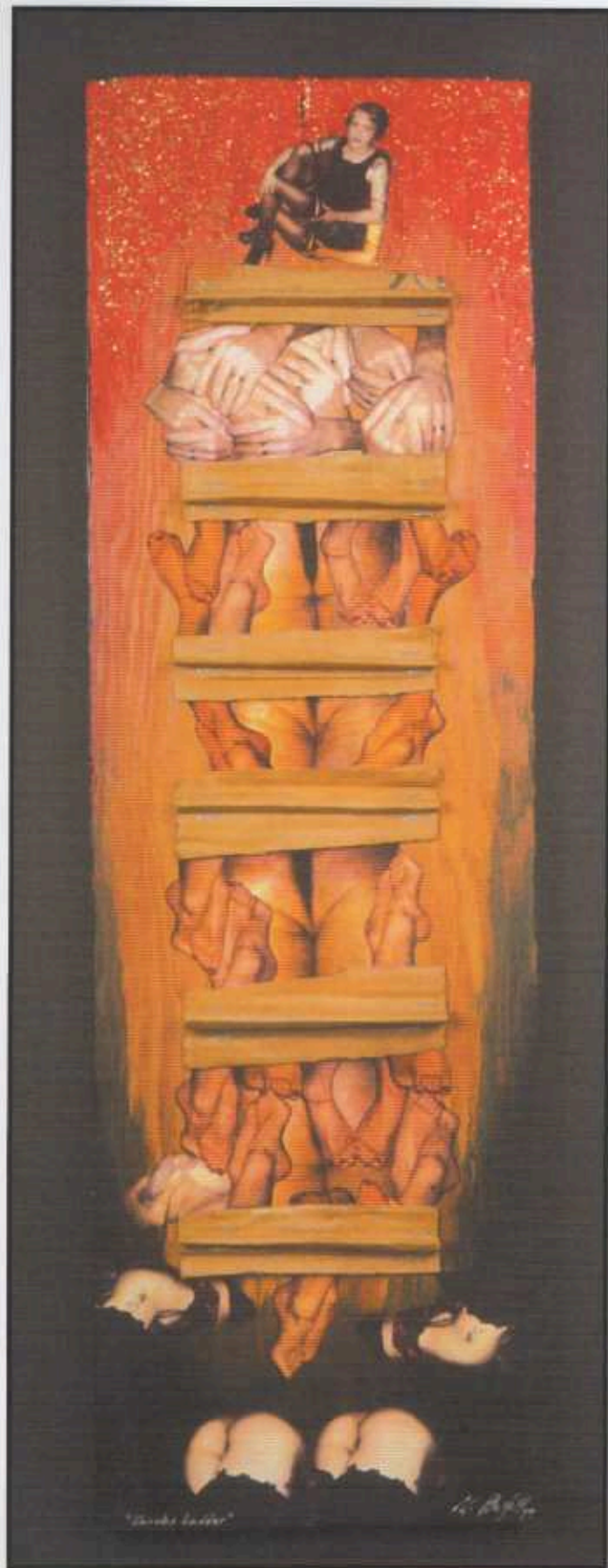


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Paul Cecil was co-founder of Temple Press with Genesis P-Orridge in the late '80s and is the editor of *Flickers of the Dreamachine* (Codex Books). He is currently engaged in doctoral research into the metaphysics of process and the agency of ideas. His e-mail address is: [process@burningmail.com](mailto:process@burningmail.com)





"Jacob's Ladder", 1999.

**“SIGILS”—AN  
ALPHABET OV  
DESIRE  
BY  
GENESIS  
P-ORRIDGE**

**A**

*Thee moment ov orgasm is central to thee process. It is special and all should be done to make it so. Thus we decorate thee moment as we would a jewel, with all manner ov objects and actions that are precious and personal. Like gifts to a Lover, we consecrate thee moment in L-ov-e.*

**B**

*We say to make thee room or space ov work special. We say likewise ov thee interior mood, for so thee one is physical, so thee other is psychick and our aim is to join thee two to a single purpose.*

**C**

*In sex, physical self-consciousness is abandoned in favour ov intensified sensual pleasure. In sleep, everyday consciousness is abandoned in favour ov thee unconscious, thee world ov dreams. In Sigils, thee two states meet in a single act: and so is released a special and potent energy; a fertile power ov harmony, transcending thee barriers ov thee conscious/unconscious divide. And so it is thee Sigil lets forth an energy that cuts through like a flaming sword, overcoming all that stands in its path.*

**D**

*Intuition and instinct are thee only pointers in everyday consciousness to thee objects and methods from which to construct a potent Sigil. Thee books and lessons are ov thee museum ov thee past - thee future is entirely ours to construct as we will.*

**E**

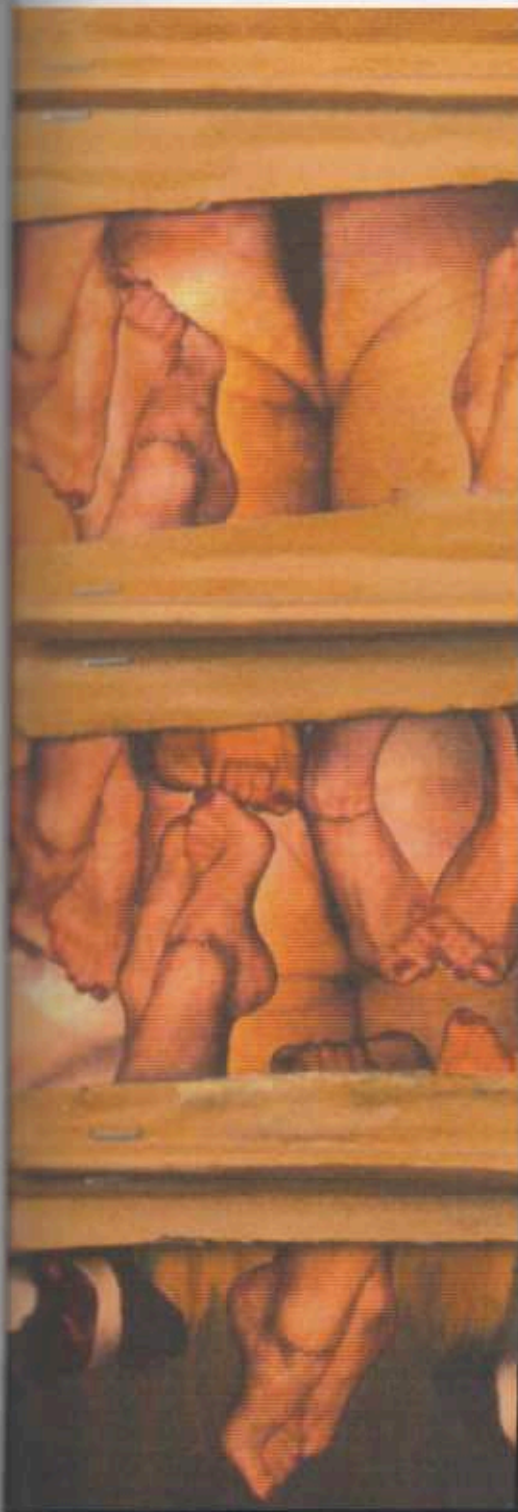
*All must coum from experience, and all experience is ov value. It is simply a question ov observation; seeing thee links, and drawing all without exception into thee universe ov magickal intent and action.*

**F**

*Sex is thee medium for thee magickal act, enacted physically and with direct control ov thee Individual. It generates thee greatest power which, when released, is diverted from its ordinary object and thrust with thee intense force ov will towards thee fulfilment ov desire.*

**G**

*All must becoun focused to thee single purpose in hand. It is a case ov giving up all pre-conceptions, all inhibitions and preferences, for thee work involves a totality and anything that gets in thee way ov coumpleteness is as a vestige ov thee past which will remain to trick and trouble thee matter to its detriment. Relinquish all control and prejudice in order to reclaim and master it, redefined and in thee train ov informed desire.*



# H

Sigilisation leads to the realisation of personal truth, and provides the means with which to express that truth in life.

# I

"I know what I will, and I will what I desire."

# J

Sigils are the unity and integration of Will, Desire, and Knowledge. They are the process by which dreams become reality.

# K

It is certain to us that Sigils, enacted with true determination, and filled with the perfect strength of a sincere desire, generate of their own the necessary will for success. It is simply a matter of intent and intensity; the practice in the sure knowledge and acceptance of result.

# L

Sigils are the art of transforming former belief into current knowledge of the way ahead. Sigils are the revealers of truths, be they hidden or put aside through fear or expedience.

# M

The Sigil is the declaration of intent. It awakens the Individual magically to the circumstances of their life and in this way makes the focused desire more likely to happen. Sigils are not a way of guaranteeing success, they can only open the door for your own action. A Sigil might ensure that an opportunity for what you desire becomes apparent to you, but you must still act upon that knowledge for the desire to be fulfilled.

# N

Without the physical response the psychick work is pointless. Be awake not asleep to action.

# O

The more Sigils you perform, the greater the clarity of aim you will find within. A cumulative power of activated will develops, and the Sigils become intensified in direction and effect.

# P

The ritual of the Sigil should be enacted to produce a climax of utmost intensity. At the moment when the rising flux of sexual excitement becomes ungovernable, when the whole of physical and mental consciousness undergoes a spasm that takes it beyond the point of return, at that moment all must be focused on the Sigil, the physical sensation discarded and forgotten.





## Q

A Sigil can be designed to answer any desire, without limitation or constraint. The aim need in no way be sexual. The Sigil encompasses all possibility.

## R

The result of the Sigil becomes a part of the life process. Thus it may not bring obvious results immediately, but however long it takes you can be certain that if the desire was true, and the intent real, you will be moving towards achieving the desired goal; preparing and passing through all the necessary stages so that when the moment is right you will be ready and alive to it.

## S

As we have said before, the methods described by TOPY are better guides to Individual action. As long as the Sigil contains the basic element of focused will, all other details can be varied. Indeed it is essential that the ritual be one that is reflective of who you are, and so should be the result of personal input intuitively arrived at.

## T

Although some days and times might have particular significance to an Individual and the Temple, a potent Sigil can be performed at any time on any day.

## U

Orgasm during a Sigil can be reached by any method. Alone or with a partner, by masturbation or intercourse, orally or in any other way the Individual desires. A partner need not be involved in Temple activity to be an effective collaborator.

## V

The act of making a physical record of one's Sigil is a useful way of instructing the subconscious, and at the same time of revealing to consciousness what it is the subconscious wishes to say. Thus the process forces the divided self into Unity, and manifests the outcome in the physical plane.

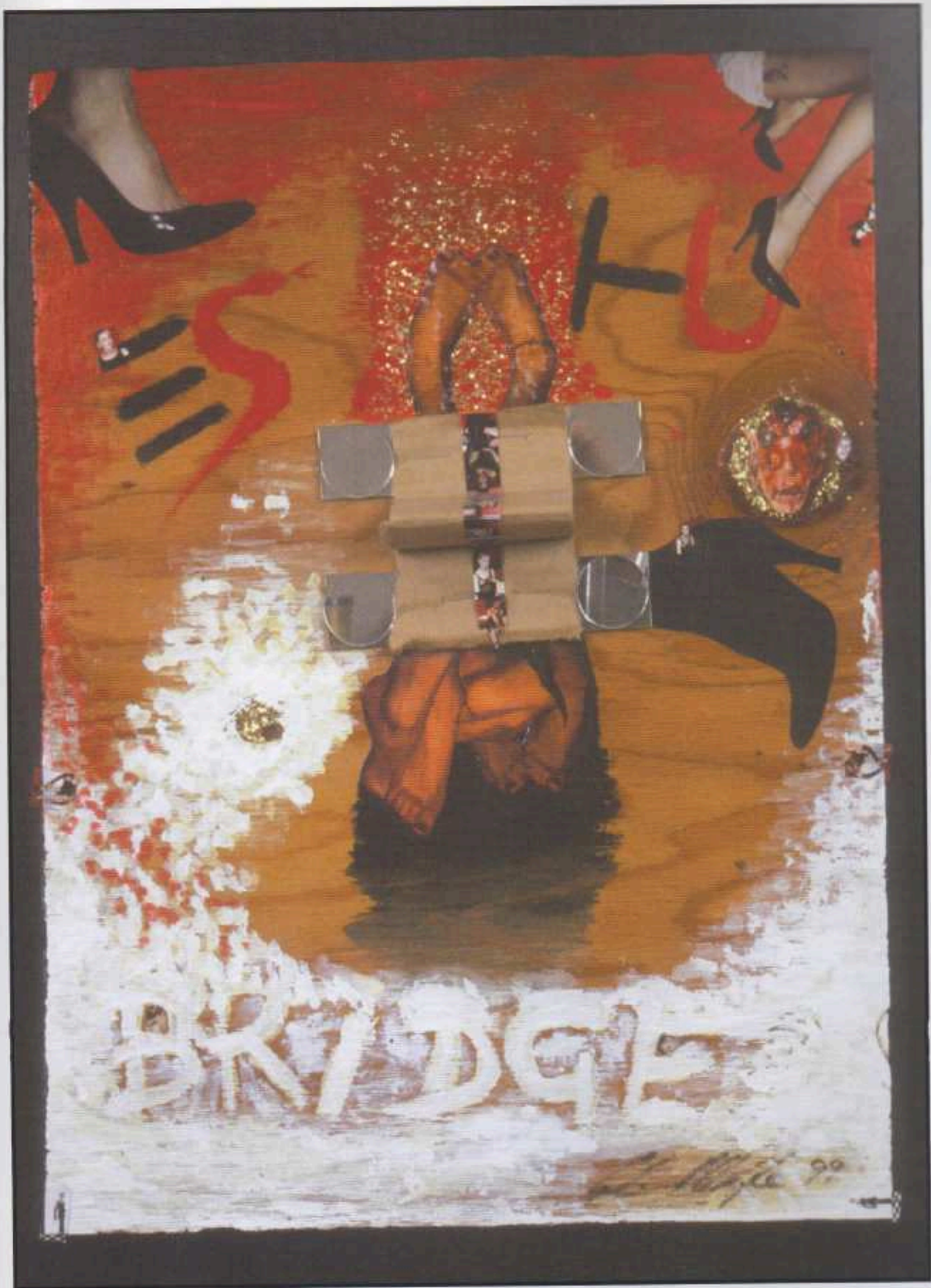
## W

Although we strongly recommend the making of a Sigil Paper, other methods of recording may also be incorporated into the ritual: polaroids, photographs, cassette recordings, drawings (automatic or otherwise), film or video. As with the Sigil Paper, all these methods should be used in the ritual to heighten the intensity of what it is you do, rather than purely to document the event. Let intuition not logic be the guide in this, and experiment freely without embarrassment or doubt.

"Kat-Healing" Sigil.







"Bridge," New York, 1999.



"The Majesty Babel", 2000.



"Sirius Star", 1985.

**PAINFUL BUT  
FABULOUS  
(AN INTERVIEW ON  
THE DEMATERIALIZA-  
TION OF IDENTITY)  
CAROL  
TESSITORE**



Eva Adolf Braun Hitler. Photographed by  
Michael Fox, NYC.

Talking about ideas...

**GP-O:** The phrase *red-light district* popped into my head. I was thinking about shoes, and the gallery owner said to me "We'll put you in a hotel here right near the station." And I know in Europe when they say that it usually means two things: a) it's cheap and b) it's in the red-light district. I suddenly had this image in my mind of Christmas lights and it all gelled into taking a lot of old high-heeled shoes, that I've worn in performances, rituals and so on, and putting little light fittings inside each one and red light bulbs in them, stringing all of them together and have them hang like Christmas tree lights. That'll be the red-light district in the gallery that can be where I have the images that are more explicit.

**TEAR:** So you are focusing on your art again... would you like to talk about that? How has art changed for you over time?

**GP-O:** When I first started making art in the mid sixties—and I'm still trying to figure out what the implications are, because the most important thing for me is that my art and my life have truly always been as close to one another as they could ever get—my original name was Neil Megson. In 1965 Neil Megson decided to create an art character Genesis-P Orridge, or to at least accept that character, and instead of having it be a contrived idea, that was very much about gallery art. I decided that I would completely immerse myself in Genesis P-Orridge, and then place GPO into art and popular culture to see what would happen. In a sense, all of my art has been the diary of GPO.

**TEAR:** That brings up an interesting question, who is Neil Megson to you now, has he always remained "behind the scenes" of creating GPO or is he separate?

**GP-O:** That's actually one of the most intriguing questions there is, I've been thinking about more and more lately for what ever reason, I've been asking myself, "Where is Neil?" Neil invented this game, this character GPO and sort of set him loose into the world. In the beginning Neil was being Genesis, and Genesis was responsible for what the art was and for the creativity, Neil was the sort of puppet master of this alter ego. Then as I took it more and more seriously or as Neil did, I changed the name legally, and people would meet me and I was only Genesis to them, there was no Neil. There was a point when Neil was forgotten by Genesis. It's a question that puzzles me—does Neil still exist? Or was he erased by Genesis almost like a monster or parasite in one of those movies where the creation takes over the creator. I honestly am not sure whether Neil exists anymore. What I feel is that this is Genesis, I'm Genesis, and I think I killed Neil. I wonder, if I went back could I ask him to look at what he became as Genesis, would he still make the same decision, or would he not want to be erased in that way by the art. On the other hand, I think it was my absolute determination and dedication to truly living art and life as one that made the whole phenomenon work. I think the reason that my art, writing and music succeeded in the way they have, at whatever level, is precisely because I was prepared to sacrifice everything including my identity. I don't know where Neil is, and I wonder if Neil created Genesis and Genesis has now completely absorbed everything that was

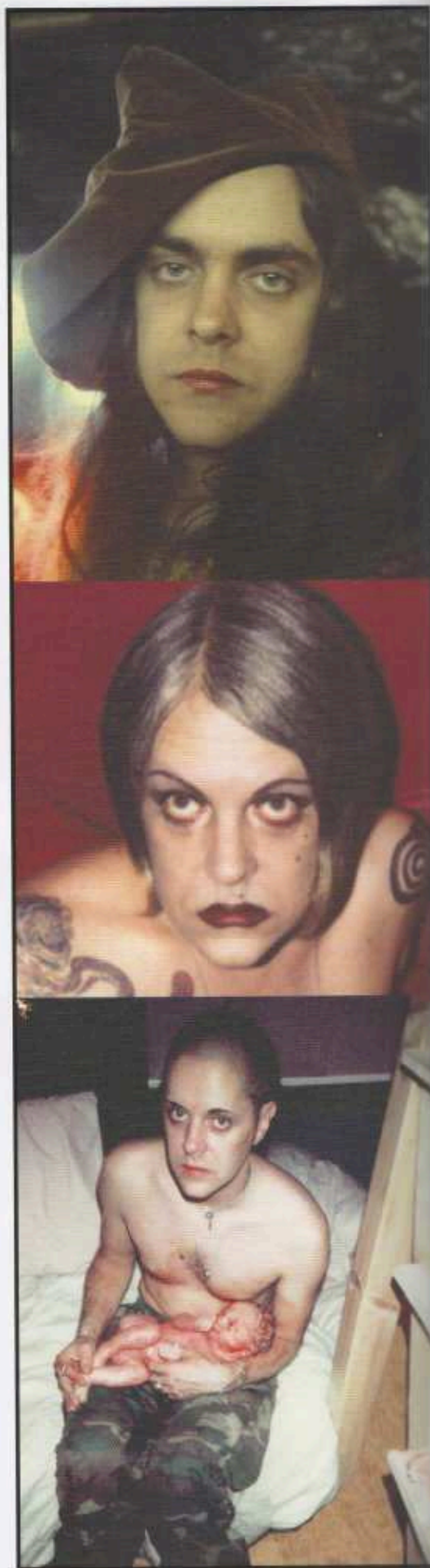
Neil, perhaps the only way to resolve that question is to not be Genesis anymore, and change my name again. Maybe become Neil again or someone else. It's one of the things that I'm actually considering right now. How do I find out who I am? Because the idea of becoming someone else has been so successful.

**TEAR:** I like the idea of maybe being able to step back and "visit Neil" and then get to see what Genesis has done from a different perspective, getting a chance to soak it all in.

**GP-O:** I think that's partly what I'm trying to do right now, I think that's one reason I've gone back to making art. I've chosen to be more self-conscious. To look at everything I do as a piece has helped me a lot to realize that GPO was actually the artwork, and Throbbing Gristle, the painting and the books and so on are all bits of one big artwork, which is the person. I think I am creating a retrospective by revisiting all of the threads and going back to the sources of everything, and seeing where I lie in there. I think one thing that happens to a lot of people is that they start to believe that their art is either innately important or that they are innately interesting or important because of some measure of success or attention from the outside world. That's of course where people usually lose the integrity that they had in the beginning. If you start to believe in the things you make, instead of the reasons that you make them, then you start to produce art for other people instead of yourself. That's something that I've always tried really hard to avoid, I've always tried to be my own therapist or analyst checking. Am I doing this because I can, because I can get away with it? Am I doing this because that's what I do, I make music so I'll make some more. Am I doing this because I will find out something or discover something that I didn't know yesterday? All art to me is looking for something new, some new way of seeing the world or your place in the world that changes you or changes the way that you perceive things.

**TEAR:** I see you as a sort of Jack of all trades, but your current focus is on visual art, does visual art or any other art form carry more importance to you, or is it just a time for visual things right now?

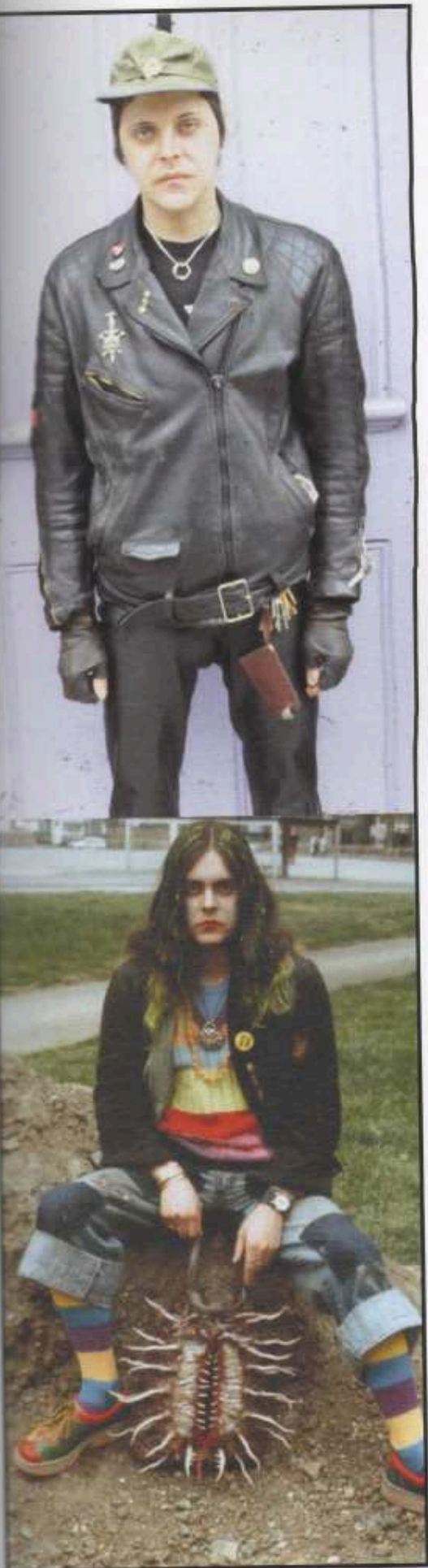
**GP-O:** When I began I wanted to be a writer, I wanted to write books, but I also wanted to be a fine artist. I began doing performance art and mail art and so on in the '70s. The performance art with COUM became really quite well respected; we were doing big shows in Milan and in Museums and so on. Basically in the background was the music, I started creating audio soundscapes. When what we were doing became acceptable to the art world, it seemed we had proved our point. One of the points was that you didn't need traditional training to produce something that was valid and valuable in the art world. And so we took on something else, which was music. I never stopped making art all the way through, I always carried on doing drawings and collages. It became the one thing I had that was mine. It was secret, no one else knew about it, and no matter what else was going on, I always had the collaging and the secret visual material to come back to that was mine. In the '60s I really believed that every individual had what I used to call the genius factor. I believed that without exception everyone had some skill,



some ability to do something completely unique that was *only theirs* that would add something to the world. But the education system, the way that society conditions people, fundamentalism whether it be religious, political, economic or tribal, the environment that you are born into conspires deliberately to suppress that genius factor. You are not encouraged to find your marvelous skill, the thing that you see that no one else sees, that you have an absolute right to see and to express to others, and that the world was supposed to evolve by the sharing and discovery of everybody's highest potential. I was an idealist and a utopian, and I still am. All the projects that I worked on were very much about beginning without the expected skills. Without a record label if you were going to be a band, without being able to play an instrument in a traditionally clever way, or if you couldn't draw perfectly you could use collage or some other way to create. A way for people to create an icon of their uniqueness. That was one of the real ideas behind all of it was that you didn't need traditional support systems or traditional ways of thinking or being. So with the COUM performances, apart from that it was a personal journey of breaking taboos and inhibitions, I wanted to wipe the board clean as a being and say to myself "nothing has to be accepted that I was given." Not my name, not my gender, not my social class, not what I'm expected to do for a living, I have an absolute right to choose what I want to be, and that's how Neil started building Genesis. He said "OK, I have this blank concept of a being that I have the right to be, the one I wasn't told about by society." Let me build him or it. Throbbing Gristle was like that too, it was very much about four people who couldn't play their instruments, finding a way with music and with sound, to actually discover something so inevitable in terms of expression of life. So each project was very much rooted in that basic ideal that if you really break everything that you've been told you can be. If you don't accept anyone else's voice in terms of what you can be as a person, then you will start to see and find who and what you really are. I think that looking back now, Genesis has almost been a mirror of the way that society's been changing over these decades. My concerns have altered from using music as a platform to contemporary times where I'm very naturally interested in cosmetic surgery and transgender and the manipulation of the human body itself as is the world outside, if you look at the *National Enquirer*. I'm looking at it from an artist's point of view and theoretically, but in a way I'm just like everybody else, and that's the concern of every housewife who's trying to decide whether or not to get breast implants. I think the artist somehow takes the concerns that the psychology of their society is obsessed with or afraid of or unable to give shape to and describe to them. I'm trying to say that the artist ultimately is the mirror of the society that they're in, and I've created a mirror that changes the same way that society does.

**TEAR:** Ideally, that is, the artist is the mirror of the society that they're in.

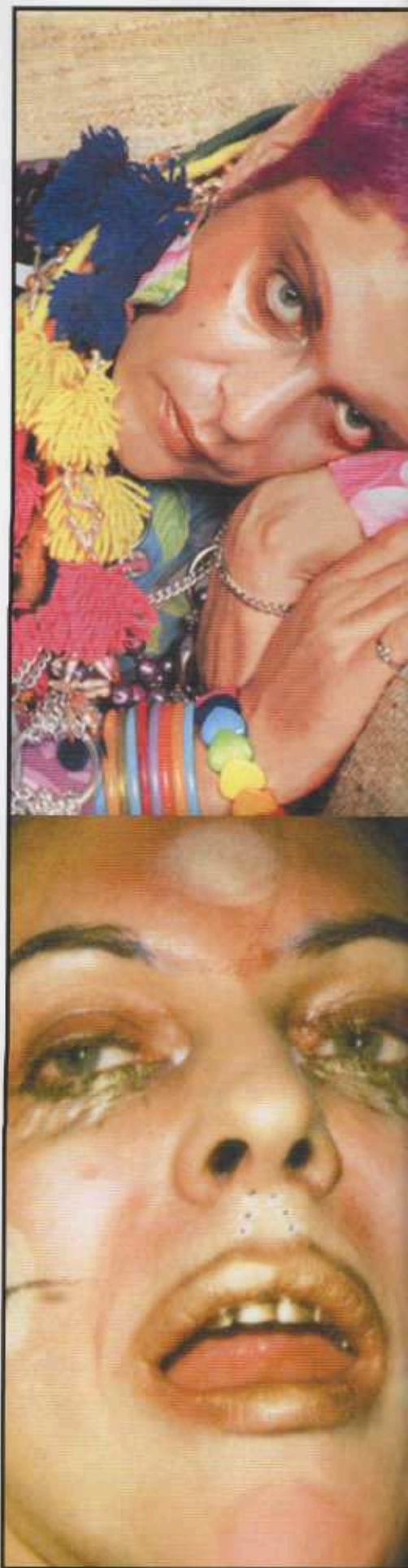
**GP-O:** I think that's probably one of the achievements that I've made. I think that's probably why I have the obsession with the idea of mirrors in the arts. Even though they're not always present in the art, the idea of reflections and infinite reflections seems to me to be incredibly powerful, especially in graphic art.



**TEAR:** Is there any reason in particular why you chose not to include other forms of art (music and writing) in this retrospective book?

**GP-O:** In 1995 I fell out of a window of a burning mansion in California, escaping the fire. I landed on some concrete steps. My arm was broken in eight places, I had broken ribs, I had a pulmonary embolism and I was in intensive care for ten days. I was lucky to be alive. I had to spend almost an entire year just physically recovering enough to function properly. I had a whole year to consider what to do, to sit back for the first time since I started out. It was the first time I had a year off. I decided to look at what I was doing and why I was doing it. Was it from habit, or had I become a cork bobbing on the relentless wave of my own work. I decided to sit down and start all over again in terms of choosing what it was I wanted to do. So I asked myself some basic questions. What always gives me pleasure? And the answer was I always get pleasure from making art. Do I really want to keep on making music? No, I've made 200 CDs, I don't have to ever make music again, I might want to, but right now I'm kind of tired of it, I need a break. And so I just went back to square one, and thought, I love words, I love writing. So I decide that I am no longer obliged to do anything. I don't have to feel that because I've always been creative and don't things in public that I have to do that ever again. It was very liberating to suddenly say I don't have to be Genesis anymore. Or Genesis doesn't have to make Genesis products or art. So I chose very consciously, to return to the things that gave me joy, and that I felt had a precision about them that was finite. That when I finished a piece of art, it was finished. Whereas with music you finish a CD and then people hear it, it hangs around, and you make some more, it's more of an ongoing, repeating process. I didn't want to be part of that; I wanted to make things that were from my point of view a clear precise statement of how I see the world and life. Even if they're surreal and ambiguous in terms of how others view them. That's why I've gone back to fine art. As I did this, I became aware that that's really what I've done all along; I've tried to freeze moments of perception, of the mystery of being alive. To me the music and a lot of the things that I've done were about sharing similarities with people. Saying "You're not alone, I feel the same way, this is how the world makes me feel as well" and you are the voice of like-minded people, your own sort of extended family, that's what the poet and the musician and so on do. But I wanted something that was mine. So I decided in a sense to be creatively selfish and make art that was very personal and intimate, but also exactly my sense of self. And then instead of saying, here I am, I'm like you and I'm just speaking out loud what you're thinking and feeling. That's where the shift was, I changed it to this is how I am, and this is what makes me different. So instead of being just the mirror and saying this is how your world is, reflecting it, I was actually saying here's how my world is, but I will let you come and look. So that's the big change, and that would be why the whole question of identity pops up again, because I'm looking at my little world again and having to define it.

**TEAR:** That somehow makes me think of a concept you've mentioned before about the heightened emphasis on individuality and uniqueness in the art world, and how the Candy Factory went against that by creating something that was completely collaborative.





**GP-O:** The Candy Factory with Eric Heist was a very specific project. In a way it is the fine art equivalent of Throbbing Gristle in the music world or Coum in the performance art world. It's dealing with different issues in terms of its approach to the art world, and its exploration of the post-Warhol effect on art. With the show in Frankfurt, basically what's happened is that I've come to terms with existing. I think for a very long I really was erasing myself. The experience of being a consciousness in a physical body is completely bizarre. Just the idea that we're alive arbitrarily, because two people you didn't know in advance met and were maybe in love and you are created. Certainly after a number of years you become conscious of yourself as an individual being. When you're a child one day you become aware that you are here, you discover that you are an individual person and usually around the same time you discover that you're mortal and that one day you're going to die. From that moment on there's this huge mystery about the entire process of existing. It's fascinating and it's totally bizarre. I've never really lost my shock and surprise at the idea that I'm on this planet apparently able to manifest and do things, meet people. It's hard enough getting used to the idea that you're here, but also simultaneously coming to terms with the fact that you won't be here. I think that is one reason that I've always been fascinated with the idea of collaboration. The basic human need to be connected to someone. I don't know how it is for you, but I find it hard to be connected to reality. Every day I wake up and I am surprised. Did that answer your question?

**TEAR:** Sort of, but I was more curious about how you felt about this emphasis on individuality in the art world which to me is very formulaic.

**GP-O:** The art world is these days very much about careers and business. It's more like a banking phenomenon. There's two ways that it tends to work, one is that someone, maybe just leaving college or whatever in their show, makes a piece of art and it receives very positive attention. It might be that they're doing black stripes on a yellow background, or everything that they do is just yellow and black. Because that's what people like, they think OK, that's what works, that's what gets the attention, and they do lots more paintings with black and yellow. Eventually they get known as the "black and yellow person." It's a formula, but then it's repeated over and over with very slight variations until they die. And the other way is who they have sex with, which gallery owners they have sex with. Those are the two basic ways that the art world works. I have no interest in doing the same thing every day of my life, to me that's the same thing as being dead. Why not just go work in a factory, if all you're going to do is churn stuff out, you may as well go work in a sweatshop. So it's a great tragedy that modern art has become a slave to familiarity, that people want an artist to keep doing the same thing, and that that's seen as a positive quality. I mean what art grew from were various people's attempts to paint or sculpt transcendental mystical divine states. It was religious and it was about epiphanies and about our place in the universe and our relationship with nature. Sometimes it was schematic too, like sand drawings or Navaho maps, and it was ritualized. It wasn't even about making something that was permanent. It was a ritual that took place for the psychic or physical healing of the tribe. It was magic, and I grew up feeling very strongly that it was supposed to be magic, it was supposed to be about a conversation with nature and the universe. It was

also a way to try and describe the indescribable. It's about the states of consciousness and joy and revelation that can't be photographed or manufactured. That to me is what art is for. A religious sacred calling, and it was as important as any religious or spiritual belief system. To me art is the religion. The fact that god's first quality is creation, to me that's everything. Creativity and the creation of something that didn't exist before is something ineffable and incredible and unlikely, that you can share with other human beings. But that's not what we see in the art world very often, in fact it's usually laughed at. The art world today is so formularized and so much about cliques and pleasing those with money. It's basically decoration.

**TEAR:** I'm interested in what you were saying about art being a way to describe the indescribable, and what you believe to be the most efficient mode of creative communication, whether it be visual art, words or music. Many people feel that music is the most powerful form of communication that there is.

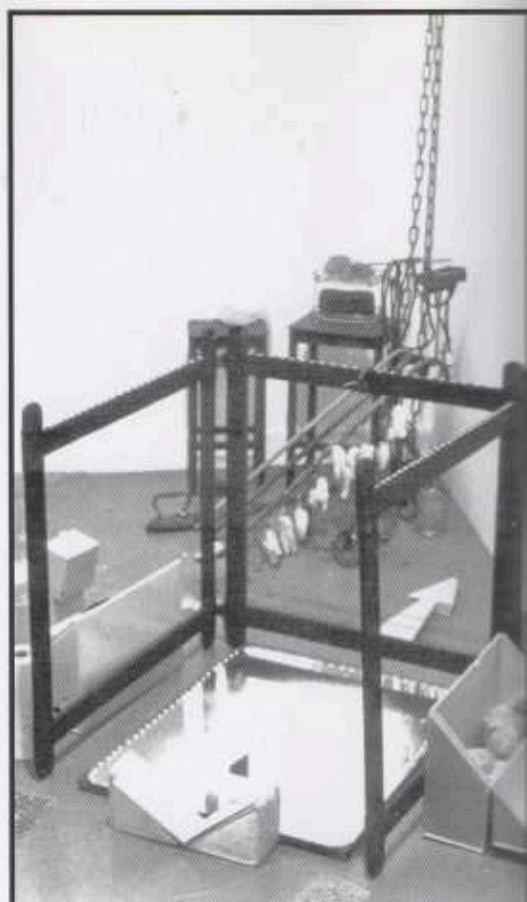
**GP-O:** Well at one point I thought music would be the most efficient way of communicating with the greatest number of people. The way that we thought of a record was literally a record, a document, it's a multiple. So a record's just as much of a piece of propaganda. Here's an opportunity to talk to people and tell them what I'm thinking about the way the world is. In fact making music was almost an afterthought or very much coincidental. The most important idea was that you could speak to a lot of people. It was reasonably democratic in that almost anyone who could get into a shop could get it. It wasn't limited to the Upper West Side rich people that go to the galleries. We were hoping that we could invest something that was basically street culture with the intent and the information that one would normally get from a piece of art. That was one of the things that TG was trying to prove and I think it managed to.

**TEAR:** I agree, as you were talking I realized that I would not have asked that last question to just any musician, because music today is usually purely about the aesthetics of sound or a sound, rather than a movement or feeling.

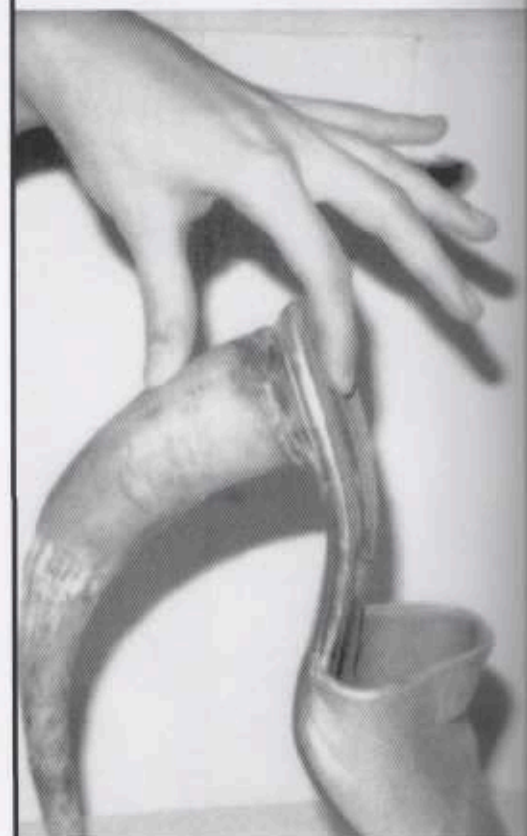
**GP-O:** That world is very much about production value, like Mr. Potato Head, they go "OK, we need somebody this height, male or female, this size breasts," basically they just manufacture these people and then they put them over the basic template which is the ongoing "music factory" that's going on, and that's very much like the art world. In fact all the cultural media have become businesses. The souls have been sucked out of most of them. And the sad thing is that a lot of people are colluding in that, and are growing up saying "Yes, I want to be famous and successful and rich," not "I want to change the world, I want to heal people's souls, not I want to try and tell people something they didn't know before."

**TEAR:** Would you say this has been a recent shift in society?

**GP-O:** I think it's been happening at an accelerated rate since MTV occurred, I'm not saying it's all MTV's fault, although I think MTV is a curse on culture. But certainly somewhere in there I think the advent of blanket satellite tele-



"Mirrorhole," 1975.



"Shoehorn" 2002.



vision, mass media, global media is really the culprit. That we're in the first age where everybody can communicate with just about everybody else, even people in caves in Afghanistan can use satellite phones to talk to people in America. It's phenomenal and it's so completely different to any other period of human history that I don't think anyone has fully understood the implications. I think television and global media are really the culprits for the disillusion and destruction of serious, thoughtful and spiritual culture. To me that's incredibly frightening, because as we've said I've been blessed with growing up a utopian who thought that there was no question that art was a gift, and a blessing and a holy occupation. I'm just appalled when I see the absolutely immoral disinterest in any kind of humanist or empathetic content or intention with art now. Culture is in a sense the visible soul of a people, and the visible soul of our people in the west right now is empty. The *National Enquirer*, Extra, Access Hollywood, and MTV and the Grammys. That is the soul of the people in very many ways. Even the comodification of Sept. 11th, into just the highest rating they've had on CNN since the Gulf War.

We were talking earlier about why I've returned to doing Fine Art, and I think it's partly because it's a controllable environment. The scale of global culture now and the relentlessness of superficiality are so overwhelming and so huge and amorphous a power, that privacy and intimacy become really radical. Everything is now about being connected. People walk down the street talking about their private business out loud. Once upon a time they'd have been arrested for being lunatics, walking around gesticulating and talking out loud like that. Now it's a sign of status that you've got one of those headset phones, and you don't need to hold it. Everything is about being available 24 hours a day and instantly answering emails and instantly that. It's all very public; everything is about being available and having access to everything. The web is supposedly fantastic because you can find everything and everyone is on there, you can talk to everyone. It struck me that in a way privacy is taboo. People say to me "Why haven't you got a cell phone?" They're in shock, "poor, poor baby, hasn't got a cell phone, that must be terrible." And I hardly even answer the phone until I know who it is. I value my privacy and I like to choose whom I speak to. I like to have moments where I'm with myself. Or moments where I'm with someone one-on-one and focusing very much on that person. I think that's something that's really worth exploring now, unplugging from the networks, separating oneself. Not in an aggressive way, but just choosing very carefully who you really want to have interaction with and reclaim the ideas of intimacy and privacy once more. And also with that you rebuild trust, conversation, and friendship. All of those things have somehow been eroded by fashion. Somehow fashion has almost taken control over how people behave and relate to each other. That I think is one reason that I've returned to the concept of an art gallery, and the images that I use are in a sense becoming more and more intimate. Almost as a reaction against this whole mass-production-comodification-consumerism and the idea that the more you sell, the more you'll make, or the more people you'll speak to. Somehow the quantity is the value, and of course it's not. The value is the content and the value is the trust and the value is deeply caring for and caring about another being.

Some of the works that I've been creating, they do touch upon the idea of the shamanic way of making art. Sometimes artwork is the end result of a ritual that would be about healing or cleansing a state of mind and so on.

"Perfect," Polaroids, Breyer P-Orridge, 2002.

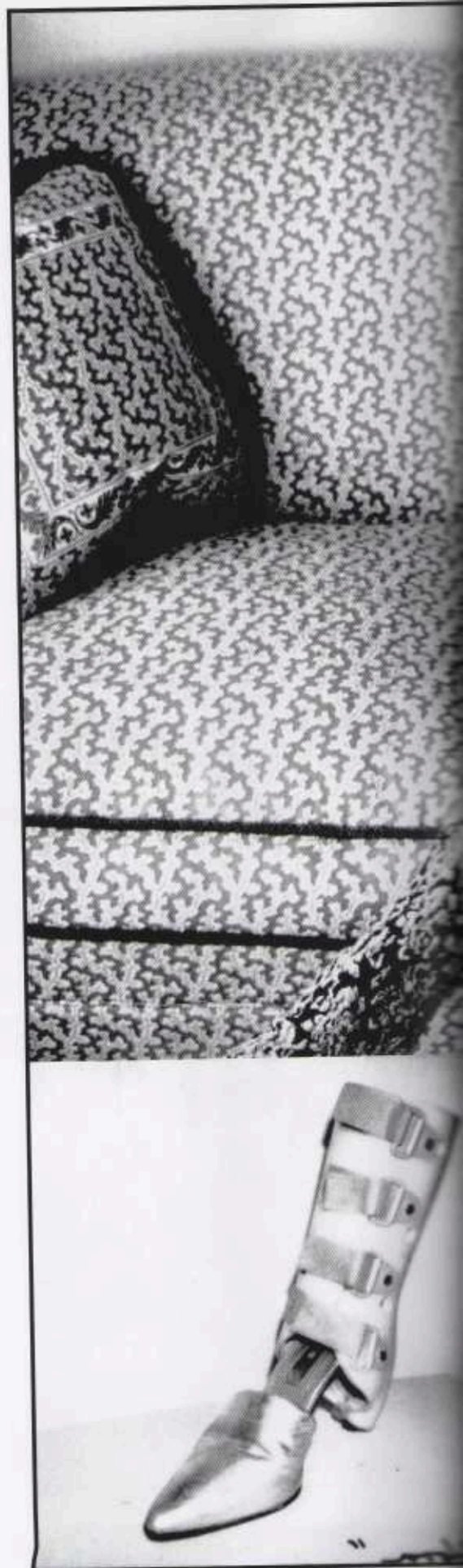
Which is very much in the ancient tradition of art. So in a way what I think I'm doing is very much linked to the origins of art and the way that it occurred rather than being about contemporary art worldviews. To me they are the evidence of my soul search.

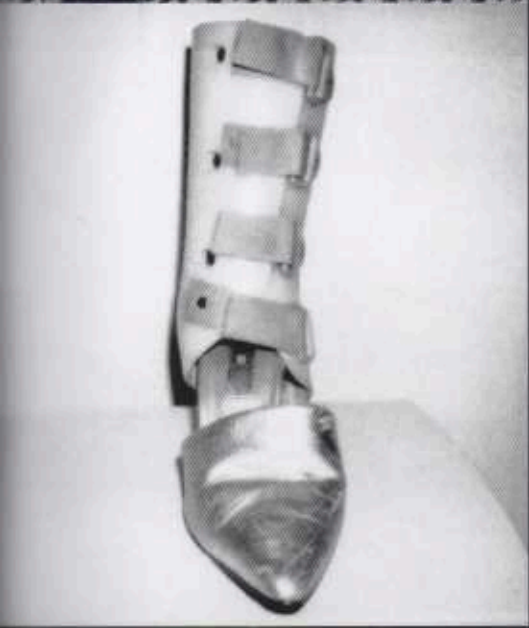
The book is called *Painful but Fabulous*.

It's almost as if the way that you perceive yourself dictates what the artwork is, for example if I'm doing a portrait of GPO—we could argue that's exactly what I've been doing for 30 years—then wherever GPO is, is the subject center of the picture. And so if I'm in a costume in the street that's the rest of the picture, the frame is conceptual in a sense, the frame is just somewhere. And I am extended out of the canvas into this reality.

**TEAR:** This brings us full circle to our first question about Neil Megson.

**GP-O:** In this way of describing things I guess Neil Megson is still sitting somewhere in 1965 as the artist. And the subject of the portrait is three-dimensional and exists in time and space. That's actually an interesting thought because then the mail art would make sense. The artwork is actually travelling through time and space. It's made here by me and then it's cast into the mail system and it arrives in somebody else's universe. Then it's existing in their environment on the wall, thrown away, set on fire, but everyone in one's mind is still perceiving it as the work of art. All those scenarios between it being created and it ending up in a fire all of them at any frozen moment are an artwork with that as the center. Same with performance, it's taking what might have once been a canvas, a scene from the bible or Bruegal's "Medieval Village" or whatever, and instead of it being painted on a canvas, you animate it and find people and dress them in costume and drop them out of the canvas and put them into a room or on the street. Because you perceive them as the artwork, they still are. I think a lot of the work that I've done has been concerned with taking what was once the content of a painting and/or portrait and manifesting it into what we call real life. The moment to moment experience of living, but it's actually an artwork. If you were to take a slide of a COUM performance, some of them are actually so beautiful in and of themselves that if you then made a print and framed it, it's a painting again. A flat piece of art that could only exist because of all the physical actions. The artwork is just a slice of time and space. And sometimes it can only be documented in the memory of those present. To me one of the really exciting aspects of performance work is that the full experience of it is only in the minds and the memories of those present. Even if you film it and photograph it, and do all of these technological methods of documenting it, it's not the same as being there. It's not the same as the sense of the smells, the sweat, the shuffling feet, the feeling of how big the room was, the things you were thinking about when you arrived. That's all part of the performance, an audience is all part of the performance in the way that they effect the ambience of the space. So all the things that are subjectively and secretly happening to them become integrated into the actual piece that they're watching. It's a fascinating area of boundaries. I guess these boundaries really obsess me, the line between awake and asleep, the line between alive and dead, the line between performance and daily life. Where are those lines and arbitrary are they and if you go down, down where is the moment *where one minute becomes the next on a clock? There isn't one.* Because if





you go deep enough, there isn't a moment when anything changes, and yet things change constantly. That's where I like to try and place the art, that's the home of what I try and make. It's a place that can't be measured. It only exists in that we are still alive and thinking.

**TEAR:** It's occurred to me, as a fan of Industrial music, and being born a few generations too late in the game, that the way I perceive Industrial is surely different from the way that you may have meant it 30 years ago. Is there anything, some concept that you hope would withstand time and evolution?

**GP-O:** Sometimes it concerns me that there appears to be ignorance among the younger generations as to the roots of their music. For example, in the sixties when the Rolling Stones and the Animals started trying to play blues music, they constantly say it in interviews and made it aware that that's what was inspiring them. And they were all incredibly knowledgeable about the roots of blues music and where the music of which they became a part of came from. They played music because they loved the previous blues music. They might go, "Yes I love Marilyn Manson and yes, I love Nine Inch Nails" but you'd be lucky if they remembered Ministry and Skinny Puppy. A lot of them have no idea who Throbbing Gristle were, and if you were to say to them "Well actually I actually made it industrial music" they'll go "Yeah right" I've had people actually say "Yeah sure." The getting credit bit's not what's important to me, but the bit that bothers me is that they have no interest in finding out about where the music came from. They don't realize that it did actually start at a specific time and it was an attempt by us, and then we found that there were others trying to express the same feelings, at which we were excited. We weren't threatened or felt like we were in competition, we were like, "Good, we're not crazy!" Which is very rare in musical history, there was a very particular moment of about two or three years where punk and industrial music were invented basically. Industrial particularly, because punk is kind of an offspring of rock n' roll. Industrial was a new approach altogether. Then naturally, it's kind of like Jazz, it's kind of like you'd invented the idea of Jazz. Of course there are hundreds and hundreds of ideas of what Jazz is, in the same way that there are hundreds and hundreds of ideas about what Industrial is. You can even argue that techno and other music have grown out of that; there are a lot of references to it. It seems now that music is just taken as an accessory, like a fashion accessory.

**TEAR:** That's an interesting thing I have noticed. Especially in younger generations, people almost define themselves by the music that they listen to. In a sense that shows just how significant music really is in our lives, but I mean more literally, down to the clothes that they wear and the way that they talk, that musical taste and genre is a way of life. It's all very cookie-cutter strange to me.

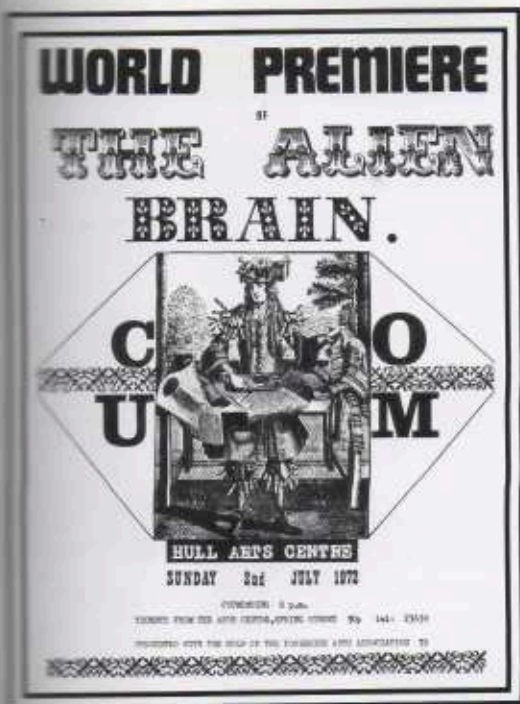
**GP-O:** It's how they look, certain slang terms that they might use, it's really quite remarkable. Somebody one day in music colleges will look at that and say Industrial music in particular is one of the few times when it's very clearly defined in terms of when it began and how it spread out. It can be traced very precisely because everyone was making CDs and records whereas with the blues music, lots of those people never got recorded and are forgotten

and lost. So I feel a bit like that, I feel like the old blues man in Louisiana who's lost all of his teeth and is sitting there playing when he's 85 years old. Somebody comes along and sort of rediscovers him. And he finds out that some big pop star's been doing one of his songs. I'll wake up one morning and someone will knock on the door and say, "Here's a royalty check for that song you wrote 50 years ago." But that bothers me, just to get back to the point, it baffles me that there seems to be so little curiosity. There seems to be no interest in genres of music and how they intertwine. People don't seem to want to be knowledgeable; they just want entertainment or distraction. Everything is very much about distraction from the moment, and less to do with background. There's no passion for what music can be in terms of expressing emotions, feelings and angst. Music and the form of the song are very much the legacy of the storyteller. The song was developed to memorize the history of the people. It was easy to remember because it had rhymes and rhythms, and that's how the people knew their story. All the history of the world was recorded through the equipment of song and poetry. Entertainment was purely secondary. Somewhere along the line, musicians had patrons that would pay them to write songs about them, just like painters were commissioned. That's what's been lost with art and painting as well. And that's a very hard job and a very responsible one. It requires integrity and a moral stance, without being judgmental and it requires incredible dedication. You have to give your life to it, it's a lifetime's work. That's not how most people today see it, they see it as entertainment and as one of the ways to break out of one's economic class and get rich. So we're losing the game, we're losing the soul of the people. We were saying earlier that culture is the soul of the people revealed, that's one of the reasons. Now we have all of these technological ways to actually "record" history, but there's a big difference between that and Shakespeare. There's something far more wonderful about that way of recording history, and there's something that's more to do with the soul, and the essence of the people that we're losing if it's just commodity.

**TEAR:** Do you think it's possible for humanity to get its soul back?

**GP-O:** The quest for the soul? There's a writer called James Hillman who is actually a Jungian psychologist, his theory is that the process of being alive is about building a soul, and that one's responsibility to oneself is to build the soul that you desire in your life. In the West, the materialism, greed and the selfishness that is so rampant, so all pervading as near as I've ever seen it to a time of true godlessness. In a way when you imagine the fundamentalists in the Middle East, the America that they see is the America of Hollywood and magazines, and who wouldn't think it was a godless, soulless and violently selfish place? The representation that is projected and transmitted out to the rest of the world is some kind of ultimate society. It's a given that on all the TV programs from all levels of society, even the so-called radicals, take it as a given that America is the best country in the world. Everybody would love to be somewhere like America. We might have our problems, but ultimately the idea of America is this fabulous thing. But actually if the culture is the reflection of the soul of the people then we have a really huge problem here. And it's not that it's an American problem so much as it's America being so deeply entrenched in mass-media, it reveals more quickly and it amplifies itself





For more information about New York City based artist and writer Carol Tessitore visit her at: [www.caroltessitore.com](http://www.caroltessitore.com).



Ink drawing, 1968.

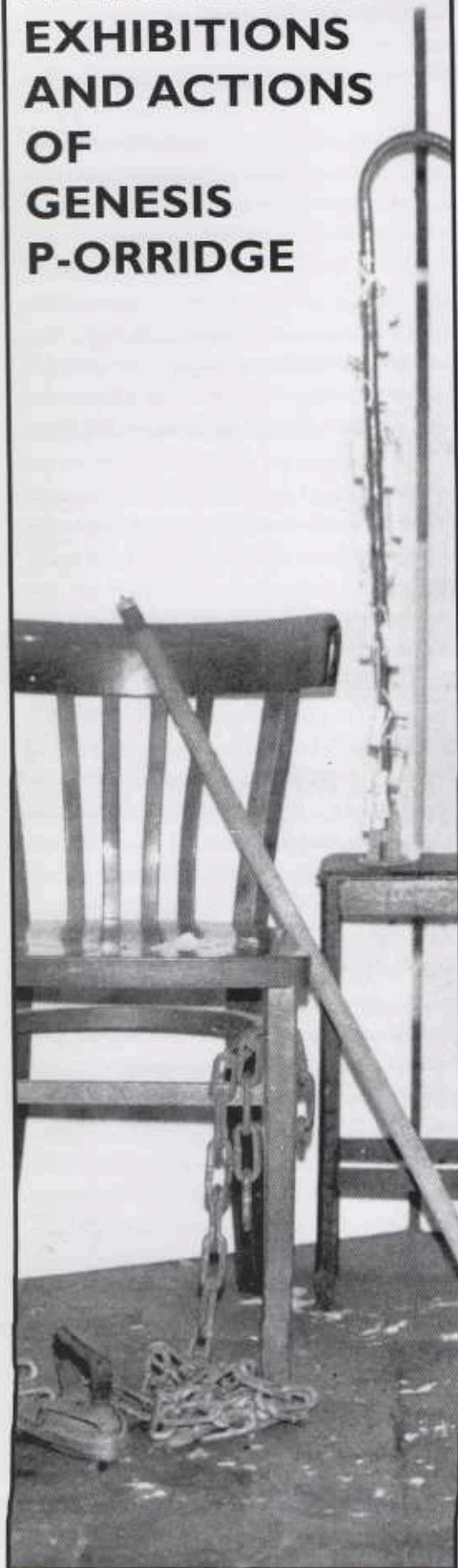
much more because it controls so much. It's all summed up in things like *The Real World*, and *Behind the Music*. We were talking before about privacy, and all of these people have their life on camera, they reveal everything about their life, but with very little thought, there's not much thoughtfulness, everyone seems to take for granted that the media are innately beneficial.

**TEAR:** They take it for granted that I am going to be interested in watching somebody else think, instead of trying to actually think myself, why would that be interesting to anyone?

**GP-O:** It's as if people want to exist by proxy. They've gotten more and more lazy and inert and now it's as if we never even have to exist, cause other people will exist for them on television. What seems to be happening is that people are abdicating the responsibility of living. Because living is about thinking and building a soul. Perhaps that's another thing that has to do with Genesis as a mirror, Genesis is the epitome of wanting to build a creative soul, wanting to think, and what I believe living is for. And it can be done, you can live a creative life, you can survive by being an artist and you can take risks or disagree with the status quo. And it's OK, it's fun and interesting and exciting to live a creative life. What reality television implies about the psychology of the society is yet to be realized. I imagine if people look back, the impact of reality television in terms of it being a metaphor of the state of mind of the people would be pretty disturbing. The overriding desire of the people in American culture seems to be that they will say, do and be anything to be on a television screen for even a split second. For many people the ultimate achievement in life would be to be on television for a minute. That's a profound indictment of the sterility of the Western cultural vision. How we reclaim the quest for the Holy Grail, which is obviously wisdom and knowledge, through wisdom we can actually step through time and space and be other than trapped in a body and other than trapped in the idea of mortality. All I know is that the only language I know for dealing with the problem and for exploring how to reinvest love into existence is creativity. I do believe that the time has come for people to shed their defenses and shed all the camouflage that they have quite rightly have learned to use since they were small. And to reveal who they really are for better or worse. The courage of exposing that you believe in something other than greed, it seems that that's the only path that you can take, partly why the book is called *Painful but Fabulous*. I think that we don't have the luxury of doing that slowly. We have to really accelerate the process by giving ourselves up to the possibility of being sacrificed to the Great Spirit. And that's what art is for. The artist is the holy fool, but is prepared to sacrifice themselves in order to save those that they love, which ultimately can't be limited to just those that you know. You have to ultimately have compassion for the world through the work that you do.

First published in **TEAR** magazine, Summer, 2002.  
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# SELECTED ART EXHIBITIONS AND ACTIONS OF GENESIS P-ORRIDGE



## 1968

1 June. Beautiful Litter, Mell Square, Solihull.

## 1969

June-November P-Orridge performs Kinetic Actions with EXPLODING GALAXY at Hull University. Joins the group. During this period its name is changed to Transmedia Exploration.

19 November. "2001" P-Orridge performs for the last time with Transmedia Exploration in Liverpool.

November 23 COUM Transmissions is received in a trance state in a car whilst P-Orridge is visiting with his parents in Shrewsbury. Word COUM first appears in notebooks and "received" drawings that day.

Three Fabulous Mutations, St Peter's, Anlaby, Hull. COUM sonic performance (Genesis P-Orridge/John Shapeero) as part of an improvisational Hull "super-group".

Space Between the Violins, COUM (Genesis/John Shapeero) at Phase Two Club, Hayward Arms, Hull.

Dead Violins and Degradation, COUM (Genesis/John Shapeero) at The Round, Hull University.

## 1970

Whiplash Girichild, COUM music action (Ian Evetts/Tim Poston/Ray Harvey/Genesis P-Orridge/Haydn Robb) at Hesse Church Hall, Hull.

Autumn. Blue Suede Mud, COUM music action (same line-up as above without Tim Poston) at Bluebell Inn, Hull.

Winter. 99 United Sacks, COUM music action (same line-up) at Albert's Jazz Club, Hull.

Winter. Broken Equipment, COUM music action (same line-up) at Bizarre Society, Hull University Union.

## 1971

5 January 1971. Neil Andrew Megson changes his name by deed poll to Genesis P-Orridge.

10 January. Disintegration of Fact, COUM music action at Granny's Parlour Folk Club, Royal Oak Pub, Hull.

18 April. "ON CUE," COUM music action studio session for hosted by Bob Edmands and Jim Hawkins, BBC Radio Humberside, Hull.

Spring. Riot Control, COUM music action at Gondola Club, Hull.

21 August. Fairyland Powder Puffs, COUM performance art and music action at Brickhouse, Hull.

September. Caves of Montalban, COUM performance art and music action at Hull Arts Centre. Cosmosis appears in COUM first time.

22 October. Edna and the Great Surfers, COUM music action supporting Hawkwind at St. George's Hall, Bradford.

December. Exorcism of Shit, COUM music action at Afro Club, Bradford.

## 1972

January. Harmony Farm, COUM (Genesis P-Orridge/Tim Poston/Nicholas Bramble) action at Gay Lib Street Theatre, Portobello Road, London. Gen re-encounters Derek Jarman from Exploding Galaxy days.

January. Infra Red Bucket, COUM performance art and music action at Hull Arts Centre, Hull. March. This Machine Kills Music, COUM music action at New Grange Club, Hull.

21 April. Copyright Breaches, COUM performance art at University of Kent, Canterbury.

May. Prison Sell, COUM performance art in streets of Hull for RAP (Prisoners Rights Group)

May. Festival of Night, COUM performance art action at Ferens Art Gallery, Hull.

June. Wagon Train, pram sculpture used by Genesis P-Orridge and COUM in performance actions in the streets of Hull.

2 July. Mass Panic and Thee Alien Brain, COUM performance art action at Hull Arts Centre, for Yorkshire Arts Association.

August. Spartacus Defused, COUM performance art action at Bradford Arts Festival, Bradford.

October. "Postal Exhibition," P-Orridge mail art exhibited at Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham. Group show.

13 November-3 December. "Kingston-coum-Hull" Hull Arts Centre. Conceptual art exhibition by P-Orridge.

## 1973

6 January. "Ministry of Antisocial Insecurity," COUM performance art action at Ferens Art Gallery, for Yorkshire Arts Association.

January. "Yorkshire Artists' Collection," Fanfare for Europe, Hull Arts Centre. COUM performance art action as part of group show.

7 January. "The Winston Spencer Churchill" (Performance Art Supergroup). COUM music action art of Fanfare for Europe, presented in collaboration with Phase Two, Hull Arts Centre.

January. "Baby Competition," (also known as Baby of Europe) COUM performance action at Lijnbaan, Rotterdam, Holland, for Fanfare for Europe.

January. "Colliche Postage," COUM performance action at De Lantaren, Rotterdam, Holland, for Fanfare for Europe.

January. "Infantile Launching," P-Orridge launches L'Ecole De L'Art Infantile mail art conceptual group at Ferens Art Gallery, Hull.

January-February. "Hors Language," P-Orridge mail art at Theatre de Nice, France. Group show.

February-March. "Winter Exhibition," Ferens Art Gallery, Hull. Group show. P-Orridge exhibits his sculpture "Wagon Train."

- February. "Genesis P-Orridge, infantile," interview by Barry Chambers for "Look North", Nationwide, BBC 1, filmed in the Ferens Art Gallery, Hull.
- February. "Glass with Care," P-Orridge exhibits photo work of being refused entry to Ferens Art Gallery in "ALIEN BRAIN" costume at Ferens Art Gallery, Hull.
- 18-21 February. "Ministry of Anti Social Insecurity and Colliche," COUM performance actions at Swansea University Arts Festival.
- 18-21 February. "Shoe String," P-Orridge mail art at Swansea University, Group show.
- Spring. "Hygiene de l'art," P-Orridge mail art in Galerie in Paris, France. Group show.
- Spring. "French Letters," P-Orridge mail art in Transcanadada Projectoires, Musée de l'art moderne, Paris, France. Group show.
- March. "Art Journals of the World," P-Orridge mail art in Augenladen Galerie, Mannheim, Germany. Group show.
- March. "The Biggles Saga," COUM performance art action for Theatre Department at Bretton Hall College of Education, Wakefield.
- 29 March. "Copy Dementaria," COUM performance art actions with KIPPER KIDS and Robin Klassnik at Open Theatre Festival, Louvain, Ghent, Belgium.
- 30 March. "The Revolutionary Spirit," COUM with Kipper Kids and Robin Klassnik at Louvain University, Ghent, Belgium.
- 30 March. "Sawing Our Lady In Half", COUM performance Art action with the Kipper Kids and Robin Klassnik at Louvain University, Ghent, Belgium.
- April. "Litter Art Show," P-Orridge mail art exhibited in New Jersey and tour of USA. Group show.
- April. "Art Journals of the World," P-Orridge mail art at Produzengalerie, West Berlin. Group show.
- April. COUM receives an "Experimental Arts" award from the Arts Council of Great Britain.
- Summer. "Mix Exhibition," P-Orridge mail art at University of Saskatchewan, Canada, exhibition later toured the USA. Group show.
- 1 May. "Baby's Coumpetition," P-Orridge and Robin Klassnik as L'Ecole de L'Art Infantile at the May Festival, Oxford University.
- May. "Thee Marriage of Fizzy Paet and Tremble," COUM performance art action at Manchester Arts Festival. Commissioned and filmed by Granada Television.
- 16 June. "Snail Trail," Genesis P-Orridge confronts police in plastic tube, first of many legal encounters, as part of "Fluxshoe," Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham. COUM performance art actions and mail art are permanent part of this travelling Fluxus Group show. "Decompositions," P-Orridge "Mobile Diary" and other flux sculptures are part of "Fluxshoe," Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham. Group show.
- Late June. "Art Decadent," COUM lecture by P-Orridge as Visiting artist at Reading University Art Department.
- 7 July. "Stick Em Up" P-Orridge performs solo art action at the Surrey University Arts Festival, Guildford.
- 12 July. "Landscape Painting," solo P-Orridge COUM performance art action at Bull Ring shopping centre, Birmingham.
- 6-21 July. "Terribull Twin," COUM performance art action as part of "Fluxshoe." P-Orridge "Approximately 4000 Holes In Blackburn Lancashire" flux book for Yoko Ono and P-Orridge and Tutti mail art fluxpiece, "Black Mail" at Blackburn Art Gallery, Lancashire. FLUXSHOE Group show.
- July. "Everything is Nothing" COUM performance art action at Stepney El Festival, London.
- 20-21 August. "Landscape Painting," COUM performance action as part of "Fluxshoe," Victor Musgrave Gallery and Beach, Hastings, Sussex. Group show.
- August. "Art Vandals," Genesis P-Orridge and Joseph L.R. Rose at Edinburgh Festival, Demarco Gallery, Scotland.
- Late September. "Framed," COUM street art action in collaboration with Action Attitude from France on Portobello Road, London.
- October. "Flag Show," "COUM Cosmic Seed" design received in P-Orridge visions in 1969 made into a flag by P-Orridge and Tutti for Midland Group Galleries, Nottingham. Group show.
- October. "Information Dispersa," P-Orridge mail art in group show organised by WORKS in Calgary, Canada.
- November. "Action/Attitude," P-Orridge mail art in Orleans, France. Group show.
- December. "Thee Lump E Found on the Pavement," COUM street art action at City University Students' Union, London.
- December. "Parties Overt," COUM performance art action and music action at Oval House Theatre, London.
- December. "Kitschmas 73," P-Orridge mail art at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham. Group show.
- December. "Perspex Boxes," P-Orridge mail art using dead animals, used tampons and maggots at National Library, Vancouver, Canada. Group show curated by The Western Front.
- December. "Postcards," P-Orridge mail art at Mostly Flowers Gallery, San Francisco, California, USA. Group show.

## 1974

- 24 January. Marcel Duchamp's Next Work (a.k.a. Marcel Duchamp's Next W.O.R.K.S), COUM and WORKS at the 4th International Festival of Electronic Music and Mixed Media, Zwarte Zaal, Ghent, Belgium. In collaboration with Paul Woodrow of W.O.R.K.S. from Calgary.
- 26 January. Marcel Duchamp's Next Work, COUM music action (with Paul Woodrow) Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium.
- January. "Return to Sender," P-Orridge mail art at Galleria Schema, Florence, Italy. Group show.
- January. "Hygiene de l'art," P-Orridge mail art at Galerie La Bertessa, Geneva, Switzerland. Group show that toured Europe and North America.
- January. "Artists' Rubber Stamps," P-Orridge mail art at Ecart Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland. Group show.
- January. "Rubber Stamps" at the Institut de l'environnement, Paris, France. P-Orridge mail art in group show that toured Europe, North and South America.
- January. "Postal Project 74," P-Orridge mail art at La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Group show.
- January. "Creative Postcard Show," P-Orridge mail art at Montivideo, Uruguay. Group show.
- January. "SLUJ International," P-Orridge mail art at Colby Junior College, New London, New Hampshire, USA. Group show.
- February. Spaghetti Junction, Clapham Junction and Hackney, London. A monthly series of meals as transgender performance art with the Art and Artists editor Colin Naylor.
- February. Miners' Catastrophe, COUM performance art action at Roundhouse, London.
- February. "Mail Art," P-Orridge mail art at West Illinois University, Illinois, USA. Group show.
- March. "Couming of Age," COUM performance art action at Oval House Theatre, London.
- Week of 27 April. COUM receives £750 as first half of Arts Council of Great Britain grant.
- April. "Robin Klassnik," including P-Orridge mail art postcards at Galerie Dois, Porto, Portugal (32 recycled cards). Group show.
- 30 April. "Alien Rocks (a.k.a. Cabaret and Alien Porno Rock)," COUM music action at HOWFF Theatre Club, London.
- 18 June. "Orange and Blue," COUM at Art Meeting Place, London.
- June "Signals," COUM at Art Meeting Place, London.
- July. "Orange and Blue," COUM performance art action at Manzoni Gardens, Birmingham. Police were called to investigate public nudity but the crowd was so large they could not take action.
- July "COUMMusic Action," COUM at London Film-makers' Co-op.

- 4 August. "Airbourne Spells, Landborn Smells," P-Orridge and Fizzey Paet special COUM performance action together at Brook Green, London. Police were called to investigate "indecent" behaviour. No action taken.
- 15 August. "4 Hours Music Action (a.k.a. Throbbing Gristle)," TG very first arises with its own name from COUM music actions at Art Meeting Place, London.
- 7 September. "Dead Babies, Wet Rabies," COUM street actions at Hat Fair, Covent Garden, London.
- 14 September. "Schlimm," COUM at Stadfest, Rottweil, Germany. COUM "Cosmic Seed" flag also exhibited. P-Orridge first meets Bridget Riley, op-artist and they become friends.
- 15 September. "All that Glitters is not Kunst," COUM at Stadfest, Rottweil, Germany.
- October. COUM receives second half of grant from Arts Council of Great Britain, £750.
- 1 October. "Music for Stocking Top, Swing and Staircase," COUM performance art action as art history lecture at Gulbenkian Hall, Royal College of Art, London.
- October "Opportunity Knocks," COUM performance art action at International Art Centre, London.
- October "Time Transfixed," P-Orridge solo performance art action in shop window solo action as COUM at Academy of Art, Liverpool.
- 31 October. "Birth of Liquid Desires," COUM performance art action and installation at Goldsmith's College of Art, London.
- November. "Gainsborough's Blue Movie Boy," COUM performance art action at Art Meeting Place, London. David Medalla who founded the Exploding Galaxy is there.
- 28 November. "Filth," COUM performance art action at Art Meeting Place, London. Part of an hypersensualist party organised by COUM.
- 5, 6, 7, 8 December. "Coum Music," COUM music action (with Tom Puckey and Kerry Trengove) at Oval House Theatre, London.
- 13 December. "Universal Man in Forty-five Tasks," P-Orridge performs solo in work by Rose Garrard at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, opening of the exhibition "Bodybox," 14 December-26 January 1975.
- December "Marcel Duchamp's Next Work," COUM music action performed and recorded at Battersea Town Hall, London.

## 1975

- January "Pictorial History of the World," P-Orridge mail art at Kansas City Art Institute, Missouri, USA. Group show.
- January. "Portrait of Robin Crozier," P-Orridge in mail art group show at Sunderland Art Centre, England.
- 3 February. P-Orridge starts his editorial job for CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS dictionary, with Colin Naylor, of "Spaghetti Junction" notoriety, at St. James's Press, London.
- January/February "Museum of Information," COUM photo documentation of actions at New Reform Gallery, Aalst, Belgium. Group show.
- 15 February. "Omissions," COUM performance art action at New Reform Gallery, Aalst, Belgium.
- 17 February. "Omissions," COUM performance art action at KK Centrum, Antwerp, Belgium.
- 18 February. "Jusqu'à la balle Crystal," COUM performance art action as part of "Theorie, Informatie, Praktijk" (with Joseph Beuys; Albrecht D. and others) at Stedelijk Academy, Ghent, Belgium. Group Show.
- February. "L'école de l'art infantile," P-Orridge mail art in New Reform Gallery, Aalst, Belgium. Group show.
- February "Postal Art," P-Orridge mail art at KAA Gallery, Toronto, Canada. Group show.
- February "Postcard Show," P-Orridge mail art at Reflection Press Gallery, Stuttgart, Germany. Group show curated by Albrecht D.
- February "Book Art," P-Orridge Fluxshoe book "COPYRIGHT BREECHES" (Beau Geste Press) and other hand made mail art books in British Council show, toured Germany. Group show.
- March "A Discourse on the Demise of British Performance Art Today," COUM performance art action at Oval House Theatre, London. COUM meet Sleazy Christopherson.
- 27-30 March. "Couming of Youth," COUM performance art action at Melkweg, Theater Zaal, Amsterdam, Holland. This is the first work to include Sleazy Christopherson.
- 5 May. "Coumdensation Mucus," COUM performance art lecture action at Royal College of Art, London.
- 6 June. "Bollocks In Thee Breeze," COUM performance art action at Art Meeting Place, London.
- 21-28 June. "Omissions," COUM performance art action at Kulturamt, Kiel, Germany. As part of group show and childrens street theatre festival, "Kielnie Spielinie"
- July. "Studio of Lust (a.k.a. Sex une bonne idée)," COUM performance art action with P-Orridge/Tutti/Christopherson at Nuffield Gallery, Southampton.
- 23 August. "Whip It Out, Wrap It Up, Stick It In," listed as a COUM performance art action at Hat Fair, Winchester, England.
- 3 September. Official date of the formation of Throbbing Gristle.
- 18 September. "Jusqu'à la balle Crystal," COUM performance art actions and installation (featuring P-Orridge sculpture "WOMB" containing used tampons and maggots) at the 9th Paris Biennale, Musée d'art moderne, Paris, France.
- 26 September. SPACE open day. COUM exhibit photo documentation of performances.
- September/October. "Art Information Center," Vleeshal, Middelburg, Netherlands. P-Orridge mail art in group show curated by Peter van Beveren.
- October. COUM receive £900, the first half of a grant from the Arts Council of Great Britain.
- October "Video Encounter," COUM performance action video works included at Galleria Circa d'arte Moderna, Ferrara, Italy (toured Europe and South America). Group show.
- October/November n "1st International Postcard Show," P-Orridge mail art at Loeb Centre, New York, USA. Group show.
- 21 November. P-Orridge interviewed by the Post Office Investigation Division police and charged with sending "indecent" mail, ie. erotically altered souvenir postcards of the Queen.

## 1976

- 21 January. "Rectum as Inner Space," COUM performance art action at Architectural Association, London, as part of the 'Real Space Conference' (with Daniel Buren, Germano Celant and others). Group Show.
- 17 February. "Death of Liquid Desires (a.k.a. Death of Liquid)," P-Orridge solo action as COUM at Hatfield Polytechnic.
- 24, 25 February. "Towards Thee Crystal Bowl," part of "Arte Inglese Oggi 1960-76," exhibition held at the Palazzo Reale, Milan. COUM's performances take place in the central octagon of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. Performance art Group Show with Gilbert and George, Stuart Brisley.
- 25 February. "Maid on a Bed of Lies," invitation only COUM performance art action at Galleria Borgona, Milan.
- 5 April. "G.P.O. v G. P.-O.," prosecution of P-Orridge for "indecent collaged Queen postcards" (see page 190 of this book) Highbury Corner Magistrates Court, London.
- October. "Photos of Actions 1973-1976," COUM exhibition of performance art photos at Galeria Akumulatory 2 (SZSP), Poznan, ul. Zwierzyniecka 7., Poland.
- 18-26 October. "PROSTITUTION," COUM retrospective exhibition of press cuttings; objects made for actions; costumes; sculptures; Tutti's appearances in porno magazines and P-Orridge's "TAMPAX ROMANA" series of used tampon sculptures. TG play at opening party of "Prostitution," ICA, London. Supported by LSD. (a.k.a. Chelsea). Massive media frenzy and scandal ensues. Questions in Parliament. More police visit.
- November. "Cease to Exist no. 1," COUM performance art action at Marianne Deson Gallery, Chicago, USA. Curated by Kit Schwartz.



November. "Cease to Exist nos. 2 and 3," COUM performance art action at NAME Gallery, Chicago, USA.

Tuesday 23 November. "Cease to Exist no. 4", COUM performance art action at LAICA, Los Angeles, USA.

24 November. "Cease to Exist no. 5," COUM at IDEA Gallery, Santa Monica, California, USA. Also performances at the Gulf Museum, Portland, Oregon, USA, and the Great Building Crack-Up Gallery, New York, USA.

November. "Nazi Love and Gary Gilmore Memorial Society," COUM photo action. Tutti, P-Orridge and Monte Cazazza at Shattock Studio, Berkeley, USA. P-Orridge later turns the pictures into postcards, and T-Shirts for BOY. The police investigate again. More media scandal.

December. "'After Cease to Exist," COUM performance action at Goldsmith's College, London.

December. 'COUM', Reflection Press Gallery, Stuttgart, Germany. COUM documentation and P-Orridge mail art in exhibition curated by Albrecht D.

December "Paper and pencil," P-Orridge mail art at Museum of Modern Art, Bogota, Colombia. Group show.

December "Last Correspondence Show," P-Orridge mail art at California State University, Sacramento, USA. Group show.

## 1977

March. "Gary Gilmore Memorial Society," COUM postcard designed by Tutti, Cazazza and P-Orridge and T-shirt of same image sold at BOY from opening day. Shop designed and named by Peter Christopherson. His window displays are seized by the police and end up in the "Black Museum". T-Shirts cause scandal in press, "Sickly P-Orridge."

9 July. "Genetic Fear," COUM performance action at ACME Gallery, London.

October "Image Bank Postcard Show," COUM contribute postcard featuring picture from "Rectum As Inner Space" action.

## 1978

11-25 January. "COUM," exhibition of photos of actions at Galerie St. Petri Archive of Experimental and Marginal Art, Lund, Sweden.

21 April-17 May. "COUM Transmissions: Scenes of Victory 1973-77," Atelier Milchstrasse, Freiburg, Germany. Exhibition of P-Orridge's queen postcard mail-art collages and COUM photo documentation.

May. "Scenes of Victory," Antwerp University, Belgium. Last solo COUM performance action by P-Orridge. So physically demanding intense he becomes seriously ill after contracting blood poisoning.

## 1979

August. "Hayward Annual 1979" P-Orridge exhibits three books of mail art and correspondence by Skot Armst, Monte Cazazza, and Al Ackerman. Group show, London.

## 1980-1994

Genesis P-Orridge works full time as vocalist and musician in Throbbing Gristle, and later Psychic TV. He continued to make new art, sigils and collages in private.

## 1994

January "Genesis P-Orridge ESOTERRORIST-Retrospective," lifetime's overview of sigils, collages, photo documentation with a lecture at RITA DEAN. Gallery, Dan Diego, U.S.A.

## 1995

July "GENESIS P-ORRIDGE-WORKS," new expanded polaroids and collages at SERFOZO Artadventures, Zurich, Switzerland.

## 1998

December "@ MOMENTA," new collage using expanded polaroids, "Flowers" show at MOMENTA Art, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

## 1999

June "Sigils and Expanded Polaroids," new works at CLAYTON Gallery, New York City, U.S.A.

June "The Second Annual Portrait Show," new transgender collages and expanded polaroids by P-Orridge at JORGENSON Gallery, New York City, U.S.A. Group Show.

April "FROM A TO B (AND BACK AGAIN)," photographs of "Snail trail" Fluxshoe action by P-Orridge at ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART Galleries, London, England. Group Show.

## 2000

December "Death Race 2000," new works "Tongue Kiss" sculpture of wolves by P-Orridge and "DNA" collage shown by P-Orridge at THREAD WAXING SPACE, Broadway, New York, U.S.A. Group Show.

July "Team Gallery Group Show," new sculpture with Eric Heist shown at TEAM Gallery, Chelsea, New York City, U.S.A. Group Show.

June "OVERCOAT EXHIBITION ACTION," new sonic piece and sigil collage shown in Berlin, Hamburg, Hanover, New York City. Touring exhibition inside Jesse Bercowetz's actual overcoat. Group Show.

June "VOLUME ... P.S.1," new sound piece "THEE HOWLER" installed at PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York City, U.S.A. Group Show.

April "From Scratch," new sculpture (with Eric Heist) at Fashion Institute Of Technology, New York City, U.S.A. Group show.

February "Live In Your Head," documentation of COUM actions, at WHITECHAPEL Art Gallery, London., Group Show.

## 2001

February "CANDY FACTORY" (with Eric Heist), sugar paintings, sculptures, expanded polaroids and multiples at TEAM Gallery, Chelsea, New York City, U.S.A.

April "CANDY FACTORY" (as above with Eric Heist), at Centre Of Attention, London, England.

June "EXPANDED PHOTOGRAPHS 1970-2001," sigils, collages, sculptures, and expanded polaroids at ECART Gallery, Art 32 Basel, Sweizer Mustermesse, Basel, Switzerland.


June "THE LP SHOW," graphic design for albums shown at EXIT ART Gallery, Broadway, New York, U.S.A. Touring Group Show.

## 2002

February "EXPANDED PHOTOGRAPHS," new works, sculptures, expanded polaroids, sigils (collaborating with Miss Jackie Breyer P-Orridge) at Kunsterhaus Mousonturm, Waldschmidtstrasse 4, Frankfurt, Germany.

February "CANDY FACTORY," new sculpture (with Eric Heist), Hunter College New York, USA. Alumni Group Show





TO BE EX-DREAM -  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOURCES OF COUM  
ACTIONS  
GENESIS  
P-ORRIDGE

I. Most COUM Transmissions originated in dreams. Daydreams, sleep dreams, and sometimes spontaneous trance-like fantasies or dream extrapolations. I fervently believed COUM Transmissions actions should all ways strive to be completely arbitrary, whilst maintaining their original dream characteristic: to be an improvised primal exploration; a self-confrontational outpouring; an intersection of taboo; and a spontaneous physical, emotional, and later on sexual, manifestation teetering on the very edge of instructional disintegration and absurd meaninglessness.

So it was, that the declared policy during all COUM Transmissions actions in the years 1969-76 was to refuse to arrange any planned, formal or in any manner preconsidered documentation that could function to compromise the "source dream" that so often inspired the actions. Our intention was to thereby engineer a unique and highly deliberated, pro-subjective, experiential exchange, integrated with an equally pro-subjective, "sight-specific," perceptual exchange, between "transmediator" and viewer.

What I personally really wished to do was to reach and decontrol the "object of desire," in at least this one of its many potential senses, by the tradition of gratuitous documentary diffusion.

This was primarily achieved in terms of the post-action long time frame; that is, in the photographic traces remaining after the event that had been created by this conscious strategy of universal inclusivity of participation in the active medium of "memory" by those we can literally label "passers-b/eye".

I imagined, that by means of this expansive application of what might easily be defined as another aspect of random chance, a certain fundamental sacrilege of the two-dimensional medium would ensue; so powerfully charged by a raw celebration of the inexpert that it would engulf, violate and evade the previous object commodification process within the existing art world and the entrenched and tyrannizing art gallery system.

This approach seemed, at the time, to be in immediate and positive contradiction to the then fashionable "art market" norm and its implicit creative dilemma of concretion, coupled incestuously with its co-conspirator, formularisation. Furthermore, I wished to completely degrade and subvert

at its source the innate, and appallingly inevitable, hierarchy and the self-proclaimed expertise, of opinionated and talentless critics; smug and profiteering dealers; and their self-serving participation in matters of "Art," by directly confronting and circumventing what I saw as an obsolete over emphasis on that contrived and mundane banality grossly labeled "art historical context"!

Any project at that time that was inclusive of organised perfect photos, predictable serial documentation and limited edition prints that were created to be saleable in and of themselves had absolutely no place in our purist perceptual scheme of things. Indeed, I for one was convinced that they would be intrusive hindrances and distractions from the desired goal of absolutely no separation between the intuitive metaphors created in time and space by the performers and the nervous systems and senses of those observing. We were developing a new, spontaneous and magical, universal language too delicate to survive establishment contrivance.

The fact that Coum Transmissions were consistently perceived as authentic, instead of merely emptily posturing to suit the current mode of generating vacuous neo-credibility like most of our contemporaries, was both a discriminating conceit, and a conscious but elegant friction, within and without the established critical mores of that particular epoch.

Many artists colonising the idea of '70s "performance art" and its declared concerns with investigations of "life-as-art" and "body-as-art" made the appropriate specious loud noises; publicly protesting that the unfolding in real time of their action or performance in and of itself was clearly for them the work in its entirety. (They still do!) Privately however, they brazenly revealed their all-pervading hypocrisy and old-fashioned "artworld" careerism. Over and over again suffering a concealed, pitiful, aesthetic anguish as they laboriously choreographed their "performances" in collaboration with highly paid art photographers in order to give themselves the best possible photo-documentation.

Such counterfeit "art performances," "actions," "happenings" and spectacles were trumpeted with great polemic and pompousness by their perpetrators in journals and catalogues as contemporary avant-garde evolutions. Then they were validated based upon the assertion that they were ideologically divorced from, and devoid of any respect or regard for, any relationship with "art world" capitalism.

Ah yes! this was "art" irrevocably freed at last of absolutely any vestigial consideration whatsoever, implicit or otherwise, of commercial commodification.

Thus, then, was this transient, but fashionable, stance of self-serving denial actually seized upon quite ruthlessly as yet another





shamelessly self-promoting and success oriented opportunity for the promulgation of expensive, museum directed collectibles. And with it came a synthetic alliance of "nihilist" artists with trendy collaborating photographers, ensuring very commercial series of beautiful photo prints and graphic editions for their dealers; cropped and stylish promotional illustrations for prestigious magazines and catalogues (later on this would grow to include seminal books, texts and indispensable critical appreciations). Even formal, retrospective, gallery exhibitions of the highly prized and highly priced photos themselves as conceptually validated artworks in themselves became an established and establishment signal of co-option that continues to this day in direct contradiction to any original, albeit fabricated, intent.

All this Astorical preamble is essential to a deeper appreciation of the unique integrity of the original sources of the pictures contained within this book; of the importance of the seminal process which they implicitly represent; and of the ironic retrospective commentary which they now invoke. This approach could perhaps be defined most completely as a new medium of "Nostalgic Precision."

All the photographs in this book of COUM Transmissions actions were taken by strangers who chose for themselves what moments; what images; what details; even what traces remaining afterwards to record. This they did for their own arbitrary reasons regardless of any personal expectation by COUM as to what might have been significant in terms of their aesthetic progress. COUM might think a particular image created was unique and intensely graphic later to discover it had been ignored or overlooked by the passers-by that happened to take photographs.

So it was completely unknown people, who happened to have cameras with them by chance or by independent choice, who were the first means of refusing control over what was recorded.

Then, of this already small group of people, it was only those who, of their own volition, happened to take the time to find out for themselves the COUM mailing address somehow and then actually bother to expend the time, trouble and expense of actually sending their pictures to COUM who became the second means of refusal of control over what was recorded.

Allowing this arbitrary interaction to choose the material of the means of perception was, and probably still is, unique.

I think it is ex-dreamly important to constantly remember that all the photographs contained in this book were originally sent in the post by person or persons unknown. By the "Passer-B/eye."

Upon receipt of these occasional unsolicited reminiscences, a period of assimilation by my SELF of the materials donated would ensue. Often they would be pinned on the wall near my desk, and near my bed so that they were eventually burned into my retina and memory by repetitious viewing and peripheral viewing until they would, once more, enter the content of my sleeping, waking, and other dreams. After due contemplation and familiarisation a concomitant technique of laborious excision of detail from the initial photographs would ensue.

This "ex-cising" might take the form of re-photographing the received prints, or specific significant sections of them, in my own darkroom in a converted kitchen within my home. It might take the form of collaging various elements, exploring telling collisions and shockingly remarkable, undreamed of, intersections.

This re-manufacturing of graphic images of "time-transfixed," of "frozen moments," I perceived as a concurrent epilogue to the original action. The effect being very much like re-visiting an hallucinatory dream whilst possessed of an ability to make the very matter of that dream malleable and re-definable.

This epilogue stage of an action in turn allowed me to "fix" both chemically in the tray, and visually in the refined content of the resultant photographic image, the distilled essence of my original intention, or "dream," as it had become clear through this retrospective act of illumination.

Through everything transmission and reception governed both the private source, dreams, that became actions; the actions themselves as they unraveled in public; and the accumulation of the documentary epilogue of both.

In all three of these stages I found my role far more mediumistic, therefore, than artistic or intellectual. I was clearly far more a vessel for manifestation.

I had become a mediator between "dream" and a more and more disheveled construct of consensus compromise, commonly mislabeled "reality."

Even if a COUM action was transmitted by one biological male, in description it might often refer to both a male aspect and a female aspect. As in many COUM actions this "shadow female" is always present as an equal and complimentary aspect of the transmediator. Countimes my SELF would literally slip back and forth between both persona's using costume and body language as signals of this hermaphroditic process. Countimes a second transmediator, a biological female, would simultaneously explore the "shadow female." The "shadow male" would become apparently solid when activated and, in a sense, thereby was perceived intellectually by



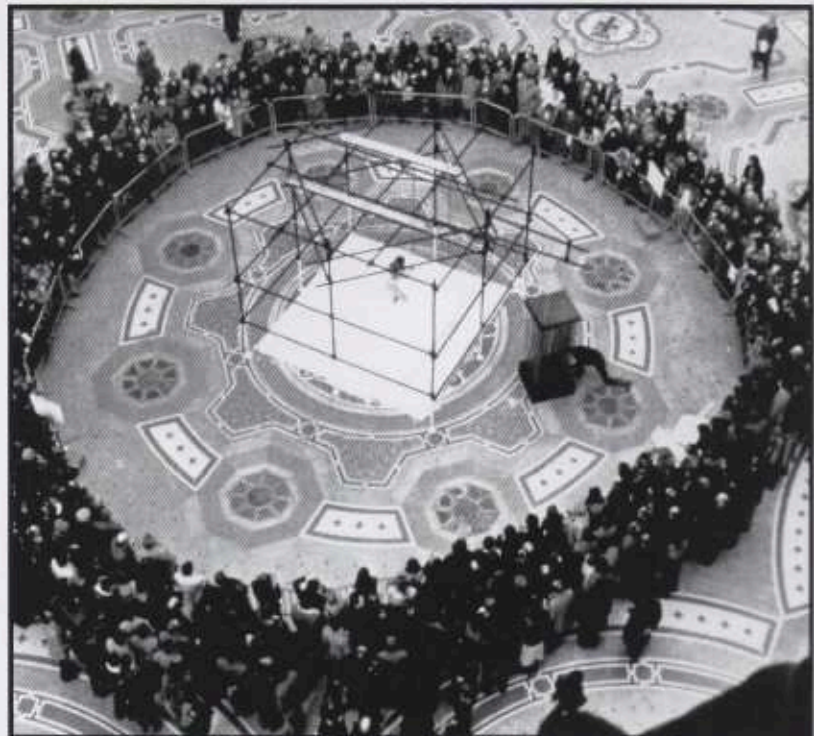


thee viewer as a physical "reality." In thee same way, if my SELF switched over to thee "shadow female" persona, this activation too would assume an apparent corporeality. Both are all ways present at all times. Thee aspiration or goal would be an hermaphroditic ascendancy. This mutation would seem to be more and more clearly inevitable and absolutely necessary as thee point ov retrospective perception is more clearly defined and localised.

Dear reader: Please be aware that all stories, descriptions, and propositions contained within this book are parables and metaphors. After all, none of this could possibly be true, could it ?

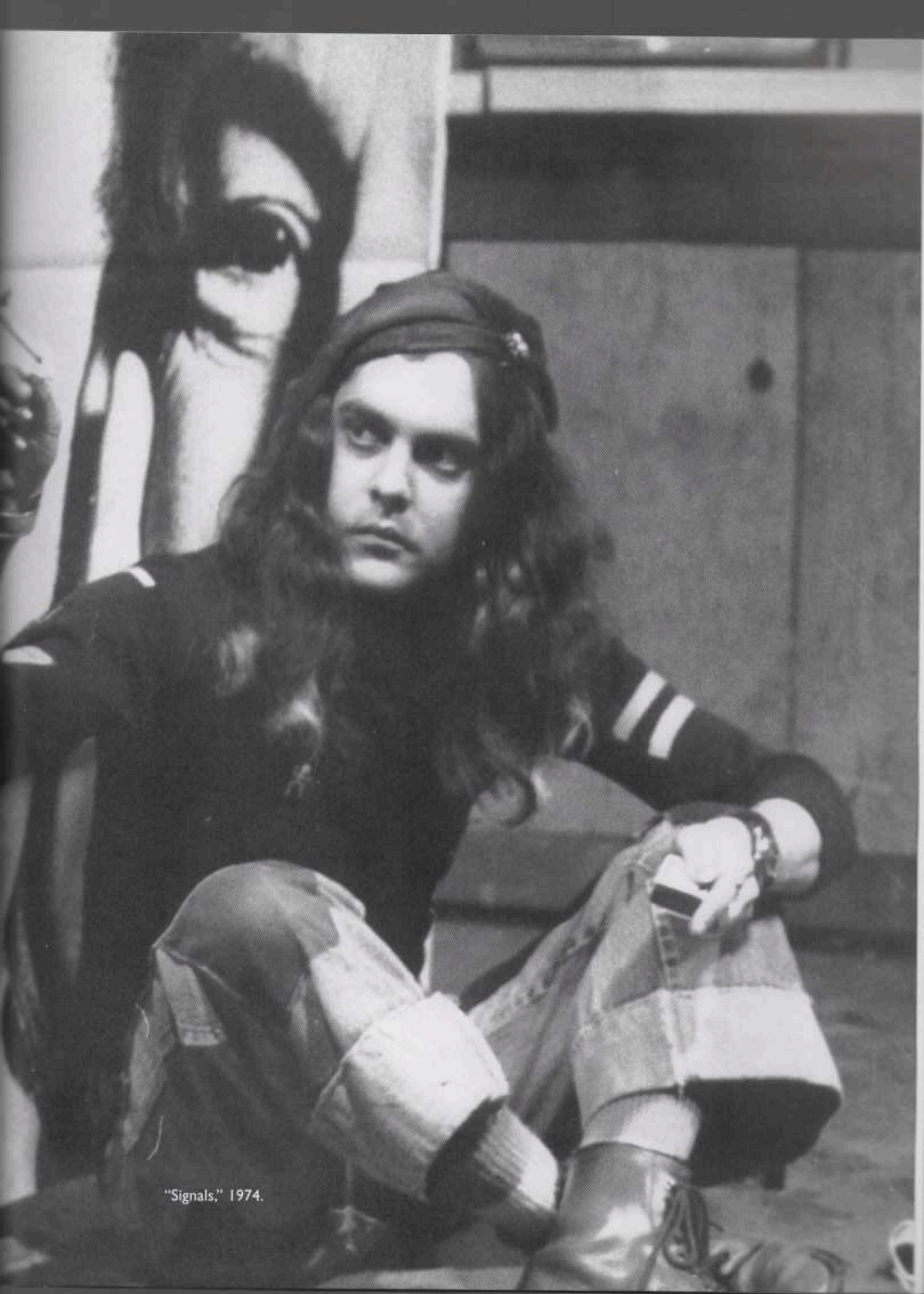
Read, mark, earn, and inwardly divest!

"Towards Thee Crystal Bowl," Milan, 1976.



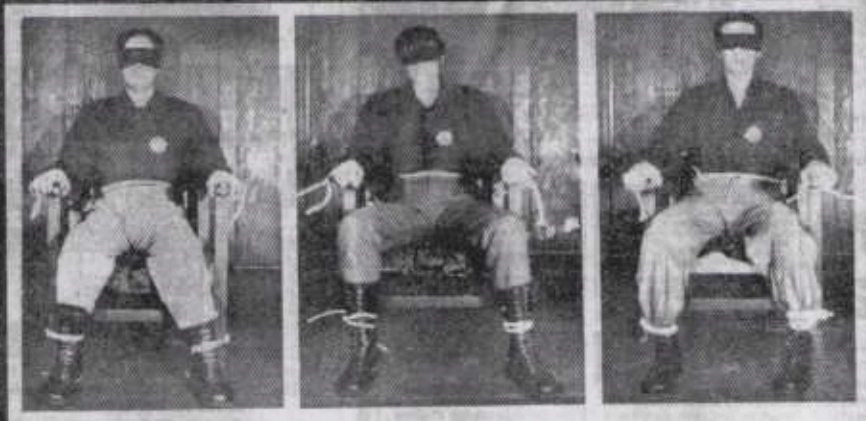






"Signals," 1974.

# SICKLY P-ORRIDGE



GARY GILMORE MEMORIAL SOCIETY

## Now he sells firing squad postcards

**F**ROM the man who has sickened you before, here is a piece of bad taste to give you an even greater shock.

These three "execution" pictures appear on a postcard released by the Gary Gilmore Memorial Society—a group founded by the controversial Genesis P-Orridge.

The last picture by P-Orridge, an exhibition on prostitution at a top London art gallery, caused a public outcry.

By TONY ROBINSON

This new, \$18,877 move is sure to bring more scorn. The memorial society has been set up to commemorate the execution of killer Gary Gilmore, who died before a firing squad in the USA a fortnight ago, a fire hanging on his right to be shot.

The Memorial Society is also producing T-shirts and sunglasses designed as a tribute to be sold in a Chelsea boutique.

Mr. P-Orridge, 26, an artist and rock musician said: "I think the American public came out of the execution much worse than Gary did."

Mr. P-Orridge, 26, said: "One of the reasons of the shop is going to be the martyrdom of Gary Gilmore. It's obviously a great thing if a guy is prepared to die for something—even if it's his own feeling of despair. That's courage."

### Martyr

Mr. John Kribben, part-owner of Boy boutique in King's Road, Chelsea, confirmed that he would be selling the Gary Gilmore products when the shop opens on February 16.

Mr. Kribben, 26, said: "It's obviously a great thing if a guy is prepared to die for something—even if it's his own feeling of despair. That's courage."

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1977

4 BY EVENING NEWS

# A BIZARRE BOUTIQUE THAT SELLS VIOLENCE

**MACABRE** clothes go on sale at a new boutique in the King's Road tomorrow.

T-shirts with dried animal blood and decorated with hospital drip tubes and bandages are part of the latest sick trend.

Accessories include leather made of genuine hypodermic syringes and syringes made of contraceptive pessaries.

John Kribben, 26, part-owner of the boutique rolled

### EVENING NEWS REPORTER

"Boy" said "Punk is Gated. We call this stuff 'Survival'."

These are T-shirts with necked-up execution photographs of Gary Gilmore, the American murderer who died by firing squad.

The photographs were made by Genesis P-Orridge who caused a storm with his exhibition on prostitution at the USA.

### ARSON

It's believed the "Arson-bomb" part of the shop was deliberately set on fire and "bodies" scattered in the streets.

Shirts have been doctored

with animal excrement to give a charred impression and T-shirts have been doctored liberally so.

Mr. Kribben said "Of course they are shocking. But life is shocking."

"These clothes are about survival in London in 1977. They are about what happens every day in the streets."

Mr. Kribben left his premises in a basement of the expensive King's Road antique market "Antiquariat."

He said, "They didn't like the punk kids—we attracted. It didn't go with their image. The same kids will be coming to our new shop—but it won't be, pong, anymore. Punk died when an Astro-TV crew came and made a

documentary in the old shop."

He said: "There is nothing for the kids except us. They come in wearing home-made stuff and if it looks good I invite them to design the same thing for us at our workshop."

### HATE

Later on, there will be anti-marriage, anti-parent and heterosexual T-shirts.

A woman shopper said: "It's sickening."

But Gary Gartinke, 14, from Haddingham Road, Beckton, said: "Horny T-shirts? That's great. I'd buy one."

"I wouldn't wear the sub-transcursive jewelry, though. That's not nice."



Sandra Gilmore... in which Gary was executed by firing squad. The wire is draped over the back of the



was executed by firing squad. The wire is draped over the back of the

**'These people are the wreckers of civilisation'**



TORY MP Nicholas Fairbairn fought his way through Hell's Angels and young men with multi-coloured hair, lipstick and nail varnish last night —

AND SAW

**sex-show**

A STRIPPER, accompanied by a rock group called "Throbbing Gristle" far, far worse than anything I have ever seen. I was appalled. "They must be very sick people indeed."

**A WEIRD porn-and-pop show,**

Its filth is exceeded only by its banality. The pornography can only destroy the values of our society.

**Nicholas Fairbairn . . . outraged.**

And the MP's critical appraisal was: "It's a sickening outrage. Sadistic. Obscene. Evil. . . money is being wasted here to destroy the morality of our society. These people are the wreckers of civilisation. They want to advance decadence."

"I came here to look, and I am horrified," said the MP.

**THROBBING GRISTLE**

ARE attempting to destroy the difference between good and evil, and fast and slow.

"I'm sickened. This show is an excuse for exhibitionism by every crack, queer, squirt and ass in the business."

Mr Fairbairn said he saw SADISM with alkies and Rats.

WEIRD music from what exhibition organisers called the Death Factory, by a rock group called "Throbbing Gristle" allowing people to promote every swill-bin attitude they can to degrade language, meaning and thought."



Visitors . . . what today's connoisseur is wearing.

CEASE TO EXIST

**Stripper**

The show includes a stripper accompanied by masochistic performances by a rock group called Throbbing Gristle;

They are devoid of any sense of proportion and respect for the decency of life.

**MASOCHISTIC performance**

performed by a rock group may be a scabrous symbol of one facet of Britain today; but not yet, thank heavens, of the whole. And the underlying impulse is not one of survival but of destruction and the death-wish.

**controversial pop-and-porn show**

A rock group called Death Rock will be taking part at the opening. They will be singing songs about mass murder and about the child murderer Ian Brady. They offer reflections on the way TV programmes and the other media work.

"spooks with soft-belt intellectual arrogance . . . anxious to promote every swill-bin attitude they can to degrade language, meaning and thought."

"The organisers must be very sick people. I wish I'd never got involved." it was an excuse for exhibitionism by every crack, queer, squirt and ass in the business.

"We're only just getting a look at the maggots in the nest. By the time the current controversy dies down their scrapbook will be fat enough to ensure gigs a plenty here and abroad for them, their rock band Throbbing Gristle and any professional striptease artists they care to take along with them."

SECONDARY ORGASMIC DISFUNCTION

**PARANOIA CLUB**

GENETIC FEAR

BLURRED SELF IMAGE

"We are presenting information. Without people, information is dead. People give it life."

But for me, it was like a scene out of a realistic horror show last night.

As I walked in, a drunken young woman was being carried out. She had green hair.

At the bar, a girl in trousers and bright orange hair was embracing a blonde in a gold lame dress.

Next to them was a 6ft. 5in. tall West Indian transvestite in a red off-the-shoulder gown.

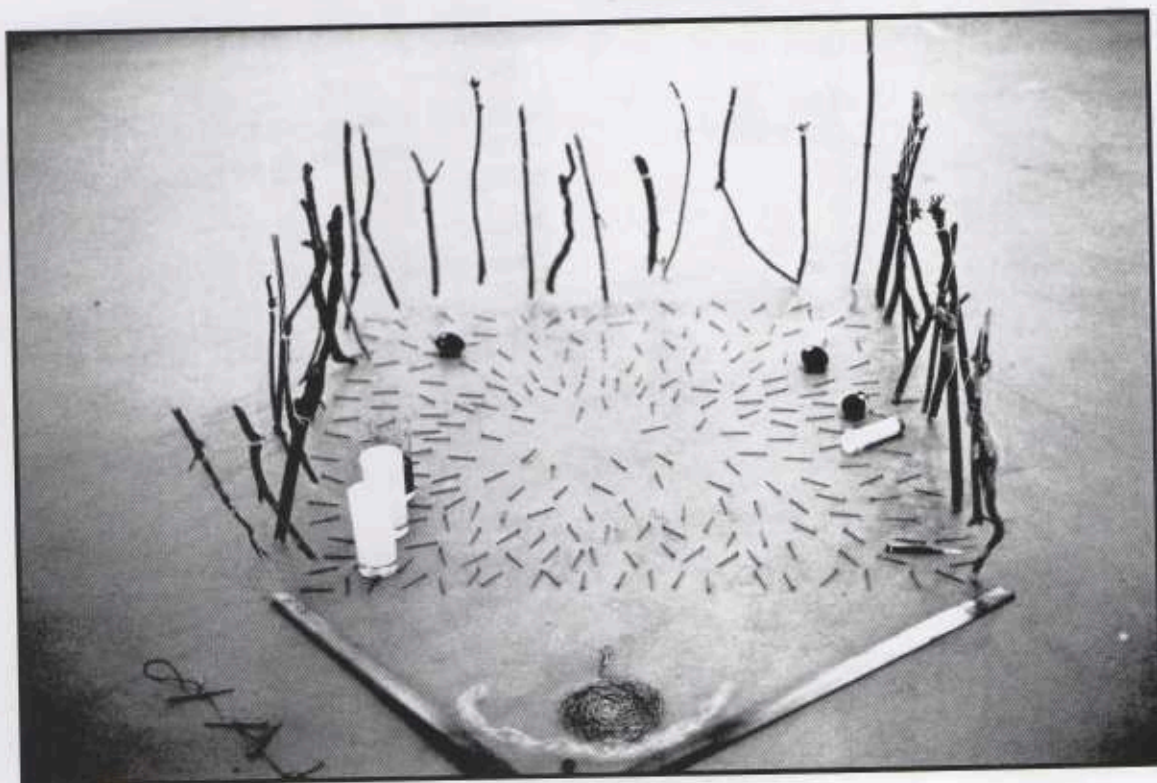
There was also a very noisy rock group called Throbbing Gristle, dressed in more black latex.

My main concern is that it has become the phenomenon of the age in music for non-creative people to make up for their inability and lack of imagination by being obscene, vulgar and depraved." Seen filthy rabbits has always been available in holes and corners for those willing to pay for it, and there have always been people ready to make a living by purchasing it.

A red and white checked nearly wigged on black knee trousers and showed: "God there are so many straights around"

Scotland Yard said today: "A report is being sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions"

"This all sounds rather menacing, but these are always the things which attract publicity"



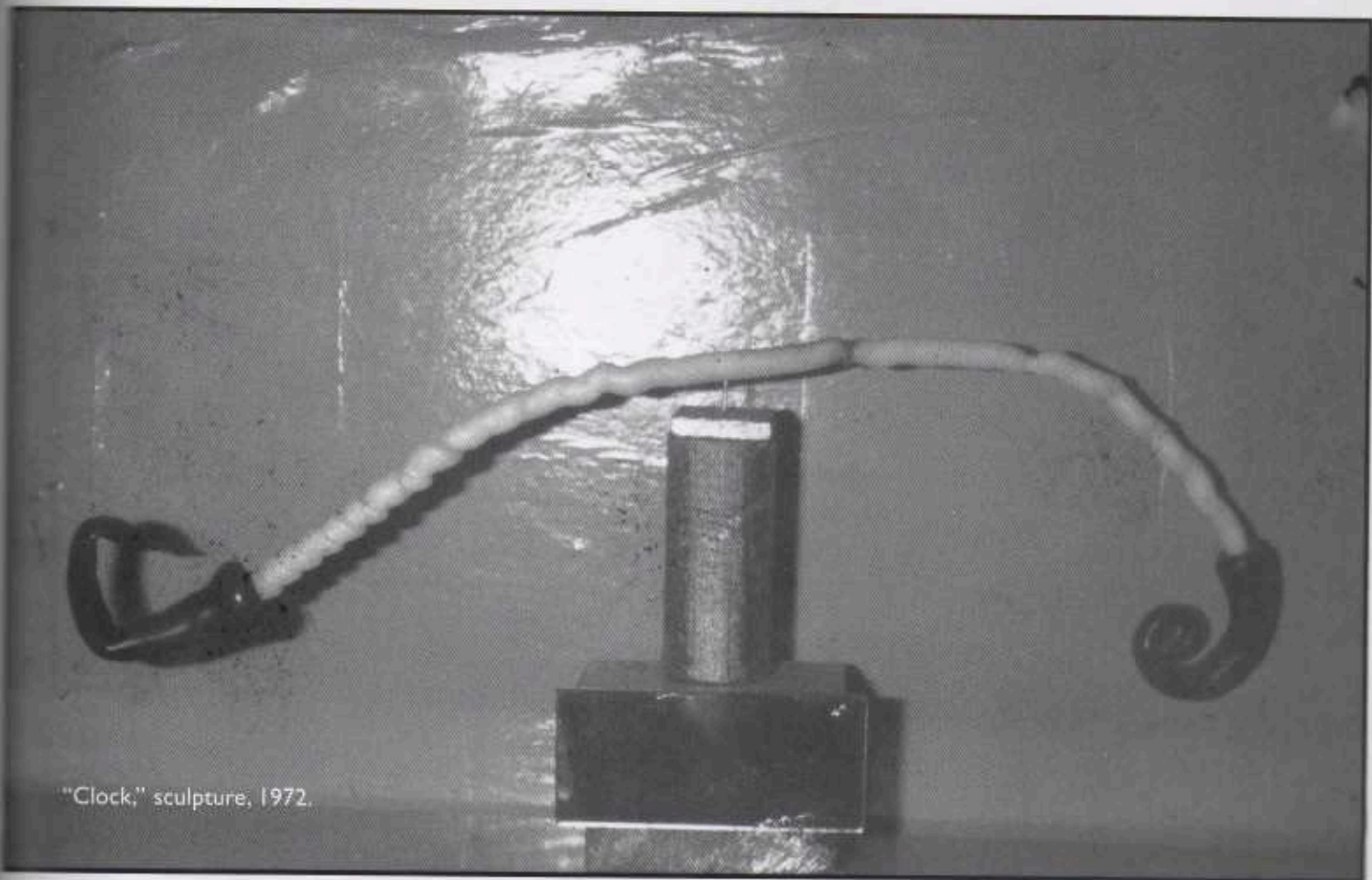
"After Cease to Exist #4," Los Angeles, 1976.



"Iron Point," sculpture, 1973.



"Stabiliser," sculpture, 1973.



"Clock," sculpture, 1972.

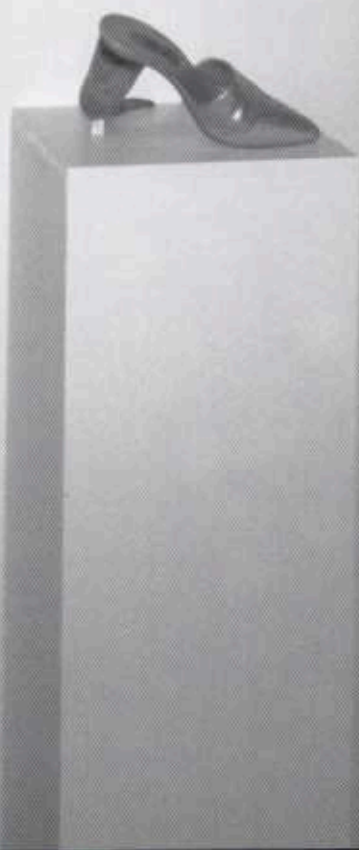
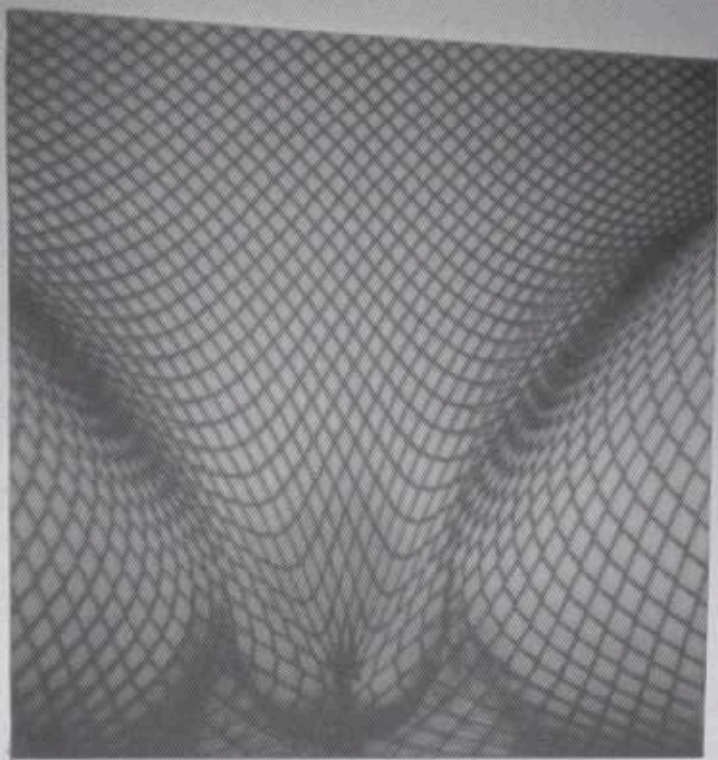


"Gents Painting," 1970.

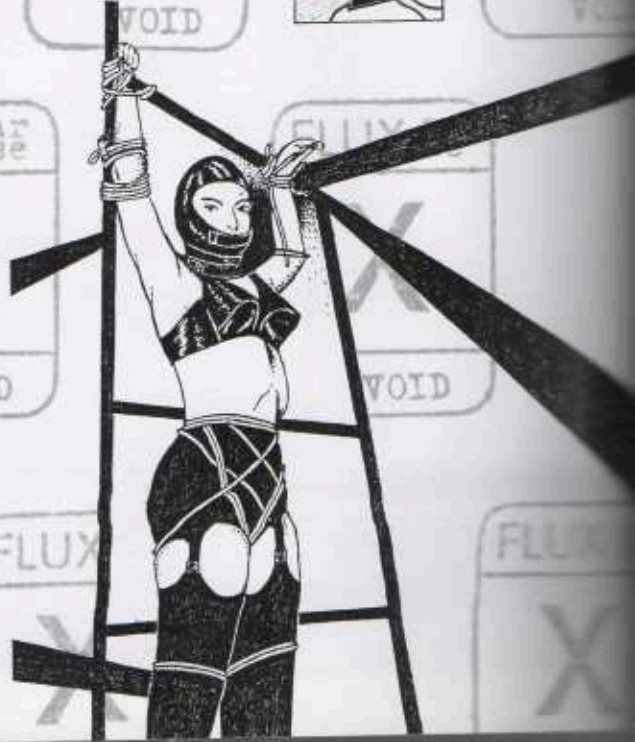
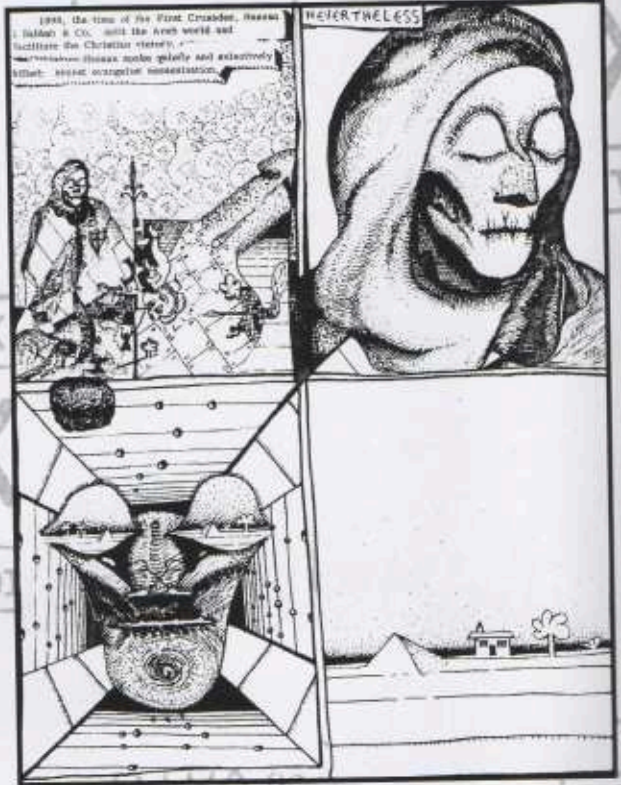
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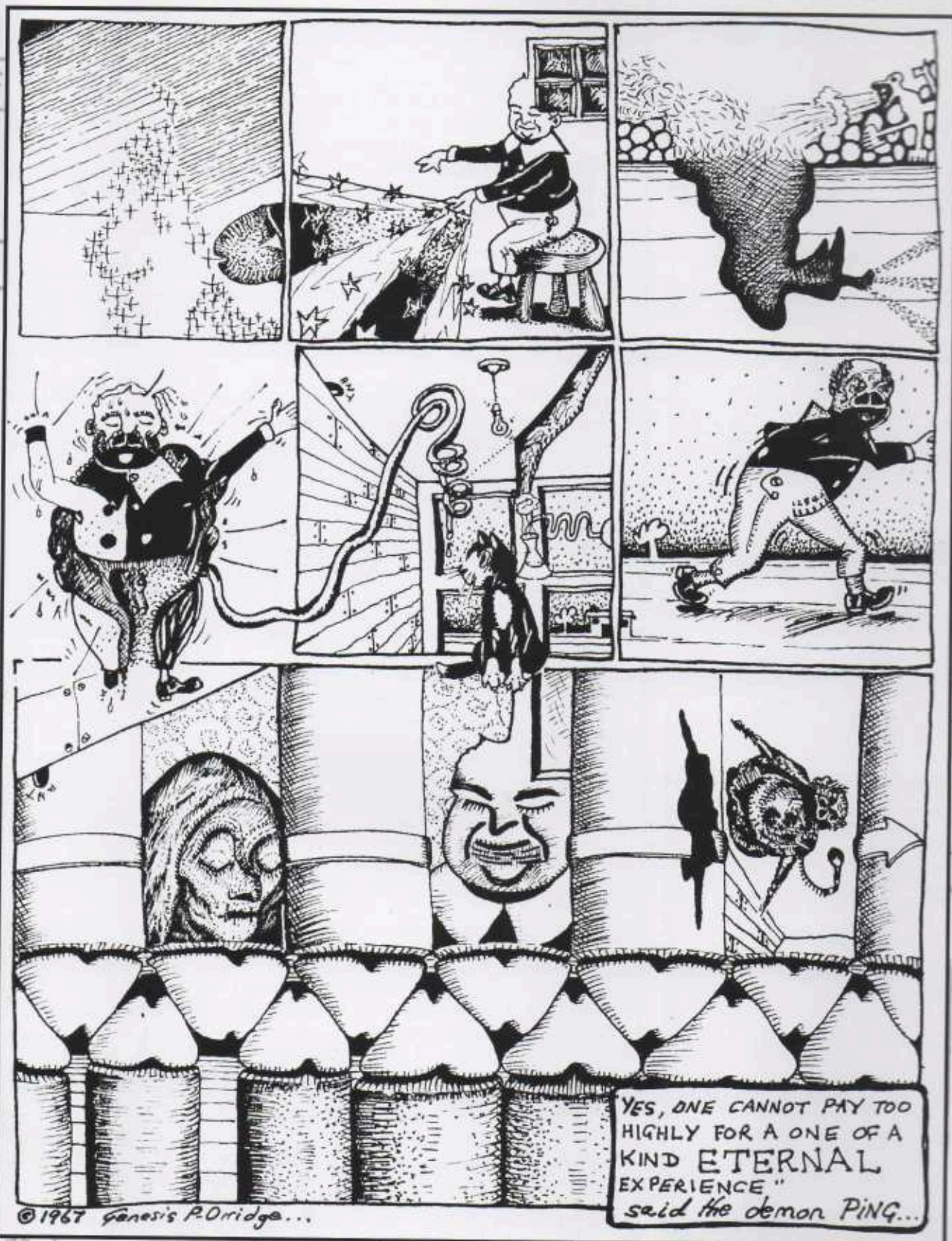
"Blue Mural," 1970.



"Fisionet," 2002.







©1967 Genesis P. Orridge...

YES, ONE CANNOT PAY TOO HIGHLY FOR A ONE OF A KIND ETERNAL EXPERIENCE" said the demon PING...

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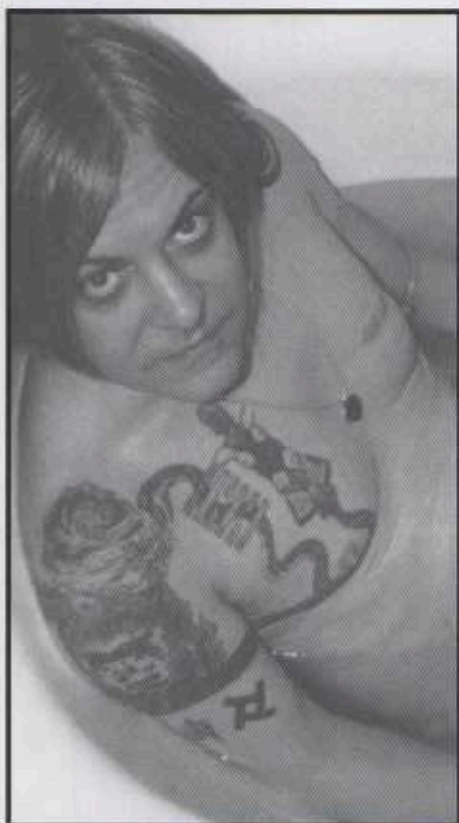
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# GENESIS P-ORRIDGE Selected BIBLIOGRAPHY



*Genesis P-Orridge has had interviews, articles, and essays published in over 2,000 magazines and anthologies from 1962-1998. At this time it is impossible to list all those publications here. For those readers who wish to research further, eventually, an increasingly full catalogue will be accessible via the website:*

[www.genesisp-orridge.com](http://www.genesisp-orridge.com)

*What follows is a very simplified and minimal bibliography of books that are specifically about or by Genesis P-Orridge, or that have significant sections by or about him and his works:*

## BOOKS BY GENESIS P-ORRIDGE

**SUBVERS/GENESIS P-ORRIDGE** Special Edition—limited edition concrete poetry and experimental writing publication G. P-O issue consisting of 3 large fold-out posters covered in poems and drawings presented in vinyl wrapping with inserts. Published by Hans Clavin, Subvers, Ijmuden, Netherlands 1972.

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**THE BLACK BOOK: SIGILS**—Basic manual on the methods and practices of T.O.P.Y. sigilisation and directed orgasm. Published by Temple Press, London, England, 1984.

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## BOOKS INCLUDING TEXTS/ESSAYS BY OR ON GENESIS P-ORRIDGE

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Published by Black Dog Press, London, England, 1999.

**PAINFUL BUT FABULOUS THE LIVES AND ART OF GENESIS P-ORRIDGE...**  
to be continued...all ways...



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[www.scannerdot.com](http://www.scannerdot.com)

[www.ubertext.se](http://www.ubertext.se)

[www.softskull.com](http://www.softskull.com)

YES  
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COUM

First poster design for COUM, 1970.



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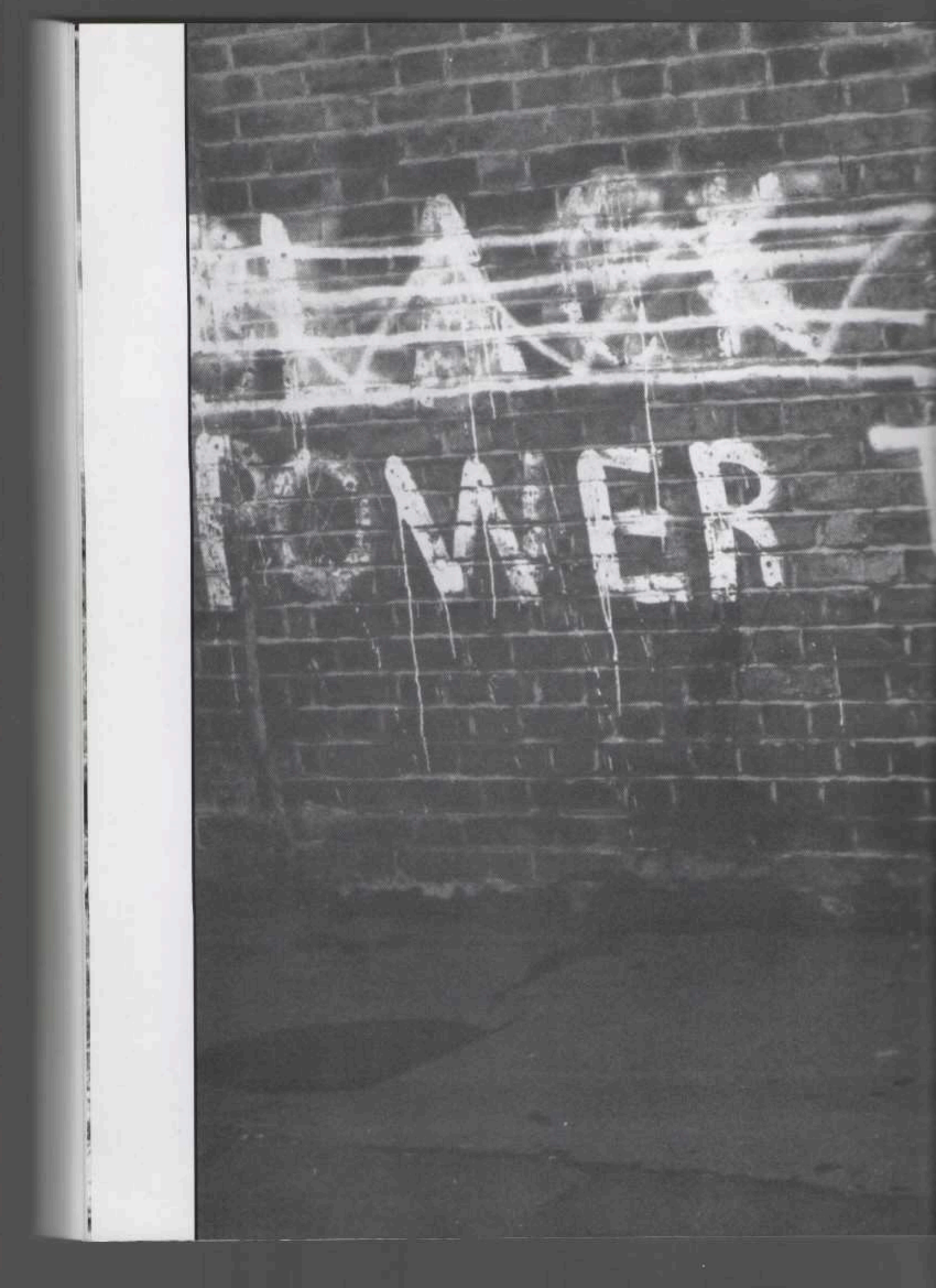
**BRIAN JONES**

born 28th february 1942

died 3rd July 1969

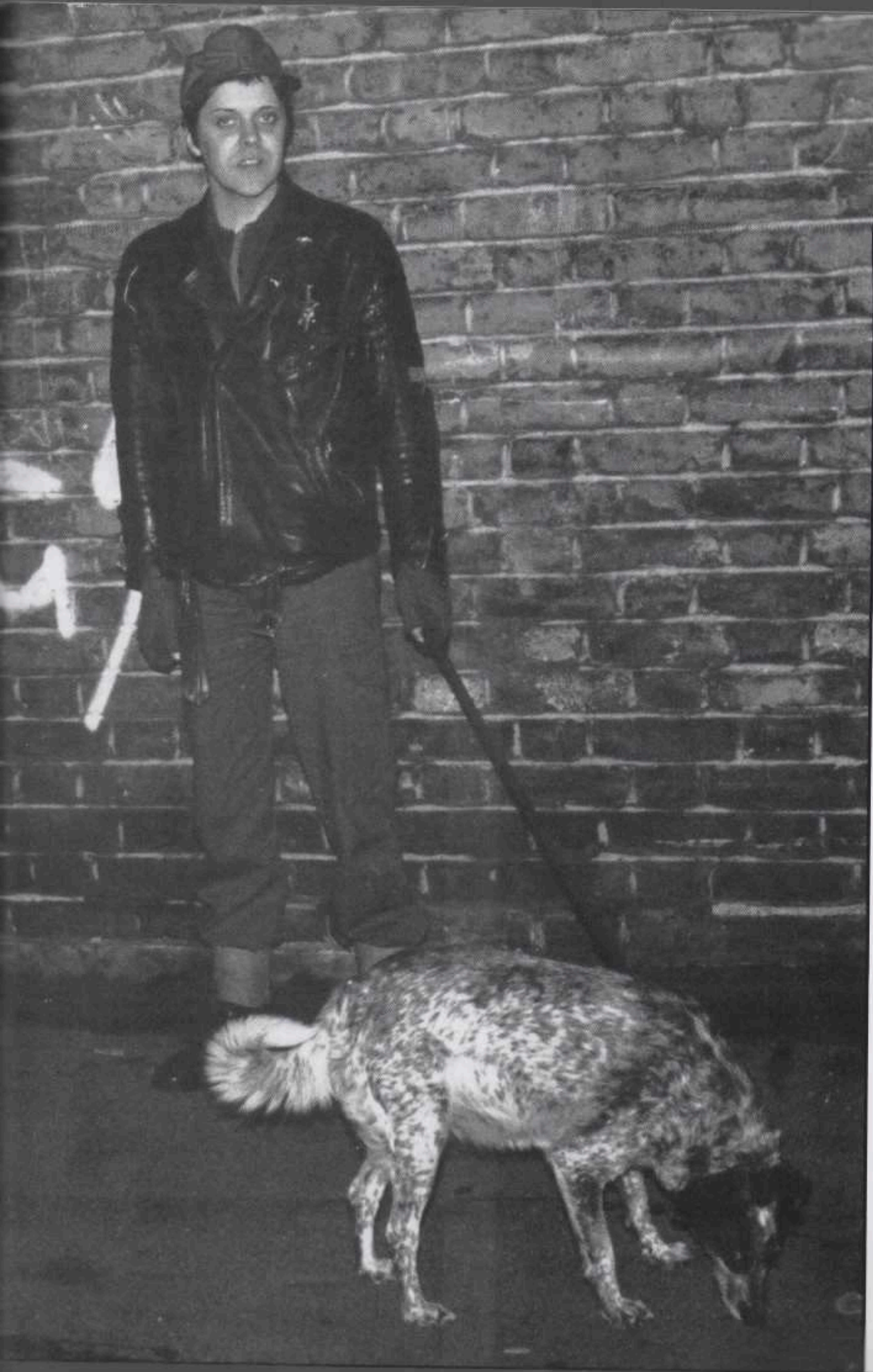
at Hartfield, Sussex





WALLER







# GENESIS P-ORRIDGE Selected DISCOGRAPHY



## PSYCHIC TV

WEA FORCE/THEE HAND OF CHANCE LP

OV POWER/JUST DRIFTING 12" Single off "FORCE" LP

JUST DRIFTING/BREAKTHROUGH 7" Single off "FORCE" LP

THEMES ONE Ambient LP Free with first 5000 copies

CBS DREAMS LESS SWEET LP ORCHIDS/WHITE NIGHTS 7" Singles for Radio off "DREAMS"

THEE FULL PACK/CATALAN 12" Single Free with first 5000 copies

PSYCHIC TV on TEMPLE RECORDS

TOPY 001 UNCLEAN/MIRRORS 12" Single

TOPY 002 NY SCUM HATERS LIVE LP

TOPY 003 PAGAN DAY LP Pic.Disc

TOPY 004 THEMES 2 LP

TOPY 009 GODSTAR 7" Single

TOPYC 009 GODSTAR 12" Pic.Disc

TOPYS 009 GODSTAR 7" Twin.Pak

TOPYH 009 GODSTAR 12" Single

TOPY 010 MOUTH OF THE NIGHT LP

TOPYC 010 MOUTH OF THE NIGHT LP Pic.Disc

TOPYC 010 MOUTH OF THE NIGHT Cassette

TOPY 012 HASHASHINS Ambient LP

TOPY 014 LIVE IN PARIS LP

TOPY 015 LIVE IN TOKYO LP

TOPY 016 LIVE IN GLASGOW LP

TOPY 017 PAGAN DAY LP

TOPY 018 LIVE IN HEAVEN LP

TOPY 019 THEMES 3 LP

TOPY 020 LIVE IN BREGENZ LP

TOPY 020CD LIVE IN BREGENZ CD

TOPY 022 MAGICK DEFENDS ITSELF 12" Single

TOPY 023 GOOD VIBRATIONS 7" Single

TOPYT 023 GOOD VIBRATIONS 12" Single

TOPYD 023 GOOD VIBRATIONS 7" Twin.Pak

TOPY 023 P GOOD VIBRATIONS 7" + Poster

TOPY 026 LIVE IN REYKJAVIK LP

TOPY 027 LIVE EN SUISSE LP

TOPY 028 LIVE IN TORONTO LP

TOPY 029 LIVE IN GOTTINGEN LP

TOPY 030 TEMPORARY TEMPLE LIVE LP

TOPY 032 THEE YELLOW ALBUM LP aka "PSYCHEDELIC VIOLENCE"

TOPY 033 CINNEBAR PORCELAIN LP TURNING SHRINES (FRED of PTV)

TOPY 034 CD MOUTH OF THE NIGHT CD

TOPY 035 ALLEGORY & SELF LP Pic. Disc

TOPY 036 LIVE MARDI GRAS LP

TOPY 037 TUNE IN (TURN ON THE ACID HOUSE) 4 x Remixes 12" Single

TOPY 038 ALLEGORY & SELF LP

TOPY 039 TEKNO ACID BEAT LP

TOPY 040 JOY 12" Single

TOPYCD 041 TEKNO ACID BEAT CD

TOPY 042 LIVE AT CIRCLUS LP

TOPY 044 R.U.XPERIENCED? 12" Single CARESS & SICKMOB (FRED)

TOPY 045 R.U.XPERIENCED? 7" Single CARESS & SICKMOB (FRED)

TOPY 045 LIVE AT THE RITZ LP

TOPY 046 KONDOLE LP

TOPY 046 CD KONDOLE CD

TOPY 047 LIVE AT PYRAMID LP

TOPIC 047 LIVE AT PYRAMID LP Pic. Disc

TOPY 048 LOVE-WAR-RIOT 12" Single

TOPY 048T LOVE-WAR-RIOT 10" Single

TOPY 049 TOWARDS THE INFINITE BEAT LP

TOPY 049CD TOWARDS THE INFINITE BEAT CD

TOPY 050 JET'AIME 12" Single

TOPY 051 DJ BEYOND THE INFINITE BEAT 2x12" Singles DJ REMIXES of PTV

TOPY 051 CD BEYOND THE INFINITE BEAT CD DJ REMIXES of PTV

TOPY 058 I.C. WATER 7" Single

TOPY 058T I.C. WATER 12" Single

TOPY 052 CD BERLIN WALL VOL.1 LIVE CD

TOPY 053 CD BERLIN WALL VOL.2 LIVE CD

DCD 9046 MEIN\*GOTT\*IN\*GEN LIVE CD

TOPY 059 CD DIRECTION OF TRAVEL CD Z'EV & MEGSON

WAXCD 7179 CD ULTRAHOUSE CD

CSRC27 Were You Ever Bullied at School... Do You Want Revenge? CD

IRS 990 274 SBZ CD 011 Dreams Less Sweet CD Psychic TV Some Bizarre Ltd.

WAXCD 9188 ULTRAHOUSE THE 12" MIXES CD also issued as 12" Vinyl

SBZCD026 Force the Hand of Chance - Enhanced CD With Videos Terminus Video

CLEO 9595-2 Force The Hand Of Chance CD Cleopatra Label 1195

ACID 001 CD JACK THE TAB CD PSYCHIC TV (as "various") also issued as Vinyl LP

WAXCD 8128 HIGH JACK CD EP (as "various")

WAXCD 7127 TEKNO ACID BEAT and JACK THE TAB Double CD (as "Various") Later issued by TVT as TWO CD's.

TOPY 068 PEAK HOUR CD (band without G.P.O)

TOPY 077 TRIBAL 12 Inch Re-Mixes (band without G.P.O)

SR9332 KONDOLE Parts 1.2 & 3 CD

Original "KONDOLE" Ambient Music with extra 23 minute Section.

WSFA SP18 DECODER Film Soundtrack CD PTV & others

DCD 9041 TEMPORARY TEMPLE/ATONAL LIVE CD

CLEO 65082 HEX SEX - THEE SINGLES (Vol.1) CD Comp.

CLEO 95182 GODSTAR - THEE SINGLES (Vol.2) CD Comp.

CLEO 94692 PAGAN DAY (extra Tracks) CD

DOSSIER DCD 9041 TEMPORARY TEMPLE & ATONAL CD, Genesis P-Orridge & Psychic TV

SSFP23 Live in Paris. CD. G.P. ORRIDGE & PSYCHIC TV. 8-6-86 Sortide Sentimental label

WPCR-1766/7. Force the Hand of Chance. PSYCHIC TV. Japanese import. UK Rock Manifesto Series. (Bootleg)

Psychic TV - OV POWERLA Pagan Dis- Concert 1983. "Made in England." (Bootleg)

DCD 9073 "BREATHE" Genesis P-Orridge, Larry Thrasher. Live spoken-word Performance highlights 1994. CD Dossier Records.

TTCD 013 "PEAK HOUR". CD PSYCHIC TV In Toy label.

CLEO 9601-2 THEMES PART I: LIMITED EDITION OF 1,000 (NOTE: 69 IS IMPRINTED ON jewel case) CD 1995 REISSUE "ORIGINALLY RELEASED 1982". PSYCHIC TV

CLEO 94912 ALLEGORY AND SELF - THEE STARLIT MIRE CD PSYCHIC TV

SSCD 001 DESCENDING CD Live in ROUEN, France PSYCHIC TV

CSR20CD Themes Part 2: A Prayer for Derek Jarman CD Themes and soundtracks for Derek Jarman Film and videos. Made in England. Cold Spring records 1997. PSYCHIC TV

SSCDV 01 LISTEN TODAY CD/Video (PAL/NTSC)

VIDCD 001 ULTRADRUG CD Re-Edited/Re-Mixed/New Tracks. New version of ULTRAHOUSE

CDTG24 GRIEF CD Bootleg of unknown origin "Made in England."

VIDCD 005 SIRENS CD of Trance/Dance Re-Mixes

SBZ CD 011 DREAMS LESS SWEET CD

SYARD 001 ELIPSE OV FLOWERS CD

SYARD 002 TAROT OV ABOMINATION CD

SYARD 003 STAINED BY DEAD HORSES CD

SYARD 004 MOUTH OV THEE KNIGHT CD

SYARD 005 SUGARMORPHOSES CD

SYARD 006 COLD DARK MATTER CD

CLEO 9665 "TRIP RESET" CD and three ANGELS OV LIGHT

CLEO ! "COLD BLUE TORCH" CD PSYCHIC TV remix CD

TOPY! Live in NYC Nov 1983. Limited Edition of 123 copies. Unlabeled black cassette tape wrapped in leather with string and metal key fob-type latch mechanism. Audio Cassette.

## GENESIS P-ORRIDGE - SPOKEN WORD

GENESIS P-ORRIDGE and PSYCHIC TV featuring LARRY THRASHER

A HOLLOW COST Cat#VCD 003 Spoken Word/Ambient CD G.P.O./L. THRASHER Released on VISIONARY RECORDS, through Cherry Red in UK. Cover of G.P.O. as seen on 10 is different to US. Release on Invisible. Track listing identical as US release on Invisible.

INV040-pr CD A HOLLOW COST CD Genesis P-Orridge and Psychic TV featuring Larry Thrasher. Made in Canada. Label is INVISIBLE.

A HOLLOW COST Cat# INV 040 Spoken Word/Ambient CD G.P.O./L.THRASHER. Released 1995 Invisible Records in USA. Cover says Genesis P-Orridge and PSYCHIC TV but it is officially SPLINTER TEST.

BREATHE Cat#DCD9073 Spoken Word/Ambient LIVE CD Recorded at WOW Hall, Eugene, Oregon, USA 1994.

AT STOCKHOLM Cat#PSYCHEC 001 Spoken Word/Ambient CD G.P.O./WHITE STAINS.

GENESIS P-ORRIDGE and SPLINTER TEST featuring LARRY THRASHER

THEE FRACTURED GARDEN CD GENESIS P-ORRIDGE & SPLINTER TEST<sup>†</sup> Spoken Word/Ambient studio album by Larry Thrasher and Genesis P-Orridge.

## SPOKEN WORD PROJECTS

AL-OR-AL DCD 9054 Spoken Word/Ambient Music CD PSYCHIC TV/XKP

ELECTRIC NEWSPAPER QUARTERLY SAMPLING PROJECT:

OCD 9056 ELECTRIC NEWSPAPER Issue ONE Winter 1994. On Dossier Records from Germany. Edited and Assembled by Genesis P-Orridge and Larry Thrasher from the PSYCHIC TV audio Archives.

DCD 9059 ELECTRIC NEWSPAPER Issue ONE Winter 1994. On Dossier Records from Germany. Edited and Assembled by Genesis P-Orridge and Larry Thrasher from the PSYCHIC TV audio Archives.

OCD 9070 ELECTRIC NEWSPAPER Issue TWO Spring 1995. On Dossier Records, Germany. Edited by G.P.O and Larry Thrasher.

OCD 9076 ELECTRIC NEWSPAPER Issue THREE Summer 1995. On Dossier Records, Germany. Edited by G.P.O and Larry Thrasher.

INV ELECTRIC NEWSPAPER Issue Four "The Human Voice" (note: also issued as CD INV-085 Electric Newspaper, Issue Four, Splinter Four, 1997)

## COMPILATIONS FEATURING PSYCHIC TV

Collaborations and/or compilations featuring Psychic TV and/or Genesis P-Orridge:

IN STRICT TEMPO by DAVE BALL (formerly SOFT CELL) Genesis co-wrote and sang on 2 Tracks "SINCERITY" and "MAN IN THE MAN" on this Dave's first solo album.

WHAT'S HISTORY? by Genesis P-Orridge Ambient Music on STAALPLAAT in Holland.

THE MYTHS/PART 1. PSYCHIC TV have one track "Supermale" on this SUB ROSA Compilation from Belgium.

SHAMANARCHY IN THE U.K. PSYCHIC TV have one track "ECSTASY IN U.K." on this Tekno-Anarchy Compilation on EVOLUTION records from England.

50 YEARS OF SUNSHINE PSYCHIC TV have one track on this SILENT RECORDS of San Francisco 1993 Compilation CD called "ACIDOSIS".

FROM HERE TO TRANQUILITY PSYCHIC TV have one track on this SILENT Records compilation called "COMPLETION 4A".

MYSTERIOUS ENCOUNTERS PSYCHIC TV have one track on this promotional only CD for CLEOPATRA RECORDS, "GODSTAR 91"

A SAUCER FULL OF PINK PSYCHIC TV have a cover of "SET THE CLEO 9551 CONTROLS FOR THE HEART OF THE SUN" Cleopatra Records.

MM 80127-2 BETTER LIVING THROUGH CHEMISTRY. PSYCHIC TV have track five, "Money for E", A 7th art release, Cleopatra Pictures Presents. A Parasite Production.

BR002 Beautiful Records Presents "Theme: Beauty" PSYCHIC TV has a track on the album. Cassette. Limited edition of 353 copies.

MM 80127-2 Better Living Through Circuitry. Movie Soundtrack. Enhanced CD Track 5 is "Money for E" by PTV. Moonshine music.

## GENESIS P-ORRIDGE APPEARANCES

"TRUTH WILL OUT" PIGFACE GENESIS does various vocals and continuous prepared tape samples throughout this excellent live CD record of a PIGFACE 1994 USA detour on Invisible Records.

WHAT'S HISTORY? Genesis P-Orridge and Stan Bingo. Nektrophile Records. Limited Edition of 1000 copies.

"NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND" PIGFACE GENESIS and OGRE (SKINNY PUPPY) share vocals on "YOUR OWN" and GENESIS does lead vocal on "HAG SEED" on this studio CD album on Invisible Records INV028 CD in 1995.

"FEELS LIKE HEAVEN" PIGFACE Remix CD of PIGFACE tracks on Invisible Records includes a remix of "HAG SEED" by Larry Thrasher and Genesis P-Orridge renamed "SLAG SEED". CD INV 034CD.

"INVISIBLE ROUTE 666" VARIOUS Compilation CD of tracks by various invisible recording artists. Includes an excerpt from "A HOLLOW COST" by Psychic TV INV 666.

"PROPHETS OF TIME" HAWKWIND Genesis P-Orridge also performed vocals on three Tracks on the most recent NIK TURNER and "HAWKWIND" studio CD called on Cleopatra Records and on the double LIVE CD from the HAWKWIND 1994 USA Tour "NIK TURNER-SPACE RITUAL".

"UNHEALTHY" LAB REPORT Genesis P-Orridge also appears on the new 1994 LAB REPORT CD with Lydia Lunch, on INVISIBLE RECORDS INV 031 CD.

"S MAN JOB" PENAL COLONY Genesis P-Orridge and Larry Thrasher also RE-MIXED three tracks for PENAL COLONY's new 1995 CD on Cleopatra Records CD CLEO 9512.

"MICROSCOPIC" CLEO 076-22282 DOWNLOAD Vocals by GENESIS on 2 tracks of this new remix CD by former SKINNY PUPPY musician cEVIN KEY Cleopatra Records.

"FURNACE" CLEO 9644-2 DOWNLOAD Vocals by GENESIS on three tracks. Cleopatra Records

"PUPPY GRISTLE" Limited Edition of 1000 copies. SKINNY PUPPY (Including Dwayne Goettel, Ogre, cEvin Key with LARRY THRASHER and GENESIS P-ORRIDGE jamming 40 minute instrumental on SUB/CONSCIOUS Records Cat # Sub23.

SALTCD 007 LC-11524 Bluelght - Fever Track 3 - TOYTOWN contains samples from "Three Starlit Mire," performed by PTV and taken from "Allegory and Self."

## THEE MAJESTY

Relocating The Sacred. Thee Majesty / Genesis P-Orridge. Punkcast 56. PC Format 256k. RealMedia. CD. Recorded in Preston, UK at the Relocating the Sacred Conference.

SOICD 0400 Time's Up. Thee Majesty. Put out by The Order of the Suffering Clown.

For a full and detailed discography of Throbbing Gristle and Genesis P-Orridge please visit:

[www.genesisp-orridge.com](http://www.genesisp-orridge.com)



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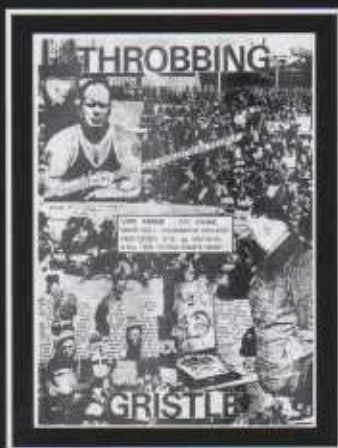
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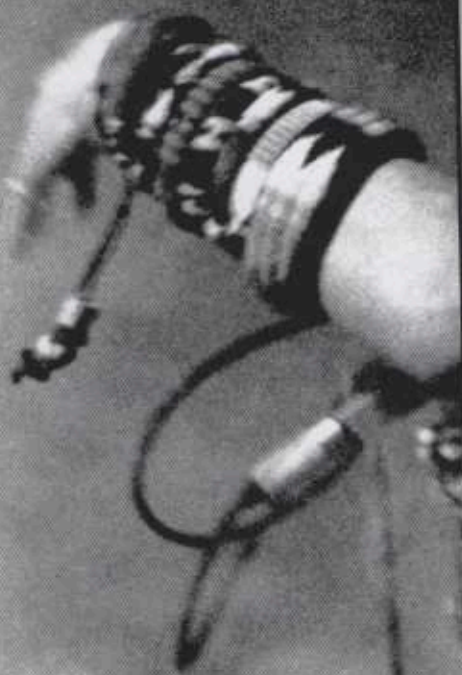
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the leather nun



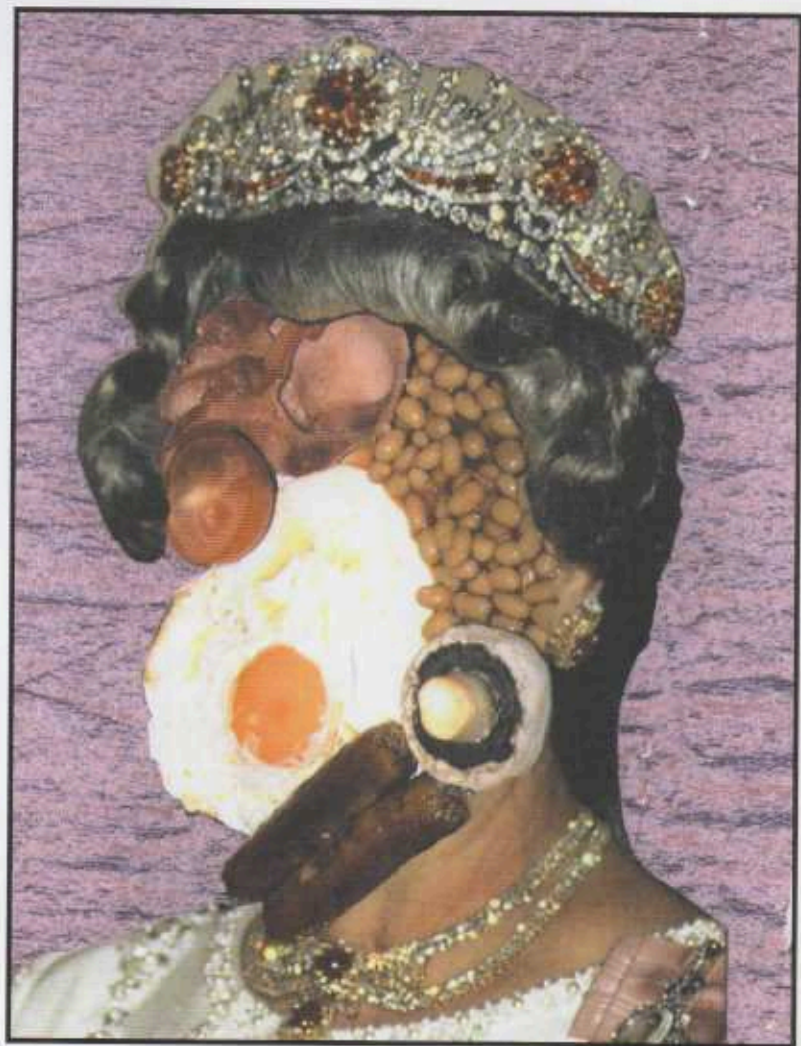
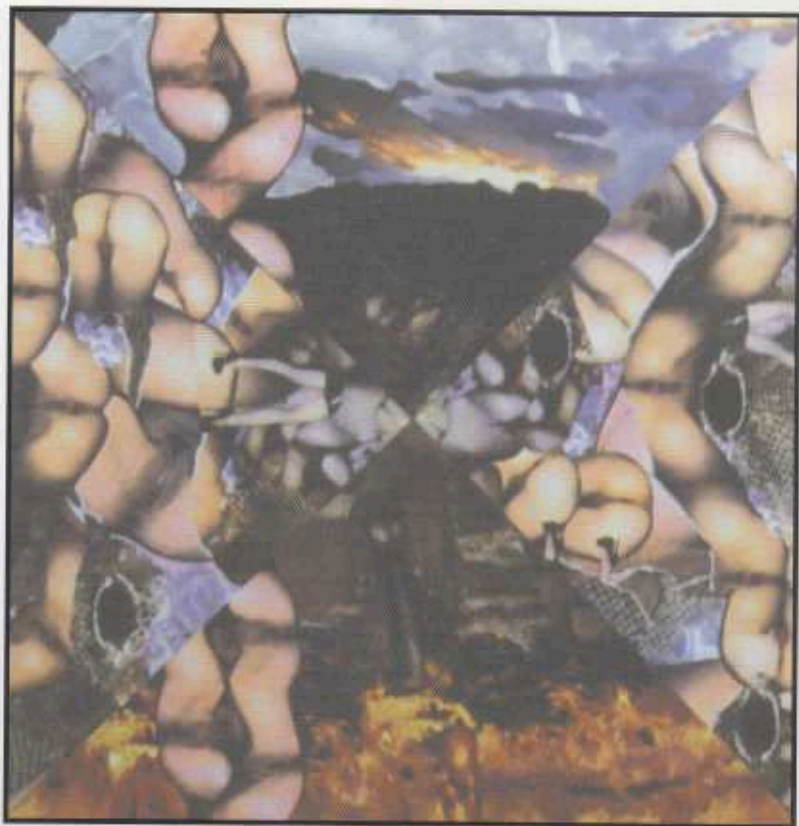
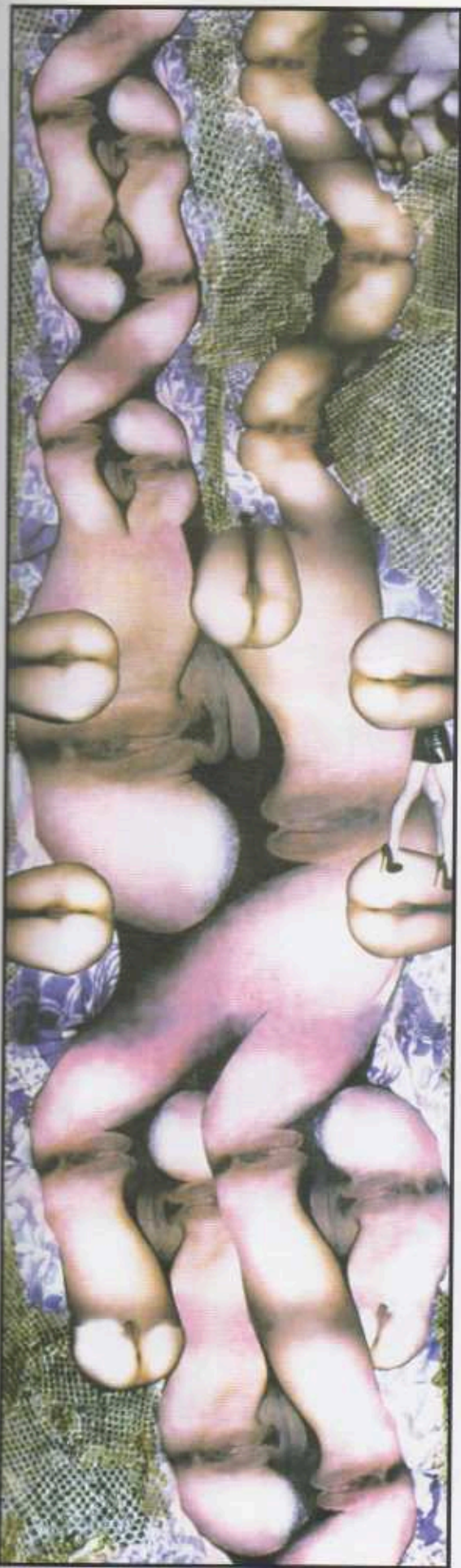


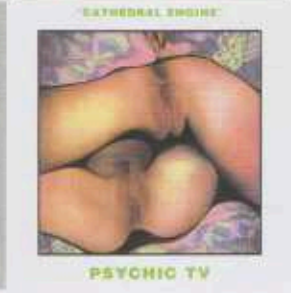
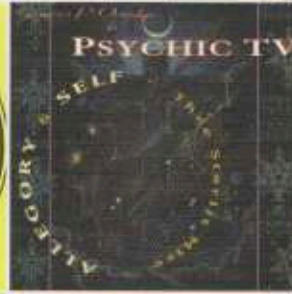
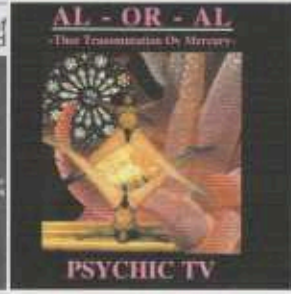
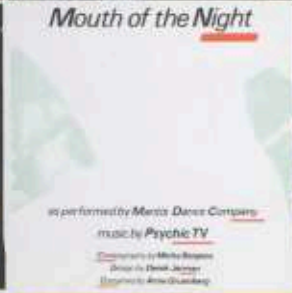
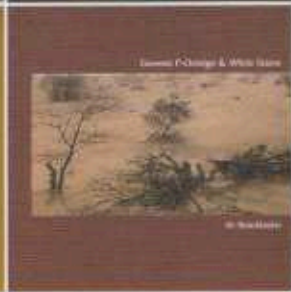
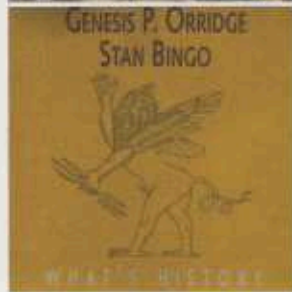
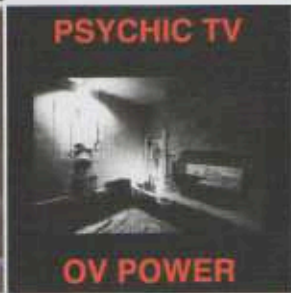
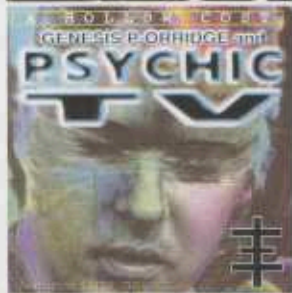
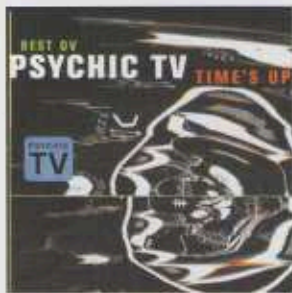
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"Pink Shiva." 1994.



opposite page, "Yellow Flowers," 1998.



PLEASE  
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THE PAINTINGS







"St. Margaret," 1968.

4 Tampon Boxes, ICA, 1976.



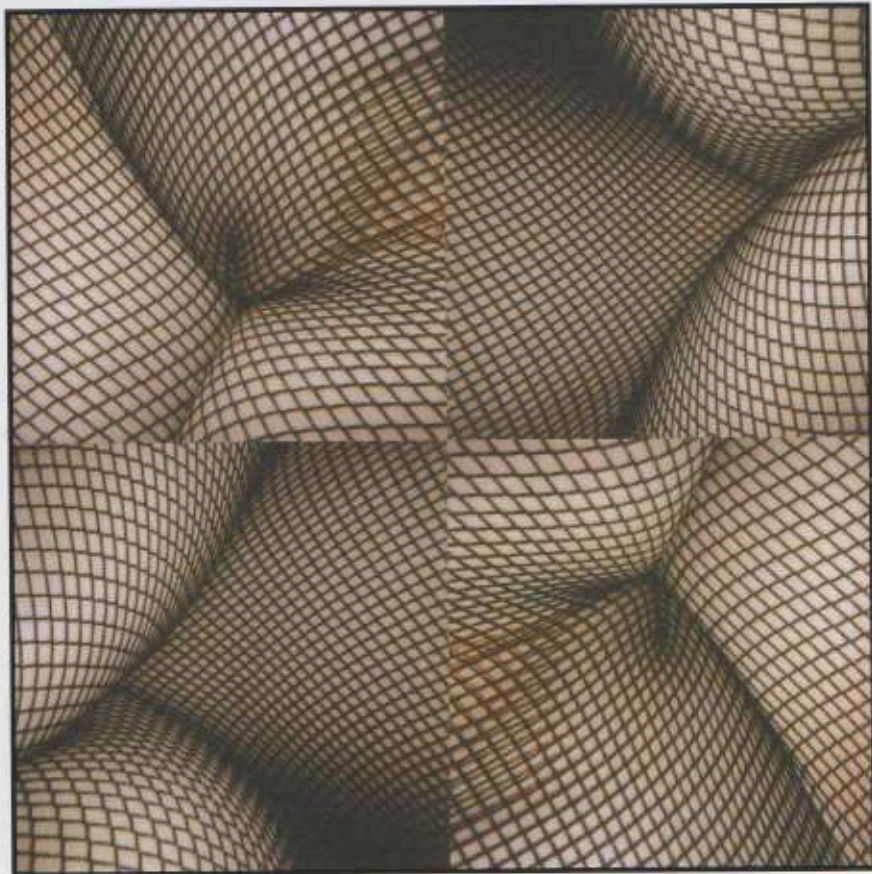




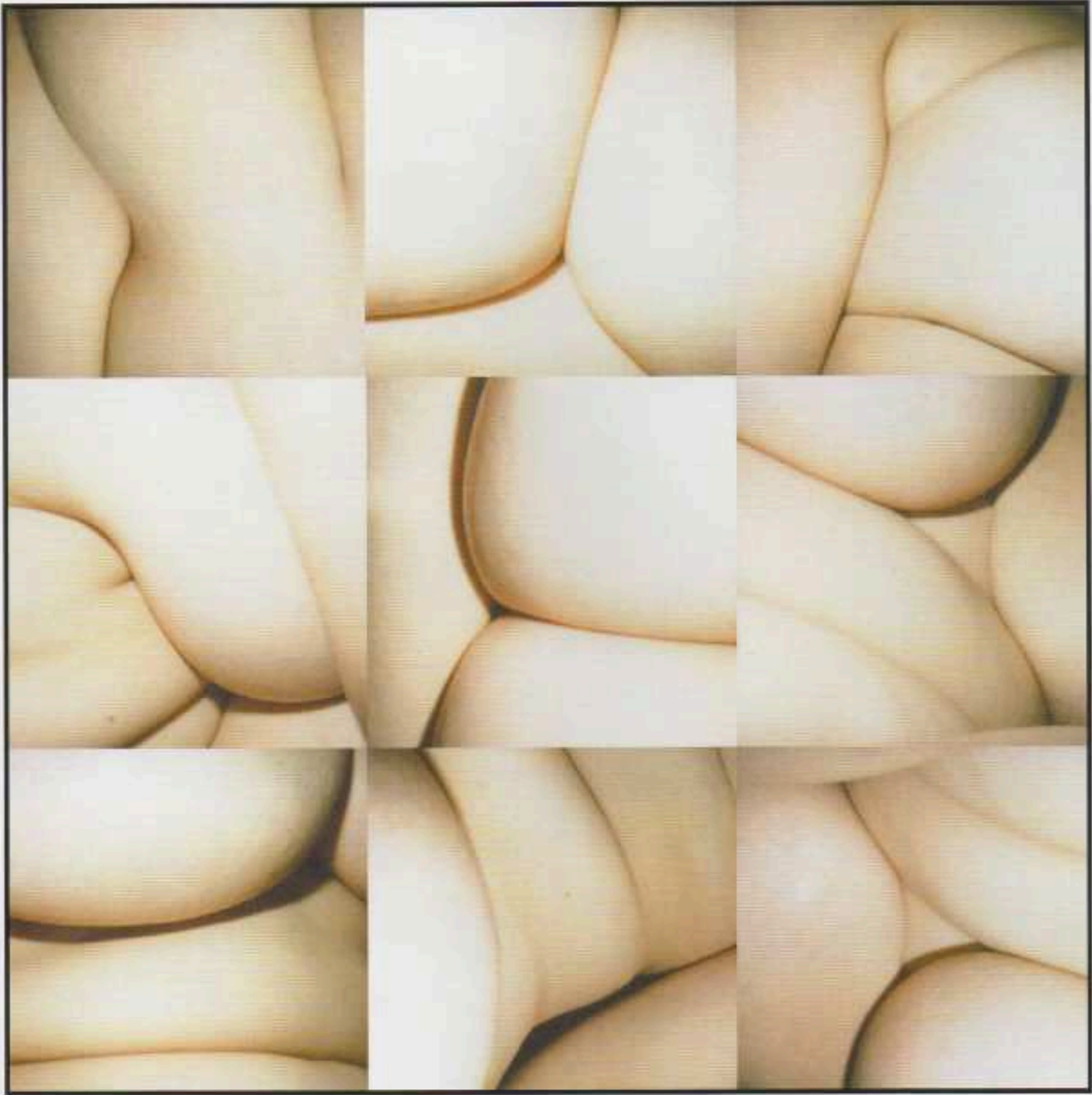
"Tongue Kiss," 2001.



"Perfect #2," 2002.



"Fisionet"

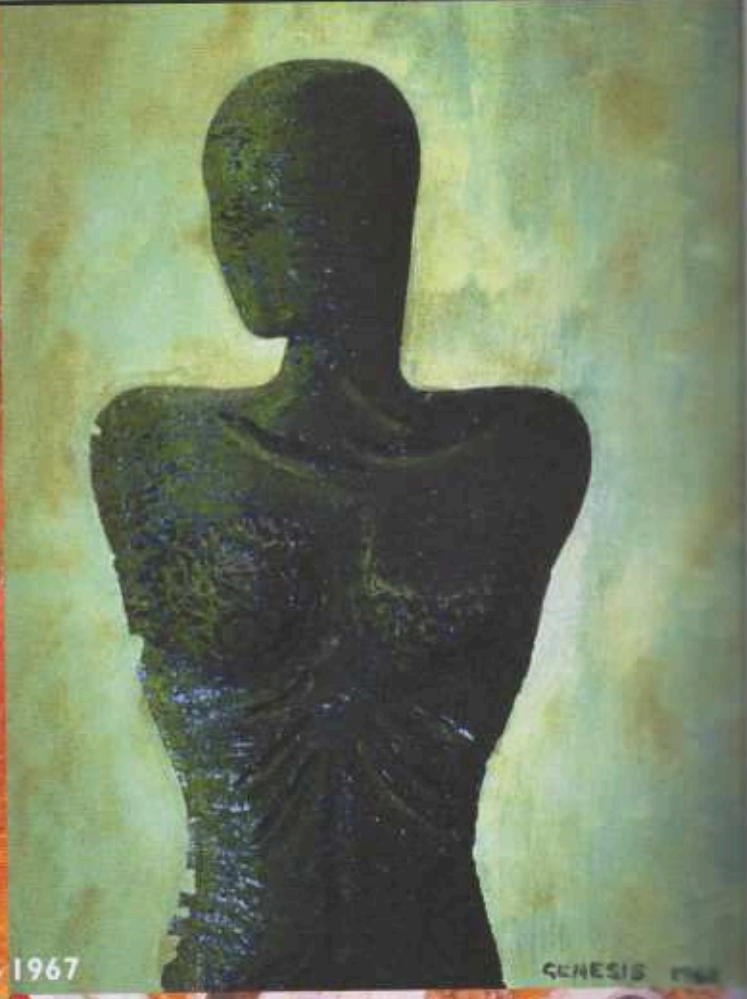


"Amnion Folds"

3 works by Breyer P-Orridge, 2002.

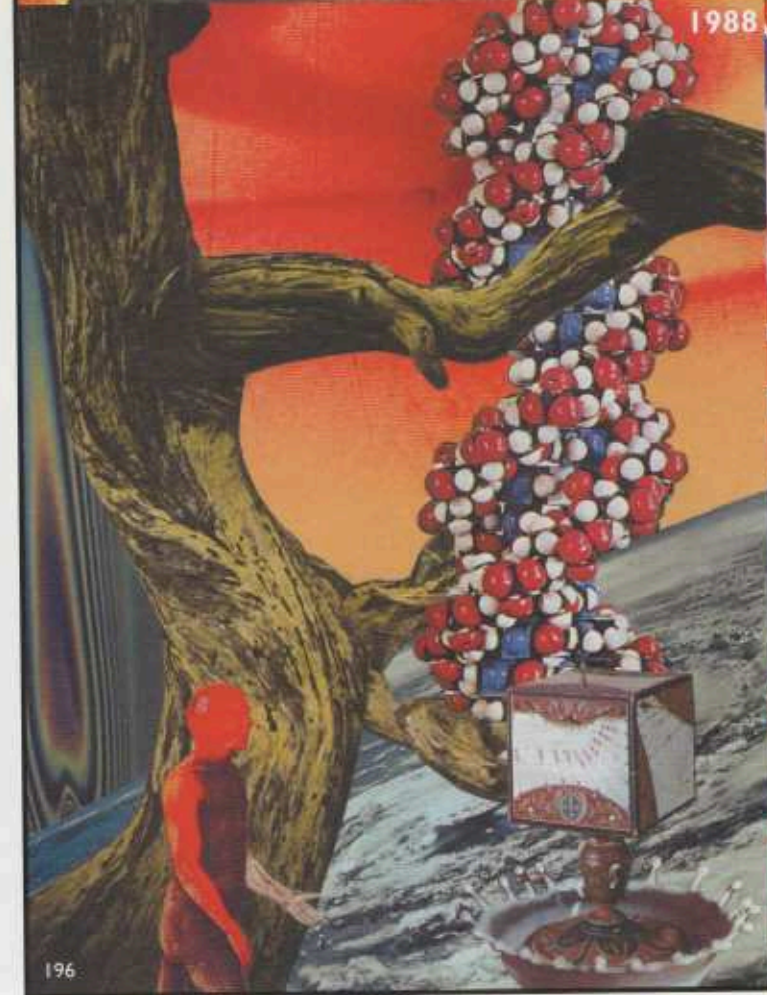


1966



1967

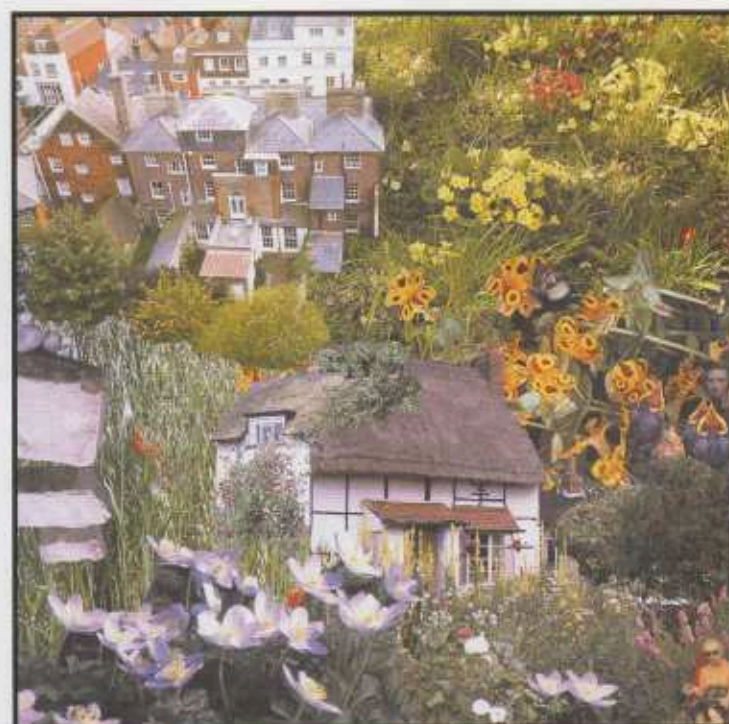
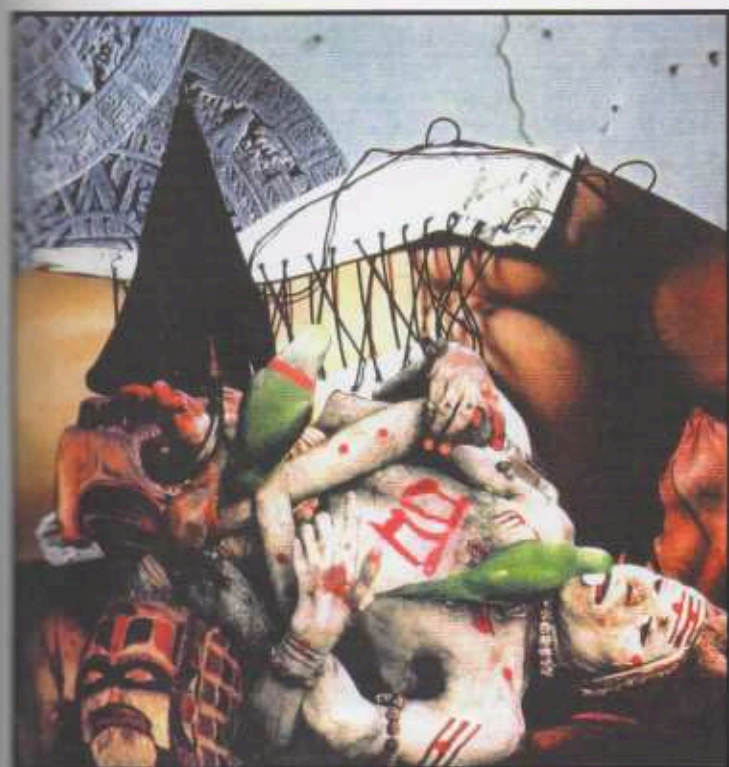
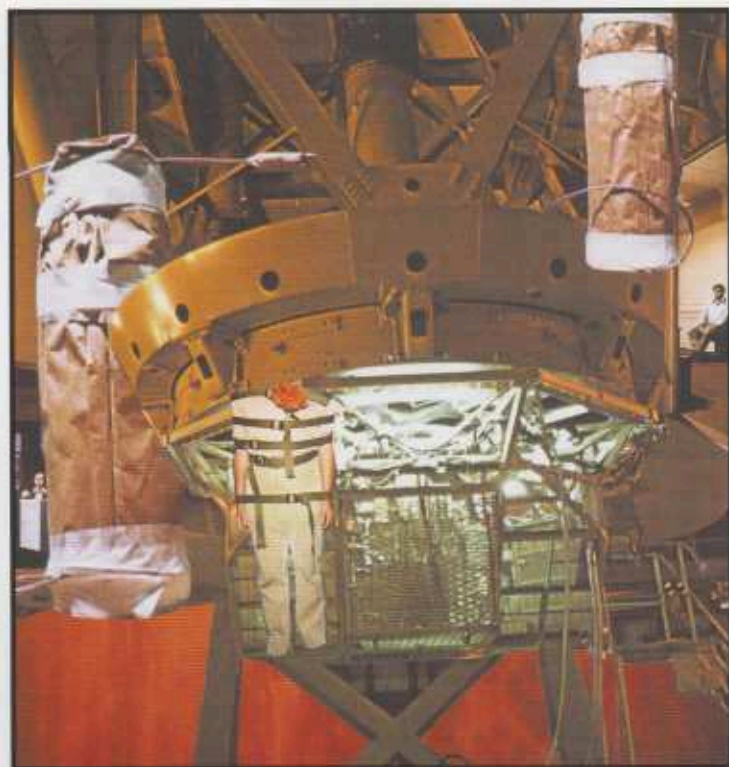
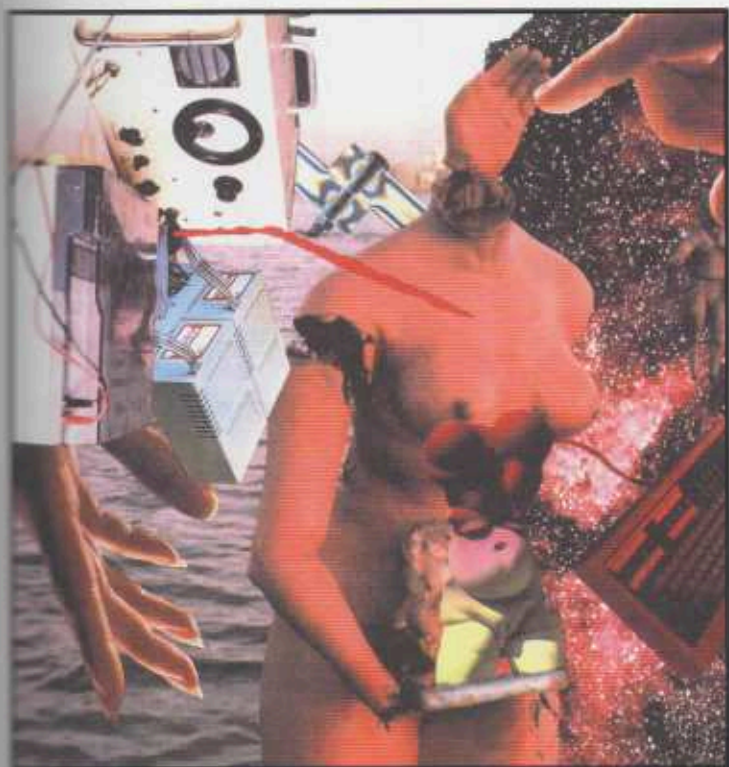
GENESIS 1966



1988



2001



Electric Newspapers, 1995.



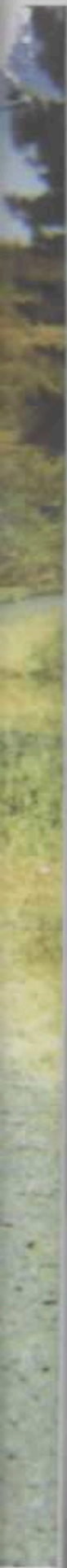


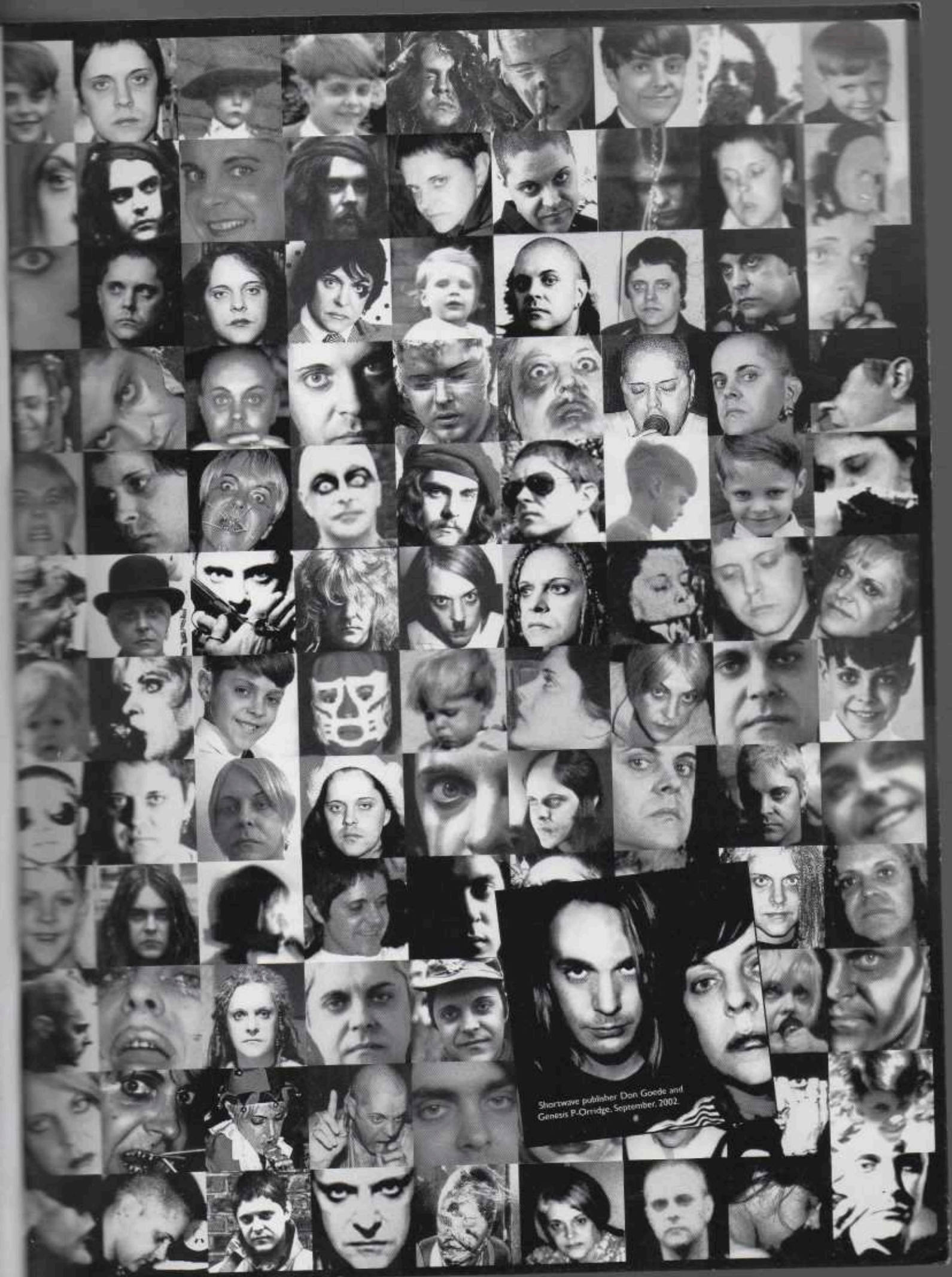
"The Tower", acrylic painting, 1967.



To be continued....







Shortwave publisher Don Goede and  
Genesis P. Orridge, September, 2002

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