

EARTH EARTH

Dialogue *Sound*



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MICHAEL OLITO
February 2 - April 6, 1986

The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba
This exhibition has been made possible by a grant from The Canada Council

The exhibition will be open to the public on February 2 with the opening ceremonies and performance at 8:00 p.m. on February 13



Windcatcher I, 1985



Windcatcher III (fish image), 1985



Windcatcher II (the flowing mane), 1985



Rites of Passage - Performance at Shared Stage, 1985 Photograph by: Bill Eakin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Standard forms expected in an exhibition catalogue such as an "acknowledgement" page seem almost an intrusion upon this publication which, as the exhibition curator, Terrence Heath, has explained elsewhere is not a documentation of the exhibition, but "is meant to be an integral part of the performance and exhibition"¹. The intimacy, the secrets of an artist's journal entries add a dimension rarely included in an art exhibition, and perhaps not easily given over by Michael Olito, the creator of *Earth Dialogue/Earth Sound*. His generosity, however, has not only

meant opening his diaries for our benefit and understanding, but giving unwavering assistance to the Gallery and to Terrence Heath in seeing the exhibition to completion.

As curator, Terrence Heath worked closely with the artist in determining the combined event of exhibition, performance and publication which makes up *Earth Dialogue/Earth Sound*. He has edited the journal entries into the selection of thoughts and observations which appear here.

The technical difficulties surrounding this exhibition were exceptional. Art museums the size and nature of The Winnipeg Art

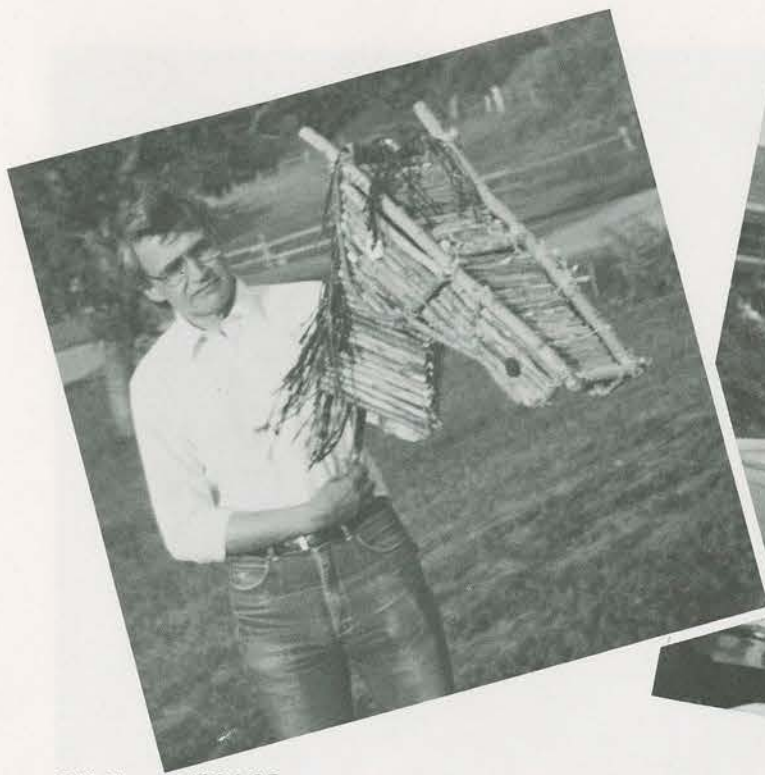
Gallery must employ means of control when natural materials enter the building for any reason. The level of humidity necessary to preserve works of art could encourage growth of various life forms where ordinarily they would lie dormant. However, the Gallery must also consider the integrity of the work of art, the wishes of the artist and stipulations of the lenders when displaying works made of natural materials and thereby any special treatment required. In an attempt to balance these demands, a consistent policy is difficult to maintain. The best of professional advice has been provided by

Gallery Conservator, Jane Douglas. I wish to commend her, team project leader Roderick Shiels and the preparation staff for the care and consideration they have given the technical problems of design and installation.

Funding for *Earth Dialogue/Earth Sound* has been provided by the Canada Council and The Winnipeg Art Gallery welcomes their confidence in this exhibition.

Carol A. Phillips
Director

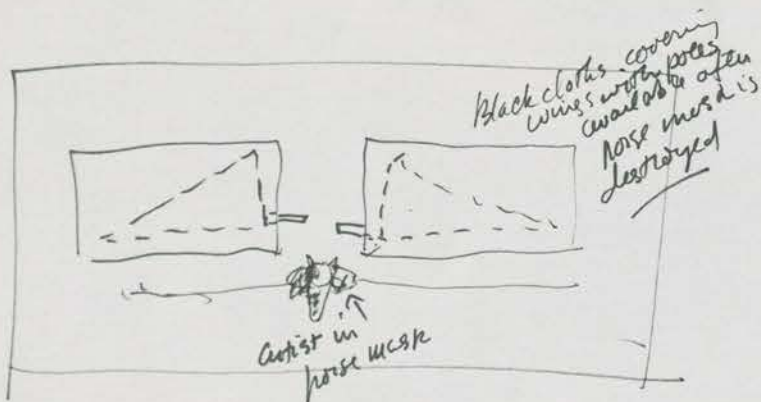
¹ Terrence Heath, "Earth Dialogue/Earth Sound", *WAG Magazine*, February/March, 1986, page 8 to 10.



Gift Horses, 1984-85



Bright flashy silver paper on glass catches spotlight and glimmers, feathers contrast to dark outside spot as artist rises - gently flaps wings - raises them above his head and the, then lights go out, drum stops and all is over.



After destruction of mask horse sinks into heap

Sketchbook Pages, 1984

in diminishing light (never complete dark) - drum stops for a short while - starts up slowly and, as light increases, artist begins to stir - takes wings and rises.

Progress of Piece -

- ① Drummer on stage - invoking horse (as if magic)
- ② Horse arrives and goes to stage - stops and turns.
- ③ Drumming stops - quiet -
- ④ Assassin appears at back of crowd - emits yell and runs at horse and begins attack as drum picks up with the action.
- ⑤ Horse is down, assassin retreats to stand behind drummer.
- ⑥ Lights diminish - all is quiet.
- ⑦ Drum begins and Phoenix rises with rising light and increasing drum.
- ⑧ Phoenix gestures overhead with wings.
- ⑨ Drum stops and lights go completely out.

Wings - silver and white only - perhaps even little bits of mirror on them (etc).

(detail) Small sections of mirror set into wood (glued to it)



Gift Horses, 1984-85



Horse Mask from Phoenix Performance, 1984 Photograph by: Ernest Mayer

INTRODUCTION

The following excerpts are taken from the last eight years of journals and sketchbooks of Michael Olito. Each one has been selected to map out the range and development of the artist's thoughts and feelings as he conceived of, prepared, and carried out major performance pieces. The passages are meant to be an integral part of the exhibition "*Earth Dialogue/Earth Sound*" and of the opening

performance piece for the occasion of the exhibition. It is hoped that they will allow the viewer to participate more fully in the performance and to imagine more vividly the role of the artifacts in the exhibition and how they form a part of the developing mythology of Olito's art.

Terrence Heath,
Guest Curator

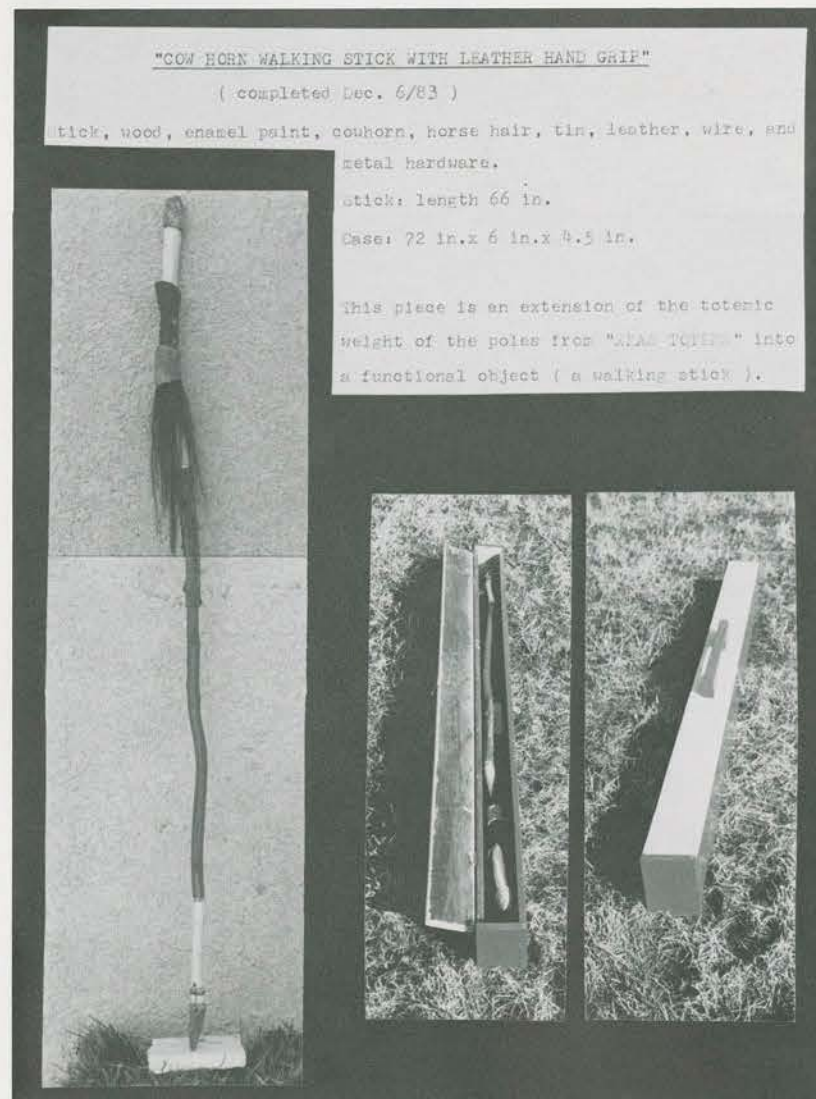
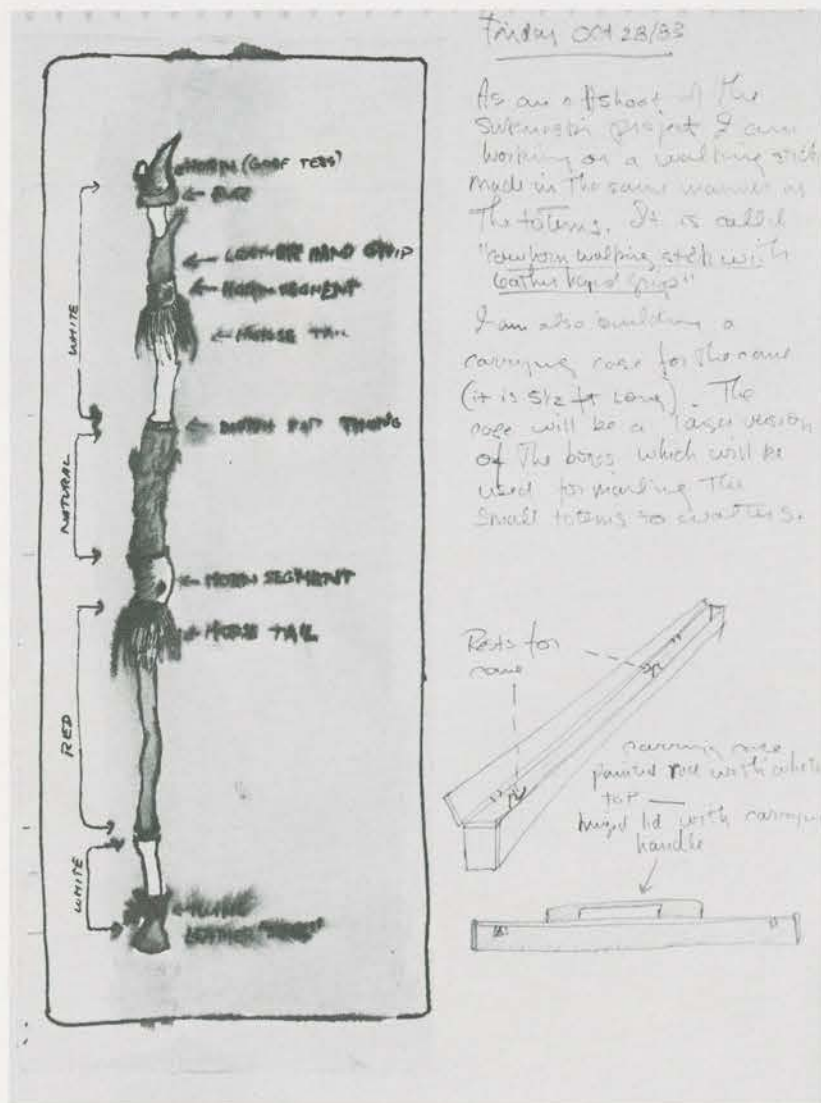
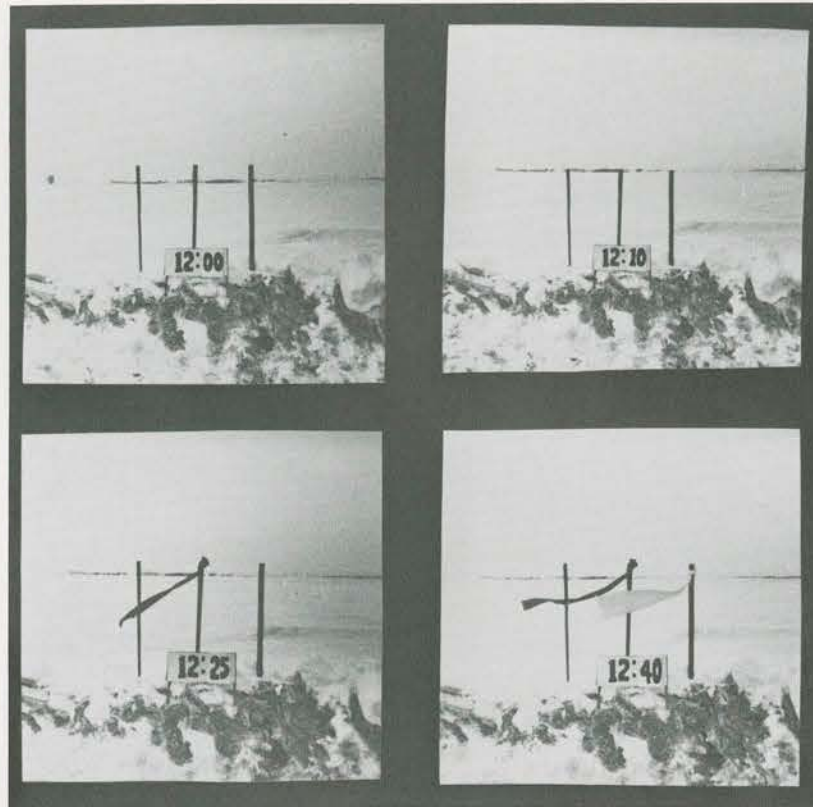
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"*Earth Dialogue/Earth Sound*" is an exhibition of work I have completed over the past two years. During this time performance has played an everincreasing role in my art and many of the articles in this exhibit are masks and other objects used in these performances. As in "*Phoenix*", where a horse mask was clubbed to pieces above my head, and in "*Rites of Passage*" where I defended myself with a shield against the same club, the pieces have grown to contain encapsulated acts of violence and I hope some of that energy lingers in the objects themselves.

I have many people to thank for their help with the exhibit including the Curator, Terrence Heath, and the two people directly involved with setting up

the show and catalogue, Roderick Shiels and Ernest Mayer. I would also like to thank Tony Tascona for, among other things, his help with certain aspects of "*Dawnscreen*". Special mention must also be made of everybody who has supported my work in the past and, especially, the artists who are helping with the performance, "*Earth Sound*", and have helped with my art in the past. Among these I single out George Morrisette and Vince Arnason, who have helped with every one of the performances, and Andy Suknaski with whom I have exchanged Christmas art for seven years. Finally a special thanks to my wife, Verla, for putting up with so much over the years.

Michael Olito





"Trying to see more clearly"

Meduto 179

Trying to See More Clearly, 1979

**MIKE OLITO: JOURNALS,
MARCH 1, 1978 – JULY 22, 1985**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1978

Project: "Banners"

DEAR _____

You have been chosen to participate in a conceptual art project. If you wish to help with this work follow the instructions, if not, please do not tell anyone about this letter until the project is finished.

- (1) Tell nobody about this letter until the project is finished
- (2) On Sunday, March 12, 1978, between _____ and _____ go to the spot marked on the accompanying map. I will meet you there beside the road.
- (3) Bring with you a piece of cloth 8 inches wide and not less than two feet long.

- (4) If, for any reason, you cannot come do not tell me or anyone else.
- (5) It is extremely important to arrive at the time requested.
- (6) Do not attempt to discuss this project with me until after it is finished.

The entire project will require only a few seconds of your time and will harm you in no way whatsoever.
Thank you very much for your cooperation.

P.S. You may bring anyone you wish with you to the meeting place as long as you do not tell them anything about the project until just before leaving.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 1978
NEAR NOON**

"Today I have been thinking about adding sound to my occurrence pieces. A display of photos accompanied by recordings of the sounds that went on during the process e.g. *Banners* –"

**SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 1978
"Banners"**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 1978
EVENING**

The "Banners" project went well. On thinking it over I am amazed by the effect it had on participants. As it was my first attempt at an organized project . . ."

**THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 1978
3:15 AM**

"For days my mind has been haunted by Jim Dine's 'car crash' – particularly the relationship between the girl reading and the words she reads."
"In the projects I have planned I am dealing with time but it has become encapsulated time. In the happenings e.g. 'car crash' and especially Alan Kaprow's 'calling' there is a sense of flowing time."



Island Link, 1978



Island Link, 1978



Island Link, 1978



Island Link, 1978

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 1978

Project: "Colonization"

"... If the artist can transform an object into art simply by decreeing it to be art he can therefore, by touching an area with that object, create an area of art..."

"The ramifications of 'colonization' are immense. After the project is finished the area will, indeed, be colonized and no longer under the laws of Canada or Manitoba. An artist could perform illegal acts in these areas and be immune from arrest..."

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 1978

Project: "The Answering Spirit" (Later entitled: "Section Link")

"This would appear to be a very appropriate form of prairie art with its emphasis on linear patterns over vast distances. 'The Answering Spirit' would provide a beautiful study of prairie isolation and the desire to communicate."

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20, 1978

Project: "Island Link"

"At Willow Island I will join the two islands off Willow Island (Crow and Dog Islands) with a rope."

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1978

Project: "Spring Colours"

"Early this afternoon three holes were cut into the ice of the Red River near the artist's home south of St. Norbert, Manitoba. 6 oz. of harmless vegetable dye was placed in each hole to freeze. After the dye has frozen the holes will be filled with water, which will freeze and trap the pockets of dye in the ice, not to emerge until the Spring breakup. The primary colours, red, yellow and blue were used."

FEBRUARY, 1979

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1979

Project: "Trying to See more Clearly"

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1979

Project: "Section Link"

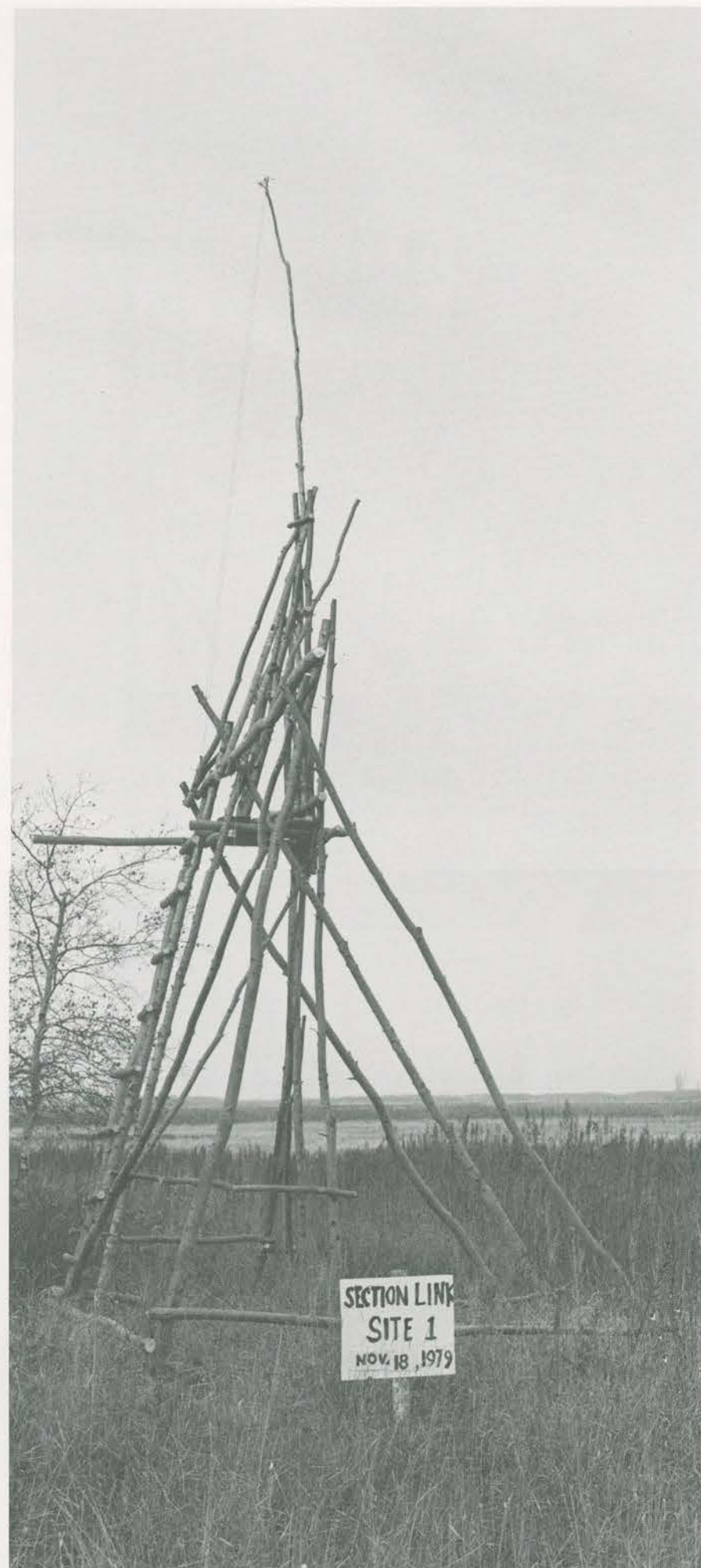
"On Sat, Sun - Wed, Thurs I was at MacGregor working on 'Section Link'. The towers have a magnificent - quietening religious quality -"



Section Link, 1978



Section Link, 1978



Section Link, 1978



Section Link, 1978

FEBRUARY 3, 1980

Project: *Totemic Execution* –
"Piece to be performed"

Oct. 18, 1982

Dear Andy,
You have received a beautiful but fragile object (a clay bird's egg made by Verla). Keep it carefully, it is the first part of this year's christmas exchange.

Mike Olito

P.S. Keep both copies of this letter

Nov. 5, 1982

Dear Andy,
The egg can not endure. Like art and artists it is too fragile. Take this stone and, at midnight Christmas Eve, smash the egg – YOU MUST DO THIS.

Mike Olito

P.S.P.S. Keep both copies of this letter

Dear Andy,

Arnason has played his role and delivered this letter to you. DO NOT BREAK THE EGG. At midnight Christmas Eve take the stone to some remote place and throw it far away. Tomorrow take the egg to wherever you are celebrating Christmas and put it in a place of honor, keep it forever but do not forget the stone

Merry Christmas to all from Verla and Mike

P.S. Return one copy of this and each of the other letters to Arnason.

FRIDAY, October 28, 1983

Project: *"Cowhorn Walking Stick with Leather Hand Grip"*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1983

"Not knowing how art comes but knowing the thread – sensing what is good . . ."

" . . . perhaps all art should be given away."

" . . . nothing really works right there seems to be no possible follow up to things – perhaps this is the way the world works . . . things seem to start but never build into anything – I long for a sort of community – an uninterrupted communication – talking into the night – no one is in control of his life –"

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1983

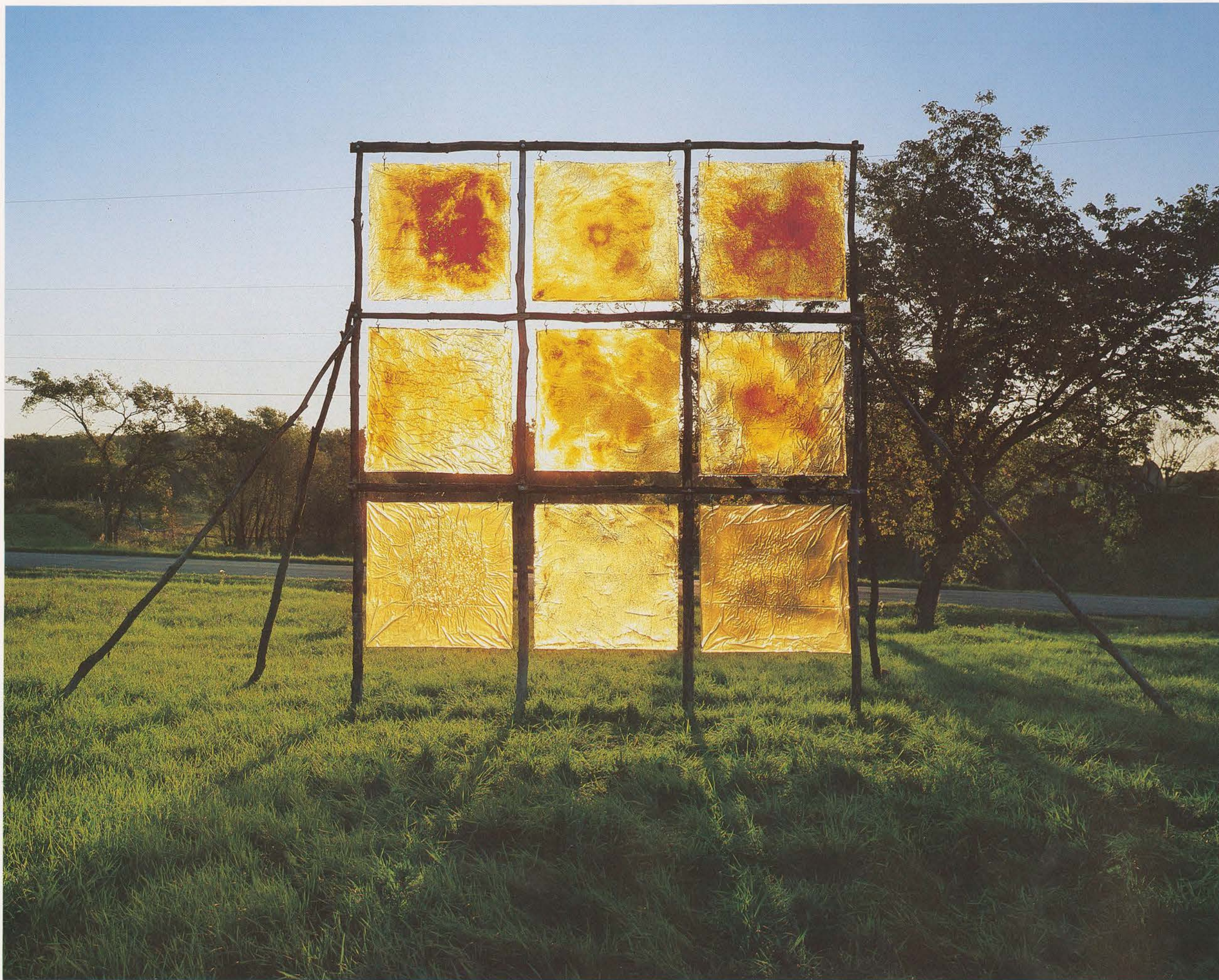
NEAR NOON

"Sometimes I cannot escape from the beauty of mind images . . ."

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1983

11:15 P.M.

"The past three years of my life have been such confusion – everything has been just sort of shoved aside as I tried to keep up with working, drinking and life –"



Dawnscreen: Installation I, The artist's farm, Red River Drive, St. Norbert, 1985 Photograph by: Ernest Mayer

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1983

11:30 P.M.

"A night of great turmoil and art."

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1983

"There was something about survey work that I found incredibly beautiful."

"... I can see the natural world of the coyote but I cannot act in it – The coyote has paths of a kind but lives in a state of nature in his world, as free as there can be freedom. The bull (it is a Spanish fighting bull) lives in an artificial world and is tormented and goaded by man. This bull can see the coyotes world but must act out his role."

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1983

"Have been thinking about lining up things (e.g. Icelandic studies) I like the idea of pointers being moved to different sites to bring significance of one site to the other. Ivan Eyre once criticized conceptual art by saying that it was "just pointing". I think this is a wonderful description of it."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1983

"Dreaming – many felt but not remembered –"

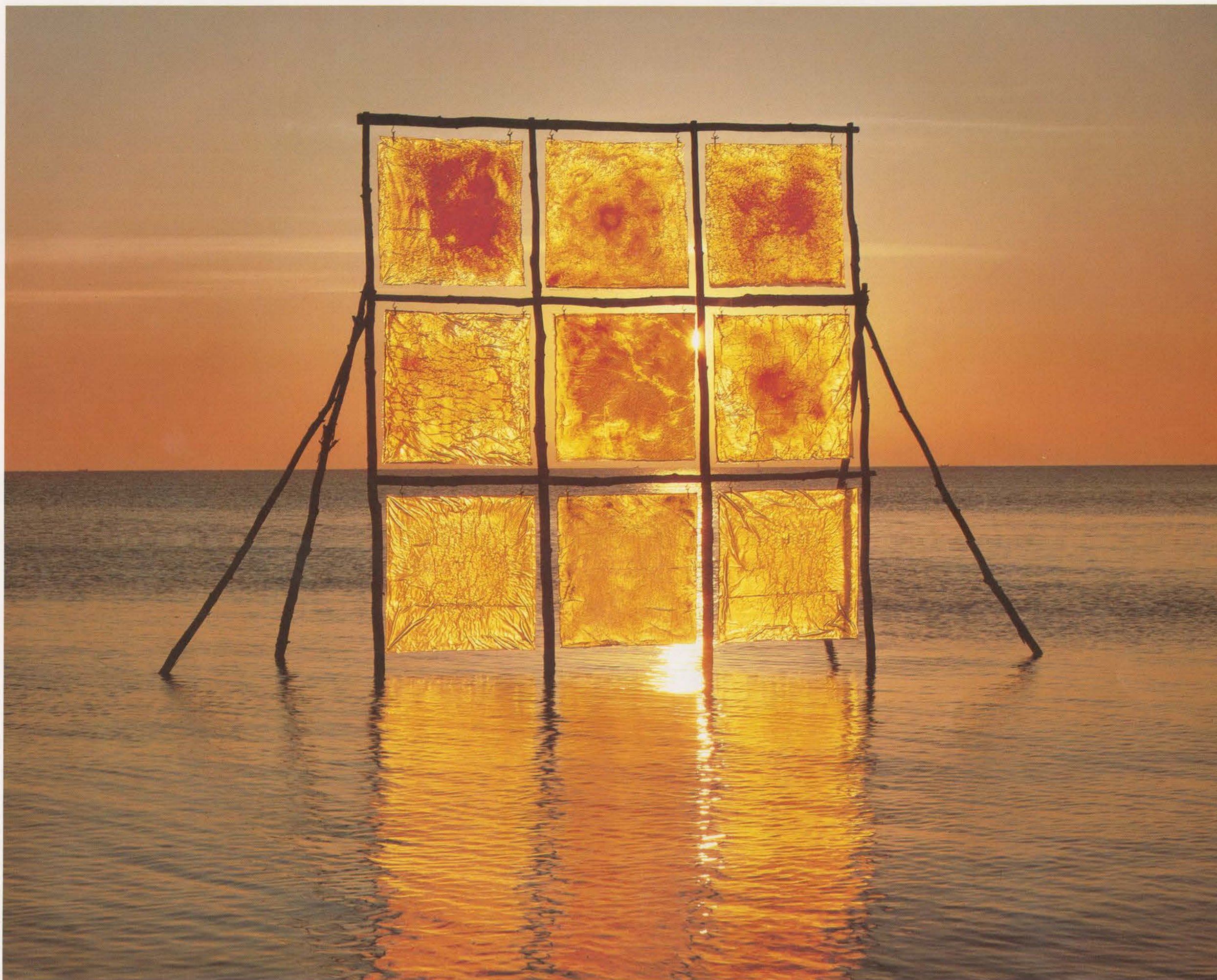
"No remembered dreams from drunken sleep."

"Amidst all this the mind struggles with art. Not the doing (drawing, etc.) but formulating something. It is almost as if, by a massive act of will power, you must come to grips with the entire flow of the cosmos before you can make specific actions. Most art is done in the head pulling these things together. Hard to describe. For some reason I have a desire to meet with people and talk to them. It is an irony of art that it is such a lonely job at the same time as being a form of communication. When I do meet

people they, or me, always seem so rushed and busy. Everybody is always just going away to do something. The whole world seems to be like my mind – agitated – jumping – working only in short ten minute sections then rushing on to something else. The winter trap closes on us – Everything is so difficult in the winter –"

"The rulapilsas are cooking in the kitchen and they make a fine smell for reading the sagas by."

"Art is devastating on one, working only makes you feel wasted and empty but art destroys. I guess there is no answer."



Downscreen: Installation II, Lake Winnipeg off Willow Island Gimli, 1985 Photograph by: Ernest Mayer

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1983

2:05 P.M.

"I am not a critic or even an interpreter of my art – what I have to say about it is largely irrelevant."

"All art is about art in the end but you cannot say this . . ."

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1984

10:20 A.M.

"Last night I worked on the Kroetsch sculpture. . . . The formal becomes common – understandable – The whole point of Kroetsch's writing . . . it is strange – this is a portrait drawn from the art not the man . . . – perhaps to do things in landscape (totems, ropes, towers) there must be a re-evaluation – the rules and formal bridges are not the same – more submission is necessary –"

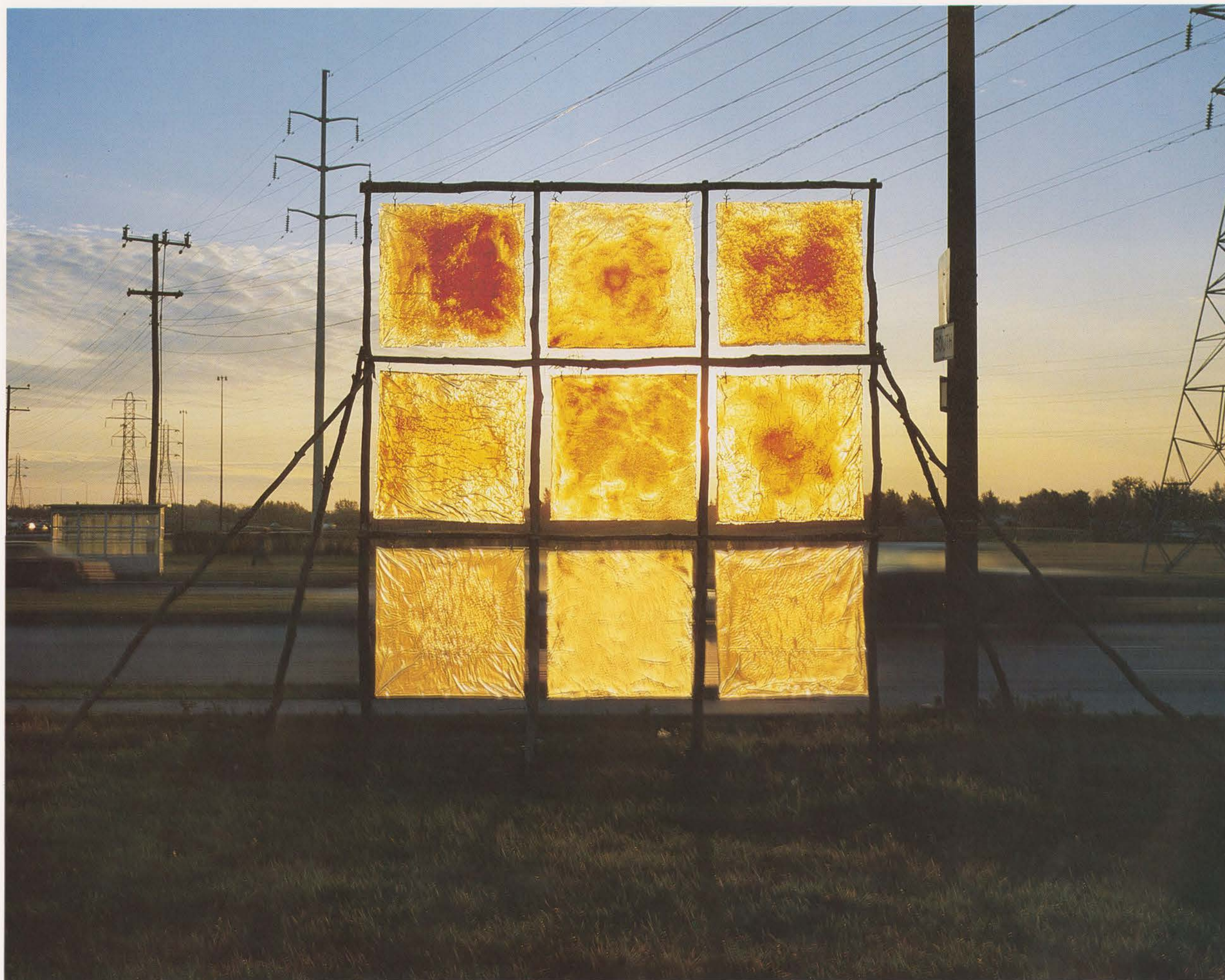
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1984

8:30 A.M.

"Tony Tascona wants me to watch him cast resin and learn to use it. Last night I had no ideas but this morning while watching the sun rise through my east window behind the resin piece he gave us I have a splendid idea."

11:20 A.M.

" have further explored the possibility of resin project with drawings and a small model containing a piece of resin . . . It would create such a gentle intrusion in the landscape."



Dawnscreen: Installation III, Pembina Highway, Bishop Grandin Boulevard Interchange, Winnipeg, 1985 Photograph by: Ernest Mayer

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1984 – 10:25 A.M.

"I wonder if things people do in forgotten dreams colour the way we feel about those people . . ."

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1984 – 6:30 P.M.

"Today I have been working on an art piece to do with Marcel Gosselin through the mail. It is called "Earth Dialogue".

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1984

"Difficulties with Gosselin – perhaps I can use my square to invoke a response –"

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1984

"I think I shall do invocation pieces on the square and not mail them until I receive a response. . . ."

MARCH 11, 1984

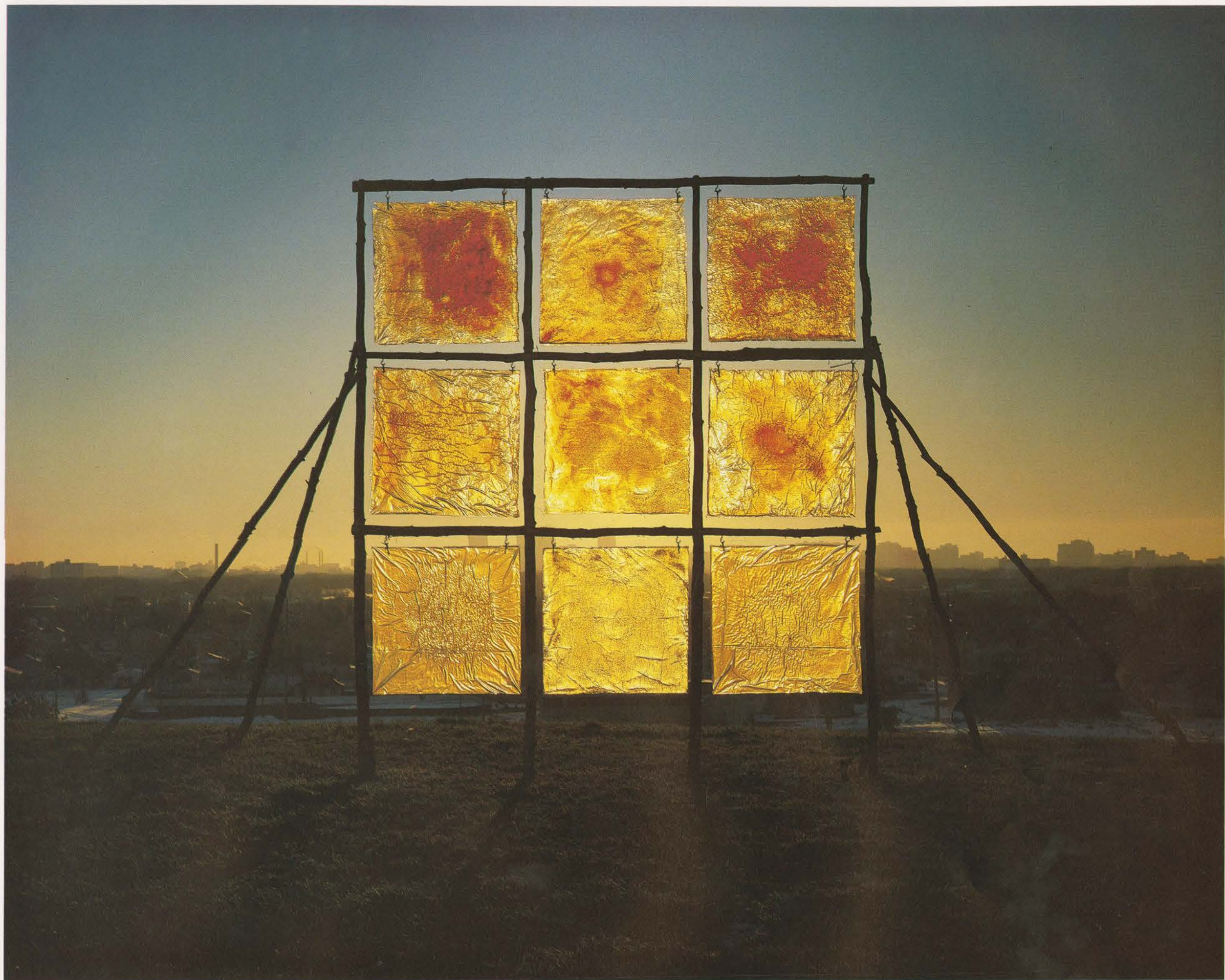
"The square and the stones wait but there is no reponse. The invocations are over and unheard – they have created their own beauty and now, perhaps, the dialogue must turn inward, a dialogue between myself and the earthsquare or a dialogue within myself. Perhaps people cannot speak to each other but must work alone."

APRIL 21, 1984

Project: "Earthsound".

SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 1984

Project: "Earth Dialogue: The Summer Square"



Dawnscreen: Installation IV, Westview Park, Winnipeg, 1985. Photograph by: Ernest Mayer

JULY 24, 1984

"Gosselin Visits the Square"

TUESDAY, JULY 17, 1984

Project: *"Earth Dialogue: The Guardians"*

"The square is small but it may contain the whole world and it will grow to contain the actual world with its extension into 'Earth Sound'."

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1984

9:30 P.M.

"'Earth Dialogue', like all my art for the past six years or so, is essentially about human communication, the difficulties of establishing and maintaining relationships. . . ."

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 1984

"As posts are mailed to different places, the square expands on its axes forming a world square with Winnipeg as the symbolic centre —"

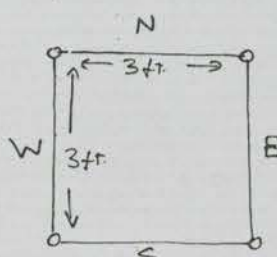
TUESDAY, MAY 29, 1984

Project: *"Dawnscreen"*

". . . the piece is visually perfect. The glow before the sun actually rises is amazing. The panels seem to be brighter than any part of the sky —"

"EARTH DIALOGUE"
 DATE: Jan 20/84 LOCATION: Lot 49, Red River Drive, St. Norbert,
 TO: Marcel Gosselin, Man.

You have received, with this letter, four site markers, connected to each other by a measuring string. They are to define a site three feet by three feet, oriented north to south and east to west. The markers are made of natural wood (the forces of nature), painted white (the pure, aesthetic intrusion of art), and red (the blood passion of the artist).



I have chosen a site near my home and you are to select one near yours. These sites are to serve to initiate a dialogue between we two artists and between the two areas of earth. We must act or observe within the boundaries of our sites and communicate, by mail, to develop this dialogue. There will be no predetermined end to this project and its finish must come as a natural consequence of its progress.

Michael Chute

Sketchbook Page, 1984

"EARTH DIALOGUE"
 DATE: Jan 22/84 (page 1) LOCATION: St. Norbert
 TO: M. Gosselin
 " SITE DESCRIPTION "



" View from the west "

The site I have chosen is in a small, planted spruce and poplar bush to the east of the dugout on the farm where we live. To the south and west are open fields, to the north a hedge and a tree nursery, and to the east a low, excavated area containing two dugouts. Beyond the dugouts are our horse pasture, yard, and house.

The actual site is in an area of the bush that was burned over and the small tree, visible in front of the site, is dead. At the time of the installation the area was covered with a foot of snow.

M. Gosselin

Sketchbook Page, 1984

JUNE 28, 1984

5:15 A.M.

"I work in a very nervous manner – cannot concentrate on anything but the screen and neglect life – at the same time rain delays enrage me –"

SUNDAY, JULY 1, 1984

8:00 A.M.

"Yesterday disaster. The night before a wind blew the greenhouse over – threw the panel that will not dry, jam-side down, into the grass – it is ruined . . ."

SUNDAY, JULY 8, 1984

EVENING

"Am now uneasy about gallery shows – how to remain out of their influence – already they are trying to organize my art – timing is so awkward – . . . can I now work free of thinking of filling these galleries?"

"Enright is going to write about me . . . I don't know – the art must come from the art and it is difficult to get involved in these things which feed back from the wrong side – everything steam rolls – Hughes also wants to write about me too much introspection – they will ask questions –"

TUESDAY, JULY 16, 1984

1:40 P.M.

"I have just photographed the square in summer . . . It is nice to think of the square guarded by natural forces until I make my next move –"

"EARTH DIALOGUE"
DATE: Jan 22/84 (page 2) LOCATION: St. Norbert
TO: M. Gosselin



"From the west"

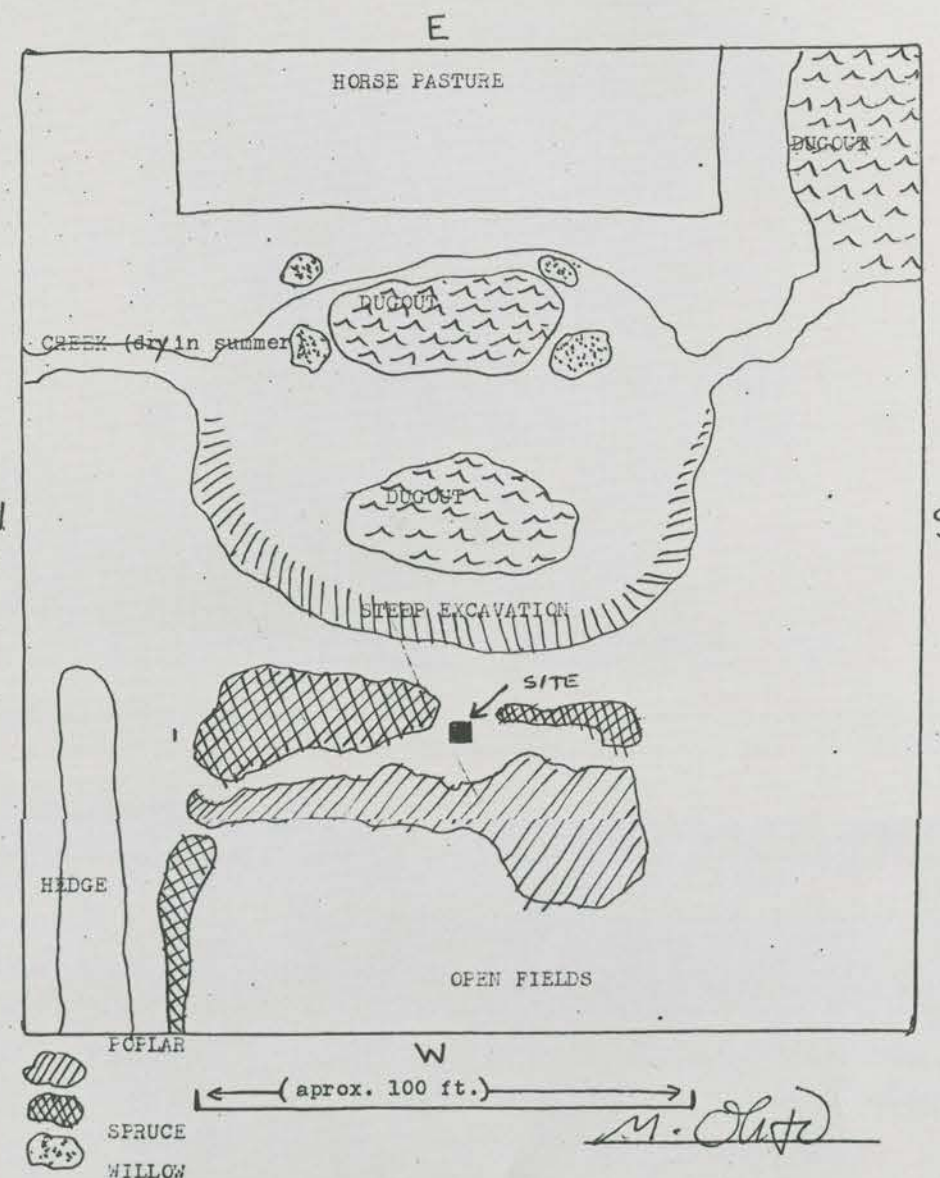


"From south, south west"

M. Gosselin

Sketchbook Page, 1984

"EARTH DIALOGUE"
DATE: Jan 22/84 (page 3) LOCATION: St. Norbert
TO: M. Gosselin



Sketchbook Page, 1984

SUNDAY, JULY 29, 1984
4:15 A.M.

"... yesterday I did much art despite the incredible heat -"

TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1984
11:00 A.M.

Project: "The Broken Horse" (Later called: "Phoenix")
- have just spoken to Grant Guy on the phone - he wants me to do a performance for shared space some time between Oct. 20 and the new year...
"I will make a large horse mask and then see how I feel about the performance piece."
"Have been working on the mask for "Horse". I really have no plan but am sort of drawing with the sticks."

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1984
MIDNIGHT

"The horse mask will be destroyed but from the ruins will rise a "phoenix" - the artist - in white feathers -"

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 1984
1:30 A.M.

"The mask looks good in the moon light - I propped it up against the car and lay on the ground and looked at it (now I am covered with small, green worms)"
"Spent most of the night thinking about the performance sculpture -"
"why must I do such high risk things - Art, gambling, racing horses - things with absolutely no security!! -"

"EARTH DIALOGUE"
 DATE: Feb 1/84 (page 1) LOCATION: St. Norbert
 TO: M. Gossehn
 "CASHTOC"



But the Gigantics—the face of Cashtoc on which they were dancing was square—were wearing the burning skin of nettles, and their four masks were facing, at the same time, the Four Giants of the Sky, enough to calm the furies of the elements.

Their masks were four.

The one of the face. The mask of the Golden Moor. Blue eyes, brows like blond mustaches, teeth of silver, lime and carmine on their cheeks. The one behind, the one of the back, the one that is never seen and goes with us, a mask of the carbon of a fragrant wood with luminous moles. We know from it that we are absent from what goes on behind us, followed by the seeds of sleep in the great darkness of life. The mask of the right ear, over the right shoulder, the slingman, a blue maskarell, or mask in the shape of a swell or sea shell, and the one on the other side, over the left shoulder, the shoulder on which the blow gun is carried, the mask of joy, the smile from one corner of the mouth to the other in the growing quarter of the moon.

Sisimite, as soon as he heard Tazol, a spindle of corn and wind, jumped four times from one side to the other, trying to enclose him in the cardinal points.

"Don't be afraid of anything, Sisimite," Tazol said, laughing his rasping laugh of dry corn shaken by the wind, realizing that the other one was enclosing him in the four leaps of the universe, "I'll not escape these limits, you don't."

All quotes from "Mulata" by Miguel Angel Asturias.

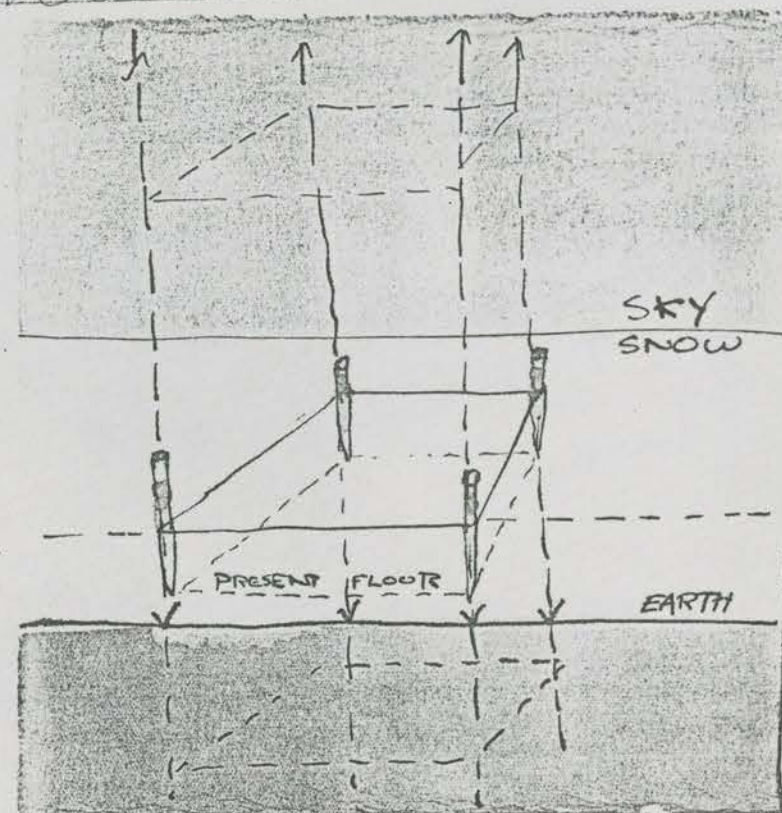
Wooden drums, tunnels of unending echoes. Leather drums, bellies of resounding wind. Sea shells with a prophetic howl. Tortoise shells. Empty gourds. Cane flutes. Jingles. Ocarinas. And the Giants and the Gigantics dancing, thanks to their four masks, they had their faces turned at the same time to the four extremities of the celestial quadruped who was covering Cashtoc's square face—the square of Tierrapaulita—easy to recognize in his invisible presence, for in his chest could be heard the magic face of the makers of sundials, and around his neck like that of a hanged man the necklace which roared, announcing destruction.

the Giants, who were the four sides of the square face of Cashtoc, the Great, the Immense, and the Gigantics, who were now getting ready to dance, not with the sound of a celebration—they were not in Tierrapaulita to celebrate—but in compensation for the insult that had been made to the other ones.

M. Gossehn

Sketchbook Page, 1984

"EARTH DIALOGUE"
 DATE: Feb 1/84 (page 2) LOCATION: St. Norbert
 TO: M. Gossehn



"Cashtoc" is an intensification of the square through the parallel imagery of "Mulata", a book I started reading after the square had been established for this project. I have made the four masks and placed them on my square, now the pegs will double for the masks. Because the masks look upward to the masks in the sky I am extending my space upward to infinity and downward to the bottom of the pegs. It can go lower if I excavate the ground. I am the gigantic and my art dances in the square.

M. Gossehn

Sketchbook Page, 1984

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1984

"Today I made the nostril and eye sticks and put them in the horse mask. They are not properly painted yet but they are marvellous. Finally I am beginning to see how primitive artists think..."

FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 1984 MIDNIGHT

"Have just come back from a walk. It is cool and absolutely still outside — bright stars and northern lights — as I walked I remembered another dream I had last night. In it the panels were falling from the screen and breaking — these dreams of my art breaking must have something to do with the inevitable breaking of the horse during the performance — This act is beginning to trouble me more and more — It was necessary to make the mask unbearably beautiful in order to give strength to the act of destruction but I succeeded all too well — I walked and thought about this — it is going to be a very difficult thing to do — I hope the emotion I feel will come through in the performance —"

SEPTEMBER 6, 1984

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1984

"There is no flow of art — only in retrospect do I seem to be doing anything."

MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1984

"... now my show in the WAG is to be January '86 and they want the performance 'Earthsound' for it. I cannot reconcile the delay with the piece — it makes no sense — art cannot be handled like this — it might become false by then —"

"The square is obscured by netting — camouflaged ... The delay (Feb/86) for 'Earthsound' causes confusion and introspection. What does it all mean now? Art becomes nuclear, confidence wanes — (The square is hardly visible under the netting) — The fall leaves begin the job and the artist continues, covering the square and covering the meaning. It all flowed so perfectly into 'Earthsound' now all cannot lie dormant for over a year — the square must live — but how?"

February 1, 1984

Dear Mike,

I received your wooden markers and must say that your ideas so fascinating. It brought back many previous thoughts I had had concerning the many changes that had taken place on my property in last few years; sometimes they are subtle, and other times they are drastic, but always they were interesting....

However I always seem to need a "Recovery" period after each show I have had.... a time to think things out. I can't say that I would feel at ease, at the time, to begin such a dialogue. I guess I have been dialoguing my way through the last paragraphs..... without really being aware of it. If you don't mind I would like to hang onto the markers, and maybe at some future point.... well, who knows, I may be more inclined to set them up and observe or participate in the CHANGES brought on by nature.

I really appreciate your enthusiasm; it's something not easy to find....
Till next time.
Yours truly,
Marcel Gosselin

"EARTH DIALOGUE"

DATE: Feb 11/84 LOCATION: St. Norbert

In response to Gosselin's reluctance to participate in "Earth Dialogue" at this time, I am beginning a series of invocations to draw a response from him. He will not be informed of these acts and the documentation of them will not be in the form of letters but will make up information to be forwarded to him after he does respond.

There will be four invocations to parallel the four masks which define the square. The invocations will be as follow:

- #1... a signal fire..the mask of the quarter moon..seen from afar by the sense of sight...
- #2... a gun fired on the square..the mask of the shell, ear..the sense of hearing..the shot heard from afar...
- #3... magic..the mask of the carbon of a fragrant wood..the dark side of the moon..things unseen..the hidden recesses of the mind...
- #4... the dance of the gigantic..the final mask..the mask of my own face...an immense mask of sticks will be made to give me the stature of a gigantic and I will dance in the square, an earth shaking dance..the sense of touch and the trembling of the earth..the culmination of the invocations...

M. Gosselin

Sketchbook Page, 1984

Sketchbook Page, 1984

OCTOBER 28, 1984

Performance: "Phoenix"

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1984

"If only art wasn't so destructive."

"...I know no answers. I know none of the secrets of art and life - all I know is that some of the things I do are not only better than anything I have ever seen but also better than anything I can imagine - The best stuff comes from an original idea that is often almost absurd -"

"...must start something new - the square is dormant - nothing is coming out of it - it waits for 'Earthsound', which will not come..."

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1984

"I brought all the art in from the shed and stored it in the basement... I may put some order to the storage and make a kind of display... The artifacts in the basement are so fine. I wish my show was coming up this February -"

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1984

"The fifth horse grows in the basement - no longer are they 'three horses for Christmas presents' - but now the horses are in control - they have the bit in their teeth and are running..."

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 1985

"...I now see the correctness, the timeliness of 'Dance of the Gigantic' and 'Phoenix' - First, the powerful depiction of suffering - existing - energetic man - (still hopeful - perhaps not aware of original sin - still innocent - with some vague hope that something would come of it) - in the dance and then the coming of awareness - The full realization - the shattering reality of the smashed horse and the triumph of the spirit on the wings - submission to the process - but the resurrection of the process - life and death - we cannot conquer death - but it gives power to life -"

"EARTH DIALOGUE"
DATE: Feb 11 / 84 LOCATION: St. Norbert

INVOCATION #1 (THE FIRE)



At 4:15 p.m. today I lit a signal fire on the square, hoping Gosselin would see the smoke and respond by mail. I took the goat with me, for I have heard that goats have supernatural powers.



M. Gosselin

Sketchbook Page, 1984

"EARTH DIALOGUE"
DATE: Feb 16 / 84 LOCATION: St. Norbert

INVOCATION #2 (THE SHOT)



At 12:40 p.m. today I fired one shot with the shotgun on the square, hoping Gosselin would hear the noise and respond by mail. I have kept the shell casing and will use it as decoration on the mask used in the final invocation.

M. Gosselin

Sketchbook Page, 1984

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1985

"The windcatchers do not really fit into the 'theology' of my work but do borrow strongly from personal images - (horse, fish, skull)"

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 1985

"The performance art is very different from just making things - there doesn't seem to be the same continuity - the catharsis is exaggerated - the build up and let down - destruction and rebirth -"

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 1985

Project: "Rites of Passage"
"Yesterday I worked on the new fish . . . and painted the shield - it still needs one more coat of red but is marvellous - It felt so good to paint the blood red paint on it and let it seep into the dry sticks. Somehow it feels so good to paint this object - it is almost like a war shield and I am building up its magic to protect myself during the performance. It is also true that you make impossibly beautiful objects when you know they are going to be destroyed - damaged . . ."

"This may be the last performance to use these instruments and format of the players drawing the mask. Somehow I feel the performance of 'Earthsound' in Feb. will end a lot of things."

MONDAY, MAY 13, 1985

It is slowly dawning on me what the piece was all about - 'Phoenix' spoke of the beauty of art that can grow out of the suffering of life - 'Rites' speaks of the possibility of human endurance despite the aggression of friends . . . a much more somber theme - no marvellous solution but the powerful growth from underneath . . .

"EARTH DIALOGUE"

INVOCATION #3 (THE APPEAL BY MAGIC)

Note: All information for the practices used in this section was obtained from Kristjana Gunnars.

DATE: Feb 13 / 84

STEP 1...THE PLACING OF THE PROTECTIVE STONES.

I have decided to do two magical invocations to attract Gosselin's attention. Three days before using any magic it is necessary to place three protective stones in a sacred place (the square) to insure the safety of the person (myself) using the magic. Today I placed The three stones, wrapped in a cloth, in the square.



M. Gosselin

DATE: Feb 17 / 84

STEP 2...THE FIRST MAGIC INVOCATION, USING A COMBINATION OF LETTERS.

At 4:00 a.m. I woke in the middle of the night and wrote the required letters on a piece of paper which I now carry on my person.

M. Gosselin

"EARTH DIALOGUE"

(1)

INVOCATION #4 (THE DANCE OF THE GIGANTIC)

DATE: Sunday, Feb 19 / 84



The mask was completed, the head dress containing all the images of the square which parallel the invocations, the moon for sight (the signal fire), the carbon of fragrant wood for unseen things (the magic), and the shell for ear and hearing (the shot and the doubling of shell for shell and two ears). The central face is my own face (the face of the gigantic).

Sketchbook Page, 1984

Sketchbook Page, 1984

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Apparatus for *Earthsound*: All measurements in centimetres. Height precedes width precedes depth

Staff
1984
painted wooden pole decorated with photographs & found objects
284.48 x 30.48

500 Striking Sticks
1985-86
painted sticks
38.10

500 Striking Stones
1985-86
painted stones
approx. hand-sized

2 Rattles
Log Drum & Drumsticks
Stringed Instrument
1984
4 musical instruments, sticks, string, paint

Pieces in Earth Dialogue:
The Mask of the Gigantic
1984
mask of sticks, string, photographs, found objects
213.36 x 96.52 x 35.56

Phoenix Wings
1984
2 wings of sticks, feathers, string, mirror reflectors
274.32 x 76.20

Horse Masks from Phoenix
1984
2 masks of sticks, string, paint
each mask 132.08 x 121.92 x 35.56

The Large Horse
1985
mask of sticks, string, paint
274.32 x 243.84 x 76.20

(2)



At 10:30 a.m. I put on the mask and the gigantic loomed among the trees.

Sketchbook Page, 1984

(3)



All was ready and.....

Sketchbook Page, 1984

Club
1985
wooden pole painted &
decorated with feathers
183.0

Shield from Rites of Passage
1985
sticks, nails, paint decorated with
feathers
139.70 x 63.50

*Cowhorn Walking Stick with
Leather Hand Grip*
1983-84
wooden walking stick decorated
with paint & found objects,
enclosed in a painted wooden
carrying case
stick: 165.1 cm
case: 182.88 x 15.24 x 11.43

Dawnscreen
1984-85
resin panels mounted on a
wooden frame
411.48 x 365.76

Above all collection of the Artist

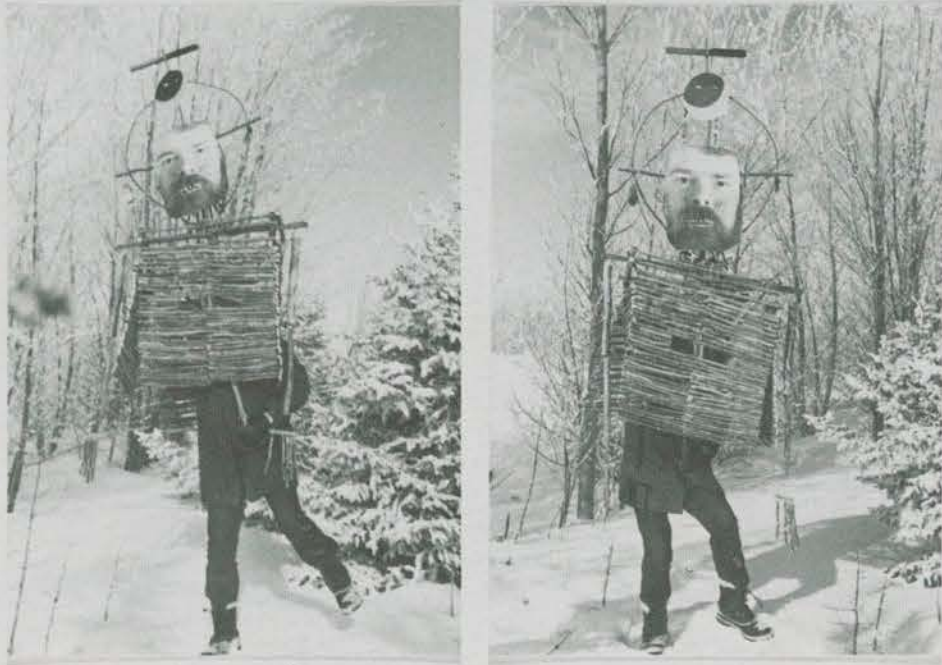
Windcatcher I
1985
weathervane of a deer skull, cloth,
sticks, paint mounted on a post
set in a bed of stones
182.88 x 35.56
Collection: Walter Hildebrandt

Windcatcher II (the flowing mane)
1985
weathervane of sticks, twine,
paint, mounted on a post set in a
bed of stones
182.88 x 35.56
Collection: Robert Enright

Windcatcher III (fish image)
weathervane of sticks, tin, paint,
mounted on a post set in a bed
of stones
1985
152.4 x 91.44
Collection: William Lobchuk

Gift Horses
1984-85
masks of sticks, twine, paint
81.12 x 25.40
Collection of: Grace Thomson,
Tony Tascona, Doreen Millin, Bill
Eakin, Verla Olito, Terry Heath, Ken
Hughes, and David Arnason

(4)



..... I began the earthshaking dance of the gigantic,
vibrating the earth and summoning Gosselin to respond.

Sketchbook Page, 1984

(5)



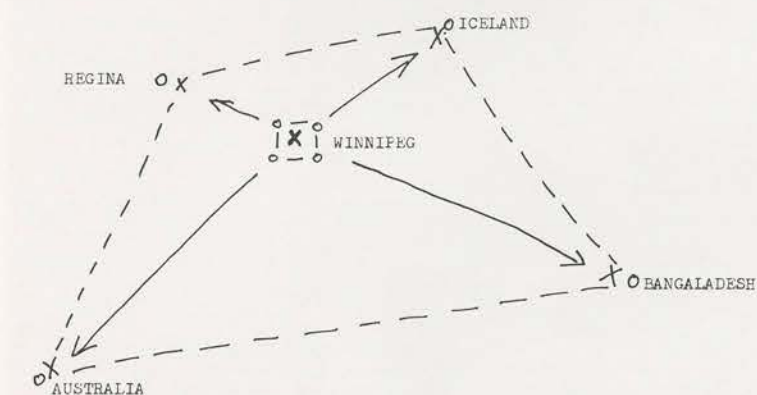
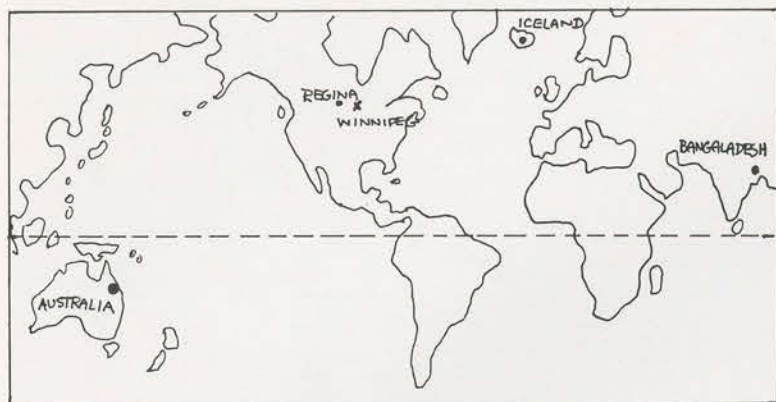
Now the cycle of parallels is complete and the invocations are over.

Michael Gluck

Sketchbook Page, 1984

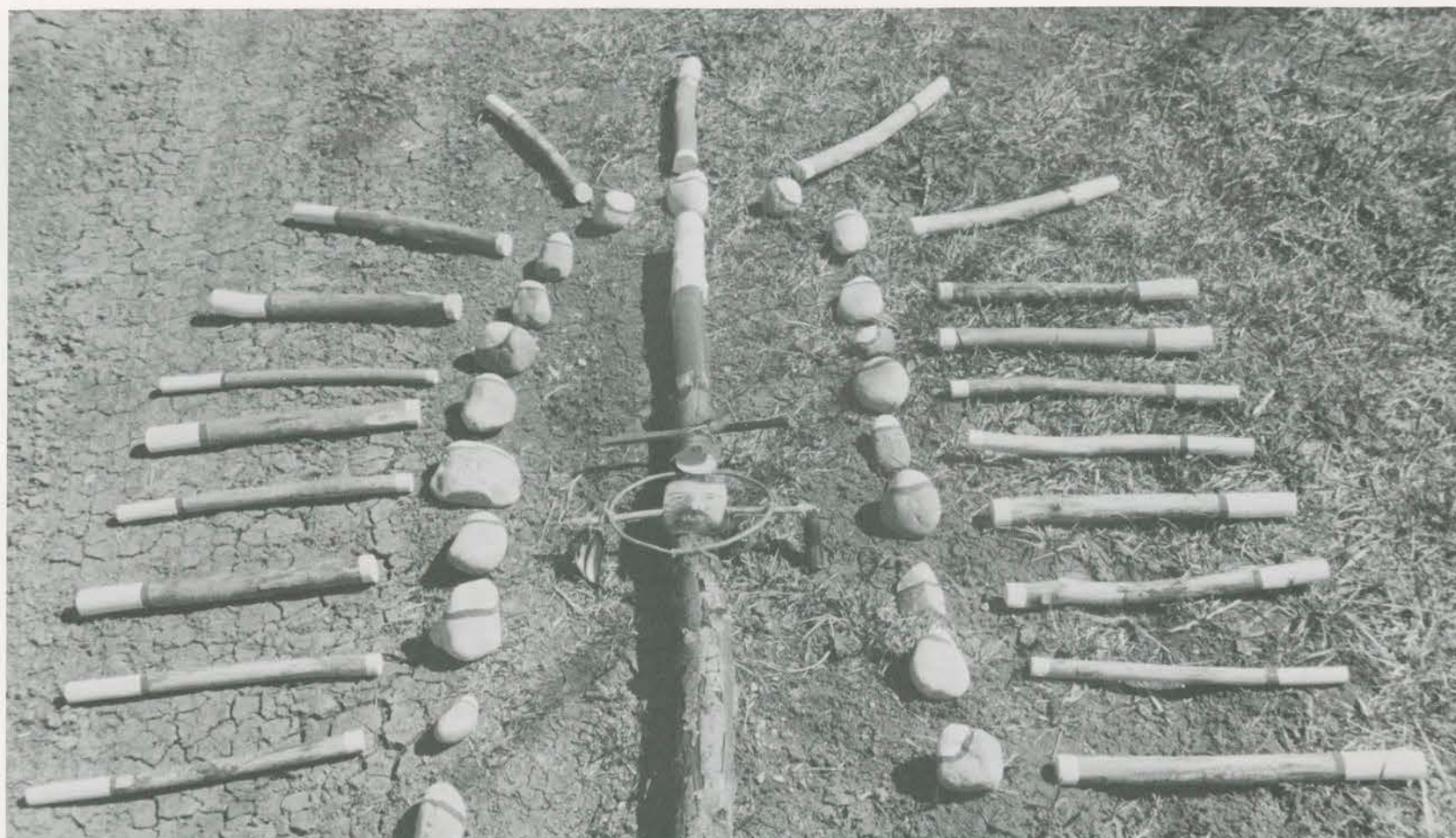
BIOGRAPHY

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1942 Born Woking, England.
(Father in Canadian Army.) | 1970-72 Worked at art. | 1978 <i>Island Link.</i>
One Man Show, Fleet
Gallery, Winnipeg. | 1985 <i>Rites of Passage</i> , Shared
Stage, Royal Albert Hotel,
Winnipeg. Canada
Council B Grant and
Travelling Allowance
(Iceland). Site Studies
(four locations),
<i>Dawnscreen.</i> |
| 1945 Family moved to a farm
near MacGregor,
Manitoba. | 1972-73 Taught school at Shilo,
Manitoba. | 1979 Manitoba Arts Council
Senior Grant.
Acting President,
CAR/FAC, Manitoba.
<i>Section Link.</i> | 1986 <i>Earth Dialogue/Earth
Sound</i> , Performance and
One Man Show,
Winnipeg Art Gallery,
Winnipeg.
<i>But We Are All Captives</i> ,
Installation and One Man
Show, Gallery 1.1.1.,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg. |
| 1962 Finished high school at
MacGregor. | 1974 Won first prize for
painting, M.S.A. jury show,
Winnipeg Art Gallery
(William Ronald, juror). | 1980 <i>Totemic Execution.</i> | |
| 1963 Graduated from
Manitoba Teachers'
College, Winnipeg,
Manitoba. | 1974-77 Worked for Versatile
Manufacturing as
scheduler. | 1980-83 Worked for an insulation
contractor. | |
| 1963-69 Taught school for two
years alternative with
attending University of
Manitoba. | 1977 <i>Progress of the Minotaur.</i>
Manitoba Arts Council
Junior Grant.
Exhibited a sculpture, Arts
Council Awards Show,
Archives Building,
Winnipeg.
Exhibited two sculptures
in group show at Janet
Ian Cameron Gallery,
University of Manitoba. | 1984 Manitoba Arts Council
Senior Grant.
<i>Dance of the Gigantic</i> ,
Shared Stage,
Cardigan/Milne Gallery,
Winnipeg.
<i>Phoenix</i> , Shared Stage,
Royal Albert Hotel,
Winnipeg. | |
| 1969 Graduated from
University of Manitoba
School of Art. Married
Verla Bradley. Taught
school at Riverton,
Manitoba. | | | |

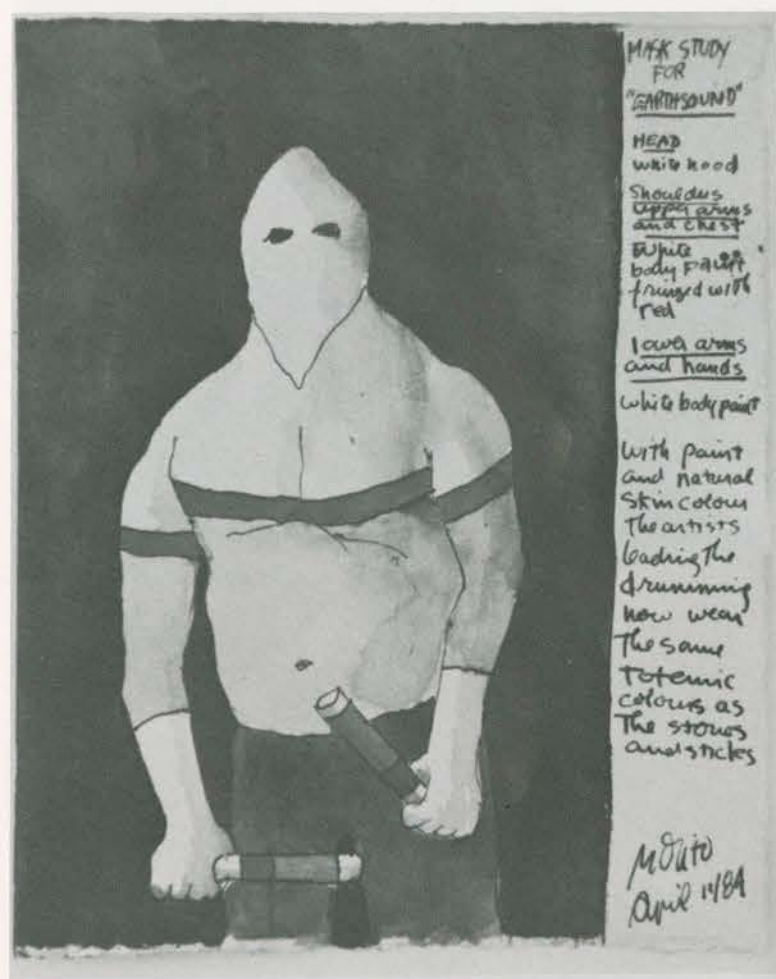


The pegs move outward on expanding axes to form a world square, the staff replaces them at the centre.

"EARTHSOUND" Map, 1985



Sticks, Stones and Staff for "EARTHSOUND", 1986



Drawing of costume for "EARTHSOUND", 1984



Detail of Staff for "EARTHSOUND", 1986

THE PERFORMANCE

On February 13, 1986, a crowd will gather in the Gallery. At exactly 8:30 p.m. four artists (including myself) will come into the Gallery, painted the symbolic colours, red and white. The artists will pick up stones and sticks and begin striking out a simple beat. All the people in the Gallery will then join in and help in creating a huge, communal cry, "EARTHSOUND".

At exactly the same time the four far-away artists will drive in their pegs, (extending the square) and begin tapping out their own lonely cries with their sticks and stones.

After the ceremony the staff will be taken to the original site of the "EARTH DIALOGUE" square and set up there.

"EARTHSOUND"

"EARTHSOUND" will be an extension of the ongoing piece, "EARTH DIALOGUE", from its specific and personal attempts at communication to the larger and symbolic cry of art itself. The square from "EARTH DIALOGUE", initially intended as an area for individual communication with another artist, will expand to form a world square and the personal communication itself will become a public performance.

PREPARATION

I have prepared 500 stones and 500 sticks by painting them the symbolic colours of my art (red for the blood passion of the artist, white for the aesthetic control of art, and partially unpainted showing the natural colours and representing the forces of nature).

These sticks and stones are to be set up inside the Gallery for the performance. I have also made a staff bearing all the images of the masks which define the corners of the square.

I have mailed one peg from each corner of the square to artists in Regina, Australia, Iceland and Bangladesh. Along with the peg each artist was also sent one set of striking stones or sticks similar to the ones in the Gallery.

1.
"EARTH DIALOGUE"

Tuesday, July 17/84

"THE GUARDIANS"



The square waits, guarded by the forces of nature (the trees surround and shade it, blooming alfalfa, vetch, grass, and raspberries grow on it, and birds, dragonflies, butterflies, and rabbits...not photographed as I was not ready for their quick flight..... are everywhere.), for my next move.

I search for space.

The square is small but it may contain the whole world and it will grow to contain the actual world with its extension into "EARTHSOUND".

Sketchbook Page, 1984

"EARTH DIALOGUE"

July 24/84

"GOSSELIN VISITS THE SQUARE"



Today Marcel Gosselin visited. He went into the Earth Dialogue square where he picked up the guardian stones and examined them.

Michael Olito

Sketchbook Page, 1984

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300 Memorial Boulevard
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
R3C 1V1

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Olito, Michael, 1942-
But we are all captives; Earth
dialogue/earth sound

Catalogue of an exhibition held
at Winnipeg Art Gallery, Feb. 2 -
April 6, 1986 and at Gallery 111,
University of Manitoba.
ISBN 0-88915-126-1

1. Olito, Michael, 1942-
Exhibitions. I. Olito, Michael,
1942-. Earth dialogue/earth
sound. II. Winnipeg Art Gallery. III.
Gallery 111. IV. Title. V. Title: Earth
dialogue/earth sound.
NB249.04A4 1986 730'.92'4
C86-091060-1

CREDITS

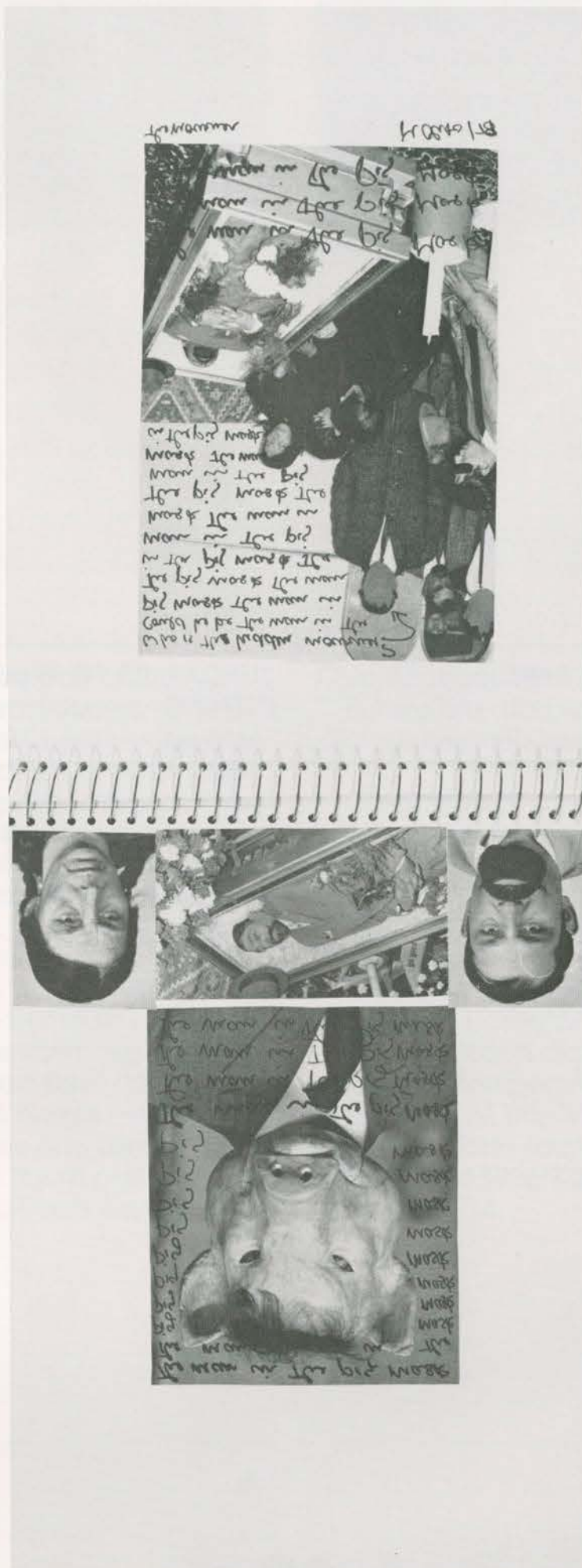
Catalogue and
Exhibition Design
Photography
Typesetting
Colour
Separations
Printing

**Roderick Shiels
Ernest Mayer
Designtype**

**Image Color
Hignell Printing**

	Manitoba: school at Riverton, Verna Bradley. Taught school of Art. Married University of Manitoba graduated from Manitoba. attending University of years alternative with		University of Manitoba. Ian Cameron Gallery, in group show at Janet Exhibited two sculptures Manitoba. Archives Building, Council Awards show, Exhibited a sculpture. Arts Junior Grant. Manitoba Arts Council Progress of the Minotaur. scheduled. Manufacturing as		Winnipeg. Royal Albert Hotel, Phoenix shared stage, Winnipeg. Cardigan Mills Gallery, shared stage, Dance of the Gigantic, senior Grant. Manitoba Arts Council contractor.		Winnipeg. University of Manitoba, show, Gallery J.J.J., Installation and One Man But We Are All Captives, Winnipeg. Winnipeg Art Gallery, One Man show, Group Performance and Earth Dialogue/Earth Dance/Screen, (four locations), (Iceland). The Studies Traveling Allowance Council Grant and Winnipeg, Canada stage, Royal Albert Hotel, Rites of Passage, shared
1993			1977		1984		
1993-98	Taught school for two Manitoba. College, Winnipeg. Manitoba Teachers, graduated from Macleod.				1980-83		
1993					1980		1989
1995	Finished high school at Manitoba. near Macleod.	1974-77	Worked for Versatile (William Ronald) Junior. Winnipeg Art Gallery painting, M.S.A. July show.				
1998	Family moved to a farm Amy.) (Father in Canadian born working England.	1974	Won first prize for Manitoba.	1979			
1998		1975-77	Taught school at Shilo.	1978			
		1979-80	Worked at art.				

The Mother, 1978



55.84 x 55.89
 babel, 1977-78,
 and other related works on
 series,
 Marriage in this Modern World
 But We Are All Captives series,
 sketchbooks:
 Drawings and Collages from
 depth,
 Height precedes width precedes
 All measurements in centimetres.
WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

550.88 x 78.50 x 83.20
 other found objects,
 wood, photographs, glass and
 self-portrait looking back, 1977,
 80.88 x 80.88 x 42.75
 and other found objects,
 wood, photographs, iron, glass
 portrait of Ken, 1977,
 sculptures:

50.35 x 88.04 x 18.02
 and other materials,
 bear skull, wood, glass, stones, tin,
 The Trap, 1979,
 503.50 x 38.10 x 38.10
 other found objects,
 wood, photographs, glass and
 Homage to Jackson Pollock, 1977

125.40 x 125.40 x 125.40
 wood, and other materials,
 Captives, 1980, concrete, stone,
 installation, But We Are All
 180.20 x 158.24 x 52.40
 clothing, and other materials,
 wood, photographs, shotgun,
 Totemic Execution, 1980.





which evolved from a private act of captivity. It was a box sculpture sculptures he made on the theme was the last of the series of box this piece is a transition piece: it 'death' and 'resurrection'. For Olito, subconscious concern with scrutiny Olito's conscious of amateurs necessarily brings into artist gives to the crosses used as format and the high visibility the The choice of an altar piece execution. altar piece is titled Totemic of a tribal altar piece. The glass in a box which took the form together and preserved under documentation were brought performance and its when the remnants of the the concept came a month later formalize it into a box sculpture. there was no intention to At the time of the 'execution', documented with photographs. The performance was their insidious influences, necessary to bridge himself of

awareness of our true condition us – to bring up to a sense of Gallery 'J.J.' he attempts to 'real confinement sculpture event in performance'. Now, with the essential aspect of his shaman's rites of passage was also an magical scriptural object in the the presentation of his body as a 'rebirth' were enacted in Phoenix action). Psychic 'death' and realization through creative stages of self-induced cure (a psychological illness, followed by experienced a long period of become a shaman. He had captive: in a sense, he had he is not alone – we are all He came to a full recognition that performances in public places. Dialogue is one) and sculpture dialogues with other artists (Earth and bodily through ritualistic ability to reach out emotionally 'resurrection'. He discovered the three years, he experienced made no art. At the end of the for three years after this event, he

Assistant Director, Gallery 'J.J.'
Curator of Exhibition,
Grace Thomson

- Winnipeg
Passage May 12, 1982, Shared Stage, Royal Albert Hotel
March 10, 1982, The Manitoba Theatre Centre, Winnipeg, Rites of
Shared Stage, Royal Albert Hotel, Winnipeg. Out like an axe,
Canadian Wildlife Gallery, Winnipeg, Phoenix October 28, 1982
10. The Dance of the Shamanic April 1, 1982, Shared Stage
9. Notes to the writer from the artist
expectations
8. Awareness of Robert Morris, 1 box 1982, conditions viewer's
7. Ibid. p. 14
4. Fall 1982, pp. 10-11
6. "Letters from the Earth," Interview with Michael Olito by Robert
2. Ibid. p. 11
Hamiltonsworth, England/Penguin 1972, p. 109
Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus trans. Justin O'Brien (1952) 191,
summoned by Scott.
crowing his victory. There is no fate that cannot be
judicial that was to constitute his journey at the same time
condition, it is what he thinks of during his descent. The
rebellious knows the whole extent of his misdeeds
Sisyphus' proclamation of the gods' powerlessness and
rolled down just as he reached the summit. Camus writes:
the gods to push a great boulder uphill from where it tumbled
4. Sisyphus is a figure in Greek mythology who was condemned by
3. Writer's interview with the artist
5. Ibid
1. Notes to the writer from the artist

FOOTNOTES

Homage to Pollock 1978 Photograph by: Ernest Mayer



Homage to Pollock 1978 Photograph by: Ernest Mayer



which is a photo-image of Olito's window on either side, behind of the box. There is a small bail covers the upper two-thirds out like window shutters. The top two sets of doors, each opening stands on a low pedestal. It has large vertical box sculpture which

Self-Portrait Looking Back is a beceives him. Ken's portrait, as the artist and the contained, constitutes and the emotional, the container the piece. Together, the formal box, also represent the content of across the bottom portion of the restraining belt which stretches the central vertical bar and the which hangs on the outside over Ken's captivity. The heavy chain speaks of the political nature of packjob photography, which the horizontal bar) and the glass, eyes hidden completely by central cross frame of the window centred directly behind the photo-image of Ken (the face Contained are the cut-out

says of the piece:

thrusters and a compine. Olito his older sister together with the sister, while in the background is himself, his father, and his younger Manitoba. In the foreground are youth on a farm near Macleod. Photography of a scene from his and the rest is covered by a portion of his trousers is revealed rest of Olito, but only the upper shutter, one expects to see the begin. In opening the lower the navel, where the lower doors third the waist down to just below the middle the chest, and the upper register frames the face, frames into three registers. The horizontally divided by narrow the artist behind glass which is photo-image of the nude torso of one is confronted by a

Upon opening the upper doors, no window. Olito's own. The lower doors have the eyes of which are at level with slightly larger-than-life-size face,

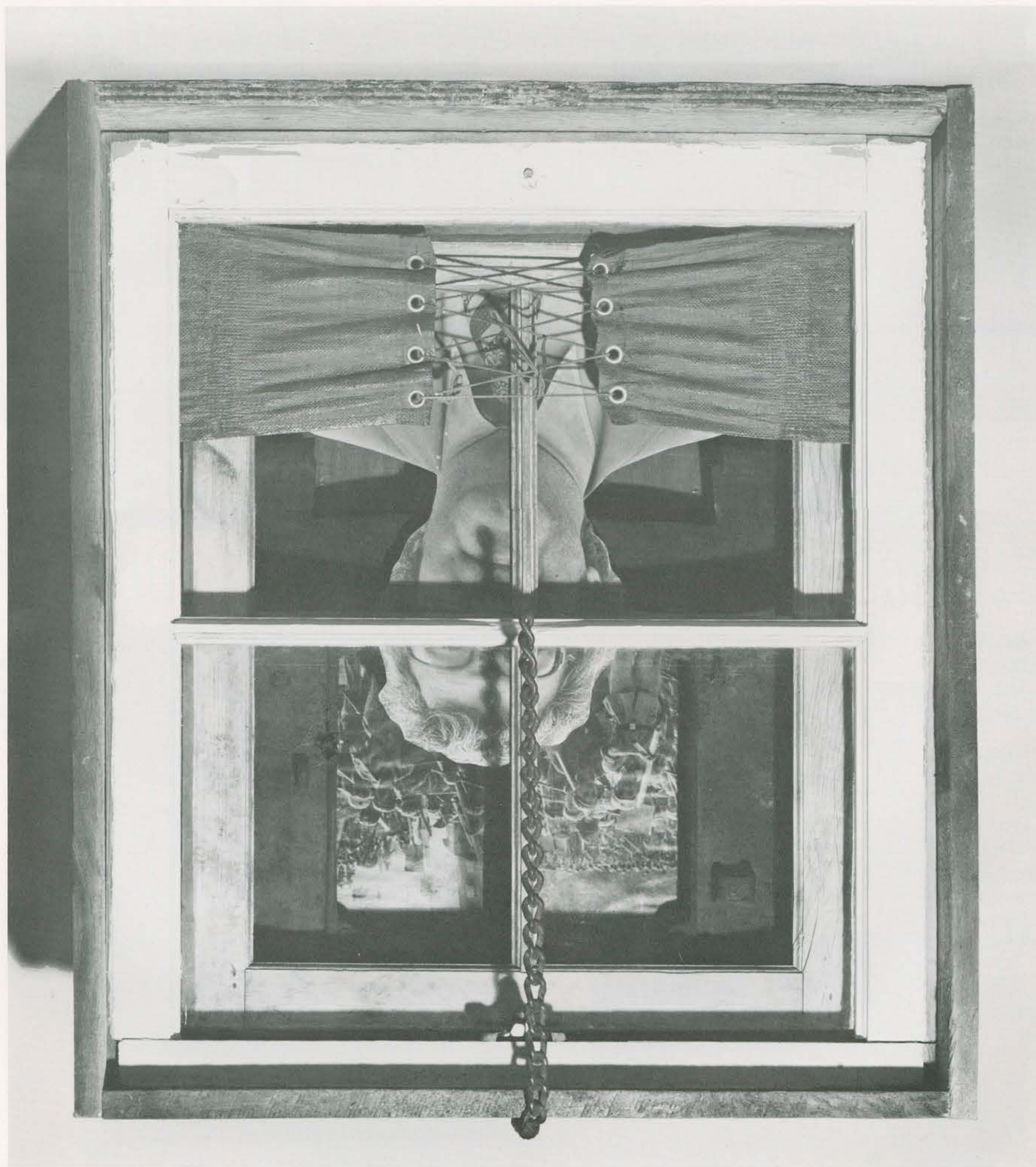
the sketchbooks and journals. The muffled between the pages of drawings and collages, but absurdity of life, strongly stated in against the unjustness and self-conscious voice of protest. It began with a somewhat an "ongoing dialogue of process."

Michael Olito's oeuvre is indeed

important in my work. process that has become so an ongoing dialogue of manifestation of this idea of future. This work was an early upon one past and imply one any one time but always draw. We are never just as we are at everything is part of a process, deal with the fact that but, rather, is an attempt to nothing to do with nostalgia person. . . The piece has presence of the same person and the physical past that has shaped a of the bridge between the . . . I hoped to present a view

captive and their sacrifice was control of his own life. He was a preventing him from taking the will of the artist and they were irresistibly acting upon deceitful — both destructive in that kind, the other ill-motivated and time — one well meaning and external forces in his life at that other in dark, were effigies of one dressed in light clothing, the with gun shots. The scarecrows of snow and they were executed, scarecrows were placed in a field back yard. Two blindfolded performed a private ritual in his the winter of 1980, when the artist which resulted from an event in through an object, the last of his sense of being wronged. During this period, he supplanted conflict with the current trend, himself as an artist who was in main concern to understand manifestations exemplify Olito's sculptures. These early contained in images of the box voice took form and became

Portrait of Ken, 1977



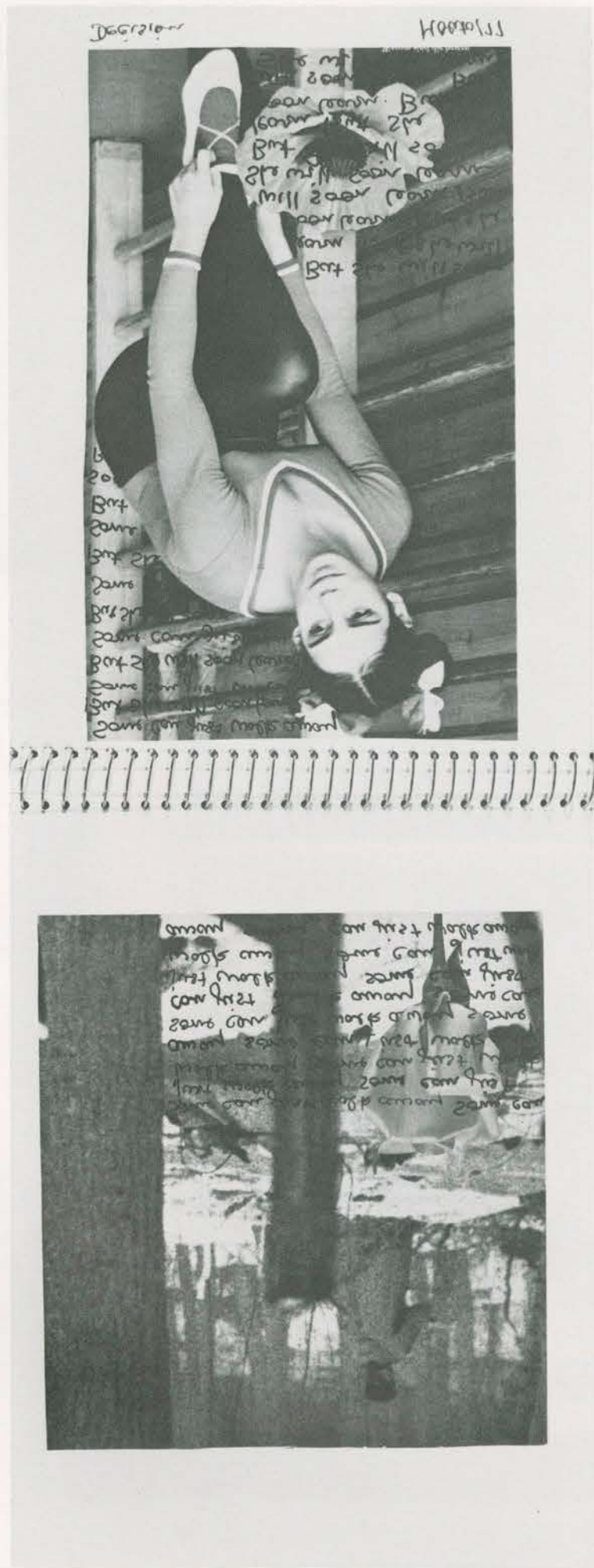
across the picture, reiterating the and over again, like slogans, short sentences, repeated over usually consisting of one or two covered with ink handwriting. Many of the collages are indifference is often effected, realism and objective directly to them, a feeling of stark have a mainly, newspaper-like from European magazines, which mainly black and white, taken since the photo-images are without apparent cynicism. In fact, intensifies the expression of each, through visible images the dichotomy of conditions. The method of presentation of concomitant states of captivity, disillusionment in marriage and its with those communicating in love are placed side by side representing madness in life and formation. For instance, pictures in which or which-like symmetrically in an iconic fashion about, pictures are placed within the composition, in another

told that he had no ability to work university training, his having been this too was expressed during his making things with his hands, but to be a sculptor. He enjoyed the artist had always felt himself rather than the illusion of it, three-dimensional space and death with glass, one behind the other, one on several pieces of on a piece of paper, I made instead of making a collage assemblages: three dimensional materials and naturally evolved into the use of story-telling by this method quite narrative needs. The process of quickly be based up to realize his ready-made images which could provide for the artist, at that time. The medium of collage personal workings of the artist, and may be seen as graffiti - the words are provoked by the image central theme of captivity. These

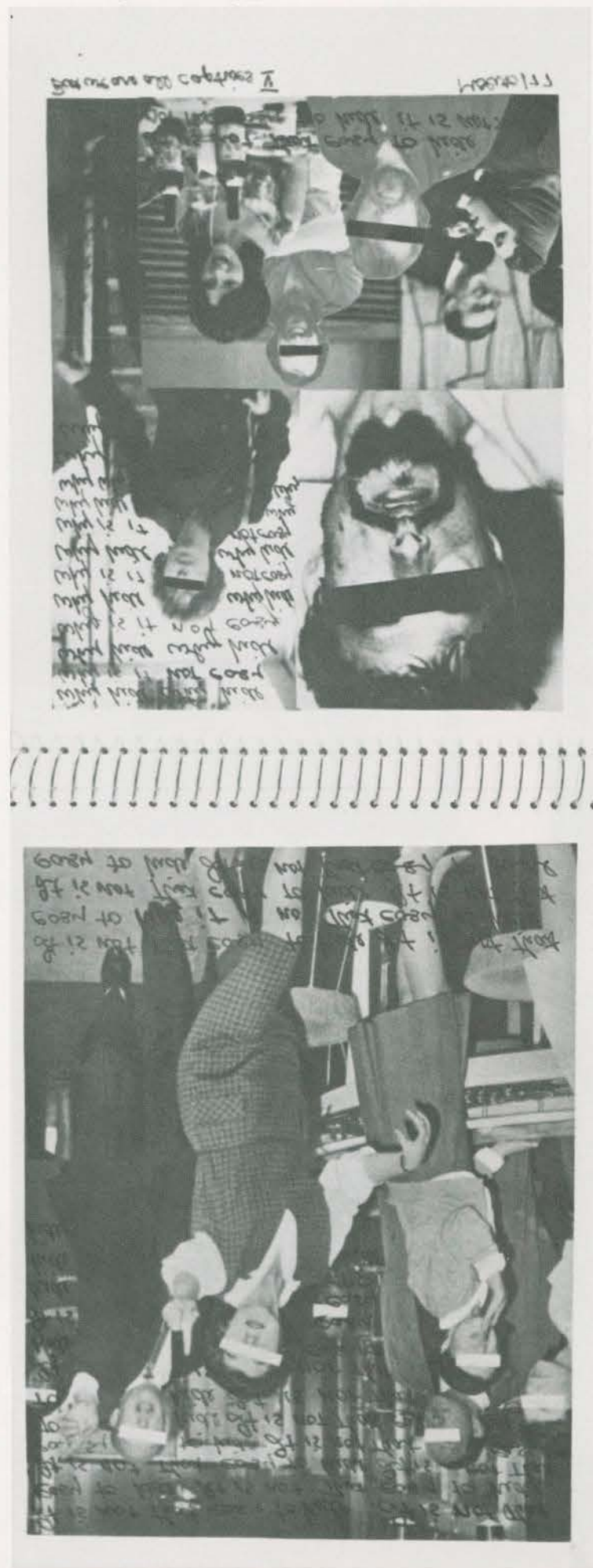
glass, light filters through each compartment, each behind a covering three compartments within the are precisely placed like relics in wrecked automobile. The objects, idiosyncratic, and a model of a semblance of a girl, painting, broodingly, a miniature script, tells Jackson Pollock's story, Jackson Pollock a tall, thin, box setting for a story. Homage to process also serves as an ideal continues, preserves, and in the that of captivity. A box contains, the main theme continues to be weather-worn boxes are clear, messages contained in Oltos Cornelian shadow boxes, the unlike the ambiguous surface, reference to a two-dimensional frontal orientation, has three-dimensional, but due to its a box for drawing. A box is attempt at script, the format of this reason he chose for his first three-dimensionally. Perhaps for

represents the container, cross-hair framing of the window, of one into four parts by a of window glass within, the division the structure of the box, the layers friend - Ken's state of captivity, reflection of the nature of his window box piece. It is a Oltos Portrait of Ken is a small story it I feel like it, dogs, and I can tell a simple because we all have our, I only make this piece script, he has written: - on the inside of the door of the which he is attempting to escape state of his own captivity how communicates to the viewer the him in that he realizes and represents a break-through for anthropological content. It important to the artist for its Jackson Pollock, this piece is the script is an homage to an otherwise effect. Although compartment, giving the interior

Decision, 1977



But We Are Captives I, 1977



does physical confinement,⁵ which cage us as surely as any of a number of things outside circumstances . . . or captivity may be due to and cannot act freely. The way we are captives no matter what illusions we

that
The meaning of what it is to be is

emotional confinement,⁶ to an awareness of his or her a way that he or she will come physical confinement in such an aesthetic illusion of

presented with imprisonment. The participant is vision of existence — existence is consciously experience his own wishes the participant to accessible because the artist captivity are purposefully made this impossible. The symbols of level of visual noise within makes

that gods.⁷ Olito believes, like Camus' monolith, we must score the the rock to the top of the endless and futile task of rolling like zylburs engaged in an that even in knowing that we are alleviate his own pain. He urges an attempt to modify or to willed himself to creative action in against our destiny.⁸ The artist has imbed us to action — to fight recognition of this suffering must no escape, but Olito says that the humankind is not enough. There is And sensitivity to this dilemma of moving ship.

along the deck of a westward freedom only to crawl eastward gamnel Beckett's slave, enjoying movements in reality, we are, like and so are in control of our own are responsible for our own acts, believe that as human beings we environmental limitations. We things as genetic restrictions and of freedom, unconscious of such Most of us live with impressions

performances. At least two of well as the scripture of many of his later art objects as record the process of realization journals. Drawings and collages badges of his sketchbooks and approach the problem in the

Olito began in the seventies to tell stories with his art, mode of art. He had a need to captive to the tyranny of this lodge at the time and Olito was or non-representational art was in sixties. Late modernist abstraction as a student in art school in the influence of the alienation he felt piece, it is important to note the the purpose of discussion of this imprisonment for some time.⁹ For captivity and emotional been obsessed with the idea of Manitoba that Michael Olito has with Robert Enright of Arts

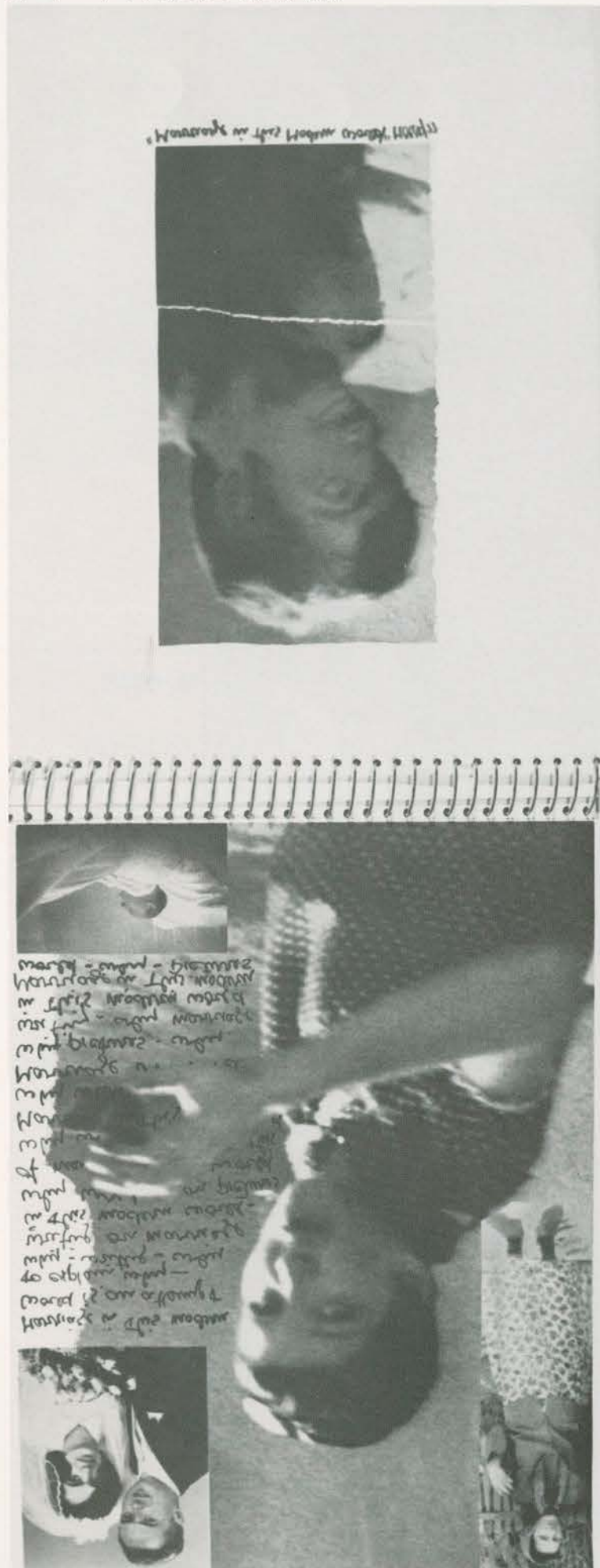
It is evident from an interview man's heart.¹⁰ . . . the struggle itself towards

isolate, hide, or point out figures created by drawing in walls which arrangement. Space cells are on the picture to alter the spatial black ink drawings made directly

One group of collages has very little beyond displacement. Images are usually manipulated the desired effect and these from magazines to conform with chosen images are appropriated purpose of the artist. Carefully imitating by the didactic sketchbooks but also more the size of the badges of the here are prescribed not only by composition. The compositions aesthetically satisfying materials to create an juxtapositioning of shaped bits of collage-making is not the usual

The artist's process of present scripture, of an idea that culminated in the early notations of the determination of captivity. They are obviously collages dealing with the theme these sketchbooks are filled with

Marriage in this Modern World 1977



They were not always this way 1977



quindgeon type enclosure and in Western prison cell. It is an exotic is not that of a contemporary. The appearance of the structure placed directly above the roof. Piece comes from a large pulp since the only lighting for the pairs which cast shadows within. Roof is open except for the iron operated from the outside. The opening and a pair latch to be the door has a small window. Wooden door in one of the walls and concrete with a solid. The four walls are built of stone feet in area and is five feet high. Approximately twenty-five square.

The sculpture measures chamber, attended by a guard refers to as "a confinement a prison cell" or what the artist we are captives. The sculpture is the theme of the exhibition. But 'J.J.' a sculpture which embodies Michael Olito built within gallery opening date of this exhibition.

During the week before the
BUT WE ARE ALL CAPTIVES

this piece does not in the same in the other, the performance of spectator in recognition of the self and transferred over to the articulated in space by his body. Personal life of the artist was lives of passage, where the the gigantic Phoenix and the by the artist, such as the Dance of performances presented earlier. However, unlike the sculpture stage setting awaiting activation. Gallery space is reminiscent of a

The sculpture placed in the his operating beliefs. From an honesty of conviction in existing in this piece emanates the sense of monumentality. The style is unmistakably his own. In other works by the artist and bower. These features are evident with ritual and metaphysical materials used suggest concerns of construction and the elemental presence. The hand-built process. The sculpture has physical tiger cage.

fact suggests perhaps an Asian

immediately become conscious against one wall, and will sit down on the bench installed upon entering. The participant will cell and to be locked within it. Led by the guard into the prison by allowing him or herself to be participates in the central event.

The individual viewer features in Olito's art. At once romantic yet authentic consciousness in the viewer, are of participial states of feeling and and the anticipated inducement form chosen for the prison cell defines human nature. This exotic condition that, for the artist, or herself this emotional experience and to realize for him viewer to enter into his mind to emotions and Olito invites the concretization of the artist's of the viewer. The sculpture is the participial state of mind with that rather the interaction of the artist's articulate the gallery space but the artist's body which will sense, belong to the artist. It is not

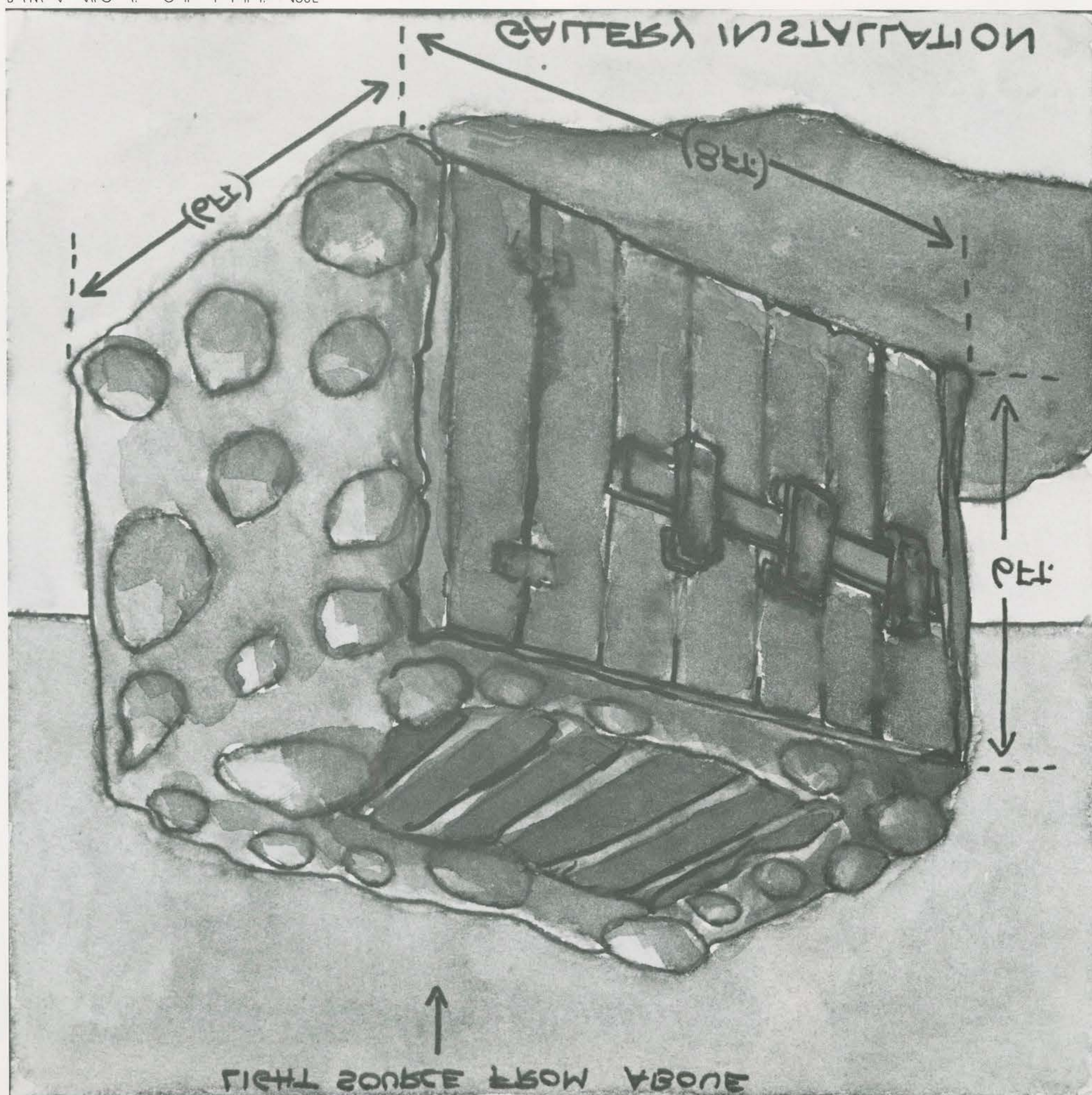
setting for quiet meditation. The cell, as described, is not a lead the prisoner out.

The cell, as described, is not a lead the prisoner out. Will then watch the door and opening in the door. The guard signal to the guard through the leave the cell, he or she may.

When the participant is ready to inmates.

to those taken of real prison by full front and side views, similar artist. Each prison is represented selected individuals known to the photographs of randomly contains black and white institutionalized. The second book tied, chained, handcuffed, physical confinement - jailed, people in various states of. The first book contains images of books which are held by chains, discover and look through two captivity. The participant will then wire, reflects an illusion of opposite, enclosed in paired limited activity. The mirror as the tiny space allows for only of his or her physical confinement

But We Are All Captives Gallery Installation, 1982



But We Are All Captives: Gallery Installation, 1982



the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and Terrence Heath, former Director of

I am also most grateful to the staff of the gallery for the enjoyable hours of interview preparation, and for the many placed on him during

in responding to the demands for his patience and cooperation the work exhibited in Gallery 111.

My first thanks go to Michael for

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bold format and in the beautiful expertise, as evidenced in the photographs, for their respective gifts, designer, and Ernest Mayer.

Special thanks go to Rodrick exhibition and catalogue. Gallery to produce this important collaborate with the Winnipeg Art 111, the opportunity to sound for giving me and Gallery Curator of Earth Dialogue/Earth

Grace E. Thomson

(Gallery Technician).

Gallery 111, and Sarah Mann Dale Amundson (Director of Alistair Thomson, Anita Spadatore, and assistance: Mariene Braun, persons who gave me support appreciation to the following

I also extend my sincere visual content of the catalogue.

Michael Olito

paid curating it.

Grace Thomson who worked so exhibition of my work, especially responsible for setting up this

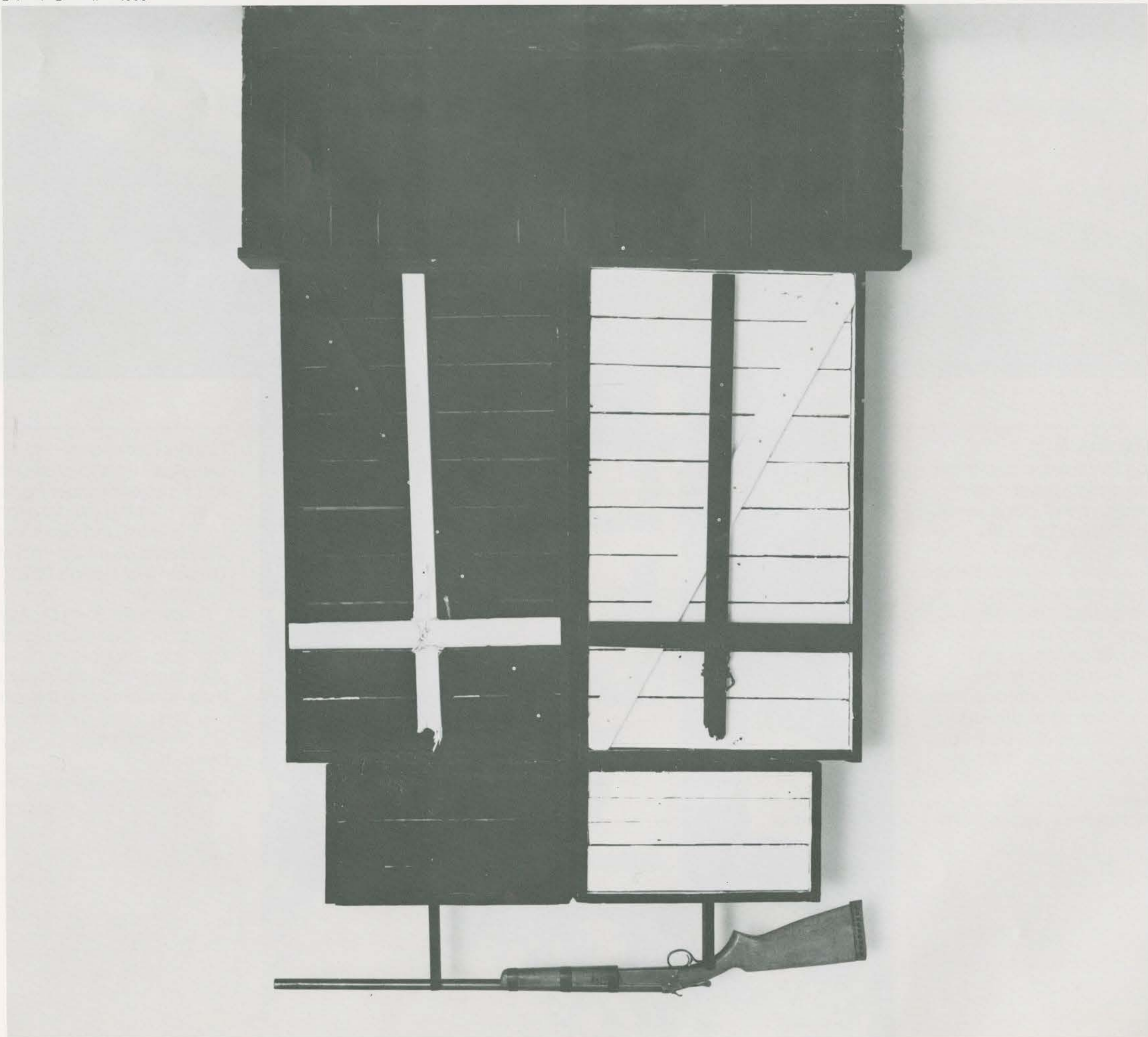
I would like to thank every one

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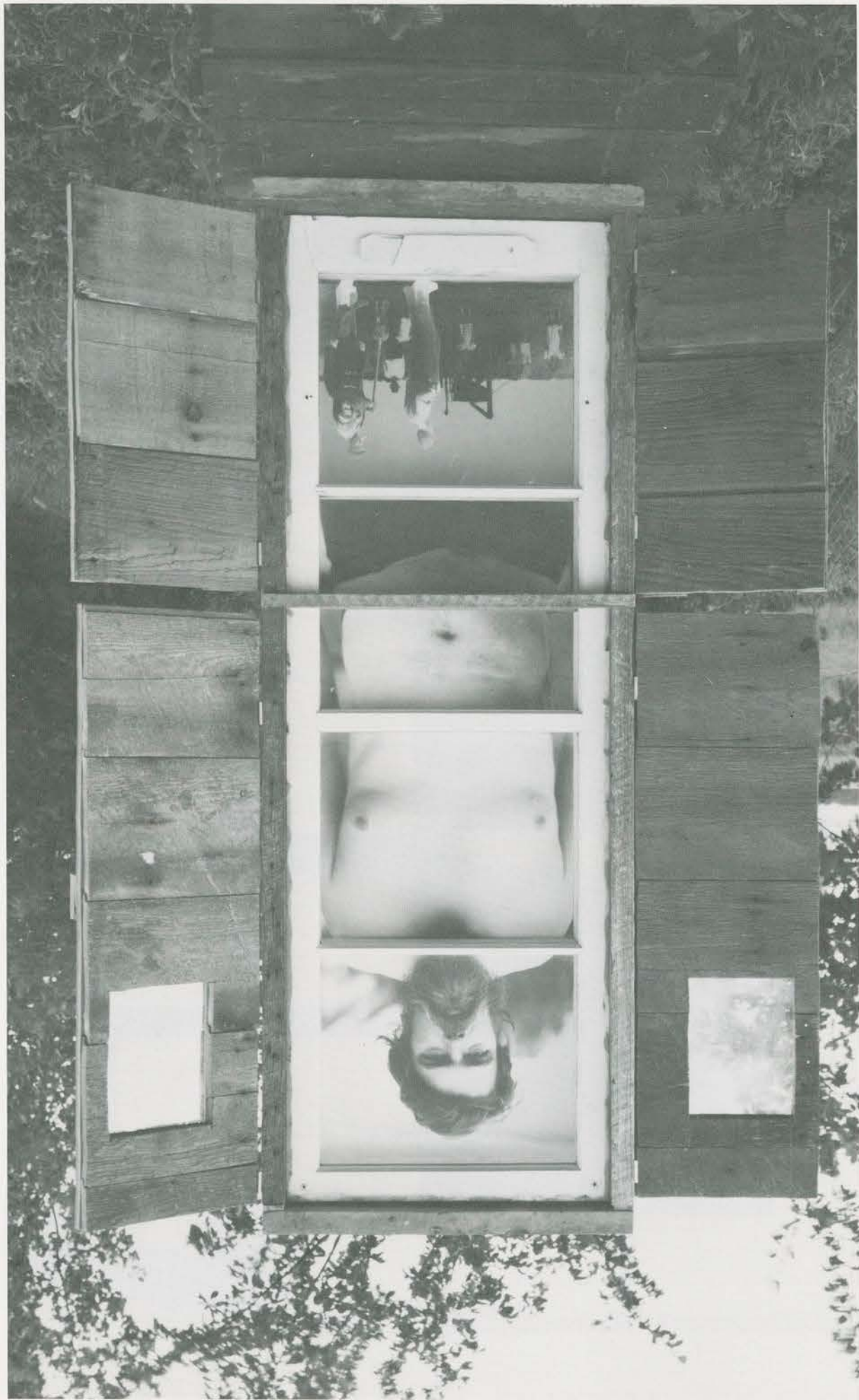
Totemic Execution, 1980 Photograph by: Ernest Mayer



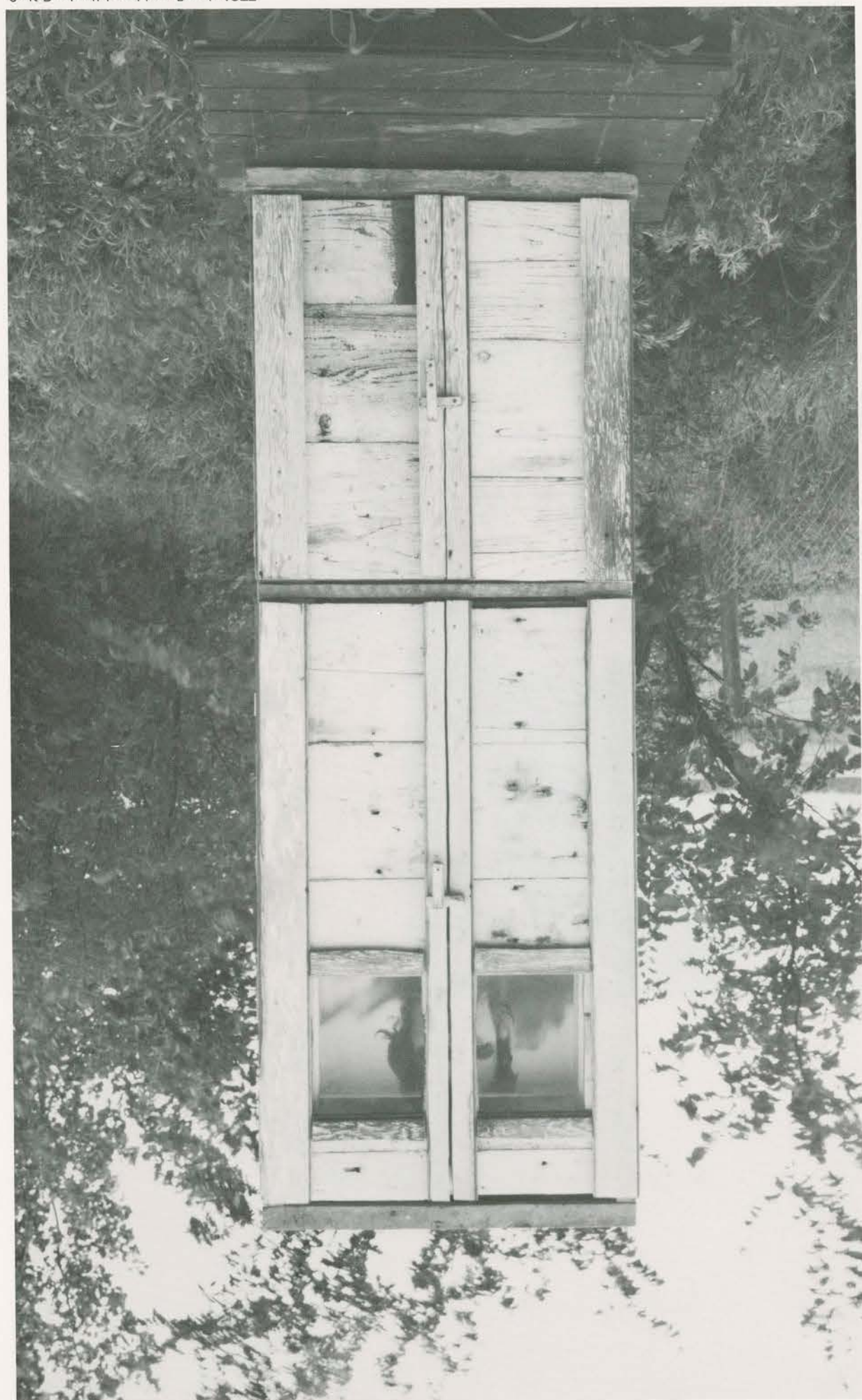
Totemic Execution, 1980



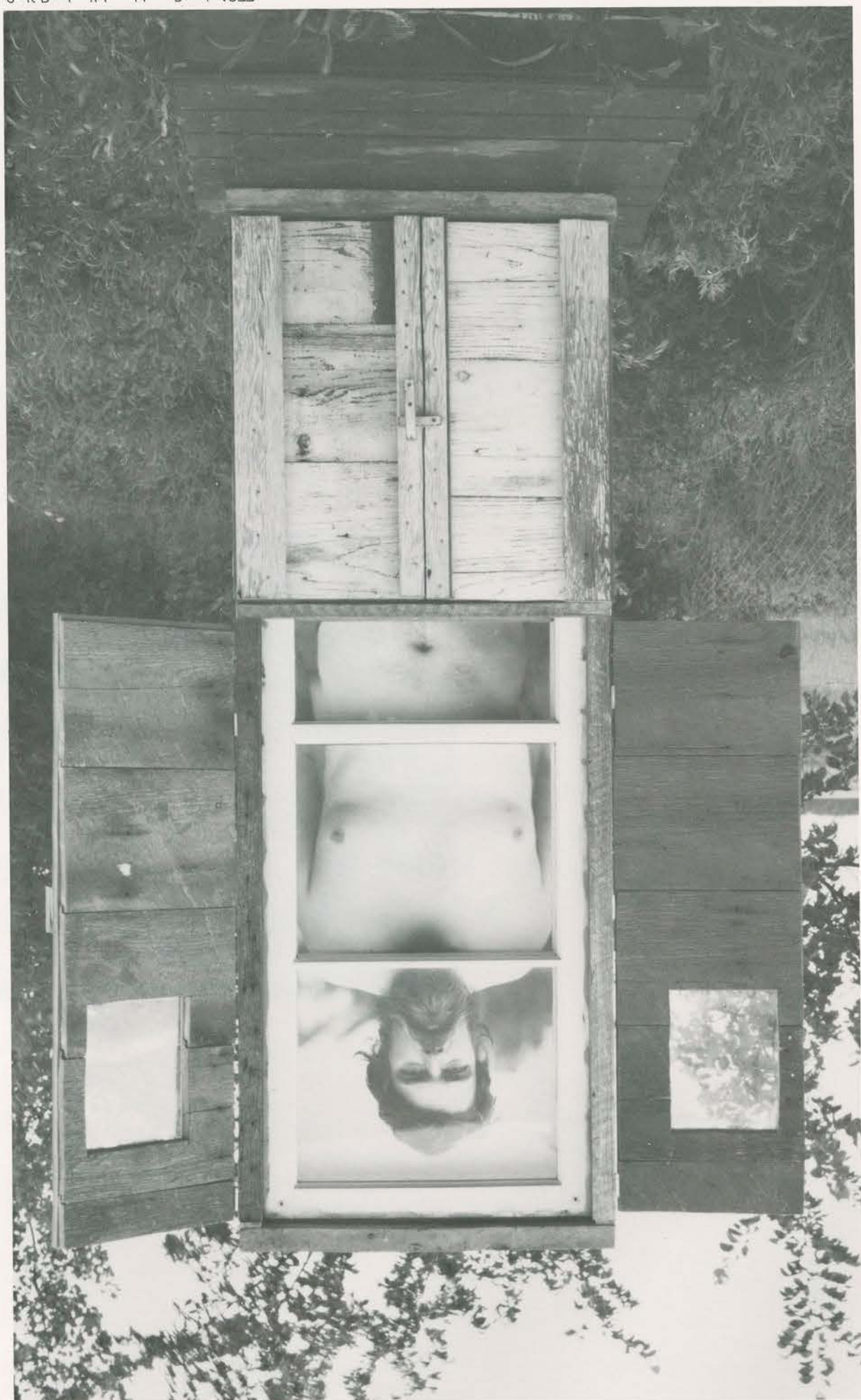
Self portrait looking back 1977



Self Portrait Looking Back 1977



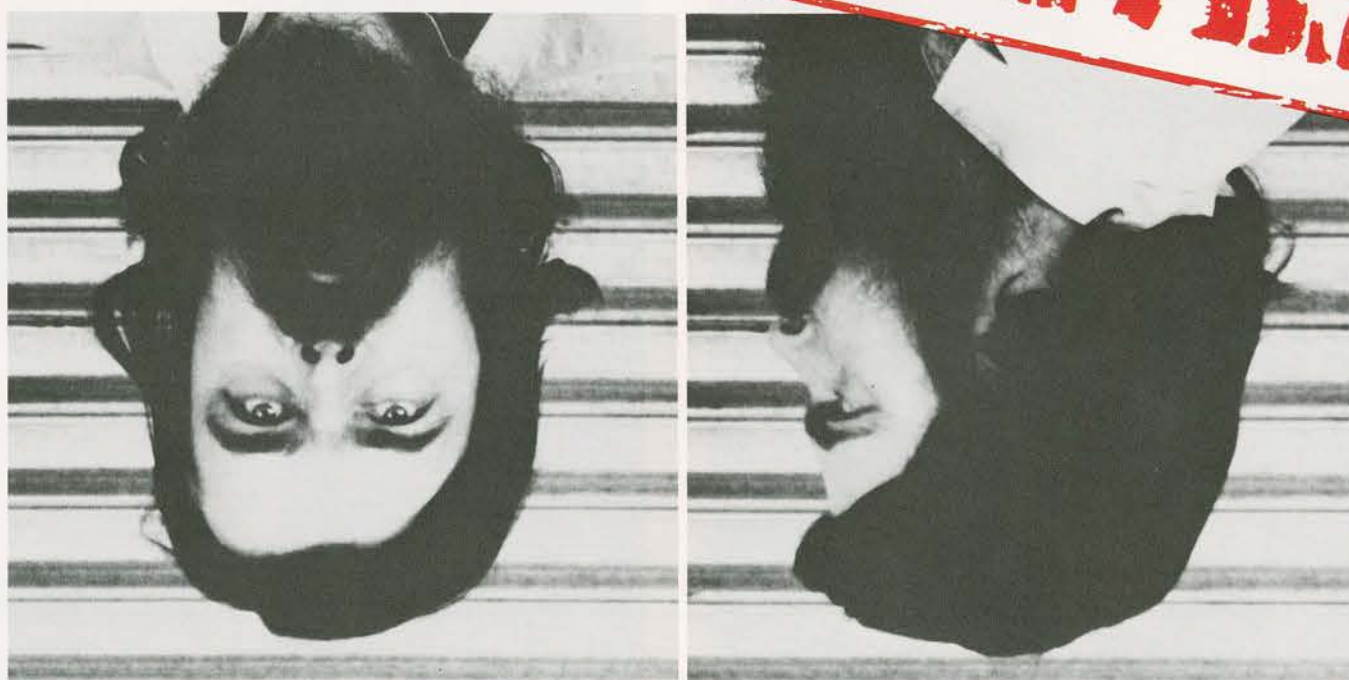
Self Portrait Looking Back 1977

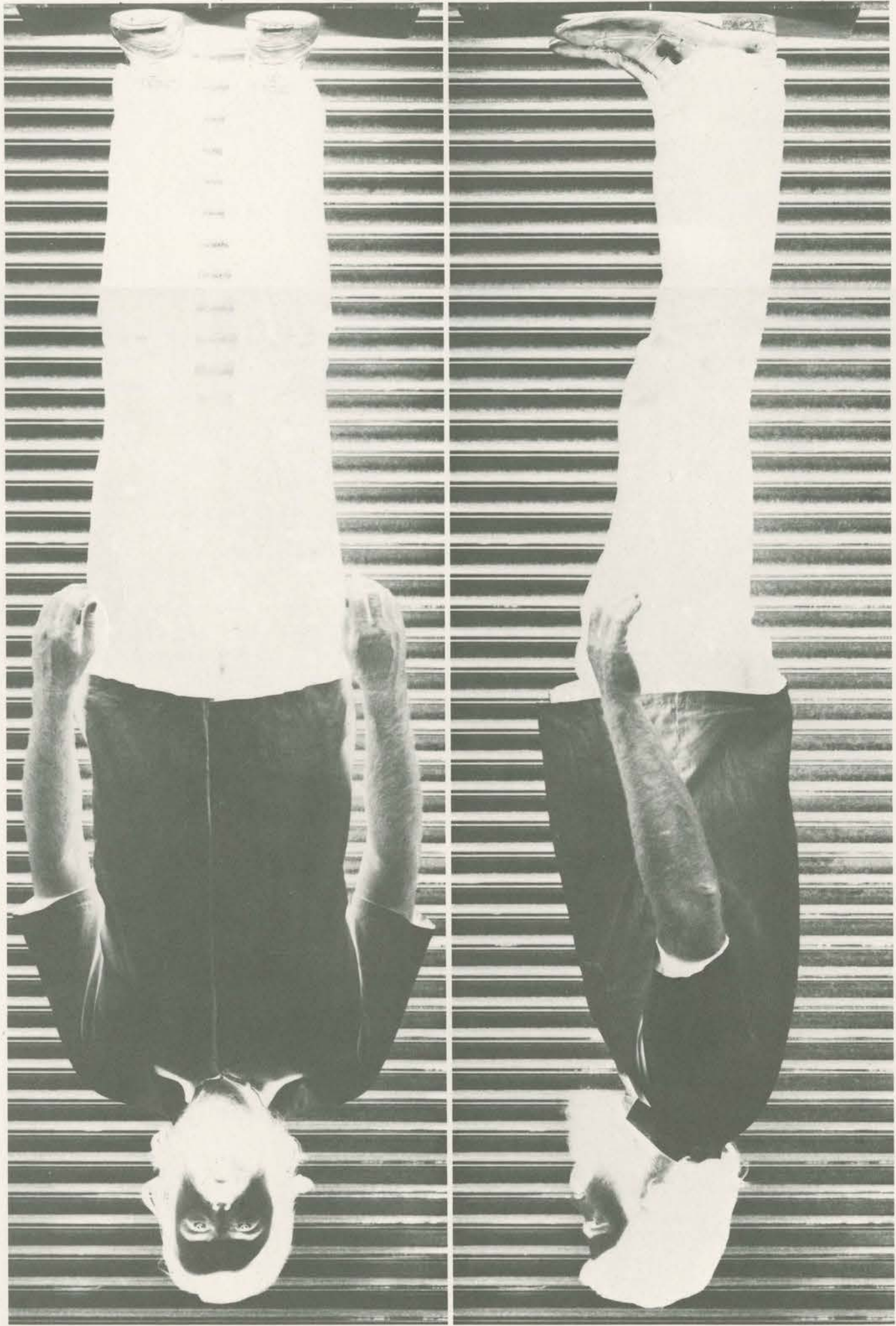


Opening Reception, February 8, 1988, 5 - 8 p.m.
Installation, February 3 - 7 (open to the public)

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Gallerie J.J.J., School of Art, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba
February 5 - February 28, 1988
MICHAEL OPILO

TELL ME WHERE THE CIVILIANES







STILL WE ARE ALL CAPTIVES