

# Nomadmedia

## On Critical Art Ensemble

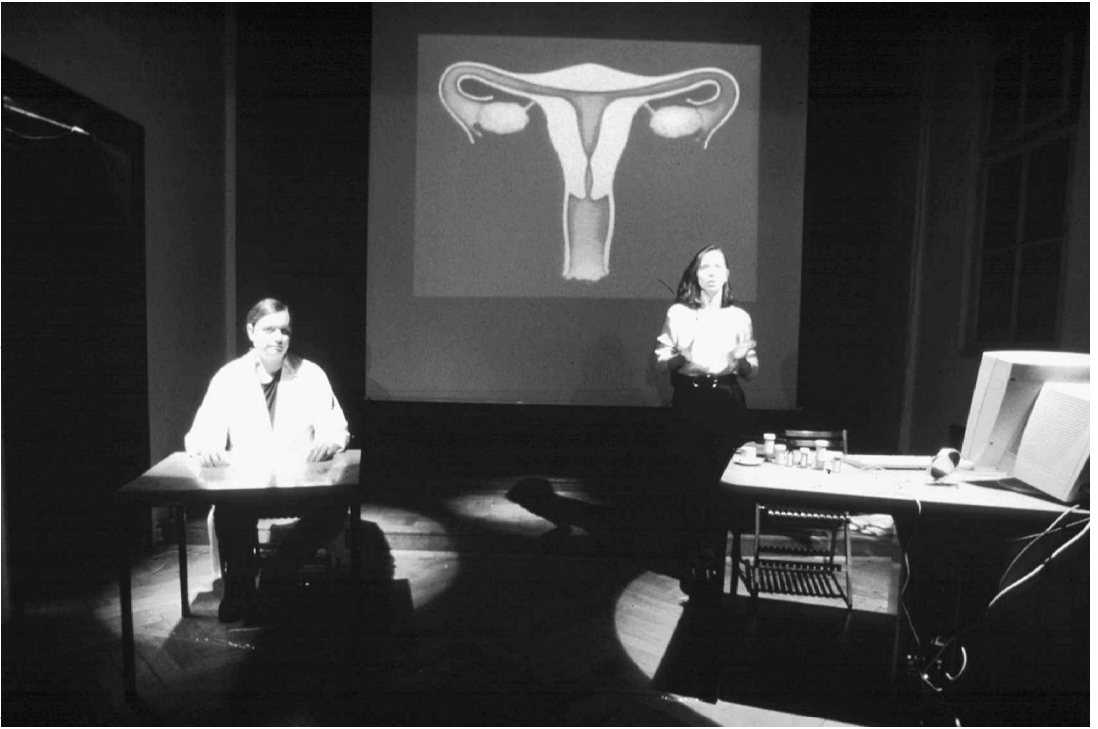
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*Rebecca Schneider*

When an audience member enters the performance space for Critical Art Ensemble's *Flesh Machine*, she might think she's stumbled upon a lecture in some Biology Hall of her past, except for the fact that the information is extremely up-to-date and delivered by artists. Dressed in lab coats, CAE presents information on medical and scientific practices in the field of eugenics, peppered by short performance sketches so that the "class" will stay attentive. Unlike a parodic or distanced performance of a lecture (recall Ron Vawter performing Clifton Fadiman's explication of *Our Town* in the Wooster Group's *Routes 1 and 9*), CAE's opening is a lecture without overt irony. They *are* lecturing (which is not to say they are not performing).<sup>1</sup> Wanting their audiences to know some facts about contemporary eugenics, CAE finds the lecture to be both the gentlest and most reliable entry into what quickly becomes a more complexly challenging event.

Opening with a lecture, emphasis is placed on the particular situation that many women face in regard to the political, social, and economic pressures to reproduce and raise children. In fact, for CAE biological reproduction is primarily an "Ideological State Apparatus" (Althusser 1977). From the start, CAE explains their own political position regarding issues of reproductive technology—as one member put it, they don't want to "trick anyone." Frontally and predictably staged, with all the trappings of an orthodox presentation, not only is this format a functional means of getting across a body of information, but the traditional theatre/lecture presentation panders to habit, providing, in CAE's words, a "cushion for the impact of process theatre" which follows.

In the second part of the event spectators become far more involved—this is the "lab" portion of biology class. Audience members participate in actual lab processes and encounter various models of artificial reproduction. This is CAE's attempt to include a tactile relationship to the material, going beyond presentational language—what Junior High teachers call "hands on." But this is no labeling and pasting of leaves onto paper (my own memory of Junior High bio). For this section, CAE built its own cryolab to house living human tissue for potential cloning so that audience members become hands-on genetic engineers. But is this any more than a theme park of cryopreservation? How much "real science" is involved?



In preparation for *Flesh Machine* CAE studied in biology labs to learn cryopreservation and biopsy techniques. They lived with and documented a couple going through in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment. They studied material science to learn how to build a cryolab. In the fall of 1997 they mounted their performance in Vienna at Public Netbase,<sup>2</sup> touring participants through the “signage” of the reproductive process (from theory to testing to representations of the process). Their aim was to reveal what they considered to be hidden eugenic agendas, agendas that become most apparent on the intimate level of the literal procedure.<sup>3</sup> To do this, they stumbled across that social sacral line between hard science and soft art. When asked about the specifics of their study process, CAE gave me the following response:

We didn’t study “seriously.” We are amateurs. However, to get to the political economy of this situation, and the sociological impact of these goings-on, you don’t have to get a degree. We simply read lots of books and journals; spent a semester in cell biology lab (more like a participatory researcher in anthropology); spent two weeks living with a couple going through IVF; did numerous interviews with molecular biologists; had biologists (experts) check our work, and generally act as consultants. When we did *Flesh Machine* in Vienna, a team of biologists from the local university came to the event to check our work, and show we were a fraud. They did not find one thing they could dispute, and were quite congratulatory about it too—although they were never too keen on our politics.<sup>4</sup>

When I asked specifically which labs participated with them in their training, CAE provided the names of four U.S. labs, but asked that I not make them public as “it could lead to problems for people who have been kind enough to help us under the table.” I asked CAE these questions when *TDR*

1. *Flesh Machine*, a 30-minute lecture/performance. Performed from 1997 to 1998 at Beursschouwburg (Art and Science Collision), Brussels; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Public Netbase, Museums Quartier, Vienna; Labor Gallery, Graz; and Kapellica Gallery, Ljubljana. The project opens with a stage performance to critically contextualize the event that follows by problematizing various elements of new reproductive technology. (Photo courtesy of CAE)

editor Richard Schechner was critical of the appellation “study” to describe CAE’s forays into hard science. Schechner was “fearful of amateur dabbling being labeled ‘study.’” He reminded me that “Study comes hard, is not cheap, and doesn’t yield to ‘I told you I did it’” (Schechner 2000). Did CAE learn biopsy, or watch it and then mimic it? I shared this concern with CAE, and was given the following response—a response that in many ways succinctly presents CAE’s general principles in this and other projects:

This is the very attitude we are struggling against—the crotchety academic defending his territory. Until myths such as “we must suffer long and hard to learn about a model” are done away with (which is not to say that specialization should be done away with) there will never be interdisciplinarity, nor productive public dialogues on various knowledge bases. We are amateurs, and say so very proudly. Amateurism is a fundamental principle of tactical media work and nomadology in general. Amateurs move mountains; think of ACT UP for example—total amateurs, yet had an impact on AIDS policy (and I might say, for the most part, for the better). One of the functions of “you must be an expert” discourse is to keep such movements from happening—listen to big brother, he knows best. Not all science is brain surgery (although they are the exalted scientists who are so much smarter than everyone else, so it must be). Most lab techniques, particularly the ones we learned, are monotonous and simple, and any idiot can do them. Contrary to expectation, the Human Genome Center is not a scientific think tank with brilliant biologists scurrying about in X-File surroundings, rather it is just a bunch of students from the general work-study pool following Betty Crocker cake recipes. In *Flesh Machine* particularly, this was a myth that we were trying to break down. It’s one reason why we had on-site labs, so the audience could see that science isn’t magic, and that they the audience are easily smart enough to participate in this discussion if they so desire (and without suffering).

The second section of *Flesh Machine* starts when the lectures end and the audience begins to mill about and attend to computers throughout the space, available for audience members to check out a CAE CD-Rom. The CD contains a donor-screening test (abducted by CAE from an “actual clinic”). Audience members sit at monitors and take the test to assess their individual suitability to be further reproduced through donor DNA, cytoplasm, and/or surrogacy. If they “pass” the test, they receive a certificate of genetic merit. Those who pass can be further examined through an interview with CAE followed by actually having a cell sample taken by lab technicians at the site. These samples are then stored, if the audience member is willing, in CAE’s cryotanks. The artists have been collecting photographs of audience members who “pass” this standardized test, and they claim that the similarities among those determined fit for reproduction is astounding. By now they can predict “passes” just by looking at them: straight-looking white white-collars, usually male.

After this hands-on cell-sharing experience, the audience re-assembles as a group for the close of the performance. This final section of *Flesh Machine* is intended to underscore the class politics, economics, and logic of human commodification implicated in eugenics.

At this point, CAE presents a frozen embryo to their audience—an embryo that CAE inherited from a couple who no longer needed their eggs. A live image of the embryo is projected through a video beam onto a screen. The image has a clock marking the time the embryo has until it is “evicted” from its clinical cryotank. If enough money is raised to pay the rent [approximately

\$60] on the cryotank through the performance, the embryo will live. If not, it will be “terminated.”

Put another way, if no one buys the embryo, it dies.

CAE then takes donations from the audience. To date every performance has ended with the death-by-melting of the embryo. This part of the performance, CAE claims, speaks for itself—though on more than one occasion CAE has had to speak in the wake of their actions. In Vienna, for instance, they found themselves on national TV debating the ethical implications of “embryo murder” with the Archbishop of Salzburg live via satellite.

The group of artists who call themselves Critical Art Ensemble are concerned with “tacticality” in an information age when power is radically dislocated from geography by the instant-time synapses of cyberspace and when colonizing “penetration” seeks out new frontiers at the level of DNA. Their most recent concerns have pivoted on what they label the “New Eugenic Consciousness,” but this interest in biotechnology grows out of their longer-standing agenda regarding postnational capitalism. CAE has repeatedly asserted that digital technology has enabled capital power to “retreat” into cyberspace “where it can nomadically wander the globe, always absent to counterforces, always present whenever and wherever opportunity knocks” (CAE 1995). How to fight nomadic power CAE-style? With dislocation and intermediality—perhaps nomadmediality—an ever-shifting, no longer simply hybridized, media tacticality.<sup>5</sup> If nomadic capital is never present, never there, never available to embodied resistance—how can it be challenged? How does one counter or resist absence? With absence. By becoming nomadic. By appearing disappeared. Nameless. Or, dissimulating, by appearing as *not* that which one claims to be or by claiming to be *not* that which one seems. For example, CAE set up a faux corporation called BioCom and cast it onto the web.<sup>6</sup> Art? Or capital?

CAE is a collective of five white “new media” artists, two women and three men, trained in various skills from book arts and performance to computer, film, video, photography, and critical theory. CAE’s work has consistently been committed to the “continuation of resistant cultural models.” While exploring and critiquing models of representation used in capitalist political economy to sustain what they call “authoritarian policies” they have experimented with various organizational (versus primarily representational) strategies for making art that intersects with activist practices. Because they resist precise or discreet location relative to genre and venue and artist identity, their work questions the politics of location, specifically the politics that have historically located art via authorship, site, public/private space, media, price, frame.

Publishing and performing collectively and anonymously, CAE disseminates its works as broadly as possible (CAE books, if not the authors’ names, have circulated freely on the web). Their anonymity serves as a mark of their resis-

2. & 3. Project visitors at Flesh Machine’s Vienna manifestation use the BioCom CD-Rom to take donor-screening tests and to gather information on reproductive technology. On the CD, viewers can find factual data on in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment, new methods for assisted reproduction, egg and sperm donor profiles, and even take an actual donor-screening test. There is also a family page documenting a couple going through IVF and a children’s book on assisted reproduction. Those who pass the donor screening test are asked to give blood for DNA extraction and amplification. (Photos courtesy of CAE)



tance to privatization—as does their collectivity. They are not secretive about their names. They simply do not use their names as signatures relative to their work. Similarly, they do not respect the signatures of other artists as “Keep Out” signs of private property. Indeed, between 1988 and 1994, CAE began releasing object-oriented artists’ books of plagiarized poetry. The books, five in all, sold to library, university, and museum collections around the U.S.<sup>7</sup>

While plagiarism draws lines of indebtedness to the historical avantgarde (one thinks of Brecht immediately), in other ways CAE is reminiscent of feminist collectives in the 1970s who refused to put forward a director or an author because of the critique of authority at the base of their efforts to think and create differently. And like such collectives, CAE has firsthand experience that collective activity runs against the grain of what the art world expects. Financial support favors individuals, as do art institutions. Several years ago CAE gave up applying for grants. As they wrote in 1998:

In spite of all the critical fulminations about death of originality, the artist, and the rest of the entities named on the tombstones in the modernist cemetery, these notions persist, protected by an entrenched cultural bureaucracy geared to resist rapid change. (1998:73)

In art schools across the country, students are taught to accept the ideological imperative that artistic practice is an individual practice—there is “no place where one can prepare for a collective practice” (74). Even in theatre schools the emphasis is rarely on ensemble. Though theatre is a model that carries within it a deep imperative for ensemble work, more often than not that work is subsumed under the name of a director, an auteur, or a specific site. A roving band of anonymous actors without a playwright or director or stage is hardly the kind of collective one finds promoted in academies or on the professional stage, and so students entering the profession with training, have most often already been trained against the grain of collectivity.<sup>8</sup>

CAE began in 1986, two years after the Guerrilla Girls formed their anonymous activist collective of “artists and professionals.” Comparing the two groups can help to situate CAE’s anonymity as similarly activist, but differently focused. The Guerrilla Girl mission is to expose racism, sexism, and homophobia in the art world and they have done this through posters, statistical fact sheets, masked actions, and various publications. While the Guerrilla Girls were anonymous initially to protect their names, the necessity of their anonymity itself made a loud statement about the general blindspotting of artists of color, female artists, and queer artists precisely where art meets capital—the “art scene” of galleries, funding, museums, reviews, shows, sales, and placement in history. Historically, women and people of color have not been *named* “artists” and for such artists, then, anonymity signals a troubled and suspect position. The broader sexed, raced, and gendered context that continues to influence capital in the art establishment is what the Guerrilla Girl collective wants to *name* and *locate* (see Guerrilla Girls 1998).

Looked at from this perspective it would be possible to argue that for a collective of white people (such as CAE) to claim anonymity and emulate the fluid dislocation of capital while appropriating the work of others is nothing remarkably out of the ordinary historically, but rather a longstanding privilege of the larger propertied white collective. Most likely, however, CAE would agree and argue that they deploy such emulation in an attempt to make those operations explicit. Rather than struggle to name the unnamed, CAE names the operation of naming, struggling to expose the fact that the named artist (the “star” individual) has long been circulated *as a name* to support a broader anonymous (unmarked) collective of (white patriarchal) privilege that repro-

duces its foundations by structurally facilitating institutional support for the cult of the individual artist.

Critical Art Ensemble began when two grad students at Florida State University collaborated on low-tech videos. In initially 1987, picking up new members, the group transformed into an artist/activist collective. Some of CAE's early projects between 1987 and 1993 include *Fiesta Critica*—a project launched in 1991 in Indiantown, Florida. CAE interacted with Mayan migrant workers in the town and developed a set of pieces presented at an Easter fiesta, using their grant money to support the fiesta, which otherwise would have been beyond the means of the workers. In *Cultural Vaccines* (1989), CAE collaborated with Gran Fury on a multimedia event that critiqued U.S. policy regarding the HIV crisis.<sup>9</sup> The first chapter of ACT UP in Florida emerged from this exhibition, with CAE members as founding members. *Exit Culture* (1992) was a series of works developed for highway culture in Florida. The piece incorporated trucker poetry for CB, postcards for tourists, invisible performance, and bus-stop video. For three days, CAE traveled around Florida in a Winnebago stopping only to perform at tourist sites, rest stops, and malls.

In 1994 CAE published *The Electronic Disturbance* with the Autonomedia Collective of Semiotext(e). The book was a broad-based critique of technology within pancapitalism. It immediately found a very wide audience. Hakim Bey called the book a “manifesto for a new generation of artists” and Tim Druckerey heralded it “required reading.” The book jumped to the #1 best-seller slot in nonfiction on the *Village Voice* alternative best-seller list. It was available to download free off the web. Suddenly CAE was deluged with offers to speak, perform, and publish. *The Electronic Disturbance* was translated into German within a month of its appearance in English (works by CAE now appear in eight languages).<sup>10</sup> *Electronic Civil Disobedience and Other Unpopular Ideas* (1996) soon followed and CAE was on the road all over Europe, the U.S., and Canada.

In 1995 at a festival in Winnipeg, a woman showed a CAE member a photo of her child. While this quotidian exchange might not have been remarkable, this particular photo showed the child at the four-cell stage. The woman was a single parent who had conceived through in vitro fertilization. The sighting provoked a turn in CAE's work from critiquing information and communications technology, with an emphasis on the internet, to addressing ideological problems associated with biotechnology.

This turn, which resulted in *Flesh Machine*, is interesting in part because CAE's critique of electronic technology had always included a critique of the ways in which net culture ignores or blindspots material and bodily effects in favor of a thrall to supposed user disembodiment. And yet, one of the most riveting suggestions in *Electronic Civil Disobedience* concerns the futility of contemporary political activism based solely on present-body embodied actions. While pressing for an assessment of the bodily effects of web culture, CAE simultaneously believes, quite adamantly, that resistance at the level of bodies in the street is defunct. The CAE argument runs as follows. Activism of the present protesting body (from sit-ins to marches to million-body appearances) is dependent on an image of sedentary power: that is, power as centered in bunker-institutions, locatable and inhabitable, available for physical take-over. But power in pancapitalism has become nomadic, decentered (or at least multicentered), and global—dis-located into the synapses of digitalia. In fact, CAE argues that the state has *given people the streets* (as a kind of “false public” space) because power has itself gone nomadic through electronic networks. To take to the streets, today, they argue, is civil obedience—anticipated, sanctioned spectacle—prolonging the illusion that presence alone can have effect.<sup>11</sup> While presence certainly does have a kind of effect, it is largely representational and pedagogical—not what CAE would call direct political action.

CAE makes its primary concern one of tacticality regarding digital interruptions into pancapitalism's digital fluidity. Literalizing a certain poststructural insight, CAE maintains that direct political action in the form of civil disobedience cannot be effected through affects of *presence* in representational regimes. The days are over, they remind us, when "castles, palaces, government bureaucracies, corporate home offices, and other architectural structures stood looming in city centers, daring malcontents and underground forces to challenge their fortifications" (in Dery 1998). As Mark Dery explicates CAE's position, the edifices that once housed power are now "monuments to its absence." Power is neither visible nor stable—thus effective resistance must make use of the invisible and unstable. CAE makes it clear that working in representational regimes is key to pedagogical resistance—and such resistance is important. But CAE makes a distinction between pedagogy and direct political action. For them, direct political action today necessitates invisibility and non-locatability, but pedagogical actions can slide into the space between location and dislocation, visibility and invisibility. *Flesh Machine* is largely a work falling into the category of pedagogy and thus should not be mistaken for direct political action, or for civil disobedience.

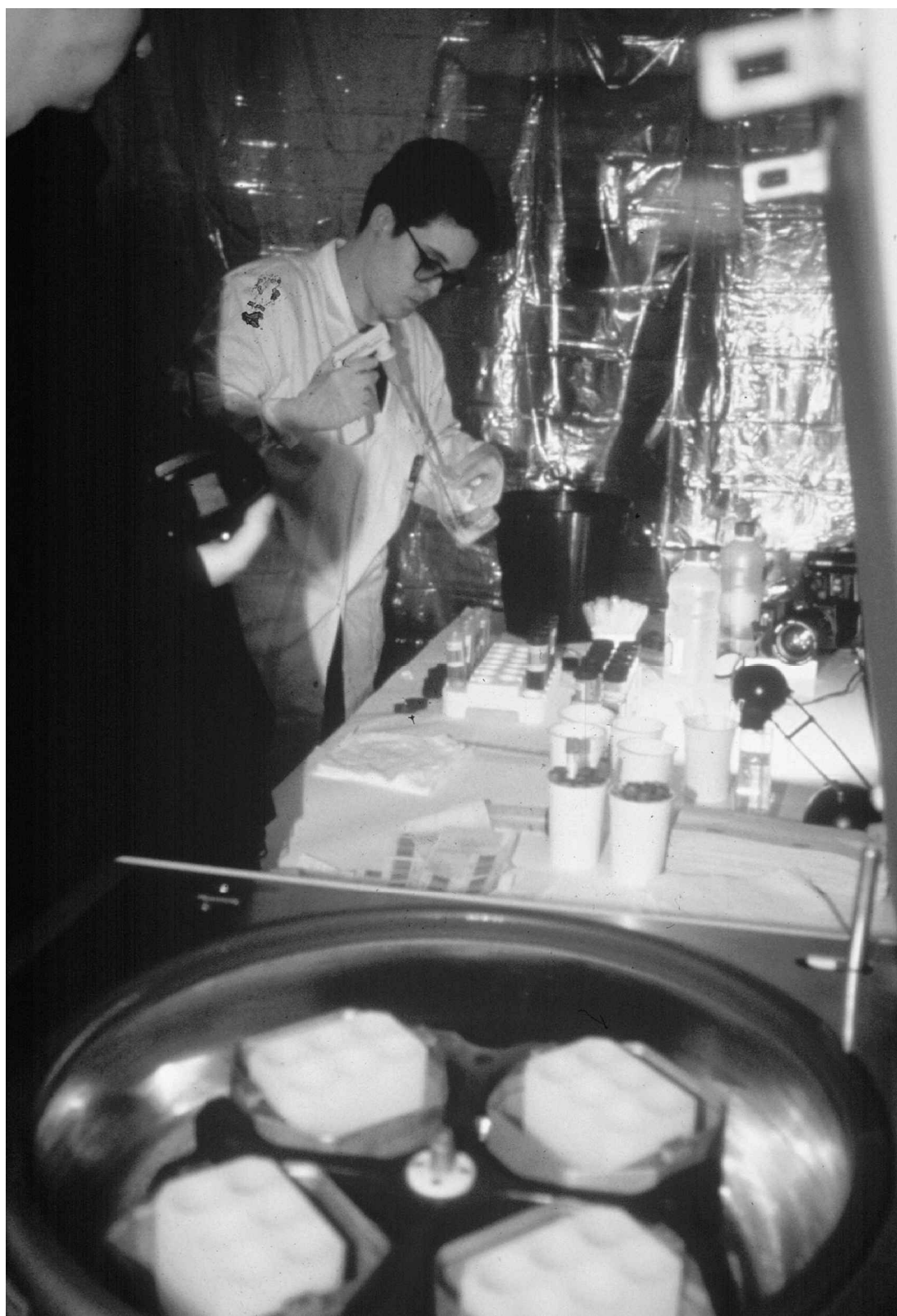
If power is neither visible nor stable, and if effective resistance must make use of the invisible and unstable, what kinds of instability does CAE deploy? For CAE, a long-standing device of instability is recombincance. In the essay in this issue of *TDR*, CAE cites the "tradition of digital cultural resistance" as one indebted to a wide-ranging heritage of recombincance stemming not only from digital media but more generally from the "avantgarde": "combines, sampling, pangender performance, bricolage, detournement, readymades, appropriation, plagiarism, theatre of everyday life, and so on." The disobedience that the digital offers is precisely a renewed deployment of the age-old disobedience of the thieving copy, a plagiaristic unsettling of the prerogatives of the ruse of locatable origin.

The benefits some theorists of the virtual see in the "new" body—the degendered body, for example—is, according to CAE, shortsighted. To them, the promise that cyberspace might become a truly multisensual apparatus, unleashing myriad bodily pleasures released from policings of desire, ignores the fact that the technology is developed and released only under the auspices of intensive capital. "Why would capital want to deliver what would essentially be a wish machine to its population?" asks CAE:

Capital depends upon a consistent state of what the Situationists called "enriched privation." If satisfaction were ever offered to the public, the economy of desire would collapse overnight. A virtual wish machine is about as likely as capital legitimizing and insisting upon the use of heroin among its [working- and middle-class] population. (in Dee 1998)

CAE's citation of Situationist Debord above is a huge clue to CAE's indebtedness to '60s radical performance politics—and an indication that it does not agree with the postmodern claim that the avantgarde is dead. *The Electronic Disturbance* relentlessly critiques conventional Western theatre and performance art—seeing much of it invested in a navel-gazing celebration of the "solipsistic self" and citing the proscenium arch as the primary apparatus of that solipsism in a machinery of presence. But certain avantgarde art tactics are considered resistant—and useful for *pedagogical* actions.<sup>12</sup> The Living Theatre, Happenings, and other '60s attempts to collapse the distinction between art and life are cited as offering "tremendous help" by "establishing the first recombincant stages." CAE also cites Berlin Dada, Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, feminist performance of the '70s, and Guerrilla Art Action Group as

4. *Flesh Machine*. DNA is amplified at an onsite lab. (Photo courtesy of CAE)



inspirational. Though, as they claim in this issue of *TDR*, the art world regularly “defanged” these movements, the lesson CAE takes from various earlier radical theatres is the impact of the “experiential,” of something called “real life.” They maintain the importance of an art that is “looped back” into the immediacy of everyday life. Into and out of. The loop is important as they feel equally strongly that “everyday life” can not be art’s exclusive terrain:

CAE’s interest in the Living Theatre stems from our belief that it offered a proto-postmodern model of cultural production. The group quite consciously located itself in the liminal position between the real and the simulated. Various behaviors were appropriated and redeployed so perfectly that, regardless of their ontological status, they had the material impact of the real. The Living Theatre performed the crisis of the real before it had been adequately theorized, and contributed to the conceptual foundation now used to understand and create virtual theatre. It helped make it clear that for virtual theatre to have any contestational value, *it must loop back to the materiality of everyday life.* (in Dery 1998; emphasis added)

The turn to biotechnology from their earlier artwork on communications technology offered a site for a direct interrogation of the relations between digital capital culture and the “loop” to material everyday life. CAE wanted their work on biotechnology to challenge the distinction between the simulated and the real—something that biotechnology itself challenges (think simply of Dolly the sheep clone [see Schneider forthcoming]). In the tradition of the Living Theatre, they wanted to tap the contestational value in enunciating “the loop.”

Intent on the real/virtual/real loop, then, CAE’s deployment of digital models of recombination is not a move to bankrupt the material body as site of political action, despite the fact that the “street” has moved to the nonmateriality of the information highway. Rather recombinant resistance needs to be attentive, precisely, to the *body politic* of nomadic authoritarian power and its multiple deployments of the digital toward increased privatization—including the production of “false public space” and the parallel production of privation for “undesirable” or deviant bodies. Despite its nomadism and dislocation in terms of the national or geographic, capital still operates through metaphors of the frontier, which are, more precisely, metaphors of penetration (the name of a new consortium of scientists and companies investing in cloning is “Probio America”). For CAE the biological body, or more precisely, the privatization, manipulation, and commodification of the *organic*, is the “new frontier” that capital is “penetrating.”

While feminist and critical race theorists on the left have long been hip to the regulation of bodies under capital and the politics of the body as capital vis-à-vis production and reproduction, the “new eugenic consciousness” of the right makes the laboring body *seem* like an antiquated machine. CAE suggests, however, that we distrust this notion that the laboring body and its manipulation will be outmoded through the promises of biological technology. New Eugenics is a body radically disembodied—a body contained in a single sample, the body as digitized code—but still, perhaps, a future body designed relative to economics, regulating and managing a white-collar workforce. I asked one CAE member to make this point clearer to me—being a bit skeptical of the conspiracy theory that seemed to undergird the argument. The artist pointed to a large glass office building opposite my seventh-floor window in the financial district in Manhattan. We sat silently for a few moments and watched the workers inside. Floor upon floor upon floor of management—the ones with windows, the ones we could see, were middle-level executives—many of whom might be the clients of a corporation like BioCom,



5. CAE member places prepared cell samples into the cryotank during *Flesh Machine*. (Photo courtesy of CAE)

many of whom might “pass” for appropriate genetic duplication, and many of whom might be able to afford the cost. It was hard for me to see exactly how this was a frontier—body upon body upon body, floor upon floor upon floor, the furthest thing from “wild” let alone “where no man has gone before.” But maybe it only takes a little thought. Even if this frontier is more cellular than it is geographic, its ramifications are as far-reaching as other “penetrations” have been in the history of capitalist expansion. Here, biotechnology, like some railroad to the interior, opens access like never before—making “the body” available for empire building.

CAE’s point in *Flesh Machine* is clear: The new commodity market open for colonial expansion of property politics is taking place intra-bodily via reproductive biotechnologies. They advocate, through their nomadmedial highway dodgings between art, critical theory, digital production, performance, and the literal life/death auction of an embryo, a close analysis of linked apparati

of reproduction (aesthetic, digital, and biotechnical). They are not neoluddites. They are very much manifesto-style avantgarde artists of technology. Their biggest effort is pitched toward making certain that technological development is shaped, designed, and deployed alternatively.

Even, it seems, if some have to die in the process.

### Notes

1. See Jon McKenzie (forthcoming) on the “lecture machine.”
2. Subsequent performances took place at the Kapellica Gallery, Ljubljana; the Labor Gallery, Graz; Beursschouwburg, Brussels (at the Art and Science Collision); and at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki.
3. CAE’s notion of hidden agendas has a resolutely Marxist ring, though their angle on late capital’s liquid structure—its nomadism—lands them more precisely in league with the anti-rationalist schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari.
4. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes by CAE are from a series of interviews conducted from June 1999 to June 2000.
5. The word “intermedia” was introduced into the arts lexicon by Dick Higgins in 1965 (see Higgins 1969, the essay dates from 1965). In describing artworks at the interfaces of established media and in the interstices between art and life, Higgins anticipated the postmodern preference for hybridity over formal unity and the challenge to “art” as an ontologically pure and privileged category. Deploying intermedia CAE’s nomadmediality dislocates as well as interfaces.
6. BioCom is now a page on CAE’s website at <critical-art.net/biocom>.
7. Each book was a small edition, hand-bound, letter-press book printed in editions of 100 copies.
8. Of course there are ensembles of performers today who are very active. The Wooster Group, East Coast Artists, San Francisco Mime Troupe, Spiderwoman, Mabou Mines, Sacred Naked Nature Girls, Goat Island, Grotowski Workcenter, the Living Theatre, Great Small Works, and more. In the art world, collectives are much more foreign, for obvious reasons. In the theatre, groups are not dominant, but neither are they nonexistent. In fact, one of the tendencies the theatre inherited from the interaction with visual arts that produced performance art was the tendency toward solo creation.
9. Gran Fury is an artists’ collective that emerged simultaneously with CAE and the Guerrilla Girls. Ironically named after the popular brand of car used by police, Gran Fury was closely tied to the ranks of New York AIDS activists. Their mission was to use the medium of advertising to strike back against homo- and AIDS-phobia. Refusing to identify its members, Gran Fury wheat-pasted posters all over New York City. Perhaps most famous is the up-turned pink triangle and “Silence=Death” logo. *Kissing Doesn’t Kill* (1990), a video by the collective, aired on cable and MTV. A bus poster of the same title was banned in several cities because it featured multicultural imagery of gays and lesbians kissing.
10. After completion of this essay, I asked CAE to tell me which eight languages were represented. They are, interestingly, difficult to track. By the time CAE got back to me, the number had jumped to nine. As of June 2000, CAE gave me the following response:

Our books are in German, Italian, French, Slovenian. Our books are anthologies of our writings usually combining the most influential chapters from *TED* and *ECD*—*TED* and *ECD* proper were only published in Italian; *Flesh Machine* proper was only published in German, although an Italian edition is supposed to appear, and a French edition also if our publisher gets back in the black. Various configurations of the group’s writings are in Hungarian, Finnish, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch. The Slovenian is new—we have gone from 8 to 9 languages. We have signed releases for Chinese and Korean translations, but we don’t have the reference (maybe it happened; maybe it didn’t). Since all our work is anti-copyright, we get surprised all the time. Our work gets printed and we don’t know it, and often happen to stumble across it.

11. That embodied protest as effectual might be a ruse of postnational power is reminiscent of Baudrillard’s argument that the manufacture and media deployment of scandal is an

empty ritual of authority engineered to maintain the ruse that capital and its governing body has conscience (1994).

12. CAE makes a distinction between pedagogy and direct political action. Direct political action necessitates, today, invisibility and non-locatability, but pedagogical actions can slide into the space between the visible and the invisible, as between virtuality and “the real.”

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