



Bruce Charlesworth

From *Wrong Adventures* by Bruce Charlesworth

(1987) are music video-style romps. The former is visually as funky as its song by The Wallets, local art-rockers, the latter updates an old Fugs song with complex processed imagery and deliberately bland performance poses, with music performed on hybrid junkyard-material instruments.

Judging 15 years, or even a week's festival, on its final two programs may be unfair; as with any pioneering regional media center, the strength of the works is also informed by the stability and continued viability of the host organization. Because Intermedia Arts has learned to grow beyond video freakdom into the far more complex 1980s, a celebration was surely in order and this grab-bag evening was the best way to cap it all off.

Phil Anderson

installations

WAYNE ZEBZDA

"RIP-OFF: ON THE NATURE OF SECURITY"

Artspace
San Francisco
March 22 - April 30, 1988

Contemporary notions of victim and perpetrator extend beyond street crime into the arena of representations. The "gaze" functions as a weapon of male desire when women are positioned in certain ways in film, for instance. Other factors that preclude a simplistic reading of crime include societal and individual complicity in the blurring of roles. Wayne Zebzda's *Rip-Off: On the Nature of Security* investigated the ramifications of security in a wide ranging field of manifestations.

Using individual found and fabricated sculpture and room-scale installations, Zebzda provoked many levels of interpretation with visual or titular verbal puns. The ominous *Have a Nice Day* underscored the presence of violence beneath the banality of daily living, whereby the saccharine Happy Face symbol was transformed into a sign of terror; nine ski masks used by muggers and rapists were arranged on the wall to form the eyes and curved smile of the logo. Our security is only an illusion. *Heart Protector*, a small metal

plate with straps, only protects a small part of the body. *Lead Wallet*, a piece of folded sheet lead containing a dollar bill, only protects the money from radiation, not theft. 1939, an old magazine photograph of a night watchman captioned "It's my job to lock up the United States every night and hang on to the key" was also ironic, because the Pearl Harbor attack propelled America into World War II shortly after the photograph was published. *Tricycle (for bad boys)* consisted of a rusty old tricycle with a ball and chain attached to it, but nothing prevented the bully from getting off the vehicle. Many false senses of security that we fall into were impressively developed in the work.

Three pieces with punning titles commented sarcastically on various topics. *Kennedy Papers*, a framed cigarette paper with JFK's picture on its logo, pointed out the morally criminal appropriation of a crime victim's image. *Safe Painting* swiped at collectors who buy art for investment. A metal safe had a Mona Lisa reproduction glued to its door, complete with wooden frame around the opening. *Set For Life (tilted living quarters)* offered a set of monochromatic mustard-yellow room furnishings attached to a large board positioned vertically. This drab environment functioned metaphorically either as life imprisonment in a jail or a stultifying middle-class existence where we live as characters amidst a stage set.

The most unforgettable part of the exhibition was *Nice-Doggie-Nice Doggie (cage structures)*, where two live German shepherds barked furiously at gallery visitors. Enclosed by a system of metal passageways formed by cages welded together, the dogs could even visit the upper loft, but they usually stayed on the floor in the rear gallery room, guarding their territory. When I approached them, the noise was so intense that it was disturbing to stay even though I knew they could not have attacked me. Here, security, or lack thereof, was hammered home on a gut level as I recalled facing barking dogs in the past. (The artist had rented the dogs from an

obedience/protection training company, and he took the animals home with him every night.) Despite its simplicity, Zebzda's work convincingly established its relevance to crucial issues affecting our daily lives; this was a strong first solo exhibition in the Bay Area, and I look forward to future developments.

Alfred Jan

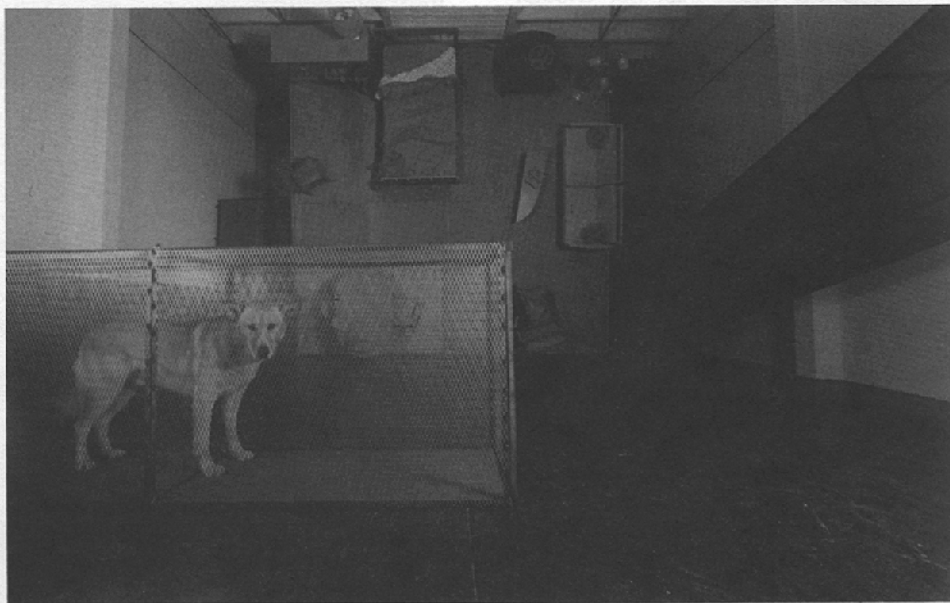
JAMES LEE BYARS

UNTITLED INSTALLATION/PERFORMANCE

Hoffman/Borman Gallery
Los Angeles
April 16 - May 7, 1988

In his installation at Hoffman/Borman Gallery, James Lee Byars eloquently combined issues central to the previously opposed arts of minimalist and modernist sculpture. Although this dandified shaman continued to cultivate his persona as celestial sage—by wearing, at the show's opening, his trademark gold lame suit, black top hat and blindfold—his installation needed no dressing up. At its best, free of the costumed buffoon's mock-serious presence, Byars' installation offered a glimpse of the moment when perceptions and thoughts slip over into their more lasting form as memories. In this way, his installation distinguished itself from the charlatany of his sideshow performance: it did not dress up an attenuated version of minimalism in mystical-philosophical garb, but pushed minimalism's interrogation of perception to a point where this project's distinction from modernist art no longer made sense.

Byars' installation united modernism's instantaneousness with minimalism's exploration of art's extended situation. In the center of the gallery's main exhibition space, Byars placed, side by side, two 39-inch lava spheres. High in each of the large room's corners, he suspended a single clear light bulb. The gallery's walls had been painted dark red and the windows blocked out so that walking into the dimly lit space felt like entering a huge empty cavern. As one's eyes adjusted to the



Rip-Off: On the Nature of Security by Wayne Zebzda

Sixth Street Studio