What We Got Away With: Rochdale College and Canadian Art in the Sixties

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Abstract

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Robin Simpson

This thesis examines the place and influence of Rochdale College within the Canadian, and more specifically Toronto, art milieu of the late sixties. Occupying an eighteen story concrete building just north of University of Toronto, Rochdale College was an unprecedented alternative living and learning environment. Following its opening in 1968 Rochdale and its community quickly came to be a major beacon for the counterculture attracting artists from across the country. Entirely student-run, Rochdale was a world-unto-itself with its own governing committees for administration, finance, and education. Divided into four chapters, "What We Got Away With" situates Rochdale College under an art historical lens. These chapters survey how artists experienced and interacted with Rochdale College and turn a critical eye toward the College's printed ephemera as a means to better understand the cultural and socio-economic conditions surrounding the experiment. Chapter one inquires as to why certain artists chose to attend Rochdale instead of another Canadian art college. At the time many existing art colleges, as well as government committees on education, were also incorporating protocols of radical pedagogy into their curricula. This chapter explores how the socio-economic conditions of the late-sixties bore influence on arts education in Canada. Chapter two profiles a number of artists' relations and interactions with the College, identifying artworks that can be traced back to the College either via aesthetic or historical avenues. Chapter three investigates how Rochdale's print culture intersected with its actual built

environment taking for its example the College's first restaurant. The restaurant's futuristic design was initially elaborated over numerous newsletters. Its final form acted as a clever retort to the College's prescribed concrete architecture, drawing attention to a latent radicalism in the surrounding built environment. Chapter four is a study of the College's infamous phony degrees. By closely examining their design, distribution, and resulting correspondence this chapter reassess the satire behind these novel documents and the role of the publics it assembled.

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Introduction

"Quantitative measurements will get you nowhere, and all descriptions are on their way to being out of date as soon as formulated."[1] So the 1969 academic calendar to Rochdale College warned incoming residents. An ambitious experiment in freely structured communal life at the northern edge of University of Toronto's campus, Rochdale stood as Canada's counter-cultural beacon throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. Towering at eighteen stories Rochdale was a world-unto-itself, housing upwards of 5000 residents throughout its seven-year existence.[2] According to the calendar, it was

> a living articulate cross-section of contemporary society different only in being genuinely self-(often un-)determined, and in the openness with which it citizens act out both their joys and troubles. You may have trouble distinguishing between the academic, the therapeutic, and the vocational. [3]

Could these two caveats regarding the volatile nature of Rochdale's loose curriculum and social organization also apply to its history and to anyone, such as myself, who aims to write an academic account of the College? Could this experiment in radical pedagogy and shared living, which ended over thirty-five years ago, still be able to repel scholarly scrutiny? The amount of primary material available for consultation is daunting. A working relationship between the College and alternative publishing house Coach House Press assured a constant outpouring of newsletters and ephemera, and with these documents a graphic and textual tumult of truths and non-truths. The testimonials I

[1] *Rochdale is...* (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1969) n. pag.
[2] Sharpe 12.
[3] *Rochdale is...* n. pag.

acquired via interviews only add additional voices to this cacophony, as do photographs, journalistic interpretations, and secondary accounts. Historian Theodore Roszak, in introducing his study on sixties youth culture, expressed a similar hesitation, "As a subject of study, the counter culture...possesses all the liabilities which a decent sense of intellectual caution would persuade one to avoid like the plague."[4]

In the pages that follow Rochdale as an institution is never my principle subject of study. Rather, my interest in the College has led me to examine its place in and relation to the Canadian art milieu of the time. Much of my effort has been guided by printed material related to the College. In place of rationalizing and organizing this material I have chosen to approach each document as part of a larger textual and graphic membrane. Thus, my study uses Rochdale College and its print culture as its centre-point in order to access and contemplate Canadian art history from an unfamiliar perspective. In some sense I've attempted to suspend the College as a point of passage in a manner similar to how it was experienced by the artists under study. The emphasis here is placed on artists who came to live and work at or in association with Rochdale College. Some of these connections are explicit, notably with the collective General Idea whose membership came together at Rochdale. Other relations are more tenuous, where Rochdale was a temporary place of employment or resource for artists, or a home to organizations whose operations straddled artistic experimentation and community activism. Certain situations addressed here follow visiting artists back to alternative organizations elsewhere, associating Rochdale with a network of galleries and services

[4]Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969) xi.

then emerging in parallel to the mainstream art system.

Moreover, my inquiry is guided by a secondary, but no less important, current. In some cases artists chose Rochdale's chaotic learning environment over the curricula available at existing art schools around the country. Considering this I investigate how Canada's principal art schools (including Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Ontario College of Art in Toronto, and École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal) also incorporated ideas of radical pedagogy into their own operations. Similar propositions could also be read in certain government policies on education and labour. Comparing such instances has allowed me to suggest parallel negotiations by the counterculture and mainstream, as they contended with the conditions of the post-industrial economy. This overlap is evident in my analysis of two enterprising projects realized at Rochdale. One such project was a futuristic restaurant on the ground floor whose design attempted to draw out the similarities, rather than differences, between the College's hippie population and its staid architecture. I also examine the design and distribution of Rochdale's infamous phony degrees, and suggest that this satirical enterprise can be read as a clever comment on the state of education within the post-industrial society.

Rochdale College

By the mid-sixties the University of Toronto was experiencing a severe lack of student housing as the baby-boom generation started to enter higher education *en masse*. The non-profit organization Campus Co-op, already set to construct a major co-operative student house for the University of Waterloo and managing a number of properties in

Toronto, began working with the Toronto school to realize a major, multi-floor building to alleviate the mounting pressure to accommodate incoming students. In the spring of 1966 Campus Co-op successfully negotiated a five-year mortgage totalling over $5 million along with a below-standard interest rate. A development site on Bloor Street West at the northeast end of the University's campus was secured and planning commenced for what would become Rochdale College.[5]

Rochdale College was officially incorporated in 1964, its name taken from the prototypical mid-nineteenth century consumer cooperative the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers.[6] Throughout its history the experiment would exist at once as a co-operative housing project and as a foray into experimental education. Working with the architects Elmar Tampõld and John Wells the projected building was many times larger than any of the cooperative's previous undertakings. The potential of this larger future community to stand as an alternative to the neighbouring university was quickly recognized. The overseeing council solicited part-time professor, poet, and writer Dennis Lee to develop an education program for the College. Setting up shop in a set of houses also owned by Campus Co-op in the spring of 1967, Lee and the residents of what would be known as the Rochdale Houses worked together to elaborate a program of student-centric learning and collective administration. Lee's program and his own reflections on these preliminary activities were soon published in *This Magazine is About Schools,* an important and popular journal on radical pedagogy for a growing Canadian readership.[7]

[5]Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz 7-12.
[6]Sharpe 15.
[7]Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz 16-17. Dennis Lee "Getting to Rochdale," *This Magazine Is About Schools*, winter 1968. The same article was republished in Howard Adelman and Lee's *The University Game*

These initial participants, numbering around twenty-five, came to supervise Rochdale's transition from a minor experiment into a major countercultural hub. Just prior to the commencement of the education program the Rochdale Council and Campus Co-op were officially bifurcated. Soon after Lee and the Houses participants' education program was approved by the Ontario government and Rochdale College was officially chartered as a non-profit organization. Just one year before the building's opening the idealistic educational program, which initially began as a supplement to the ambitious housing project, was given free rein. [8]

Rochdale opened in the fall of 1968, two months behind schedule. Residents had already begun arriving in the summer months moving into the building while it was still under construction; ambling about the hallways and exploring their new abode protected by hard hats. Comprised of two wings the building towered above the neighbouring campus, the west-wing reaching to eighteen floors and the east-wing to sixteen floors. Built in a hotel-like fashion, the building's units were apartments of varying sizes. Accommodations were given appropriately scholarly designations: Aphrodites referred to one-bedroom units, Zeus to those with two-bedrooms, Gnostics referred to another version of the one-bedroom unit, and large suites with a double bedroom, a single bedroom and a privatef bathroom were dubbed Kafkas. Ashrams, the definitive living arrangement at the college, featured eight apartments arranged around a common living room and bathroom.[9]

(Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1968) and *This Book Is About Schools*, ed. Satu Repo (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

[8]Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz 18.

[9]Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz 14.

Soon after its opening Rochdale quickly established a reputation as Canada's countercultural hub. In place of teachers the College hired a staff of resource people, an array of dynamic specialists whose services were often remunerated through free or reduced tenancy in the building. Although a council supervised Rochdale's educational activities the collectively authored curriculum was in constant flux. The 1969 course calendar noted, "Nobody knows exactly how many Education Things are going on here. Seminars come and go before anyone has thought to write them up for the *Daily* ... Workshops, projects, formal and informal tutorials throw up brief structures faster than the mind can boggle."[10] Accordingly, at Rochdale learning through experience meant "Nothing is extra-curricular."[11] Ebullient and violent at times, the College at its peak occupancy stood as North America's largest student co-operative residence and free university.[12] It remained open until 1975 when the College's inability to pay its mortgage and debts, along with the combined pressures of internalized crime and external persecution by the police, public, and media, forced the experiment to close its doors.[13]

Material and Methodology

My investigation principally references material held at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. Classified simply as a "collection [of] miscellaneous material issued by and about Rochdale College", the word 'collection'

[10] *Rochdale is...* n. pag.
[11] *Rochdale is...* n. pag.
[12] Sharpe 11.
[13] Unable to handle its debts and under mounting public pressure Rochdale went into receivership in 1974. It was bought back by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation at a public auction in 1975 and converted into the Senator David A. Croll Apartments which remain open today. Sharpe 257-277.

alone is telling, suggesting that the material assembled does not amount to a comprehensive fond with an inherent organizational logic. However, what is available is more than enough to allow a researcher to immerse himself in the College's history: administrative material, a myriad of newsletters and publications, newspaper clippings, audio-recordings, council minutes, legal documents, correspondence, and some printed ephemera. Amongst this material I have concentrated on the College's weekly newsletters and its offshoots, as well as the degrees and related correspondence.

Indeed, a retelling of Rochdale's history is an undertaking that greatly exceeds the scope of my study. And is not necessary, since a number of studies and accounts of the College have been published. David Sharpe's *Rochdale: The Runaway College* narrates the rise and fall of Rochdale through its financial and administrative events. With their book *Dream Tower: The Life and Legacy of Rochdale College* Henry Mietkiewicz and Bob Mackowycz do much the same while relying extensively on the retrospective testimony sourced from a range of original residents. More recently historian Stuart Henderson has commenced a critical revision of these accounts. Having previously authored *Making The Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s*[14] Henderson has since turned an academic eye to Rochdale. Henderson's recent article on the College is guided by *There Can Be No Light Without Shadow,* a massive tome published by Rochdale in 1971, pairing a history of the College written by then-president Peter Turner with an anthropological study by resident Kent Gooderham.[15] Two other ex-Rochdalians

[14]Stuart Henderson, *Making The Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

[15] Stuart Henderson, "Off the Streets and into the Fortress: Experiments in Hip Separatism at Toronto's Rochdale College, 1968–1975," *The Canadian Historical Review* 92.1 (2011): 107-133.

have published their own autobiographic accounts: Ralph Osborne's *From Someplace Else: A Memoir*[16] and Brian J. Grieveson's *Rochdale: Myth and Reality*[17].

Although the cultural dimension of Rochdale is chronicled to varying degrees in the above-mentioned studies it has always remained secondary to narratives following the College's more salient controversies and spectacles – its parlous fiscal conditions, police raids and drug sales, armed internal security, suicides, and the untenability of its communalism. While recognized as an experiment unique to Toronto and Canada it is also all too often presented simply as a depository or convenient point of summary for the full gamut of political and cultural events of the sixties. To date there has yet to emerge a study that specifically examines Rochdale's place and influence within the Toronto, and by extension Canadian, arts milieu. I have therefore situated my thesis project in relation to this gap in the scholarship.

Coeval to the development and operations of Rochdale was the advent of an initially informal network of artist-determined galleries, festivals, and projects. As the residents of Rochdale ambitiously set forth to elaborate a shared living and learning environment as an alternative to the standing university system so artists began to come together to form a pan-national constellation of galleries and services to explore new possibilities outside of the existing art system. My thesis addresses different points of junction between this emerging network and the College. In situating Rochdale within this web I consider the College at once as a point of passage for artists and as a sympathetic institution in correspondence with these new cultural spaces.

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[16]Ralph Osborne, *From Someplace Else: A Memoir* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2003).
[17]Brian J. Grieveson, *Rochdale: Myth and Reality* (Haliburton, ON: Charasee Press, 1991).

In recent years, which is to say since the mid-2000s, the art world has seen the increased presence of educational models within the practices of artists and curators. According to cultural theorist Irit Rogoff this "educational turn" has assumed two distinct forms. A focus on the conversational, "an insistence on the unchartable, processual nature" of art making brought with it renewed interest in structural critiques of the 1970s and a critical reactivation of art spaces and services. At the same time a genre of "pedagogical aesthetics" concentrating on the superficial representation of education began to appear within the programs of museums, independent spaces and festivals, and the global biennial circuit. To Rogoff the potential of this turn lies in this first form through which the art world becomes "a site of extensive talking." Pedagogical models are deployed as a way to transform the existing infrastructure of the art world into an expansive university. Rogoff sees this turn as a means of opening up the art system to the support of a shared and cross-disciplinary "speculative mode" of inquiry.[18] Similarly, Brian Holmes has characterized a third wave of institutional critique emerging in the late 1990s as "extradisciplinary." This implies that artists and activists in correspondence with thinkers from other sectors have commenced working together on projects hinged on issues of social justice and diffused across a range of art institutions and services.[19]

Indeed, while preparing this study I was invited to partake in a number of projects of this very nature. In response to a renewed interest in Rochdale among students and

[18]Irit Rogoff, "Turning," *e-flux Journal*, September 2010, 11 August 2011 <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18>. See also the anthologies: Steven Henry Madoff, ed., *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)*(Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009) and Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, eds., *Curating and the Educational Turn* (Amsterdam: De Appel, 2010).

[19] Brian Holmes, "L'Extradisciplinaire. Vers une nouvelle critique institutionnelle," *Multitudes*, 10 June 2008, 11 August 2011 <http://multitudes.samizdat.net/L-Extradisciplinaire-Vers-une>.

researchers the University of Toronto Art Centre hosted an exhibition displaying artefacts drawn from the University's library collection.[20] Ad hoc workshops were conducted alongside the exhibition, coordinated by students and with little intervention from the project's instigators. In this context I presented an early version of my concluding chapter. At the Banff Centre I joined a group of artists and curators in a practical and collective exploration of utopian-minded artist-led communities (Is there any other type?).[21] And at the Venice Biennial I participated in another collaborative project, this time one that was closer to the performance of "pedagogical aesthetics" as identified by Rogoff.[22]

Incubated within this contemporary-art context, my study was initially framed by scholarship on art pedagogy. The appearance of the English translation of French philosopher Jacques Rancière's short book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* in 2007 was an important event in this "educational turn".[23] Rancière's book recounts the story of Joseph Jacotot, a rogue nineteenth-century French pedagogue, who developed a technique of not only teaching the illiterate to read but also providing them with the means to teach others. The book's perceptive translator, Kristin Ross observes that Rancière's story of Jacotot can be read as a two-fold parable. On one

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[20] "The exhibition does not claim to present a complete historical portrait of Rochdale, but instead prepares a historical collision in which Rochdale never stopped. The fragments of the wreckage allow us to recontextualize Rochdale in all its forms." Curated by student Rebecca Noon and UTAC education program coordinator Sunny Kerr. 28 September to 2 November 2009. For more information see: <http://www.utac.utoronto.ca/student-programs/past-student-exhibition/182-rochdale-college>.

[21] This during the thematic residency *Beyond Former Heaven: The Institute for Surrealist Ethnography* as coordinated by artist Olivia Plender.

[22] This under the rubric *Reverse Pedagogy II* a project instigated by artist Paul Butler, first realized at the Banff Centre and later collaboratively developed for Venice.

[23] Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (San Francisco: Stanford University Press, 2007).

hand, it is a meditation on equality. On the other, it is an allegorical critique regarding the failure of the French education system, both at an institutional level in its incapacity to serve the lower classes and immigrant youth and also at an intellectual level.[24]

Ethnographic surveys of artists and their education, such as Howard Singerman's *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*[25] and Judith E. Adler's *Artists in Offices: An Ethnography of an Academic Art Scene*,[26] informed my understanding of the historical development of art education and the influence of art institutions. These two books pay particular attention to art education after the Second World War within the United States, examining the social and aesthetic ramifications of specialized education in art. Singerman's study focuses on the shift of art training away from technique and its transition into an academic discipline. In examining the nature of graduate-level art education Singerman considers the changing role this training has played in the validation and professionalization of artists – the transference of methodologies and vernacular from the humanities, the interrelations between formal certification through study and informal artists' activity outside of the academy. Taking a cue from artist Daniel Buren, he approaches the university as a "crucial structuring site where artist and art worlds are mapped and reproduced."[27] Also referenced by Singerman, Adler's sociological study focuses on the California Institute of the Arts. She examines the correlation between artists' adoption of professional academic roles and the rote "ritual revolt" of art in the

[24] Kristin Ross, Translator's Introduction, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, Jacques Rancière (San Francisco: Stanford University Press, 2007) vii-xxiii.
[25] Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in The American University* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
[26] Judith E. Adler, *Artists in Offices: An Ethnography of an Academic Art Scene* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1979).
[27] This is best summarized in his closing chapter "Toward a Theory of an M.F.A." Singerman 187-213.

1960s (in part fuelled and eclipsed by the larger revolutionary goals of the counter-culture).[28] The story of Black Mountain College, the famous remote refuge of the American avant-garde, is an obvious point of comparison with Rochdale.[29] Lisa Tickner's account of the student revolt at London's Hornsey College of Art[30], and in particular her contextualization of these events through Thierry De Duve's essay on the genealogy of art education, plays an important role in my examination of radical pedagogy and Canadian art education.[31]

Yet, despite my positioning of Rochdale under an art historical lens, the College never explicitly operated as an art school. And although the titles above provide valuable reference points for my study, their sociological orientation tends to leave the aesthetic and rhetorical dimensions of their case-studies largely unaddressed. As one former resident recalled, life at Rochdale was one of constant reading, a daily absorption of "messages, notices, advertisements, horoscopes, snippets of philosophy, photos of lost animals, and statements of deeply religious nature."[32] The primacy of printed material to my study required the adoption of a methodology that could position this textual and graphic data in such a way as to trace out other histories of Rochdale. Therefore, I have adopted approaches from sociologist Sam Binkley's study of alternative lifestyle publications from the 1970s[33] and Kristin Ross's examination of the management of the

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[28]Adler 34-42.
[29] Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2009).
[30] Lisa Tickner, *Hornsey 1968: The Art School Revolution* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2008)
[31] Thierry de Duve, "When Form Has Become Attitude - and Beyond," *The Artist and the Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and the Wider Cultural Context, e*ds. Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Foster (Southhampton, UK: John Hansard Gallery, University of Southhampton, 2005)
[32]Ralph Osborn, *From Someplace Else: A Memoir* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2003): 104.
[33]Sam Binkley, *Getting Loose: Lifestyle Consumption in the 1970s* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press,

memory of May '68 in France.[34] To different ends these two books employ comparative methods of discourse analysis by drawing correspondences between various facets of printed culture, across both categorical and temporal lines. Binkley traces out the reception of underground print culture by a new middle-class readership. He argues that this shift in attention can be read as one aspect of the erosion of hippie-era communalism and the arrival of individualist and pleasure oriented life-styles under the conditions of neoliberalism. Ross's challenge to the official histories of May '68 sets up communicative exchange between two different yet interrelated body of texts. In doing so she aims to re-articulate "memories of past alternatives that sought or envisioned other outcomes than the one that came to pass."[35] These documents, authored by both the May intelligentsia and its radical citizenry, were selected by Ross for the ways in which their tone and content was determined by the immediate events of May '68.[36] Accordingly, in my own study I arrange a number of encounters between seemingly disparate documents. These comparisons are made in order to better understand Rochdale's place within a larger socio-political climate.

A study of the circulation and reception of these documents and artworks implies a theory of community. Indeed, the majority of my thesis – with the following chapters on artists' relationships with Rochdale, the sale of phony degrees, and the College's restaurant – discusses the means by which people came together through via its services

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2007).

[34] Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[35] Ross 6.

[36] "I have found the filmed documentary footage, small publications, and mimeographed pamphlets from all kinds of groups, the often ephemeral journals, and the interpretations written in the white heat of the moment to be of much more interest and value than any of the interpretive commentaries ... consecrated in the years afterward." Ross 8.

and printed ephemera. And while Rochdale operated in part as a free school the artists who are profiled herein, although contemporaries to each other, have not to this date been categorized as members of a single stylistic or intellectual "school." But what else might these commonalities have amounted to if not a community? Scenes, sociologist Alan Blum writes, are assured by an informal yet intimate and collective form of problem solving. As an urban social phenomena they are shared "projects"; polemics enacted and diffused through public theatrics. "The desire for the scene plays off the collective concern for eventfulness in ways that highlight as part of the urban experience, the search for renewal through the critical moment."[37]

Blum's working definition of scenes – examined against principles of morality, theatricality, publicness and privacy, and spectacle – is intended to complicate Benedict Anderson's famous idea that nations, and by extension communities, are the result of shared imaginings between strangers and intimates.[38] To General Idea's AA Bronson, the print culture of the 1960s and 1970s was paramount to community building,

> Publishing was a primary means of building a connective tissue with the rest of the world, and also of acknowledging our own existence as artists (since we were not being acknowledged by the art world). We were not looking for legitimization from the art world, and we thought of ourselves as infiltrating the museums and galleries, rather than working with them. But we were very aware of our peers – locally, nationally and internationally – and it was to them we looked for acknowledgement.[39]

Taking these different perspectives of community into account I settle on Michael

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[37]Alan Blum, "Scenes," *Public* 22/23 (2001): 32.

[38]Benedict Anderson*, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

[39]Qtd. in Luis Jacob, *Golden Streams: Artists' Collaboration and Exchange in the 1970s: Image Bank, General Idea, Banal Beauty Inc. And New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver* (Mississauga, Ont.: Blackwood Gallery, 2003) 36.

Warner's notion of "counterpublics" as the basis for my critical framework.[40] Warner's examination of "stranger-relationality" considers the power of public speech to transform strangers into intimates. "With public speech," Warner writes, "we might recognize ourselves as addressees, but it is equally important that we remember that the speech was addressed to indefinite others." He continues, "in singling us out, it does so not on the basis of our concrete identity, but by virtue of our participation in the discourse alone, and therefore in common with strangers." In turn, public speech is hinged on "our partial nonidentity with the object of address."[41] Newsletters, magazines, almanacs, annuals, and other serial publications all partake in a "reflexive circulation" by entering a "cross-citational field" wherein discourse is made available to reader responses in order to be redirected and manipulated in unexpected ways.[42] Departing from feminist theories on the formation of subaltern publics.[43] Warner identifies "counterpublics" as instances of stranger-sociability where the reception of discourse is incorporated into challenges, both consciously and unconsciously, to normative social principles.[44] It is such instances that are important to my own study. With the case of Rochdale's phony degrees I re-examine the satirical impact when strangers reply in place of the expected public. My examination of Rochdale's restaurant investigates how its futuristic design challenged the assumed incompatibility between the internal population and the building.

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[40]Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005).
[41]Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* 78.
[42]Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* 94-95.
[43] Nancy Fraser's use of the same term in her essay "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" forms the basis of Warner's own definition.
[44]Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* 118-124.

What We Got Away With

A note on the title of my thesis. To some extent, I write this having my own Rochdale pedigree. In my last years of high school I found myself at S.E.E.D Alternative School. At the time this was located on the top floor of a five floor commercial building in the northeast corner of downtown Toronto. Toronto's oldest alternative school, S.E.E.D provided a learning environment that was decidedly different from the massive suburban high school I had defected from. Collegial in nature, the small student body and equally modest-sized faculty spent the first weeks of the school year planning the content of the curriculum. In addition to the standard and required core courses the floor was open for students to suggest additional topics of study. For these courses, which fell outside of the regular faculty's expertise 'catalysts' were brought in – practising artists, professionals, fanatics, and university students all arrived to guide the remainder of the student-determined curriculum.

S.E.E.D, it turned out, was once closely connected to Rochdale College. This was announced by our art teacher as he wheeled an AV cart and television into the student lounge. Together we watched Ron Mann's 1994 documentary *Dream Tower.* Rochdale's building, then and to this day a retirement home, was but a short-walk away from the school its bare concrete exterior betraying little of its past incarnation. I soon began to become aware of its residual influences on the city, first in relation to my own pedagogical context, and later in connection to other underground mainstays.

Arriving at university in Montreal I immediately stepped back into mainstream education. The university's library had a copy of David Sharpe's book and I once again

began to familiarize myself with the College. At the same time I began learning more about art in Toronto from this period (a slow-burning homesickness perhaps?), making note whenever Rochdale made an appearance.

Finally Rochdale returned full-tilt. Preparing a flyer for an evening of music hosted by myself and a friend I returned to Sharpe's book looking for a suitable image. The title of the event was "Let's dress up like cops, Think of what we could do!" Plucked from the Television song "Venus" I knew an image from Rochdale would complement this title. Rochdale resident Alex MacDonald took the majority of the photographs in Sharpe's book, and amongst these were a few images of Rochdale's notorious armed security team. In a group portrait shot in the building's underground parking lot seven bikers in official uniform, armed with rifles and belts of bullets, posed for the camera. Down the line the last two guards were embraced in a kiss, beards entwined. I sent the e-mail out to my own imagined constituency and quickly received a reply from a friend who not only recognized the photograph but also knew the photographer. I soon found myself in touch with Alex MacDonald who mailed me a comprehensive selection of images from his years at Rochdale.

The title *What We Got Away With* was composed in response to Tom Verlaine's lyric and casts this sequence of events as a personal prologue to my study here. It of course also speaks of the permissiveness of the era and the subject matter under discussion. And more importantly it speaks to what now might be carried over into the present through reflexive historical inquiry.

Chapter 1: Rochdale and Radical Pedagogy in Canadian Art Education

While the emphasis at Rochdale was placed on free, intuitive, and creative approaches to learning and living it was not specifically an art school. Rather it was imagined as a multi- or trans-disciplinary learning environment, a radical alternative to specialized learning, a school that made no distinction between active learning through participation in seminars, discussion groups, workshops, or an equally active refusal to learn all together. This format appealed to a great number of artists to whom Rochdale appeared as an exciting alternative or supplement to the major art colleges across Canada. However, as Rochdale's community was coming together art schools across Canada were also adjusting their curricula, to varying degrees, in response to changing cultural and economic contexts. My aim with this chapter is to contextualize Rochdale within these developments in Canadian art education during the 1960s and 70s.

In the fall of 1968 the Canadian art periodical *arts/canada* published a special issue under the rubric "The New Education in the Arts."[45] With the publication date roughly coinciding with Rochdale's opening, the content of this issue serves as a suitable armature for my analysis. Focusing on English-Canada the issue presented articles on

[45]"The New Education in the Arts." spec. iss. of *arts/canada* October/November 122/123 1968. This special issue on education was not an exception to the magazine's editorial mission. Since its foundation in 1943 the magazine was thought to act simultaneously as a forum for art criticism and as an art education service. In his study of the magazine Robert Graham references a 1966 document on editorial policy written by editor Barry Lord: "The lack of a prepared audience and the lack of mature criticism are the two chief inhibiting factors in the development of the arts in Canada today. These two aims - education and criticism - will be the purpose of the magazine … There is no dualism between art education and good criticism." Robert Graham, "Understanding ArtsCanada: History, Practice and Idea," M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1988, 36-37.

Toronto's Ontario College of Art and New School of Art, Halifax's Nova Scotia College of Art, and Vancouver's Simon Fraser University. Curiously absent is any mention of Montreal's École Des Beaux-Arts where in the past decade students had staged two strikes and were preparing an occupation of the school to be put into effect October 1968.

Some of these schools found themselves breaking away from a long-standing commitment to academicism and traditional arts training, which had persistently ignored more recent developments in twentieth century art. Others were emerging as alternatives, either official or unaccredited, to these same stalled institutions. Each article in *arts/canada* elaborated upon the pedagogical philosophies and current events at the institution in question. The texts were generally positive and sat halfway between testimony and a call for recruitment. Wherever possible I have counterbalanced this material with more recent literature on the school. (There is unfortunately very little published material on the topic of New School for Art.)

In their edited collection *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments Against Liberalize Globalization* Mark Coté, Richard J.F Day and Greig de Peuter offer their definition of radical education. Here utopian pedagogy has "nothing to do with rationalistic dreams of a future perfect society." It is instead characterized by an agonistic attitude toward the mainstream. This combative approach departs from the recognition "that domination and exploitation can only be minimized, never eliminated." Thus, the utopian impulse is a constant process, assuring "spaces of becoming," where "social critique and self-criticism and -creation are mutually constitutive processes." At its base utopian pedagogy argues for a revaluation of education as a means to generate

alternatives to existing socio-economic orders, commencing with greater autonomy assigned to students and teachers. And the recognition of both of these parties as "active subjects in, rather than objects of, the world."[46]

What is of interest here is Coté et al.'s proposition that radical programs in education emerge from, and are sustained by, a persistent dissension to the dominant order. Coté et al.'s proposition suggests that utopian scenarios can emerge at moments of overlap between radical projects and the mainstream. As we shall come to see, the bureaucratic stratagem of education policy throughout the sixties in Canada was to observe, absorb, and adapt the propositions emerging from experiments in radical education.

While many of the curricula introduced in this chapter demonstrate a welcoming of countercultural values – intuitive learning, the dismissal of specialization, and an environment free of hierarchies – they were also extensions of an earlier alternative model as established by the famous Bauhaus school in Germany. In *arts/canada* this influence was not overlooked. An article notes that the Bauhaus system, as an example of art education elaborated under modernist protocols, bore influence on art schools in Canada seeking to break from traditional studio- and mentor-based learning.[47]

Art historian Lisa Tickner suggests that the educational reform in art education of the sixties can be read as evidence of an "anti-academic" turn in art education. To argue this point Tickner refers to Thierry de Duve's essay on the genealogy of art education

[46]Mark Coté, Richard J.F Day and Greig de Peuter, *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments Against Neoliberal Globalization*(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 3-14.
[47]Margit Stable, "Bauhaus," *arts/canada* October/November 122/123 1968: 8.

"When Form Has Become Attitude – And Beyond."[48] De Duve traces the transition from the academic model of art education – one of apprenticeship, mimicry and technique – through to a present-day privileging of theory, practice, and a "critical attitude." Between these two points, of tradition and perpetual critique, lies the sixties-era meeting of the Bauhaus ideology with a countercultural attitude.

Bauhaus disposed of the traditional academic tests for talent and its pedagogical program was instead founded on the principle that creativity was a universal human attribute. In turn it offered a democratic solution to previous academic modes of instruction. Tickner's reference to De Duve's essay arises in relation to her own detailed study of the dramatic events at Hornsey College of Art in London in 1968, where students occupied the campus in a lively protest against conservative reform to art education. She locates this growing student unrest and desire for open-ended curricula within the "implosion" of modernism.[49] De Duve indicates that following this shift, as signalled by events such as those at Hornsey, the Bauhaus model fell into crisis as the introduction of social and political criticism troubled the purported pure and democratic nature of medium-specific study. Under these critiques the proposed universal distribution of creativity became suspect and was called out, by students and teachers alike, as another bourgeois dream.[50]

While the Bauhaus model delivered a severe break from traditional arts education the reinvestment in this model in the sixties itself did not bring about Tickner's "anti-academic" turn. Rather the shift resulted from a volatile meeting of Bauhaus's modernist

[48]Tickner 83-99.
[49]Tickner 91.
[50]Tickner 91.

utopianism with the rather different utopian dreams of the counterculture. Evidence of this can be read in the articles featured in *arts/canada*. Canadian schools belatedly adopted the Bauhaus model as a means to "find a compromise between traditionalism and modernism."[51] This negotiation was further complicated by the rise of countercultural attitudes, and an increasing political awareness, within the student body and faculties of these schools.

The pedagogical processes of Bauhaus promised the "liberation of the student's creativity, an actualization of his artistic potential."[52] Yet within the context of the sixties, this liberation was no longer bound to material realizations. The neo-avantgarde, in their reclamation of the ludic strategies of Dada, continued to blur the lines between life and art. Conceptual practices contributed to the dematerialization of art and a diminishment of the primacy of formal values.[53] Liberation within the art school of the sixties also brought with it new modes of critical theory as encouraged by the civil rights, women's, and gay movements.

'Visual University' at Ontario College of Art

"Renewal at the Ontario College of Art" is the title of artist and teacher Aba Bayefsky's contribution to this special issue of *arts/canada.*[54] Bayefsky's article summarizes a proposal authored by the school's faculty for the renewal of the existing

[51] De Duve, "When Form Has Become Attitude - and Beyond," *The Artist and the Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and the Wider Cultural Context, e*ds. Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Foster (Southhampton, UK: John Hansard Gallery, University of Southhampton, 2005) 26.
[52] De Duve 30.
[53] De Duve 34.
[54] Aba Bayefsky, "Renewal at the Ontario College of Art," *arts/canada* October/November 122/123 1968: 25-27.

curriculum composed in response to a series of student protests against the school's standing president.[55] The student body initially acted out against the privileging of design orientated programs over studio arts studies. As this discontent mounted the students articulated a wider critique of the school's administration and the overall conservatism of the faculty. During these protests Bayefsky was an outspoken supporter of the students and a strong critical voice within the faculty. His actions led to his dismissal in early 1968. In response to these events students took to the street, marching to nearby Queen's Park, the seat of the provincial government, in a mock funeral procession for the death of academic freedom. The students' action was successful and following pressure from Queen's Park the administration reinstated Bayefsky.

Despite this very recent "crisis" Bayefsky's article is polite about the matter, making only passing mention of the turmoil earlier that year, and instead focusing on the school's move towards change. The proposed curriculum offered students a balance between studio- and discussion-based seminars. This new program of study aimed to assist students in situating their work and role as artists within a larger socio-political context. Amongst the suggestions is a "travel week" where graduating students might travel to any number of international art destinations.

Following the publication of Bayefsky's article, the school saw a few administrative changes, most importantly the introduction of a student voice to the school's council and a handful of new faculty hires. Despite these changes much of the

[55]Former OCA teacher Morris Wolfe has published a detailed account of this era at the school in *OCA 1967-1972: Five Turbulent Years* (Toronto: Grub Street Books, 2001). My summary here draws principally from Wolfe's text, whose own personal recollections are buttressed by material drawn from the College's archives.

school's pedagogical structure remained the same with a curriculum divided by disciplines and course material isolated from the larger art world. The student members of the council along with members of the new faculty again called out the school's conservatism. It was decided that what was needed was a new president. In the summer of 1971 British artist and pedagogue Roy Ascott was brought on to take the helm.

Having previously taught at Ealing Technical College and School of Art and Ipswich Art School, Ascott arrived from the with all the popular notions of self-directed learning as well as also a far-reaching vision of the role of art education in a new technological society. At Ealing Technical College Ascott, in collaboration with other faculty members, elaborated a Bauhaus-styled foundational course that incorporated new ideas of cybernetics. Cybernetic theory provided the means to reimagine not only the dynamics of the classroom, between teacher and student, but also the role these relationships played within larger social systems.[56] Based on his recent experience Ascott's approach to the renewal of Ontario College of Art was decidedly more aggressive than the proposal presented three years earlier in Bayefsky's article.

With his open curriculum Ascott aspired to transform the school into what he coined a "visual university." Ascott's new curriculum placed emphasis on the students' own self-directed development. A Bauhaus-styled foundation course was introduced to the curriculum for second-year students. Under this course returning students were required to spend their first month of studies investigating the Fuller-esque question "What is man?" The eagerness to depart from traditional academic study was met with

[56] Emily Pethick, "Degree Zero," *Frieze* 101 2006, 1 September 2011 < http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/degree_zero/>.

the introduction of courses on electronic art. The cost and short-sightedness of this transition was the swift elimination of departments working with tradition materials and methods. Craft-based practices received a severe degree of calumniation, as did studio-based activity that carried on any semblance of technical or rote training. The question of interdisciplinarity was answered by new hires from disciplines outside of the visual arts. New experimental courses that focused on students' sensorial experience and shared observations were introduced.

What was Ascott's "visual university"? In what way did it adjust, augment, or surpass the traditional art college model? How might it have corresponded to the experiment at Rochdale College, a seemingly anarchistic learning environment just a short walk away? Answers to these questions can be found by examining the influence of Buckminster Fuller within Ascott's curriculum.

By 1971 Fuller's utopian project of humanistic design had been widely adopted by the counterculture. Images and instructions relating to his faceted domes were iconic and broadly circulated elements of a hippy vernacular; for much of the counterculture Fuller was a key figure in a pantheon of elder oracles.[57] All of Fuller's designs were predicated on a set of forty "strategic questions" ranging from "Has man a function in universe?" to "What is 'truth?'".[58] His signature domes could be easily built and their measurements, equations and ratios quickly learned and shared. They served to

[57]Fuller held particular importance to Stuart Brand's counterculture directory *The Whole Earth Catalog*, along with its sister publications, including the Rochdale-based *Canadian Whole Earth Almanac*, in addition to countless underground newspapers and magazines serve as testimony to this. Fuller also visited Toronto in 1972 for the Eskisics Conference

[58] Buckminster Fuller, *Utopia or Oblivion: The Prospects for Humanity* (Toronto, New York, Bantam Books, 1969).

foreground issues of shelter, community, and adaptability. In turn, domes as spaces of multiple usage put into question issues of specialization not only at an architectural level but also at a societal one.

The influence of Fuller's thought on Ascott's curriculum was not simply a corollary of the embrace of domes and Fuller's theories by the counterculture. In a 1962 talk on the topic of education addressed to students of Southern Illinois University Fuller described himself as a "comprehensivist."[59] His strategy of a "comprehensive anticipatory design science" was an approach to inquiry and learning which eschewed specialization, an approach that could be equally applied to all problems.[60]For Fuller existing education systems only served to prevent our "innate comprehensive co-ordinate capability" by initiating us into learning founded on segmentation and differentiation when we are naturally predisposed for simultaneous and associative learning.[61]

A "comprehensive" learning environment was one that surpassed the academy and aspired toward planning and problem solving at a global scale.[62] Comprehensive learning considers "how we can make life on earth a general success for all men."[63] As such he provocatively suggested that "[p]hrases like the 'College of Fine Arts'" lose their meaning. To Fuller the study of art is an "objective discipline," a luxury that can only follow expansive data gathering and analysis through "subjective" study. [64]

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[59] Buckminster Fuller, *Education Automation: Freeing the Scholar to Return to his Studies* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962).
[60]Fuller, *Education Automation* 68.
[61]Fuller, *Education Automation* 69.
[62]Fuller, *Education Automation* 79.
[63] Fuller, *Education Automation* 68.
[64]Fuller, *Education Automation* 82.

Ascott clearly saw the art college environment as one that could make a quick transition from a traditional specialized academy into a hub of utopian learning. Here utopian is understood in accordance with the definition laid out earlier: a site of process exploring alternatives to the existing dominant systems. This attempt at comprehensive learning within an art college context was coeval with the ongoing developments of multidisciplinary strategies in art production and the shift toward idea-based art and with it the dematerialization of the art object. Ascott's "visual university" accounted for these changes in art production by introducing new courses that placed an emphasis on the interrelations between participants and an awareness of everyday sensual experience. Yet the introduction of a curriculum in comprehensive learning was not simply to align the school with new modes of art production. Ascott's curriculum aspired to inspire a provincial art college in need of a shake-up and in the process transform it into an entirely new form of institution.

By adopting, or at least proposing, the title "Visual University" in place of "College for Art" the institution was to do away with an earlier disciplinary isolation, plugging into a new era of automation and information as anticipated by Fuller. Just as Fuller, and other luminaries of the era, spoke in equal breaths to the counterculture and the mainstream so Ascott's curriculum encouraged students to develop alternatives within, outside and between business, industry, and society. The definition of utopian pedagogy is met in two ways: first, in a recalibration of the educational experience as an exploratory activity for the students; second, by a willingness to confront and engage with existing dominant and conflicting powers.

Ultimately Ascott's curriculum renewal was too farfetched for the school. The formlessness of the new curriculum was a break from the earlier academic format, yet its severe departure from traditional arts training served to confuse and disorient many of the students. Ascott's term was brief, his audacity made him as many friends and enemies, and after some questions arose concerning his professional qualifications, he was suspended and dismissed from his position in the spring of 1972.

The free school spirit remained and a sympathetic body of pro-Ascott students and staff took it upon themselves to carry on with the curriculum. Art collective and Rochdale affiliates General Idea reported, or rather gossiped, about the new school in *FILE* magazine,

> Out of the turmoil at the Ontario College of Art has risen Z which is the last letter in the alphabet (see A Space) and a last ditch effort to provide an alternative to the back to batik movement underway at the college since the removal of President Roy Ascott. The new school/space is housed in a factory at 184 Pearl Street in downtown Toronto and is being supported by students, faculty, volunteer lecturers, donations and grants in the future.[65]

Despite their proximity, both in terms of a shared locale and organization logic, there is no apparent evidence of mutual influence or collaboration between the school during Ascott's term and Rochdale College. At an organizational level both shared a critique of specialization. Each, in their utopian aspirations, drew upon the rhetoric of the counterculture and its aforementioned pantheon of intellectuals. In both contexts, the contempt for specialization and expertise emerged in the form of satire. Acts such as the sale of phony and personalized degrees at Rochdale were equally present. One course

[65] *File* 2.1/2 1973: 39.

offered students accreditation in the form of a paper bag.[66]

Student autonomy was a key element to the curricula of both Rochdale and the college. Each shared an emphasis on learning by experience through self-directed exploration, providing a learning environment without prescribed roles or measure. Rochdale troubled specialization in learning with an adaptive and open program, wherein those with a stake in the arts found themselves commingling within a seemingly exhaustive array of groups and individuals. Ascott's curriculum challenged specialization in art education. Art training, while no longer vocational in the traditional sense, was approached as a means to adapt to a new era where the lines between cultural, business, social sectors had become all the more tortuous.

Personal Art and Social Design: Nova Scotia College of Art

In May 1969 the Nova Scotia College of Art placed an advertisement in TIME Magazine asking readers "What is art?" The advertisement carried on with a response: "If we knew, we'd tell you. Although we have firm ideas about what design should be, we still don't know what art is or what it isn't. Which we believe is the way it should be."[67] A few short statements follow this copy. The school has no answer to this question, nor should it be expected to provide one. This relinquishing of authority over the knowledge of art implies equality between faculty and students, leading to a freedom of experimentation in which material and intellectual restrictions may be put aside. The

[66]This "accreditation" was awarded by Frank Ogden a self-styled "LSD therapist" and "catalectic provocateur" who conducted a "a 24 hour non-stop high intensity course" at the College. Wolfe 57.

[67]This advertisement is also reproduced in Morris Wolfe's account of his years at OCA. His brief comparison considers the concurrent changes at OCA and NSCA, the ideals shared by Kennedy and Ascott, and also makes reference to the article in *arts/canada.*

playful honesty of the advertisement serves to introduce the sea change underway at the school. All interested parties with further questions were invited to start up correspondence with the college.

In his contribution to *arts/canada,* school president and artist Garry Neill Kennedy provides a brief single-page breakdown of his institution's teaching philosophy as it was envisioned at the time of publishing.[68] Kennedy, following an invitation from the school's board, had only recently arrived in Halifax from Wisconsin where he was then head of the art department at Northland College. Prior to his appointment in 1967 the Halifax school's curriculum was a conservative studio-based program that discounted many of the major shifts in twentieth-century art. The Ontario College of Art had long served as a model for the Maritime school and Kennedy, himself a graduate from the Ontario college, was well aware of the shortcomings of this model.[69] With the arrival of new funding the school quickly moved beyond its traditional format. Kennedy expanded the faculty with new hires (mainly American artists) and worked in collaboration with them to establish an active visiting artist program, two gallery spaces, a publishing house, and lithography workshop.[70] The overall curriculum was organized around tendencies in Conceptual art then emerging within the art world.[71] While Halifax was far removed from the international art world Kennedy believed that great potential could be found in its remote location. His experience in rural Wisconsin supported this, where he saw students

[68]Garry Neill Kennedy, "Nova Scotia College of Art," *arts/canada* October/November 122/123 1968: 30.
[69]Garry Neill Kennedy, "The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and the Sixties: A Memoir," *Canadian Literature* 152/153 1997: 192-193
[70]For more on this last program see: Jayne Wark, "Conceptual Lithography at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design," Journal of Canadian Art History, 30 9 (2009): 60-91.
[71]Garry Neill Kennedy, "NSCAD and the Sixties," *Conceptual Art: The NSCAD Connection, 1967-1973*, ed. Bruce Barber (Halifax: Anne Leonowens Gallery, 2001) 22.

far-removed from any art centre actively learning about and responding to the styles of the time. He found further conviction in observations made by critic and curator Lucy Lippard during a 1969 talk at the school. For Lippard Conceptual art held great democratic potential as the notion of dematerialization emphasised not only the conceptual processes of art making but also the social determinants of art. In considering this Lippard found that Canada's art milieu, which at the time lacked any robust commercial gallery or museum system, could serve as an ideal environment for Conceptual art and its publics.[72]

In his calculated and economical text Kennedy lays out a curriculum in part inspired by the Bauhaus system. A first year foundation course eschewed material- and discipline-based divisions. Instead, focus was placed on the development and observation of each student's "problem solving processes." Throughout the course students were permitted to make use of "whatever materials" they might need "to confront the situations which are presented to" them. It was imagined by the end of this first year that the faculty, in analysing the outcome of each student's self-directed activities, would then be able to divide the student population into two distinct groups. A student who confronted problems which were "personal and of his own making" was identified as an artist. While a student concerned with social issues continued their studies as a designer.[73]

In Kennedy's article the school's new experimental curriculum appeared to follow two models. On the one hand, as an interpretation of the Bauhaus system it

[72] Kennedy, "NSCAD and the Sixties" 21
[73] Curiously, while the curriculum Kennedy outlines *arts/canada* detailed the College's new approach to instruction there is no mention in this article of the school's art education program.

promised the bare minimum of authoritarian intervention in the learning process by placing emphasis on this process as the means of and material for learning. On the other hand, the bifurcation of students into two separate areas of specialization suggested an experimental protocol closer to that of a misguided psychiatric clinic. And this seemingly contradicting the promise of an equal balance between students and faculty as presented in *Time* magazine.

Collegial intermediary: New School of Art

In her *arts/canada* article on Toronto's New School of Art, Vera Frenkel opens with a critique of the current status of art education in the province: "our cycle of teachers teaching teachers to produce teachers begins to resemble a hall of mirrors for the passing on of second-hand experience."[74] This problem of "teachers teaching teachers to produce teachers" in art school was the direct motivation for the foundation of the New School of Art. The school emerged from the tumultuous years at the Ontario College of Art leading up to the hiring of Roy Ascott. A major criticism of the Ontario College of Art was that the majority of its faculty were not actively exhibiting artists. Its traditional education program had compelled some members of the painting faculty, many associated with the Painters Eleven group, along with an initial handful of students, to defect and form the New School of Art. The composition of the school was far from radical. It was not a complete re-imagining of the art college system, rather it simply put aside much of the administrative conservatism at the Ontario College for Art. Attention was placed on the

[74]Vera Frenkel, "The New School of Art: Insight-explosions," *arts/canada* October/November 122/123 1968: 13-16.

students' time spent within the studio under the supervision and guidance of a practising artists.

In Frenkel's eyes the school was "a human environment laboratory." Futuristic as this might sound in actuality the school upheld the master-assistant dynamic within the studio. The school aimed to provide "neophyte-artists" with the opportunity to study with "practising, exhibiting artists rather than teachers' college graduates." In addition to its faculty of legitimate artists, the school also regularly brought in guest instructors from outside fields including computer design and psychiatry. One part of a triad of art organizations managed by art impresario John Sime, the school subsisted on a sliding scale tuition and financial support from federal and provincial arts councils.[75]

Prerequisite study or certification in art was not required for enrolment in the school. Rather, as Frenkel remarks, "the experience itself is the drawing card."[76] The importance of the learning experience echoes the basic fundamentals of radical pedagogy as articulated at the time by Rochdale founder Dennis Lee along with other advocates of *This Magazine is About Schools*. Frenkel herself was quite familiar with *This Magazine.* She had housed a few of the founding members of the editorial board in her house, where she rented rooms, near the University of Toronto. Frenkel was peripherally involved in the magazine's production, assisting with layouts and designing a few covers. She was also occasionally present at meetings on the topic of radical pedagogy, including a few discussions on the development of Rochdale.[77]

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[75]The other two organizations were: The Artists' Workshop and Hockley Valley School. Frenkel 13.
[76] Frenkel 14.
[77]Vera Frenkel, personal interview, 21 February 2011.

Her close association with, and interest in, the rise of radical pedagogy running through Ontario is apparent in the article. She makes mention of Rochdale as well as the experimental grade schools Everdale and Superschool. With these projects she saw the potential of extending what the New School of Art has already introduced. And she was correct. That fall the school was officially associated with Rochdale. Rochdale housed New School of Art students and, as a 1969 course calendar indicates, the school's studio space was available to interested Rochdale residents.[78]

Frenkel's awareness of current pedagogical issues is further demonstrated in her reference to a recent and major provincial report on educational policy. Officially known as The Hall-Dennis Report and subtitled *Living and Learning* the document offered some 260 recommended changes to the education system in Ontario.[79] At its core the report called for greater teacher autonomy and student-centric learning. It brought into question the primacy of competitive marking and the early prescription of future employment roles for students. It foresaw a passage of study during which students would experience more and more freedom and choice in the direction of their studies as they progressed toward graduation.[80]

The scope of the report only concerned grade- and high-school level learning. Yet for radically-minded pedagogues and artists in Ontario the report echoed much of what they were working toward. *Living and Learning* appeared as a timely and necessary re-

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[78]*Rochdale Is...* n. pag. For more on New School of Art students at Rochdale see my next chapter.
[79]Emmett Hall, Lloyd Dennis, and Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario, *Living and Learning* (Toronto: Publications Office, Department of Education, 1968).
[80]*Re-Thinking Education*: *The proceedings of a conference on the report of the provincial committee on aims and objectives of education in the schools of Ontario, Living and Learning* (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1969) 44-45.

evaluation of education for a changing world. The report was dense and comprehensive, examining and commenting on all aspects of education in the province. The committee sought advice from a wide range of advisors, including Marshall McLuhan whose influence in the text's content and cadence can be read throughout.[81]

The report's bold projections – for individualized learning, the recalibration of evaluation and abandonment of certification, and a sweeping de-hierarchization of the school system – were met with equal praise and criticism. Within professional circles the report was widely discussed and disputed.[82] Despite its lively and lefty lingo *Living and Learning* can, in retrospect, be understood as a body of recommendations set in place not only to ameliorate the state of learning in Ontario, but also as a way of introducing new educational policies suited to the changing face of labour in a post-industrial society.

In *Living and Learning* the notion of a school experience coordinated around autonomy, multi-disciplinarity, and adaptability spoke simultaneously to the growing countercultural attitude and a new economic reality. The report sought to answer the questions posed by new body of students and pedagogues set in defiance against vocational and regimented learning. These same propositions were set forth to contend with a move away from defined industrial production toward an economy based on the exchange of information and service, and the necessity to prepare a workforce for this increased aggregation of labour. *Living and Learning* assumed a new type of student and a new type of teacher who both could better adapt to emergent and complex forms of

[81]The report also makes reference to writings on education by philosophers John Dewy and A.N. Whitehead.

[82]See also, *Were Do We Go From Here: A Collection of Working Papers on the Hall-Dennis Report, "Living and Learning"* (Toronto: Ontario Teachers' Federation, 1968).

labour. Its policies were presented as a means of retaining and retraining active economic subjects.

Sensorium at Simon Fraser University

For his contribution to *arts/canada*, R. Murray Schafer (most famous as a composer of experimental music) outlined the shared teaching philosophy of the visual arts faculty at Vancouver's Simon Fraser University.[83] Founded on the principle that art in the modern era – with its privileging of the visual – was symptomatic of a larger alienation from nature, Schafer's curriculum aimed to reintroduce a balanced ecology of the human senses to art learning. In collaboration with other faculty members, novel teaching methods were developed around the individual and shared sensorial experiences of the students. This was an "anti-academic" move meant to establish what Schafer expressed in his text as a "sensorium" for learning.

At the time Schafer was head of the Centre for Communications and the Arts which had opened along with Simon Fraser University itself in 1965. Again founded on the Bauhaus model, the first-year foundational course focused on the sensorial experience of the students and claimed no allegiance to one discipline. Looking ahead Schafer envisioned an extradisciplinary program, dubbed either "media studies" or "studies in sensitivity and expression." This curriculum would guide students toward an awakening of the full spectrum of aesthetic experience, a phenomena he otherwise described as "synaesthetic".

Faculty teams led many of the courses and with the emphasis always placed on

[83]R. Murray Schafer, "Cleaning the lenses of perception," *arts/canada* October/November 122/123 1968: 10-12.

interdisciplinarity artists were often paired up with composers. A number of these teachers, amongst them Iain Baxter of N.E. Thing Co., experimented with "non-verbal teaching" and delivered lessons through a series of silent yet "highly rhetorical" gestures. Interdisciplinary study demanded a wider scope of inquiry into aesthetic experience and the students often met with guests from outside the visual arts milieu. For example, students examining the question of "scent" consulted a cosmetician and a pestologist, while on another occasion, a physiologist was invited to present on the science of vision.

At the time of the publication of Schafer's article in *arts/canada* the Centre was halfway though its three-year trial period within the university. During this period the Centre offered no credits for its courses. A condition which deterred many specialized students from participating in the courses on offer, thwarting Schafer and his faculty's hopes for cross-disciplinary studies.[84] The experimental nature of the program was not embraced by the university's administration and in 1969 the Centre was dissolved. Discipline-specific learning took over with other faculties assuming responsibilities for the constitutive factions originally encompassed by the Centre. Schafer continued to be associated with the university until 1975.[85]

For Schafer a curriculum founded on the senses fell in line with his work as an experimental composer. In the late 1960s Schafer had started to develop a complex set of protocols necessary for the study of soundscapes. With these recordings Schafer did not seek to register unadulterated natural sonic environments, rather he was interested in the interplay between the organic sounds of the world and the industrial sounds of human

[84]Hugh Johnston, *Radical Campus* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2005) 245.
[85]Johnston, *Radical Campus* 244-248.

activity.[86] Schafer's pedagogical approach, as elaborated together with the faculty, offered a particular sensitivity to the complexities of our social environment, taking into account technological, intellectual, and natural influences.

A question of occupation in Quebec

Curiously absent from the special issue of *arts/canada* on education is any account of Quebec. With this oversight the editors of the issue in question neglected to acknowledge a series of important events and related public debates focused on art education underway in the province since the early part of the decade.[87]

The pedagogical and institutional issues concerning students and some teachers, both within Montreal and greater Quebec, were similar to those driving changes in art schools elsewhere in Canada. As with the Ontario College of Art and the Nova Scotia College of Art instruction at the Montreal school was studio-based and divided by discipline, while classrooms adhered to a master-apprentice format and the imitation of a limited historical canon. Much of the faculty were disconnected from, and ultimately inimical toward, the new styles and critical attitudes underway in the larger art world.

By the late sixties the province was in the midst of the Quiet Revolution, a broad social shift that saw the galvanization of the wider Quebecois public as they asserted their

[86]See R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York: Knopf, 1977). In his article "Transparent Listening: Soundscape Composition's Objects of Study" Mitchell Akiyama examines Schafer's soundscape compositions and studies with the World Soundscape Project considering their simultaneous role as aesthetic and empirical oeuvres. Mitchell Akiyama, "Transparent Listening: Soundscape Composition's Objects of Study," *Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 35.1 2010: 54-62.

[87]Outside of this issue there were attempts to bridge the divide between a French- and English-speaking readership, just one issue earlier featured an article by Yves Robillard profiling the Montreal-based multi-disciplinary group Fusion des Arts.

collective identity and command of governance over the combined factors of the Catholic Church, federalist-minded political parties, Anglo-American cultural hegemony and economic imbalance. The famous 1948 manifesto *Réfus Global* issued by the artists' group Les Automatistes was a key tract for a younger generation of artists and the youth at large. Yet despite the primacy of art in the province's changing cultural landscape the protocols and environments for art education remained unchanged.

Come the sixties, as with other provinces, Quebec began to recalibrate its public school system to the end of harmonizing the province's education system with emerging technology and service sectors. This increased attention to vocational training coincided with the inauguration of a new ministry for education. Art schools, however, were altogether left out of this reform.

Between 1965 and 1968 the students of École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal would mount a series of strikes and actions. The first strike commenced in the fall of 1965 as a protest against the school's limited curriculum and mishandling of recent renovations. Soon students turned their attention toward larger structural concerns: the province's neglect of art schools in the aforementioned policy reform and the economic and social status of artists within Quebec.[88] The newly appointed Minister of Education was quick to respond and a committee of inquiry was assembled to consider the questions raised by the students. By the spring of 1966 students remained frustrated and doubtful regarding the Ministry's committee and its operations. A second and larger student strike was launched with the students from a number of other local art schools and programs joining

[88]Francine Couture and Suzanne Lemerise. "Le Rapport Rioux et les practiques innovatrices en arts plastiques." *Hommage à Marcel Rioux. Sociologie critique, création artistiques et société contemporaine* (Montréal : Éditions Saint-Martin, 1992).

in solidarity. A new committee of inquiry was assembled, this time under the helm of l'Université de Montréal professor Marcel Rioux. A sociologist and a popular public intellectual, Rioux was known to be sympathetic to the students' cause. He was also a strong nationalist voice within the academy and it was expected that his report would suitably address both the students' demands as well as contribute to the province's growing sovereignty movement.[89]

The Rioux Report applied a vision decidedly different than earlier inquiries into the province's education system. Earlier provincial reforms had privileged vocational training and science, while disciplines within humanities and the visual arts were maligned as elitist, even extravagant, topics of study. Under Rioux interdisciplinarity was championed. The report proposed that all facets of higher education should be concerned with a coming "open society," where labour is free from specialization. The idea was therefore that policies on education must be adjusted to the imminent post-industrial condition.[90] While Rioux and his committee took into account the socio-economic importance of art and art education they were equally wary of surrendering these spheres to raw capitalist exchange. And warned in their report that the subservience of social policy to capitalism heightened the risk of smothering the population's autonomy.[91]

The report was delivered to the Minister in the late summer of 1968. The students soon requested its immediate public release. The Minister dismissed their request and withheld the document. Taking this refusal to heart, the students continued with their

[89]Couture and Lemerise 10.
[90]Couture and Lemerise 12.
[91]Couture and Lemerise 10.

demands. Come October, two years after the inquiry began, they mounted a dramatic occupation of the art school.

The occupation was informed by two distinct sentiments. A larger group of students focused on communality, the abolishment of hierarchies within education, and a general freedom founded on the convergence of art and life. A second smaller group consisted of those who pragmatically argued for increased student autonomy with the aim of recalibrating art education to the changing economy in order to assure artists employment after graduation.[92] The occupation lasted one month, during which students drove faculty and staff from the school premises. A red flag was flown from the roof and students self-organized into various groups, assuming responsibilities for food and coordinating shared use of studios. Soon after the occupation the school was incorporated into the larger Université de Québec au Montréal project that had been in the planning stages for most of the decade. [93]

Marshall McLuhan: Education, Automation and One-Room Schools

In what way can these different, if concurrent, pedagogical reforms be compared to Rochdale? If Rochdale was principally a communitarian project and only briefly a committed experiment in pedagogy, then what is to be gained by considering it amongst these legitimate, if at times volatile, art schools? What are the allegiances amongst these experiments and what might they reveal about the overlap between the radial critique and

[92]Couture and Lemerise 20.
[93]Documents pertaining to the occupation and providing details on these facts can found in *Québec Underground 1962-1972,* Robillard, Yves ed. *(Montréal: Editions Médiart, 1973).*

renewal of art schools and adjustments to socio-economic policy?

It is clear that the Rioux Report, the Hall-Dennis Report, as well as the public funding made available to Rochdale College and activities within, were all examples of how governments and related institutions were responding to the demands of youth culture. These projects recognized that the youth of the sixties were reaching for autonomy through intuitive, communal, and horizontal modes of interrelation in response to the wider cultural upheavals of the post-industrial era. This was an era, as Coté et al. note, wherein education and educational policy was increasingly influenced by the idea of "lifelong learning." A concept founded on the idea that education is a perpetual process free from the mandates of colleges and universities, whose content and outcomes are not restrained by narrow vocational categories or cultural prejudices towards race, gender, class, or age.[94] Yet Coté et al. argue that "lifelong learning" within a neoliberal mode of economy means something quite different. The loss of specialization, both academic and vocational, resulted in a rootlessness. The acquisition of new knowledge became a continuing requirement and a moving target for economic subjects who struggle to maintain their place under a capitalistic system entwining work and learning.[95]

Marshall McLuhan addressed this same issue in *Understanding Media.*[96] Summarizing this coil of work and learning, he stated that the post-industrial mentality "not only ends jobs in the world of work, it ends subjects in the world of learning."[97] As a public intellectual McLuhan's influence was far reaching. Educators and artists closely

[94] This concept can be traced to the British adult education movement within which socialist intellectuals Raymond Williams and E.P Thompson played an important role. Coté et al. 4.
[95] Coté et al. 3-14.
[96] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).
[97] McLuhan 300.

followed his analysis of and prophetic announcements about electronic communications. At Rochdale his was an eminent presence.[98] Referenced in countercultural periodicals as much as in governmental reports, McLuhan's newly introduced field of media studies revealed to a wide public the influence of information technology on their everyday perception of the world.

For McLuhan the sixties was an era of a great "electric speed-up" which, among other things, had ushering in a new era of education. Ideas introduced by McLuhan – of a world brought together through the transference and exchange of information, the unveiling of networked and organic interconnectedness between communities, the privileging of process over product – corresponded with the ideals that Canadian art schools and colleges were attempting to incorporate into their curriculums, classrooms environments and administrative systems.

To McLuhan this new understanding of information as a social aggregate was a direct corollary of automation. In order to illustrate this McLuhan took for example the one-room school. Once a complex pedagogical site the one-room school was a fixed environment where a single group of students participated in an interrelated weave of studies across all subjects and grades. As industrialization brought with it the increased segmentation and specialization of knowledge and labour so the one-room school model was dismantled. Thus, the industrial era was one of "fragmented unrelation." Yet with the "electric speed-up" of the sixties the one-room school once again became a possibility.[99]

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[98]An edition of the *Daily* from the fall of 1968 announced that University of Toronto's media oracle was expected to cross campus to meet with Rochdale residents in the cafeteria. *Daily*, no date, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

[99]McLuhan 300-311.

According to McLuhan the return of the one-room school model was made possible by automation. Automation was not simply a phenomena in manufacturing but rather it was a new mode of thought and organization which emerged from "the invasion of the mechanical world by the instantaneous character of electricity."[100] Just as with his concept of a "global village," the return of the one-room school was a paradoxical pairing of the social environments of a pre-mechanized society with the electronically enhanced perspectives of the present-day. The immediacy of electronic communications now permitted the simultaneous transmission and reception of disparate knowledge. Specialized training and labour was no longer suited to this electric era. The return of the concept of the one-room school was part of a greater holistic turn, emphasizing process over product. Liberal education within the "all-at-once world of electronic organization," according to McLuhan, had become a "paradoxical" necessity.[101]

McLuhan's rhetoric complemented the experiments in art education across Canada which in part emerged as responses to a society of "fragmented unrelation." The modes of thought enabled by automation unified a whole "world of policy," wherein education was an important component, together with industry. Shifts in education were tied to the emergence of new categories of wealth and work. New modes of organization in industry necessitated new relations with social sectors. McLuhan recognized this to a serious degree stating that within the organic organization of the electric era any structural change "demands full understanding in advance. There is no room for witless

[100]McLuhan 302-303.
[101]McLuhan 310.

assumptions and subliminal factors in such electronic and instant organizations."[102] The comprehensive studies and resulting recommendations put forth in the Hall-Dennis and Rioux reports are testimony to this.

Student protests at the Ontario College of Art and École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, the new curriculum introduced at the Nova Scotia College of Art, the alternative studio-based learning at New School for Art, the cross-disciplinary classrooms at Simon Fraser University, were all predicated on an understanding that art education in Canada was drastically out of synch. Each demanded or served to demonstrate new models of an "all-at-once" institution.

It would be much too reductive to argue that the shared legacy of student-centric reforms at these schools and the entire Rochdale experiment was only a signpost to a new economic era. These experiments, while short-lived, were productive ones. The relationship between art colleges and multiple levels of governance is a complicated matter, as scenarios vary from province to province, and beyond the scope of this study. Nor should the students, faculty, and administrators of the examples provided above be thought of as only passive agents within a seemingly permissive post-industrial agenda. Students at the Ontario College of Art quickly involved local members of parliament. The strikes and protests in Montreal resulted in an important report whose conclusions on the interrelations between culture and nationalism added force to the social upheavals already underway in the province. The massive public financial support behind Rochdale was unprecedented for the time. And amidst all its social and fiscal disarray the College housed and hosted a number of important social, political, and cultural initiatives.

[102]McLuhan 308-310.

Chapter 2: Artists and Rochdale

Artistic activity was not exempt from Rochdale's excess; if anything, it was its capstone. The community within Rochdale had access to a surprising array of equipment, facilities, and services. Most notable and often remembered are Theatre Passe Muraille and Coach House Press. As one of Toronto's first experimental theatre companies, Theatre Passe Muraille's earliest productions were developed under the auspices of the College.[103] The eager participation of residents in these collaborative productions is recognized to have ushered in a new era of experimental theatre in Toronto, much to the chagrin of the City's morality squad. The printed material examined throughout the following chapters is but minor testimony to the important role Coach House Press played in encouraging graphic and literary culture within the College, not to mention the Canadian arts community at large.

In 1972 artist-run centre A Space published *Vehicle: Handbook of Toronto Cultural Resources.* In addition an entry on Theatre Passe Muraille the guide also a number Rochdale business tenants working with film and video, among them the Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre, the Toronto Film Co-Op, and Liberation Media. Rochdale was also granted its own entry. Summarizing the history of the College, the copy clearly indicated where Rochdale stood in the eyes the City's art community:

> Began in 1964 as campus co-operative housing for the University of Toronto students; in 1968 various Rochdale Houses moved into their present location

103 For a detailed history of Theatre Passe Muraille and the arrival of experimental theatre in Toronto see Denis W. Johnston, *Up the Mainstream: The Rise of Toronto's Alternative Theatres, 1968-1975* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

> which was originally a student residence and free university. Now, the space houses people who do mostly handicraft oriented activities, and young people who have left home for the first time.[104]

By 1972 Rochdale was no longer viewed as an educational experiment. In *Vehicle* contact information was provided for any groups interested in long- or short-term rental of space for workshops and meetings. The entry listed a few more amenities in addition to the other organizations already included in the guide: "a printing shop on the second floor (The Pub), pottery and weaving workshops on the sixth, Radio Rochdale on the fourth, as well as a large variety of publication and associations." The twenty-four hour clinic, Etherea Natural Foods Restaurant, and weekly screenings also received mention.[105]

An empty room on the second-floor, facing south and looking out on the patio, occasionally served as an exhibition space, although exhibitions, at least those that were announced or registered in any sort of print, were far and few between. Another gallery was briefly opened in the spring of 1970 on the ground floor despite the administrative council's wish to rent the space out. A protest and occupation by the gallery's organizers convinced them otherwise.[106]

The community at and around Rochdale seemed most receptive to larger spectacles. Regular film screenings, hosted by a gamut of programmers, appeared early on and remained popular throughout the College's lifetime. Numerous festivals for music, crafts, and performances were planned and a few realized. Before Rochdale's

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[104] Isobel Harry and Marlene Sober, eds, *Vehicle: Handbook of Toronto Cultural Resources* (Toronto: A Space, 1972) 125-126.
[105] *Vehicle* 125-126.
[106] Sharpe 152.

main entrance sat the fruits of the sculpture workshop, *The Unknown Student*: a large nude and sexless figure crouched and facing the building.

The aim of this chapter is not to recover or put in order the plethora of creative activities that occurred in and around Rochdale. The multitude of cultural events, spaces, and individuals that occupied the College throughout its seven-year existence greatly exceeds the scope of my study. Both David Sharpe and Henry Mietkiewicz and Bob Mackowycz have discussed art-related activity in their respective narratives on the College. Sharpe's history is primarily assembled through archival research with particular reference to the *Daily* newsletters. Mixing the spectacular with the trifling and the incomprehensible he makes an attempt in his account to mirror the cacophonous nature of Rochdale's printed realm.[107] His conclusion on Rochdale's "artistic legacy" is dismal:

> Seeing for ourselves, what can we now say about the artistic legacy created by Rochdale? ... Some Rochdale graduates have gone on to mature work; some will argue that the work developed because of Rochdale. Some others will say it developed in spite of Rochdale. But the work done inside, despite its importance for the participants, has had little direct external effect. Most of it has become artifact, preserved and no more available or popular than the thousands of theses and dissertations in the libraries of mainline colleges.[108]

Alternately, Henry Mietkiewicz and Bob Mackowycz counterbalance the more notorious elements of the College's history with reference to artistic ventures nurtured by the experiment.[109] Constructing their narrative primarily from testimonies by former residents and others who found themselves involved at the College, the authors foreground examples of productive collective activity, exemplified by the theatre workshops, while also including activities of more determined political and social

[107] Sharpe 148-160.
[108] Sharpe 160.
[109] Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz 42-67.

mandates, specifically the Institute for Indian Studies. Despite methodological quirks and oversights in both published histories (for example there is no mention of the arrangement with the New School for Art), both books provide a fair survey of the diverse range of artistic activity underway at Rochdale over its seven-year lifespan.

Coeval with the transformation of Rochdale from a loose liberal arts program in a few student houses to a towering experiment in community and learning was the emergence of a nationwide network of collectively-run independent exhibition and production spaces. In this chapter I situate Rochdale within this particular trajectory of Canadian art history by directing my focus toward evidence of intersection between the College and this burgeoning national network of artists' organizations. Through the examination of select artists' engagements with Rochdale, I argue for a reconsideration of the College's place within the history of artist-run culture in Canada, granting it greater influence within the milieu than previously afforded it.[110]

The possibility of artist-run culture was in part the corollary of a wave of permissive government funding. The introduction of new employment programs by the Trudeau government in the late-sixties, specifically Local Initiatives Program and Opportunities For Youth, provided artists across Canada with the time and the means to establish new creative spaces and services free from the conditions of the existing art system – at the time a triad of stubborn art colleges, narrow-minded museums, and meagre commercial markets – and open up lines of communication with the international

[110] Up to this point Rochdale College has received only cursory mention in art historical accounts of the Toronto and pan-Canadian art scene of the 1960s and 70s.

art world.[111] While these funds were not specifically intended for the support of cultural activities, artists quickly recognized the flexible nature of these programs. Just as those behind the initial coordination of Rochdale deftly merged a growing public interest in radical pedagogy with a pressing need for student housing, so artists responded to labour stimulation programs (and their conditions) as a means to validate and sustain their activities. Successful applications resulted in wages for administrators and the acquisition of equipment. This further encouraged the programming of dynamic new spaces and festivals, the publishing and distribution of magazines and tracts, and the sharing of technology and know-how. Through these organizations, artists gained access to community, equipment, and knowledge previously unavailable to them.[112] By exploring select artists' relationships to Rochdale, I aim to position the College as a significant site of incubation for individuals who would soon after become key participants in the first stages of the artist-run network.

This chapter opens by tracing the presence of the Toronto art scene within

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[111] For a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic determinants of artist-run culture see Vincent Bonin's excellent introductory essay as well as accompanying authors' texts in *Documentary Protocols (1969-1975)* (Montreal: Leonard and Bina Ellen Gallery, 2010).

[112] In addition to the initial funding provided for construction and early operations, numerous organizations within Rochdale also acquired Local Initiatives Program and Opportunities for Youth grants. In an inquiry to the Department of the Secretary of State dated June 23, 1971 Toronto Spadina-riding MP Sylvester Perry Ryan made a request for a list of all organizations within the College receiving government funding. To the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State "Rochdale was of interest...as a Canadian experiment in social organization and youth participation." The branch issued four grants to the College between 1967 and 1969. The Rochdale Free Clinic received a sizable grant from the Opportunities for Youth program to extend their services to 24 hours. *Grants to organizations with headquarters at Rochdale College,* 23 June 1971, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, file no. 105-1606-28-3. An undated document produced at Rochdale entitled *Educational Resources Space Revision Form* lists services housed within the college, many of whom operated under the auspices of government funding. Those of note include: Liberation Media (Womans [sic] Involvement Program) RM. 309; Ontario Alternate Press RM. 408; Cabal Newspaper Scotty McDonald RM 626; Canadian Whole Earth Almanac Ken Copeland RM. 1004; Transformation Magazine Marjaleena Repo RM. 1604, The PUB & Tuesdaily Mike Randell RM. 205. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 2.

Rochdale's printed matter, much of this material exhibiting relations to both Coach House Press and the New School of Art. The connection between the College and artists' collective General Idea is examined in detail commencing with founding member AA Bronson's early experiences with alternative pedagogy and communal living in Winnipeg. The section continues with a consideration of the group's involvement in collaborative theatre at the College itself, and concludes with the examination of the representation of Rochdale in two early works. My account of artist Lisa Steele's work for the Rochdale-based publication *Canadian Whole Earth Almanac* considers the importance of this printed resource as a site for alternative learning. The publication's focus on esoteric knowledge leads to an examination of the influence of this information within Steele's own emergent video practice. A visit to the College in 1969 by members of Vancouver's Intermedia*,* recognized as the prototypical artist-run centre in Canada, is a key event in the development of this chapter. This encounter provides the necessary evidence and framework for an elaboration of the term 'counterinstitution'. Finally, this chapter concludes with a profiling of a nascent medium, video, as it was used in video art and televisual activism at the College. Video was equally important to artistic experimentation and community-based education. The artworks considered here reinforce connections between Rochdale and the artist-run centre A Space and sheds light on the Rochdale-based feminist video initiative *Liberation Media*.

Toronto art scene within and around Rochdale

Soon after the College opened, resident Stuart Hertzog introduced another

periodical to Rochdale's internal readership. The weekly publication, printed with the suitably perplexing title *Yrjls: A Rochdale Publication*, was conceived as an alternative to the *Daily*. By following a relatively organized journalistic format the publication distanced itself from the multi-voiced chaos crammed into each single-sheet *Daily*. Acting primarily as a vessel for critical and relatively lucid writing on the College's activities it also made room for criticism of cultural activities within and around Rochdale. Resident Liz Smaller took on the role of art critic, her brief first column carrying on much of the satirical flogging of the expert typical to Rochdale:

> Critics' opinions, especially in the arts are generally insensitive, shallow, uneducated and biased. Since I have all these qualifications, here is a list of galleries and exhibitions that are on this week in this vicinity. This way, when I come out with some inane opinion about a show, you will have already seen it and will be able to reject everything I say - thereby defeating the purpose of an art critic.[113]

The list included the "supposed father of the 'minimal school'" Tony Smith's exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario and an exhibition of Marcel Barbeau's work at the Carmen Lamanna Gallery.

An early resident of the College and student at the New School of Art, Smaller was enthused and determined to find a place for the visual artists within Rochdale.[114] Her efforts extended beyond the criticism promised in the new Rochdale weekly. Earlier in October she placed a short communiqué in the *Daily* reaching out to residents interested

[113] *Yrjls: A Rochdale Publication* 20-26 October 1968. Collection of Ross Higgins.
[114] Smaller's affiliation to the New School of Art is noted in a Nov. 1, 1968 list of residents. *Rochdale College Resident Members Nov. 1, 1968*. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

in a seminar on the fine arts.[115] She had invited painter Dennis Burton to lead a workshop on illustration and all interested parties were welcomed to this inaugural meeting to occur later that month in the thirteenth floor lounge. This same edition of the *Daily* also featured a request by the sculpture group for proposals for a large public work to be installed outside of the College. Designer, publisher, and resident Ken Coupland chimed in with a request for artists and Ontario College of Art students to assist with posters and layouts. On both sides of the newsletter, buried beneath the inter-residential chatter, was the trace of printed ephemera connected to artist John MacGregor's exhibition at the Isaacs Gallery, a key commercial gallery not far from Rochdale.

The incorporation of material such as the Isaacs Gallery advertisement into the *Daily* was not uncommon. Another edition featured an advertisement for an exhibition by Murray Favro at Carmen Lamanna.[116] Coach House Press was often contracted for the design and printing of gallery promotional material, with this cultural detritus often creeping its way into the *Daily* during the hasty and improvised paste-up sessions at the printers.[117]

The second edition of *Yrjls,* which had since changed its name to the pronounceable *Rochdale Weekly,* proved to be much more accomplished.[118] Eight pages in length, it made room for reporting on Rochdale related-matters, including financing as well as a report on a recent protest in Queen's Park. Smaller's second column was not much larger than her introduction of the week before. The first half reported on her arts

[115] *Daily* 17 October 1968. Collection of Ross Higgins.
[116] *Daily* 30 October 1968, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 4.
[117] Interview with Stan Bevington, 18 January 2010.
[118] *Rochdale Weekly* 22 October-2 November 1968. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

seminar as announced in the *Daily*, explaining that the seminar went the way of most activities at Rochdale and was reduced to a circular discussion of the overall structure and procedures of the workshop. A second paragraph rounded up the reviews including a glib comment on an exhibition at The Pollock Gallery and a supportive note on the Art Gallery of Ontario's exhibition of local artists (which included Dennis Burton). In what could be read as a nod to the recent Tony Smith exhibition, Smaller encouraged readers to indulge the urban sublime and lend their attention to "the construction fence of the century" sharing the same block as Rochdale.

General Idea

In recalling General Idea's place in Toronto's counterculture milieu of the late sixties and early seventies, member AA Bronson has stated,

> Toronto was a cultural centre when we began, but not for the visual arts ... It was not the art scene we were involved with, but rather the alternative literary / educational / theatre / social action community. We wanted an art scene, a real art scene, and we knew we had to start with what we had before us: a theatre scene, a literary scene, a music scene, and so on.[119]

Rochdale College was an important site in Toronto where these scenes converged. The practice of the artists' collective General Idea is understood to have incubated within, around, and through Rochdale College. This early stage was a pivotal point of conjunction where shared experiences in theatre, publishing, and exhibition brought together the collective's core participants.

Through Rochdale, the three members of General Idea came to encounter and develop topics and skills that would become key elements of their practice. Participation

[119] Qtd. in Jacob 35.

in printing workshops at Coach House Press facilitated the production of early ephemera. Experimental theatre workshops and productions encouraged knowledge of audience interaction, drag and camp, spectacle and stage design. Rochdale's ambitious communal mandate and anti-institutional stance attracted their future collaborators, enticing them away from their hometowns and studies elsewhere in Canada. Assembled at Rochdale and for several years following their departure from the College, the collective would welcome a large cast of collaborators, among them, Mary Gardener, Mimi Page, Granada Gazelle, Ron Terrill, and Ken Coupland. As their collaboration continued the name General Idea would come to represent the cohesion of three members: Michael Tims (AA Bronson), Slobodan Saia-Levy (Jorge Zontal also known as George Saia), and Ron Gabe (Felix Partz). This partnership of life and art, which would endure for twenty-five years, came to an end with the deaths of both Zonal and Partz to AIDS-related causes in 1994.

Studies and surveys of the General Idea's collective output, their production between 1969 and 1994, do not overlook this period of encounter. In her catalogue essay to the 1997 exhibition *The Search for the Spirit: General Idea 1968-1975*, Fern Bayer provides a detailed chronological account of the group's activities, resolving many of the discrepancies and overlap which can arise during a period of free and fluid collaboration.[120] In the same publication Christina Ricci examines the group's "innocent beginnings" to trace out the members' shared intellectual and artistic inspirations.[121] Ricci is quick to note that the group's penchant for myth-making causes difficulties when

[120] Fern Bayer, "Uncovering the Roots of General Idea: A Documentation and Description of Early Projects 1968-1975," *The Search for the Spirit: General Idea 1968-1975* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1997) 22-115.

[121] Christina Ricci, "Illusions, Omissions, Cover-Ups: The Early Days," *The Search for the Spirit: General Idea 1968-1975,* 13-16.

attempting to tell General Idea's story outside of their own self-determined narrative.

Rochdale has never been an explicit part of General Idea's self-fashioned narrative but it has endured as part of their history. That is, Rochdale played but a minor role in General Idea's oeuvre, however, AA Bronson in his reflections on General Idea, as well as on the broader artist-run culture they participated in, has consistently mentioned the College. Throughout the 1970s General Idea would establish a number of alternative institutions, both legitimate and fictitious, in support of their own practice as well as those of their peers. To Bronson and his collaborators Rochdale was a point of arrival, the ideal environment for charged creation and encounter, for participatory and intuitive learning, and ultimately an early way station before venturing onto other sites and projects within city. The purpose of this section is to lend greater attention to projects realized by the collective, in whatever form its membership may have taken, at and around the College. My research here offers but a few minor additions and interpretations to the excellent scholarship already published on the group. Close study of General Idea's earliest projects provides unique and multiple points of access to the College through action, friendship, and intervention. As Ricci has noted these early connections are at times but "fragile links." Amongst General Idea's early output there exist two projects that contain imagery directly related to the College. They are: Jorge Zontal's 1970 photographic installation *Good Enough to Eat* and the extended performance *What Happened* realized that same year.

From Winnipeg to Toronto

Mimi Paige recalls first learning about Rochdale through an article published in *Star Weekly* in the fall of 1967.[122] Living in Winnipeg and studying interior design at the University of Manitoba Paige found the notion of a school without limits of great appeal.[123] Bronson, who had recently dropped-out of the architecture program at the same university, had come to learn about Rochdale through his own engagements in radical pedagogy and communal living.[124] Together with eight other architecture program dropouts Bronson had co-founded The School in Winnipeg. Also known as Loving Couch, The School was a living, learning, and publishing commune.[125] Amongst the commune's principle activities was the publication of the underground newspaper *Loving Couch Press*. At the urging of some close friends who had already made the move to Toronto, Paige left Winnipeg sometime in early 1969.[126] Having already met some of the College's principal players through his activities with The School, Bronson also made the move to Toronto, staying with Mimi until the summer and living off the College. (Bronson's associations with the College's council permitted him to live rent-free and he was given a generous amount of meal tickets for the cafeteria).[127] Felix Partz, then Mimi Paige's boyfriend, and his brother arrived from Winnipeg in the summer of 1969. They

[122] Mimi Paige, personal interview, 20 February 2011. "University Without Borders," *Star Weekly*, September 1967.
[123] Published before the construction of the tower on Bloor Street West, the article reported on educational activities in the Rochdale Houses as conducted by a much smaller group of participants. Upon arrival Paige was disappointed to find that the experiment was much more distant from the alternative school model she imagined. Mimi Paige, personal interview, 20 February 2011.
[124] AA Bronson, personal interview, 4 August 2009.
[125] In conversation with Nils Norman, Bronson recalls that the school regularly siphoned guest lecturers from the University. "AA Bronson & Nils Norman," 9 August 2011 <http://www.creativetime.org/programs/archive/2009/ctimes/P2.html>.
[126] Mimi Paige, personal interview, 20 February 2011.
[127] AA Bronson, personal interview, 4 August 2009.

too moved into Rochdale with Paige while Bronson moved out into the city.[128]

In addition to the article read by Paige, word of Rochdale reached Winnipeg via a number of avenues. Due to his involvement with the commune, Bronson was regularly invited to speak on the topic of radical education and through these engagements he met some of Rochdale's key initiators, notably Rick Waern.[129] In addition to his involvement with the commune's newspaper, Bronson also worked on another project simply titled *The Magazine.* Developed in collaboration with Clive Russell, *The Magazine* sold for one dollar and packaged together printed resources around a loose theme. The first issue was "a fuck education thing" and was described in the pages of *Loving Couch Press* as

> another supernifty, trans Canada dirigible, Loving Couch School project. The Magazine sometimes comes in a bag or a box or something, and contains information and goodies concerning the new life or perhaps a do-it-yourself reform kit (change yourself, change the world).[130]

A silk-screened flyer announcing the contents for the third issue included "Rochdale College - Assorted Papers" amongst the assembled material.[131] It can also be assumed that members of the commune were reading *This Magazine Is About Schools*, the content of which would appeal to their collective ambitions while also delivering articles on the

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[128] Mimi Paige, personal interview, 20 February 2011.

[129] This point is also addressed by Fern Bayer in her essay, and elaborated upon here through my own conversation with AA Bronson.

[130] *Loving Couch Press*, March/February 1968.

[131] The document consulted was found in the private collection of Mimi Paige. Other contents of the issue include: "The Soft-Hard School by Ontario Institute for Studies in Education" and "The Putdown Society by Arthur Gladstone." Associated with University of Toronto, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education was a progressive institutional forum and resource for the multitude of radical experiments in education across Canada. Gladstone's text was part of an emergent body of literature related to Gestalt Therapy and would have been of great interest to the founders of the Winnipeg commune, in particular Bronson, who had begun working with a psychologist from the University of Saskatchewan specializing in group therapy. More on Bronson's experience with group therapy can be read in: AA Bronson/Dont Rhine, "Is This Where We Should Begin," *Make Everything New: A Project on Communism*," Grant Watson, Gerrie Van Noord, and Gavin Everall, eds (London: Book Works, 2006). 39-44, and the aforementioned discussion between AA Bronson and Nils Norman.

philosophy and development of the Rochdale experiment. Additionally, *Loving Couch Press* was a member of the Underground News Syndicate permitting those involved with the newspaper to be regularly exposed to news of radical action from around the globe. For example, the May 1968 issue, co-edited by Bronson,[132] featured a breakdown of the student riots in France. In his essay "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat: Artist-run Spaces as Museums by Artists" Bronson fondly notes that it was through these early activities in "publishing and networking" where he "first tasted blood."[133]

Theatre Passe Muraille and General Idea

Theatre Passe Muraille was founded by Jim Garrard in 1968. Originally from small-town Ontario, Garrard had recently returned from studying theatre at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and was eager to import much of the radical and sensational productions he had seen during his time abroad. In a discussion with Ontario Arts Council agent Charlotte Holmes, it was suggested that an affiliation with the College might provide Garrard with the means to actualize this desire. Drama already held a place in Rochdale's curriculum where many of the methods of experimental theatre had come inform modes of radical pedagogy.[134] Garrard approaching the College with a proposal and was hired on as a resource person, moving into a large Zeus suite that also doubled as a rehearsal space for the newly formed company.[135]

Improvisational workshops started immediately upon his arrival in the fall of

[132] The other co-editors for this issue were Steve Knight and Ken Nightingale.
[133] Bronson, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat" 165.
[134] Johnston, *Up the Mainstream* 34.
[135] Johnston, *Up the Mainstream* 35.

1968. This first period of production, between 1968 and 1972, was characterized by a co-operative structure that, contrary to traditional theatre organizations, divided creative authority between all participants.[136] Garrard also had ambitious architectural fantasies in mind for Theatre Passe Muraille. His initial proposal to Rochdale included plans for a collapsible and transportable "plastic theatre." The flexible structure would have occupied the second-floor patio, its movable components intended to further trouble the divide between audience and performer while easily adapting to the company's relentless experimentation.[137]

Throughout 1969 AA Bronson, Mimi Paige, and Jorge Zontal participated in a number of Theatre Passe Muraille productions.[138] The horizontal organization of Theatre Passe Muraille greatly appealed to Bronson, who arrived at Rochdale with skills in group facilitation gleaned from his earlier forays in collective living and group therapy while living in and travelling about the western provinces.[139] The involvement of Bronson, Paige, and Zontal ranged from collective performances (*Laundromat Special #1*) to set design (*An Evening with the The Maids* and *Home Free*), as well as production staff (*An*

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[136] Johnston , *Up the Mainstream* 28.

[137] Johnston , *Up the Mainstream* 35. Although this project features as part of Garrard's proposal, it was most likely drawn from ideas already circulating around the College. A report on guerrilla theatre workshops at the College published in *Rochdale Weekly* described a student-led initiative to construct a portable and fully customizable theatre, the cost were estimated at around $ 150 000, the article noted that the students were in the process of approaching government agencies and private businesses for support of their project. It may be assumed that they contacted Charlotte Holmes at the Ontario Arts Council. The same text also indicated that the College intended to hire a professional theatre company. *Rochdale Weekly* October 22 - November 2 1968. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

[138] Fern Bayer's text succinctly describes each of these performances, Bayer 26-28. A comprehensive list of Theatre Passe Muraille productions can be found in Judith D. Rudakoff ed., *Dangerous Traditions: A Passe Muraille Anthology* (Winnipeg: Blizzard Publishing, 1992).

[139] AA Bronson/Dont Rhine, "Is This Where We Should Begin," *Make Everything New: A Project on Communism*, Grant Watson, Gerrie Van Noord, and Gavin Everall, eds (London: Book Works, 2006) 39-44.

Evening with FUTZ). It is important to note that while most rehearsals and workshops took place within Rochdale, all of Theatre Passe Muraille's productions, with the exception of one early presentation, were presented elsewhere in Toronto.

An Evening with FUTZ was Rochdale's first sensational brush with the authorities. The company's freewheeling interpretation of Rochelle Owens's allegory on social alienation and prejudice as told through a love story between a man and a pig, involved a lewd pre-show spectacle that caught the attention of Toronto police who interrupted the opening performance issuing fines to all participants.[140] Bronson, with the assistance of Paige, prepared a complementary installation for the lobby, which consisted of a matrix of plastic sheets fitted with pockets for shoes with each pouch filled with raw meat.[141]

Good Enough to Eat and What Happened

Sometime in 1970 Jorge Zontal wheeled a tiered cafeteria cart into Rochdale's second-floor gallery space.[142] Three of the silver cart's four sides were covered with black and white photographs mounted on white panels. The twenty tray slots, ascending in two columns, were occupied by more mounted photographs, with their matting cut to the same size as the absent trays. Atop the cart were four more panels arranged with their backs to each other to form a box (fig. 7, 8).

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[140] Sensationalist advertising issued by the production company that Garrard had, regrettably, partnered up with for this specific production drew the police's attention. A detailed account of the *FUTZ* fiasco can be read in Johnston, *Up the Mainstream*.

[141] Mimi Paige, personal interview, 20 February 2011.

[142] There are only two existing photographs of this installation. General Idea fonds, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Good Enough to Eat 1970 (Project Series).

Zontal's tower housed a varied body of photographs featuring: commercial showrooms of light fixtures; Toronto street scenes; domestic interiors; window displays; details of architectural ornamentation such as tile mosaics; subway cars, platforms, and station entrances; suburban houses; construction sites; portraits; and street corners.[143] Amongst these photos are three candid shots of a gathering of friends within a Rochdale suite, and a downward view of Rochdale's front terrace as seen from an apartment window.

Despite its gourmand title Zontal's arrangement did little to accentuate its lunchroom armature. Rather than treat it as a serving station for photographic delights it transformed the polished steel cart into an architectural model of the College itself. Zontal, like Bronson, was also trained in architecture[144] and while never a resident of the College he was a frequent visitor.[145] Zontal's installation offered a fantastic and complex re-imagining of the building. Presenting a virtual and personalized version Rochdale. The imagery assembled was a sampling from Zontal's constant urban derives, photographs collected while as he passed through and around the College. With his camera Zontal assembled new inhabitants, embellishments, and experiences for his architectural model. He arrived with ornate light-fixtures, only to quickly depart again on the subway, lifting tile mosaics from the next station. Another excursion brought in the contents of a few shop window displays. Zontal further populated his tower with photographs of friends at

[143] The majority of the original photographs that made up this installation remain in the collection of AA Bronson. Zontal was a prolific photographer; the same topics that populate *Good Enough to Eat* (ornamentation, domestic architecture, transportation) can also be seen in other photographs from the period. *Toronto Deco c. 1970-1971 (Project Series)*, General Idea fonds, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives.

[144] Zontal studied architecture at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Bayer 23.

[145] Bayer reports that Zontal had arrived in Toronto to initially produce a film with Theatre Passe Muraille. Bayer 26.

the College. Each panel functioned as a window, some peering into the College and others looking outward, first to the terrace below and then elsewhere in the city. A few panels featured photographs in series: one a brief animated sequence of a friend on the subway platform turning to face the camera as the train approaches; another a long ascent up a staircase in an old house to view an antique cabinet at its peak. Shots of domestic households, both interior and exterior, as well as construction sites, further accentuated the complexity of Rochdale's build environment.

What Happened was realized as part of the Festival of Underground Theatre held at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts and the Global Village Theatre between August 19 and September 6, 1970. The arrival of this ambitious international festival was in part credited to collective member Ron Terrill, a producer with Theatre Passe Muraille, and then working as an administrator at the St. Lawrence Centre.[146] The festival was a watershed event for many Toronto artists, as its entry in the artist-run culture chronology *From Sea to Shining Sea* affirms,

> At this point in Toronto's history the underground theatre scene was attracting all the talent of a new generation. Many of the visual artists circulating in and around that scene came to use the model of the underground theatre as a beginning for thinking about their own work. The festival ... seemed to offer a new model for both production of and audience for contemporary art, soon to be tested further in Toronto.[147]

For the festival General Idea presented an interpretation of Gertrude Stein's difficult and ambiguous play of the same name, their version elaborated through "a

[146] Johnston, *Up the Mainstream* 38.
[147] *From Sea to Shining Sea* 46.

ragatag collection of media transformations."[148] Three performances took place in the Town Hall Lobby of the St. Lawrence Centre on August 19 and 29 and September 5. These performances assembled documentation from disparate events throughout the city. The collective also made use of borrowed telex and video equipment to further assist in their "media transformations." Coordinated by Zontal, a communiqué listed the project participants as: "George Saia, Mary Gardner, Jeff Levy, Michael Tims and Bernice Hune of General Idea."[149] A last minute change to the program resulted in the first 'public' Miss General Idea Pageant, a serendipitous beginning to a project that would come to define the collective's work throughout the following decade.[150]

Among the performances announced was an intervention by Mary Gardner and Tim Rhodes on the roof of Rochdale's second tower. Borrowing an over-sized white laundry bag from an earlier Theatre Passe Muraille production Gardner and Rhodes draped the prop down the west side of the east wing.[151] Images from this intervention were later reproduced in the newly inaugurated photography revue *Image Nation* (fig 9).[152] Over a sequence of three images Gardner and Rhodes slide the bag beneath the

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[148] "What Happened A Series of Private and Public Recorded Events With Text by Gertrude Stein, Devised and Executed by General Idea," General Idea fonds, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, What Happened and the 1970 Miss General Idea Pageant 1970 (Project Series).

[149] "What Happened A Series of Private and Public Recorded Events With Text by Gertrude Stein, Devised and Executed by General Idea," General Idea fonds, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, What Happened and the 1970 Miss General Idea Pageant 1970 (Project Series).

[150] "Another event for *What Happened* would have featured Honey Novick, wearing a sash and tiara, travelling in a convertible to join a scheduled parade down Young Street to the St. Lawrence Centre. But the parade was cancelled, and instead General Idea used the theatre lobby to stage *The 1970 Miss General Idea Pageant* (1970). The title 'Miss General Idea 1969' was given to Granada, and Mimi was declared 'Miss General Idea 1968' ... They claimed to have crowned them in prior 'secret ceremonies.'" Bayer 46

[151] *Laundromat Special #1* (1969) was coordinated by Mary Gardner. Thanks to Fern Bayer for pointing this out.

[152] *Image Nation* is another case of a Rochdale-centric initiative that turned to concentrate on the arts milieu. Previously focused on Rochdale related affairs this particular issue marked the publication's

rooftop chain-link safety fence, secure its top corners to the fence links, and allow it to hang down the side of the building. This final photograph is taken from a suite in the neighbouring tower, while the first two survey the two interventionists from behind. Visible in all three shots is a line of neighbouring concrete towers running to the east and west along Bloor Street. Without question these photographs serve as evidence of the group's early passage through Rochdale and its membership during this period, confirming the College's role as a permissive site of action and as a shared point of perspective onto the surrounding city and burgeoning arts milieu.

As part of General Idea's early period of production this sequence of photos, in addition to Zontal's photographic model, hints at what the group was to soon become. Throughout the 1970s the extended mythology of the Miss General Idea Pavilion would be elaborated through numerous architectural reveries. For Art Metropole, the group's artist multiple storehouse and distribution initiative, a stylized and historic rendering of the building wherein they rented a floor would come to stand for the entire operation gracing promotional and administrative documents.

Declarations of General Idea

In the years following their departure from Rochdale, communication from General Idea continued to circulate throughout the College. An edition of the *Daily* from the fall of 1969 featured a small advertisement announcing the group's inaugural

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transition into a showcase for Canadian photography. *Image Nation* 8 (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1972).

exhibition *Waste Age* in their new headquarters at 78 Gerrard Street West.[153] The spring 1971 issue of the Canadian Whole Earth Almanac published a letter from Jorge Zontal (then known as George Saia). A commercial tenant at Rochdale the *Canadian Whole Earth Almanac* was edited by General Idea friend and associate Ken Coupland and printed at Coach House Press.[154] Saia wrote:

> Dearest Friend!
>
> I hope you realize what rich enjoyment your work affords us and I am sure millions of others.
>
> You have done a gorgeous job. It is a sure-fire hit and will be an everlasting thrill.
>
> Your work is a smashing stroke towards our cause. We knew you would come through but what a triumph.
>
> They couldn't stop you and nobody can after a performance like that. It certainly rang a bell.
>
> Great Stuff old chap, three rousing cheers for you and the boys.
>
> You painted this town red. A powerhouse. You have a fine store.
>
> George Saia
> for General Idea
>
> P.S. In quoting please credit to General Idea.[155]

The satirical missive reads as if Saia had been moonlighting at a toastmasters club, while the directive postscript demonstrates that material emerging from Rochdale served as a valuable relay for the still young collective to articulate their newly incorporated artistic identity.

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[153] *Daily*, 30 September 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 2.
[154] For more information see the following section on Lisa Steele and the Canadian Whole Earth Almanac
[155] *Canadian Whole Earth Almanac* Spring 1971, n.pag.

Esoteric Knowledge and the Canadian Whole Earth Almanac

The *Canadian Whole Earth Almanac* was a comprehensive directory for the tools and knowledge necessary for all aspects of countercultural life. Four issues were published between 1971 and 1972 assembling articles, book reviews, and correspondence around the respective themes of food, shelter, industry, and healing. A northerly sister publication to California-based Stuart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog*[156] the *Canadian Whole Earth Almanac* was comparably smaller, yet its vibrant and multi-layered design, to the credit of Ken Coupland, resulted in a spirited and engaging Canadian alternative to its American counterpart.

Artist Lisa Steele was amongst the contributors to the "Healing" issue. Hired with the assistance of a grant from the Opportunities for Youth program, Steele worked as a "review editor" soliciting copies of esoteric publications from alternative publishers and distributors to be delivered to the publication's suite on the tenth floor. Arriving shipments also often included herbal remedies, holistic apparatuses, charged crystals and the like – this to the delight of the adventuresome staff who readily tested out each product.[157] In addition to her editorial duties, Steele also contributed a researched article on Marxist psychoanalyst and rogue inventor Wilhelm Reich.

At the time Steele, an American who immigrated to Canada in 1968, was just commencing to work as an artist in Toronto. Soon after her contract with the *Canadian*

[156] For more on the Whole Earth Catalog, see Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[157] Lisa Steele, personal interview, 3 June 2010.

Whole Earth Almanac she began working with the Baldwin Street Women's Photography Co-op and later with artist-run centre A Space. As a burgeoning artist her interest in esoteric topics extended beyond her contract at Rochdale. For a 1973 group exhibition at A Space, she contributed a work entitled *Herbal Complex*. The installation consisted of a system of copper wires connecting hanging cheesecloth bags filled with herbs, and arranged to suggest the schematization and circulation of a latent organic energy.[158] Reich was a proponent of Orgone energy, an invisible life force that could be harnessed and directed by humans through a variety of apparatuses and procedures. This concept, along with his body oriented therapy, appealed to Steele who made associations with her interests in dance and knowledge of other alternative somatic therapies such as the Alexander Technique. For Steele "these alternative readings on the acquisition and transmission of knowledge" provided new ways to think about information and would come to bear particular influence on her video work produced in the mid-1970s.[159]

A 1975 article on Steele's work written by Peggy Gale and published in *Parachute* identified some of these tendencies.[160] First working with video in 1972 Steele quickly took to the medium producing fourteen videos in just three years. Surveying these works Gale traces the development of Steele's oeuvre, suggesting that it could be

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[158] Vic D'Or (Victor Coleman), rev. of *After Paris*, *Proof Only* 15 Nov. 1973. Toronto: A Space.

[159] "Looking at these alternative readings on the acquisition and transmission of knowledge it was certainly very shortly after, when I started to do video, my work would really spin into that through looking at how we get knowledge. That was my first two or three years of work and then secondly in the body itself and all my stuff in the mid-1970s. The most famous of these works is *Birthday Suit*." Lisa Steele, personal interview, 3 June 2010; Fred Turner suggests that the *Whole Earth Catalog* acted as a "forum for encounter between cultural and scientific communities" (45). He further situates the development of the counterculture's technologically enhanced communitarian and communication ideals as a form of resistance against the Cold War era military-industrial complex (28-29); Steele's colleague Tom Sherman frequented Rochdale's SCM Book Room which supplied him with hard to find literature on electronics and cybernetics. Tom Sherman, *The Faraday Cage*, unpublished manuscript: 43.

[160] Peggy Gale, "Lisa Steele: Looking very closely," *Parachute* 2 1975: 30-31.

understood as an exploration of "intimate information." An underlying theme in Steele's videos was the coordination of a dialogue between natural phenomena and scientific analysis. For example, the two-channel *Sleep/Dream Vigil* (1973) pairs a video of a sleeping subject with readings of literature on sleep and dreaming. Steele's milestone video *Birthday Suit – Scars and Defects* (1974) examines the body as an index of memory with the artist guiding the viewer through each blemish and injury sustained. *Internal Pornography* (1975) again commingles empirical study with subjective information this time on the topic of sexuality. Over three separate tapes Steele recites passages from medical studies over footage of her nude body, dictates her own fantasies directly to the camera, and closely examines a set of plants with the camera.

Steele's research on Reich is a useful complement to her early output and Gale's contemporary observations. Recognizing the artist's investigative nature, Gale closed her article with the following statement, "The final decision is not made, the summary not yet possible, but each of Lisa Steele's works is an interim report."[161]

Counterinstitutions

The 28 February 1969 edition of the *Daily* announced the arrival of Vancouver's Intermedia at Rochdale. The West Coast group was represented by two members, Gary Lee-Nova and Gerry Gilbert. Nova had recently visited the film seminar to present his films *Steel Mushrooms* (1967) and *Magic Circle* (1968)[162] and his colleague Gilbert was scheduled to meet with the same group in order to read his poetry and present his

[161] Gale 31.
[162] Descriptions of Nova's films can be read in *Vancouver Art and Artists: 1931-1983* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1983) 165-166.

multidisciplinary publication *Radiofreerainforest*. [163]

Founded in 1965, Intermedia commenced as a cooperative resource for video and electronic equipment, the project aimed to provide provisional space and resources for experimentation with technology and artistic collaboration. The organization itself was ultimately informal, and its overall character, as Diana Nemiroff notes, was both elusive and multifaceted.[164] By 1969 Intermedia had evolved from an equipment resource centre pairing artists with technicians into a larger communal and collaborative outfit. Multi-media happenings which placed emphasis on audience interaction mixed McLuhan's concept of artist "as a creator of anti-environments or counter-environments"[165] with the Fluxus goal of democratizing art making.

The *Daily* noted that Lee-Nova was excited by Rochdale and promised to carry his impressions to colleagues back in Vancouver with hope of future exchange between these two "counter-institutions." Gilbert was advertised as being available to discuss the West Coast organization with any interested residents.

Those at Rochdale were correct to identify Intermedia as a similar experiment. To its members Intermedia was recognized as a new social apparatus for learning. In 1970 Gilbert wrote to David Silcox at the Canada Council wondering if

> maybe Intermedia is a model for a new kind of art school. We are certainly designing new structures of communication media: radio, TV, film, newspapers, art galleries museums. We band together freely and make a new, open music (dance poem...) in which the 'audience' is as creatively at work (play) as the

[163] For more on Gerry Gilbert and *radiofreerainforests* see Michael Turner, "Expanded Literary Practices," *Ruins in Process: Vancouver Art in the Sixties*, 6 August 2011 <http://expandedliterarypractices.vancouverartinthesixties.com/>.
[164] Diana Nemiroff, "A history of artist-run spaces in Canada, with particular reference to Véhicule, A Space and the Western Front," M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1985, 23-27.
[165] Marshall McLuhan, "Technology and Environment," *arts/canada*, February 1967: 5-7.

'performer.'[166]

To Dennis Lee, the term 'counter-institution' defined something positive, but all too common at the time. He asserted that Rochdale was imagined to be a distinct, organized, and influential place of learning:

> we had a lot in common with groups that were meeting across North America and probably many parts of Europe, as this sort of dissatisfaction with multiversities began to surface. And it could have taken the direction of the standard model of the time for a 'free university,' which simply meant a few score people who would get together and create course that they couldn't study at the local university. But the hope was that it would not be just a counter-institution, but that it would have its own dynamics and its own reason for being.[167]

To artists in Toronto, Intermedia was a "clue to a future lifestyle."[168] The organization was surprising and inspiring on two levels. As an independent organization it evaded the conditions of the museum and commercial gallery systems. This independence in turn seemed to open up access to these very sectors, as evidenced by Intermedia's exhibitions with the Vancouver Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the Edmonton Art Gallery.

Despite Lee's statement the term 'counter-institution' serves as an important point of connect between Rochdale and Intermedia. With its obvious etymological relation to the era's anti-authoritarian ethos 'counter-institution' was a category applied to a wide range of organizations. The emergence of 'counter-institutions' in Toronto has been attributed to the arrival of American war resisters and sympathetic expatriates. In her

[166] Qtd. in Bonin 33-34.
[167] Qtd. in Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz 18.
[168] Bronson, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat" 165. Prior to arriving in Toronto Bronson had travelled to Vancouver and visited Intermedia, it was there that he and Jorge Zontal first met. Bayer 26.

study of the expatriate scene in Canada, René G. Kasinsky uses the term 'counter-institution' in reference to Rochdale and a range of other organizations and services welcoming the war resister community.[169] For many expatriates Rochdale served as their first point of contact following entry into Canada.[170] Sitting at the northern edge of the City's "American Ghetto" the College provided expatriates with living space, consultation services, and a wide range of new possibilities for social, political, and artistic engagement.[171] Coach House Press published the "Manual for Draft-Age Immigrants" which was distributed throughout the United States through clandestine circuits (to avoid incrimination, the Press opted to exclude their name from the publication).[172]

Introducing American resisters to sympathetic citizens and commingling cultural and political mandates from both sides of the border, 'counter-institutions' in Toronto, and elsewhere in Canada, were points of complex interrelation between numerous cultural groups. One historian of the Toronto expatriate scene notes, "Indeed, where the counter-culture began and where the deserter scene ended was not easily identifiable because of the overlay of anti-draft aid groups, alternative commercial space, communal

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[169] René G. Kasinsky, *Refuges from Militarism: Draft-Age Americans in Canada* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1976): 189-190.

[170] Rochdale supported war resisters and anti-draft groups in a number of ways, from reduced rents to benefits and financial contributions. Numerous expatriates equally took on important leadership roles at the College. Sharpe 40-41.

[171] The ghetto's eastern limit was Spadina Avenue, following south to College Street, and west to University Avenue where the office of the United States consulate general was situated. In addition to *Refuges from Militarism,* two other studies of the presence and engagement of war resisters in Toronto are: David Stewart Churchill, "When Home Became Away: American Expatriates and New Social Movements in Toronto, 1965-1977," diss., University of Chicago, 2001; and John Hagan, *Northern Passage: American Vietnam Resisters in Canada* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). War resister, writer, and poet George Fetherling offers his own personal account in *Travels by Night: A Memoir of the Sixties* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1994).

[172] Stan Bevington, personal interview, 18 January 2010.

living arrangements and political organizing."[173] In assembling disparate groups and by sustaining multiple services, networks of 'counter-institutions' provided a sort of service gestalt acting as an alternative to the segmented public and commercial systems of the mainstream. Describing a community mental health clinic he helped found in New Haven in 1969, psychiatrist Dennis Jaffe wrote, "In a political sense, we feel that a community like Number Nine, if it can survive and grow, will pose a constructive threat to education and social service institutions."[174] This 'counter-institution,' which was collectively run by professionals and non-professionals, was predicated on the "creative expansion of current views of social services."[175] In a similar vein AA Bronson has described the passage from correspondence art to the artist-run network as unfolding "[l]ike a disease" as "communication spread through the artistic population to create a sort of cultural epidemic ignoring the established art system (if "system" is in fact a credible word for those static, impenetrable institutions) and establishing a community based on national and inter-national networking."[176]

Although his comment specifically targets art institutions Bronson's call for a real system is of key importance. Kasinsky notes that 'counter-institutions' were coordinated as rallying points for a broad "community of the dislocated," a category encompassing not only American expatriates but also recent immigrants and transient hippie youth.[177] Expatriates arriving in Canada entered a cultural milieu populated by artists who felt

[173] Churchill 144.
[174] Dennis Jaffe, "Number Nine: Creating a Counter-Institution," *The Radical Therapist*, The Radical Therapist Collective and Jerome Agel (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971) 231.
[175] Jaffe 222.
[176] Bronson, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat" 165-166.
[177] Kasinsky 189.

equally "dislocated" at home. To quote Bronson again, "we felt the closeness and the divisiveness of the American border. We felt the lack of feeling ourselves as part of an art scene."[178] By the late 1960s Canadian artists were looking to build a new art system, an actual system constituted by a constellation of initiatives whose individual mandates contributed to a shared whole.

Come the early 1970s, the artist-run network with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts had quickly started to materialize. The connection between Rochdale and Intermedia in 1969 suggests that this burgeoning network was not isolated in its cultural idiotype but enmeshed within other networks of counterstrategies and counterservices.[179]

In 1970 an alliance of social groups approached the Ontario Council for the Arts to propose the rental of the Council's community hall.[180] They planned to convert the hall into an information and service hub for expatriates. American expatriate John Phillips, co-founder of The Baldwin Street Gallery, was amongst the core instigators. Phillips and his wife Laura Jones had immigrated to Canada in the winter of 1968, moving into the newly opened Rochdale College and later moving further south to Baldwin Village. The couple opened their gallery in the summer of 1969. While their gallery was focused on the exhibition of photography, the space operated simultaneously as a bookstore, lending library, and informal meeting place. The couple regularly rented rooms to other recent

[178] Bronson, "Humiliation of the Bureaucrat" 165.
[179] For examples see the aforementioned *Vehicle: Handbook to Toronto Cultural Resources.*
[180] Kasinsky 189. Descriptions of this initiative, known simply as The Hall, can also be found in Churchill. Hagan suggests that the positive social and commercial initiatives by expatriates, non-profit or otherwise, were in part a responds to Canadians' "ambivalent feelings" towards the United States and their underlying concern about American cultural dominance. Hagan 71

American immigrants. After some financial difficulties the gallery temporarily closed, re-emerging in the early 1970s as the aforementioned Baldwin Street Women's Photography Co-op.[181] Laura Jones also organized an after-school program for neighbourhood children and shared selections from her journal entries along with material produced by the children in an issue of *This Magazine is About Schools.* The article was later collected in the anthology *This Book is About Schools* appearing alongside Dennis Lee's *Getting to Rochdale.*[182] A Space, like Phillips and Jones's initiative, was also a regular point of connection of expatriates. With an active expatriate membership, the centre's café served as a social space for newly arrived Americans.[183]

From the literature referenced here no clear definition of a "counter-institution" is provided. Drawing from what is available in these references and considering the context of my analysis, I would like to propose a profile of a 'counter-institution.'

A 'counter-institution' is in some sense coordinated around services for the "dislocated." This sense of dislocation is implicitly understood as a means and source of knowledge toward the establishment of *other* systems. 'Counter-institutions' might be defined as such only through their engagement with this system, in other words in interrelation with other 'counter-institutions.' This means that scrutiny of any single 'counter-institution' might reveal an overlapping of different mandates and constituencies.

The codifying of Rochdale as a "counter-institution" in multiple instances – first

[181] Hagan 91-94.
[182] Repo.
[183] Vera Frenkel, personal interview, 21 February 2011. The correlation between A Space and Rochdale is further elaborated in the following section.

in the *Daily* in relation to artist-run culture and later in scholarship on the expatriate scene – reveals a broad network wherein the shared and implied mandate of servicing the "dislocated" brought together a range of cultural, social, and political initiatives. Repositioning Rochdale within this category puts into question exaggerations of the College as a site of hippie-bourgeois isolation and fortification.[184] The edition of the *Daily* referenced above draws in Intermedia and, by extension, other artist-determined projects to bring greater complexity to the socio-political history of artist-run culture. In turn it lends greater political weight to Lucy Lippard's comment in the fall of 1969 at Nova Scotia College of Art of the great potential for artistic experimentation available within Canada, a region imagined as free from the restrictions and conventions of a market- and merit- based art system.[185] This statement when combined with Bronson's

[184] Here I am thinking of Stuart Henderson's suggestion that Rochdale served was a locus of "hip separatism." Under Henderson's coinage Rochdale is representative of hippie culture's move towards emancipation from mainstream culture, a depressive exodus in the wake of waning social and political idealism. Rochdale becomes the vertical and urban counterpoint to the rural commune. The relationship of a 'counter-institution' to mainstream culture is decidedly different. Its presence and purpose is persistent and agonistic. To return to Jaffe's portrait of the New Haven experiment, "We do this in a way different from the confrontation politics we are more familiar with. Although we respect and many of us feel the need for serious political confrontation, we have decided that for our own survival and for our own values we will deal with the world differently. Since we see ourselves as a model of the kind of community we would like to live in, we have chosen to relate on this model to institutions outside us." With 'counter-institutions' there is no denial of or refusal to interact with other, possibly adversarial, institutions. Rather regular interaction with sceptical individuals and institutions provided opportunity for "subtle confrontation." "We try to create a change in each interaction we have with the community ... We encourage people to visit us when they are suspicious, and include them if they come to our meetings ... We feel that such organizations cannot exist only in the laboratory, but must be visible and operate within the political reality of a community." Rooting Rochdale to its fiscal constraints and physical site, in addition to privileging its status as a residential building, Henderson overlooks the institutional affinities Rochdale shared with a larger cultural and political community, and the scope in which the College diffused its membership (for more on this see my chapter on the College's phony degrees).

[185] "The impermanent art that is being done now demands that artists travel as well as the art. As artists travel to different cities and countries, they talk to other people and to other artists who are in turn directed to ideas of their own rather than waiting for the objects to be dragged up to wherever they are, which often takes a long time. Europe is wide open for this kinds of decentralization process now, and Canada probably still more so ... New York has a very, very strong gallery, museum, critic, collector, magazine oriented power structure and it is going to take an awful lot of energy to get rid of it. In

biolyrical prose on the artist-run network seems to echo McLuhan's thoughts on automation and the post-industrial world of policy discussed earlier, an era of "intense sensitivity to the interrelation and interprocess of the whole" founded on "the power of adaptability" and "patterns of decentralism and diversity."[186]

Rochdale on Tape

Bruce Emilson's *Rochdale Tapes* (1972) were first aired on Rogers Cable and later exhibited at A Space between March 18 and 29, 1975.[187] At the time A Space was the sole organization in Toronto screening new video work.[188] Emilson's video consists of a series of interviews with residents on the topic of the College. As its dates of production and exhibition attest, the video was commenced well after the College's downward turn, a decline in part due to financial and social burdens of drugs, drifters, and violence.[189] Emilson took an interest in Rochdale precisely for these reasons and paying frequent visits to the now weary Rochdale outfitted with a portapack.[190]

Lisa Steele and Tom Sherman had developed an ambitious program for A Space, in part assisted by the successful acquisition of a Local Initiatives Program grant. The

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Canada, maybe you can start from scratch and don't even have to mess with breaking down any barriers." Qtd. in Kennedy 21.

[186] McLuhan 300-311.

[187] Nemiroff 397.

[188] Nemiroff 232.

[189] Unwelcome guests were a problem at Rochdale from the very beginning. Tensions between members and "crashers," as they were known put strain on the experiments co-operative mission. In 1970 policy at the College was adjusted to consider all residents who assisted or house crashers as candidates for eviction. The crasher problem was thought to be directly related to the increased presence, and dominance, of drug dealers within the building. Sharpe 222. In 1971 the police frequently raided Rochdale in search of drug dealers and users. There were six raids in the first six months of that year, much to the delight of the press who used the events to cast a negative image of the College. Sharpe 227. Armed security, hired by the College, only added to an air of violence.

[190] Vera Frenkel, personal interview, 21 February 2011.

proposal submitted outlined the acquisition of equipment, the coordination of regular workshops and screenings, the authoring of an equipment resource manual, and further coordination of outreach to schools and universities. After experiencing some difficulty with A Space's equipment, Tom Sherman was directed toward a tenant at Rochdale College. Rolling Thunder Video operated on equipment borrowed from University of Toronto and the organization's member "Jim" was able to show Sherman a few clever tricks in editing and set-up.[191]

In its earliest years, A Space was imagined as a "tool to be used by artists."[192] As key administrator and founding member Robert Bowers noted in retrospect the organization as a whole was considered a relational structure in which the desire for a better social reality could be articulated. At its commencement A Space shared the same utopian mind-set and radical politics that had set Rochdale into motion. A Space was for Bowers "one of those efforts to realize some of those values" of the counterculture.[193] Emilson's intimate exposure of the inner life at Rochdale observed and recorded the social effects of the experiment. Demonstrative of the dual use of video for community and artistic purposes the subjects of *Rochdale Tapes* served to narrate a utopian project coming to pass. Exhibited within A Space these accounts of Rochdale became allegorical lessons received within a new model of cooperative and artist determined exhibition, production, and administration.

Resident Raphael Bendahan produced another video documentary of Rochdale in 1970. The twenty-minute video opens with a long and distant zoom on the building

[191] Tom Sherman, *The Faraday Cage*, unpublished manuscript: 41.
[192] Nemiroff 225.
[193] Nemiroff 206.

accompanied by the roar of London, Ontario's Nihilist Spasm Band. The audio sourced from footage of the band's performance at the College. Bendahan also recorded interviews with residents and includes a sequence of children playing in the College's daycare centre. The Canadian Filmmaker's Distribution Centre whose offices were at that time based in Rochdale distributed the tape. Around the same time Bendahan founded and edited *Impressions*, a photography magazine printed by Coach House Press. The premier issue contained an advertisement for room rentals at Rochdale with a note about the College's photography studio to entice any interested photographers.[194]

Women interested in video making and distribution found an important resource at Rochdale with the Women's Involvement Program. Founded by artist Ruth Hartman and Anne Bingham in 1972 the Women' Involvement Program brought together a membership of twelve women who aimed to address the misrepresentation of women on television as well as the gender divide in television production. Producing videos under the rubric *Liberation Media* the group worked in partnership with the Ryerson Community Television studios and Keeble Cable who provided instructional workshops in recording and editing as well as studio time. Funds acquired through the Local Initiatives Program contributed to productions addressing women's rights, family issues and child rearing, women's health, Canadian women's history, labour, and patriarchy with titles such as: *Free Mum, Free Dad, Free Daycare; Women at Work; Rape, Justice & Karate; Anatomy & Birth Control*, amongst others.[195] Broadcasting time-slots were

[194] *Impressions* 1 (Coach House Press, 1970).
[195] Liberation Media statement, Canadian Women's Movement Archives, University of Ottawa, Box 139. Multiple draft statements are included in this collection. Another version made note of screenings at Toronto's Women's Place and the Western YWCA, with distribution servicing women's groups in

secured with both Keeble Cable and Graham Cable,[196] videos were available to rent on half-inch Sony tape, and A Space played host to a number of screenings.[197]

In 1973 Bingham and Hartman joined Lisa Steele and Marion Lewis to co-curate a program of video art for the *Women and Film Festival*. Hosted by the St. Lawrence Centre and instigated by filmmaker Sylvia Spring, the festival was modeled after the *1st International Festival of Women's Films* held in New York just a year prior. An all-women programing and administrative staff assembled a comprehensive program of women-authored films reaching back to 1896. Screenings ran from June 8 to 17 after which it carried on nationally to the end of July with eighteen related programs opening up in every province (including a presentation in Whitehorse, Yukon).[198] In their contribution to the festival's catalogue, Bingham, Hartman, Lewis and Steele wrote,

> Women are making tapes that cannot be categorized in any cinematic tradition; in other words, terms like 'documentary' often do not work to describe a softer, more intimate style that often uses real time as a device to pull you into the reality of the experience. Video is identified as a medium free from the male-dominated milieu and language of film. [199]

The independence offered by video is even located in the inferior technical make-up of video equipment, as the authors note that frequent need for repairs are opportunities for "learning to solder and being able to identify a transistor."[200]

While Bingham and Hartman's program principally used video as a

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multiple provinces. The same statement indicates that the group had a darkroom and was interested in supporting still photography and film production. Another statement advertised weekly evening screenings and portapak workshops at the Women's Place.

[196] Ruth Hartman, e-mail to author, 2 April 2011.

[197] Liberation Media statement, Canadian Women's Movement Archives, University of Ottawa, Box 139.

[198] General Idea muse Granada Gazelle published a playful two-page photo exposé on the festival in *FILE*. *File,* 2.3 1973: 4-5.

[199] *Women and Film 1876-1973 International Festival* (Toronto: Women & Film, 1973) 6-7.

[200] *Women and Film 1876-1973 International Festival*, 6-7.

consciousness-raising tool, the organization continually served as a first point of contact with video for numerous women in Toronto. The evidence is no clearer than in the catalogue for the Art Gallery of Ontario's exhibition *Videoscape*. The catalogue focused on the impact the emergent medium on individual artistic processes. Participating artists were asked to identify their first encounter with the medium. To which Toronto artist Barbara Cochrane listed the Women's Involvement Program as her initiatory site.[201]

Ruth Hartman arrived at Rochdale in December 1968. She had moved to Toronto from Kitchener to study at the New School of Art. Initially accepted into Ontario College of Art she found its commercial focus and academic conditions stifling, on the other hand New School of Art, with its defected Ontario College of Art faculty, offered the freedom she was looking for. While residing at Rochdale, Hartman worked at Coach House Press, learning typesetting and letterpress printing. She also took on administrative duties at the College. Her illustrations appeared in the *Daily* and she was regular participant at council meetings.[202] Like much of the counterculture and anti-establishment movement at large, Rochdale's environment was undeniably male-centric; sexist rhetoric continually appeared in the *Daily,* women's voices were commonly ignored during council and ad hoc meetings.[203] Hartman found alliances and friendship with women inside Rochdale and at neighbouring Coach House Press, and many of these relations carried over into the Women's Involvement Program. Hartman and Bingham met through the Toronto

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[201] Gale, Peggy, Garry Neill Kennedy and Marty Dunn. *Videoscape: An Exhibition of Video Art* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1974) n. pag. This catalogue's format is in part a borrowing of artist-coordinated directories already in circulation such as the *Video Exchange Directory* (Vancouver: Intermedia, 1971).

[202] Ruth Hartman, e-mail to author, 2 April 2011.

[203] In his article Stuart Henderson briefly considers the persistence of sexist rhetoric within the *Daily* and the definition of Rochdale as a male environment. These utterances were met with strong contestation by the consciousness-raising group Rochdale Women.

Women's Caucus. Hartman's commitment to social justice and women's rights was formidable, her hunger for feminist theory voracious, and communication between women, in whatever medium, was paramount. After reading Simone de Beauvoir in the Rochdale Library, Hartman sent a letter to the thinker, including a Rochdale Degree and some Coach House Press ephemera with her note. De Beauvoir's hand-written reply arrived soon after.[204]

Bingham and Hartman's organization lasted just two years, disbanding at the end of their funding cycle. As a business tenant, Women's Involvement Program benefited from Rochdale's cheap rent, yet the organization also remained true to the College's founding (if then floundering) social vision. As Hartman reflects, "We were a feather in late Rochdale's cap as an example of a working, socially relevant remnant of its educational base."[205]

[204] Ruth Hartman, e-mail to author, 2 April 2011.
[205] Ruth Hartman, e-mail to author, 2 April 2011.

Chapter 3: The Same Twenty-four hour Restaurant

A great number of creative and enterprising activities that took place at Rochdale have been nearly forgotten. The College's amorphous and anarchistic nature only helped encourage this tendency. A restaurant, art gallery, free store, record store, health food grocers, or small-time casino could appear with ease and just as quickly disappear.[206] This section considers just one of these spaces –*The Same Twenty-four hour Restaurant.* Opening in the fall of 1968 and operating for just over a year the restaurant was an early and ambitious project for the College. A colourful and futuristic space accessed at street level, it served as a liminal site between the new society developing within Rochdale and the larger world outside. Designed by artist, publisher, ex-architecture student, and Rochdale resident Ken Coupland, its look and operations fell in line with radical experiments in architecture underway at the time, to which both the counterculture and larger public were encountering through periodicals and large-scale events. Conceived as a commercial venture its futuristic design and elaborate menu corresponded with the open social systems at the core of the College's experiment. However, the restaurant did not successfully aid the College in maintaining solvency and over the course of the year the eatery and its elements were progressively dismantled.

My examination of Rochdale's restaurant follows three interrelated avenues of research and analysis. The first is a chronicle of the development of the restaurant's design, its construction and correspondence with the College's built environment, and its

[206] Conversely, Rochdale also hosted initiatives that carried on long after the College's closure, for example the Rochdale Free Clinic which exists today as the Hassle Free Clinic.

use and reception by the internal population. My understanding of this design is primarily derived from plans, photographs, and commentary published in the *Daily* newsletters between the summer of 1968 and winter of 1969. The second component of this chapter examines the various ways in which information on the restaurant was elaborated, enumerated, and advertised through print. I argue that the *Dailies*, in addition to other periodic documents, were not only communications resources but also printed extensions of Rochdale's built environs. In analyzing representations of the restaurant I discuss how Coupland utilized the printed page to elaborate the spatial and sensorial effects of his design. Within his layouts Coupland accentuated the futuristic look of the restaurant and foregrounded its radical potential. In support of this I draw comparisons to other contemporary and historical examples of utopian architecture.

Dispatched weekly by neighbouring Coach House Press the *Daily* newsletter was Rochdale's internal organ.[207] The single sheet bulletin pasted together council minutes, classified ads, personal notes, lifestyle suggestions, seminar and workshop descriptions, advertisements, along with an assortment of graphic oddities. Conflicts, complaints, and news all graced its pages. The bulletins were distributed throughout the building by a team of volunteers who would slip copies under each apartment door. With its frequency of production, its range of content, and its wide dissemination, the *Daily* gave voice to the internal population. As a printed document it was both a vital, if at times vulgar, "connective tissue" – the phrase comes from AA Bronson – and acted as a site wherein

[207] The *Daily* masthead was prone to permutations, sometimes appearing as the *Tuesdaily*, *Mondaily, The Daily Planet* amongst others. Yet the content remained focused on Rochdale related news.

the College's space could be manipulated, fabulated, and re-imagined.[208] However, it is a note in another Rochdale publication which best summarized the complex role design held at Rochdale:

> "IMAGE NATION means where you locate – whether it be inside your body, your mind, on the street, in school or even Port Alberni or Roberts Creek, BC – looking around at what you know. Rochdale is a unique opportunity for communal design. IMAGE NATION is a working ground for such an effort."[209]

While the collective and improvised nature of the *Daily*'s assembly and design makes it difficult to credit one single individual, issues that Coupland contributed to are easy spot. A recent dropout from University of Toronto's architecture program Coupland had migrated to the north end of the campus, joining the printing and graphic design team at Coach House Press.[210] Coupland's preoccupation and general excitement with his restaurant plans resulted in their graphic dominance of a number of *Daily*'s emerging from Coach House Press in the months leading up to the College's opening in the fall of 1968. In certain instances, Coupland's graphic elaborations of the restaurant covered the entirety of the letter-sized newsletters.

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of *The Same* as a queer space. Since the 1990s queer theory has come to represent an expansive field of inquiry that situates

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[208] AA Bronson, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat: Artist-Run Spaces as Museums by Artists," *From Sea to Shining Sea: Artist-Initiated Activity in Canada, 1939-1987*. Eds. AA Bronson, et al. (Toronto: Power Plant, 1987).

[209] *Image Nation*, 15 April 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 0013 Box 9. The first volume of *Image Nation* was in many ways the organ for Rochdale's intellectual class. Published over the spring and summer months of 1969 its editors included Judith Merril and Victor Coleman with design duties assumed by Ken Coupland and other Coach House Press adherents. Early issues contained a mixture of longer texts on Rochdale affairs (with some shorter communications in the style of the *Daily*) in combination with literature and poetry. Later issues were focused entirely on literary contributions. Issue 8 saw its transition into a photography magazine with a uniform design. Coach House Press continued to publish the magazine through this transformation.

[210] Stan Bevington, personal interview, 18 January 2010.

"sexuality [as] a primary category for social analysis." Under queer theory the questioning of sexual order is concomitant with the critical analysis of institutional and social ideologies. Queer critique may manifest "in contexts other than sex" and is characterized, in a generalized sense, by a resistance to all things normal.[211] Within this framework, with additional reference to scholarship on the topic of queer architecture, I argue that through his design Coupland addressed the conflict between the College's prescribed architecture and its inhabitants, and demonstrated that a productive relationship between them was possible through aesthetic, social, and gastronomical communion.

Rochdale's Building: For Us or Against Us?

The austere concrete tower that housed Rochdale College is often understood to be one of the experiment's fundamental contradictions. Designed in Brutalist-style by architects Elmar Tampõld and John Wells, the tower was erected specifically for the College. The radical ethos of the College demanded a built environment that would support a liberated pedagogical system and as such be organized as an alternative to the existing models of classrooms and schools. Accordingly, it was initially imagined that the living spaces at the Rochdale Houses could be transferred over into this new high-rise model. However, the building's final outcome was cold and utilitarian, in part the result of strict conditions enforced at the last minute by one of the project's financial backers.[212]

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[211] Michael Warner, "Introduction," *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) vii-xxxi.

[212] Rochdale's final form was in part dictated by secondary mortgage holders Revenue Properties. Floor plans ultimately followed the configuration of the underground parking lot. Sharpe 28-34. For more on the building and residents reactions to it see Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz 14-15.

As noted in a study of Toronto's concrete architecture Rochdale's grey high-rise was but one example of a series of like buildings that had started to appear along Bloor Street, quickly bringing the strip into the "space age."[213] Built out of cast-in-place and precast elements, the building was composed of two interconnected wings. The west wing was set back from the street to open up a court. A horizontal and unbroken sequence of windows counted out its eighteen stories. Concrete architecture emerging in Toronto at this time was not the result of one trend or another in the field. Architects working with concrete in Toronto borrowed liberally from both British Brutalism as well as eminent French architect and city planner Le Corbusier. Yet the prominence of concrete in the City's expanding infrastructure can also be accredited to the arrival of skilled immigrant populations and the material's easy and quick application, attending to the "country-building" surrounding the Centennial and the Trudeau government's policies.[214]

In his study of Brutalist planning theory architecture critic Reyner Banham pronounced that by the 1960s the "violent revolutionary outburst" of the movement had distilled into a "fashionable vernacular."[215] Brutalist architecture emerged in the years following the Second World War and was championed by a set of younger architects, notably Alison and Peter Smithson, who contested the primacy of modernist architecture's material principles. An increased critical awareness of the social impact of

[213] Michael McClelland and Graeme Steward, *Concrete Toronto: A Guidebook to Architecture from the Fifties to the Seventies* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2007) 32.
[214] McClelland and Steward 12-63.
[215] Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1966) 89.

infrastructure in part informed this new approach to architecture that combined the modernist reverence to materials with a strong social ethic. As a sort of urban ecology Brutalism sought to establish a balance between building, inhabitant, and environment. Concrete in its plasticity, mobility, and immediacy was recruited as the base material for this theory. The raw appearance of Brutalist architecture was intentional and made explicit reference to the conditions of the "mass-production society".[216]

The Same Twenty-Four Hour Restaurant

Plans for a restaurant were underway before Rochdale officially opened to the public. Residence at the College included room and board; a cafeteria was installed on the second floor and the communal kitchens serviced the ashrams. Just below the cafeteria at street level there remained an unoccupied commercial space lined with large windows. This was where Coupland's restaurant would be installed.

An undated edition[217] of the *Daily* newsletter, circulated to the internal population, features a text enumerating the material and labour costs for *The Same* (fig. 1). Printed over a photograph of Ken Coupland, it read more like an inventory for heavy industry than that for a restaurant ready to service Toronto's new countercultural Mecca – steel piping and clamps; slabs of Herculite reinforced vinyl; sheets of coloured metallized Mylar; panels of perforated pre-galvanized steel; spools of wire rope, and dozens of incandescent showcase bulbs. Only the inclusion of a silver cash register and an old-style

[216] Banham, *The New Brutalism* 42-135.

217Many of the *Dailies* that guide this section are undated, either because the date was excluded from the layout or, in the case of the original paste-ups, the piece of paper indicating the date has gone missing. In these cases my sense of chronology here depends on their classification by the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. This edition is understood to have been printed before 30 September 1968.

jukebox disclosed the purpose of all this material. The proposed design was expected to accommodate 106 diners and would be open twenty-four hours a day. At the moment of publication, construction was projected to occur during the last week of September. The College's governing council was scheduled to visit the new restaurant on 30 September 1968, to christen the eatery and mark the commencement of the College's official opening week.[218]

Despite some minor delays, Coupland's novel use of industrial material proved to be successful and the structure was easily mounted in the early weeks of October. The 13 October 1968 edition of the *Daily* served as a photographic celebration of the newly opened restaurant (fig. 2, 3). The front side of the newsletter featured a large black and white photograph recording a group of four diners observed through the perforated steel seating of a neighbouring booth (fig. 2). A smaller photo on the same page shows the space in its final stages of construction, with Coupland himself adjusting one of the coloured baffles. The backside of the newsletter is completely dominated by imagery pertaining to the restaurant (fig. 3). To the top right of the page is a view of transparent tabletop from the floor of the booth, upon which the dishware appears to float freely. To the bottom left a close-up photograph of a baffle demonstrates its optical and material qualities in contradistinction to the ridged steel structure. The remaining photos featured silhouettes of diners in their booths with the large sheet windows looking onto the world outside. A view looking inside *The Same* through those same windows was later incorporated in two versions of the 1969 course calendar. Available in a booklet and

[218] A reminder of this presentation is included in the *Daily*, 29 September 1968. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

folded format, the printed curriculum featured photographs of a packed service at the restaurant.

Throughout the month of October 1968, small graphic advertisements for the restaurant continued to appear in editions of the *Daily*. Making use of Coach House's bank of graphics and typefaces, they paired simple illustrations of modernist and art deco skyscrapers with groan-worthy phrases set in brush stroke styled fonts, reminding the readership that "They'll come back for more of: *The Same*."[219] These advertisements, most likely designed by Coupland, crept into the *Daily* layouts, adding to the weekly textual cacophony. The choice of fonts and imagery recalled a bygone day of innocence and simplicity in print advertisement, and further accentuated the popular restaurant architecture upon which Coupland based his designs. For example, an advertisement for the restaurant on the back cover of *Image Nation*, featured a photograph of a formal ball, the couples dancing at arms length beneath the phrase "Welcome to the Club." The contrast between the advertisement's vintage graphics with the restaurant's futuristic design gave further force to the anachronistic play that Coupland put into motion with his design.[220]

Early on the restaurant was heavily used, and abused, by the internal population as demonstrated by an announcement in the *Daily* pleading with residents for the return of

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[219] These very same graphics and typefaces were also used by AA Bronson in his designs for a body of early General Idea ephemera (letterheads, invitation cards, etc) for examples see: Barbara Fisher, *General Idea: Editions* (Toronto: Blackwood Gallery, 2002). An invitation card designed by Coupland to the General Idea authored project *Betty's* (1 January 1969), a project to which Coupland was the principle coordinator, uses the same typeface. The front graphic appeared three months earlier in a late-September 1969 edition of the *Daily.* Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 0013 Box 9.

[220] *Image Nation*, 3 March 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 0013 Box 9.

three hundred missing forks.[221] Within two months of its opening the restaurant had become a topic of concern for the governing council and was a key issue at the 27 November 1968 meeting.[222] Considering their mortgage payments, the council was depending on *The Same* to be a stable and lucrative enterprise. In addition to the shortcomings of the restaurant the catering operations of the second floor cafeteria were also reporting losses. The delayed construction of *The Same*, attributed to contractors' late delivery of building materials, was in part to blame for a shortfall in revenue.[223] To save on costs it was decided that the restaurant would be closed over the winter holidays.[224] Come the New Year and the return of much of Rochdale's internal population *The Same* remained closed.[225] Mention of the restaurant only reappeared near the end of the winter. The 1 March 1969 edition of the *Rochdale Supplement*, which was sometimes included with the *Daily*, featured an interview conducted in the restaurant by science fiction writer and Rochdale resource person Judith Merril with the band The Mothers of Invention (sans Frank Zappa). The band was in Toronto for a few days while ironing out some issues with the Canadian customs and had decided to pay Rochdale a visit "not because they knew what a groovy hip place it is (like all those articles in Newsweek and everything), but because they heard the restaurant had good vegetarian

[221] *Daily*, c. December 1968. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.
[222] *Daily*, 2 December 1968. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.
[223] *Daily Planet,* 20 January 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9; council minutes published and circulated in June indicated that the restaurant was expected to make $60 000 in revenue, *Council Meeting*, 20 June 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 13.
[224] *Daily*, 2 December 1968. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.
[225] *Daily Planet,* 20 January 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

food (but Roy ordered liverwurst)."[226] Theatre Passe Muraille founder and Rochdale resource person Jim Garrard recalls that, following the interview, the Mothers left *The Same* to join the troupe in a series of theatre games as they rehearsed for the opening of their production of Rochelle Owen's play *Futz.*[227]

The spring season also welcomed the college's culinary resource person Wu as the full time manager of the restaurant.[228] Under Wu's charge the menu spiralled upward toward a near rococo level of gastronomy. A feature on the College published in Maclean's enumerated but a small selection the myriad of choices now available:

> "19 kinds of honey, including linden, rosemary, and mellona; caviar at 40 cents a portion; 25 kinds of coffee, from straight Canadian to dandelion; 23 kinds of tea, from tea-bag through something called Constant Comment to Yerba Mate; 10 varieties of smoked meats; 22 variations on the theme of jam; and 23 flavours for milk shakes, including anise, bilberry and tamarind (a rare Indian date)."[229]

This new, seemingly interminable, menu was well suited to Coupland's design. Wu was quoted in the Maclean's article as finding his work at *The Same* as "less inhibiting" than that his other role of preparing daily meals for residents in the cafeteria. His menu offered diners an experience that was akin to the College's ethos of an intuitive and individualized curriculum and plugged into the open system suggested by Coupland's design. Just as the industrial and standardized make-up of the restaurant's booths

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[226] *Rochdale supplement*, 1 March 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

[227] Johnston, *Up the Mainstream* 39.

[228] *Mondaily*, 3 March 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9. With Wu's arrival came a slight increase in menu prices, although a 25% discount was available to all members (otherwise registered Rochdale residents). Wu is simply referred to by this single name throughout the College's periodicals as well as its two published histories (Sharpe; Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz). Prior to Wu's arrival Art Roberts managed the restaurant.

[229] Alan Edmonds, "The New Learning: Today it's Chaos / Tomorrow...FREEDOM?," Maclean's, May 1969: 70.

suggested a flexible and expanding dining space so Wu's menu carried the potential for constant culinary permutations as diners assembled their meals ingredient by ingredient. AA Bronson recalls how the system shared between an expanded menu, ceaseless jukebox, and dynamic architecture emerged within a molasses thick passage of time, part drug induced, the result of the long waits for orders to arrive as Wu invented a new dish for each diner.[230]

With Wu now in charge of the kitchen it appears that by spring 1969, close to half a year after its opening, *The Same* had finally hit its stride. The restaurant continued to run smoothly up to the summer months when it once again became a subject of the council's concern. In June the community at Rochdale was gearing up for the Toronto Pop Festival and it was expected that the transient population in the building would increase significantly over the festival's run. A motion was passed to close the restaurant until the excitement around the festival had subsided.[231] The festival came and went; the restaurant remained closed for the rest of the summer. Over these months professional caterers were hired to help Rochdale cope with the hundred thousand dollar debt it had amassed in just one year of operation. Come the first week of September *The Same* reopened with significant changes to its operations and menu.[232] No longer open for twenty-four hours the restaurant was now serving mainly hot dogs, hamburgers, and chips; a menu no different than the cafeteria located above it or any fare available

[230] AA Bronson, personal interview, 4 August 2009.
[231] *Council Meeting*, 20 June 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 13.
[232] *Daily*, [c. 8 September 1969]. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 13.

elsewhere in the vicinity.[233] Later that month resident Jack Jones voiced this inquiry in the *Daily*: "The restaurant seems clean and nice, but not very Rochdale. I wonder if we can do something about that? Food? Decor?"[234] Jones's inquiry was published 30 September 1969, a year to the day after the restaurant's presentation to the council was reported. Sure enough *The Same* was closed yet again for renovations. Along with a new cooperative work program, steam tables arrived to replace Wu's inspired concoctions. The cancellation of the restaurant's around the clock service was also part of the council's policing of amphetamine addicts and uninvited guests, whose presence had burdened the restaurant's atmosphere. Soon *The Same* was replaced by Etherea Natural Foods. As the name might suggest, the restaurant took a decidedly different direction. Coupland's industrial material was abandoned for wood panelling and a more organic decor. The change, Stan Bevington recalled, was "a real backwards move."[235]

Megastructures

Having studied architecture at University of Toronto Coupland was well aware of the fantastic urban propositions emerging from the megastructure movement and more radical strains of architecture at the time.[236] Propositions such as UK-based Archigram's

[233] *Daily,* c. 8 September 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 13.
[234] *Daily*, 30 September 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 13.
[235] Mietkiewicz and Mackowycz 71
[236] AA Bronson, himself an architecture school drop-out and collaborator and co-worker with Coupland, recalls that they "were both well-versed in such arcane delights as Archigram" and that this interest held noticeable influence over Coupland's designs. E-mail to the author, 1 February 2010. In 1967 AA Bronson, in collaboration with Clive Russell, produced *Junkigram!* a sensational and critical one-off newspaper on radical architecture. Christina Ricci notes that in addition to its obvious synonymy with Archigram the publication also drew inspiration from architects Alison and Peter Smithson and the

Plug-In City, Fuller's aforementioned geodesic dome, ex-Situationist Constant Nieuwenhuys's *New Babylon*, and Cedric Price's *Fun Palace* all envisaged new forms of architecture in which shelter, entertainment, and leisure could be housed within one comprehensive built environment.[237] Utopian in nature these propositions looked towards the full integration of technology to realize adaptive spatial networks, buildings and cities as open systems in synch with McLuhan's "electronic speed-up."[238] These designs promised a cross wiring of architecture with individual and collective desires, adaptive environments responsive to each of its inhabitants' impulses.[239]

Megastructures were not solely theoretical phenomena in the domain of architecture. (Although the critical potential of these fantasies as they appeared on paper is an important component and contributes to this analysis.) The immensely popular Expo 67 in Montreal saw the construction of two new islands in order to accommodate a

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Independent Group, in particular their 1956 exhibition *This Is Tomorrow* that famously marked the emergence of pop art. While the publication was published by the University of Manitoba School of Architecture these architects and events were not included in its curriculum, Bronson and Russell gleaned this information from their own independent learning. Ricci, "Allusions, Omissions, Cover-Ups: The Early Days," 14. I believe the same argument can be made for Coupland's case, in that his technique was honed through study at the University of Toronto but the conceptual underpinnings of his designs were acquired outside of its curriculum. Ricci's perceptive identification of Alison and Peter Smithson is also apt for Coupland, considering the duo's central importance to the advent of Bruatalism and Pop Art, a genealogy to which Coupland, I argue here, attempted to foreground. For more on the work of Alison and Peter Smithson and the Independent Group see: Claude Lichtenstein and Thomas Schregenberger, eds., *As Found: The Discovery of the Ordinary* (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2001) and *The Independent Group*, spec. issue of *October* 94 (2000).

[237] On Archigram see, Simon Sadler, *Archigram: Architecture Without Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005). On Constant's New Babylon see, Tom McDonnell, "Metastructure: Experimental Utopia and Traumatic Memory in Constant's New Babylon," *Grey Room* 33 (2008): 84–95 and Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999). On Cedric Price's Fun Palace see: "Cedric Price: Fun Palace," Canadian Centre for Architecture, 28 April 2011 <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/collection/283-cedric-price-fun-palace> and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, *Cedric Price* (Köln: Walther König, 2010).

[238] See my first chapter for more on this term and McLuhan's thoughts on automation.

[239] Inderbir Singh Riar, "Montreal and the Megastructure, ca 1967," *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*, eds. Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) 193-210; See also: Terence Riley, *The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002).

massive temporary city of pavilions. Operating under the rubric *Man and His World* the islands hosted a veritable global village. The event brought together nations and corporate industry, which erected monumental and futuristic sensorial spectacles. The exhibitions contained within the pavilions blurred the lines between national ideologies, psychedelic and altered experiences, and industrial automation.[240]

Does not Rochdale's open social system, its accommodation of a widely variegated population of groups and individuals, and this community's emphasis on the roles of desire and intuition fall in line with the examples above? Considering this, could Rochdale also be defined as a megastructure? In these examples megastructures are in part confirmed by their seamless integration of advanced technology, the lifestyles within are provided for by a ubiquitous and ceaseless cybernetic service system. Much of the technological adaptability in the previous examples was pure fiction; in comparison Rochdale's concrete towers housed a complex and (relatively) permissive society that allowed for the spontaneous emergence of numerous amenities. Advanced electronic and media-based technology was also present within Rochdale, for example with its radio station and television studio, but, more often than not, the environment was determined by organic and social action. I wish to suggest that *The Same* restaurant, in its design and execution, exemplifies Rochdale's status as a megastructure.

In her book *Architecture or Techno-utopia: Politics After Modernism*, Felicity D. Scott presents a critical re-examination of the architectural experiments of the 1960s,

[240] For more on the topic of megastructures see Reyner Banham's definitive and timely study *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976); On Expo 67 see Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan, eds, *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

arguing that the liberties and luxuries imagined in megastructure designs were equally present in emergent post-industrial socio-economic systems.[241] These experiments in radical architecture can be read as evidence of a "symptomatic alliance" between the era's countercultural attitudes and economic re-calibration.[242] In similar fashion, architecture historian Inderbir Singh Riar, in his study of the Expo 67 site and its critical reception, defines a megastructure as "a flexible framework that encloses the functions of a city, thereby making immanent new forms of human interaction, social control, and the technical organization of space."[243] Therefore, the adaptability of megastructures is a means of control over the inhabitants within, rather than simply a service to the population's needs and desires.

As I have suggested earlier in my analysis of the relationship between radical pedagogy and political policy, it is all too limiting to retroactively to judge these experiments as subservient to the conditions and agendas of the post-industrial society. Scott notes that countercultural experiments in ambitious and autonomous community building, as with the rural Colorado dome community of Drop City, while remote in location, served as points of reconnection with the larger electronic and post-industrial society. As electric ecologies, these new communities provided space where inhabitants could apply and repurpose technology free from capitalist ends to the benefit of their community and surroundings.[244] An acknowledgement and incorporation of systems of

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[241] Felicity D. Scott, *Architecture or Techno-utopia: Politics After Modernism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007) 1-2.
[242] Scott 187.
[243] Riar 193-210.
[244] Scott 195. See also: Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) and Andrew Kirk, "'Machines of Loving Grace': Alternative Technology, Environment, and the

control within megastructural designs can also be read as a sign of self-reflexivity, a cheeky play with what Reyner Banham dubbed the "urban futures of the recent past," this oxymoron signalling not so much that the effects of post-industrialism are steering culture but the fact that the counterculture was sensitive to these influences. Such awareness, as demonstrated in megastructural fantasies, resulted in the ironic play on the counterculture's own sense of futurity.

Comparably small in scale Copeland's restaurant could have easily served as an amenity within any of the megastructures discussed above. At street-level *The Same* served to advertise the myriad groups, themselves distinct social systems, within the College's concrete tower. While the radical futurological propositions of megastructural design might have served as arcane delights to architecture students, enrolled or dissenting, by the fall of 1968 the majority of Canadians were already familiar with the standard look of utopian architecture. Montreal's immensely popular Expo 67 with its network of pavilions and man-made islands served as a training ground for what Riar refers to as a new "citizen-participant." For many Expo 67 visitors architecture took on a surprising new character. The experience of free ambulation throughout and between pavilions, in combination with a ceaseless barrage of sensorial delights of their exhibitions, foregrounded the spectator's own role in the overall event and introduced a notion of learning as a social, spatial, spectacular, and constant activity.[245] A year later in Toronto passers by on Bloor Street could peer into the street-level restaurant at the foot of North America's most ambitious countercultural community. They would see diners and

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Counterculture," in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, eds. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002) 353-78.

[245] Riar 197-198.

staff corralled within a steel-tubular structure, a system of booths slipped into the foot of a towering concrete box, and looking as if it had been ordered in from, or even constructed from, the surplus material of Expo 67's futuristic city. At street-level and around the clock the restaurant advertised and affirmed Rochdale as a utopian-minded project; instantly recognizable to a Canadian public that had just left the idyll in the St. Lawrence River. *The Same* qualified Rochdale as a rag-tag parallel to the highly stylized meeting of nations and industry in Montreal.

The Plans

Many of megastructure projects existed solely as propositions spread over essays, publications, models, and illustrations. These documents performed the precision expected from architectural documents. By pairing architectural conventions and futuristic projections an uncertainty arises as to whether what has been delimited is a utopian or anti-utopian projection. Architectural theorist Anthony Vidler refers to this as the "representation effect." The critical edge of megastructures lies in their ambiguity, leaving the viewer to wonder if the inhabitants are liberated by this fantastic higher technology or ensnared and exploited by its complex system.[246]

Coupland's manipulation and placement of his plans within the overall layout of the newsletters anticipated the spatial and visual experiences of the final product. Printed arrangements that resulted in the distribution of speculative imagery where the restaurant's designs freely surpassed their budgetary and material constraints. Instead of

[246] Anthony Vidler, "Diagrams of Utopia," *The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationalist Architectures from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond*, eds. Catherine de Zegher and Mark Wigley (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002) 84.

bridging the divide between the virtual space of the printed page and the real space of the College, these documents called attention to the readership's position between these two worlds – a life shared between the play on paper and community unfolding within the College.

The edition of the *Daily* discussed above (fig. 1) was paired with a precise photomontage of the restaurant (fig. 4) in which a drafted plan is transferred onto a photograph of the actual space that it would come to occupy. Rendered in white, the overlaid design suggests the cool luminescence of the proposed metal and plastic armature. Readers could then consider the restaurant as they might approach it upon entry. (To do so the reader was obliged to reorient the newsletter by holding it in the landscape orientation despite the green title running across the shortest width.) The underlying photograph revealed Rochdale's delayed state of construction – electrical cables snake across the floor, walls and columns remain unfinished with exposed cinderblocks, various tools and materials are strewn about, a chalky dust covers the whole of the room. Amidst this are two figures, one standing in the centre of the room, presumably facing the street, and another seated further back on some low-lying debris. Each is wearing the requisite construction hats. Snapshots of the College's earliest months taken by resident photographer Tamio Wakayama were common features in the newsletters. At first glance this photograph could be assumed to be a convenient study of the space, the perspective and relative bareness of the setting suiting Coupland's needs. However, when the two figures are considered in relation to the overlaid plan it becomes apparent that this photograph was staged with the restaurant's arrangement of space in

mind. The two figures not only supply a sense of scale but also occupy the projected space of the restaurant. The standing figure is situated in an aisle, assuming the role of a server, while a booth is traced around the second seated figure. This pairing of the restaurant's ghostly apparition, semi-transparent and brilliant, with the rough unfinished interior of the College conjures the "futures of the recent past." Here the *Daily* is a horizon where the imminent potential of College is visited by its yet-to-arrive futurological apex.

In another edition of the *Daily* the reader is brought into even closer proximity to the coming design (fig. 5). Under a light blue title, set in the same enlarged typewriter typeface as the edition examined above, is a tangle of three plans and textual information. The page is framed by a technical illustration of a booth viewed from the side with the back of each bench marking the limits to the left and right edges. Steel tubing extends vertically up to the top edge of the page where it would be expected to connect the booth to the larger tubular system. Again drawn with great precision, this illustration reveals the bare simplicity of Coupland's design. His clever usage of industrial material as a means of bringing about spatial and optical effects was founded on an absolutely rudimentary and classic booth design.[247]

Perspectival play is established on the page through repetition and layering. A smaller version of the same plan, this time printed in black, sits in the centre of the page, its placement almost perfectly aligned with the larger booth. The difference in size and colour allow this smaller booth to appear set a distance from the larger sketch. The black

[247] Coupland, accompanied by Stan Bevington, conduced an exhaustive survey of Toronto area restaurants and their interior design, documenting and measuring classic booth designs. Stan Bevington, personal interview, 18 January 2010.

ink draws the smaller design into focus, foregrounding its simplicity, its graphic repetition approximating its easy material replication. In contrast the light blue lines become out-of-focus, as if the lighter hue in combination with the size of the illustration suggests an immediate proximity to the page's surface and the reader.

In this case Coupland's layout proposed the infinite continuation of his design; the graphic repetition resulting in a *mise en abyme*. In this instance the booth system's capacity for expansion is viewed from a single fixed point. It is as if the page of this *Daily* shares the view of Coupland's photographed subjects in the construction site, peering out of one booth and into another. While the booth printed in light blue frames the page and appears as the closer of the two it does not fully dominate the page. Nor is centrality entirely assumed by the smaller booth. Rather they are both overcome by a tumult of additional graphical (a floor plan) and textual elements (a materials list). This material resists much of the perspectival play between the two booth designs. It crowds the layout, interrupts the light blue lines, surrounds the smaller centred design, and agitates the remaining space. With this knot of graphic and textual data the page becomes something for the reader to peer through, approximating the distorting effects of the baffle. In turn the *Daily* becomes a pivot point where the *mise en abyme* not only deepens the printed expanse but also draws in the immediate environment of the reader. The layout stakes a claim on the space within which its projections will come to occupy and allows the reader to imagine the experience of sitting and dinning in a booth.

The textual data also serves to provide the details missing from the layout; additional information on building materials as well as absent atmospheric effects –

"There will be a candy concession," "Wurlitzer will be installing a juke-box...geography of the listening will have its vales, peaks," "Love-lights." The costs for labour were also enumerated, including Coupland's fee and another to artist Erik Gamble for some collage work to be applied to a selection of baffles. The total amounted to $7550, its inclusion demonstrative of the College's attempts of sustaining an open society rooted in fiscal and informational communality.[248] A working schedule set construction to commence the last week of October 1968 with an official opening in early November 1968.

The reverse side of the same *Daily* featured a bird's-eye view of the restaurant's booths (fig. 6), A view that could be imagined as a downward and penetrating vantage point from the College's highest floors. Hard black lines sketch out the complex arrangement of tubing, wire, and plastic extending vertically and horizontally throughout the printed expanse. The precision of this plan attests to Coupland's earlier training. A print of a small branch with three leaves appears in the centre of the cold lattice providing a hint of the organic. To the bottom of a page is a panel extracted from the "The Meanest Girl in Town," a morally assertive Christian comic that had been appropriated and embroiled in Coach House and Rochdale's weekly graphic and textual uproar.[249]

The tight lattice of booths is turned to the top left corner, and the perspective is further skewed as it seems to pivot on another axis to bring the highest bars all that much

[248] This communality also apparently applied, in one instance, to the restaurant's design. A *Daily* from early November 1968 advertised: "RESTAURANT BOOTH****Friday 730p.m....third floor ashram lounge: meeting for those who have ideas about table tops, seats and partitions for the RESTAURANT BOOTH / KEE KLAMP." As this communication appeared following the opening of *The Same* I would assume that this meeting was not instigated by Coupland and was organized in order to discuss aesthetic interventions upon his design. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

[249] "The Meanest Girl in Town" was published and syndicated by Gospel Publishing House in Springfield, Montana. The comic follows Opal a teenage girl who bullies her good Christian friends only to later follow their example of forgiveness and prayer.

closer to the surface of the page. There is a sense that these plans are rooted in nothing at all, that the only space they'll come to serve is that delimited by the *Daily* as it circulated throughout Rochdale. The printed page remained a non-space where the plans were deposited within. To this effect we can make comparisons with the early experiments of Russian Constructivist El Lissitzky. In the early 1920s Lissitzky developed a body of paintings known as *Prouns.* These abstract works arranged three-dimensional forms as a means of suggesting a potential architecture, while multiple and contradictory points of view drew them back into abstraction. As Victor Margolin writes, "Lissitzky felt that the *Prouns* could shape values about the built environment without literally depicting buildings as such."[250] Lissitzky's *Prouns* did not fully participate in Constructivism's revolutionary aesthetics. In their ambivalence they were "metaphors of organization" which provided room for individual and unexpected permutations in advance of a projected social universalism.[251]

Coupland's plan expands beyond the dimensions of the page as if he wished to prove its easy execution, modular nature, and potential for expansion. This sense of a structure in perpetual formation is confirmed in the top right corner of the page. Whereas at the other three limits of the page the lines continue on unabated, here they start to fade and disappear. The same staccato technique used throughout to illustrate taught wires beneath heavy transparent tabletops and behind baffles is now applied to the thick structural tubing. The effect is intriguing. Coupland's design seems to be vanishing as it

[250] Victor Margolin*, The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy: 1917-1949* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 34.

[251] Margolin further argues that *Proun* painting and their accompanying manifesto, "PROUN: Not World Visions, BUT—World Reality," can also be read as a means for Lissitsky to express concern about the place of his Jewish identity within the totalizing vision of the Revolution. Margolin 36.

proceeds along. Or perhaps the reverse is the case and this is the last empty corner of the page soon to be occupied by the expanding design. This overflowing plan also suggests that other editions of this same edition of *Daily* have already been occupied, which is true to the extent that each edition was published in the hundreds. The whole of this edition then could be lined up edge to edge, permitting the expansive momentum of each edition to be multiplied across a blanketing grid formation. Or so the document permits one to imagine. With its modular design on view from overhead this layout presented *The Same* as an immanent space for all of the College's residents.

Artist-Run Restaurants

While the restaurant at Rochdale was not specifically identified as an art project, Coupland's designs, both in their printed and executed form, and in combination with Wu's expansive menu, are indicative of a subversive play with the possibilities of the restaurant model – an ambiguous cultural pivot point, alternating between a private space, a social site and a business in performance. At this point I would like to suggest that *The Same* can be considered part of a larger phenomena of artist-run restaurants opening across Canada and the United States throughout the 1970s. Two of such projects were Food, which opened in New York in 1971, and Eye Scream Restaurant, which opened in Vancouver in 1977.

Advertised and operated as an artist-run restaurant Food was founded by dancer and photographer Caroline Goodden in collaboration with artist Gordon Matta-Clark.[252]

[252] Gooden was the principle investor in the project, early collaborators also included Tina Girouard, Rachel Lew and Suzy Harris. For the history of this project see Catherine Morris's excellent catalogue

The restaurant's design was conceived by Matta-Clark as an immersive stage that put the entire restaurant apparatus on show. Art historian Catherine Morris stresses that Food was an important and practical node for a community of artists working outside of and in opposition to the standing art system. Beyond the fact that it was staffed and administered by artists, it was "an artist generated political, economic, and artistic project."[253] The restaurant equally welcomed artistic interventions and hosted a rotating cast of guest chefs whose menus and performances melded the culinary with the conceptual. Accordingly, Food also encouraged Matta-Clark's own practice. In collaboration with photographer Robert Frank he chronicled the restaurant's operations on film. He also incorporated material from the renovation process into his own sculptural work. The Anarchitecture group, coordinated by Matta-Clark, held regular meetings at the restaurant. Food frequently advertised in *Avalanche*, an art publication closely linked to the restaurant's owners and constituency. The playful advertisements emphasized its status as a collective and transparent artist-run enterprise.[254]

Later on in the decade and elsewhere (in Vancouver), N.E. Thing Co. Ltd., artists Iain and Ingrid Baxter, otherwise referred to as N.E. Thing Co, or NETCO, opened their Eye Scream Restaurant.[255] Operating equally as a conceptual art project and company, NETCO's activities were governed by a new lexicon for the identification, classification, and evaluation of art. Bourgeois and academic measurements of cultural worth were

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FOOD: An exhibition by White Columns, New York (Münster: Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, 1999).

[253] Morris 21.

[254] Food frequently advertised in *Avalanche*, an arts publication closely linked to the restaurant's owners and constituency, reproductions of this advertisement and further documentation of the restaurant can be found in Catherine Morris's catalogue.

[255] *Vancouver Art and Artists, 1931–1983* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1983) 366.

supplanted by the singular rubric of "information." According to NETCO, all cultural activity was isolated as "sensitivity information," which was in turn broken down into specific categories, "visual sensitivity information" concerning objects of art. In the catalogue to the group's 1978 exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery chief curator Alvin Balkind notes that the Eye Scream Restaurant fell within the category of "experimental sensitivity information," a multidisciplinary space acting as, quoting NETCO, a vessel for "food information":[256]

> Opening 7 April 1977 the restaurant was conceived by the company as:
>
> "A forum for ideas (visual, aural, movement, & a celebration of the ordinary) It will be an N.E. Thing Co. vehicle for change, culture, quality frivolity, sensitivity information, anything."[257]

Designed by Iain Baxter, in collaboration with Allan Clarke, the restaurant subscribed to a retro-futurism similar to that of Coupland's design. The Vancouver restaurant featured metal streamlined panels, faceted mirrored walls, a chrome juke box and pecan pie as the house speciality. Meals were served on custom dishware, items which were considered "normal dishes [when] used in the restaurant" and "art items" when sold.[258]

Toronto also hosted a number of artist-run businesses throughout the 1970s. As previously mentioned artist-run centre A Space initially operated simultaneously as an exhibition space and a café.[259] The business was both practical and demonstrative. The café was a popular destination; open late, it hosted regular events and represented the

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[256] Alvin Balkind and N.E Thing Co, *Another 2 Projects* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1978). n. pag.
[257] Alvin Balkind and N.E Thing Co n. pag.
[258] Alvin Balkind and N.E Thing Co n. pag.
[259] Simply known as "The Café" the business was in operation between 1970 and 1972, opening at the initial St. Joseph Street space and then continuing on at the St. Nicholas Street space. Nemiroff, 208-209.

new organization's determination to foster and host their community. The promised revenue was important to the overall mission of the newly opened artist-run centre; it at once represented the self-sufficiency of the organization and its role in the local economy.[260] Although a successful venture the café component of A Space was eventually abandoned in order for the organization to focus on artistic programming.

In 1979 artists Susan Britton and Robin Wall co-founded the Cabana Room in the Spadina Hotel. Considered to be one of the Toronto art community's first social spaces the Cabana Room hosted video screenings, performances, and concerts.[261] Many regulars were equally implicated in artist-run organizations and bands. Video artist Colin Campbell dramatized these relations in his serialized video sitcom *Bad Girls* (1979). Each episode followed the misadventures of Robin, a suburbanite who desperately attempts to gain access to the Cabana Room and its scene. The series was screened episode by episode at the Cabana Room before the very same scene staring and exaggerated within the plot.

After the demise of *The Same* Coupland carried on with artist-run affairs. In the winter of 1969, in collaboration with Ron Terrill and Jorge Zontal, Coupland mounted *Betty's* at 78 Gerrard Street West. The old house had become the headquarters for General Idea. Coupland had come to know the collective through Michael Tims (soon

[260] Diana Nemiroff quotes from a 1971 report to the Ontario Arts Council: "Not only do we wish to find ways of overcoming the patron system as a means of gaining freedom of action, but more importantly it is a statement of our concern that art and artists must begin to find their way back into the economy and into a genuine relationship with our increasingly integrated society." Nemiroff 209. An advertisement placed in the premier issue of General Idea's *File* enumerated the café's dimensions (30 x 40 ft) at 85 St. Nicholas Street stating it was A Space's "major source of operational funds." *File* (15 April 1972) 4.

[261] Philip Monk, "Toot toot ... beep beep: Colin Campbell's Bad Girls An Allegory of Art Community," 3 June 2011 <http://www.colincampbellvideoartist.com/writings.php?id=23>. Monk also employed Campbell's *Bad Girls* as the figurehead to his exhibition *Picturing the Toronto Art Community: The Queen Street Years,* The Power Plant, Toronto, 1998.

to become AA Bronson) who he met while working at Coach House Press.[262] Moving in the fall of that year (Coupland was not a resident at this address) the group immediately took to arranging rotating window displays and opening faux-boutiques such as *The Belly Store* in December and *Betty's* to follow.

Coupland, Terrill, and Zontal's project displayed the stock from an abandoned post-war clothing store. Initially discovered by Coupland its entire contents were purchased for a nominal fee from the building's owner. Opening on New Year's Day 1970 the project was featured later that month in the *Globe and Mail*'s fashion column. Wherein Coupland reflected on the project, "Maybe it's our version of the straight world; a caricature of the straight world."[263]

Queering Rochdale

At Rochdale Coupland prepared a highly coordinated built environment. Its ironic design flirted with the functionalist and egalitarian objectives of the Brutalist towers while also setting itself in contrast to a persistent hippy status quo within. The restaurant performed, and encouraged the performance of, an exaggerated publicness, serving as a playful site of encounter and (distorted) observation. As a street level commercial space it served as an ambiguous port of passage between the building's interior and Toronto's larger urban environment. While many residents bemoaned the discord between the Brutalist concrete shell and their notion of a free and spontaneous community, Coupland's restaurant briefly held a curious dialogue with Tampõld and Wells's

[262] AA Bronson, personal interview, 4 August 2009. See the previous chapter for more information on General Idea's connection to Rochdale College.
[263] Joyce Carter, "Authentic Unreality," *Globe and Mail*, 22 January 1970.

building.[264]

As a Janus-faced retort *The Same* revelled in its own artifice. Dressing Rochdale up in futuristic drag its hippie customers were recast as anachronistic visitors, either as time-travellers from a coming hippiedom or present-day freaks who wandered into a future amenity. In accentuating and fabulating the overall futuristic look of the building it underscored the College's (and larger counterculture's) utopian trajectory. Through his design Coupland made acknowledged the futurity shared between the College's architecture and its inhabitants' own visionary projections, while executing a self-critical gesture which played upon the tensions between them. In a clever act of mimicry *The Same* adhered to the College's concrete walls like a steel parasite. And it was through this ambiguous role, where neither the interior of the College nor the exterior street received privileged attention, in combination with an interplay of sensorially stimulating materials and a witty engagement with the College's existing architecture, that I would like to argue that Coupland, himself a gay man, can be considered to have been queering Rochdale's architecture.

In *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire* Aaron Betsky argues that queer architecture is a form of counter-architecture. Queer strategies in architecture are identified as those which treat built space first as a scene, a site of theatrics and play and

[264] "According to sociologist and resident Kent Gooderham, the new tenant-owner 'hated the building...which he considered to be anti-human in every respect.' " Sharpe, 30; see also Resident Jack Jones comments in the *Daily* referenced above. Conversely, AA Bronson remembers a "sense of ownership" for the building that despite its prescriptive and insensitive design residents understood that the structure had been specifically built for them. Thoughts of "how to use it" overtook "wanting to change it." The question was, "How could we make use of this big thing?" AA Bronson, personal interview, 4 August 2009.

a vessel to the ephemeral and sensual.[265] Queer architecture is not so much a genre unto itself but a coordination of nuanced gestures within pre-established styles as a means to disrupt its framework. By accumulating de-stabilizing elements queer architecture coordinates a space that appears all together superficial to one observer and rich with meaning to another.[266] Self-reflexiveness and a sense of ambivalence are both qualifiers. Sensibilities of camp, guided by Susan Sontag's important essay, are essential – "the love of the exaggerated, the "off" of things-being-what-they-are-not ... alive to a double sense in which some things can be taken." [267]

Betsky's study is principally concerned with iterations of queer architecture within the modern era and he suggests that queer interpretations of space known to the twentieth-century can be situated in relation to the advent of the middle-class. Drawing on the early writing of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, he notes that the middle class emerged alongside technological advancement and a disconnection "from the production and reproduction of material reality." Value for the middle class, now disengaged from physical toil, became a product of artifice. This new class was concerned with the manipulation of intangible economies. Intermittent social spaces such as bars, restaurants or cafés, became important sites of class validation. Entering these spaces the new middle-class brought along a gamut of corrective protocols in health, family, and social composure.[268] Betsky argues that "queered modernism" actively resisted these sexual and social mores. In denying modernism's "fixed principles" and the middle-class's self-

[265] Aaron Betsky, *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1997) 26.
[266] Betsky 8-9.
[267] Sontag qtd. in Betsky 82
[268] Betsky 8-9.

policing, it welcomed and played with the demands of everyday life. Queered modernism pointed out contradictions and exclusions within these rational and supposedly universal arrangements of space, in order to coordinate a space that was both "much more comfortable" and a lot "stranger."[269]

While Betsky contributes a greater sensual and aesthetic complexity to the trajectory of modern and postmodern architecture, he does overlook some of the more radical experiments with which I have aligned Coupland's designs. Nonetheless the concept of "queered modernism" is appropriate to analyzing *The Same* and I would like to suggest that the means through which Coupland's design operated within Tampõld and Wells's strictures can be understood as a sort of queered futurism. In his article "Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment*,"* Christopher Reed proposes that queer space can also be understood as imminent space. Here 'imminent' is used in both its archaic sense, to overhang or to threaten, while also suggesting a readiness and foresight into the very near future. For Reed queer space is found in the process of taking place, an assertion over existing space.[270] Here we can think back to the drafted plans of *The Same* in the pages of the *Daily*, where the potential of the restaurant's modular design was suggested through its early occupation of the College's printed space.

As noted above Rochdale's concrete architecture was but a stylistic vestige to the utopian impulses of Brutalist planning theory. In the process of queering Rochdale Coupland's restaurant communed with the humane ethics embedded in the building's architectural genealogy. As a critical gesture Coupland's design refused direct

[269] Betsky 114.
[270] Christopher Reed, "Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment." *Art Journal* 55.4 (1996): 64-70.

confrontation with the contested architecture. Rather he insisted on a collaborative relation in order to foreground the potential flexibility hidden within the building's austerity. By drawing attention to this quality Coupland's design renewed the ethical project of Brutalism that Banham registers as the "idea that the relationship of the parts and materials of a building are a working morality."[271] In this sense Coupland's queered futurism was also an atavistic action. As a parasite *The Same* investigated, rather than combated, its host. Pairing itself up with the College *The Same* teased out regressive traits in Rochdale's architecture and reanimated the building's repressed radicalism.

While it is difficult, and perhaps unnecessary, to confirm that Coupland's design served to facilitate same-sex desire, it was certainly a site of sensual pleasure in tune with the psychic and social desires of Rochdale's constituencies. Plastic and metal membranes fractured, reflected, and animated the space and its occupants, providing a psychedelic optical experience generated by the whole system of the restaurant and shared by all parties plugged into their booths.[272] The chromed jukebox delivered an additional element of camp, at once confirming the average restaurant model while hinting that the arrangement might also be a stage for an elaborate historical regeneration. Slightly out of date, its luminous sheen and coloured lights spoke of a new conjunction between the once idealized and prosperous recent past and a glamourized future.

And what of Betsky's positioning of queer architecture within modern socio-economic conditions? If queer strategies emerged as a form of resistance to and within

[271] Banham, *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* 135.
[272] The total effect is described by Stan Bevington as "a hall of mirrors, a maze," he also notes that the metallized Mylar sheets (in silver, blue, and pink) were both reflective and transparent. Stan Bevington, personal interview, 18 January 2010.

the policing of private/public space in relation to the economic abstractions connected to the modern middle class, could Coupland's queer futurism then be considered a response to the contemporary conditions of a post-industrial economy? In his analysis of Andy Warhol's *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, Branden W. Joseph argues that an awareness of the sensorial and controlling effects of automation and electronic media was an important element in the conception of intermedia events. Warhol's immersive spaces were decidedly different than the popular rock spectacles pairing together live music performances with psychedelic light shows. While coeval with the spirit of the sixties Warhol's events refused to seek refuge within these dreams, rather, Joseph posits, *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* events acted as a point of junction between the audience and performers' sensual, social, and sexual drives and the "perceptual retraining" for a new era of capitalism. The result was an ambiguous experience where feelings of uprootedness and disorientation were optimal. While straying from the hippie ethos, these events did not forego a search for potential transformation. Passing on the hippy alternative as a point of cultural transcendence, the duality between counterculture and the status quo was rejected. Warhol's events instead explored the possibility of new subjectivies emerging within the overlap between culture and economy.[273]

Like Warhol's intermedia events or Betsky's modernist re-orientations, Coupland's restaurant was a self-reflexive space, its witty artifice and sensorial distortions bringing it playfully at odds with the limitations of both Rochdale's counterculture society and its assigned architecture. Camp and satire, as modes of critique

[273] Branden W. Joseph, "'My Mind Split Open': Andy Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable," *Summer of Love: Psychedelic Art, Social Crisis and Counterculture in the 1960s*, eds. Christopher Grunenberg and Jonathan Harris (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and Tate Liverpool, 2005) 239-259.

that revelled within and animated these contradictions, revealed an alternative to the bifurcated confrontation between straight culture and the counterculture. Sitting at the foot of Rochdale *The Same* was a surprise preamble to the uniform tower. It transposed the tense of the whole experiment. The immanent finality of Rochdale was no longer an issue if the entire building and its inhabitants were already visitors from the future to begin with.[274]

[274] My sci-fi reading of Coupland's contribution to Rochdale is not as far-fetched as it might seem. Aside from being one of Canada's key countercultural hubs Rochdale was also home to the largest collection of science fiction novels in the country. The "Spaced-Out Library" held roughly 10 000 titles and belonged to American author and resident Judith Merril, a generous figure who not only shared her literature but near all else with the College's population. Merril's involvement was ubiquitous – she sat on numerous councils, contributed to, managed, and conceptualized various periodic publications, acted as a conscientious mentor and advisor to numerous residents, and was the principle organizer of a celestial themed Summer Festival in 1969 (the same festival that saw the "temporary" closure of the restaurant) which was organized in celebration of the U.S. moon landing. See Sharpe 64.

Chapter 4: The Degrees

It is clear that Rochdale's role as a college was principally defined by its inversion of institutional conventions. The mass-production and sale of phony degrees exemplifies this fact. Sold within the building and via mail-order, these phony certificates were both saturnalia party favours and key components to a fund-raising scheme for the debt-ridden experiment. Their circulation – through advertisements, media coverage, and word of mouth – extended their satirical rhetoric far beyond Toronto. They lampooned the College's academic and institutional adversaries all the while attempting to alleviate the college from its financial difficulties.

By unpacking the rhetoric of the degrees and examining correspondence between the College and buyers, I consider how these documents delivered the College's educational and social principles while also highlighting the impasse of these utopian dreams. I ask what happened to this satirical rhetoric when its public reception extended beyond the scheme's intended scope? I answer this question by arguing that the public constituted by the degrees was not unified around a shared recognition of the satire at hand, nor was public participation in Rochdale's jest a manifest celebration of counterculture. To better examine the rhetorical and aesthetic nature of the degrees I refer to a body of art historical scholarship on the use of bureaucratic frameworks by artists of the neo-avant garde. The graphical and textual qualities of the degrees, while not specifically intended for circulation within any strata of the art world, can be viewed as similar to works and acts associated with Conceptual art and Fluxus to which they were aesthetically akin. Furthermore, I suggest that the potential of the degrees to address a

wide body of strangers sets these documents apart from similar artworks circulating within art subcultures of the time. Comparing the degree's rhetoric with that of the *Living and Learning* report provides additional context by drawing Rochdale's satire in parallel to policies in education then in development.

Rhetorical attitude

Between 1970 and 1975, anyone could purchase a degree from Rochdale College. A B.A. sold for twenty-five dollars, an M.A. for fifty dollars, and a Ph.D. for one hundred dollars. Rochdale also offered non-degrees following an inverted pricing scheme – a non-Ph.D. would set you back twenty-five dollars while a non-B.A. cost one hundred dollars. As with Rochdale's broader education program the degrees held no correspondence with the certificates of legitimate institutions and carried no value in connection to Rochdale's provincial charter.

The design was a collaboration between Coach House Press founder Stan Bevington and employees and residents Dick Steinman, Jerry Ofo and Nelson Adams (fig. 10). The complicated printing process to print the degrees guaranteed that they were "unforgeable."[275] At a material level these documents carried all the necessary marks of academia. Rochdale's name was set in an Old English styled font with a raised effect achieved through the application of Verkotype (a black powder which reacts to heat), the recipient's name and subject of study was lead typed, signatures of both the President and Chairman of the College endorsed the document, and for a final touch a gold foil label was impressed with the Rochdale College seal and applied to the bottom left corner. The

[275] Stan Bevington, personal interview, 18 January 2010.

content was framed by two blue borders: an outer border composed of a decorative pattern of hands whose index fingers extended to touch their neighbour's and an interior border featuring a single repeating graphic of a marijuana leaf. Two watermarks sat underneath the copy – a mirrored profile of Queen Elizabeth and the Latin phrase *Caveat Emptor,* which translates into "*Let the buyer beware.*"[276]

It is this legalese, obscured both in its language and its graphical arrangement, that speaks of the nature of the contract at hand: a reminder to the recipient, as well as future employers and educators, to be wary of the degree's farce and the lengths to which it may be taken.

While the degrees were supposed to function as elaborate donation receipts, the conditions of purchase were at times clearly articulated and at other times abandoned all together. In addition to the questionable legality of the degrees, these conditions also appeared across various application forms and advertisements. While the design was refined and completed by 1970,[277] the requisite application forms in both their design and rhetoric varied over a five-year period. Two separate versions of the forms featured a photograph by Rochdale resident Alex MacDonald of a flasher/graduate, fully exposed with three degrees hanging within his smock. One application form stated: "A Rochdale Degree, like the college experience itself, is whatever you make of it. People understand who they are better than any institution can." The text continued with, "People buy Rochdale degrees because they deserve them - who else could judge?"[278] The same form

[276] Rochdale College Degree, c.1975, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.
[277] Sharpe 170.
[278] Rochdale College Degree Application Form, c.1972, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of

noted that the majority of sales were to non-residents.[279]

Rather than stress the status of the degrees as novelty items, the text provided profiles of suitable applicants and uses for the satirical certificate. Among the accounts on the form is "Gary's" experience. A college drop-out who, after spending a year at Rochdale, left with a B.A. degree and found his way into graduate school in Oregon, soon securing a job as a teaching assistant. The application reports that "he did really well" and a final request is made to all applicants not to "use your degree to convince somebody that you can do something unless you can really do it."

The prose on the degrees itself is another matter. Outwardly formal it shares the same legal tenor of the caveat watermark. The slippery legalese at once accentuated the satire and quietly disclosed the conditions of its awarding. It stated that degrees were awarded "with all the rights, privileges and honours appertaining thereto, in consideration of the fulfilment of the prescribed contribution to higher learning as set forth in the official acts of the Council of the College."[280] What might first read as the recognition of the submission of a major written work to the college in fact delivers the very truth behind the farce. The contribution is nothing but the monetary one paid for the degree.

At Rochdale, play with official documentation was not limited to the degrees. Take for example the Rochdollar, an internal currency, also developed in collaboration with Coach House Press. Like the degrees these phony bills were also simultaneously

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Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.

[279] "Some people have lived with us in downtown Toronto for years while learning the things life taught them before they purchased their degrees. Most people just send the appropriate amount of money back with this application." Rochdale College Degree Application Form, c.1972, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.

[280] Rochdale College Degree, c.1975, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.

novelty items and serious countercultural assets. The concept behind the bills was drawn from Stan Bevington's own experience with social credit during his youth in Alberta and served as a humourous means to further remove Rochdale's growing black market from the attention of the authorities.[281] Coach House Press's rapidly advancing technological capacity and fanatic eagerness to produce highly detailed and complex imagery resulted in the production of a convincing banknote for the College. The design was based on the Canadian one-dollar banknote with a few important adjustments. At the time, the official bill featured a prairie vista with a grain elevator in the distance; a subtle change was made whereby a minute Rochdale building appeared on the horizon.[282] At some point there was serious concern of real counterfeit bills circulating within the College. A warning to residents penned by Rudy Hierck, of Rochdale Security, read:

> Residents Beware. There are a lot of phony American $10 bills floating around. They are quite easily identified due to poor quality – 1) They are faded badly on backs; 2) Georges lip looks like Al Hirts's trumpet lip; 3) The numbers generally fall in a pattern on the bills; 4) The paper is to thin. If you have any or someone tries to give you some – bring them or it to security.[283]

A mischievously manipulated court summons appeared in the 18 March 1969 edition of the *Daily*.[284] The original document concerned charges laid on all performers in Theatre Passe Muraille's production of *Futz* for appearing "in an obscene performance in a theatre." The reprinted version was modified so that the recipient was collectively named as "Futz." A note below the Justice of the Peace's ratifying signature read: "When

[281] Bevington's grandfather was a proponent of the province of Alberta's adoption of social credit to the benefit of the United Farmers' Union. Stan Bevington, personal interview, 18 January 2010.
[282] Stan Bevington, personal interview, 18 January 2010.
[283] Security announcement concerning counterfeit bills, no date. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 2.
[284] *Daily,* 18 March 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.

it comes to theatre, Toronto can be a disgusting city."[285]

Academic publishing was also considered as a readily available medium of infiltration and extortion. *The Rochdale Journal of Arts and Peripheral Sciences* was proposed as a means to coerce "straight universities" to pay a one hundred dollar fee for a seemingly relevant academic publication. To abate any suspicions the content was to be wrapped in a glossy cover.[286] Examples such as these are further evidence that the reception, negotiation, and digestion of outside and official documents were regular aspects of the Rochdale experience.

Stranger Sociability

The Rochdale material held at University of Toronto's Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library houses a number of degrees that never left the College. The principal reason for these landlocked artefacts was non-payment.[287] This material is paired with a considerable amount of correspondence, notably a series of letters between twenty-six year-old Dennis J. Neiditch of Los Angeles, California and Rochdale's registrar Nickie Ashely.[288] In his first letter, dated March 1973, Neiditch recounted his situation – he was unemployed and without a college degree in a job market that increasing demanded

[285] *Daily,* 18 March 1969. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 9.
[286] Anonymous proposal, no date. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 2. General Idea employed the same strategy with their "megazine" FILE. Contents were printed on cheap newsprint and enrobed in a higher quality glossy cover in order to appear as a mainstream publication. Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine also adopted this approach. AA Bronson interviewed by Olivier Zahm and Dash Snow, *Purple Magazine* 11 2009, 28 July 2011 <http://aabronson.com/art/purple/interview.html>.
[287] As if to suggest that a belated payment might still be accepted these retained degrees are presently filed as "Degrees on Hold" at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.
[288] Correspondence with Dennis Neiditch, c. 1973, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.

certification. He had some college education. While not working he had been volunteering at a local free clinic, and based on this experience Neiditch requested both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in psychology. The total cost of this request was seventy-five dollars, though Neiditch was under the impression that a degree from Rochdale cost just ten dollars, information gathered from a friend who had apparently lived at the College. The letter included a small contribution to this fee, twelve dollars and fifteen cents, with promise that he would send the full payment after securing employment with the degree. Neiditch noted that he had deciphered the Latin inscription on the degree and concluded his letter in stating: "I don't feel any guilt over having an 'unaccredited' degree. Just the loneliness of walking in and out of doors without them."[289]

Ashely's reply reiterated that the degree was but an unofficial conversation piece and, while Rochdale had no control over how their recipients made use of their degrees, she reminded Neiditch that abuse of the degrees often made its way back to Rochdale and burdened its administration. "If you are really so hot to avail yourself of gainful, meaningful employment and all the other benefits of capitalism" wrote Ashely, "why not get a real degree? I doubt that you will after much privation in the process." Neiditch's money was returned to him and no degrees were issued in his name. [290]

Neiditch's correspondence made mention of an advertisement for Rochdale seen in *Playboy* magazine. Rochdale had not solicited any advertising space with *Playboy*

[289] Correspondence with Dennis Neiditch, c. 1973, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.
[290] Correspondence with Dennis Neiditch, c. 1973, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.

although a short description of the College and its mail-order degrees had appeared under the header "Superliberal Education" in the February 1973 issue of the magazine (fig. 11).[291] Describing Rochdale as "an experiment in communal living that at times seems crazier than a Marx Brothers movie shown in reverse," the short text reiterated the cost of a Ph.D. and Rochdale's address was provided at the end for any interested parties. This was accompanied by a stock illustration featuring a schoolmaster perched at his desk engrossed in his writing, while four school children played freely around him. Ashley suspected that the men's magazine had most likely seen another advertisement for the degrees printed elsewhere. One such advertisement appeared in the pages of *Rolling Stone* in June 1972 (fig. 12).[292]

Featuring an image of a dog inspecting a fire hydrant the *Rolling Stone* advertisement ran under the headline "Looking for a college degree?" The cost for the degrees was referred to as "tuition" and their conditions limited to a skill-testing question. No mention is made of the non-degree option. At the time the advertising space Rochdale occupied in *Rolling Stone* was also being sold to other alternative schools and programs across the United States. Much of what these advertisements broadcast was in line with Rochdale's own ideals.

Ohio's Antioch College, San Francisco's Athenian Urban Centre, and the New College of California, amongst others, all placed ads of the same size and in the same section of *Rolling Stone* that year. They promised a school that "responds to the needs of the communities that surround them and not just to their own needs;" an institution that

[291] *Playboy,* February 1973.
[292] Advertisement, *Rolling Stone* 8 June 1972: 69.

permitted students to "plan your own studies, work at your own pace, find your own place to live, run your own school;" announced that "this might be school – but school was never like this!"; and advertised a school that was "conveniently located inside your head."[293] The rhetoric of these institutions spoke to the public with promises of self-directed education and exciting co-operative living opportunities. Conversely, Rochdale's ad featured a minimal amount of text, offering no insight into the exciting experiment behind the satire. The advertisement closed with a reminder that a Ph.D. for hundred dollars would be processed with "no questions" asked. With this advertisement, Rochdale had forsaken the opportunity to show itself as a genuine experiment in pedagogy and member of the growing network of alternative institutions across North America.

In 1974 registrar Mike Randell composed a letter on behalf of a recent applicant. It read:

> To Whom it May Concern, This is to certify that Mr. Charles A. Roy has completed the requirements of the Governing Council of the College for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) with study in the fields of Education and Linguistics.[294]

The letter was sealed with the same emblem found on the degree's foil sticker. It was provided for Roy before Randell had even received the twenty-five dollar payment for his Bachelor's Degree. Randell's letter, unlike the degrees, had no satirical fail-safes in its rhetoric. There were no telltale graphics or even subtle legalese in its composition.

That same year twenty-four-year old Peter Henry William Willis wrote from

[293] Copy from advertisements for Antioch College *Rolling Stone* 22 June 1972: 61; New College of California, *Rolling Stone* 11 May 1972: 63; and Athenian Urban Centre *Rolling Stone* 25 May 1972: 73.
[294] Letter of confirmation signed Mike Randell, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.

England to Rochdale.[295] His application included twelve pounds sterling along with a personal request to the registrar. Willis inquired whether the registrar, upon posting his degree, could "write a sweet note" to his parents in Toronto to inform them that their son had indeed passed all his classes at Rochdale College and received his degree in the Sociology of Literature.

In the spring of 1975, administrator Bill King wrote to two publishers in New York City inquiring about advertising rates and circulation data. One of his letters was addressed to the National Periodical Publications Inc, better known as DC Comics, and the other to the Marvel Comics Group.[296] At this moment Rochdale was near the end; two months after the posting of these letters, the building was taken over by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the crown corporation that had enabled the building to be constructed in 1968.[297] It is doubtful that any transaction occurred between Rochdale and the two companies at this point. The popular comic books of the time, with their wide readership, might have been the most suitable forums yet for the continued circulation of Rochdale's satirical rhetoric.

Counterpublics

I would like to suggest that Rochdale's degrees constituted what American literary critic and social theorist Michael Warner would label a "counterpublic." Warner understands that "a public is a relation among strangers" which "comes into relation to

[295] Letter and applications form from Peter Willis, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.
[296] Letters to National Periodical Publications and Marvel Comics, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 2.
[297] Sharpe 271

texts and their circulation."[298] A counterpublic is not simply guaranteed because countercultural strategies are present in aesthetic and rhetorical composition. Rather Rochdale's degrees constituted a counterpublic because their wide circulation ensured replies from a body of strangers in excess of Rochdale's rhetorical address. As Warner observes: "Counterpublics are 'counter' to the extent that they try to supply different ways of imagining stranger sociability and its reflexivity; as publics, they remain oriented to stranger circulation in a way that is not just strategic but constitutive of membership and its affects."[299]

There were those who simply indulged in the degrees as a souvenir items, as artefacts of Rochdale's monumental countercultural position and evidence of their own relationship to the experiment. These are the representative figures: the principal and intended recipients as implied by the degree's rhetoric. Yet, for every degree awarded for in Failure, Mindfucking, or Paleolithic Technocracy, there were also degrees issued in the Sociology of Literature, Education and Linguistics, or Psychology. The arrival of a counterpublic brings the question, "How can the existence of a public depend, from one point of view, on the rhetorical address and, from another point of view, on the real context of reception?"[300] The wide circulation of Rochdale's rhetoric brought another body to the fore. These were non-typical members, strangers, such as Neiditch, who were dreaming of escape from the trappings of counterculture, who recognized and deciphered Rochdale's satirical address and diverted this back into the world.

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[298] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* 74, 66.
[299] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* 121.
[300] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* 67.

Ironic Counterfeits

The question remains as to how Rochdale's degrees might be situated within an art historical analysis. My alignment of the degrees with the critical strategies of Conceptualism and Fluxus is at once institutionally and methodologically ratified by their inclusion in the recent exhibition *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980*.[301] The documents' dates of production, between 1969 and 1975, place them comfortably within this exhibition's historical scope. Within the exhibition, the degrees provide additional context to the understanding of Toronto's cultural climate while suggesting an affinity between young artists and Rochdale. Rochdale College and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design are the only educational institutions to figure prominently in the exhibition. The importance of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design is paramount as the perennial keystone of Conceptualism in Canada with its international faculty, historic symposia, lithography workshop, and ambitious publishing house.[302] Rochdale's presence in the exhibition, which is nominal compared to the section committed to the Halifax school, does suggest that artists at the time were actively seeking alternatives to established art schools.

Performing authority through slippery legalese and bureaucratic formalities, the degrees in this context call to mind similar documents produced by artists included in the exhibition. For example, the particularly Anglo-Canadian confluence of Conceptualism

[301] This circulating exhibition was initially presented at the University of Toronto Art Galleries (Justina M. Barnicke Gallery and University of Toronto Art Centre, Blackwood Gallery, and Doris McCarthy Gallery) from September 11 to November 28, 2010. It was curated by Grant Arnold, Catherine Crowston, Barbara Fischer, Michèle Thériault with Vincent Bonin, and Jayne Wark. The component of the exhibition on Rochdale College was coordinated by Sunny Kerr.

[302] Jayne Wark signs the NSCAD and Maritime section of this exhibition.

and Fluxus often associated with the work of collectives General Idea and NETCO.[303]

Through rhetorical and graphic play, these artists reinforced the stature of their enterprising identities by producing documents hinged on judgements of certification. Consider General Idea's 1972 work *Gold Diggers of '84.* An ornate certificate delivered by post, under unsolicited pretence, to a select group of recipients – primarily collectors, galleries, and museums. The certificate served to inform its new owner that they (and their art collection) were now in custody of a work by the puckish collective. NETCO developed quasi-bureaucratic protocols and forms for the classification and organization of situations, things, and works of art. This information in turn was divided into two categories – ART (Aesthetically Rejected Things) or ACT (Aesthetically Claimed Things) – each with their own corresponding form.[304] The historical and aesthetic positioning of the degrees within this exhibition, and in correspondence with artists, confirms that these documents may be examined via scholarship on the neo-avant garde of the 1960s. Studies on the production and distribution of artists' multiples, the incorporation of legal formalities within Conceptualism, and Fluxus artists' infiltration of economic and social systems influence my analysis.

Reflection on the problems of multiples provides a useful critical framework for

[303] This is not to ignore the impact of Fluxus or Conceptual art in Québec. For more on Fluxus and performance in Quebec see: *Art Action, 1958-1998*, Richard Martel, ed (Quebec: Éditions Intervention, 2001). In their contribution to the exhibition *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980* Michèle Thériault and Vincent Bonin posit that conceptual practices were adopted in a different fashion in Quebec. With English as Conceptualism's lingua franca artists of English-speaking backgrounds, Canadian citizens or American expatriates, readily adopted or mirrored the established protocols of Conceptualism. On the other hand, Québécois artists did not fully adopt the schism between traditional arts and new dematerialized practices. Since the publication of Les Automatistes' manifesto *Réfus Global* in 1948 painting, as well as sculpture and dance, were implicitly connected to radical socio-cultural change in the province

[304] The satirical forms and surveys of British-born Calgary-based Paul Woodrow, who also collaborated with NETCO, is another examples of this tendency in Canadian art.

the examination the degrees. Artists' multiples can be difficult to categorize. As a commercial product, a multiple can represent a conscious evasion of the art market through the dispatch of affordable and accessible artists' products. Their reproduction and distribution implies broad access to artworks that are "serial without narrative."[305] Notions of individual authorship are complicated with the arrival of new relations between artist and publisher, artist and technician, artist and distributor. A multiple equally condenses and foregrounds market operations by enforcing scarcity through limited editions and authentication through signature and certification.

Art historian and librarian Stephen Bury identifies an important difference between artists' multiples and art commodities produced for a commercial market. For Bury, a multiple is identified as a serially produced and sold artwork that proffers self-reflexivity of its own status as a commodity. Each multiple delivers an extended "jest" which plays throughout the ceremony of purchase and encourages buyers to examine their own status as consumers.[306] With reference to a few notable studies in art history and literature, Bury further suggests that the proliferation of artists' multiples following the Second World War was demonstrative of artists confrontation with an increasingly abstract economic system.[307]

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[305] Karen L. Kleinfelder, "Welcome to the Hyperreal," in *The Great American Pop Art Store: Multiples of the Sixties* (Long Beach, California: University Art Museum, California State University, 1997) 96-97.

[306] Stephen Bury, *Artists' Multiples 1935-2000* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2001) 6-9.

[307] "[Jean-Joseph] Goux has argued that the departure from the gold standard in favour of paper and of credit, destabilized the world of literature, using [André] Gide's *Counterfeiters* as one of his examples. [Rosalind] Krauss has extended this theory into the artworld, seeing the abstraction and surface of the early cubist works of Picasso and Braque as an equivalent. The multiple might be a better example; its separation from and proximity to the real world give it a symbolic, abstract value. It is negotiable, saleable and widely distributable." Bury 23. See also George Baker's *The Artwork Caught by the Tail: Francis Picabia and Dada in Paris* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007) wherein Goux's psycho-economic theories are applied in analysis of Dada artists' acknowledgment, play, and subversion of the economy

Conceptualism grew from an increased awareness of the forces and relationships that govern artistic judgement and value. Artists turned their attention to these factors and began to employ these previously hidden mechanisms as a means to foreground the conceptual impetus of their work. These strategies presaged institutional critique where this epistemological inquiry into the nature of art was then turned back onto its supportive frameworks, further exposing the political conditions and inequalities of the larger art system.

In his oft-cited essay on the genealogy of Conceptual art, Benjamin Buchloh categorizes the deployment and mimesis of legalistic and administrative styles by artists as the "aesthetics of administration."[308] With artistic validation hinged on speech acts and the authority of a third party, such as a lawyer, taste as a measure of artistic judgement was replaced by "a discourse of power."[309] In Buchloh's analysis, this adoption of the "vernacular of administration" leads to paradoxical ends where the artist's critical intention is troubled by the proximity to and simulation of capitalist systems within the artwork.[310] As a reaction to the utopian attitudes of the sixties (manifest socially in the counterculture and artistically with the tenacity of modernism) works utilizing bureaucratic formats followed a pragmatic rational designed to extinguish "the last residues of artistic aspiration toward transcendence."[311] Reading this within a Canadian

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of art. Baker argues that "Dada's confrontation was not just of art with the commodity. Dada entailed a challenge close to Marx's concerns in *Capital*, a confrontation of art with *money* – the principle of the circulation of commodities and their abstract equivalency." Baker 117.

[308] Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to Institutional Critique" in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimpson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999) 514-536.

[309] Buchloh, *Conceptual Art* 519.

[310] Buchloh, *Conceptual Art* 532.

[311] Buchloh, *Conceptual Art* 532.

context, curator and art historian Vincent Bonin has argued for an exception. Bonin notes that Buchloh's conviction that artists' adoption of administrative and legal protocols was evidence of concessions to the demands of capitalism disregarded the role that these same strategies might have played in a milieu without a strong commercial art market, for example, in Canada where they were integrated into the establishment of new artist-run organizations and services.[312]

In his book *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, Alexander Alberro expands upon Buchloh's essay by situating the formal features of Conceptual art within the economic context of the late 1960s and early 1970s.[313] The coeval arrival of the managerial class and Conceptualism is considered against a new economic era grounded in processes of information exchange where creative (and critical) strategies of art and business began to commingle.[314] Conceptualism is seen as a point of junction between new modes of labour, value production, and cultural critique. New curriculums in art were another important factor to the arrival of a new class of market-minded and highly educated artists.[315] Alberro also re-instils the era's utopianism, arguing that Buchloh impulsively dismissed the important role of activism and radical politics within

[312] This is a tangential argument on Bonin's part where he briefly places Buchloh's essay in dialogue with Clive Robertson's *Policy Matters: Administration of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2006). Bonin 27.

[313] Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

[314] For a brief survey on the "professionalization" of artists and the intersections between art and business in the post-industrial era see Julia Bryan-Wilson's chapter "From Artists to Art Workers" in *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2009): 13-40, in particular pages 36-39. For a specific example see Adam Lauder's excellent analysis of NETCO's conceptual enterprise, its organizational structure and correlation with the thoughts of Marshall McLuhan, amongst others, on the emergent service- and knowledge-based economy, "IAIN BAXTER&: The Artist as Drop-in," *The Journal of Canadian Art History* 31.2 (2010) 40-75.

[315] Alberro 2

Conceptualism.[316]

Alberro's study is refracted through the work of one of Conceptualism's key impresarios, Seth Siegelaub. Siegelaub's engagement with Conceptual art – as a curator, art dealer, publisher, and entrepreneur – is presented as the sum of its complexities. Of interest here is his faith in the use of printed matter and mass communication networks as a means to deliver and experience conceptual works. One example is an advertisement published in *Artforum* for a 1968 exhibition of work by Douglas Huebler and organized by Siegelaub.[317] In addition to providing the necessary details for the exhibition, the advertisement also indicated the specific issue of *Artforum* it appeared in, described its own dimensions and placement upon the page, and made claim to stand-in as "one form of documentation" of the exhibition. As an equivocal jest the advertisement at once "celebrated its insertion into the heterogeneous fabric of publicity, display, and information" and ridiculed the attempts of the surrounding advertisements to stand alone. Considering this Alberro asks, "To what extent can artistic practices parallel (and even appropriate) advertising strategies without fully becoming advertisements themselves?"[318]

Under the rubric "Escape Attempts" Lucy Lippard re-examines the ideas and tendencies of Conceptual art surveyed in her important book *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*.[319] She is clear on the shortcomings of Conceptual art's inhabitation of informational circuits, exposing the

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[316] Such as the Art Workers Coalition. Alberro 172n11. See note 314.
[317] Alberro 131.
[318] Alberro 131-132
[319] Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972...* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) vii-xxii.

period's silent litany: "Communication (but not community) and distribution (but not accessibility)."[320] While Conceptual artists might have circumvented the limitations and conventions imposed by the museum and gallery systems, their gestures and products only "pointed toward democratic outreach." Political and social content was rare, proving that "neither economic nor esthetic ties to the art world were severed." Much output was the result of a persistent techno-fetishism where "Communication between people was subordinate to communication about communication."[321]

When considered against these critical studies it is clear that Rochdale's degrees shared some characteristics with Conceptualism's administrative turn. Alberro's analysis of the Seigelaub/Huebler advertisement can easily be applied to Rochdale's advertisements. Like the Seigelaub/Huebler ad, the "Looking for a college degree?" ad demonstrated a keen self-awareness of its printed context. Alone it read as a blunt lampoon of the commodification of education. When re-situated in its original context the target of Rochdale's satire shifts. The criticism directed at the 'straight' education system now also targets neighbouring publicity for a range of sympathetic counterinstitutions and re-calibrated schools. At the same time that an outward criticism was directed at an elite adversary, so an inward criticism aimed to nullify all other alternatives.

The capacity of the degrees to assemble unexpected publics and virtual members for the College differentiates this project from Conceptualism's administrative turn, in contrast with the rhetorical address of many conceptual documents, which rarely left the constraints of a few art subcultures. As indicated in my examination of the

[320] Lippard xvi.
[321] Lippard xvi-xvii.

correspondence between buyers and the College, Rochdale's ludic system of accreditation was not free of elitism, nor was this elitism blind to profit. As Buchloh points out, mimesis of power and authority can infect a project with what it aims to resist.[322] The potential for misuse required those responsible for the sale of the phony degrees to police access to them. Assuring that the documents remained, by and large, an elite novelty of cultural critique.

This is not to suggest that Rochdale's project was a failure. Rather it is this ambiguity arising out of satire that remains the most potent quality of the degrees. As Jennifer Bajorek has noted irony is always Janus-faced, offering evidence of "a copresence or mutual interference of two voices, two meanings, or two events, standing in an infinitely reversible relationship."[323] Just as Bury asserts that humour assures the radical status of a multiple by opening up a productive distance between the art object and the market, so Bajorek reads irony as a means to destabilize fixed conventions. In this light, Rochdale's satire can be read not as an attempt to deliver an annihilating critique of higher education, but to grapple with its own role as a countercultural document in dialogue with its supposed adversary. It is this possibility of participation, for feedback between sender and receiver, which draws the documents away from the ethos of Conceptualism and closer to those of Fluxus.[324]

In her recent article on Fluxus artists' products art historian Julia Robinson

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[322] Buchloh, *Conceptual Art* 532.
[323] Jennifer Bajorek, *Counterfeit Capital: Poetic Labor and Revolutionary Irony* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) 4.
[324] For interpretations the influence of the idea of 'feedback' (as drawn from cybernetic theory) in the American neo-avant garde see: Benedict Seymour, "Short Circuits: Finance, Feedback and Culture," Mute, 20 July 2011 <http://www.metamute.org/en/articles/short_circuits_finance_feedback_and_culture >.

proposed the category "anti-commodities" as a starting point of analysis.[325] For Robinson the production and release of anti-commodities by Fluxus artists, in particular those designed and sold by the group's unofficial impresario George Maciunas, was an act of "productive intervention." She argues that their mimetic design simultaneously confronted the commodification of art and a capitalist occupation of cultural space.[326] In an earlier essay, Buchloh makes a similar argument in consideration of the work of Robert Watts, arguing that Fluxus commodities extended and elaborated pop art's contention with consumer culture.[327] Whereas pop art initially sanctioned the representation of commodities within pre-established disciplines of art, Fluxus set to work within "the residual forms of public services and systems" of an increasingly commodified social realm.[328] Existing and accessible services, such as the postal system, were employed by artists as "spaces and communicative circuits" for "noncommercial forms of social exchange" operating "outside of a rigorously controlled commercial culture."[329]

Fluxus artists Robert Filliou and George Brecht saw these alternative circuits for art as constitutive of what they dubbed the Eternal Network. Filliou was an influential figure within the alternative art community in Canada, which he referred to as Canadada,

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[325] Julia Robinson, "Maciunas as Producer: Performative Design in the Art of the 1960s" *Grey Room,* 33: 57-79.

[326] Robinson 75.

[327] Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Robert Watts: Animated Objects – Inanimate Subjects," in *Experiments in the Everyday: Allan Kaprow and Robert Watts: Events, Objects, Documents*, Benjamin H.D Buchloh and Judith F. Rodenbeck, eds (New York: Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, 1999): 7-26. Watts's oeuvre is particularly close to the Rochdale-related documents referenced here, notably his efforts to patent the word "pop" and his postage stamp and dollar bill designs.

[328] Buchloh, "Robert Watts: Animated Objects – Inanimate Subjects" 11. Fluxus artists sought to contend with "the seemingly unalterable and increasingly invasive conditions of consumer culture." 17. On the topic of Pop Art multiples see the exhibition catalogue *The Great American Pop Art Store: Multiples of the Sixties (*Long Beach, California: University Art Museum, California State University, 1997).

[329] Buchloh, "Robert Watts: Animated Objects – Inanimate Subjects" 17.

and visited periodically through out the 1970s. For Filliou the Eternal Network, a decentralized network of artists in constant correspondence, was a means of participating in a "poetical economy" where value might be measured by sentimental effect.[330]

With Fluxus commodities, a negotiation took place wherein community was imagined as a process of consumption. Buchloh notes that Fluxus products were not simply mimetic items or commercial decoys cast afloat in economic systems but rather important points of interrelation: the economy of art as a means to convene. The "ludic practice" of Fluxus playfully asked for a reconsideration of the relationships shared between all subjects and objects involved in the exchange, foregrounding the "centrality" of commodities "in the structuring of all human relationships."[331]

As Lippard has noted, the circulation of Conceptual and Fluxus products remained confined to art subcultures and rarely completed the democratic outreach that their form suggested.[332] Consideration of Rochdale's degrees is an opportunity to study the effect of a document similar to those produced under the auspices of Conceptual art and Fluxus, but one that exceeded the limits of the art subcultures in question. The wide and unrestrained circulation of Rochdale's rhetoric, as demonstrated by Playboy's recirculation of this information, was, to use Robinson's words, a "productive intervention" which introduced the College's to its own counterpublic. Retrospective analysis of the problems and contradictions which arose from relations with this

[330] See Sharla Sava "The Filliou Tapes – From Political to Poetical Economy (caught in the word storm of May)" in *Robert Filliou: From Political to Poetical Economy* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 1995) 16-48. For more on correspondence between Fluxus and Canadian artists see the *Under the Influence of Fluxus* (Winnipeg: Plug In Inc, 1991).
[331] Buchloh, "Robert Watts: Animated Objects – Inanimate Subjects" 22.
[332] Lippard xvi.

counterpublic lends greater complexity to an understanding of the intentions and effects of the degree's satire.

Between Parody and Policy

According to Bajorek, the inherent contradictions of irony, which can at times mistaken as evidence of cynicism or nihilism, are in fact important components of a utopian and revolutionary rhetorical device.[333] Concentrating on the prose of French poet and critic Charles Baudelaire, her argument, which is materialist at the core, is built around critic and theorist Paul de Man's writing on allegory. De Man states that allegory is necessarily temporal and historical:

> if there is to be allegory, that the allegorical sign refer to another sign that precedes it. The meaning constituted by the allegorical sign can then consist only in the repetition .... of a previous sign with which it can never coincide, since it is of the essence of this previous sign to be pure anteriority.[334]

Bajorek's point of elaboration is that irony breaks this historical impasse. While allegory is temporally rooted by a fixed referent – the preceding "pure anteriority" – irony troubles this chronological relationship between sign and referent. Thus irony becomes a means to disrupt history, where the ridicule of the sign puts into question the legitimacy of its past referent. Through irony it "becomes possible to speak of the production of an *other* history."[335]

Rochdale's degrees did not simply point out the bankruptcy of the existing

[333] Bajorek 13-41.
[334] Paul De Man, *Blindness and Insight* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) 2007. Qtd in Bajorek 23.
[335] Bajorek 24.

education system, to tell an allegorical story of how the present resistance to it had come about, but rather teased this system into correspondence with its alternative as manifest through satire. In this referential knot, as Bajorek writes, "each of two voices or of two meanings negates the other while at the same time referring to this other as its own historical condition, such that there ensures a kind of generalized referential disorder."[336] This is the same anachronistic effect that Ken Coupland's restaurant design evoked; utopian not because it brought a new future into vision, but because it promised communion with, and transformation of the past, and in turn an immediate modulation of the present.[337]

While the degrees travelled far and wide,[338] they emerged from a political context and a specific locale highly supportive of educational reform.[339] At the same time that Rochdale was negotiating with, and servicing, a counterpublic savvy to the bankruptcy of expertise, a major public discussion was underway regarding broad changes to education in Ontario. These discussions centred on the provincial report, *Living and Learning*.[340] Published just as construction of Rochdale's building commenced, the report compiled three years of research examining the state of primary and elementary education in

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[336] Bajorek 24.

[337] This conclusion is read through the prevailing positive ideologies at the core of the Rochdale experiment and the hippie counterculture. Parody can equally be read as nihilistic, as George Baker notes in his study of Francis Picabia: "Picabia's lifelong dedication to the copy, his initiation of an aesthetic system of perpetual parodic acts, embraces the mimetic copy only in its absolute bankruptcy – a bankruptcy in the face of the unrepresentable nature of the token sign, but also, one realizes, a bankruptcy on which the token sign will be founded." Baker 129.

[338] Sales from the first week amounted to $ 6000. Sharpe 170. The exact number of degrees printed and sold is unavailable, correspondence held at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library between the College's various registrars and Coach House Press provides a sound record of their production. Orders were received from Canada, the United States, England, Ghana, and, what was then known as, the Republic of Rhodesia. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-10 00013 Box 8.

[339] Half of Ontario's budget at the time was committed to education. Kasinsky 180.

[340] See my chapter on art education in Canada for more information and analysis of this report.

Ontario. Its proposals included: greater student autonomy through customized curricula; adjustments to administrative hierarchies; the improved and equalization of student-teacher relations; an abandonment of lock-step examination and grading systems; the introduction of new architectural models for schools; the establishment of experimental schools; and ultimately the removal of the concept of failure from the schooling process.[341] Considering the stakes of an "ungraded" school, the report warned that, "Isolated organizational gimmicks should not be embraced for the sake of novelty. Too often such words as 'ungraded' have been treated as magic formulae to solve all the problems of education."[342]

When examined against the aims and recommendations of *Living and Learning*, the emancipation promised by Rochdale's satiric degrees is compromised. How does this countercultural jest unfold in face of a comprehensive governmental report with similar yet serious aims? Might these degrees be read as satirical evidence of a larger cultural shift in the wake of deindustrialization, as testimony to their own conditions of production? When placed in dialogue with the report, Rochdale's degrees no longer appear to be in conflict with a staid and out-of-date educational system. The temporal distance of its irony has been foreshortened so it no longer aims to undermine the established education system of training and expertise. Rather it addresses a new state of educational policy, at that very moment in formation, which also advocated for the adoption of education founded on flexibility and choice. Thus the irony of the degrees' mimesis is near symmetrical, negotiating the differences between the counterculture and

[341] *Living and Learning* 179-203.
[342] *Living and Learning* 62.

the status quo as well as their increased proximity and similarity.[343]

Conclusion

Rochdale's degrees assembled counterpublics that interacted with the College through a form of participatory criticism. At times the satire bowed under the stress of the College's financial responsibilities and a persistently homogenous perception of counterculture. The discord that arose between the rhetorical address of these documents and the "real context of reception" troubled the administration when a real stranger replied in place of the imagined and ideal global countercultural citizen. Yet, it was these stranger replies that confirmed the documents' radical and subversive potential. In turn, this subversion is abated when the degrees are considered outside of a narrow countercultural context. Once drawn into the world of policy, the same satire can be understood as a reaction to broader socio-economic adjustments as a result of the information age and general post-industrial condition. Whether this critique was compromised by the College's immediate and threatening financial strife, blinded by novelty, or simply spread too thin in its distribution, the dynamics which arose between the degrees and its counterpublics are testimony to Rochdale's complex social and cultural environment as experienced through its own rhetorical and aesthetic devices.

[343] For a comprehensive analysis of the subsumption of "artistic critique" under neoliberal capitalism see: Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2005).

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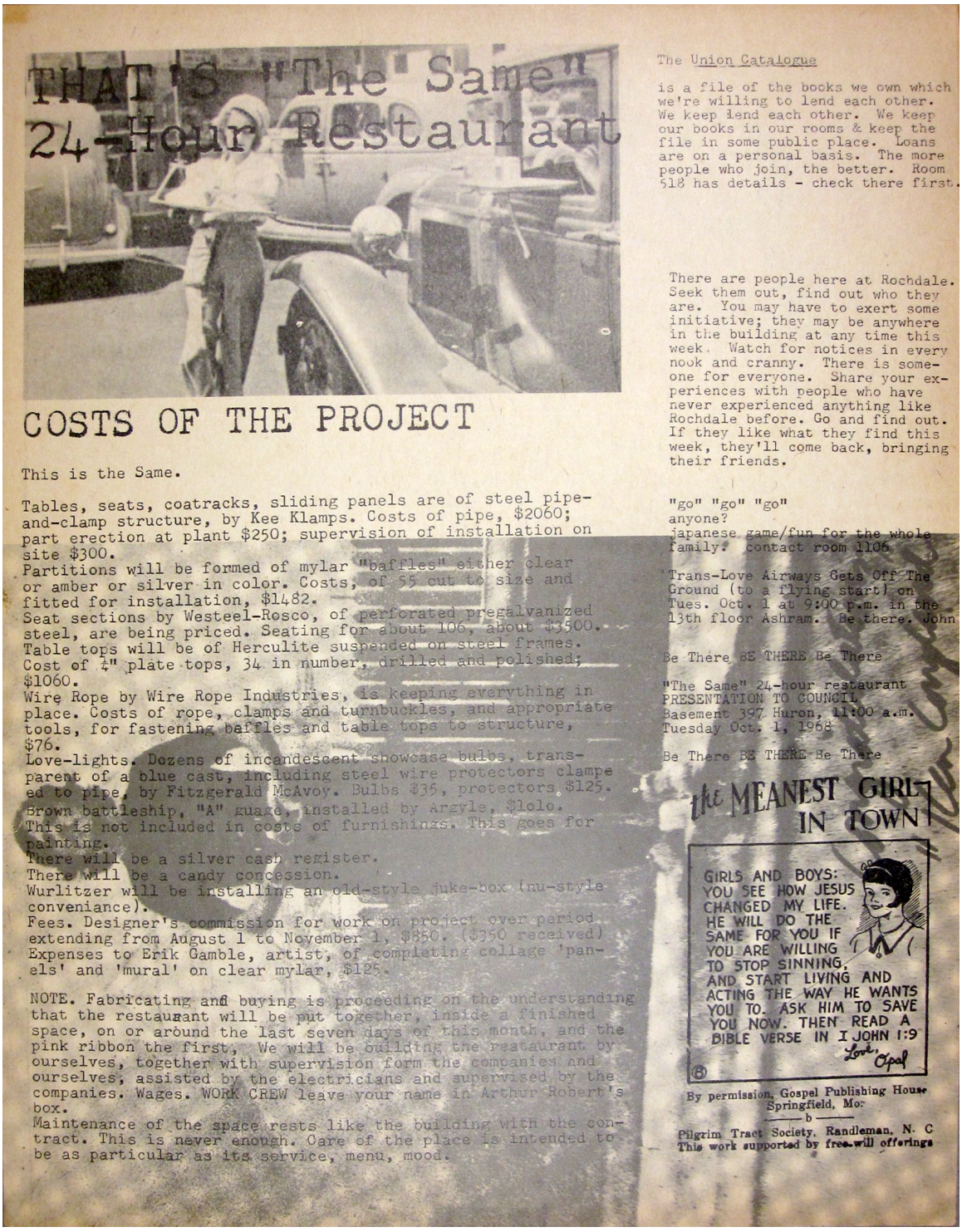

Fig. 1 *Daily*, c. September 1968.

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daily

"The Same"

YOU AND ME AND THE C.B.C. ... peat performance)

On Sunday October 13th at 8:30 p.m. a debate is being held at Rochdale College. It has been arranged by the ideas (IDEAS) unit of the public affairs Department of the CBC. They will be recording it for broadcast as one program in their current CBC FM series of IDEAS on "The Experts and the Mysteries" The experts and their mysteries in this case will be Dr. Claude Bissell, President of the University of Toronto, Dr. Christian Bay, Chairman, Political Science Department, the University of Alberta, and Rick Waern, Registrar of Rochdale College. We, as audience, are expected to play as vital a role in this discussion as the panel, and it is for this reason that we are making a special effort to invite people whom we know are concerned with the meaning of education in this country.

The actual broadcast will be heard on Tuesday, October 22nd, on the CBC's FM network from 7:00 -8:00 p.m.

Fig. 2 *Daily*, 13 October 1968.

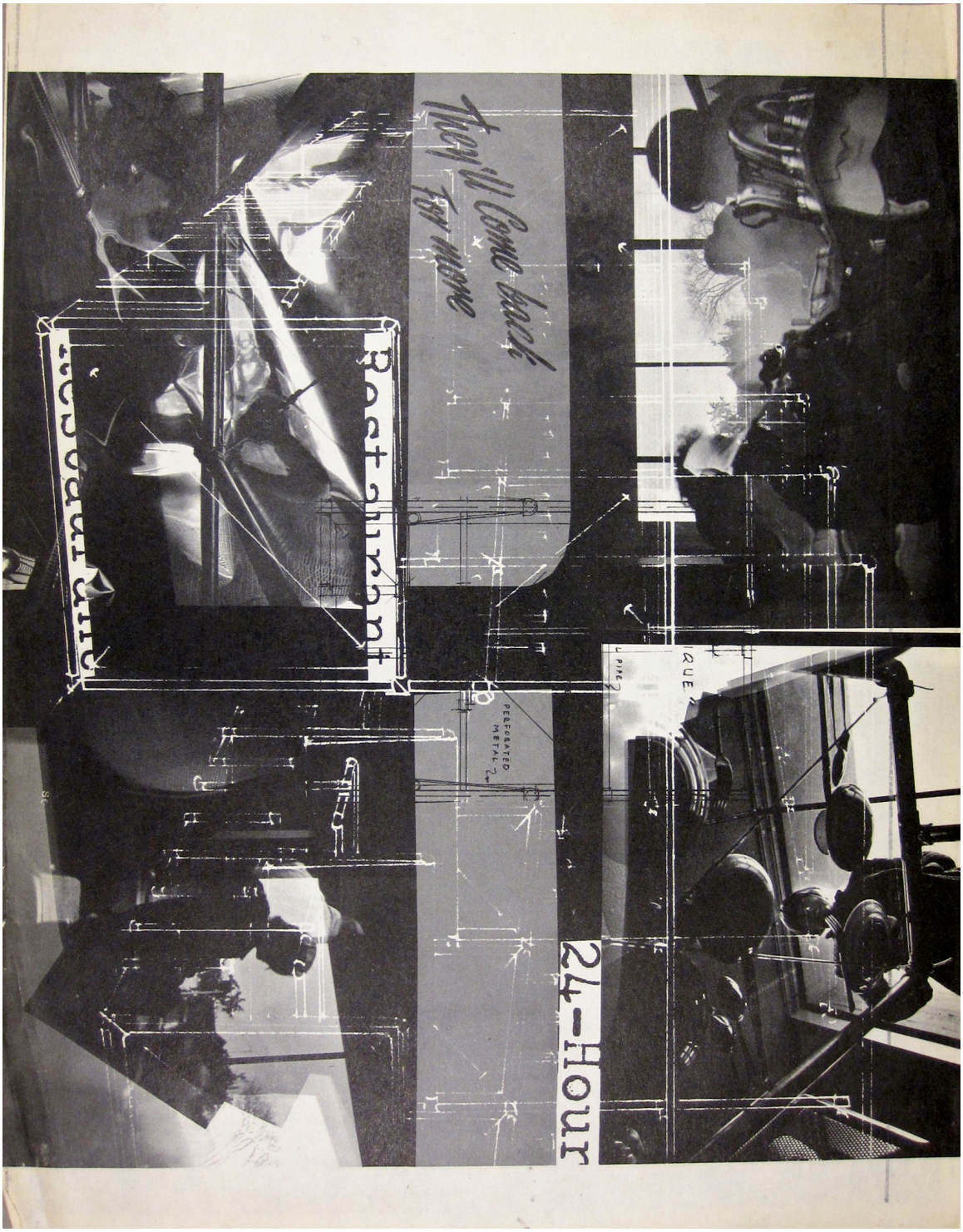


Fig. 3 *Daily*, 13 October 1968.

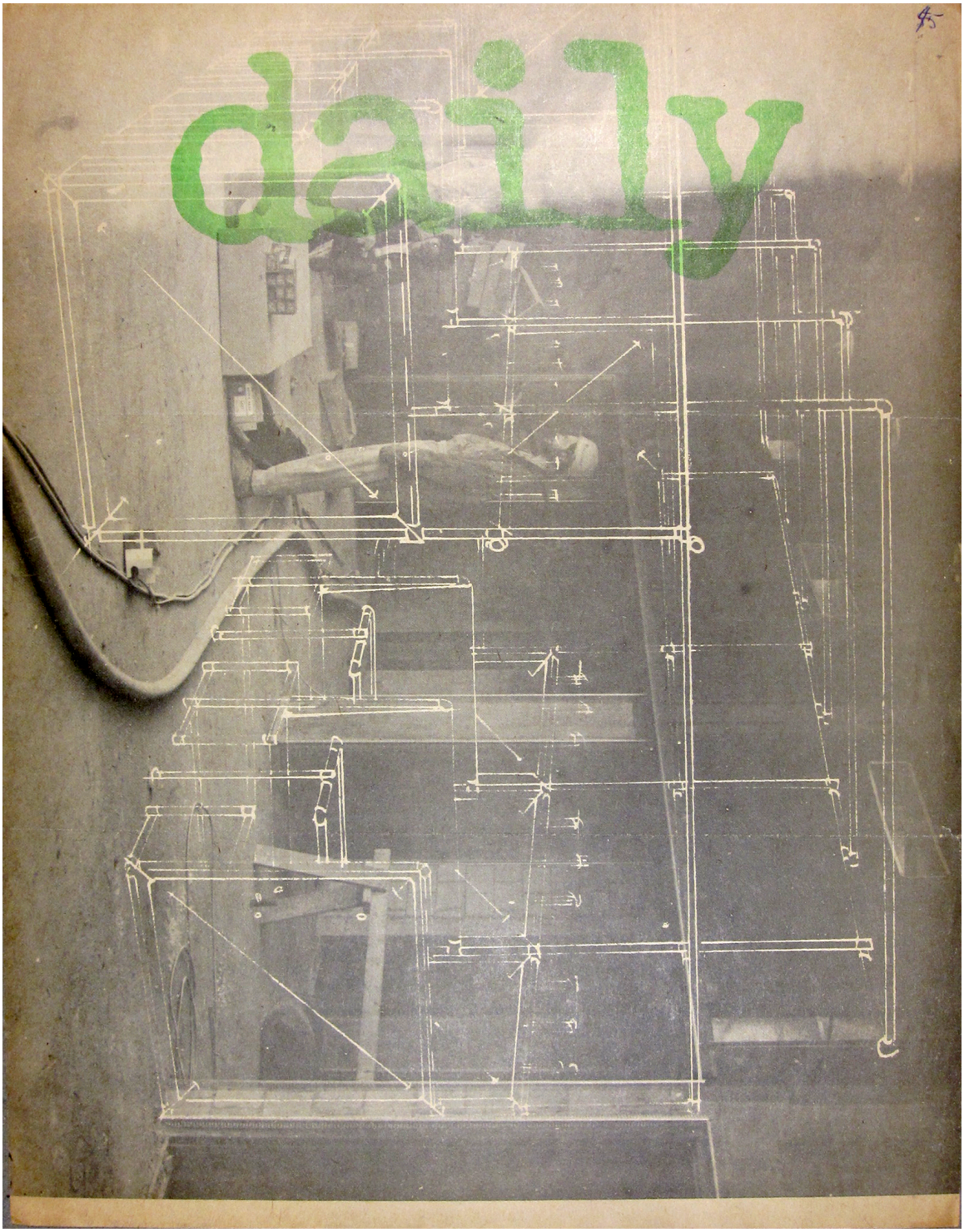


Fig. 4 *Daily*, c. September 1968.

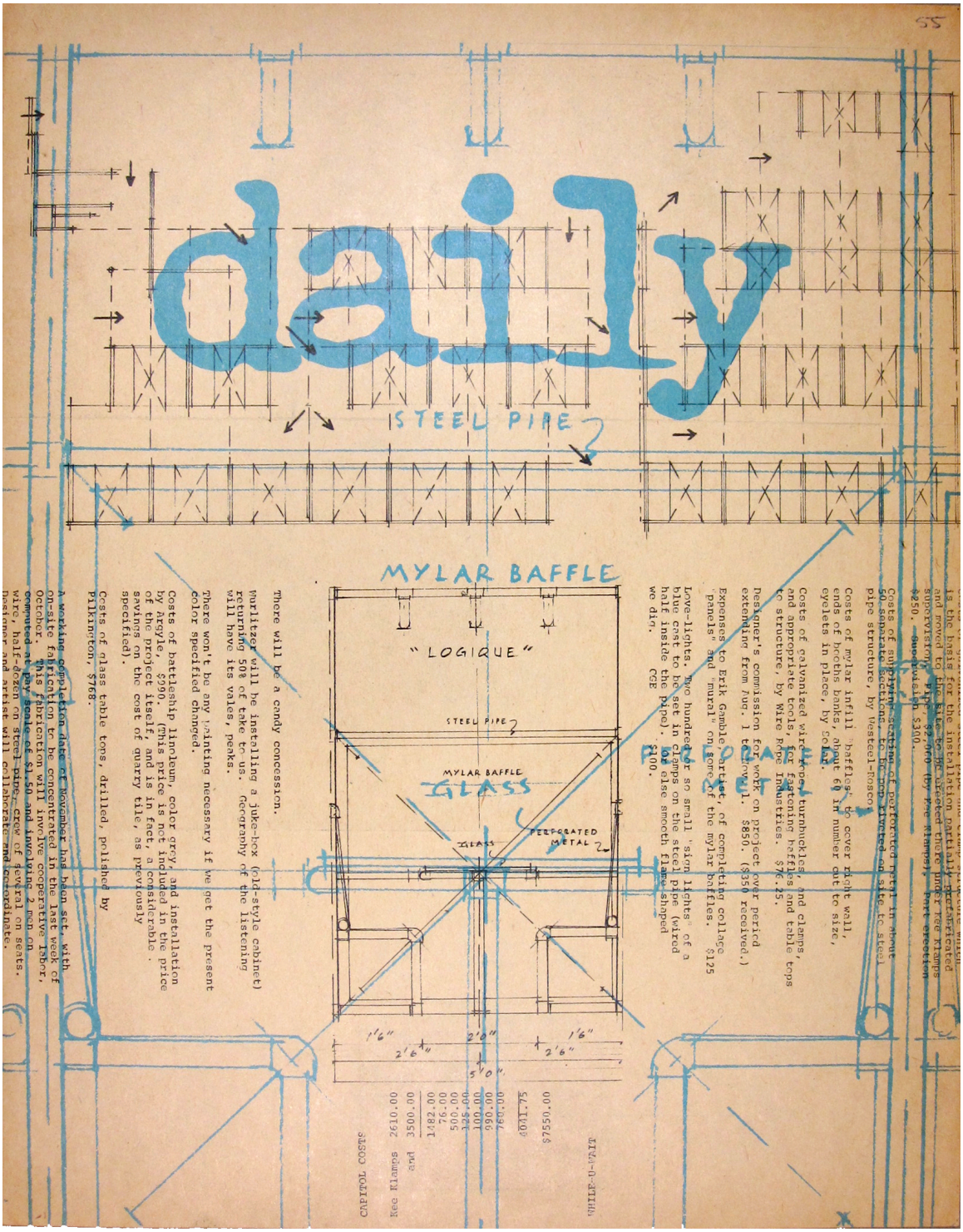


Fig. 5 *Daily*, c. September 1968.

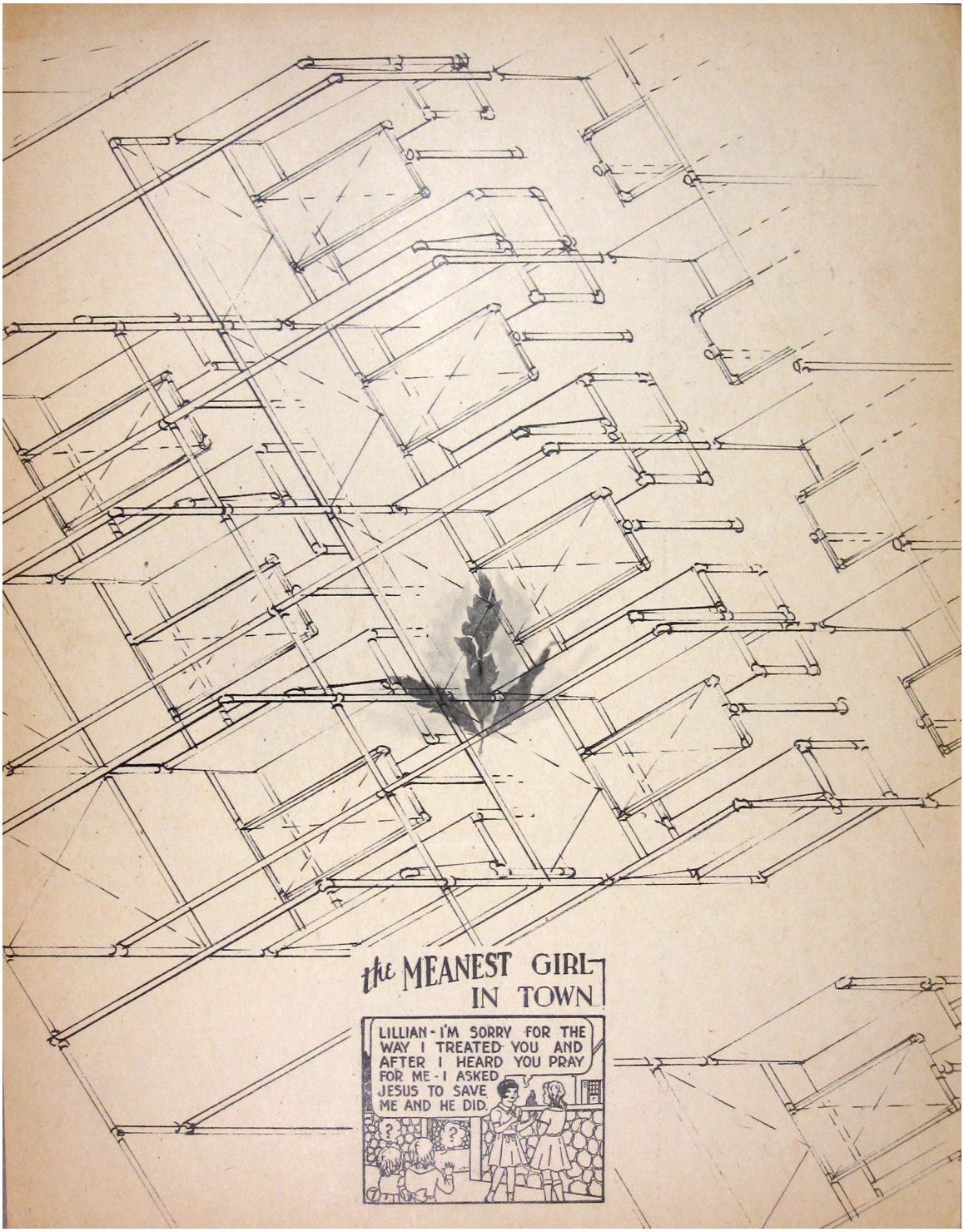


Fig. 6 *Daily*, c. September 1968.

Fig. 7 Jorge Zontal, *Good Enough to Eat*, 1970.

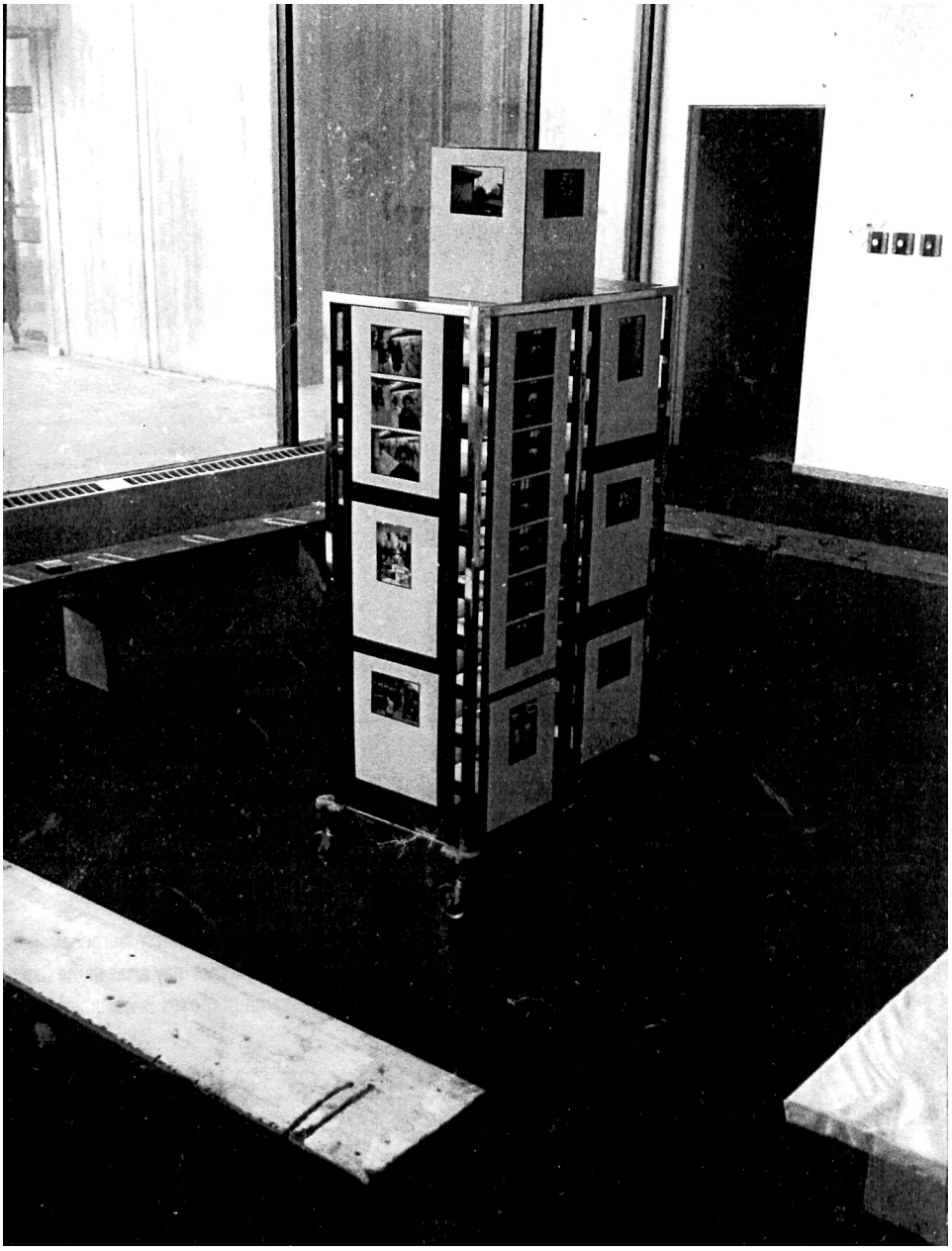
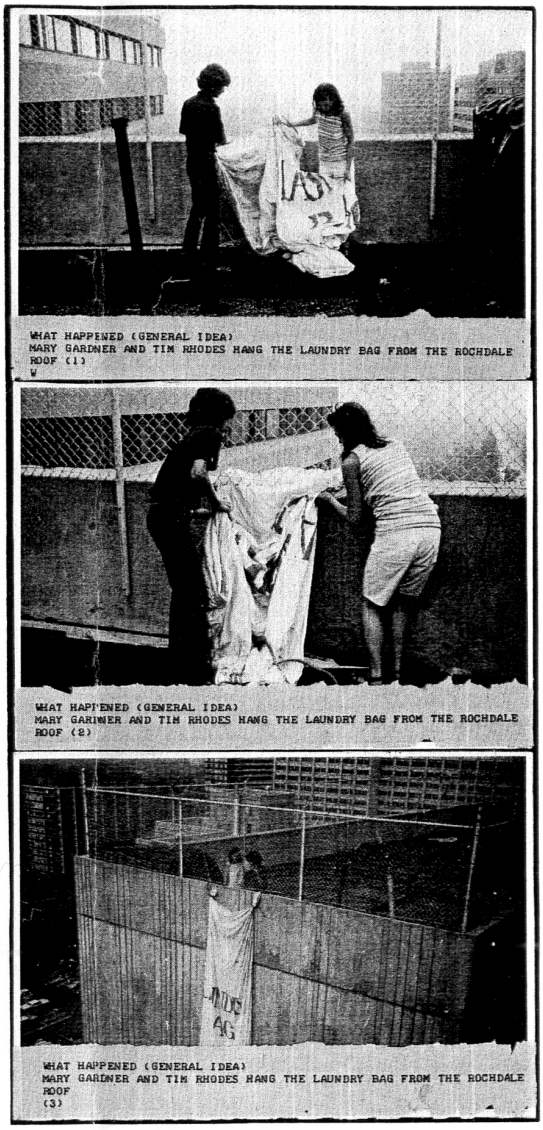


Fig. 8 Jorge Zontal, *Good Enough to Eat*, 1970.



GENERAL IDEA

Fig. 9 General Idea, *What Happened*, 1970. *Image Nation* 8 (1972).

Fig. 10 Rochdale degree, c. 1975.

SUPERLIBERAL EDUCATION

Want to buy a Ph.D. for $100, with no questions asked? Try the freest free school we've ever heard of, Rochdale College in Toronto. Even though the Ph.D. stands for Phony Diploma, your bucks will go for a good cause—supporting a student-run experiment in communal living that at times seems crazier than a Marx Brothers movie shown in reverse. Rochdale's 18-story building houses, among other things, a photography workshop, medical clinic, drama group and printing house. All the info you want (and then some) is available from Rochdale, 341 Bloor Street West, Toronto 181, Ontario. School's out—far out!

Fig. 11 "Superliberal Education." *Playboy* February 1972.

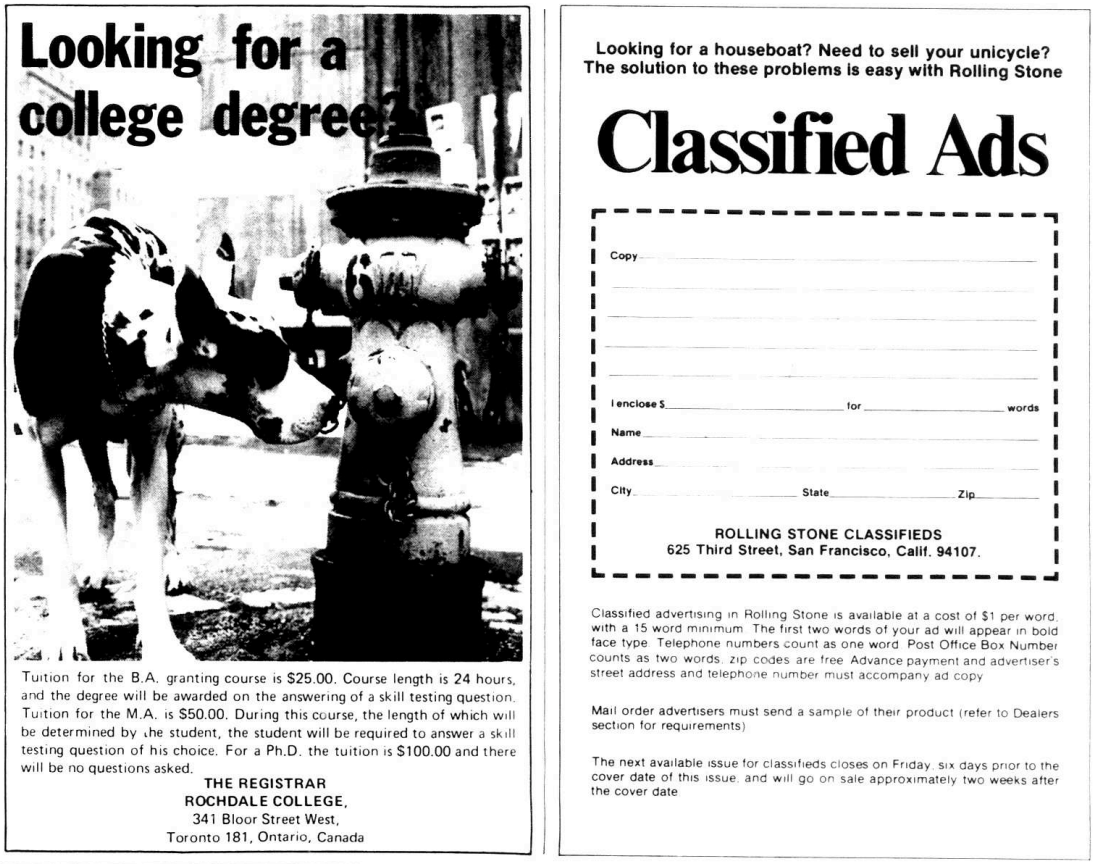


Fig. 12 Rochdale advertisement. *Rolling Stone* June 1972.