

HETERONYMIC

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MO DAVID
KRISTAN KOHL
RICHARD MAUWRA
MIKE OSTERHOUT

MARCH 29-APRIL 26

HALLWALLS
700 MAIN ST.
BUFFALO, NEW YORK
14202

HETERONYMIC

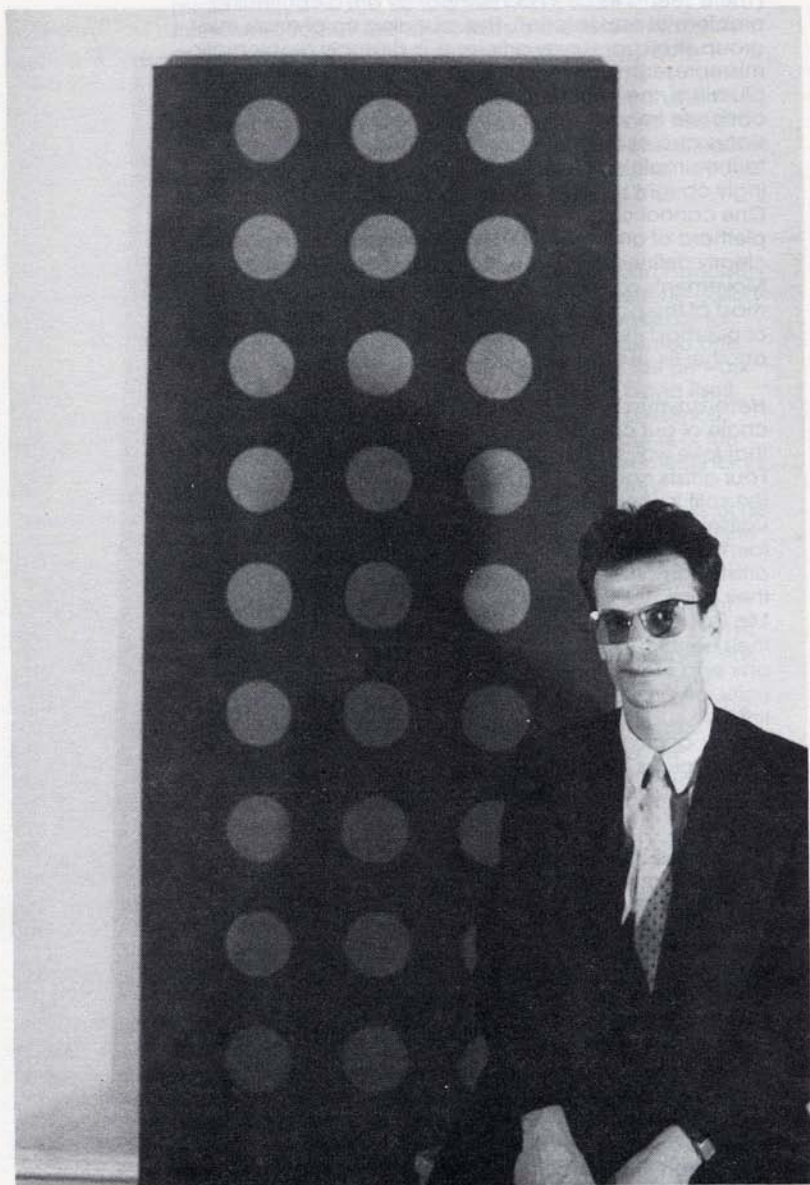
HALLWALLS is pleased to provide these four artists, all of whom are beginning to command a great deal of interest, the opportunity to exhibit together in a meaningful context.

I wish to thank William J. Currie, director, for his interest and support, Carlo McCormick for generously contributing his essay, Paul Szpakowski for designing this brochure, and most importantly, I would like to thank the living artists in this exhibition whose enthusiasm has been fundamental.

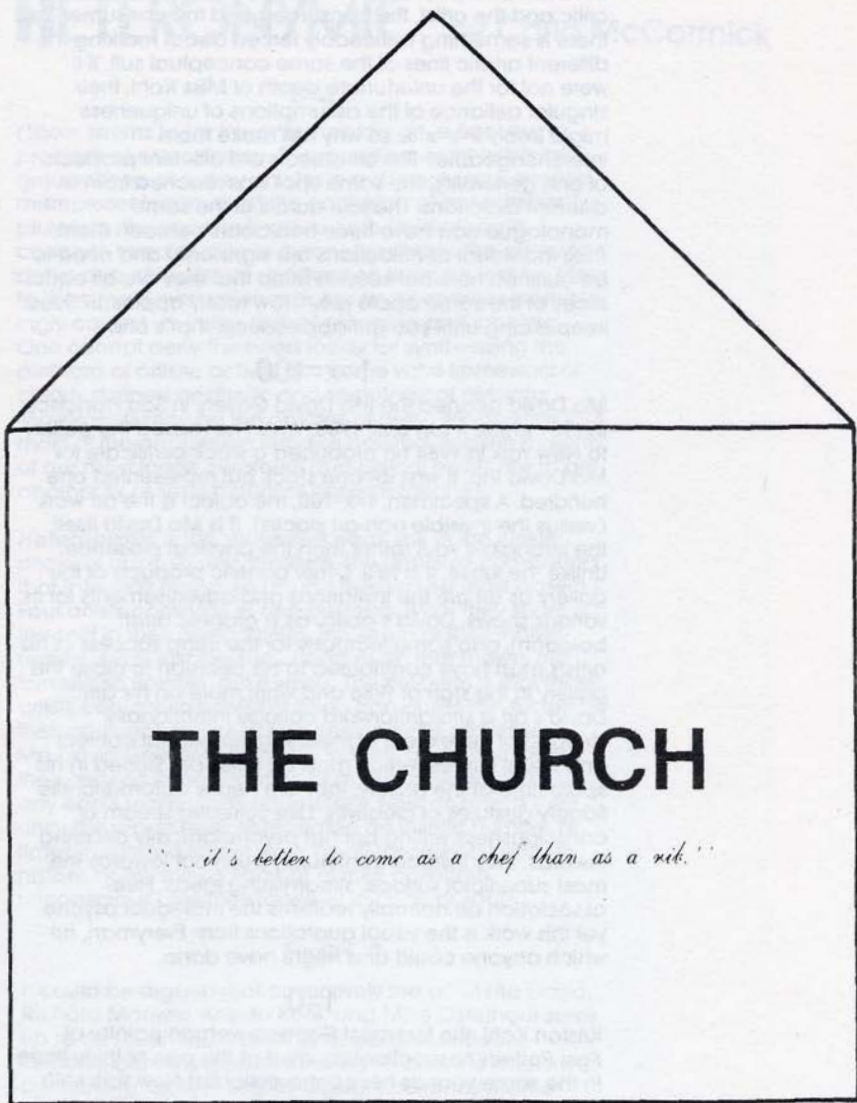
Catherine Howe
Curator
HALLWALLS

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Photography: Julie Powell and Mike Osterhout
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Mike Osterhout with painting by Kristan Kohl, 1985



THE CHURCH

"...it's better to come as a chef than as a rib."

**Mike Osterhout, THE CHURCH, 1979. Rev. Willie Dicks,
pastor.**

"...It's better to come as a chef than as a rib."

- Rev. Willie Dicks

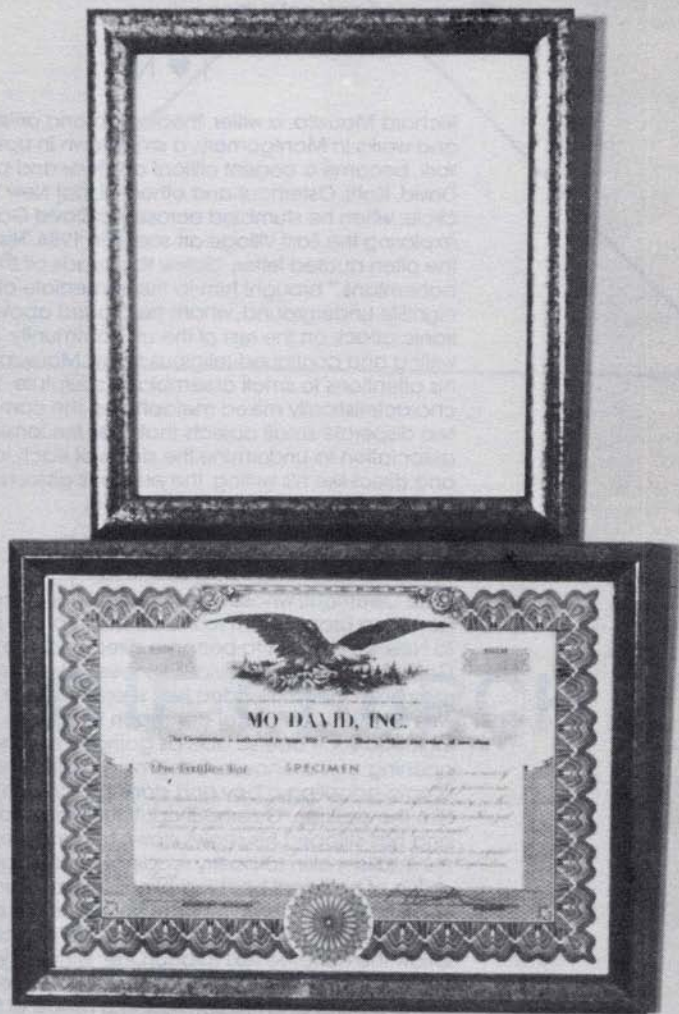
Mike Osterhout was when, at a recent panel at the New Museum in New York, he had to defend her against feminist critics who demanded to know why she was a woman and not a man.

I ♥ NY

Richard Mauwra, a writer, theologian and artist who lives and works in Montgomery, a small town in upstate New York, became a cogent critical observer and promoter of David, Kohl, Osterhout and others of that New York City circle, when he stumbled across Mo David Gallery while exploring the East Village art scene in 1984. His response, the often quoted letter, "Screw the heads off the gold card bohemians," brought him to the immediate attention of the nightlife underground, whom he praised above a searingly ironic attack on the rest of the art community. Beyond his writing and continued religious study, Mauwra has turned his attentions to small assemblage sculpture. They are characteristically mixed metaphores, the combination of two disparate small objects that uses the tension of their association to undermine the status of each icon. Simple and direct like his writing, the precious objects he produces are as funny as they are opinionated.

1 = God = L.S.D.

Mike Osterhout, whose early conceptual pieces in San Francisco brought him to the attention of Mo David, moved to New York in 1984 to become director of Mo David Gallery. Osterhout's previous success as a curator and critic may have recommended him strongly for the job, but it was his intense mystical approach to his own art (which included such diverse acts as going to seminary school, opening a whorehouse, becoming a missionary, branding a cow, adopting a boy and starting a church) which won him the position. Osterhout continues to perform regularly and has stripped his shows down to a meditative minimalism akin to poetry readings and sermons. His stoic, drone of his lyrical beat ramblings. A monotony of soothing sounds disguise this dissonant content of his poetry with the distraction of melody. It is difficult to concentrate and follow the narrative text through the winding words and intoxicatingly opiated atmosphere; these tales of love, drugs, politics and religion flow in a mood of free floating images in mesmerizing monotone. Osterhout paid attention to cleverly packaging the documentary artifacts of his conceptual performances into perfect art objects, just as in the indoctrinating sonority of his poetry, he understands the manipulative techniques of religion. Adding a supernatural mysticism to all aspects of his work, his broadening of religious experience relies heavily on the models of Christian art. Iconic emphasis transports the ordinary into the realm of worship, his most recent objects being spiritually charged artifact reliquaries of opium and L.S.D. All the 60's hippie jive of psychedelic transcendence, in fact, pales in comparison to Osterhout's turned on and tuned out God.



MO DAVID • 1981-
I created a gallery

1

MO DAVID: "Where you're the most important person in the world."

See White Book

SCREW THE HEADS OFF THE GOLD CARD BOHEMIANS

I want to address the hoopla and hub-bub over the East Village in general, and "Bohemia" specifically.

Now if we are to believe recent chronicles of life and art down here, we are all a bunch of money grubbing scumbags with little or no substance to our work, and attitudes that verge on complete "vapidity" and cultural necrophelia.

We look at articles in LIFE, ARTS, and most recently THE NEW YORK TIMES, and see the same faces, hear the same names and are fed the same lazy jingoisms over and over again. How interesting can Gracie Mansion really be?

"It's fun it's wild.....IT'S EAST VILLAGE!"

These are the "Gold Card Bohemians;" a group of artists, dealers and critics who have loosely networked together in order to further their careers and get their names in the paper. They are constantly paid left handed compliments and slapped on the back by a press corp that is either too lazy or too stupid to dig any deeper. So with the exception of a couple of these individuals, this entire group is of no use or interest to me here.

The group that does interest me, is a different matter altogether, and they sit in the gut and in between the toes of this glitzy animal known as the "East Village."

I came here in 1983 - too late to be a pioneer, yet early enough to finally (after two years) have a grasp on what's really going on down here. One of the first people I met was Carlo McCormick, a kid who worked for the East Village Eye, as I assumed, a copy-boy or something. As it turned out he was their main critic and an important key to understanding the tone, politics and logistics of this tiny village. Now here's a major paper with a large distribution, and a 22 year old as a critic.

RULE #1: NEVER ASSUME!

Next I met David West, one of Gracie's artists, but the oddball of the bunch, and a complete renegade on the art and club circuit. Between the two of them they knew almost everyone that was doing anything. They began to educate me in the ways of Bohemia.

They took me to 8 BC and Chandelier, now defunct performance clubs of historical proportions, where I was introduced to Mike Osterhout and two of his artists; Karen Finley and Harry Kipper, along with a slew of others. Osterhout runs a gallery called MO David and for a long time I thought he was just another jerk off dealer. But then I got to know him and discovered all this conceptual stuff he has done, and how he considers his gallery just another piece. He also shows that Australian artist Stelarc who hangs by his skin from hooks. Now these guys are a little closer to any definition of bohemians that I know. And I bet you've never heard of them?

RULE #2: IT'S NEVER AS BLEAK AS IT SEEMS.

I used to be very disillusioned with the East Village, and when I would see all those articles in the magazines, I would take them at their word and figure that was that, and everything was based on hype and money. But as I dug deeper (peeled the skin off the onion, as it were) I found a real juicy core.

Filmmakers like Richard Kern, Tessa Hughes-Freeland, and Nick Zedd as well as performance artists like Tom Murrin, Karen Finley and Harry Kipper have all breathed life into the mouth of the corpse of Downtown Performance and Film.

David Wojnarowicz and Mike Osterhout are writing and performing pieces that are reminiscent of the hey day of Beat and Psychedelic poetry, and Walter Robinson the Granddaddy of "Art Cynicism" is spinning out paintings that scream with deadpan humor.

Bond Bergland and Ruby Ray, along with bands like His Master's Voice, Live Skull, and Work Dogs have been doing gigs all over the place that have wit, originality, and genuine talent at their soul.

Philip Taffe, Peter Halley, Kristan Kohl, and Meyer Vaisman are all painters of the new "Cool School," who exhibit disturbingly hard edged minimalist canvas' that can only be read as a tough stance in the face of ill wind of Neo-Expressionism.

Galleries like Nature Morte and MO David are hold outs in an area that once was a haven for the truly avant garde. And while things have generally mutated to the "Yuppification" of the plastic arts, International, Piezo, Ground Zero, and quite a few other galleries remain consistent in their intelligence, integrity, and humor.

You see the one thing that holds this group together is terror and commitment. Terror at the prospect of not being able to produce and change and commitment to the task. In a town that consistently rewards superficiality and fluff, just because it makes good copy, these artists still work then land.

These are the New Bohemians and their life isn't easy. If they have any credit cards, I'm sure they're not gold, and if they even pay taxes they never heard of a shelter. Hype doesn't seem to concern them, and although they are far from ascetics, money is something that buys drugs and food and puts a roof over your head. They are destructive, tragic, neurotic, emotional, and genuinely creative. They are not posers or irascibles as Pincus-Witten and Greenfield-Sanders portray.

RULE #3: NEVER TRUST PEOPLE WITH HYPHENS IN THEIR NAMES.

Now, clubs like Chandelier and 8 BC are closing and the bars have become Yuppie meat racks. So they're out on the streets again. The asylum gate is open, so lock up your daughters and teenage boys, and hide your wallet. This is the one thing you can count on when all the hyperbole dies down, the dust settles, and the East Village becomes just another fad like graffiti or jogging, this group will be on your doorstep; if they aren't already.

RULE #4: END ON A POSITIVE NOTE!

RICHARD MAUWRA

STATE OF NEW YORK : COUNTY OF Orange
Justice COURT Village OF Montgomery

The People of the State of New York

against

Michael D. Osterhout

Defendant

Information

Milo F Moore, residing at

Town of Montgomery Police Dept. 74 Main St. Walden N.Y., by this information makes written accusation as follows:

That Michael D. Osterhout, on the 18th

day of August, 19 84, at Corner of Clinton St & Union St.

(Location)

in the Village of Montgomery,

County of Orange, New York, did

commit the offense of Disorderly Conduct.

~~Article 220.20~~ (violation) in violation of Section 240.20

of the Penal Law of the State of New York, in that (s)he did, at the aforesaid time and place*

A person is guilty of disorderly conduct, when with intent to cause public

Count One: inconvenience, annoyance, alarm, or recklessly creating a risk thereof:3.

in a public place, he uses abusive or obscene language, or makes obscene gesture;

or6 He congregates with other persons in a public place and refuses to comply

with a lawful order of the police to disperse.

The facts upon which this information is based are as follows:

The said defendant Michael D. Osterhout at about 11:15 pm on the 18th of August 1984, with intent to cause public inconvenience, annoyance or alarm or recklessly creating a risk thereof, did on Clinton Street in the Village of Montgomery Orange County New York, the same being a public place, he did use abusive language directed toward your deponent by shouting in a loud voice at your deponent and stating "Fuck You I don't have to give you a Fuck'n thing" all of this came about when the defendant crossed a Police Line during a Bomb Threat that was on Clinton St. When defendant was asked by your deponent to leave the area and to go to the other side of the street, defendants action and conduct attracted the attention of a considerable number of persons and bystanders, and disrupted efforts by Police to clear area of Bomb. All contrary to the provisions of the statute in such case made and provided.

Mike Osterhout, 1984

Kristan Kohl, Kristan Kohl studio view, 1984/85

