

stroke-as-  
led to include  
nts than ever  
The paintings  
chnique; how-  
cularly estheti-  
rtinarily arous-

und-the-room  
up by the ar-  
one is made to  
being guided  
travelogue of  
how the work  
d intentional. If  
se painting as  
ugh which one  
do not ques-  
his intention.  
lack of high-  
ted here. The  
a fraction of

welded steel  
ples of a con-  
investigating  
through from  
mith. Although  
e past several  
re contempo-  
rary to more  
logical step  
s are still well

sculptures—  
and one hori-  
cut-out shapes  
flat-against-  
l forms. He  
rms and flat  
ach sculpture  
zes with and  
occupies. The  
y larger than  
died gesture of  
physical reali-  
r Reginato, the  
e-dimensional  
ponents of the  
ught out and  
e locked into a  
which reflects,  
e wholesome-  
n. One experi-  
ptures with a  
ut without the  
emporary ar-

perhaps the  
- and a beauty.  
s derived from  
e oval-circular  
This sculpture  
ated Vitruvian

figure—a well-proportioned man whose extended arms and legs fit exactly into a circle within a square. The piece's oval horizontality occupies a squared-off space.

*Odalisque* is also highly reminiscent of the steel drums from the Caribbean, specifically Trinidad, where they were made from discarded oil drums left on American Air Force bases during World War II. Not only is there a physical resemblance to *Odalisque* (Reginato's shapes reflect some ethnic-oriented influences) but it brings to mind the relationship of the African masks to Picasso's work.

The contrast between the bulkweight of the steel sculptures and the homemade, hand-cut, delicate quality of the forms is sensitively and intuitively balanced. Reginato's surface is slightly rusted welded mild steel, hand-ground, polyurethaned and finally butchers-waxed. The combination of the surface textures emits a golden hue—that of dulled bronze, perhaps, but not of welded steel.

—SHARON GOLD

### JILL KROESEN, *The Kitchen*:

JILL KROESEN's 10-act, 2½-hour presentation of all of Western history from Evolution to The End had minor difficulties. Twenty performers, props such as oatmeal and potatoes, missiles and limp swords, 10 countries, a *bardo* (the Tibetan afterworld), three social classes, memorized lines and throwaway lines, some songs, a reigning god called Mother and played by Michael Cooper, and her son, named Stanley Oil and played by Kroesen, are some of the components juggled in *Stanley Oil and His Mother: A Systems Portrait of the Western World*. The Western world, it turns out, is something like a Montessori classroom run by sincerely confused teachers.

Mother cannot stir from her chair on the podium and must carry out her orders through Stanley, a demiurge at best. Stanley climbs down from Mother's knee to experiment with various countries scattered in little groups around the performance area, but his religious/social systems are inevitably the wrong tools for the wrong job ("This is one of the few ideas that Mother didn't have anything to do with," he observes proudly as he introduces the Black Plague as population control). He rationalizes out loud as he goes along, but, as Nietzsche observed, "one chooses dialectics only when one

has no other expedient," and Stanley's logic has a decidedly skittish quality.

Coached this way from the sidelines, civilization lurches into shape. Each country is divided into three classes, each class in each country represented by a performer: Beggars sift through bins of grain, Waiters run religion and cities, and Kings plunder everyone. All the performers recite set lines at set times, making a sort of round robin of commentary, for instance the Beggar's "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Half-human, Half-animal, please give me everything I want and don't make anything bad happen." As history grows more complex (and the evening waxes late) the performers become rowdy, tossing plunder in the form of fruit and vegetables at each other, tossing off a world war or two, while the Kings (mostly corporate executives, dictators, and presidents by now) ad lib out of turn and step on each others' lines outrageously.

A more obedient set of performers (if Kroesen had wanted them) would have produced a history more like clockwork than patchwork. But patchiness, the scruffy underside of power, obsesses her, as she remarks fairly directly in the songs she interrupts the performance

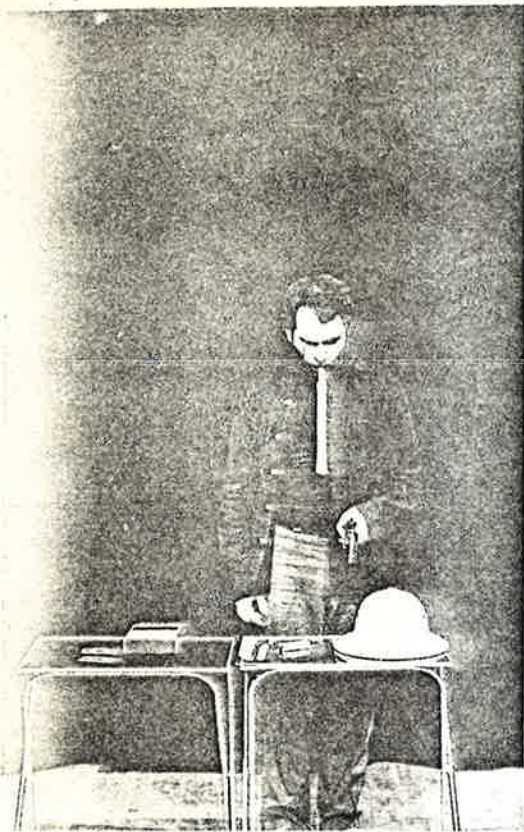
now and then to sing. Most of Kroesen's songs, whether sung in performance or in cabaret, describe power relationships; in *Stanley Oil* the terms are put more impersonally than usual, as she addresses advice to individuals such as Charlemagne and Napoleon. Throughout *Stanley Oil* highlights are flattened—the distancing effect Brecht urged for didactic theater.

Like Moorman and Paik's *Opera Sextronique*, Kroesen's pieces have, on occasion, fun afoul of the law. For instance at the 1976 Avant Garde Festival Kroesen bicycled around Floyd Bennett Air Field with a huge pyramid over herself and bicycle; on the pyramid's sides were words and drawings of obscene comments shouted at her (and her fantasized replies) when she worked as a bicycle messenger in downtown Manhattan. The police patrolling the festival made her discard the pyramid as it might possibly offend the general public.

The offense, of course, lies in the explicit reversal of making the public private and the private public: singing confidences to Napoleon and exhibiting street language as a matter of record. Three videotapes by Kroesen shown at The Kitchen during the day-



Jill Kroesen, *Stanley Oil and his Mother*, 1977, theater piece



Stuart Sherman, *8th Spectacle*, 1977, performance.

time provided other windows into patches of territory at odds with each other. In *Elatia and Jennifer* two women of sharply different temperament tried to coexist and politely converse in a room in front of an unattended video camera. *Goodbye Piece* overdubbed a drawn-out farewell scene between a man and woman until only fuzzy images and voice tones—one diffident, the other pleading—remained. In *Wicked Messenger* Kroesen masturbated standing up, her torso slightly out of focus, her genitals slightly out of range, and singing slightly discordantly all the while.

The power controlling the viewer's perception in *Wicked Messenger* remained in Kroesen's hands, the amount and quality of information strictly rationed, the nature of the information always in question. *Opera Sextronique*, only a decade away, seems in this light incredibly optimistic in its presentation of open, engaged sensuality on a par with music, movement and costumes. A celebration of Rumilia, the Roman goddess of breasts, is superseded by more severe divines keeping sharp account of power.

—BARBARA BARACKS

**STUART SHERMAN, Open Space Theater; MICHAEL GOLDBERG, Galerie Denise René:**

STUART SHERMAN's "Spectacles" exemplify a kind of performance art whose roots are not only in visual art and traditional theater, but also in music, popular entertainment, and games both of skill and of make-believe. This genre depends heavily on the performer's almost continuous use of various readymade and unelaborate, but provocative, props. They are usually manipulated by a single performer. The artistic sources for this "device theater" include the highly structured and introspective drama of Richard Foreman, the formalized "structuralist" theater related to Foreman which Michael Kirby has been championing, Fluxus events and Happenings—both historical and recent—and the musical and extramusical philosophies and practices associated with John Cage.

Ralston Farina was an early formulator of device-theater performances, influenced by Cage to present "time/time" events as early as the late 1960s; in these, which Farina continues to realize, Farina seeks to articulate temporal relationships. More recently—and without the influence of Farina's little-publicized work—the device-theater genre has come to include the intimate "Theater of Musical Optics" of John Zorn, the stand-up gag and character routines of Michael Smith, and the image-oriented presentations of Sherman, Kate Davy, and others.

Sherman's device theater "Spectacles" are presented in both staged and impromptu outdoor situations. Each consists of a series of events performed rapidly, gracefully, and in quick succession, with an array of mostly dime-store items. Sherman segues from one temporal image to another, with quick reflexes and usually without missing a beat, as if he were effecting the mimetic dramatization of a Rube Goldberg contraption. Sight gags, visual puns, and startling but logical contextual associations occur, with disarmingly sudden transition. Sherman combines the impulses, if not the show-business slickness, of a mime, a magician, and a nightclub comic.

His eighth Spectacle, most recently presented in the "Playwrights' Group Festival" at the Open Space in SoHo, is comprised of 20-odd "portraits" of various friends, only a few (like Foreman or Kate Mannheim) likely to be known even to Sherman's informed audience. Even

to those who know well, the referee certainly private tation is tempt gestures only terpreter with t

A portrayal example, has small mirror mo Sherman aims touches the head paintbrush, the with the brush. on a cassette waltzes with the ends on the voice, on tape, repeats it incessantly himself places audience. These as each is, are are based on rather than mer

If the event each other, ho Fleischner inf exactly is their Sherman preter Or is he acting of him might be ing himself to F ence? Or is h addressing him back to Sherma are propelled, r these ambiguities cal certainties of the portraits del shifting, highly a of Hellzapoppin

The action of not slapstick, h more delicate poised. This is a piece Sherman eighth Spectac brief piece by one of those sketches of Fo tween, and ofte Hysteric polylog seems to be, change on bo sophic levels t changing land sketchy, rende down the page distinction betw stage direction Stein's plays, b far more drama realized "Slight interpreted bot spoken parts a The action



Michael Goldberg, *Untitled*, 1977, molded paper, 28½ x 24½".