



## **Bob Ostertag's SPIRAL**

David Wojnarowicz: *text*

Pierre Hébert: *film*

Oliver DiCicco: *instrument design*

### **Program Notes from the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis**

**Bob Ostertag** - glass, reader, digital audio

**Gerry Hemingway**- glass,percussion

**William Winant** - glass, percussion

**Richard Board** - technical director

The creation of Spiral has been an extremely collaborative project. First and foremost in the chain of contributions, of course, is David's extraordinary text. My only regret in this regard is that David and I were unable to do the project we had planned while he was alive, leaving me to do this posthumous collaboration instead.

Pierre Hébert and Oliver DiCicco created film and instruments which are works of art in their own right. The musicians and sound engineer were given wide leeway in shaping their contributions. And Richard Board stepped well beyond the role of technical director to take a active role in the shaping of the work. Thank you everyone.

#### **On Performing on World AIDS Awareness Day:**

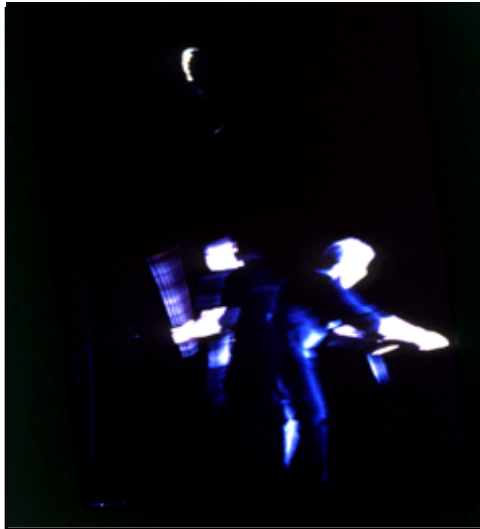
December 1st, which in recent years was commemorated as "Day Without Art", has now become "World AIDS Awareness Day," and for this I am thankful. In my opinion there is more than enough silence to go around already. There's David's silence and Keith's silence and Bo's silence and Jerry's, so many silences with so many subtle textures and colors and grain. These days you could be become a connoisseur of silence, and you may as well. After all, there's silence everywhere you look, or try to listen.

And anyway, it's hard for me to think of my music as art any more, if what is meant by art is luxury or distraction from the fact that every moment of time that rushes past us is hideously mortal and you probably missed it because you were thinking about something else. It's noise that I make that lets me know that, yes, I am still alive. It isn't art, it's medicine.

We're treading water in a sea of silence, and tonight's performance is a message to David that we're stuffing in a bottle and setting to float.

-- Bob Ostertag

*The text "Spiral" is used by the permission the Estate of David Wojnarowicz. "Spiral" appears in the book "Memories That Smell Like Gasoline" by David Wojnarowicz (Artspace Books).*



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### Biographies

**Bob Ostertag** is the recipient of a 1995 National Endowment for the Arts Composers Fellowship, and commissions from the Lincoln Center, Austrian State Radio, and many others. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe, Japan, and the former Soviet Union. His innovative use of digital sampling has established him as an influential pioneer in the medium, creating "a musical reality in which sampling technology is used in a significant way for the first time" (*Die Zeit*). He has released 12 CDs of his work, and has collaborated with the Kronos Quartet, John Zorn, Anthony Braxton, Fred Frith, Otomo Yoshihide, and many others.

"The briefest lives sometimes leave behind the strongest vibrations," the *New York Times* wrote of **David Wojnarowicz**, writer, painter, filmmaker, photographer, performance artist, and author of *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration*, *The Waterfront Journals*, and *Seven Miles a Second*. Wojnarowicz, an artist who continually pushed the boundaries of his art, died in 1992 of complications from AIDS. A retrospective of his art is planned at New York's Museum of Contemporary Art in 1997.

**Pierre Hébert** first became known for his abstract experimental films, and since 1965 his works have involved collaborative live performances with dancers and musicians. He has experimented extensively with engraving images directly on to film, and has developed a new type of performance in which "live" animation is scratched on film during performance. His first feature film, *La Plant Humaine*, is currently in release and has received numerous awards.

**Oliver DiCicco** founded the Mobius Music recording studio in 1976, and since then has received several Grammy Award nominations and RIAA Gold Record Awards. DiCicco built the musical instrument sculptures that form the Mobius Operandi Ensemble's nucleus. He produced and designed the sets and created large-scale musical sculptures for the multi-disciplinary performance pieces *Exit Vacaville*, *Scatterbrain*, and *Eating Eden*.

**Richard Board** designs lighting for dance, theater, performance art, and film.

**Gerry Hemingway** composes and performs solo and ensemble music. Recent recordings include *Special Detail*, *Down to the Wire*, *Demon Chaser*, and *The Marmalade King*. Hemingway is a member of the Anthony Braxton Quartet and Bob Ostertag's *Say No More*. He also performs with the Reggie Workman Ensemble and collaborates with many others, including pianist Marilyn Crispell and bassist Barry Guy.

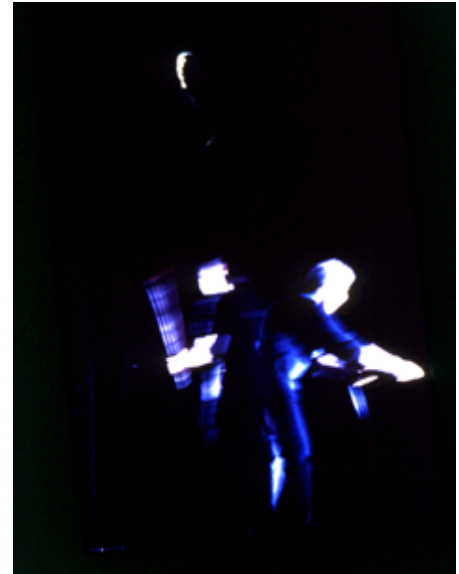
**Alex Stahl's** biography was recently requested for the first edition of *Who's Who in Media*, but he's too busy to write it.

**William Winant** is currently principal percussionist with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio, Mr. Bungle, and the Thurston Moore Trio. He has performed on over 65 recordings, including first recordings of composition by John Cage, Milton Friedman, John Zorn, and others.

# Spiral

*text by* **David Wojnarowicz**

Sometimes I come to hate people because they can't see where I am. I've gone empty. completely empty and all they see is the visual form: my arms and legs, my face, my height and posture, the sounds that come from my throat. But I'm fucking empty.



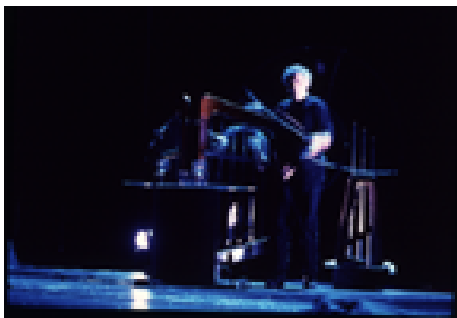
The person I was just one year ago no longer exists; drifts spinning slowly into the ether somewhere way back there. I'm a xerox of my former self. I can't abstract my own dying any longer. I am a stranger to others and to myself and I refuse to pretend that I am familiar or that I have history attached to my heels. I am glass, clear empty glass.

I see the world spinning behind and through me. I see casualness and mundane effects of gesture made by constant populations. I look familiar but I am a complete stranger being mistaken for my former selves.

I am a stranger and I am moving. I am moving on two legs soon to be on all fours. I am no longer animal vegetable or mineral. I am no longer made of circuits or disks. I am no longer coded and deciphered. I am all emptiness and futility. I am an empty stranger, a carbon copy of my form.

I can no longer find what I'm looking for outside of myself. It doesn't exist out there. Maybe it's only in here, inside my head. But my head is glass and my eyes have stopped being cameras, the tape has run out and nobody's words can touch me. No gesture can touch me. I've been dropped into all this from another world and I can't speak your language any longer.

See the signs I try to make with my hands and fingers. See the vague movements of my lips among the sheets. I'm a blank spot in a hectic civilization. I'm a dark smudge in the air that dissipates without notice. I feel like a window, maybe a broken window. I am a glass human. I am a glass human disappearing in the rain.



I am standing among all of you waving my invisible arms and hands. I am shouting my invisible words. I am getting so weary. I am growing so tired. I am waving to you from here. I am crawling around looking for the aperture of complete and final emptiness. I am vibrating in isolation among you. I am screaming but it comes out like pieces of clear ice. I am signaling that the volume of all this is too high. I am waving. I am waving my hands. I am disappearing. I am disappearing but not fast enough.

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