

A.R.C.

Judy Lerner Brice is currently showing at the A.R.C. gallery in Chicago. Her work consists of large sewn paintings and drawings and smaller, softer paintings constructed of a subtle array of fabrics, sometimes padded and stuffed with relief effects. Many are cluttered with buttons, sequins, beads and cartoon-style characters. Brice's backgrounds are opulent, all space is used. Her imagery is predominantly woman-identified, and curiously skirts overt sexuality through thematic confusion.

In 'Egyptisch', for example, four women's profiles cast shadows with heads of umbrellas. Brice uses fabric columns for visual imagery and a lot of pasted flower patterns for a border. Male objects, such as the U.N. Building and the Empire State Building, are deliberately placed on a secondary plane, reflecting her female identification.

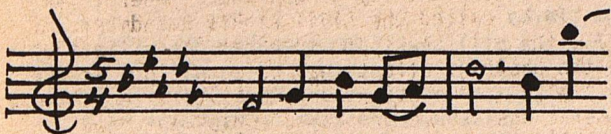
'Blondo Place' deals with two female children's dual role functions. The aura is reminiscent of the 40's, as are many of Brice's works. One girl is a cowboy, complete with fringes, and the other is a cowgirl, shooting a gun. The message is simple.

'Nobody Makes A Pass At Me!' is the most sexually oriented of all her displayed works. A mother, again in the 40's style of melancholy and clothing tastes, is carrying a load of laundry, wondering casually about her sex life while neglecting, according to the artist's interpretation, her daughter holding a female doll. Triangle aluminum pieces fall from her basket. A USAF plane in the background is intended as a heterosexual pun.

Many of Brice's larger paintings consist of shapeless but aesthetic cloth objects, often studded with wooden beads, unique buttons or flower imagery.



Nobody Makes a Pass at Me

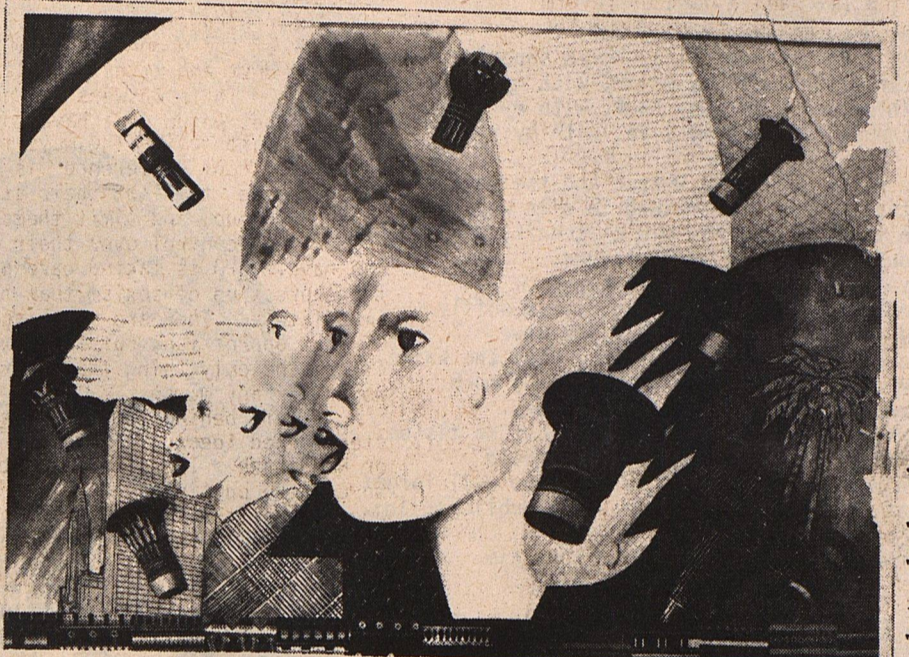


The Berkeley Women's Music Collective--Nancy Vogl on acoustic guitar, tenor sax and alto recorder/Debbie Lempke on electric guitar and hand drums/Susann Shanbaum on bass and harmonica/Nancy Henderson on piano--compose, play and sing good original music.

I had no idea of what to expect from this group. After hearing their opening number "Mercy Me, I'm Lonely Tonight", a country & western song with a heavy moving bass line and good country guitar riffs by Lempke, I was prepared for an evening of musical inspiration. Unfortunately, some one forgot to do a thorough sound check



Blondo Place



Egyptisch

photos by bernice

before the concert and the full bodiness of Berkeley Music was left to the imagination of the audience.

Technically, none of the musicians are ready to be called professional and each of them are aware of their playing capabilities at this point.

Berkeley Music, collectively and individually, is experimenting with different sounds and styles. That was a very important part of their concert and will be an equally important part of their upcoming success as a music collective. Most of their mellow songs tend to be reminiscent of Carole King. I'm sure it's because they have a special feel for that light jazzy Brazilian style and not because of a conscious effort on their part to imitate King.

I was impressed by the tightness of that particular type of song, vocally and instrumentally. "Back to Boston" and "No Thanks Mister" were fine songs. Lempke played hand drums tenderly giving "Back to Boston" a solid bossa nova rhythm. Nancy Henderson's vocals and piano playing were mellow but upbeat in "No Thanks Mister". Adding to the mellow sound, Nancy Vogl played alto recorder at the right moment--an unexpected addition. The sound system didn't pick up some of the finer guitar lines. The audience missed Lempke's riffs and didn't get a chance to feel the impact of her solos.

The Berkeley Music Collective does tight Honky Tonk which always goes over big with the audience. They are funny and actually very down to earth on stage--easy to establish some kind of contact with, whether it's musically or politically. The lyrics often speak of the women's struggle--of cooptation, specifically, in "We're Hip". The audience loved it and I was amazed at the creative instrumentation--the addition of tenor sax, a ridged gourd and maracas played by

DC's own Casse Culver. Susann's gutsy bass rhythms had me rocking all night long. She's a natural bass player. I liked the tenor sax riff but it was hardly audible even in the front. Vogl is not the best tenor sax player (she has been playing for only 10 months) but what she did play came out well. Hopefully, by the next concert she will not be afraid to blow her horn and give the people in the back a chance to hear that mellow soulful sax. Not only does it add roundness to the songs, but it lets women know that it is musically valid for women to play horns. One of the strengths of Vogl's wind playing is that she knows when to do it.

Women write beautiful love songs and Berkeley Music is no exception. "Janet's Song" was the best of all their mellow tunes. The instrumentation lacked nothing. These women know what they want to hear and where they want to hear it; and they do it. Four voices, totally different, blending together to make one love song sound so good. Perhaps I'm being melodramatic about it but it's been so long since I've heard a women's music group perform original music and Berkeley was outtasite.

I was ready to hear another chorus of "Fury" written and sung by Susann Shanbaum, accompanied on piano by Nancy Henderson. Susann's voice is almost as gutsy as her bass playing. Hearing her sing was perfect for the show and Henderson plays a fine gospel beat though it could have been a little heavier.

The Berkeley Collective has a lot to learn about being able to give more body to their sound if the PA system fails to do it. It's worth the money and time. With more practice in dynamics and on their leading instruments the Berkeley Women's Music Collective will be ready to cut a record, and it may be the best we've had yet.

by phyllis

can't afford caution

Dear oob,

It is with great distress that I read your cover editorial and with a decided sigh of relief that I read frances chapman's dissent. These are indeed confused and frightening times that we live in--lesbian mothers are having their children taken away from them; the fbi uses 1950's tactics in order to uncover information about the women's movement and we all sit down and fight amongst ourselves as to the best way to promote feminism--how wonderfully simple--what the fbi doesn't succeed at doing; what the courts don't succeed at doing; what the government doesn't succeed at doing--we will do ourselves, thank you!! How simple--how stupid. In these times we cannot afford to be more careful or more cautious--we can choose that if we want to (the male-left has used that tactic against itself for years) or we can be twice as pure (another male-left tactic) OR we can be three times as outrageous and blatant about our purposes. Myself-I choose the "dangerously sloppy" tactics of frances chapman and welcome her rational dissent from "creeping paranoia". I've had enough of that--I want to live--I want to fight--I want to grow with my sisters--not against them.

Congratulations on another fine paper from a longtime fan.

In Sisterhood,

Jackie
Michigan



from *Lesbians speak out*

what saxe deserves?

Dear Sisters:

The political climate in New York right now is such that many women, including lesbians, declare Susan Saxe a terrorist; and therefore, "she deserves what she gets." It's difficult working on this when "definitions" are used as rationales.

very sincerely yours,

marina franchild

thanks to dworkin

Dear Andrea Dworkin & OOB Staff,

This is a "thank-you" letter.

First, thank you OOB for your article about the suppression of Ms. Dworkin's book by its publisher, E. P. Dutton. After reading the article, I wrote to Dutton as you suggested. Even though I had never heard of the book, I pretended in my letter that I had and was very distressed at not finding it in our local book stores. Expecting to hear nothing more about the matter, I was very surprised to get a polite note in return apologizing for my trouble and saying that a check for \$7.95 plus postage would bring me a copy. I interpreted this as "put your money where your mouth is" and decided to do just that. The other day I received a copy which brings me to the second thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Dworkin, for writing the book. Even though I haven't finished it, I like it. Furthermore it has been an invaluable help in a project on which I am working--curiously enough in Camden, N. J., where you were born. As a student at Rutgers University in Camden, I and a group of women are trying to get our library to establish and maintain a Women's Studies Section. Since I am a history major with a bent for medieval history, my part of the project is to develop a bibliography of the history of women in those times. Your bibliography has given me some terrific leads and the book, especially the section about witches, is exactly the type of alternative evaluation of events which is so desperately needed.

Again, thank you all. I hope I made Dutton squirm a little. My "mini-action" has been fun and I have reaped unexpected benefits. I wanted to tell you about the incident to let you know there are people out here who hear & care. Keep up the good work.

With love,
Margaret Amos
Cinnaminson, NJ

sound not unsound

Dear Phyllis and oob,

Casse and I were pleased that you reviewed the Berkeley Women's Music Collective concert in your last issue and that you enjoyed them as much as we did. They are a dynamite group. We would like to clarify what the problem was with the sound that night.

Casse and I, as well as the women of the band, were responsible for the sound at the concert. The sound system consisted of a combination of the Collective's system and Casse's. You stated that, "Unfortunately, someone forgot to do a thorough sound check before the concert and the full bodiness of the Berkeley music was left to the imagination of the audience."

We spent three hours checking out the sound before the concert. The main problem was that the electric guitar amps, which were not hooked up through the speaker system, were inadequate to fill the space when it was filled with people. They blended with the speakers adequately during the sound check. I don't know if you were aware of it, but we corrected the problem during intermission by raising the amps onto chairs.

We work with Athena Productions, a feminist cooperative that produces concerts. Athena did the sound for Vicky Randall, Clinch Mt. Backsteppers, Lou Crimmins and Alix Dobkin as well as the Thursday night series at Club Madame. The women in the Berkeley Collective said that we helped them create some of the best sound they have so far produced. They were our first band experience and we learned a lot.

There is going to be a benefit for Athena Productions on June 13th. Andrea Weltman from San Francisco will be singing at All Souls Church at 8:30. The money will be used to help produce better feminist concerts and improve the equipment Athena has to work with. Hope to see all your readers there.

Sincerely,

Barbara Sandstrom
Casse Culver

overlapping lesbian news

Dear Sisters,

I'm somewhat disturbed by the friction that seems to be developing between oob and Lavender Woman. I don't feel that your explanation in the March oob was really adequate, and I'm wondering if oob is getting a little funny about "the lesbian issue." Although the LW collective may have some problems, they put out a good paper--which, contrary to your assertion, does not necessarily have an audience and perspective that are distinct from oob's. I find a considerable overlap between the two papers, but appreciate and enjoy both because of their feminist energy.

sincerely,

caroline tompkins
somerville, mass.

crediting women

Dear Sisters,

I have just finished reading the April-May issue of oob which arrived in today's mail and I was very glad to see the article about the Washington, D.C. Feminist Federal Credit Union.

A group of us here in Los Angeles is organizing the proposed Los Angeles Feminist Federal Credit Union. We expect to include six NOW chapters and the Career Planning Center in our field of membership. On June 3rd we will apply for our federal charter, and we hope to open our doors in early July. We will be located at 1434 Westwood Blvd., Suite 4, Los Angeles, Ca. 90024.

To the best of my knowledge, there are now feminist credit unions functioning in several states including California. The California Feminist Federal Credit Union, with its main office in San Diego, opened their doors on March 8th. They include the San Diego NOW, the San Diego Center for Women's Studies and Services, and the Feminist Women's Health Centers. They are reopening their membership this month to add on two new NOW chapters in San Diego County and to open a branch office in San Francisco organized by Golden Gate NOW.

Representatives from both the Los Angeles and San Diego groups spoke before the Calif.

It is especially exciting to realize that the first feminist federal credit union in the nation, the Detroit Feminist Federal Credit Union, organized in the summer of 1973, now has more than a third of a million dollars in assets!

I totally agree that money is one of the most crucial means by which many women are prevented from taking control of their own lives. But it is not just money as currency, but all the emotional harassment that is associated with it, whether in the denial of credit, the demeaning ways in which many women have to work to live, or the cruel ways which it is used to set sister against sister, that defines the old "power" issue of keeping women inferior to men. The crucial thing about a credit union is that it is a membership association and a cooperative in which money is pooled to help one another overcome the financial and emotional difficulties women face. It is truly a social change institution, reflecting the very essence of feminism.

In Sisterhood,

Betty Binder

