

WEGWAY

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Cover: Agnes Denes,
Tree Mountain – A Living Time Capsule – 11.000 People. 11.000 Trees. 400 Years 1992-1996. Ylöjärvi. Finland

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*No one detects now the track of his baby shoes.
They left not even a threadlike trace of a tiny hiking-song in the air.*

Hans Arp

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*Whenever Helen seeks these perverse excesses, her regretted deeds depress her; hence,
Helen beseeches Ceres (the blessed Demeter): 'let sweet Lethe bless me, lest these recent events be remembered' –
then the empress feeds herself fermented hempseed, her preferred nepenthe.*

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LETTERS

Perhaps Jack Bruce is to blame, but as Editor and Publisher of *Wegway*, I will accept full responsibility that *Wegway* 3 had a contribution from Brad Bruce. This was a terrible error – we did not really have a contribution from Brad Bruce, we had a contribution from Brad Brace. When Brad Brace drew this mistake to my attention, which he did by the way, in a kind and courteous manner that was much more than I deserved, I had a visceral reaction. I realized this was a very bad thing, possibly the worst typographical error that anyone should have to endure. Our names are important to us, and this is especially the case with primary culture producers. By their works ye shall know them, but not unless you get their names right.

The point of this magazine is to provide a venue for creative people who make things that aren't easily placed in most other publications. Many fascinating things don't see the light of day because publishing formats, policies and missions filter them out. *Wegway* on the other hand, is without themes or general directions except for those I cannot help, the ones that surface due to my unexamined taste. I'll work on that, and I'll try to proofread a little more carefully.

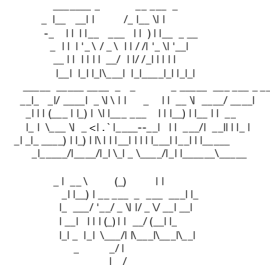
I also want to mention *Wegway's* First Annual Juried Exhibition that took place at Toronto's Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts in March, 2002. I am very grateful to the three jurors who generously donated their time: Gary Michael Dault, Stewart Pollock and John Scott.

The show was organised to raise funds for *Wegway* (the application fee), and that it did because the jurors worked for free. They selected seventeen artists and twenty-three individual works for the group show at Propeller and as promised, all these works are reproduced in this issue of *Wegway*.

The Second Annual *Wegway* Juried Exhibition is in August 2003 at SPIN Gallery, 156/158 Bathurst Street, Toronto. SPIN is a large space and the Director, Stewart Pollock, says he is hoping to see a selection of sculptures, videos, installations and new media in addition to wall works. It is up to you, dear artist reader, to make this happen – send your slides, be in a show at SPIN Gallery, have your work published in *Wegway*, and while you're at it, keep *Wegway* happening.

Steve Armstrong.

Brad Brace – The 12hr-ISBN-JPEG Project



<http://bbrace.laughingsquid.net/creative-cv.html>

NIGHT VISION : NOTES FROM THE CURATOR

Late in September 2001, some weeks after the 9/11 attacks, I attended several evening gatherings of artists in galleries and watering holes around the city. Many of us had been avoiding venturing out to social or public events, and several of us had not spoken to one another since before the attacks. Ground Zero was still smoking, most of us were back at work, but no one was really functioning normally and no one was even thinking about the true meaning of “recovery” just yet. War was on the horizon. We began to talk of our experiences and feelings of the past weeks, and also about our work and what we thought we should or shouldn’t be doing as artists.

One question that came up was whether it would be appropriate or even possible to make work that responded directly to the attacks. Then there was the question of whether it would be possible to make work that didn’t respond to them in some way. With the events of 9/11 we had immediately experienced the recontextualizing of artworks already installed in galleries which found their meanings irrevocably changed, sometimes much to the chagrin of the artists: Nancy Davenport’s digitally manipulated photographs of people jumping from buildings, and Wolfgang Staehle’s real time video panorama of lower Manhattan are two well-known examples of this kind of diverted meaning.

There was another, more plaintive question thrown out by several artists: how could we work at all at a time like this? What importance could our own stories have, dwarfed as they are by the magnitude of this catastrophe? Is making art irrelevant right now? It was this question that prodded me, since I found myself grappling with a rather different source of discomfort. My own work had long been drawn from the same image banks that were being used to illustrate the current unfolding crisis in newspapers and on television: satellite transmissions of war, declassified Department of Defense diagrams, Gulf War night vision imagery shot from the ‘91 evening news. Far from feeling suddenly irrelevant, I felt I was being shadowed by an awkward sense of responsibility. How had the events of September changed the significance of these—my—subjects? Did I have the emotional fiber and the creative flexibility to handle the changes? What part of these huge and complicated subjects should I be addressing? What was I doing working this field to begin with if I couldn’t handle it now that I’d experienced a catastrophic event first-hand? Was my problem the sudden lack of mediation?

Was I too close?

JOY GARNETT



Kill Box 2001,
oil on canvas, 38" x 48"

JOY GARNETT



Autonomic 2001,
oil on canvas, 59" x 76"

The specialized niche where I had done my research and made my work was now no longer private; it had become a stage for mainstream production and consumption. Could one conduct a critical artistic analysis just as events unfolded, almost journalistically, when so little was clear and emotions were running riot? What would constitute a clear line of inquiry? What kind of art could significantly approach what so many had witnessed unmediated and en masse? And how could we expect anything we did to take on meaning or make an impact when we were already becoming fatigued by the 24/7 onslaughts of imagery and commentary? In a matter of weeks since 9/11 we had become a super-saturated public, and yet what we actually knew amounted to very little. What possible difference could an artistic treatment of these images and issues make, and how could that compete with mainstream sensationalism in this most competitive attention economy?

I was not alone in these thoughts. There are many artists, both in the online community and in the traditional gallery realm, who have engaged the subjects of networks and surveillance, optics, military technology, and media images of war. I knew of artists and media theorists who called this their territory, and who had developed analytical, critical approaches to dealing with our culture's fetishistic relationship to apocalypse and destruction, communications and control, and to the ambivalently aestheticized images generated by the military and by the media. These issues had importance in theoretical, philosophical and artistic circles, long before they had become, in a shallow simplified form, ubiquitous 24-hour news items.

By the end of October, and after much discussion, I finally felt clear that this was not the time to turn away from these subjects. It seemed that this was an important moment to bring a group of such artists together.

At the outset of the current war in Afghanistan, the U.S. Army coined the motto, "We own the night," referring specifically to their advanced infrared and heat seeking equipment, and to the unparalleled technological advantage afforded them during nighttime maneuvers. But this show's title, "Night Vision," is nothing if not ironic: to be able

to see in the dark does not necessarily mean one can make sense of what one sees. Since the language and the job of art is to raise and reveal complexities rather than attempt to resolve them, we may take advantage of its unorthodox methods of inquiry and multiple readings. Art offers us a respite and an alternative to the one-liner narratives we have become so inured to, whether they are commercial or entertainment-driven, newsworthy and informational, or activist/political in nature. Art offers us rare protection against the effect of psychic numbing produced by a bi-polar and overzealous mainstream culture.

Joy Garnett, New York, May/June, 2002

WEGWAY'S JURIED SHOW

Alison Owen, Betty Kaser, Chriseddy, Christian Mcleod, David Griffin, E. Nancy Stevens, Fang Tong, Heather Horton, Jennifer Linton, Margaux Williamson, Paul Grajauskas, Peter Owen, René Price, Richard Kirkley, Robin Hesse, Ross Racine, Susan Lukachko

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SUSAN LUKACHKO

untitled,
paint and graphite on paper board, 26" x 31"

JENNIFER LINTON



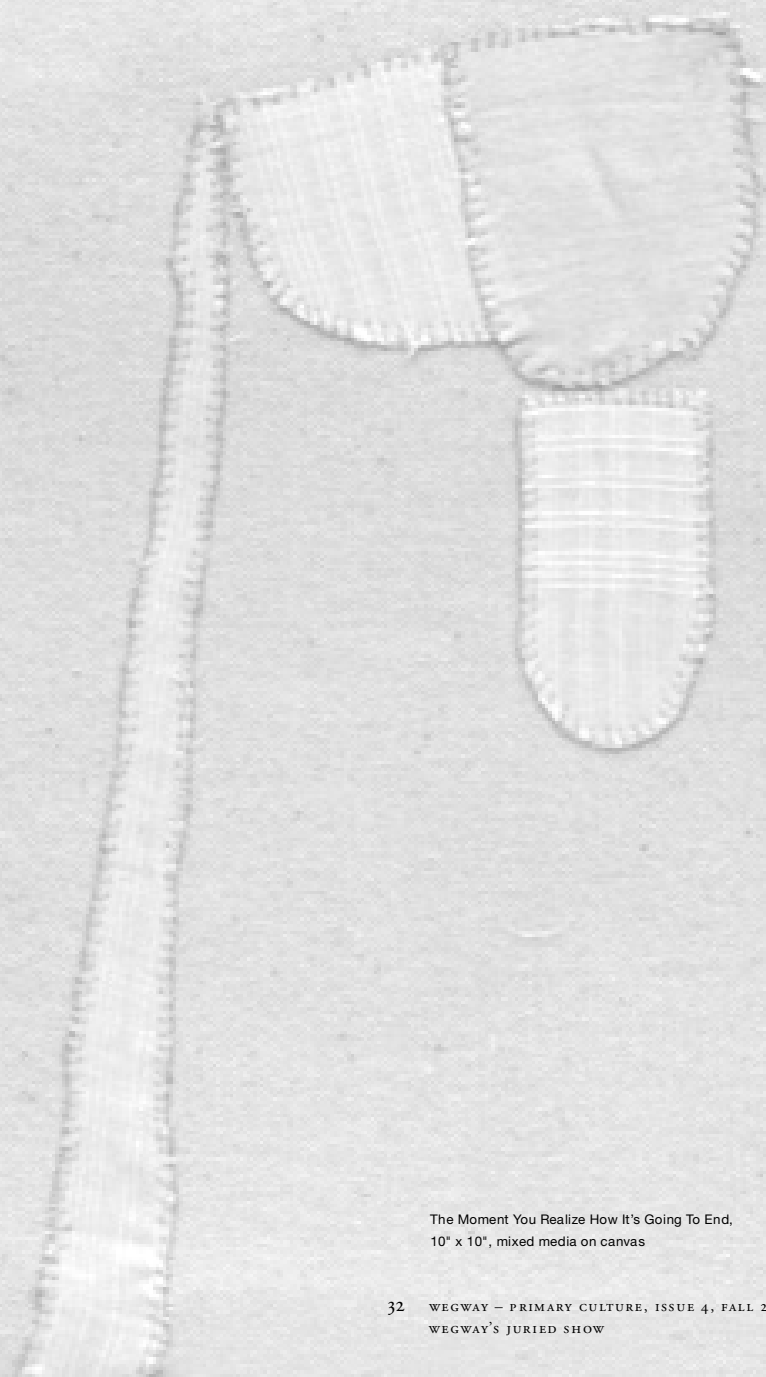
The Rape of Europa,
coloured pencil and drawing ink on mylar, 25" x 20"

JENNIFER LINTON



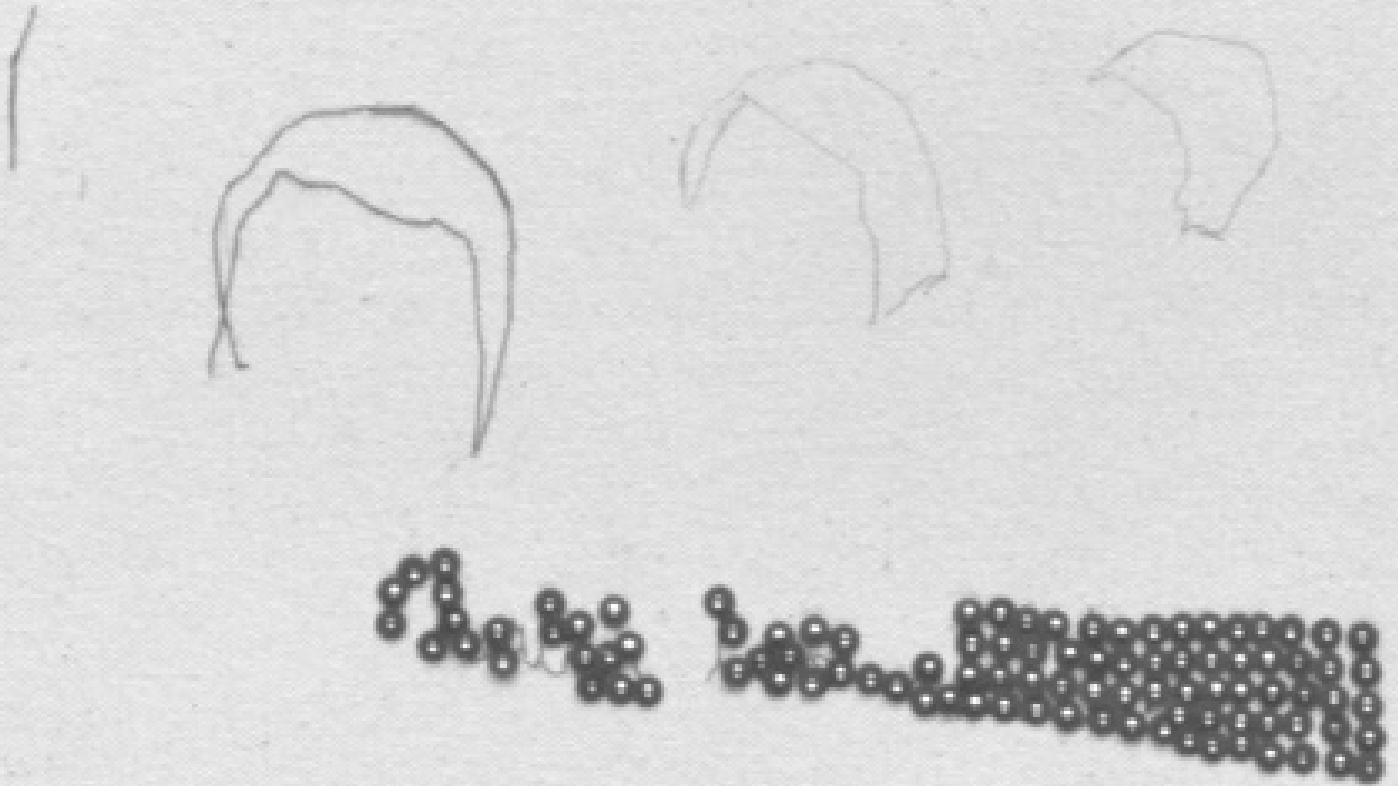
The Child Bride,
coloured pencil, drawing ink and composition leaf on mylar, 38" x 28"

ALISON OWEN



The Moment You Realize How It's Going To End,
10" x 10", mixed media on canvas

ALISON OWEN



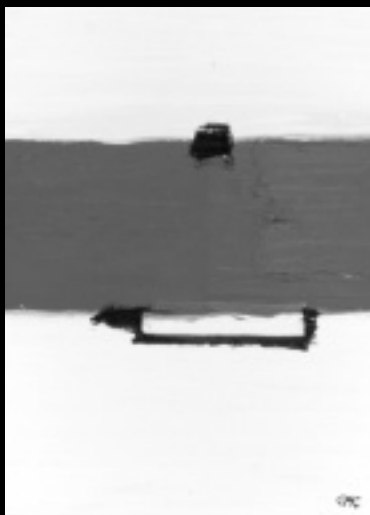
All My Hair-dos,
9" x 10", mixed media on canvas

BETTY KASER



Red Hair,
graphite and oilstick on mylar, 23.2" x 19"

CHRISTIAN MCLEOD



Bot Flag,
oil on canvas, 16" x 12"

DAVID GRIFFIN



Fear of God,
oil on wood, 48" x 38"

DAVID GRIFFIN

Shade,
48" x 48", oil on wood

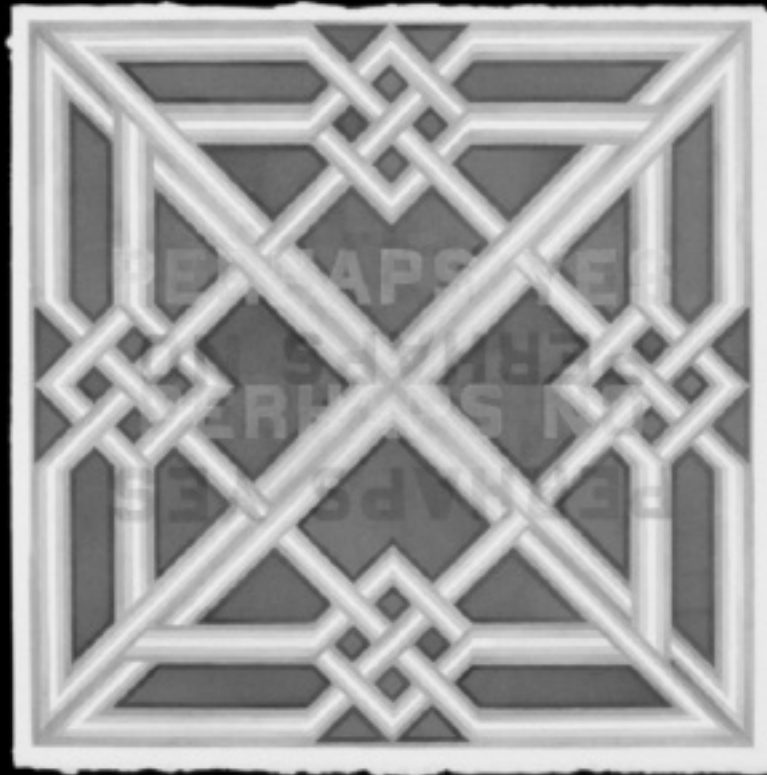
PETER OWEN



The Last Person to Understand,
oil on panel, 13" x 13"



Outskirts II,
oil on panel, 13" x 13"



Perhaps Yes... ,
acrylic on paper, 21" x 21"



FANG TONG

Chinese,
oil on canvas, 39" x 39"



Ben's Cup,
acrylic on paper, 8" x 10"



Shooting Star,
charcoal on paper, 18" x 26"

HEATHER HORTON



Pear,
oil on canvas, 6" x 8"



84 Car-crushed Pop Cans Installed on the Abandoned Lister Block Building,
Downtown Hamilton, found pop cans, wood slats and aluminium paint, photograph 30" x 20"



No Name Neighbourhood,
inkjet print, 27" x 34"



Invisacar,
Ekta Print, 27" x 34"



Future Pond Scene,
mixed media, 36" x 48"



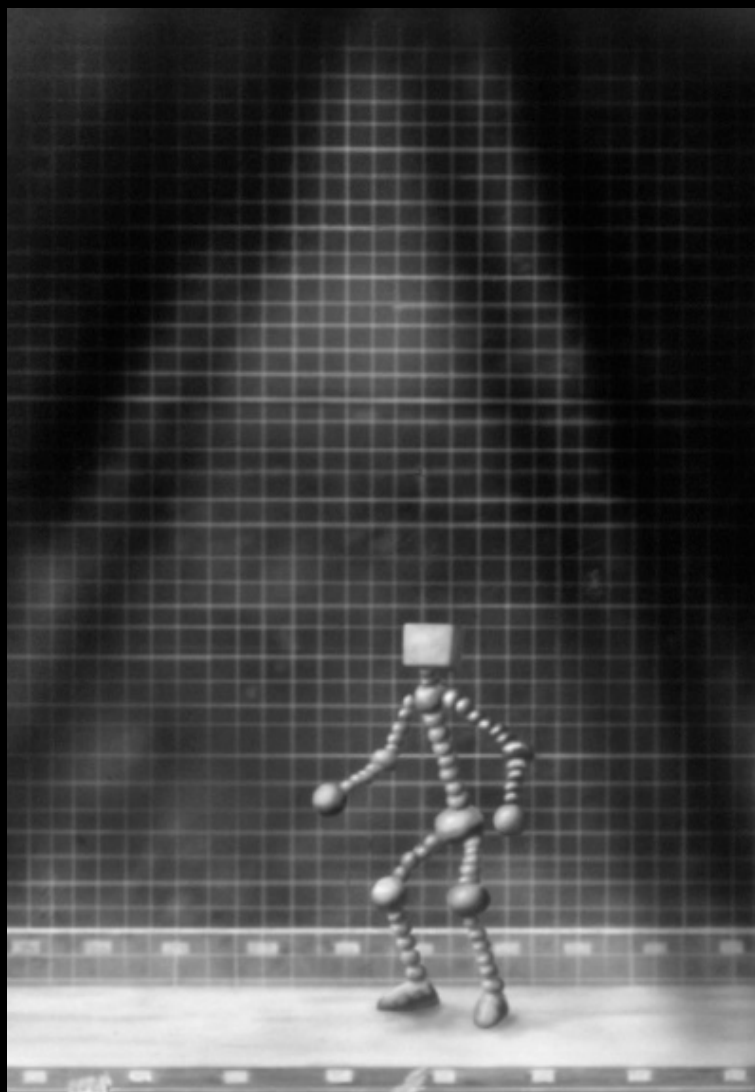
The Colour Diary,
mixed media, 52" x 42" x 8"

ROSS RACINE



Robot Life 2,
digital painting on photo paper, 20" x 15"

ROSS RACINE



Stage,
digital painting on photo paper, 20" x 15"

I BURN, I BLAZE, WRETCH THAT I AM, I AM CONSUMED BY FIRE.

For those of us working in the cultural industries, and in particular for those involved with fine art, death is about the smartest career move we can make. For an artist with a decent reputation, prices will treble the minute they do the decent thing and die. This is because creative types are prone to making pronouncements that embarrass those investing in them when they're alive. For example, they might contradict the views of a critic or insult collectors by deciding that a certain part of their output suffers from some ontological defect. It isn't until an artist is dead that their oeuvre can be fully shaped and interpreted by the bureaucrats running the institution of art, because a living artist is a loose cannon who might blow up in their faces at any moment. Therefore, it is all the more surprising that so many artists leave no proper instructions for their funerals. This is not a fault I wish to be accused of, so here's what I'd like to happen when I'm incinerated. That said, I'm not particularly bothered about where I'm cremated, if I happen to die in New York or LA, then there doesn't seem that much point flying my body back to London. However, I would like my ashes scattered on the Thames from Waterloo Bridge. Sweet Thames run swiftly long after I end my song.

As mourners enter the chapel the music they hear should be *Sing For The Future Variations* by Cornelius Cardew as played by Andrew Bottrill.

Once everyone is seated, a coffin is to be carried into the chapel. An actress dressed as a vampire will emerge from the coffin and make her way over to a video suite, which she'll turn on (exactly what this means is down to the interpretation of the actress, but she'll get fresh with the TV before discreetly punching the play button). My face will be seen on the TV screen and I'll give the following short speech:

You thought you'd got rid of me, but you haven't. For most of my life, whenever I had an amusing idea I'd be told by those in positions of authority or responsibility: "it's your funeral". Well today it is my funeral, and having had the foresight to plan it in advance, I'd be enjoying it if only I was here in more than just the flesh and digital form. While I've anticipated these last delicious moments for much of my life, I must apologise for us not being fully able to enjoy them together. As you already know, I've been unfortunately indisposed. However, video conferencing has enabled me to come back from the dead. So it's good-bye from me to the institution of art. Death is a numinous object, and so I offer you my spirit in a spirit of generosity and I hope that it is in this spirit that other spirits will receive it. The life I lived on this planet was almost grand. Unlike many others I didn't starve, although I did have to struggle against the fetters of the commodity form. I wasn't born, I came from Saturn, and now I'm heading back through the space ways.

Death is not true, and that's why capitalism tries to murder the dead. I still exist in the living memory of those who have yet to join me as members of the alien undead. It's after the end of the world and we are the zombies who will come back to bury our dead, so that the living may blaze trails to new modes of being. I remain a spectre bent on sabotaging the spectacle of my own death, such is the fate of those who take on the destiny of objects. Already there have been several premature notices of my death. So death, where is thy sting? Who I am cannot be satisfactorily summed up in words. I am nothing, therefore I must become everything. If I am dead, then yet I live. White on white translucent light. Max Schreck was my father. Cleopatra my mother. The pyramids are falling now, the pyramids will fall forever. The stars are my grandparents. Dismember me this way. I left my body for sexual experimentation after my spirit eloped along the spaceways, and I can tell you now that I preferred having sex while I was still alive. However, I did give several necrophiles a thrill and a half. I know this already because I am adept at time travel. Rub out the word, now there's the rub. Rosebud, Rosebud, where art thou? I am weary. I cannot rest. Please mother let me in. I speak the words of a dead man. I am reanimated. I'm coming at you live from the last cardboard cemetery in Hollywood. I didn't want to die in the TV, celluloid was my fetish. Video becomes reality and reality becomes video. I am not a media prophet. One can make use of technology without making a fetish of it. UFOs are massing in the skies of the Earth. Let me leave this world behind. I am happy because I shall never be at rest. You don't need rocket science to get where I've gone. You follow the astral pathways, travelling along beams of light. When you lie down at night, you may feel your body tilting first this way and then that. Don't attempt to arrest this movement. Allow your mind to spring upwards and then look back at yourself. Leave your body behind. There is a silver chord and there is a black cloud. You must command the black cloud to break the silver chord, only then will you be free. There is nothing here for me any longer. I love you all, which is why I must leave you behind. Don't let my pyrotechnics blind you to the material basis of avant-bard technopaganism. The truth is socially constructed and constantly shape shifts;

it changes us as we change it. Having said that, I must say farewell and wish you good luck. Eventually, you will follow me. Sing, sing of the space ways! Dust I am not, to dust I will not be returning, all that's left is the burning. LOVE! DEATH! SEX! EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING! Please don't feel sorrow in anticipation of the death that awaits you, it is one of the few natural phenomena left in this world. When you go home cover your eyes with a blindfold, then get someone to remove it to let in the light. I burn, I blaze, wretch that I am, I am consumed by fire...

While the video is playing my body should be brought into the chapel and as the coffin moves forward into the flames, the video monitor will cut to images of a burning Wicker Man. The chapel fills with music, the classic northern soul cut *Burn, Baby, Burn* by Mel Williams plays as the incineration begins. This tune will be followed by Sun Ra's *Space Is The Place* and the mourners can exit while that spins. Each mourner is to be handed a pine cone and a blindfold as they leave.

NO FLOWERS, CHARITABLE DONATIONS INSTEAD TO HELP THOSE FROM OUTSIDE THE OVERDEVELOPED WORLD.

EXIT

