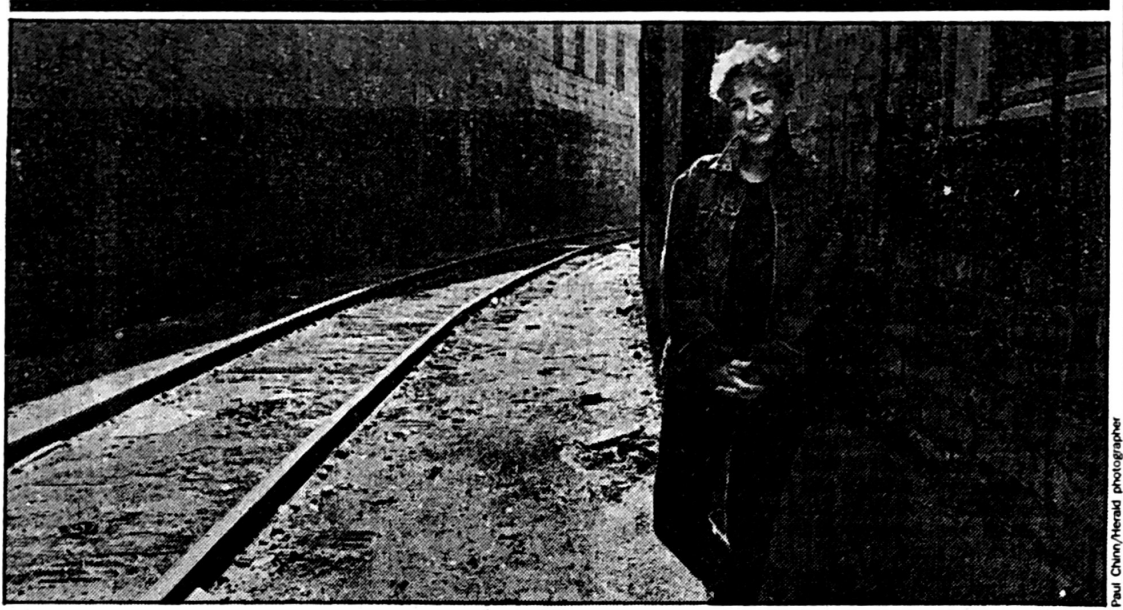


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**Director Joy Silverman on the new LACE**



Paul Chinn/Herald photographer

## LACE reopens with homage to TV generation

By Hunter Drohojowska

**T**oday we welcome back one of L.A.'s most productive and consistently adventurous art galleries: L.A. Contemporary Exhibitions. The new, improved LACE is inaugurating its 3,000-square-foot building downtown at 1804 Industrial St. with a block party of epic proportions. Everyone is invited, at no charge, between 8 p.m. and midnight tonight, to see the Compton High School Marching Band, the punked-out polka-playing Polkacides and the San Francisco psychedelic band the Sisters of the Gaga Dada. And that's not to mention the opening exhibition of art, video, performance, poetry and fiction called "TV Generations," organized by John Baldessari and Bruce Yonemoto.

It was just three years ago that LACE hired the redoubtable Joy Silverman as director. Under the leadership of former director Marc Pally, from 1978 to 1983, LACE had become the most active venue in L.A. for younger artists and performance work. When Pally left to concentrate on his own art, both the LACE board and the newly hired Silverman targeted a larger building in a better location as a top priority.

Silverman, 33, came to LACE from Washington, D.C., where she had been assistant director of an alternative space called Washington Project for the Arts. There, she spearheaded WPA's move to two different quarters, each more spacious and accommodating than the last. With an exhausted sigh, Silverman notes, "This is the third time I've done this." But the situation in L.A. proved to be a different sort of challenge.

In Washington, she had been able to get materials and labor donated by different construction firms. Because of L.A.'s strict codes and the building's need for earthquake reinforcement, she couldn't rely strictly on donated resources. Instead, the Community Redevelopment Agency came to the

rescue. After buying the building for \$315,000, LACE had to spend \$270,000 for renovation. The CRA loaned LACE \$228,000. The results are an impressive, sophisticated space with four live-in lofts for artists, a downstairs exhibition space, bookstore, office and storage space, and upstairs performance space with wooden floors and lighting grid.

Architect Jon Thogmartin took his design clues from the brick arches over the windows and vaulted a few of the ceilings. Doors are painted turquoise, and some of the trim is chartreuse or pink. In the lobby, a digital monitor rolls through the names of major donors. Thogmartin walled in the triangular back patio and added an exterior stairway that leads to the upstairs lofts and performance space. Support columns were removed to unclutter performance and exhibition spaces. "He had to put his ego aside to do this building, because the first thing

decorated the men's room. Mitchell Syrop designed the exhibition poster. And much of the labor, especially the painting of walls, was donated by sympathetic artists like Walter Lab, or Jack Marquette of the Anti-Club.

The bookstore, managed by artist Nancy Barton, will be open until 8 p.m. during the week, later on weekends and evenings of performances. A coffee bar and extensive selection of hard-to-find catalogs and texts encourage visitors to stay and read.

Silverman says that LACE should be more than ever, a place to support artists. And a place of education. Through USC extension, LACE is running classes on the history of video and performance art. "The way I saw this building is to be stimulating the process as much as showing the end product," Silverman explains. She cites Re Cher Chez, a performance workshop led by Mabou Mines founder Ruth Maleczech, which is sponsored jointly

money, but a lot of programs don't need to be expensive."

As an example, she points to an administrative assistant with a degree in film from UCLA who would like to organize an afternoon festival of 16mm film. "You (photocopy) a flyer and do it informally," says Silverman. "Or we'll have afternoon performances of new music where the artists can have the money from the gate."

Symbolic of the multimedia focus of LACE is the exhibition "TV Generations," which includes work by a range of artists, from such established individuals from the '60s as Ed Kienholz and Lawrence Weiner to young artists of the '80s like John Maggiotto, whose work is on the catalog cover, *Kathe Burkhart, Jeffrey Vallance and Mitchell Syrop*. In addition to the static work, there will be readings of poetry and fiction selected by Tim Martin with performances each Monday evening (see accompanying schedule).

Organizers John Baldessari and Bruce Yonemoto chose video installations by Bruce Nauman, Peter D'Agostino, Max Almy, Jim Shaw and Lisa Weger. Yonemoto explains: "I was inspired by John Hanhardt (curator of film and video at the Whitney Museum of American Art), who is a supporter of installation video art because it redesigns television. It changes the relationship of the viewer to TV itself." "Very broadly," adds Baldessari about his view of "TV Generations," "it means those artists whose sensibility had been affected by TV in particular and media in general. I tried to include as many young artists as I could, since they have been more exposed to the medium than most of us, almost to the point where they think of it as air.

Says Silverman: "I think it is a perfect show for the opening. Here, we will be able to do more for artists. This place may encourage artists to stay in this city. It is another venue."

Hunter Drohojowska writes regularly about art for the Herald.

### Schedule

**Feb. 24:** At 7:30 p.m., there will be a panel discussion on "TV Generations" featuring Baldessari and Yonemoto, photographer Judy Fiskin and Whitney curator John Hanhardt; \$5, \$4 for LACE members.

Performances are at 8 p.m.  
Admission is \$7, \$5 for LACE members:

**Feb. 25:** Perry Hoberman — "Dead Spaces/Living Rooms, a 3D Performance"

**March 3:** Ann Magnuson — "Tammy's Nightmare"

**March 10:** Connie Hatch — "Serving the Status Quo"

**March 24:** Poetry and fiction readings by writers included in the show and others

**March 31:** Gretchen Bender — "Dumping Core"

that goes in the budget is design," Silverman explains. "There are a lot of things he would have liked to do, but we couldn't afford them."

LACE hired artists to create some of the smaller rooms. A video-viewing den, with TV-gray seats and walls, was designed by artist Jim Isermann; during the exhibition, it will feature Bruce Nauman tapes. The bathrooms, too, were designed by artists. Lari Pittman papered the walls of the women's room and painted a garland of hanging gourds around the ceiling; Dede Bazyk

with Otis/Parsons. She adds that LACE has two new services for artists: interdisciplinary grants of \$3,000 to \$5,000 for collaborative projects involving artists from different disciplines; and On-Line, which offers L.A. video artists the use of professional post-production facilities at reduced rates. "LACE will be more of a center with an ability for things to happen. The programs that I think were successful at the other LACE, like video and performance, will have more space to develop. They may not have more