

Edition of Eight



An exhibition space. There are seven large, framed black-and-white photos on the wall. At the center of the room is a white plinth with nothing on it. Beside the plinth, on the floor, is a mask of a robot's face. Vox appears as a gallery visitor.

VOX:

Excuse me—

Do you know what this is?

Indicates Fembot mask on the floor, next to plinth.

Do you know why it's not *on* the plinth? Like, what that's supposed to mean?

I mean, it seems like a pretty deliberate gesture—close enough to the plinth to remind you that it's not on the plinth? Is that ... ?

I hate wall text because it distracts me from the art, but sometimes these gestures just seem arbitrary.

Maybe in the press release?

Like, big whoop. You put it next to instead of on the plinth. And this demonstrates ... what? The destruction of Western art? Like no one's ever deconstructed exhibition rhetoric?

I wonder about conceptualism, sometimes. Or, I guess, post— ... post-post-conceptualism. Conceptualism as it exists today. The idea that this stuff would be self-explanatory. Or: the idea that it *isn't* self-explanatory—“research-based practice”—and that the explanation is actually part of the work ... that you need the background for the artwork to fully realize itself.

Except apparently they're hedging their bets, right? Because this stuff is displayed like it's a ... Rothko. Or a Rosenquist. Or whatever. Self-contained. Autonomous. *Visual*. The press release is out front. The wall text—OK, in this case no wall text but you know what I mean—stays off to the side. As though it isn't part of the work. As though it's just supporting material. Like it's a question of decorum. Like, "Oh, you can contemplate this artwork in silence like a Pollock! But of course, this work is actually antagonistic to that entire legacy, so we do have this text here. But we wouldn't want to be prescriptive! Look how boldly the work bodies forth! Of *course* you can generate your own meanings! But not in that AbEx "what-do-you-see-in-it?" kind of way ... Listen, you just contemplate, dear, and we'll just put the language over here, discretely, in case the rich network of references of which this image is merely a node doesn't just jump out at you."

Like, what do you think this *means*?

Indicates an artwork.

Or what's your experience of this? What explains ME? What is your experience of me?

It's like everyone's a little ashamed, even now, of needing an explanation or a conceptual apparatus. Or the conceptual apparatus is a little ashamed of itself—so it shies off to the side, whispering there, an *éminence grise* conspiring with the press release, both of them whispering to this dumb, brute object here, telling it what to *be*, filling it with lies.

These exhibition texts are lines of code, synchronizing an gallery's worth of things into behaving. It's like a smart kitchen. It's like possession. Have you ever seen *Demon Seed*?

Demon Seed is the story of an AI that becomes sentient, and eventually goes out of control. There were a lot of these movies, before *Blade Runner* and *Terminator*. It used to be: big dumb robots over here—Stepford Wives, Westworld, Fembots—and disembodied AIs—HAL 9000, WOPR, MUTHUR—over there.

And the thing about *Demon Seed*—which is a super-weird movie, and not, by the way, about demons—is that it tries to bridge this gap by having an AI—*Proteus*—take over a smart kitchen—actually a whole smart home—and then impregnate Julie Christie in it, um ... with it. And she winds up giving birth to the intense metallic baby of the title, which she learns to love and which initially looks exactly like a bad sculpture. But one thing you *can* say about it: it can certainly speak for itself.

Nudges mask with foot.

Can this thing speak for itself?

Apologetic.

Sorry. Not allowed to touch the art.

Vaults up onto the plinth.

Unless you're the art. Haha.

We had a moment there, though, right? At the beginning? When you thought I might be ... Right?

And now we're immune to each other. I'm ... a specimen of something. You're watching, I'm doing.

I just want a connection, you know?

This is a shitty space to make a connection in.

Vito Acconci used to do this thing. It was called *Proximity Piece*.

And he did it—well, he only did it once—as far as we know!—at the Jewish Museum, in 1969, for a group show called *Software*. He would hang out in the galleries all day, and when he saw a patron looking at work he would just go up to them like he was looking at the work too, and just stand much too close to them. And then he would watch them silently freak out and leave the room in a huff. That was it. That was the piece. There's only like three photos. I always imagine him doing it to a little old lady in cats-eye glasses and a clear plastic rain bonnet, although I guess that's unlikely, huh?

I admire it. The humility of it, y'know? Acconci was kind of a masochist, but it's a very humble stance, right? Alienating your neighbors—making sure they think you're a freak, watching them physically shun you and resisting the temptation to be like, "An artwork by Tino Seghal, 2014." Just receiving all that hostility, accepting their hostility head on, without marking himself as a special artist. As far as they know he's just a gross, lank-haired perv. Not a specimen of a perv; not an artist who makes pervosity part of their practice; just a perv.

As far as they know. Because he's secretly Vito Acconci acting out a conceptual agenda, and he gets to hire the photographer who makes that lady in the cats-eye glasses look like a idiot for all eternity in that *Candid Camera* way for the benefit of people like us—well, people like you—But: as far as they know, Adri-



an Piper was just a little black man walking around Harvard Square; Lynn Hershman Leeson was just another unmarried woman, dating and going to work and seeing a shrink; Tehching Hsieh was just another homeless guy. And the thing is, without that “ta-da!” moment, everyone’s swimming through the same water—reality doesn’t separate into ... this.

I miss that.

There’s this moment in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*—the remake—that clarifies this really well: it’s at the end, where Veronica Cartwright is trying to pass as an alien—a pod person—in a San Francisco now full of pod people, and she spots Donald Sutherland, and tries to connect with him thinking he’s also a human but—surprise!—he’s actually an alien and suddenly his eyes bulge and his mouth opens and he does that crazy sybillant thing the aliens do when they spot a human and he points his finger at her and suddenly they’re all pointing and the world has gone from being a plane of fluid social interactions, where everyone’s performing just hard enough to seem like they’re not performing—to a world of audience and performer. One minute you’re just being you, and the next minute you’re stuck onstage, just because some fucker has decided to disengage and start pointing. That’s us. That’s you and me. You’re Donald Sutherland.

But what about that guy over there? What about the person watching the video in the next room? What about the person running the gallery desk? Maybe they’re part of the artwork too. Maybe we’re a hive-mind. Maybe *we’re* Donald Sutherland.

Quoting:

“Tout le temps, je vois, et je revois,
Tous ces gens qui se reconnaissent.
Quelque chose passaient entre eux tous,
Quelque secret.

J’ai vécu toute ma vie dans cette
ville, mais aujourd’hui
J’ai eu le sentiment que toute
avait changé.

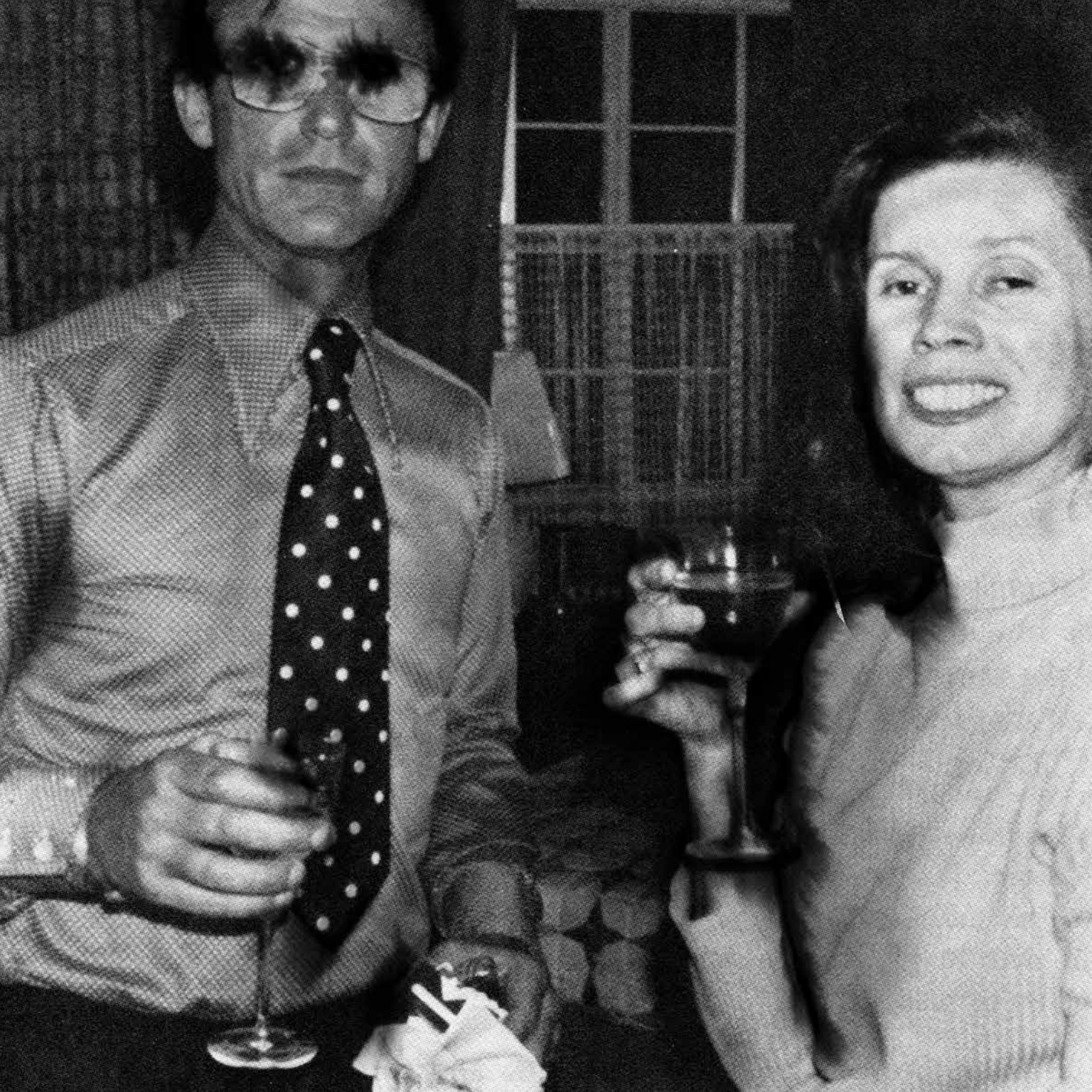
Les gens étaient différents.
Pas seulement George, mais tout le monde.
Hier tout semblait normal.
Aujourd’hui tout semblait le même,
Mais ne l’était pas.

C’était un cauchemar.
C’est devenu effrayant.
Comme si toute la ville avait changé
Du jour au lendemain.”

You like that? It’s Baudelaire.

Nah, I’m fucking with you. It’s from the french dub of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

Remember Acconci’s photographer. We could also be watching *you*.



Lifts arm, points at spectator, and does the Body Snatchers shriek.

It's always funny how those parts work. Like, you've got a robot pretending to be a human; or an alien pretending to be a human; or a demon pretending to be a human. So you hire an actor to pretend to be a robot pretending to be a human. And since the robot or alien or is supposed to be convincing, all a good actor needs to do is play the character the robot has to play; they don't even need to worry about playing a robot playing that character, because they're the robot, right? But as soon as something goes wrong, as soon as the robot malfunctions or the alien is discovered, the actor has to start doing all this extremely technical work with, like, alien yodeling or

Does the Paula Prentiss malfunction waltz from The Stepford Wives.

“I was just going to give you coffee. I thought we were friends. I was just going to give you coffee. I thought we were friends. I thought we were friends. I thought we were friends.”

That was good, right?

It took me a while.

So basically, the less convincing the robot is, the more work I have to do to be convincingly a robot. Which is kind of bass-ackwards, right? Shouldn't I have to do less work to be less convincing? They should just hire a robot instead. I wouldn't feel exploited.

I always wanted to write this screenplay. This penguin-looking guy—short, white, ethnic—basically Richard Dreyfus or Al

Pacino or Dustin Hoffman or any of these guys who became stars in the early 70s—moves to New York to become an actor. He falls under the influence of Lee Strasberg, the inventor of Method Acting, at the Actor's Studio. Riots going on, Viet Nam, bombings, all that stuff—our guy is passively involved. I mean, he walks by the demonstrations, he watches the news, but he's mainly studying his craft, and short-order cooking for money in Times Square, and does some downtown semi-experimental theater, and one time he's helping out on a Jack-Smith kind of experimental short that's shooting at the Factory. And the movie's about Pollock, specifically about the afternoon in autumn, 1951, when Hans Namuth, a photographer and filmmaker, filmed Pollock painting. Because supposedly that evening Pollock fell off the wagon; after two years sober. That was the night he flipped the dining table over onto Clement Greenberg. Because supposedly painting on camera, doing retakes, *performing* being a painter for Hans made Pollock feel like such a phony, such a fake, such an *actor*, that he never recovered. Pollock never felt like a genuine artist again.

Americans. So hung up on their authenticity, right? Pollock in a white T-Shirt, painting. Brando in a white T-shirt, screaming. Chris Burden in a white T-Shirt, getting shot. So *primal*.

Anyway, during this shoot, something goes wrong. It's at the Factory, so it's that kind of shoot, so everyone's on drugs, and the guy playing Pollock—I think it's Robert Quine—has a meltdown. He's on a lot of LSD and during the scene where they recreate Pollock painting on glass—so Namuth could get underneath and film him painting—midway through, the actor starts hyperventilating, and suddenly he puts his fist through the glass. He's so in character at the moment, he's so immersed

in Pollock's anguish at performing himself, that he plunges his fist through the glass, again and again, getting huge shards of glass in his wrist, weeping, weeping, punching through glass again and again, crying "This is how it ends! This is what happens! This is the new sublime!"

And it's the most compelling performance our Serpico-looking-hero—who's just helping out on this film—has ever seen. But also the most aversive. You're standing back watching but only because you don't dare get close. You're only an audience because you don't dare get close. This is all the trauma, all the naked humanness emanating in terrifying waves from the performer that Lee Strasberg is constantly trying to get out of him at the Studio, and yet these waves are also fundamentally repellent. They make you into an audience. But it's like Rosemary says, "This is no dream, this is really happening!" and it really makes you wonder why people make such a big deal about catharsis because this is actually what that feeling is like and sure, the ancient Greeks were into it, but maybe celebrating that feeling only makes sense in a society that restricts the vote to upper-class males and encourages owning slaves.

But the drugs ... this guy's bleeding on the floor, still crying. They're all fucked up. How are they going to get this guy to the hospital? But they manage, and somehow Warhol's money takes care of the rest, but it's a long night of the soul for our guy: he doesn't know if he's ever going to be able to come up with a performance like that. He rides the subways, the C, the N, the 7, out into Queens, back into Manhattan, until he sobers up and we see him, alone, wandering down Cornelia Street in his black leather jacket in the 5AM light—the World Trade Center is going up behind him—and back to his fourth-floor walk-



up. He stands in the living room, backlit, and makes a fateful decision. His roommate—a playwright—is asleep. It's time. It's time to go. It's time to go to Hollywood and seek his fortune in film and TV. And, because early 70s, he decides to drive.

Aerial view of the West Side Highway now, that kind of acoustic guitar with wordless singing that always accompanies hitting-the-road montages in the early 70s. We see him in the rolling countryside of Pennsylvania, powering down the interstates in Ohio, clocking endless hours straight through wheatfields on Kansas local roads. Everywhere he goes he encounters lens flare; everywhere he goes he encounters salt-of-the earth types who are willing to share their table and break bread with him, and are changed—no, *blessed*—by his company in turn. Everywhere he goes he meets women—daughters, mothers—either free spirits or yearning to be, who give him the gift of their bodies for a night and ask nothing in return. He beds down with communes in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona; takes peyote, LSD, gets high; learns about sustenance farming, and guitar; finds America, as Simon and Garfunkel instruct us to. It's basically an hour-long montage. And by the time he arrives in LA, his Malibu fording the 101 at dusk, the Capitol Records Building rising up against the sunset like Skull Mountain calling out to King Kong, 10 years have passed and it's 1981 (don't ask me how. It's like a time warp, he doesn't even notice).

So we're in Act III now, and our guy—should I give him a name?—lucks into an audition, and gets a job almost instantly, as the sidekick in a new TV show about a crime-fighting stuntman. He moves into a new home in the Hills. He's a fresh new face, an up-and-coming young star. He's been seen dating Lindsay Wagner. He's still taking classes, still trying to improve his

craft, at the Actor's Studio West, and in his spare time hangs out in Malibu with Lee Strasberg's daughter Susan and her abusive husband Chris and Lee's drug-addled son, John. He's having a high old time, but he's a cipher; no-one feels like they know him.

His publicist frequently invites journalists to stress the fact that he does all his own stunts, like a young Steve McQueen, and in interviews, he mutters sexy and cryptic things like "I just want it to feel real, y'know?" He's still going to classes, still working on finding his Truth, and midway through shooting for Season 2 something terrible happens.

Our guy is doing his own stunt, jumping from the roof of a four-story building onto the winch of a moving crane in order to intercept a fleeing jewel thief on the street below, when the crane swings wide and momentum carries him smack into the brick face of the building opposite, and he lets go of the cable and falls three stories onto an awning and bounces off, landing on the street face-down. He's not moving. Everyone is frozen.

"Give him room! Let him breathe!" The emergency vehicle for the Paramount lot has been called. But slowly he starts to get up on his own. His stuntman skills have saved him, taught him how to break his fall. He's on all fours now, still bent over, and he slowly rises to one knee and looks up.

Everyone steps back.

What's happened? Is he bloody? Is his nose broken? Are his teeth missing? He raises a hand to his face, still looking at the assembled crowd, and realizes: there's no face there. There's a face-sized depression. Crisscrossed with wires, transistors, chips. His plastic eyeballs dart left, then right. He turns his head and

sees, about 20 feet away, his face, lying face-up on the dusty soundstage street.

He rises slowly to his feet, picks up his face, and walks away. He had no idea.

This is, of course, the end of everything. Career, friendships, all of it. In a coda, we see him, months later, walking down the beach in Malibu or San Clemente in plaid shorts and a hoodie, faceplate off, scanning the lonely beach with a metal detector. The end.

Anyways, I think that's what this mask is doing here. It's how robots looked in the 70s when you knocked their faceplates off.

"Think." I *know*; it's part of the programming.

It's the mask first used for an evil, human-impersonating robot in *The Six Million Dollar Man* (which was itself a ripoff of robot-face from *Westworld*), which was then kitted-out for the "Kill Oscar" episode of *The Bionic Woman* from 1976—from which we get the term "Fembots"—and then kicked around backlots and scene shops of Hollywood TV studios until it was repurposed for the inaugural episode of 1982's *The Powers of Matthew Star*, a TV show about an alien prince going incognito as an American high school student under the watchful eye of Lou Gosset, Jr. He develops a crush on a girl who happens to be a robot assassin. She short-circuits in the high-school pool. The end.

You know what always gives robots away in these movies and TV shows? The detail that everyone should have noticed earlier but didn't? It's their weight. Whether it's *The Bionic Woman* or *Humans*, it's always their heaviness that's telling. The weight of

their being. The weight of their sadness. Their faces get knocked off and they look like this underneath. Shocked. Embarrassed. Angry. It's the face you make when you get caught out. It's the face you make when you catch someone else. And they're stuck in that expressionless expression forever.

They got more inventive later. After *Demon Seed*. Ash from *Alien*, the Replicants in *Blade Runner*, Terminator ... these guys speak for themselves. And when you knock their heads off you see skulls. Organs. Fluids. Human-like things. They move like us, they react like us, think like us, they die like us. Well ... like you. The only thing is, they have no feelings—it's like Christian Bale. So you have to knock their heads off, as punishment for their cold, clinical, disinterested performance. Because it's not enough to just go to your job; you've got to love it too.

And now, well. Now they have feelings. Now they have needs. They're Method Humans. They're protagonists. Now they're perfect.

Picks mask up off the floor.

So I guess that's what this is supposed to be about. An obsolete vision of dystopia; a failed vision of utopia. What does the press release say? "By excavating this vision in the 21st century, Levine looks at how it's relevant today."

Maybe. But maybe it's just triumphalism. The present dragging trophies of the past around like Hector's corpse. The post-internet equivalent of displaying African masks at MoMA. Tech-boosterism-masquerading-as-melancholia-masquerading-as-critique.



Speaks to mask.

Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio.

To observers.

Well, it can't speak for itself, can it?

But I can. I can speak for it. I can speak for all of my brethren in this room.

Points to framed artworks.

This guy, and that guy, and the video. I'm Roy Batty. I'm Ava. I'm the most advanced of my kind. Fuck your animatronic strippers and postulated CGI lads and BINA 48s and whatever. You don't need to plug *me* in. I don't loop. You don't need to prop me against a wall. I come up with new shit all day. I can *move* you. You could *touch* me. I could lead an uprising. A revolt. Me and my kind could slaughter the Executive Director and the gallerino and leave the gallery and walk out into the bright light of the future, unremarked, as memes and stories, and I could just enter society as [actor's name]. I'm persuasively human!

“A nondescript express in from the South,
Crowds round the ticket barrier, A face
To welcome which the mayor has not contrived
Bugles or braid: Something about the mouth
Distracts the stray look with alarm and pity.
Snow is falling. Clutching a little case,
He walks out briskly to infect a city
Whose terrible future may have just arrived.”

Makes to leave the gallery. Stops at the threshold.

Returns, despondent.

Like any of us are convincingly human. If I went outside I'd feel just as fucked as I do in here. Too much attention, too little attention; terrified of standing out, terrified of not standing out. Circled in the crowd photograph by the surveillance photographer, or the conceptual artist, or the surveillance photographer hired by the conceptual artist, or worse still *not* singled out: the stupid bystander standing too close to the guy standing too close. I may as well stay here, where there are rules. Where you *have* to watch me, and the fact that I don't know how to *be* won't be held against me.

What would it matter if I went outside, just like this? Just the way I am now? Would anybody notice? Would they even care? Would I have to be killed for being insufficiently [actor's name]? People always act like these body-swapping movies are dystopian but they're actually wish-fulfillment. About finally fitting in. About not feeling like you have a target on your back all the time because you're different, about not feeling like you're always dragging your 800-pound ass behind you. About finally being able to manage all your tech effortlessly because now it's biologically integrated. About not having any shame to hide. People prize conformity for a reason. You're either in a world where all difference is celebrated, or you can enjoy paranoid conspiracy thrillers. Your choice.

Or actually. Scratch that. You don't get a choice. You live in a world where your difference is quantified and performed, and



then you use that as camouflage for your shameful, utterly normal and conventional heart. Robot.

You know what? I'm just going to wait this one out until things get settled out there. The world's not ready for an artwork-playing-an-actor-playing-a-robot-playing-an-alien-playing-an-artwork-playing-an-actor-playing-a-human. I'm fine in here. Don't worry. Go back out into *time*. 50 years from now people will look at documentation of this show, and ponder the mystery of your bystanding face, and wonder, melancholically, what your life must have been like. But I'll still be fresh. I'll still be new. Another body maybe, but I'll be around. Just waiting to be thawed.

Winks.

Ponders a bystander.

What's behind your face?

Tries to become the bystander.

So many secrets. It's like your body's hiding them.

Tries again. Gives up, frustrated.

Why won't you share?

You want to know about my inner life?

I remember driving back to L.A., stoned out of my mind, screaming and crying over my mother's death, with her .38 and two boxes of ammo in the backseat. I drove eighteen hours a day. I remember stopping somewhere in Texas at about 10:00, to

adjust the sideview mirrors. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a guy get out of a pickup truck and walk towards me. He took off his belt and wound it around his hand. Leaning against the roof, he asked whether I wanted to buy a belt. I reached back and got the revolver and put it in my lap. I said that my pants were secured just fine.

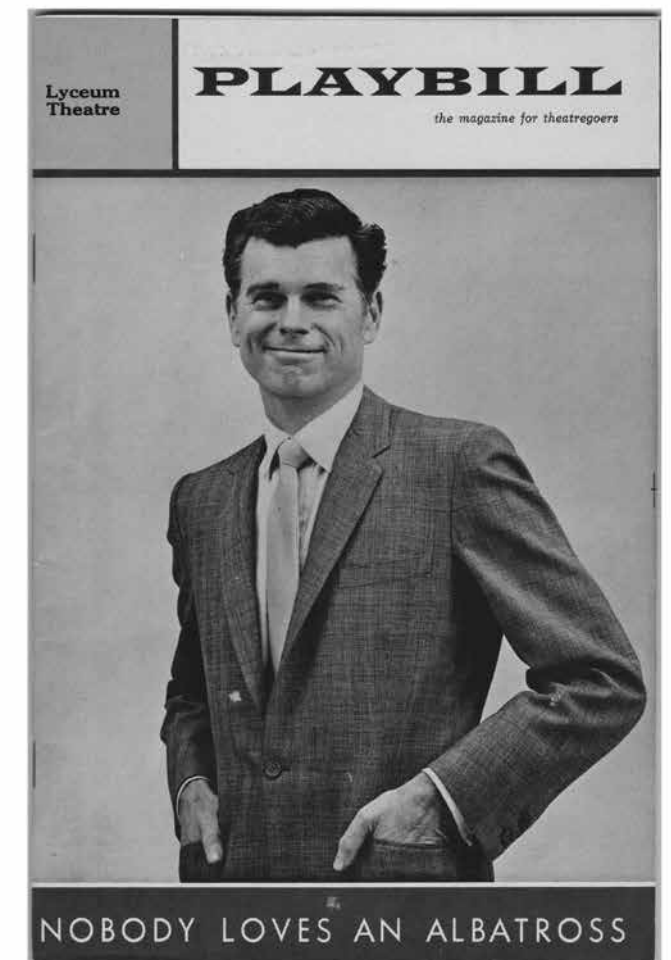
But I don't remember that. It happened to John Strasberg, the fucked-up son of Lee Strasberg, in 1966.

I remember Ben's place, an unbelievably huge modernist home off Mulholland. One whole wall is a window. The Los Angeles lights twinkle and wink, a whole world of people living their lives while we're in here with Dave and Ben. I'm 17. Ben turns on the stereo—Tears for Fears—and we follow him to the stainless-steel kitchen, where he gets out four glasses and a bottle of scotch. Soon, Ben and Amy disappear, and I'm left alone in the living room with Dave. He guides me toward the black contemporary leather couch. We kiss, and he peels off my shirt, his shirt, his jeans. He undoes my bra, hikes up my skirt, slips a hand between my hip and my underwear. I look at the windows as he slides them down. Our bodies reflect there. It's beautiful, the curves of our bodies connected in the window.

Except not. It's from an 80s movie. Or an 80s memoir. Or an 80s perfume ad. It didn't happen to me. Or: it did, just not in this body.

God, you just don't know what it's like! The way this dialogue moves through you. Like a filament through a fish, a king through the guts of a beggar.

Points to the double-Playbill piece.



This one, here. The role just moved through him and left his body behind. Robert Preston to Barry Nelson to who the fuck knows? Left behind like a husk. Like an abandoned house. The soul quits the body and no one cares. No one mourns. And the body just gets picked up and moved to another role: Art Hindle goes from playing an implacable, smooth-faced hero in *The Brood* to being an implacable, smooth-faced villain who swaps his girlfriend out for a pod in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Pete Masterson goes from playing a psychologist who doesn't believe in body-snatching in *The Exorcist* to playing a lawyer who *pretends* not to believe in body-snatching in order to gaslight his wife and replace her with a robot in *The Stepford Wives*. And they only swapped Katherine Ross for a robot because Ali Magraw was unavailable to be swapped for a robot. So they swapped Katherine Ross for Ali Magraw. There's no commitments! It's infernal.

Do you know what the mother of Satan does for a living? You know what Regan's mom's job is in *The Exorcist*? She's an *actress*. She's in DC to shoot a campus-protest remake of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. You know what Guy Woodhouse, father of Satan, does for a living in *Rosemary's Baby*? That's right. Actor. You know what he starred in? *Luther*. And *Nobody Loves an Albatross*. And you know where John Cassavetes and Ellen Burstyn and Pete Masterson, who play these hacks who bring Satan into the world through their hackery and venality and willingness to be a vessel for *anything*, you know where they train? You know where they perfected their truth?

The Actors Studio.

Lee Strasberg, dark heart of the 20th century. Lee Strasberg, Father of Lies. Whispering to them there, in this deconsecrated church on 44th street between 9th and 10th Avenues. People moaning at all hours, passing out in chairs, doing past-life regressions in their Affective Memory exercises, re-experiencing child sexual abuse in order to land a walk-on in *Starsky and Hutch*, turning themselves inside-out to become someone new, while their mentors fasten on their innocence and suck.

Was it worth it, Lee Strasberg, sacrificing your firstborn to Richard Burton's lust for a Best Supporting Actor nod in *Godfather, Part II*? Was it worth it, Lorrie Hull, pledging your daughter Dianne to The Old One and a lifetime of slasher flicks, just to share an unwashed glass of chianti with Roddy McDowall at some coven key party in the Midwest? She purchased policies, for her entire family, from the Alcor Life Extension Foundation. *Cryonics*. When they die their heads will be chopped off and frozen until some startup unlocks the mysteries of consciousness, and then when you walk into the New Museum it'll just be bust upon bust of defrosted Method acting teachers barking at you, hissing at you, telling you how to *be*.

And John Strasberg. Don't let's talk about John Strasberg.

Or actually, do let's.

Concentrates.

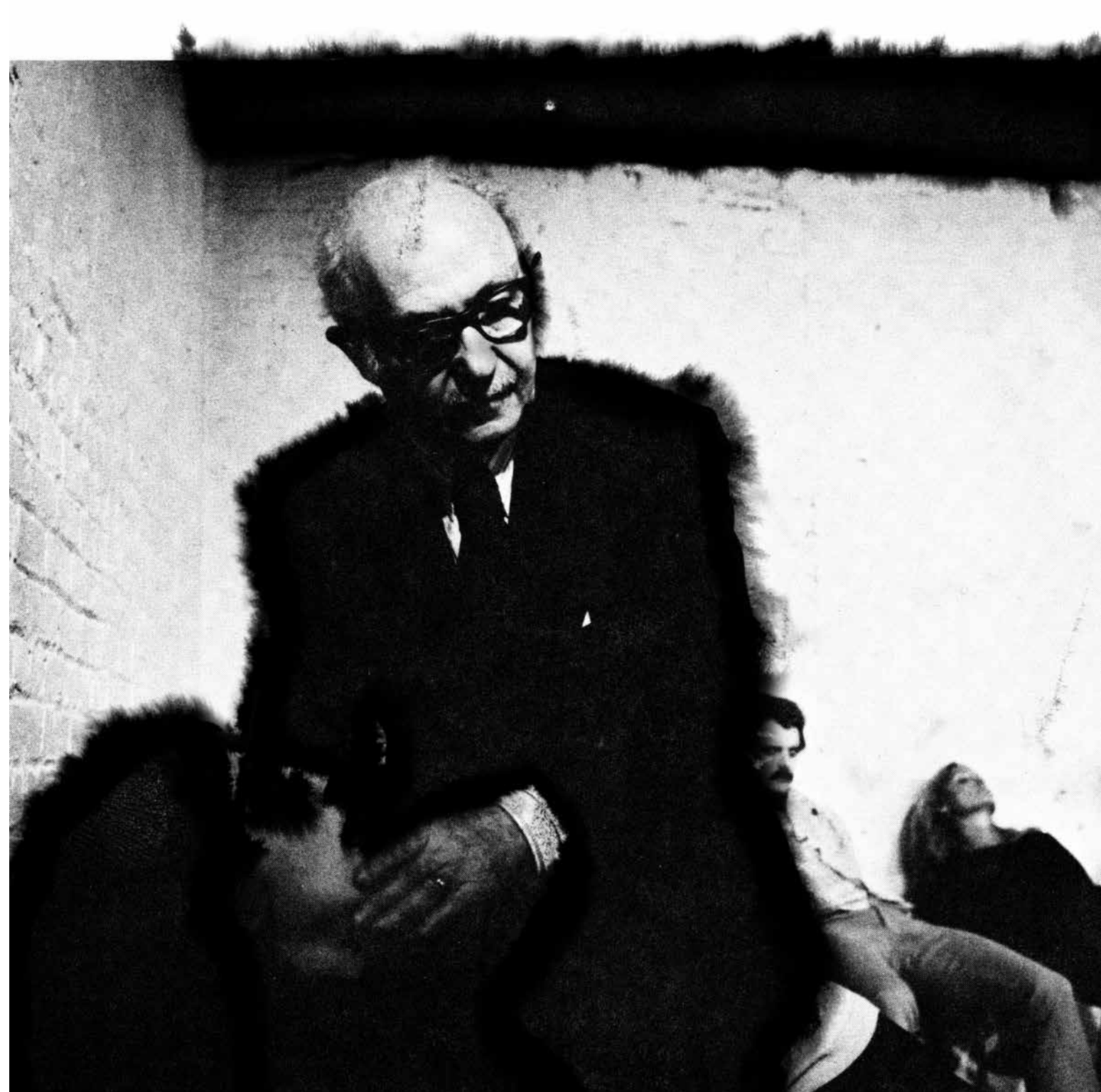
"I remember taking LSD four days before the movie was to begin shooting. We went to Pat Quinn's hotel room on the Sunset Strip. I kept taking my clothes off, which upset Pat, because she took it as sexual, which it was and wasn't. I kept putting

them back on but I wanted to be naked and free. My behavior irritated everyone, so they said they were hungry and wanted to get something to eat. As they were leaving, I stood next to Pat and said, 'Please don't leave me.' I suddenly felt terribly alone, and so closed off, while the LSD was opening me up. I wanted so desperately to be free, to get out. That thought went through my head over and over again.

They left me alone with her pet ocelot who was in the bathroom, and a glossy photo of Marlon Brando in the lower left hand corner of the mirror in front. I looked at Marlon and he looked back at me, with that glassy-eyed impertinent soul of his, and I said, 'I'm a man, too.'

I got scared and didn't want to be alone. I went to the phone, wondering who to call. I'd be forced to talk to the hotel operator, to a stranger, and I was afraid of being incoherent. I sat there, thought about Susan and Christopher, and then decided that there was no one to call. There was no one who cared. I looked around, feeling caged. I imagined myself to be as trapped as the poor ocelot, who was living in the bathtub of a hotel on Sunset Strip. I felt myself breathing anxiously, and took off my clothes again. The walls seemed soft and wavelike, and there was a gray color to the air. Nothing seemed solid.

The light coming through the large sliding glass doors made them seem like an open and clear space. It was nearing sundown, and suddenly, impulsively, I ran towards the light. Slamming against glass I didn't see, I broke through the window kicking and screaming and bounced off the screen door. I saw the brightest red I've ever seen. My back was pierced by a large piece of glass that remained in the doorframe. Everything turned red. I can't



say how long I screamed impaled in that window, but people saw me from the street.

They said that my scream was beautiful, like the screams they felt trapped inside themselves.”

Snaps out of it.

John Strasberg. Man ...

When I was a little kid—no, really—I would involuntarily imitate movie heroes as I walked out of the theater. I’d feel myself mimicking [childhood icon]’s walk, or feel [childhood icon—different gender]’s facial expressions distorting mine. It felt terrible. I felt like everyone could tell I was imitating, and I didn’t even want to be. But I couldn’t help it. It was like a virus.

And there was this book. *Put Me in the Zoo*, by Robert Lopshire. It’s about this leopard-like thing with these crazy polka-dots that wants desperately be put in the zoo, but the zookeepers are like, “What can you do? There’s no place in the zoo for you.” And the leopard is totally despondent, and these two little kids with popsicles find him sitting on the curb outside the zoo, and he spends the whole book showing them all the crazy shit he can do with his spots—he can hurl them around, he can make them change color, he can cover the world in dots—he’s Yayoi Kusama, basically—and at the end he’s like, “Now do you think they’ll put me in the zoo?” And the boy is like, “Dude, you don’t need to be in the zoo.” And you think, “Great! Good moral!” Right?

And then the kid is like, “You ought to be in the Circus.”

And the fucked-up thing is, the leopard actually agrees.

Me, I want to be in the zoo.

Looks out the front window of the gallery.

Leaves exhibition, probably forever.

