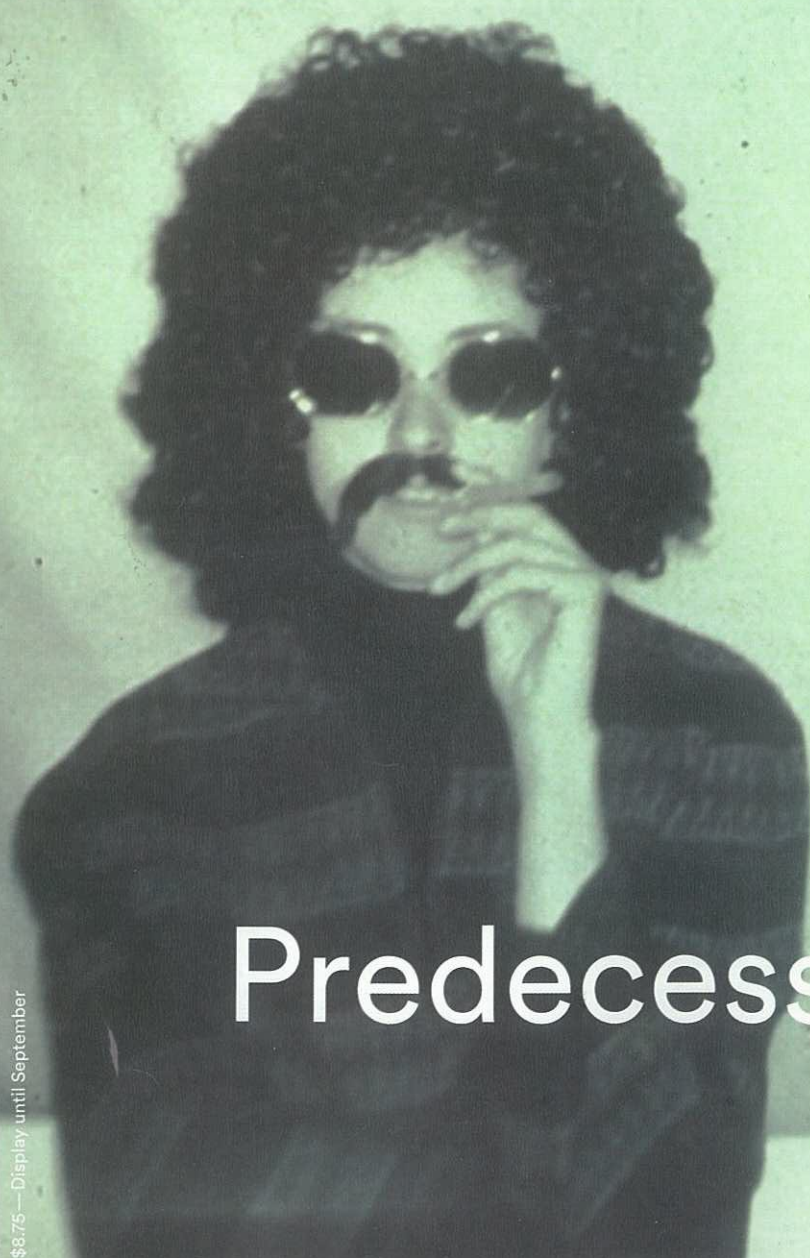


# cmagazine I26

Contemporary Art & Criticism Summer 2015

Aerobic Justice—Indigenous Law—Feminist Citation  
Counterculture Positions—Rearviews—Possible Futures  
Chris Kraus—Bill Murrar—Vera Frenkel—Adrian Piper  
Ivan Illich—Buckminster Fuller—The Motherfuckers  
VSVS—The World Will Always Welcome Lovers



## Predecessors

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# Predecessors

**Ruth Maleczech**

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**David Antin**

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*by Jamie Ross*

**May Cutler**

*by Randy Lee Cutler*

**Ivan Illich**

*by David Senior*

**AA Bronson**

*by Sholem Krishtalka*



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## JFK got my VHS, PC and XLR web quiz

by Jacob Korczynski

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A is for Andrew James Paterson, artist, author, critic, curator.

B is for bit rate, the foundation of our images and sounds passing a point towards post-production. See V is for video.

C is for colourfield, the slide from abstract aesthetics into interior environments. Minimal means and maximal ends, painting post-Internet.

D is for Derwatt, Kevin Dowler and Andrew James Paterson. A duo for Generation SoundCloud, but please stay tethered to your headphones. *derwatt.bandcamp.com*. See G is for goth-dirge.

E is for Eno, Brian. The glamour of pop and the interiority of ambient are not antithetical.

F is for fictocriticism as in the magazine work, especially in *IMPULSE*. If pop is one pole then pulp is the other.

G is for goth-dirge, giving way to funk, dub and the digital drive. See D is for Derwatt.

H is for Highsmith, Patricia. Ambiguous protagonists, queer subtexts, and the pleasure of both following and forsaking genre. Noir but not.

I is for image, though it may be cameraless. Cut and paste from the desktop for viewing on your laptop. See C is for colourfield.

J is for juxtaposition. The collisions of collage or the stitching together of timelines. Autofiction obviously, but also poetry of the concrete kind.

K is for *Krapp's Last Tape*. In this 1958 one-act play by Samuel Beckett, both the present and the materiality of the medium pull the past out and apart.

L is for Los Angeles, the setting for his 1986 novel *The Disposables*. A city full of shadows despite all the sunshine.

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## Ruth Maleczek

by Chris Kraus

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The first time I met Ruth Maleczek was on the first day of the inaugural term of the New York Art Theatre Institute. It was January 1979. Ruth had been hired as the primary teacher of acting, joining faculty who would include Valda Setterfield, Vanessa James, Kenneth Koch and Kenward Elmslie. With the exception of Ruth, we'd realize later, these people were personal friends of artistic director and NYATI founder Donald Sanders, a sometimes-director and socialite who was probably bankrolling the whole enterprise.

The twelve of us nervously filed into an enormous and minimally renovated loft on East 14th Street. We didn't know what to expect. We were all there to work with Ruth Maleczek, the lead actress with Mabou Mines, a theater company that was enjoying tremendous success with a play called *The Shaggy Dog Animation*, which had been running for months at New York's The Public Theater.

We'd all seen Ruth in this play. She played Rose the Dog, a sort of a cleft narration of her relation to the play's writer/director Lee Breuer, her husband, with whom she had two young children. Her presence in it, somehow rising above the dense mesh of theatrical concept, special effects and mixed media, was electrifying. In a company of exceptional actors, Ruth was the one that you couldn't stop watching. She had an odd beauty: long, wavy red hair; gap teeth; deep-set, transparent eyes and a slight frame with large breasts and full hips that she described once as her "peasant body." "Acting," she said once, "is my yoga." Watching her in this play was like watching a Buddhist nun undertake self-immolation in the most controlled way. She sought danger; she was never extravagant. In short, we were terrified.

Punctuality was part of the Institute's ethos. We arrived, as instructed, at nine o'clock and found Ruth waiting behind an old steel teacher's desk awash in the loft's empty space. She was wearing a button-down shirt and an old-fashioned, knee-length grey pleated skirt. Was there an apple? It was the first day of school and she was performing herself as the teacher.

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## Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology

by Helena Reckitt

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There are books that sit unread on your shelves for years. They seem to belong to another time in your life, reflecting different interests, even a different you. Their presence is almost embarrassing. Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* from 1978 is such a book for me. I read the Women's Press edition back when I was an undergraduate studying English.<sup>1</sup> The male-dominated nature of the college, the curriculum and the faculty left me searching for female allies and mentors. I wasn't yet participating in the feminist movement, which, in any case, reached its peak when I was a child. But a largely all-girls education and a maternal-dominated household had given me a strong sense of female identity and agency. Encountering *Gyn/Ecology* was an unforgettable experience. It emboldened me; it opened my eyes; and it made me feel less alone.

*Gyn/Ecology* exposes the myths that have constrained women and the atrocities that have oppressed them throughout history, from witch burning to female genital mutilation, foot-binding to suttee, Nazi eugenics to western gynocolony (a term played on in the title). Moving beyond critique, the book posits a new feminist culture grounded in female relationships and values. This in itself, Daly argues, is a



M is for melodrama. Melody plus drama.

N is for narrative, but perhaps this can be posited by genre. Says Andrew: "To lose the plot, first there has to be one."

O is for object. Says Derwatt: "Materials actually do matter; some people say they are post-materialist, virtual, but we disagree, quite strongly in fact."

P is for performance, which is not necessarily live. The camera as confidante, face and body first shot and then shaped.

Q is for queer and the politics of both desire and daily life.

R is for real-time. As opposed to what? Compression and delay? That's the new night and day. Delay, relay, today, tomorrow. See J is for juxtaposition.

S is for self-documentary. Colleagues make for cast members but the solitary arts have their privileges.

T is for Toronto. Institutions by artists and artists by institutions. A city full of separations despite all the "communities."

U is for undertone. Subtext or subharmonic.

V is for video. An ever-expanding enveloping all that arrived before it, especially the analogue. See B is for bit rate.

W is for wallpaper music. The environment as invisible and insidious, unannounced and then altered. See E is for Eno.

X is so abstract.

Y is for yawp, a harsh cry or foolish talk. A ditty or dialogue. The voice thrown from the body in No Wave nonsense or as medium for Beckett's black humour.

Z is for zigzag. Look here, turn there. Thank you, Andrew. We're still catching up.

Jacob Korczynski is a Toronto-based writer and curator.

return to an earlier patriarchal period, whose rediscovery enables women to unleash the Goddess within, or "female divinity, that is, our Selves."<sup>2</sup>

Daly's righteous anger, accumulated scholarship and visionary scope enthralled me. "Rage is not a stage," she wrote in her *New Intergalactic Introduction* to the 1991 edition. "It is transformative focusing Force that awakens transcendent E-motion. It is my broom, my Fire-breathing, winged mare. It is my spiraling staircase, leading me where I can find my own Kind, unbind my mind."<sup>3</sup> Her book allowed me to voice my previously inchoate frustration with gender roles and expectations, and my alienation from the subtly oppressive "refinement" of an Oxford University education.

Defying mainstream feminist politics, Daly rejected sexual equality, arguing that women should govern men. Her unapologetic misandry was intoxicating. "An act of Dis-possession," she pronounced her book "absolutely Anti-androcrat, A-mazingly Anti-male, Furiously and Finally Female."<sup>4</sup> In a later interview she claimed that the Earth required "decontamination," prophesying, approvingly, the drastic reduction of the male population.<sup>5</sup>

Beyond its polemical message, *Gyn/Ecology's* creative and irreverent style captivated me. Here was a new language for a new kind of woman, one that I might not live up to myself but which offered me an aspirational ego ideal. To expose language's sexist underpinnings, Daly denatured words, slashed them in two, and returned them to their Latin roots. She coined terms to devise new concepts and to imagine new worlds.

Derision and erudition were in equal evidence. A sentence considering female submission to male spirituality contains the audacious passage: "forever pumping our own blood into the Heavenly Head, giving head to the Holy Host, losing our heads."<sup>6</sup> That Daly taught at a conservative Jesuit-run university, Boston College, is hard to believe.<sup>7</sup>

I found *Gyn/Ecology's* separatism its most liberating aspect. Trained to develop the conventional female traits of niceness, popularity and amenability, the prospect of turning against my cultural education was exhilarating. Daly once said, "I don't think about men. I really don't care about them."<sup>8</sup> By subjecting men to the rejections

She introduced herself by name, vocation and age. She was Ruth Maleczek, 38, a performer. She lived on St. Mark's Place in the East Village; she had two children named Lute and Clove Galilee. Immediately, through her demeanour and presence, she established an atmosphere of acute but a-personal intimacy. Together with Lee and her other collaborators, she'd arrived at a method of acting that involved speaking her lines while traversing a parallel associative "score." "Don't you want to move audiences?" she'd been asked once. "Yes," she replied. "From one place to another."

For the rest of that term, and the one after, we spent hours watching Ruth think. The class format was for each person to select a monologue and perform it within a score of his or her own devising. During each presentation, our eyes were glued to our fellow student, but what we felt was Ruth watching. When it was finished, she said what she saw, and then she let herself drift to the thoughts that arose from her watching. Her thoughts ranged from the presumptuously personal to the meta-historical.

"I teach," she once said, "so that my past can become part of somebody's future." I've never taught writing without thinking about her.

Chris Kraus is a writer and filmmaker. Her books include *Love Dick* (1997), *Aliens & Anorexia* (2000), *Video Green* (2004), *Torper* (2006) and *Summer of Hate* (2012).