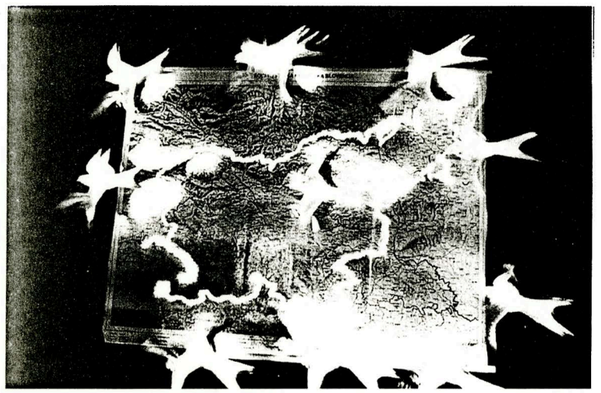
The resulting photographs are, as you might expect, very contrasty and grainy, reinforcing their documentary claim to truth. But perhaps this is just my desire. Perhaps it's just me wanting to see a spirit; me, romantically believing that anyone (especially an artist) who has lost their sight will have privileged access to this other-world. However, Bavčar himself doesn't do much to



EVGEN BAVČAR, UNTITLED, N.D., PHOTOGRAPH, 16 X 20"; PHOTO: P. BRETON, COURTESY DAZIBAO.

dispel this notion, and we are left with a Proustian world, dripping with fading memories and longing. Strange, since the images are so obviously constructed. On close inspection, for example, each dove is clearly held by a hand, and there has been no real attempt to conceal this fact.

Another romantic (or more precisely Classical) notion to emerge from the show again comes from the artist, when he describes the machinations of his work's reception:

> Put it like this: I have a private gallery but unfortunately I am the only one who can visit it. Others can enter it by means of my photographs. But they aren't the originals anymore. Just reproductions.

This is a representational model, not too far removed from Plato's cave. It goes like this: I have a fully formed idea in my head, and the words that I choose, or the images that I produce can, at best (if I am a good artist), closely approximate that idea. The idea itself is perfect and complete. Representation here is construed as a necessary evil: a mediation. Of course, this model (which is popularly accepted) has been increasingly questioned in the late twentieth century, as language itself has come to be understood as generative.

However, the case of Bavčar, who cannot see any of his visual work, frustrates any facile application of this language-based model. We are forced to step back a little from its most radical (or perhaps just its simplistic) formulations, and admit that if the meanings of Bavčar's work do not arise in the picture itself, then maybe their locus is closer to the author than some of us might have thought.

And thus, the author returns. But not in the way Bavčar imagined: head full of complete ideas waiting to be expressed in as uncorrupted a way as possible. Nor can post-structuralist discourse remain oblivious. This author clearly has an idea that exists prior to its fixing in silver, or its reception at the gallery.

Bavčar himself provides a clue to the conundrum when he recounts a theoretical impasse that is both funny (in retrospect), and perhaps a little ominous:

> Years ago psychoanalysts believed that blind people do not experience the mirror phase because they are blind [sic]. This caused great confusion in the world of psychoanalysis. To think so directly, so physically [was unfathomable]. . . . Mirrors are different places. You exist in relation to other people, not just on your own.

Conventional notions of artistic integrity cannot go unquestioned in the case of a photographer who must ask for help framing his shots. Doesn't his intention cease to determine the outcome a little too early in the game? Moreover, the editing process of an artist who cannot see his work cannot rightly be called his own. Where are these decisions made? Who is responsible?

The standard (progressively-minded) answer here would have us believe that we are all responsible as readers/authors. Not having the same opportunities in life to cultivate the pretense of independence or self-sufficiency, Bavčar goes against conventional wisdom when he remarks that "Trust is good, but control is better."

Without a doubt, the influences and determinations that went into the production of this work were multifarious. In the end however, Bavčar signs his name to it, and in the end Bavčar is responsible.

– MARCUS MILLER

MOVING & STORAGE

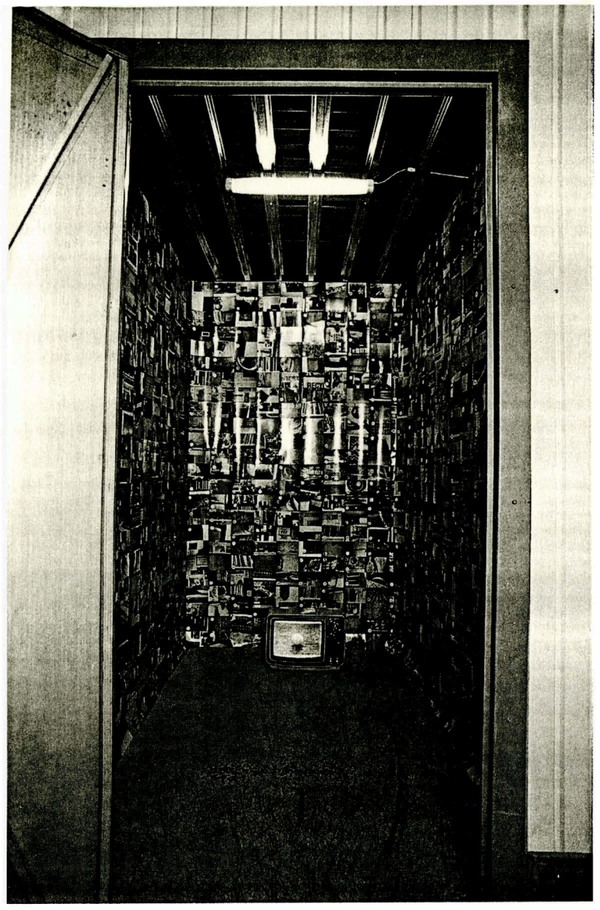
Securespace, Ottawa, March 6 – 28
National MS, Montréal, April 8 – 25
Queen West Self Storage, Toronto May 8 – 30

With the growing popularity of exhibitions in alternative spaces it is refreshing to find one which engaged critically with the social and personal meaning of the site rather than exploiting it as simply an attractive venue. Not only did the eight artists of "Moving & Storage" install their work in self-storage lockers in Ottawa, Montréal and then Toronto, their installations – for the most part created specifically for this exhibition – successfully explored issues of transience, exile, memory and inventory associated with storage facilities. By bringing the art and the viewer into these spaces the exhibition aestheticized the experience of being in a self-storage building, developing a picturesque experience of intrigue and discovery. Yet what unified these works was not so much the thematic intent as the underlying feelings of isolation and distance evoked by the juxtaposition of artists' projects with the hidden, but palpably present, contents of the surrounding storage lockers.

Richard Purdy, well-known practitioner of the fictive premise, speculated on a life of self-imposed exile by a Buddhist monk in his work *K'hiki Khor* (1999). Purdy's locker was furnished with rugs, a dirty sheet, a flashlight and remnants of a meager meal of grain and water. The focus of the room was a basketball-sized globe, intricately carved, which Purdy would have us believe was made from the excrement of the site's inhabitant. A pamphlet made available in the installation outlined this scenario, perhaps too well, leaving little to the imagination.

Gwen McGregor offered similar speculations in *Whatever* (1999). Here she numbered and photographed a wealth of domestic amenities covering the three walls of her locker with a seamless grid of 4 x 6" prints. McGregor suggested a life lived through images, an available inventory of glimpses and remembrances. A television in the space displayed scenes from the British TV cult classic *The Prisoner*. The excerpts chosen emphasized the numbering system that prevails on the island-prison of the series, reinforcing the inventory of domesticity found in both the photographs and in the complex of identical lockers within which McGregor's work was installed. While Purdy's work proposed a life of isolation and existence by minimal means, McGregor offered a readily accessible portability, nodding to consumerism as self-identification. Both installations fostered the sense of anonymity often associated with displacement.

Ian Carr-Harris offered a more oblique narrative in his work *1-900-999-6969* (1991). The work consisted of a dilapidated arborite cabinet, its doors jammed open. Slapped on top was a thickly taped stack of bargain bin pornographic magazines



GWEN MCGREGOR, **WHATEVER**, 1999, INSTALLATION VIEW; PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST.

which revealed only glimpses of their contents. The visible top page of the stack boldly advertised the phone number for which the work is titled. There was nothing seductive here. The cabinet, torn from its home, was never meant to be portable or understood as separate from the house, much like the separation of sexuality from the body involved in phone-sex.

Andrew Forster's *Trio* (1999) referred to nostalgia and memory through a contained moment of consciousness. An exercise in bodily specificity, the work forced the viewer to stand on top of a chair to reach headphones hanging from the ceiling in order to hear a soft male voice quietly singing a looping refrain of love and dedication. Enclosed and alone, the viewer was offered a surprisingly unabashed hopefulness.

Inside Marcus Miller's locker a spinning, translucent green cast of the artist's head flickered to the beat of a strobe light and the sound of a radio tuned between stations. Eyes closed, its ears appearing to flap and motivate the head, *Marcus* (1999) spoke to a truly minimal habitation and isolation within the confines of the locker, and within the mind. Like Forster, Miller made the more common use of these storage lockers seem superfluous and excessive.

Vera Greenwood, Mark Gomes and Ineke Standish made direct references to mobility and storage in their installations. Within her locker Greenwood crammed a wooden crate furnished with air holes revealing four back-lit slides of high-rise apartments, each identical in every way except for the adornment and furnishings of its inhabitants. Much like the work of Purdy and McGregor, *No Fixed Address* (1999) pointed to the anonymity, ready mobility and standardization of life within those modern cubes, with clear parallels to the storage locker itself where one set of objects will replace another over and over again as inhabitants move in and out.

Gomes' *Untitled* (1999) consisted of a contour model of corrugated cardboard laid out on a ping-pong table. Assembled from a grid of cardboard blocks, each of the model's sections of hill and valley would seem to fit neatly into one of the boxes piled up in a far corner, ready for disassembly and movement, just as the ping-pong table could fold and wheel away. Yet the work was elusive as to what was being represented – a specific terrain, imagined or real, or perhaps a generic reference to landscape in and of itself.

A motion detector triggered a light and two sound tracks when the viewer opened the door to Ineke Standish's *Sounding/Arc* (1999). The work was comprised of a metal cart with long wooden poles for handles, combined with the rumbling, clanging and vibrating sounds of a moving van. The cart was capped with a reservoir of water beneath which was a braille text proclaiming "arc." Very much an homage to Joseph Beuys, *Sounding/Arc* was a highly aestheticized and composed construction combining modern technology and elemental materials, representing the movements of sound and matter.

A sense of anonymity and isolation was created in this show through a well-conceived convergence of site, installation and viewer interaction. Where some works pointed to the excess of modern living, others made more positive speculations on the ability to live minimally. All the works were consciously mobile and transitory, looking towards their own inevitable erasure in the history of these spaces.

– DONNA WAWZONEK

HANS-PETER FELDMAN

Art Metropole, Toronto, February 4 – April 3

While Hans-Peter Feldman's work is exemplary for its consideration of issues of media representation by way of a straightforward and open-ended approach, it is still not well-known in North America. Feldman has, nevertheless, made an important contribution to Fluxus and Conceptual art, and he should, as well, be recognized as a very early practitioner of the culturally critical use of appropriated media images.

This exhibition is a comprehensive selection of Feldman's work. Included are thirty-seven pieces, twenty-seven bookworks and ten multiples, which date from 1968 to the present. The multiples, mostly produced in 1999, comprise found, everyday objects such as toy Volkswagen cars, egg cups with spoons, or an especially sculptural pair of pizza cutters. Given the simple presentation of the multiples (they are, for the most part, arranged and presented, but not altered) and the ordinary things they are, they offer viewers a much-needed call for modesty, modesty as a means for artists to resist this increasingly gloss-obsessed consumer society.

The exhibition, it quickly becomes clear, may not only be seen as a retrospective of the overlooked, but also as a show raising concerns facing contemporary artists today. Feldman's multiples may especially be likened to numerous pieces being produced by the current generation's "slacker" artists, who, while associated with sundry trends and movements, share the common ground of poaching ordinary objects and imagery from the field of popular culture. The most obvious examples, and this is due to their ubiquity, are the numerous "post-