

it is all about. I'll give you only his title again, "The Ghost in the Machine"?<sup>55</sup>

- 48 MOMA Press Release, Monday 20 January, 1969.
- 49 MOMA Catalogue Press Release, no. I34B.
- 50 MOMA Press Release, Wednesday 27 November, 1968, no. 123.
- 51 Hultén, P. & Franc, H.M. (eds), *The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age*, exhibition catalogue, 1968, p.92.
- 52 Hultén, P., 'Foreword', *The Machine as Seen*, op. cit., p.3.
- 53 Hultén, P. & Franc, H.M., *The Machine as Seen*, op. cit., p.132.
- 54 MOMA Press Release, Monday 11 November, 1968.
- 55 "The Ghost in the Machine: Art and Politics", [sound recording] no. 69.8, (22 January, 1969, 8.30pm, MOMA Auditorium) MOMA Archives, New York [accessed: Friday 8 February, 2019].



Interview with Brigitte Bardot, 1969

## Interview with Brigitte Bardot (broadside, 1969)

MS/AWL

301 × 430mm, mimeographed broadside poster with a détourned image of BB on one side and an "interview" from February 1969 on the reverse.

RH

*Reprinted many times. One of my treasured memories is of a student coming up to me in Vancouver and saying "Brigitte Bardot is with us". He'd just read a reprint in the local alternative paper, and they had taken it from a French/Canadian film magazine. I well up to write this.*

(1969)

Q. We've heard the events here last May really changed your life. In what way? Are you still filming?

A. Oh yes. Sure. I mean bread can be pretty useful. I channel it all into the Revolutionary organisations. An exposed nipple can become a Revolutionary book (cf. Vaneigem's 'Traité de savoir vivre....') or other weapons. I'd even work for all those pseudo-revolutionaries who are so busy trying to recuperate the revolution as it's made - you know from the Fugs to Lindsay Anderson. That way I re-recuperate; that's real cybernetic thinking - feedback picking up a Capitalist profit.

Q. Why was it May that specifically changed things?

A. Well, it was all suddenly obvious. You know we want to be able to lead our lives as we think we should; for that the C.R.S. are mobilised against us. At school you learn of the end of the Divine Right of Kings; nobody tells you the right was simply transferred to the bourgeoisie and status quo. I remember thinking we had all but stopped the system - it was based on our passivity; a change of will and it could be stopped. It was then clear to what a systematic suppression our wills had been subjected. Then there was the graffitti - 'Society is a carnivorous flower' - Hell, I should know that. Here am I a living illustration of the Situationist thesis The Society of the Spectacle; I mean it extends indefinitely from the obvious examples - you sitting passively watching me on the screen - wanting a flesh that is celluloid; me playing at being somebody else - somebody dead or imagined. Alienation has surpassed itself. Same of course with the other side of alienation - with the workers separation from his product - this has gone even further than Marx could have imagined.

Q. But the system does deliver the goods, can we survive without them?

A. We can live without masses of them. Start by distinguishing false needs and real ones. The 'Spectacular Commodity Society'\* multiplies needs

because it can fill none. The 'necessities' that surround us - cars, teles, gear, cameras, paintings, the fantastic acreage of kitch - are spewed out in a never-ending stream; no one thinks of its purpose other than those making a packet out of it. So we really have become a commodity-dominated society; peoples' relationships are made via objects - ton-up kids; stamp-collectors; cottage-in-the-country-owners; pot-smokers.....

Q. Is this what you mean by the poverty of everyday life ?

A. Yes, from the factory-worker to the druggie, its generally a matter of survival, not living; an administered survival kit in place of the realisation of desire. Take the poor sod in the factory who says -like so many do - 'I wouldn't know what to do with myself if I didn't work'. God, it's the apotheosis of alienation when life is so boring people can think of nothing more exciting than the daily 8 - 5 grind to make a profit for someone else. Talk about the colonisation of everyday life; they pull out of India to entrench themselves a little more deeply in your skull. And whats this big underground society. Just another market area; a variation in the range of consumer goods. There is now a 'Gear' and Arts Lab. in every swinging town; all indistinguishable; the same processed commodities. The latest goods and poses being exhibited, envied, bought and exhibited again. The city itself is dying; death by commodity asphyxiation; Marx's prediction come true - 'The dead hand of technology strangling humanity.' Everybody knows it and no one does anything about it - they are too damned scared of a little revolutionary euphoria. And even the goods themselves could be one of the means for the initial transformation to a qualitatively different form of life. Think of all the goods stacked along the Blvd. St. Germain. They could transform the city - lampposts swathed in fur coats, the pissotieres hung with jewelry and paintings, all those lousy books put into great heaps for the real

'battle of the books', the trees and houses wearing all the trendy gear from the boutiques... Anything you fancy. I mean no one needs all that junk, so lets free it, and us too from it's domination. We saw the first attempts at transforming life in May and as the U. N. (!) Report concluded---This is only the beginning of the youth unrest which will sweep the world clean. Of course we are working backwards -from youth to children. The surrealists, Buckminster Fuller etc. all knew it - Return to childhood, overthrow the reality principle.

Q. You used to have a largish collection of paintings etc. I remember seeing a photo of your house with a Caro and Poons in it. Now you've sold up Why ?

A. Why ? Need you ask. Art now is so patently reactionary. As an aspect of society (arts purity is a real myth) it has always allied itself to the prevailing social conditions or functioned as their negation. Now it is fully integrated into a consumer society, complete with middlemen and market-researchers. The revolt of the avant-gardists is nothing but the cosy spectacle of what passes for freedom in minds stultified by an acceptance culture working at full capacity. One can only realise art by transcending it. Moreover it is important to oppose to the absorbent power of society the fact that one cannot overthrow art without realising it. And the project to realise art is the same as the project to reconstruct everyday life. Those moments of imaginative resistance to the external organisation of life contain at least as much poetry as the best volumes of poetry and prose. Poetry is present in everything that does not conform to that morality which to uphold its order and prestige has nothing better to offer us than banks, barracks, prisons, schools, churches, brothels and theatres. It is a society sick enough to buy back my Bridget Rileys etc. at an obvious profit to me. Again the money goes into the project for the destruction of hierarchical power. Beyond the power

structure and the ideologies it has fed us is another reality. Let it flower; a ferocious flower bursting through the shit of the given.

Q. What about.....

A. No. No more questions about art, economics, politics etc. The day of the partial critique is over. We are asked our opinions of the details so we ignore the totality - but it is the totality that matters. They tell us to look after the pennies, while they look after the pounds. But their days are numbered. The truth is in the whole and the whole is false. Those new tremors running through the atmosphere are in my body. C'mon; lets all get in the action.....

Poetry Must be Made by All!/  
Transform the World!  
(exhibition catalogue, Moderna  
Museet, Stockholm, 1969)

MS/AWL

Curated by RH at the invitation of Pontus Hultén, *Poetry must be made by all!/Transform the world!* was installed at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm from 15 November to 21 December 1969. Expanding on the documentary model of *Descent Into The Street*, the exhibition 'attempted to bring to light that prefiguration of the supersession of art hinted at by the 20s avant-garde and tantalisingly glimpsed in the heady days of May 68'.<sup>56</sup> Recalling Kazimir Malevich's statement that 'art must become the content of life',<sup>57</sup> it 'focused

RH

*Jeff Wall wrote that 'it was the first and still one of the best expositions of the fusion of the radical avant-gardes of the of the 1920s'. Obviously I am rather proud of it.*

(1969)