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Rachel Rosenthal: Performance Artist in Search of Transformation

M. VIRGINIA B. BETTENDORF

Since her first performance piece in 1975, Rachel Rosenthal has employed autobiographical content from her eventful life to initiate change in herself and to transform the lives of others. Through creation and performance she has sought to rid herself of her own demons while providing a catalytic medium through which viewers are encouraged to begin their own self-examinations. Rosenthal's focus has shifted from the personal issues she dealt with in early works such as *Replays* (1975) to universal concerns about world hunger and world peace as in *Traps* (1982) and *Was Black* (1986).

A child of Russian emigrants, Rachel Rosenthal was born in Paris on November 9, 1926. Her childhood memories are filled with the sensuality of wealth, for her father Leonard was a multimillionaire developer of real estate and dealer in pearls and precious gems. Known as the "Pearl Emperor of the World," he sent his brothers out

like brigands [and] pirates, going all over the place, looting and pillaging and bringing back to Paris oriental pearls from the Persian Gulf, rubies from India, emeralds from Colombia, and [Leonard] would sit there like the Emperor in Paris and rake it all in.¹

Works by Marc Chagall, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, and Francesco Guardi hung in their home; there was chamber music and gypsy entertainment, and lavish dinner parties were regular events:

Of course, charlottes russes, savarins, croquebouches, souffles, all these delicious things were served daily, prepared in our kitchen by our "cordon Bleu," Julie, and brought to the table by our butler Alexandre, who had been in service with the Grand Duke Nicolai.²

Amidst these luxurious surroundings, Rachel learned that "unpleasantries" were not discussed; there was no talk of death, war, or nightmares. She learned to repress unpleasant experiences and as a result developed a series of nervous symptoms, including facial tics and insomnia. These problems were compounded by the physical and emotional segregation from her parents and by disturbing bits of gossip, mockery, and ridicule from her nurse and governess. While her parents wanted their daughter to be polite, happy, and beautiful, the servants let her know they found her lacking charm.

Her parents, however, enthusiastically encouraged her interest in the arts, and she had lessons in drawing,

dance, and music as well as Russian, English, equitation, and even golf.

Everything changed when, in 1940, Rachel and her parents, like many other Jewish families, fled France and the Nazis. They carried with them overnight bags, their gems hidden in Rachel's paint tubes. As the family crossed a bridge in an area of neutral territory, they encountered German tanks entering France. After recovering from momentary shock, the three slowly and deliberately turned, went under the bridge, and crossed the river into Spain. They later went to Portugal and Brazil before settling for the duration in New York City, where Rachel enrolled in the High School of Music and Art. The family that still remained in Europe, including her elder maternal half-sister Olga and her elder paternal half-brother Pierre, who later fought in Africa, was decimated.

After the war, Rosenthal returned to France to liquidate the remaining businesses owned by her father. (Her parents settled in Beverly Hills, California.) While in Paris, she attended the Sorbonne and the Jean-Louis Barrault School of Theatre and studied engraving with Stanley Hayter. She developed an affinity for the French Absurdist and Antonin Artaud. Her reading of Artaud's *Le théâtre et son double* in 1947 led her to realize that she could combine her disparate interests:

It was as if a veil had lifted. I immediately sensed that I actually could use all my talents within one context and not feel torn any more. I put this realization into practice at once, and over the years, evolved a theatre that encompassed all the things I loved: art, sound, lights, objects, text, movement, masks.³

After meeting American avant-gardists John Cage and Merce Cunningham in Europe, Rosenthal returned to New York City in 1953 to work and study in theater, dance, and the visual arts. She assisted Erwin Piscator at his Dramatic Workshop, studied dance with Merce Cunningham and performed in his junior company, painted with Hans Hoffman, and was introduced to Zen Buddhism by John Cage. With Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Remy Charlip, Cage, and others, she participated in collaborative happenings like "Zen and the Art of Archery." However, she soon felt compelled to break her associations with this group: "I felt very energized and yet dominated by their charisma and somehow I felt that if I didn't leave this



Fig. 1. Rachel Rosenthal, *Leave Her in Naxos* (1981).

atmosphere, this group, I would never find what I had to give.”⁴

Rosenthal moved to Los Angeles—she had to care for the family business after the death of her father. She taught acting and dance briefly at the Pasadena Playhouse, but her introduction of a “much-watered-down version of New York avant-garde to the academic curriculum”⁵ proved too radical for the school. She then moved to Hollywood and in 1956 began her own experimental workshop. “In those days,” Rosenthal recalls, “one had to choose between aligning oneself with the visual arts or with theatre. . . . I called it theatre for want of a better context. I christened it “Instant Theatre.”⁶

Traditional theatrical procedures were quickly replaced with experimental theater. Exercises in freedom and awareness utilized *Le théâtre et son double* (published in English by Grove press in 1958) and fragments of works by French Absurdist (published by the *Evergreen Review* during 1957). Dance, art, poetry, and theater were combined in spontaneous and collective work. Sets were created from discarded objects—furniture, architectural ornaments, toys, automobile parts, household utensils, and treasures from dime stores or thrift shops; masks were made, costumes acquired, and music selected. Initially, Rosenthal chose recordings from the avant-garde composers John Cage, Lou Harrison, Edgard Varèse, and Pierre Schaeffer. Eventually, however, the group created its own sound, primarily with percussion instruments, many of which were homemade. The bright cerise, purple, orange, emerald, and cobalt lights were hand-held, as were fans, which were manipulated to serve as dimmers; all the theatrical trappings became a part of the action.

By 1958 financial problems and personality conflicts had forced an end to the program. However, King Moody, an actor from the Living Theatre, convinced Rosenthal to revive the workshops. They became partners in Instant Theatre and married in 1960.

Instant Theatre soon took a new turn: Instant Fairy

Tales. These improvisational, two-act plays were designed to retain the symbolic content of the myths, folklore, fairy tales, and legends on which they were based. In 1966 Rosenthal was forced again to terminate Instant Theatre when a knee injury prevented her from doing strenuous physical work. The couple moved into a large home in Tarzana with their dogs and cats; Rosenthal returned to painting and sculpture while Moody pursued Hollywood acting roles.

In the early 1970s Rosenthal became active in the West Coast women's art movement. She was a founding member and co-chair for the feminist art gallery Womenspace, co-founder and permanent member of the cooperative gallery Grandview, and member of a coalition of women artists, Double X. Rosenthal's direct involvement with other artists in the establishment and organization of these programs and galleries had a profound impact upon her life and her art:

[these experiences] enabled me to accept myself and my life because up to then I felt that my life had been a complete waste and a mistake. I was very harsh on myself, very self-destructive, and I felt ashamed of most everything that had happened to me or that I had done. Through the women's movement, and my own growth, I was able to take a whole new appraisal of my work and change it around to work for me, instead of my being smothered. At that point I started to do performances which redeemed my life by turning it into art.⁷

Rosenthal thus proceeded to enact the redemption of her life through performances of autobiographical



Fig. 2. Rachel Rosenthal, *Soldier of Fortune* (1981). Photo: Daniel Martinez (det.).

content with transformative messages. She found that she could confront her problems while creating performance art. In her first piece, *Replays* (1975), she attempted to understand her chronic knee ailment. She searched through past experiences and through her medical history, and, through discussion with the audience, she began to understand the recurrent swelling of her knees. The performance became self-diagnosis and ultimately led to a cure. In her second performance, *Thanks*, presented within a Thanksgiving context, a symbolic "thanks" was given through audience volunteers to several people and to a cat.

As she became more active, Rosenthal's personal life became increasingly strained: "She'd be hosting this Woman's Building meeting," Moody recalled, "and she'd suddenly announce, 'I have to leave now and cook my husband's supper.'" The couple decided, partially in the hopes of resolving some of their marital problems, to revive Instant Theatre. However, confrontation revealed differences in professional approach and aesthetics. "Rachel's direction was into more esoteric and experimental performance; King Moody was after comedy and direct, entertaining communication."⁹ Rosenthal and Moody were divorced in 1978.

With the revival of Instant Theatre Rosenthal began to integrate her work in theater with performance art. Both *Charm* and *The Head of Olga K.*, performed during 1977, although derived primarily from the artist's personal experiences, incorporated improvisations by members of the company. In both instances workshop members added visual complexity to the performance. As the participants echoed the narrative, they supported Rosenthal's actual confrontation of her past.

In *Charm* the consumption of food was employed to help portray her obsessive overindulgence and as a tool in her psychological self-examination. As Rosenthal related the opulence of her childhood, she devoured, with mounting anxiety and obsession, a continually increasing barrage of pastries and delicacies such as she had once enjoyed. The crescendo of furor created by this ingestion paralleled increasingly masochistic improvisations by seven "nightmare figures," while the autobiographical narrative revealed the mental and psychological turmoil of Rosenthal's childhood:

As you could tell from *Charm*, I started out with a real split in my life. The only things that were accepted were the sunny things. The shadows were completely ignored or hidden. It was a very damaging experience. . . . The confusion and disorder which resulted was repressed then and the sunny attitudes became dogma. I began to feel more and more that something was going radically wrong. I learned that I could be sick, suicidal, really self-destructive. I was eating myself to death, couldn't have relationships, couldn't love.¹⁰

At the culmination of *Charm*, Rosenthal consumed a huge chocolate cake topped with whipped cream and cherries. Then, squatting as though defecating, she emitted a horrifyingly silent scream.¹¹

The obsessive and monstrous manner in which Rosenthal devoured the food in this performance went beyond the boundaries of acting. While the performance exemplified her personal problems in control-



Fig. 3. Rachel Rosenthal, *Traps* (1982). Photo: Basia (det.).

ling food intake through the reenactment of a binge, it was also a genuine binge. There were moments when Rosenthal "revealed contact with long denied feelings being allowed to come out, a reality breakthrough":

We see the eating in context, her inability to refuse sweets, the still present yet almost unnoticed facial tic, and as she chats, we hear a real tremble in the voice, the lowering register, the momentary haunted look in the eye, the rising rage that seems imminent, centered and real, the absence now of the smile.¹²

Over and again Rosenthal faced her past as she sought to reconcile personal feelings of inadequacy (*Charm*), guilt about her estranged relationship with her half-sister Olga (*The Head of Olga K.*), her confused and frustrated relationship with her mother (*Grand Canyon*), psychological dominance of her father (*The Arousing*), or the devastating effects of the war on her family (*My Brazil*). Importantly, in each case the personal narratives also served as examples of experiences universally encountered by humankind.

In 1978, as a performance of *Grand Canyon* grew near, Rosenthal felt depressed, stressful, and anxious. She lost self-confidence, gained 30 pounds, and believed she could not face another audience. The curator suggested she explain her problems in a letter or cassette; thus she gave her first audio performance! She related her exploration of the Grand Canyon by flight, despite acrophobia, while transformed into a vampire. She viewed geographic formations as metaphors for parts of her life and destroyed an obstruction—a vampire resembling her mother—thus freeing the flow of a canyon river.

This performance was not merely an autobiographical account, it was a continuation of her life as well as a facilitator of change:

I felt my life, past, present and future, de-fusing its potential to do me violence as it became diffused over the landscape. . . . I noticed my wings began atrophying and shrivelling almost immediately and by noon only a slight protuberance remained at the shoulder blades. But the teeth remained. I would have a lot of work still to do before they could entirely disappear. But I knew at last who I was.¹³

The image of a vampire and an experience of passage recurred in *The Death Show*, also performed in 1978. This solo performance, the last of a show "Thanatopsis," or contemplation of death, was an exorcism of the Fat Vampire, Rosenthal's personal demon. Ritualistically, Rosenthal presented the "Stations of the Fat Vampire," ten decisive moments in her life. She recited each date, the food she binged on during that period, and the death and consequence involved:

1977: Chocolate Chip Cookies. I refuse the death of Instant Theatre (again) and the bankruptcy of my personal life.

1978: Häagen-Dazs Ice Cream. I refuse the death of the Fat Vampire, of my marriage, of 51 years of my life. The 10th Station is this performance.¹⁴

With *The Death Show*, Rosenthal enacted a self-exorcism of the Fat Vampire and confronted her obsessive problem with food as a means of achieving this consciousness. Psychologist Marion Woodman has noted such means of self-exploration in many women:

Increasing[ly], I see the food complex as a neurosis compelling intelligent women toward consciousness. This is to view the food complex positively, in terms of its purpose. . . . Where the unconscious drive behind the food that involves the girl's relationship to her mother is not understood, it will be acted out destructively. If it is understood, there is some chance of it being worked out creatively.¹⁵

Rosenthal's performances remained intensely personal. In *The Arousing (Shock, Thunder): A Hexagram in Five Parts* (1979), she explored her relationship with her father through a transformative experience in which she succeeded in breaking forth from his psychological dominance. During the performance she symbolically removed a mask, gauze bandages wrapped around her head (with memorabilia tucked into the folds), and a beard and mustache like her father's. Meanwhile, on a videotape, Rosenthal elucidated the meaning of an oracle she had received from the *I Ching* and its application to her life and to her relationship with her father.

In this piece, Rosenthal "succeeds remarkably in transcending her own life events, fascinating as they are, to project an experience of triumph through struggle and a contagious awareness of potential that embraces all people."¹⁶ Because the performance was a genuine revelation for Rosenthal, the power inherent in that experience carried over to the audience.

In *My Brazil* Rosenthal combined autobiographical information about events and relationships with psychological experiences, dreams, and visions as she speculated upon the possible results of alternative decisions which she could have made in her life:

The choices between various possibilities are illusion. . . . In 1940, there is a Rachel who sailed across the Atlantic. There is another Rachel who remained

in France. The Rachel who stayed splits into a heroine who fought the Germans in the Resistance, and another who hid like a coward in some remote countryside with secret cellars filled with hams and sausages hanging from the rafters. Either Rachel or both split again. . . .

The speculative and actual experiences were united within her:

The other [wave functions], all the others, in their equal and separate universes, are somehow and inexplicably a part of me as well, as I am of each and every one of them. I am the hatred of the Germans, the fear of the knock in the night, the coward, the hoarder. I am the hero parachuted behind enemy lines, the horror and nausea of torture, the panic of incarceration, the guilty survival and the battered death.¹⁷

The performance concluded after Rosenthal described a vision in which her half-brother Pierre had appeared to her, a symbol of guidance and hope for her life.

By the beginning of the 1980s, Rosenthal had a large following in Southern California. In the ensuing years she has performed and conducted workshops throughout the United States and Europe. Success created new problems, with which she dealt in *Bonsoir, Dr. Schön!* The performance began with a videotape of colleagues praising her. She then proceeded to expose her faults through an autobiographical narrative and a segment in which she was stripped and her bodily flaws were pointed out and marked. She then explained:

That as my role model for power I take John Cage's old apartment by the Brooklyn Bridge which was empty to the winds, filled with music and open to all currents, power doesn't mean being powerfull but powerflowing, to be a channel, a conduit for our birthright, the Power of the Universe; that I want to be a lightning rod that taps that power and flows it out again into the world.¹⁸

While preparing and presenting her own performances, Rosenthal also taught performance art, lectured, and conducted performance workshops. She began intensive and experiential 40-hour weekend workshops during 1980—"The DBD Experience."¹⁹ Sessions began with individual and collective exercises in relaxation, concentration, and awareness. Rosenthal's technical assistance—with costumes, masks, sets, lighting, music, breathing, motion, and imagery—was enhanced by her guidance in authenticity (acquiring the ability to be oneself) and choice (transforming chance occurrences into actions).²⁰

Meanwhile, Rosenthal used some of her inheritance from her mother to renovate the building in downtown Los Angeles she had purchased shortly after her divorce. Here she housed her workshops. In 1981 she opened Espace DBD: A Space for Nonstatic Art, where she also sponsored performances, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and related events by other artists.

Around this time Rosenthal fell victim to a "con" artist and lost her entire savings. Depressed, she fled for two days to Death Valley and considered suicide. She recorded her feelings:

I hate this world. I hate the way things are. I hate my life, my body, my Father and Mother. I hate the chain of life. I hate what creatures do to creatures, what people do to animals, what people do to people. In the name of science, art, love, morality, patriotism, idealism, ignorance, stupidity, cupidity, cruelty and



Fig. 4. Rachel Rosenthal, *Was Black* (1986). Photo: Basia (det.).

hate. I hate being a part of it. I punish myself with food. I don't even taste what I stuff myself with. I am part of a hideous conspiracy. . . . I feel abandoned and conned into collaborating. I want to shave my head like they shaved the collaborationist women—those who slept with the Germans.²¹

Her next performance, *Leave Her in Naxos* (Fig. 1), was one of self-rejuvenation. She altered her appearance in a ceremony of death and rebirth—a woman wearing a golden glove shaved Rosenthal's head and then patted rosewater on her skull. This symbol of her rebirth has been retained by Rosenthal, who either shaves her head or keeps her hair closely cropped (in which case her light hair blends with her skin to give the impression of baldness).

Late in 1981, before a scheduled performance of *Soldier of Fortune* (Fig. 2), Rosenthal instructed the gallery director to announce that the performance was canceled. An elegantly attired Rosenthal then appeared, apologized, and related her financial ruin and psychological recovery, all the while consuming a gourmet meal. At the end of the performance, Rosenthal removed her evening gown, wig, and tiara, revealing military garb and her shaved head. She emerged as a “soldier of fortune.”

The consumption of food in *Charm* and *Soldier of Fortune* was presented as a solitary experience; one instance arose from psychological needs while the other served as a means of escape. However, it is significant that while her association with food changed from obsessive to seemingly detached and impersonal, the actual consumption of food remained part of the performance.

With *Soldier of Fortune* Rosenthal encountered autobiographical content that had an immediate and continuing impact upon her life. She found she no longer needed to initiate change in herself through the examination of her past; in this performance she

actually transformed herself into a “soldier of fortune,” someone able to face and cope with problems.

It was in 1982, with *Traps* (Fig. 3), that a major transition occurred in Rosenthal's art. In earlier performances, Rosenthal sought transformation in her own life through autobiographical material. With *Traps* she dealt explicitly with global concerns, both political and environmental, and appealed directly to the audience. While images and narratives, still frequently autobiographical, revealed her points, material was didactically presented and the spectators were challenged to become aware of the possibility of nuclear war.

In this transitional performance, several characteristics of Rosenthal's earlier works remained: autobiographical material served to exemplify the issues she addressed, food was employed as a symbolic prop, and transformation remained the goal. However, autobiographical sources alone did not serve to illustrate her points, and food became a universal symbol: eggs represented the collective fragility of a world faced with the potential of total destruction through nuclear war.

Rosenthal began the performance with images and narratives symbolic of traps; these served as social allusions and warnings against flirtation with self-destruction. In a ritualistic scene, for example, she thrust twisted pieces of paper, representing moths, into a candle flame. In another scene she raved about the regenerative function of a species of wasps in its deadly relation to tarantulas. In juxtaposition with this fixed biological destiny of the tarantula and with a series of nonpersonal images, Rosenthal then showed how one can serve as an unwitting agent for disaster through careless lack of concern, which she exemplified through an autobiographical anecdote: She disclosed her inadvertent contribution to an accident involving her blind dog, Zatoichi. A “trap” was then defined and analyzed:

What is a "trap"?

A "trap" is an act committed by one part of you to trap the other part.

When a "trap" is well laid out, nothing delights the trap-laying part better than to hear the other part lamenting after the fact: "How could this have happened?" Or even better: "How could this have happened to me?" That one's a real knee slapper!²²

A megatrap was defined through a fairy tale about two countries continually on the verge of war. A slide-tape show illustrated the megatrap as hard-boiled eggs, halved and whole, which were invaded and eventually destroyed by parasitic, small, brightly colored wooden toy animals, trees, and geometric shapes. These symbolized precarious relationships between nations and, ultimately, between humanity and the earth.

Throughout, Rosenthal urged the spectator to recognize, overcome, and transcend those traps which are encountered daily in our personal and collective lives, and thus, possibly, avoid megatrap-like nuclear warfare. Rosenthal repeatedly asked the audience "Will it be all?" as she held up an egg. "Or nothing?" as she shattered each one. A tape then played Chopin's music, while slides were projected of Rosenthal caressing her pet rat, Tatti Wattles. (To show her love and concern for all living things, Rosenthal later had herself photographed with the rat perched on her head; this image adorns her business card.) With the final image—a slide of a whole egg—Rosenthal issued, with faith and hope, her challenge: that the audience take responsibility for the salvation of life.

Concern for animals and their fate was central in *The Others* (1984). During its conclusion, about 40 abused animals joined Rosenthal on stage in a sacramental ceremony. Rosenthal pushed viewers to new limits, pointing out their individual accountability for the mistreatment of animals, in experimentation, for consumer goods, and for food. She called for a more mystical concept of animals, a deepened understanding of their place on earth.

The timing of *Was Black* (1986; Fig. 4) left no need for exhortation. Confronted with the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Rosenthal abandoned didactic text and sang a Russian folk song learned from her mother and continued to speak, rave, and grieve without uttering a word in English. Three women and a man covered in white dust, first naked, then clothed in black, revealed through movement their complete physical, mental, and spiritual terror.

Rosenthal's ability to present and juxtapose differing levels of acting and nonacting with reality allow her to share a specific and exemplary experience, convey deep convictions with sincerity and wit, and simultaneously serve as a medium. Through her command and use of different media, she creates graphic images as well as complex metaphors. Through her direction, performances are clarified and expanded, deepened without distraction. One is continually reminded that it is the viewer, the individual—you, I—who must meet Rosenthal's challenge and initiate change. •

1. Rachel Rosenthal, in *Charm*, Performance Script, 1977, 5. The profusion of biographical anecdotes was derived, for the most part, from performance scripts (to which the artist generously gave me full access) and are thus indicative of the content of those works. Interviews with Rosenthal provided additional information.
2. *Ibid.*, 4.
3. Rachel Rosenthal, "Is Performance Art an Endangered Species?," typescript of an unpublished article, 1982, 17.
4. John Howell, "Rachel Rosenthal," *Performance Art Magazine* (Fall 1979), 26. See also Calvin Tomkins, *Off The Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980).
5. Rosenthal further related: "These aberrations didn't much bother the kids (among whom was the very talented youngster Ruth Buzzi), but I was nonetheless booted out because of my hubris as much as for my black tights (Panty-Hose not having been invented yet)"; Rachel Rosenthal, "Rachel Rosenthal," *Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art Journal* (February 1975), 11.
6. Rosenthal, "Is Performance Art an Endangered Species?," 18. Instant Theatre is discussed most completely in Rosenthal, "Rachel Rosenthal," and in Linda Burnham, "The D.B.D. Experience," *High Performance* (Issue 26, 1984), 48-53.
7. Howell, "Rachel Rosenthal," 31.
8. King Moody in Richard Stayton, "Rachel Rosenthal Confronts her Beasts," *Los Angeles Weekly*, July 3, 1981.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Rachel Rosenthal in Elaine Ginsberg, "Rachel Rosenthal: An Interview," *Wordworks* (June 1980), n.p.
11. Viewers of such a performance are witnessing a live and actual event in the life of the performer. As Rosenthal explained in "Is Performance Art an Endangered Species?," 10: "We are left with the burden of having been privy to a (sometimes very private and personal) chunk of an individual's life, pain, feelings, experience, intellect, exploration or achievement."
12. *Ibid.* Rosenthal's delivery of her performance text is rendered in varying degrees of acting, nonacting, and reality. Michael Kirby has proposed a method of differentiating such degrees in "On Acting and Not Acting," in Gregory Battcock and Robert Nickas, eds., *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Dutton, 1984), 97-117.
13. Rachel Rosenthal, *Grand Canyon*, Performance Script, 1979, 5.
14. Rachel Rosenthal, *The Death Show*, Performance Script, 1978, 6.
15. Marion Woodman, *Addiction to Perfection: The Still Unravished Bride* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1982), 22.
16. Melinda Wortz, review of *The Arousing (Shock, Thunder)*, by Rachel Rosenthal, *Art News* (April 1979), 11.
17. Rachel Rosenthal, *My Brazil*, Performance Script, 1979, 4-5. Rosenthal further explained: "There is an awesome theory of Quantum Physics called the Many Worlds Theory. It states that all possibilities in the wave function of an observed system actualize, but in different worlds that co-exist with ours. Who is in these worlds? We are."
18. Rachel Rosenthal, *Bonsoir, Dr. Schön!*, Performance Script, 1980, 2.
19. "DBD means many things," Rosenthal explained during the beginning of one workshop. "Doing by doing is one meaning. I don't do it. You do it" (Rosenthal in Stayton, "Rachel Rosenthal Confronts her Beasts"). It also stands for "Dibidi," a cat which Rosenthal once had. Dibidi accidentally fell down a chimney, broke his spine, and lost the use of his hind legs, yet lived twelve years beyond the veterinarian's statistically projected survival, daily overcoming his handicaps.
20. *Ibid.* For more on the DBD Workshop see Gilah Yelin Hirsch, "Ruth Weisberg," *WAJ* (F '85/W '86), 44.
21. Rachel Rosenthal, *Soldier of Fortune*, Performance Script, 1981, 7.
22. Rachel Rosenthal, *Traps*, Performance Script, 1981, 5.

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