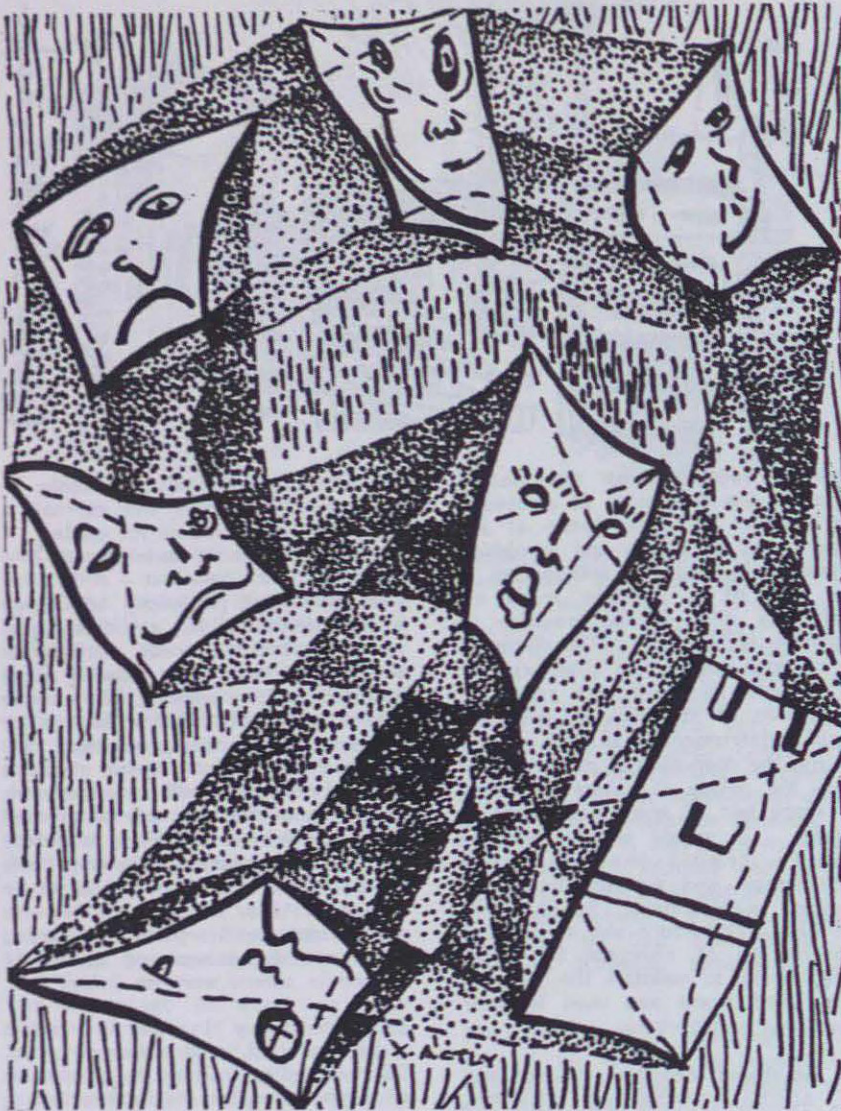


DRAWING



X. Actly is the nom de plume of Stuart Wilson, Professor Emeritus at McGill University's School of Architecture.

vividly recall the general slant or gist of Gert's.

"People are so faceless. They only have one to go with, and that gets multiplied in reflections - still pools, mirrors, shiny auto bodies, glass front buildings. They don't see themselves, only their opposite. Distorted images. Fractured. Broken up. Narcissism doesn't multiply itself but builds up into reverberation of connections and disconnections. The image is a vibration. A construction of noise. A mere frisson."

Flip-flop, flip-flop, zip-zap, zip-zap went the rose by any other name. A cool breeze seeped through Gert's frame. Her arcs shimmered. Vah daddy-o, Do-da. Her many faces took on an appearance of bliss. Her mood was transformed. The *outré* dimensionality of her being multiplied the blessed state. A rich odour of blossoming Flowers scented the air.

Suddenly, the cells trembled, flickered, flashed. G. appeared mistily as a nymph in a woodland grotto. Clear

MEETINGS AND EXCHANGES

by X. Actly

THE OTHER DAY I was sitting in a cafe in Le Faubourg St. Denis, Montreal, sipping an aperitif, conversing with Gert. Gert is short for Gertrude, which is long for Gertie. Gertie is a rhomboidal monster said to reincarnate Alice B. Toklas, Gertrude Stein, Cab Calloway, André Bréton, Bo Diddly, Harold Lloyd, Houdini, and other celebrities. Externally, G.'s sex is indeterminate, internally it must be a mixed bag tied together by a dominant mother urge.

Each multi-sided facet of her skin is a phosphorescent plastic stencilled in a cunning but apparently random fashion with the letters GERT. There is no doubt who she is.

I was inside the joint. That is to say not in the monster. G. was outside. We conversed through the open front

of the cafe. Her gargantuan network glittered flashily in the sunlight. Types clothed in zombie hair-do's, leather pants, sweaters which dragged the sidewalk, cast-off military greatcoats, high broad-brimmed black fedoras, and red flair pants strolled unconcerned into her many faces, past her nodes and arcs, and through her rhombic dodecahedral cells. The air was scented with the aroma of roses.

In her present phase of substantiation, Gert was not only monstrous quasi-physically, but pseudo-intellectually as well. Her conversation ranged from the apparently semiotic to the seemingly idiotic.

At the moment I forget what pleasant or memorable statements I had made in our previous discussion, but I do

springs burred amongst the moss and dewy ferns.

A prim but mysterious voice intoned, "Time has two faces, which I flow through - weaving a warp and woof of living strands."

One of the faces ogled me and the ever-present roses expanded their petals. But this was too much. One cannot always keep abreast of the *femme-fatale*.

"You sweet thing - sugar cookie." I grabbed for a stem of the rose but got the cookie. My hand went through it and vanished. The cookie floated down over my head and settled on my shoulders. It became a pretzel, with me part of it, and finally a rose. I was encapsulated - totally enchanted.

The rose was whirling round and round and so was I. We became more stem-like and twisted and differently connected when the bubble burst. □