

# Arts

## boxing elevated to artistic heights

by Cathi Graham

"What is that heavy breathing coming from down the hall?" This is a question any person passing Nat Taylor Cinema must surely have asked in the past month.

Approaching the doorway of the Art Gallery of York University (AGYU), the 'breathing' can be distinguished as fragments of language from the installation artwork of Irish artist James Coleman.

Coleman's work, entitled *The Box (Ahhareturnabout)* (1977), has never before been shown in Canada, according to the AGYU curator Loretta Yarlow who organized the show. It is a piece which features not only fragmentary audiotape but also a seven minute 16mm film loop of two, slightly larger-than-life men boxing.

The ghostly imagery, cut from

original film of the 1927 title boxing match between the Irish boxer Gene Tunney and the American Jack Dempsey, is displayed in the void of the blackened gallery space (which was painted black especially for this show).

For Coleman, boxing is a lot like life. Joyce Carol Oates, a writer who the artist claims crystallizes his feelings about the sport, says, "Life is a metaphor for boxing — for one of those bouts that go on and on, round following round, jabs, missed punches, clinches, nothing determined, again the bell and again you and your opponent so evenly matched it's impossible not to see that your opponent is you."

This exploration of self-identity is apparent to any viewer who watches the unending loop of film accompanied by Tunney's vocalized inner musing. Primal urgency in the taped voice brings the listener/observer into the

psychological space of the boxer, a man struggling to maintain his role in life as a hero. Whether Coleman is inviting his observer into Tunney's subconscious or his own is not clear.

Fragments of audio and film play back a continuous confusion of personal and public space in *The Box*. "Boxers will bring to the fight everything that is themselves, and everything will be exposed — including secrets about themselves they cannot

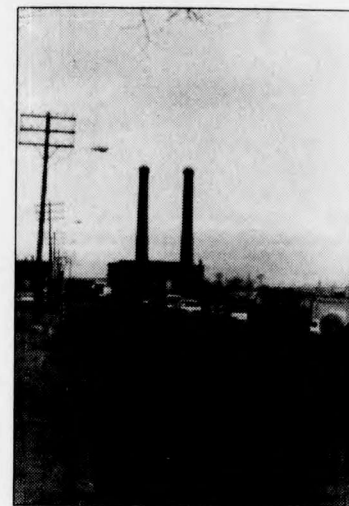
fully realize", Oates says. It is exactly this imbalance between the Self and the Other that Coleman has tried to elucidate in his piece.

Central to Coleman's work is the history which surrounds the title match between Tunney and Dempsey — a rematch of a previous fight between the two men, it was an opportunity for each of the competitors to vindicate himself and retire from the sport of boxing as a hero.

Coleman has frozen this fight in *The Box*. Time is brought to our present and held at bay within the seven minute film loop and the eerie voice track which make up the work. The probing question, "Who am I?", has been asked since the days of Plato. The endless quest for self-identity continues in Coleman's work.

Unfortunately, *The Box* will not run endlessly at the AGYU. It will show only until March 30.

## industrial wasteland: the column



ces/samples are from propaganda films (*Triumph of the Will*), televangelist speeches, horror films or other areas. Some of the bands that follow this format are Skinny Puppy (Canada), Front 242 (Belgium) and Manufacture (U.S.A.).

### Dave Lake of CHRY brings his almost weekly column to the arts section.

by Dave Lake

**O**ne predominant musical style on the Industrial Wasteland is "Industrial Dance" which has attracted many supporters at local clubs (the Empire Club, the Lizard Lounge) because of its upbeat tempo and hard driving rhythms.

This is usually music at its rawest, with the throbbing beats of drumpads/drum machines accompanied by techno-synthesizers and aggressive vocals. Often the vocals are short, repetitive lines, or more frequently, sampled voices.

Sampling is done with a sampler which allows for variations in the length of the sample, the pitch, frequency and other effects which can be adopted to change it accordingly. Many times the voi-

This style of music has its origins in the late 1970s industrial music of Throbbing Gristle, S.P.K. and others. These bands (T.G. originated this phrase to describe their noise samplings/works) experimented with found sounds which are recorded sounds they "discovered," tape loops and other "primitive" uses of equipment to define their music. As the later bands expanded on these techniques, they gravitated to what essentially became a dance-floor sound. While still incorporating many of these innovative approaches to music, they were able to compete more effectively for listeners than the strictly industrial bands.

There are currently a large number of European industrial dance bands that have made an impact on the North American market. Some of these bands were in Toronto in the last year: Front 242, Nitzer Ebb, Laibach, KMFDM, Xymox, ... Thrill Kill Kult.

Upcoming concerts include Young Gods (from Switzerland) on March 26 at the Rivoli, and an April date with Australia's Severed Heads. Many of these bands works are only available on imported labels, but a recent col-

laboration between Wax Trax records in Chicago and Play It Again Sam records from Belgium are making efforts to make more bands available. Nettwerk Records (Vancouver) have also acquired distribution rights and signed several bands.

While Nettwerk is doing this, Wax Trax has been a major innovator in this area of music. Developing its base in a Chicago record store, Wax Trax soon grew into a major alternative record label.

With a few exceptions, all of the material released on Wax Trax has a distinct sound to it. This is beneficial to a purchaser whether for home/club/radio use as it familiarizes you with the music.

The one drawback here is a somewhat repetitive sound from the artists. Whether one sees Wax Trax as distinct/repetitive, there is no argument that without their output, the industrial dancefloor genre of music would be severely limited.

Although, at present, the audience for industrial dancefloor music is relatively small, the combining factors of club/radio play, increasing availability of music on LP/CD/Tape and the commitment of those artists in the scene will serve to keep this music vibrant.

## ATTENTION CLUBS:

### STUDENT CENTRE CLUB OFFICES

Applications for club office space in the new student centre may be picked up from CYSF office (105 Central Square) or from the SCC office (N114A Ross).

Deadline for submissions: 12 April 1990

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