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THE DESTINATION ISSUE

far out!

boldly going where no magazine has gone before

Street Up And Down's Urban Realism

San Francisco's Best Musical

German techno fashion and clubs

Yodles in print/es

Plus! Summer Denim



RU Sirius, editor, *Mondo 2000*. "I think San Francisco should be a nation all of its own. We've got the most creative people in the computer industry, a thriving culture in terms of artists and writers and the most powerful economy in the USA. From marijuana to microchips, we've got the most potent multi-cultural, trans-sexual police state in the world."



Barbara, student. "We went out on Friday for a peaceful demonstration. We were marching and chanting down the Castro when the police came running out at us. I didn't run away because it's an excuse for them to hit you. So I sat down. A police officer told me to get up and when I didn't respond fast enough, he hit me on the leg with his baton. I noticed I was bleeding profusely but they put me in a van and refused to get me any medical attention. Hours later, I was seen to by paramedics. They told me there was a hole in my leg that went right down to the bone - they reckoned the policeman must have had a nail or something in his baton."



Saffron, 22, and **Joelle, 21**, painters and decorators. "We've been working together for two years in San Francisco and California. This is the best and most beautiful city we could think of. That's why we work here. There's something in the air here, some magic."

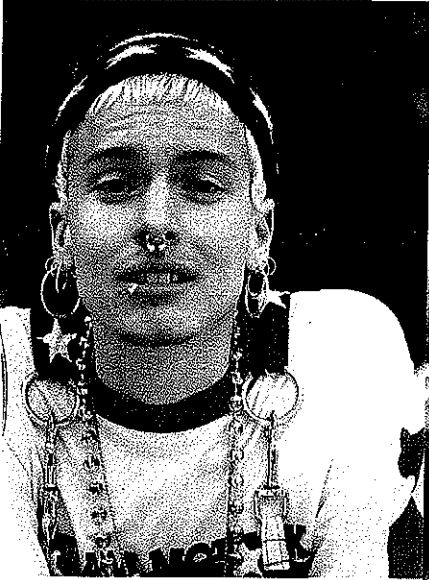
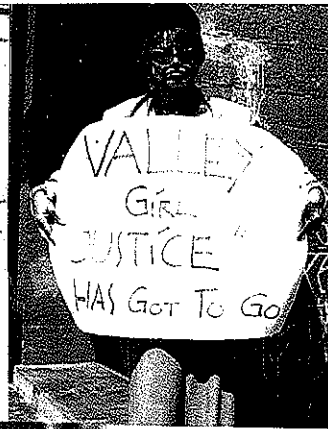
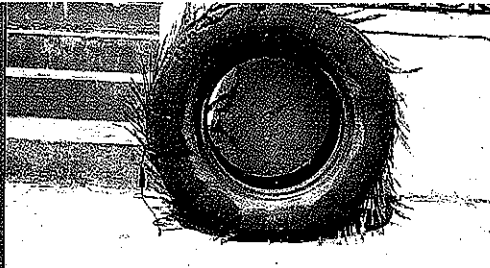
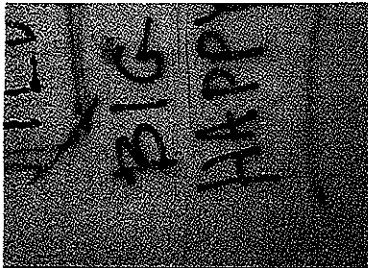
something of equivalent speed and density."

RU's got a point. George Coates' ultra-tech performance works approach the status of the techno-trip. Imagine putting on 3-D glasses and staring at incredibly vivid, surreal landscapes on a giant screen. These change rapidly whilst other projections, computer graphics and animations are layered on top. Behind the screen are performers, actors and operatic singers, who 'morph' in and out of these virtual worlds. "My work is designed to interact with the unconscious," says Coates. "Some information is being passed but the rational police can't interpret it and say, ah yes, this is a valuable experience, we know exactly what this

imagery means... I want you to be confused."

The motivation to make cultural products that disorient, confuse, and dazzle obviously predates the influence of acid. However, thanks to Jim Morrison, Jefferson Airplane and the like, acid culture has long been at home in the mainstream of pop culture. According to RU Sirius, the '60s put us on highway trip and there's no going back. "LSD prepared us for the culture that we're in, for the idea of not holding to one singular view of reality, the idea of infinite levels being implicit in every grain of sand, every media act, every political lie. It's something '60s and post-'60s. There was a growth induced through psychedelics that made it all perfectly natural to us. I can't imagine what it would be like to read the world in any other way."

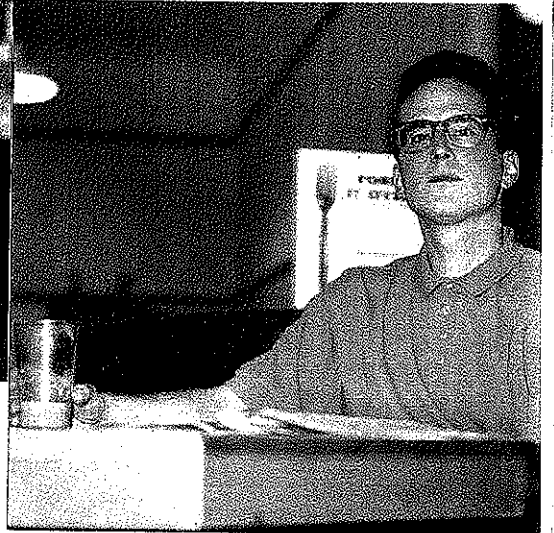
These psychedelic energies are beginning to combine with techno-vation and clubland forces. NASA refugees Todd and Cindy of Paradise Productions quit their work at Kennedy Space Centre to play with computer-generated art and imagery. Using the graphic/mixing/tweaking and mind-altering potential of the video toaster, their first experiments in the rave-zone represent a hippification of technology. "We take the tech and use it for more than just government-funded-type projects. We're using it for a higher purpose. We live in a world infested by a dark vision, a fragmentary, dark and dystopian age. We want to balance this with a light, atopic cyberspace world and create a sense of hope." They fill huge screens at parties with rainbow radiating mandalas, 3-D visions of beautiful cities: a virtual universe of vivid, ever-shifting visual magic. "We're opening up a channel of



Michael Sears, couturier from Sears And Robot. "I make club clothes and outrageous outfits to order. People here are free to dress how they want and how outrageously they want. I just help them along."



Mary, 27, resource teacher. "If I were back East I would probably have some horrible white collar job and never see daylight. I don't think San Francisco changed me, it's just helped me find out who I am and what I like. Everything I'm doing now, I've always liked doing, but I used to have to hide it. But not here, not now."



Wayne Gregori, founder of SF NET. "There's something very hallucinogenic about SF NET. There are no snappy visuals on the NET, only characters on the screen, it's like reading a book, but the book is alive and you join in."

Chad, club promoter, and **Sharon**. "We'd been listening to house music for years but there was nowhere to dance to it in this city. There's a scene here because we've made it happen. And it's getting better."

► communication. We're working towards this new language, a post-symbolist language of images that don't make sense to the rational mind but awaken a deeper self. There's a wave of psychedelic energy that surfaces at certain points in our culture. The first was in the '60s and its rising up again, now."

Hippy-tech and happy-tech: it's all very San Francisco. An interface between the tripped-out streets of Upper Haight, the campus intellect in the redwoods beyond Berkeley and the cold circuitry of Silicon Valley. This is something that goes right down to street level and into the boho bars and cafés. Look carefully here and you'll find a group of people huddled around a small video console. But they're not playing games. They're on-line, rapping in cyberspace, talking to other users on the communication network SF NET. This is a bulletin board where two dozen people can talk at once. They

write messages on a keyboard that flash up on screen for a group discussion. For founder Wayne Gregori, it's a means to democratise technology and unite a divided city.

"I'm a concerned American," he says. "I watch all this ugliness and bigotry in our society and it frightens me. I'm always thinking of ways of getting people together. The electronic medium of communication is really wild and really rich. I felt it was unfortunate that there wasn't an opportunity for street people to get involved." People talk in everyday language on the NET. Unlike most bulletin boards, it's free from the hi-tech discourse of the computer nerd. People talk about parties, politics and themselves. The afternoon I spent an hour on-line, there was a discussion about opium, Coleridge and relationship between psychedelics and the poetic imagination. "The NET is really remarkable," enthuses Wayne. "It's less than a year old but we're already having to get ready to accommodate more users. It's a faceless, neutral medium where different people can meet simply as words on a screen."

Techno-unity is evolving thanks to a growing core

of streetwise artists and schemers. Yet it took an influx of talent from the UK to extend the principle onto the dancefloors. A small group of promoters and DJs have spent the last 18 months forcing through the birth of a club scene. Drawn to the city by its Summer Of Love and future/cyber-tech associations they have kicked off something that is growing. Fast. The biggest splash came from Toon Town. Empowered by one-time *i-D* writer Mark Heley with locals Dianna Jacobs and Preston Lytton, this was the first cyber-rave, mixing future-tech and psychedelic revisionism with the trance beats of deep house. "It was an idea that conceptualised into a New Year's Eve party called Psychedelic Apocalypse," says Heley. "We took house music, VR, computer animation and expanded all these elements to a point where they were so 'in yer face' that it would fuck people's heads up."

Psychedelic Apocalypse pulled in over 7,000 people. A work of mass rave-art, it was also a public projection of the private fantasies that drew Heley to San Francisco in the first place. "I came here to live out all the ideas I was writing about when I was a journalist in England. It was that synthesis of psychedelic shamanism, smart cyberspace culture, RU Sirius and that whole DMT/Ketamine-type distanced view of reality that I felt he represented."

DMT and shamanism. The most potent plant hallucinogenic and the most ancient art for accessing its power. The connection here is with philosopher and writer Terence McKenna. It's his star that's rising over the San Francisco underground. For all its