



BAM
The
Next
Wave
Festival



ABOVE
MINE, included in *Artists
in Action*, Rona Pondick/
Robert Feintuch/Sara
Rudner, 1996. Photo:
Sidney Janis Gallery

Visual Arts

Dan Cameron

The history of BAM aligns itself with allowing for experimentation from artists working with other disciplines, and we see the interaction between visual art and the creators of other art forms as a significant element in being part of BAM and the Next Wave. The key to understanding BAM is that it has an organic flow to it, and the flow of the Next Wave has different components—performance, cinematic, educational, and visual—and as visual artists, we want and need to work with artists from other disciplines, and BAM makes that happen for us. The new generation of visual artists will have the added benefit of the technology that allows for more diverse experimentation to happen. You've planted the seeds in curating the Next Wave Festival, and now it's going to grow deeper into the visual arts.

Featuring new works by, among others, Vito Acconci, Kristin Jones, Andrew Ginzel, Chandralekha, Ilya Kabakov, Rona Pondick, Nayland Blake, and Kerry James Marshall, Artists in Action's approach was unapologetically experimental, which in the short term may have driven a few patrons to the exits during intermission, but in the long view only furthered the deepening mutual affection and admiration between the art world and BAM.

Not only was Artists in Action an ambitious expansion of the definition of performance as it had been previously observed by BAM, but it also opened the possibility of bringing other cultural institutions into a closer collaborative relationship. In one memorable production, the Dia Center for the Arts in Chelsea was the location for **Theater Project for a Rock Band** (1995), Acconci's collaboration with the band The Mekons, which employed raised platforms to separate band members from each other, while placing the audience on a viewing plane beneath them, so that the spectators gazed upwards at the musicians. Pondick's **MINE** (1996), a collaboration with choreographer Sara Rudner and fellow artist Robert Feintuch, took place in conjunction with an installation by Pondick at the Brooklyn Museum, and wove an elaborated deconstruction of the title word with the visual language of bodily movement relative to the sculpture. At one moment in the performance, a cascade of large ear shapes on the museum's floor becomes an integral part of the space filled by the dancers, who convey on their backs the large image of a human mouth with a full set of grinning teeth.