

art



Light and Shadows

Writer: JORDAN WEEKS

Claude Wampler is dancer, vocalist and creative adventurer. Trained in visual art, Butoh dance and opera, she creates pieces that are hearty amalgamations of eclectic media.

Wampler's previous works have featured disparate, sometimes emotionally confrontational subjects such as portrayals of family members (in *Jumbo Shrimp*) and tragic imagery (*The Surface of Her*), and a tribute to "tinyness" and her own small dog, Cake (*Cake Fur*). Of the latter, *Artforum's* Bruce Hainley wrote in 1995: "Her subtle

Claude Wampler's *Exposé* begins at 8 p.m. Sat., Jan. 27, at The Andy Warhol Museum, North Side. 237-8300.

and sudden shifts from airy and grotesque to dissonant and hilarious, her gossamer hand gestures, and possessed body snaps amaze. ... She loves you, and it's scary."

During a phone interview from New York City, she seems anything but scary; rather, she is soft-spoken and enthusiastic about her show at The Andy Warhol Museum.

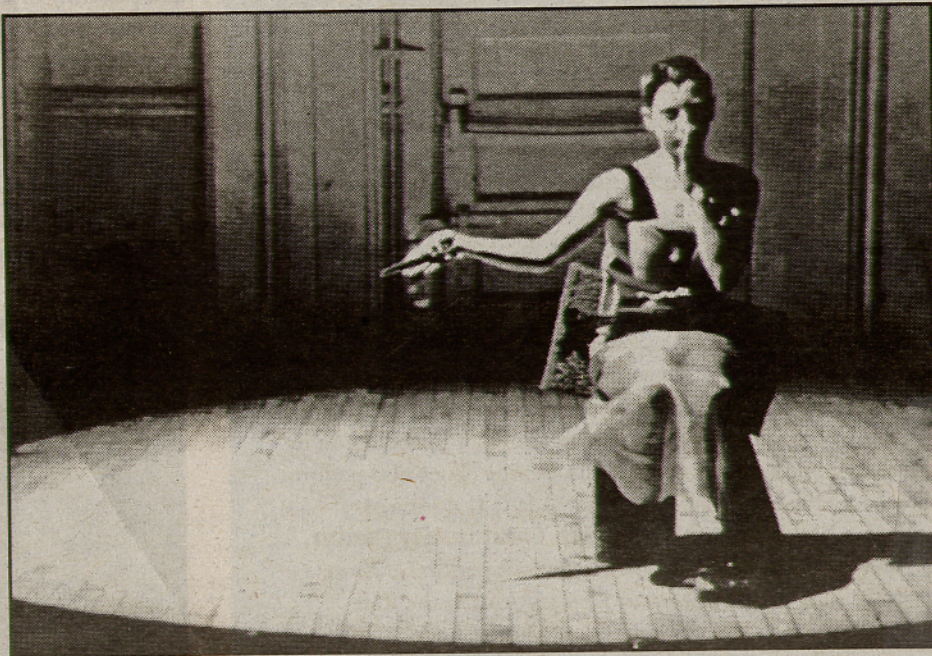
"I'm trying to break down the division

between performance and visual art," Wampler says, "because I think [it] still exists. Even though I think in the 70s there was a big boom of visual artists that were making performance, and it seemed like there wasn't such a giant brick wall between the two worlds. But now it seems that the wall is up, and sometimes there are only *exceptional* events that occur that seem to bridge the gap between the two; it doesn't seem to be a regular practice.

"So I think what I'm always trying to do," she continues, "is make it so that even a visual *installation* can be also ... sort of watched and appreciated for its performative quality, or that performance can be watched as a series of visual objects that ... happen to be constrained by time or space. I believe that all my work, whether it happens on a stage, or in a gallery, or in a museum, is coming from the same place."

Wampler developed *Exposé* specifically for The Warhol.

"It's a kind of a light installation," Wampler says. "I'm re-lighting the museum with this forensic UV lighting that allows



Claude Wampler

the human eye to see semen, because I believe that in public spaces, there is a lot more there that one cannot see; it's just a matter of lighting."

Following a video presentation, Wampler explains that audience members

will be "on their own to go through the museum," adding that "it's also going to be very pretty, I think, to look at Warhol's collection under that light."

"I'm very fascinated right now with present absence, or absent presence, or vis-

ibility versus invisibility," she says, something she asserts runs through much of Warhol's work.

"It was very exciting to be asked to do this," Wampler says, "because, first of all, I really have been wanting to make a pilgrimage to the museum, and this gave me the perfect opportunity ... and then also [making] work for the museum was really fun because Warhol is really important to me. Not necessarily as a performance artist, because I don't really call myself that, but as an artist working currently, he's really had quite an impact. He's an important figure, one that I'm really proud of. You know, sometimes it's really hard to be proud to be an American. Warhol makes it a little easier. And it's really great that the museum is just opening their doors and letting me in." ☞