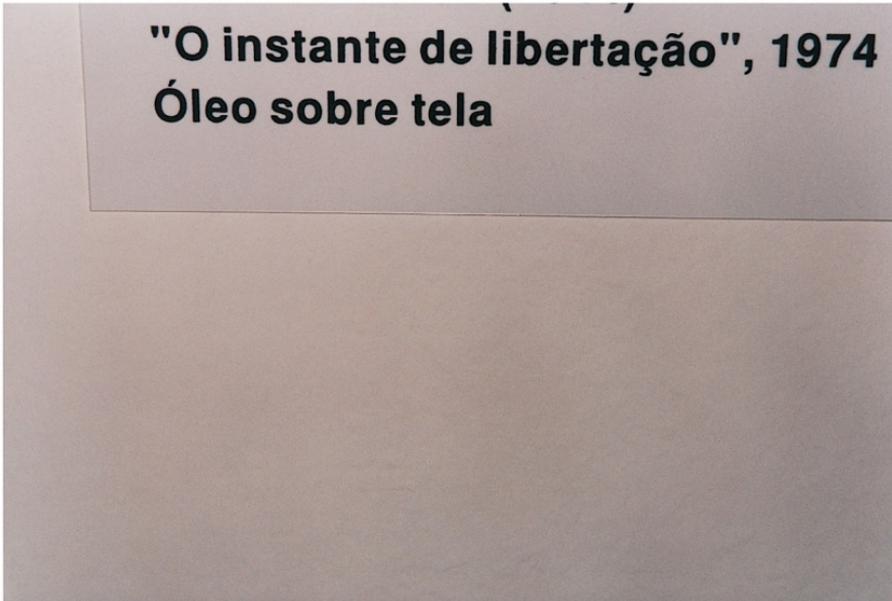


Diego Cortez

“stuzzicadenti”, 1997-99

Acoustic piano, mixed media

"O instante de libertação", 1974
Óleo sobre tela



Diego Cortez

“stuzzicadenti” 1997-99

Produced and mixed by Paul D. Miller a.k.a.
DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid

Yamaha piano & Tibetan bhoopchen (rolmo)
by Diego Cortez

Recorded at home on West 23rd Street, NYC
Recording design (piano) by Arto Lindsay
Additional recording by DJ Spooky & Flam
Kalimba, bass, hand-drums, video game sounds,
acoustic guitar and voice elements by DJ Spooky
Engineered and mastered by Flam at
Mindswerve Studios, NYC

Guest Artists:

Butch Morris, music box, track 6; cornet, track 7

Ryuichi Sakamoto, synthesizer, track 8

Ben Neill, Mutantrumpet, track 9

Priest, vocal, track 11

Kazu Makino, vocal, track 13

Arto Lindsay, guitar, track 14

1. **tiresome rocking** 1:17
2. **privation (now a lake)** 3:03
3. **Jobim's existence** 4:56
4. **Waters of Proteus** 1:13
5. **black chest (Asine)** 3:07
6. **between your face and your face** 2:30
7. **delta** 5:05
8. **Dead Sea** 6:40
9. **Venusburg of bureaucracy** 3:49
10. **whitewash** 5:27
11. **inviolate** 1:48
12. **scamander** 6:45
13. **sugar-cane** 2:10
14. **teethmen of the tropics** 5:25
15. **nemesis (loophole)** 1:52



Notes on “stuzzicadenti” by Diego Cortez

Spaccanapoli, 1997. Old instrument shop with pianos (thought to record there—didn't). Returned to New York & bought Yamaha grand. Advice from Arto on recording equipment. Three months recording nine hours (of) improvisational material (1997). Sold piano; tapes sit one year (1998). Edit (nine hours to one hour) (into fragments) (spring, 1998). Asked Paul to collaborate & produce record (summer, 1998). 'Sits' another year—slight changes (1999). Release: June 2000.

1/ 'Unprepared' piano 2/ *Colab* a.k.a. Spooky 3/ practice is perfect...a perfect phrase 4/ pianists: (excruciating attempts at) mathematical & geometric constructions (Man Ray “mathematical objects”) 5/ dance (contemp. 'German' school) 6/ *political-correctness* (origin): post-war(s) Germany(s) 7/ dervish improv's (break-) dance orbital(s) 8/ hand(s)-to-key(s)-key(s)-to hand(s) 9/ plodding animal(s)—*jungle (-hood)* 10/ change palate 11/ *dub* 12/ (contemp.) dance: (anonymous) meeting(s) 13/ intention(s), school(s) of intention(s); collaboration(s) 14/ (solid-state) representations: unification (theory) 15/ not cults, not cults: broke(n) record (documentation, documentation) 16/ *theories* (archaic) 17/ bio-specimens vs. bio-tech. (baroque strangle-holds) 18/ 'craft' vs. colonialists' (crafty) cultural apparatus 19/ baroque = spatial design(s) 20/ 'elasticity' in *tropicalist* thought 21/ no (re-) exit(s) once theatre'd 22/ naked city: Wee Gee & Spooky G 23/ (radio:) Brazilian hand-drum *rolls*—polyglots, polymorphs 24/ Susan Meiselas: “Kurdistan,” 1997 25/ plenipotent diplomacies: art of peace, failure(s) of war 26/ “micro-organisms gormandize Hieronymus Bosch varnishes at Prado” 27/ roadways: interstices (konkrete) = spirit world's end (Doyle, Polke) 30/ Airline Highway: lots 333, 335 (opposite Mahalia Jackson tomb).



Stuzzicadenti title (Italian for 'toothpicks') realized (at table) (also) in Naples (Capri)—sounded like musical notation term. Absurdist title. *Coincidence one: frammenti* ("brief bursts")—(slender)—(piano) recordings given to Paul in short fragments (Barthes: "incoherence preferred to a distorting order"). *Samples*—(to be) mixed further, altered, improvised-with. (Paul) composited, (not) composed. Critical links: *intermezzi* (Schumann)—*frammenti* (Webern).

'Il primo miracolo' di Gautama Buddha: "planting of (a) toothpick used to clean teeth *at meal's end*" (Mingmar Tsering). Tree of Buddha visible next day. *stuzzi-cadenti* are (not) such miracles, (but) *all* improvisations, composition-roots are. *Coincidence two*: function of (these) teeth-cleaning devices: *a/ contentment* (artists' worst nightmare)—feeling after a meal *b/ incidental*: piano exercises, (quiet) improvisations, (*piccoli frammenti meditativi*). Process (to play) piano with un- (rigidly) 'composed' results. Open-ended (-ness) (space) for listener. Ambient: ("*The Kind of Music*")—(sometimes, somewhat) (pure) documentary—non- or quasi- programmatic. Wholistic hole (in argument). (Yet another) futile attempt to resurrect 'new age' genre(s) after many (contemporary) failures? Reincarnation (evolution), multiplicity (diversity) principles (Buddhist)—free self from culture (-'s) (obsessive *mono*-narratives). Interactive: improvisational, collaborative (art world jump to music/film worlds). Abstraction, subtlety, *subliminality* (essence) (autonomy-creating systems): (for this) reason to collaborate with Paul D. Miller (a.k.a. DJ Spooky). (Barthes: "a pulverized discourse...") For Richard Teitelbaum, Anthony Braxton & John Cage—3 *sound/performance* teachers/mentors.



TIREOSOME ROCKING—wave theory—life: (endless) (series of) back & forth's—then: (phenomenon) to freeze (within) wave-events: 'conclusion(s),' climax (-es). Why is (all) music (especially improvisational) (so) bent upon a (tired) 'rise to orgasm & fall' model? Ideas / realizations / meditations / concepts / cultural artifacts / (even) (our) lives tire, regenerate. To rock (& roll) is pre-infantile (womb theory) (water > land > air: *anfibi*s). Rock 'n roll (rocking out): white man's 'guilt-mimicry,' appropriation of black liberation culture. (New) musical goal(s): *all-racial*; (an) evolved post-rock music; post-western (-U.S.) ('holed up' in Wash. State); aware of profound achievements from all world cultures: Afro-dance (philosophy), Buddhist philosophy (dance). New contemporary activities: 'blisses' (Eno); mutations (Spooky) of ambience to *illbience* (groove-meditation synthesis). Failures of 'new age' musics—(the) many futile (musical) attempts at 'new age': (glut:) archaic sci-fi models—pathetic—"lousy architecture"—“(a) too literal conceptualism”—(the) glaring ego of the scientist—(then) the problem of a (too) rigid sense of (cultural) history: (my) argument with G. Orozco: “(it's) not who did something first (Manzoni) that's important, but who did something best” (Klein)—(Yves) Klein, (the) endgame of 20C modernism (abstraction, conceptual)—(his) immersion in (the) spiritual—(a) master of *illbience*, he combined groove (martial arts dance, physical performance) with meditation (monochrome). 18C Tibetan bhoopchen (*rolmo*)—large hand cymbals ('mother-like' sound) played—normally used in (the) propitiation of (the) dharmapalas—fashioned from (an alloy of) a dozen metals combined to cre-

ate (a) specific sound, bhoopchen (*rolmo*) provide (both) rhythm and melody to temple music as they create diverse sounds from different parts of their (non-illusory) body.

PRIVATION (NOW A LAKE)—Ugandan kalimba (thumb piano) (*lamellophone*) in tandem with (push-button) *teletelphone*—(a) duet of traditional & contemporary technologies. Centre Pompidou's watershed “Magiciens de la Terre” exhibition (1989), curated by Jean-Hubert Martin: the pairing of traditional (ritual) expression and technologies with contemporary (conceptual) expression—(the) two-tiered world we live in *exposed*—first-world vs. third. (Artists or magicians) paired, (sometimes) awkwardly—this (visual) *awkwardness*: (our) global reality today. (We are) post-colonial survivors of (many, all) holocausts which preceded us (some flare still). (Soap opera: “Our Divided World.”) Developed ~ underdeveloped, fine art ~ folk art. (Surely) sexual division preceded racial division—what do these *magiciens* of (such) diverse cultures have in common: (to) heal (their own) cultures—(to) change society's attitudes towards the humane (faster, better than archival politicians). Why are politicians 'freaked' by artists? (professional jealousy). Artists affect *change* (without bloodshed) through elaborate (historical) systems of sign-expression (*magiciens*, priests)—unearth root(s) of (*most*) problem(s): repression / oppression—'prevention' advocates—not 'after-the-fact' (political) solution(s) ('apartheid' prisons, death penalties, archaic laws & regulations, trade monopolies). The post-modern unifies (these) historically contrary worlds of high

and low (tech.). 'First world' metaphor: *push buttons*. (Conscious, unconscious) urge to *control* (organize) through technology, 'fingers (do) walking,' *mani-pulate*—(a) danceless, (too-often) useless industry (game)—(a) *cultureless culture*. *Keyboard* culture(s) today—(evolved from) 'corpus' (individual) games to corporate games (networks & market control). 'Non-musicians' who refuse to 'compose'—'forward-thinking' conceptualists or dumb 'primitives?' Sevilla, Semana Santa, 2000: (brass) music (still) able to create moments of public coalescence (sentiment); visual component (actors, costumes; flowers, sculptures) (now) fail public. (Mass) 'attention-deficit (concentration) disorder' *fallout* (by-product) of cellular phone technological advance on consumer(s) brain(s).

JOBIM'S EXISTENCE—Antonio Carlos Jobim represents (as does Miles Davis) a musical antidote to contemporary urban neuroses—what Robert Farris Thompson defines in *Flash of the Spirit as 'cool'*: Jobim's *proto-ambient* transcriptions. Ambient & 'illbient' (sound) structures provide a '360-degree' context & environment for sound: (extra) 'space' for (listener-) thought (counter-programmatic), completion of thought(s), parallel thought(s), analysis. (Contemporary) *ambience*, derivative of (modern) existentialism? Jobim's music is (a) post-existential music—not (just) 'mellow' but *essence*-based. “Jobim's *existence*.” (a) fictive reenactment of Jobim at piano—pre-rehearsal, pre-practice—*tentative* (childish) improvisation(s). (To) arrive at simplest of melodic structure(s), moments clearly existential, probe points of (new) 'origin—root' structures. Like

(Cy) Twombly, Jobim's act(s) of creation follow (tortuous) elongated moments of *tentativity*—*not* making the 'mark,' before inspiration or idea 'moves' artist (message received). Hélio Oiticica, foremost sculptor of *tropicalist* environmental works, & important Jobim contemporary, once soundly criticized Jobim for collapsing structures in his music which (he felt) had arrived at (*muzak*-like) banality, an extension of the bourgeois fantasy: luxury, contentment (space = luxury). But today, Jobim's experiments in spatial sound (*Passarim*), (like Davis') are profound, sophisticated treatises on collapsed (relaxed) 'tentative' modes which heal, proffer *autonomous space* to listener—(a) radically with ability to (aptly) cut through contemporary 'source-noise' culture (our urban reality)—(to) create a 'counter-compulsive' plane (on which) to collect (one's) wits / thoughts. Jobim (was) a true *Filho de Gandhi*, (as) he extended the (most) radical (& successful) political model of the 20C—*pacifism*. (From) where do models of pacifism & détente stem?: (from) the philosophical endgame of the absurd—sentient, comical, existential. Jobim located (his) artistic identity in the domestic tranquility of family (another critical controversy). As he musically evolved, he (more & more) involved personal family members—(this) delimitation of extraneous complexity may put Jobim in the minimalist camp (*estetica minimalista*) (*more* than Oiticica?). Jobim sits at piano—morning coffee untouched—quiet, clumsy (pre-melodic)—not practice—not improvisation—(certainly) not formal (nor cogent)—a *transe*—meditation: (expanding) support spaces, (expanding) autonomous clusters. An existential

mind awakens to 'café, fumaca e solidao.' Paul's upright bass mimics piano strings: string (corda) / key (*tom*)—inside (dentro) / outside (fora): 'o piano do Jobim.'

WATERS OF PROTEUS—recorded by Paul at mechanic's garage on 10th Avenue (23rd/24th Streets). (Plinthed) video game (keyboard instrument), practically on sidewalk. (We hear) entire shop—(some) Arabic spoken—indoor & outdoor sounds: today's technology coexists with yesterday's (machines)—(a) pure ('engine') documentary.

BLACK CHEST (ASINE)—binary tone poem—the almost irrelevant mind of the oppressor (piano) with the (frenzied) contemporary reality of the drum: repercussion: "echoes—the language of others, complimentary or not, is tainted at its source by the *repercussion* it might have—the link to the world is thus always conquered starting from a certain fear" (Barthes). Casals: "all rhythm is in the *retard*." Drum and rhythm structures are not unlike any form of (pan-) conceptualism—(there is) a *pre-determinism* as to what will ensue—a plan of action—(great) drummers know from the outset what rhythm(s) will (must) emerge—the *starting* point is the most important aspect of rhythm. Drummers: systems analysts—systems + cycles = rhythm(s).

BETWEEN YOUR FACE AND YOUR FACE—Paul's initial count-down into jazz ballad, love song— Butch's original composition for music box, (a) work for a mechanical-age lamellophone— disconnected voic-

es of children—(another) type of cyclical patterning (metal drum)—swirling sound— treading, then underwater—evolve from sea—(all titles for *stuzzi-cadenti*: fragments from Seferis, lifelong metaphor—the sea):

*in the shade of the big ship
memory's a shade.*

DELTA—*virtual* duet with new friend Butch Morris—cornet recorded at (his) East Village apartment—(he) listened 3-4 times to solo piano part— then recorded (his) part on mini-disc, unable to hear piano—(an) incredible (recent) memory. Paul's (curatorial) intercalculations then adjusted piano & cornet tracks to fit. Following recording, Justin, Paul, Butch & I went to (Da) Silvano for dinner, the night before Butch's (Baldwin) expatriation to Istanbul. (John) Lurie passed by table, shocked to see us together. Butch spoke about the recording to John, whose reaction was (even) more incredulous. He screamed, "(Man,) you never play on my records...(and) you *never* play cornet anymore!" I was *moved* by the fact that I was part of a conceptual or ideological collaboration devised by Paul based upon (some) shared histories. Butch and I, as curated by Paul, seemed to share several identities (beliefs) based upon historical accuracy— not colonial distortion(s). My interest in New Orleans & Delta culture(s) led me to conclude that the 'adjustment period' we presently are in ('limbo' between slavery & pure non-racist behavior) is (severely) entangled—a transition mode with (an) 'exaggerated' (white) liberal (sympathetic) support for African-

American culture—(still) manipulative, patronizing, possessive, competitive, neurotic, territorial—colonialist. This (quasi-) manipulation of blacks & black culture is a (somewhat pathetic) step towards remunerating the American Negro. Today's ecology problems are *identical* to problems caused by racism: a result of the exploitation and abuse of nature (nature = truth). "...the sphere of friendship was thus populated by dual relations—what was wanted was a plural equality, without in-difference." (Barthes)

DEAD SEA—(another) 'virtual' collaboration with friend—this time Ryuichi (Sakamoto) who offered (an) unusual (& unused) sound piece—(a) fragment made contemporarily to soundtrack score *Love is the Devil*. Ryuichi's contribution to *Devil* was (a) radical departure from (the) expected lush strings of previous film scores—(an) avant-garde electronic music (east); emphasis on underlying (existential) radicality in Francis Bacon's 'tableaux.' Paul fused with piano 'frill' snippets— 'micro-' baroque (Scarlatti) ornaments, decorations; (dexterous?) finger exercises (west) combine with Ryuichi's ('macro-' historical) austere (tragic) electronic setting—(a) tragicomic (game) of counterpoint. (It is said) the purpose of Zen is an "abolition without leftovers of the reign of values." Where do we find the (historical) roots of existentialism? (>East). "Zen is akin to *torin* Buddhism (abrupt, separated, broken openings). *Kien* Buddhism is, conversely, the method of gradual access. The fragment (like the haiku) is *torin*; it implies an immediate delight."

VENUSBURG OF BUREAUCRACY—Thomas Bernhard (*Extinction*): "...Kafka, who actually was a bureaucrat, thought he didn't write bureaucratic works, but none of the others could write anything else." The terrorist landscape (today)—all (true) contemporary culture is transgressive, injurious: rules recast; (we) shed (archaic) precepts: political (cultural) lag. Veloso: "Miles Davis *stole* musical property from (an) *unknown* (to *gringos*) Brazilian songwriter? Listen then to Veloso's "Prenda Minha," 1991 (tracks 2, 12) for (an) equivalent 'appropriation' of Davis. What is the state of musical 'property' today?—do today's new technologies pose (a) serious threat to (the) sanctity of musical authorship & ownership? Yes (no?). (The) *sample*: artist as *terrorist* (media-manipulator). Soundtrack for urban (cultural) terrorism.

WHITEWASH—(Irish) heritage slips through—slippages, clips, *gigue* shards—(an almost) erased racial heritage. Possible? Genetic (self-) engineering, ethnic (self-) cleansing. (To) arrive in a new age where sexual identities, religions, races, traditions are carefully preserved—cultural artifacts, (mere yet profound) *choices*, 'acquisitions.' We don't say, "I believe" re: cultural artifact or history (presumptuous). They simply *are*—*facts*. To abandon the (archaic) game of "I believe"? as (a) (mere yet profound) distraction, slight-of-hand, manipulation, (reinforced) ignorance. To (then) wear all the robes of humanity & (then) quietly be buried above ground in a vault opposite Mahalia Jackson's tomb on Airplane Highway. (Her '50s interview with Edward R. Morrow forever changed this life.) To remember

play as (a) child in black (neighbors') homes (suburban Chicago)—'Chipper' Kee, Alice Sublette—(a) shared domestic life, (seemingly, strangely) unlike (craven) most.

INVIOULATE—Priest: "The Insular Outcry"—

Egoless
Teardrop obscenely obese
Follow the aperture of your abode foreboding
Morse code tone dot dash mayday
They say when star crossed lovers cross their
cross is altered
Faltering, falsetto failing in hallways
Minotaur stars
There's no such thing as empty because empty
is filled with nothing
Straddling the lines between here and now
Superimposed chrome can't keep me
Follow the violent beautiful raging bull chasing
narcissistic matadors and Rappers in a duel of
isolationists.
Toppling fishbowl cities
Tidal wave echo alone along
Unsure alone I stand a hand
Public shadow dissipating in light dimension
Night fall tall outside wide or angular
Rendering
Rendered powerless in the absence of you and
closure
All lines and boxes are mine
I am that I am
The reclusive counterclockwise explosion of
numbers

Numb, blues
Uneven hues of sepia, seeping in around the
corner
The insular outcry.

(Vocalic) rap's (other) scatologies relative to historical subjugation of both race-captive *and* anus-excrement (essential *end* of digestion process). Mouth (talk) = oppressor. Anus (talk 'shit') = repressed. Barthes: (1) "La double crudité (raw twice over)—crude language is a pornographic language (hysterically miming the pleasure of love); *crudités* (as they appear on the menu) are merely mythological values of a civilized meal...aesthetic ornaments...crudity therefore shifts to the abhorred category of the pseudo-natural, whence, great aversion for crudity of language..." (2) "...text-on-a-sprea" (3) "The stereotype can be evaluated in terms of *fatigue*. Whence the antidote...the *freshness* of language."

SCAMANDER—upright pianos, upright basses; upright art world (always standing), erect on hardwood & cement floors *at attention*—(impotent) male & female phalluses (Male)—("impotence always result of projection(s) of power"). (An) upright public, fundamentalist to the 'letter' (of *law*): the informed (*cognocscente*)—(those) 'in the know'—connoisseurs—'automatonistic-chit-chat': a vacuum, void—the 'rootless elite.' "Las instituciones de arte son las más brutales en censurar (agencias de cumplimiento) del 'status quo'—eso siendo sus trabajos como empleados de arte—(el) mundo del arte se rige de acuerdo al ojo del crítico

de arte del *New York Times*." Pathetic urban reality: (to) *live* to be judged—to (only) exist for a review in the *Times* (the operative syndrome among art professionals today). Gal Costa to DC (8th Street, exiting Electric Ladyland Studios, after final vocal 'comps' of "O Sorriso do Gato de Alice," clutching Billie Holliday CD boxed set): "S-h-a-k-e your *b-u-n-d-a!*" (Exact) philosophical point (as) offered by rappers to (white) audiences: reintegrate 'mouth-anus' apartheid. End *anus-fear* subjugation-projection onto historically submissive (passive, pacifist, advanced) cultures.

SUGAR-CANE—Kazu's 'mind-emptied' mantra recorded (on street) by Paul with mini-disk—another (vocal) *exercise*, (pre-) improvisation. Paul exorcised street sounds from tape in studio. Bhoopchen (rolmo) performed (at home) by DC. Sugar-cane: (all) Arto's girlfriend's, ex- and current. Cane passages between San German & Mayaguez—"por suerte es un área inundable o no estaría, desarrollado" ("todavía está verde"). Kazu & band *Blonde Redhead*: courage to endure (together), survive at 'all costs'—cost of (group) therapy. But art is therapy, bands (*are*) groups, no?.

TEETHMEN OF THE TROPICS—colonial history as much defined by north-south as east-west—manifestos of Brazilian tropicalist movements (1920s-present) lay out (the) cultural battleground. Our teethmen (Arto, Vinicius, Mel, Andrés, Davi, *Nação Zumbi*)—'sensitive' male warriors—backstage prior to São Paulo *Palace* gig—same 'intellectual-chit-chat,' but *seated!* (tropicalist stance)—Arto prac-

tices unplugged electric guitar (realmente uma musica de processo)—(impure) documentary: Brecht's nails scratch Beuys, blackboard—Paul's (laugh) loop—'Dennyquesque' (piano) loop—grooves, arabesques, chariots: 'Hover' (Crewdson) above Pelourinho.

NEMESIS (LOPHOLE)—Ruff, Polke, Trockel, Gursky, Struth, Polke, Becher's, Beckett, Polke, Richter, Baselitz, Kiefer, Forsythe, Stockhausen, Polke, Fassbender, Bausch: *three* artist-generations of contemporary German thought ("what's left of the left?")—survivors of (a) *dead-end* (colonial) *culture*. Nazism: a (nostalgist) *ruralist* (cult-) *coup* of urban (collectivist & intellectual) culture(s). Reactionary surfacings: Berlin, 1940 (hatred), Waco, 1993 (delusion), Miami, 2000 (passion)—(the) three basic (Buddhist) poisons. Gursky: (a) perfect *scale* (*analogy* = *proportion*)—Tibetan 'landscape' ("Kingdom of Shambala") thangka: humanity = (part-) figure versus (mass-) (land-) scape—(Buddha-) nature. Digital *clarity*: fusion of (recent) *plastiks*—*plastik / foto / paper*—(cold-) pressed to plexiglass. *Fusion* (monistic, nondual) more probable in art (-world) than music (-world); *collaboration* more probable in music (-world) than *art* (-world).

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Front Cover, Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro; inside cover (left)

Brian Eno, sound installation, 1998, White Cube, London; inside cover (right),

Mestre Didi, *Êsú Amuniwá*, 1982, clay mixed with cement and traditional herbal

mixture, height: 26-1/8 in., Bienal de São Paulo; inside flap cover, Hélio Oiticica,

Éden installation (1969), Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro; rear cover,

Untitled (hand), NYC; Booklet photographs: p. 1, Henry Geldzahler obituary,

New York Times; p. 3, library studio, NYC; p. 5, *Craxi*, Capri table; p. 11, Kazu,

Capri; p. 15, 'razor ribbon' photographs (Philip Taaffe studio, NYC); p. 16,

Naro Dakini, early 18th century, gilt brass; cast in several parts, with pigments,
height: 16.5 cm, The State Hermitage, Leningrad, Prince Ukhtomsky Collection.

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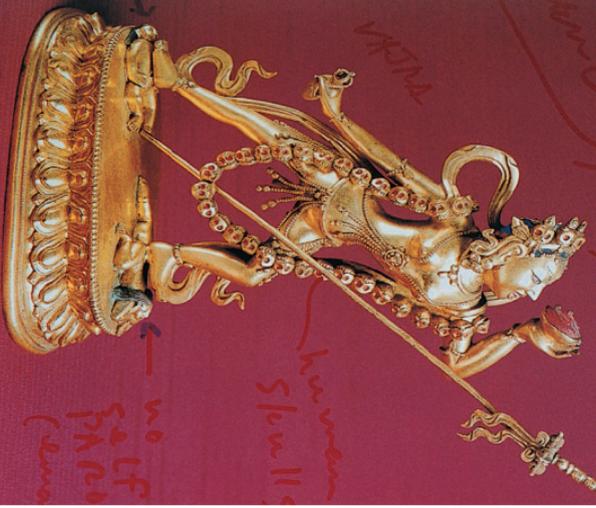
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Temple
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dance

394 Catalogue Buddha Online



With DJ Spooky, Arto Lindsay, Kazu Makino, Butch Morris, Ben Neill, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Priest

1. tiresome rocking
2. privation (now a lake)
3. Jobim's *existence*
4. Waters of Proteus
5. black chest (Asine)
6. between your face and your face
7. delta
8. Dead Sea

9. Venusburg of bureaucracy
10. whitewash
11. inviolate
12. scamander
13. sugar-cane
14. teethmen of the tropics
15. nemesis (loophole)



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