

# Artist explores fears, fantasies about science and technology

By Alice T. Carter

TRIBUNE-REVIEW THEATER CRITIC

Only a few years ago, the idea of cloning sheep, trademarking genes or linking brains up to computers was restricted to the realm of mad scientists in pulp fiction and B-movies.

Now that Palm Pilots make Dick Tracy's wrist radio look retro and heart and lung transplants are almost commonplace, maybe Dr. Frankenstein's tinkering doesn't look like so much like mad science after all.

"There is no future, just the present," Perry Hoberman says. "The future is a fiction. ... The future is a fiction to some extent. I think we are there and have been for some years."

In "Let's Make a Monster," Hoberman, an internationally known multimedia artist, takes on some of the crazier fantasies and fears people have about science with a real-time performance piece that mixes media fragments from movies, TV, the Internet and print into new mini-narratives that examine the blurred boundaries between science and fiction.

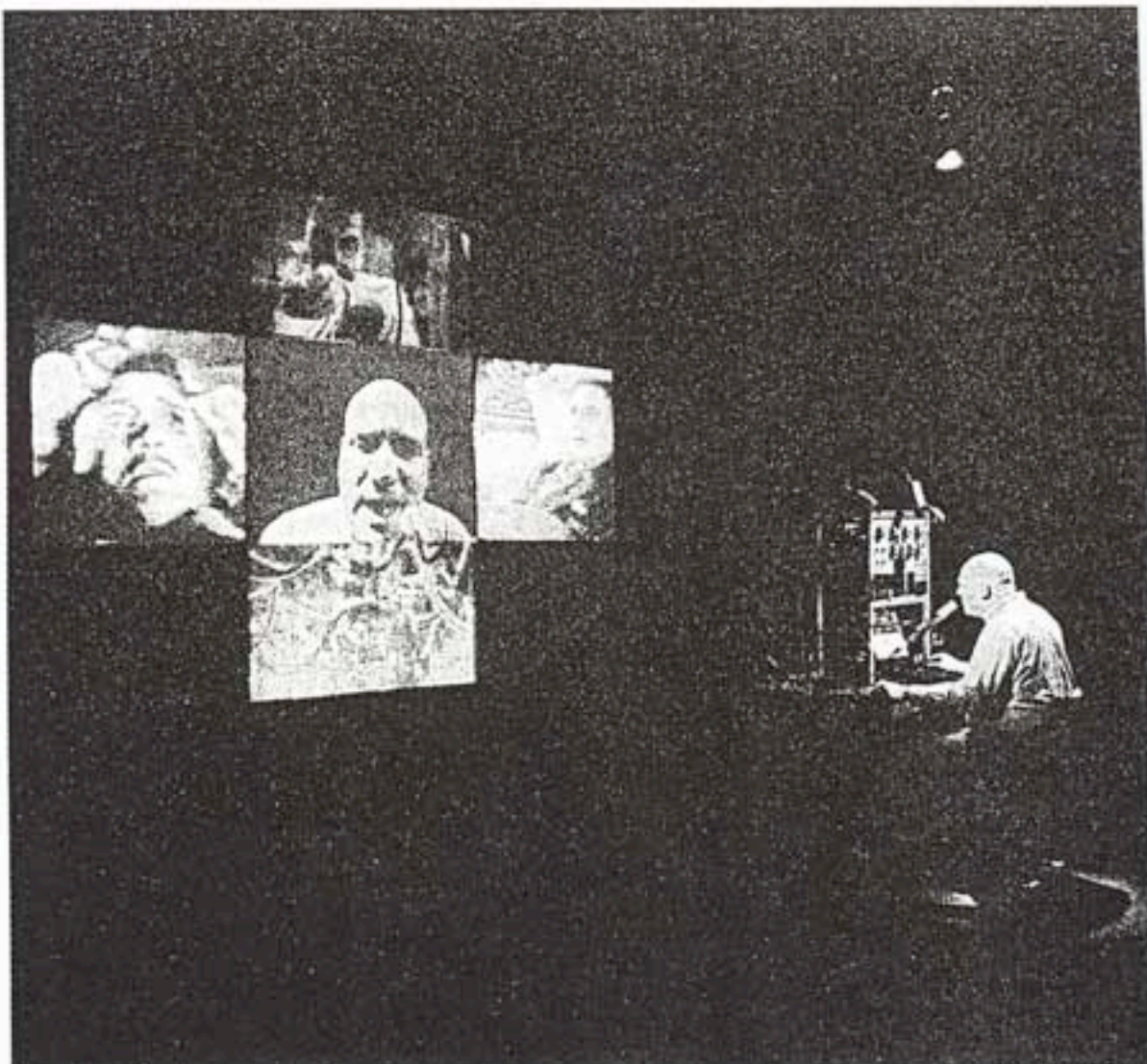
Hoberman will offer a single performance while he's in town for the opening of his "Cathartic User Interfaces" installations, an exhibit that begins Friday in the Wood Street Galleries, Downtown.

Hoberman's exhibition allows viewers to explore their relationships with modern technology, time and human three-dimensional perception by bashing at computer equipment, turning dials and otherwise manipulating and interacting with video projections and high- and low-tech gadgetry.

Interspersing 1940s and '50s film clips of mad scientists at work with manipulated loops of sound recordings and soundtracks, and maybe even some stereoscopic images, Hoberman plans to "take on some of the crazier general fantasies people are having these days — fantasies about computer technology, genetics, cloning and various things that are going to make us supposedly immortal," he says. "I'm processing it through real-time improvisatory software."

Although the images and sound bites are already recorded, Hoberman alters and juxtaposes them in a live, improvisational performance that's never exactly the same show twice. It's his take on current scientific endeavors such as the human genome project and cloning research, and the public and media speculation about what might be going on in labs.

Hoberman will perform "Let's Make a Monster" in an empty storefront space that's



Photos by Valorie Pudsey

Perry Hoberman's performance piece uses the idea of a mad scientist creating a monster. He will offer a single performance of "Let's Make a Monster"

while in town for the opening of "Cathartic User Interfaces," an exhibit in the Wood Street Galleries, Downtown.

## DETAILS

### 'Let's Make a Monster'

- ▶ 10 p.m. Saturday.
- ▶ \$5 at the door.
- ▶ Wood Street Galleries, Downtown.
- ▶ (412) 471-5605.

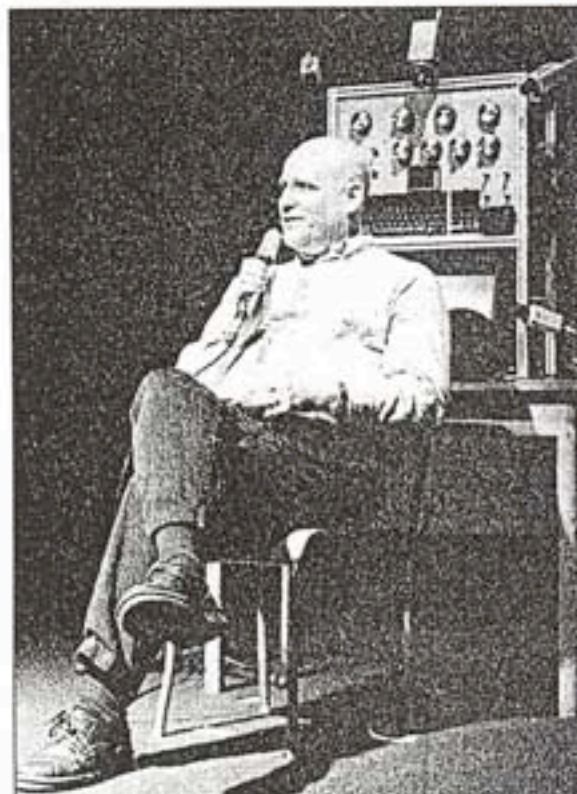
owned by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and offers room for 125 spectators. Adding to the improvisational atmosphere, no reservations are being taken. Those interested are advised to come early.

So far, Hoberman has performed "Let's Make a Monster" mostly at conferences where scientists and cultural critics present papers and discuss current issues.

"I travel around giving talks, and it occurred to me it would be nice to have something to present as a performance instead of just talk," he says.

"I make this piece a performance that seems a bit mad in the sense that mad science is mad. We get some sort of pleasure out of watching a spectacle that's somewhat over the top."

Alice T. Carter can be reached at [acarter@tribweb.com](mailto:acarter@tribweb.com) or (412) 320-7808.



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