



MB: Think of all the apparatus we have now that extends the capability of the human body, that makes it bigger and even turns amateurs into pros. But I'm more interested in a rough-hewn and simpler kind of proposition. It takes less to enable and way more to simply make a cut, an intervention in consciousness. That requires a great deal, including luck and an understanding of what constitutes consciousness. We know the body so completely, but it's full of these mysterious conundra, short circuits that we tend to brush off.

BC: *You have been a close looker at the world?*

MB: I hope so, because the visual is inextricably mixed into it. What goes on in a very crude sense is warfare between the senses, and particularly between vision and kinaesthesia, but also between vision and touch, vision and hearing. These are places where great mysteries emerge. If you can't tease up the visual end of it, not much will happen. ■

top: Mowry Baders, *Hudson Street Watercross*, 1983, steel, rubber, plastic, 120 x 40 x 120 cm.

middle: Kristan Horton, *Walnut Nuclear Power Station*, First Issue, 2006, comic art board covers.

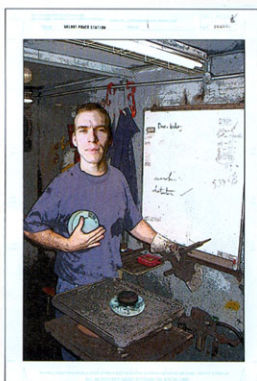
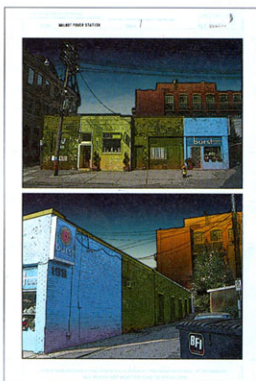
lower: Kristan Horton, *Walnut Nuclear Power Station*, Issue 10, 2006. Photos courtesy the artist.

Human Generator

Here is the way **Kristan Horton's** mind works. He begins with the idea of digging holes, which he regards as the means to open up space, a notion he finds fantastic. As an artist, he is aware of the earthworks of Michael Heizer, so scale and precedent enter his frame of reference. Then, on a trip to Hawaii, he visits an inactive volcano that includes a military installation with pillboxes and machine-gun nests. This makes him think about the *Strangelove Project*, in which he has duplicated the film in 300 domesticated images made from objects found around his apartment. (A book of 200 of these images will be published in April to coincide with an exhibition of the *Strangelove Project* at the Art Gallery of York University.) He has watched the original film over 800 times. *Strangelove* and the fortified volcano put him in mind of the Cold War, which ties into his awareness of people who gravitate towards alternative sources of power, like wind, many of whom live in North Dakota, where they "create enclaves of off-the-grid homesteading. I guess the idea of independence took over where holes began," he says. "Independence simply used hole as a means of creating a space where power could be generated."

The one thing left out of this tissue of connection is the reason why Horton was thinking about digging holes in the first place: he plans to build a nuclear reactor in his basement. The first stages of the *Walnut Nuclear Power Station*—he lives on Walnut Street and "most





top left: Kristian Horton, *Wohrut Nuclear Power Station, Issue 1*, page 18, 31 storyboards, comic art board with non-respo blue, ultra chrome ink, archival matte paper, rubber and cast stamping, 48.26 x 33.02 cm (each panel)

centre: Kristian Horton, *Wohrut Nuclear Power Station, Issue 1*, page 5.

right: Kristian Horton, *Wohrut Nuclear Power Station, Issue 1*, page 7.

tower: Michael Waterman, *Web, Sound Circuit, 2004*, mixed electronic media, installation Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph. Photos courtesy the artist.

generators are named after their locale"—were included in "We Can Do This Now," a group exhibition at The Power Plant in Toronto.

The piece is a DIY project in the form of a series of 10 comic books broken down into stages. It begins with breaking ground, then tunnelling, then excavation, plumbing and electricity, until the final comic when the reactor goes on-line. The characters who do this work are close to home. Horton is using himself and his friends to keep the feel of "the local," but, because so many images were needed, he has also taken material from the Internet. "I'm grabbing images from all kinds of sources, so a number of nondescript crewmen will appear inexplicably and then never appear again. There's no continuity in that respect."

But Horton does follow some rules. "Everything has to fit through my front door, so I have to figure out how I'm going to get a Bobcat in here to break the floor. The first part of the panel is when the Bobcat operator shows up and says, 'We're going to have to take the machine apart.' I go about securing images that facilitate all the things that need to happen, but they're constrained by the limits of the studio. Then I do extensive image manipulation—adjusting perspective or colour—to make them appear as if they're part of this reality." Even his characters are submitted to what he calls "the same kind of asynchronous discontinuum. The body and head can be from different experiences; the head is someone drinking beer in Munich and the body is something I shot here." ■