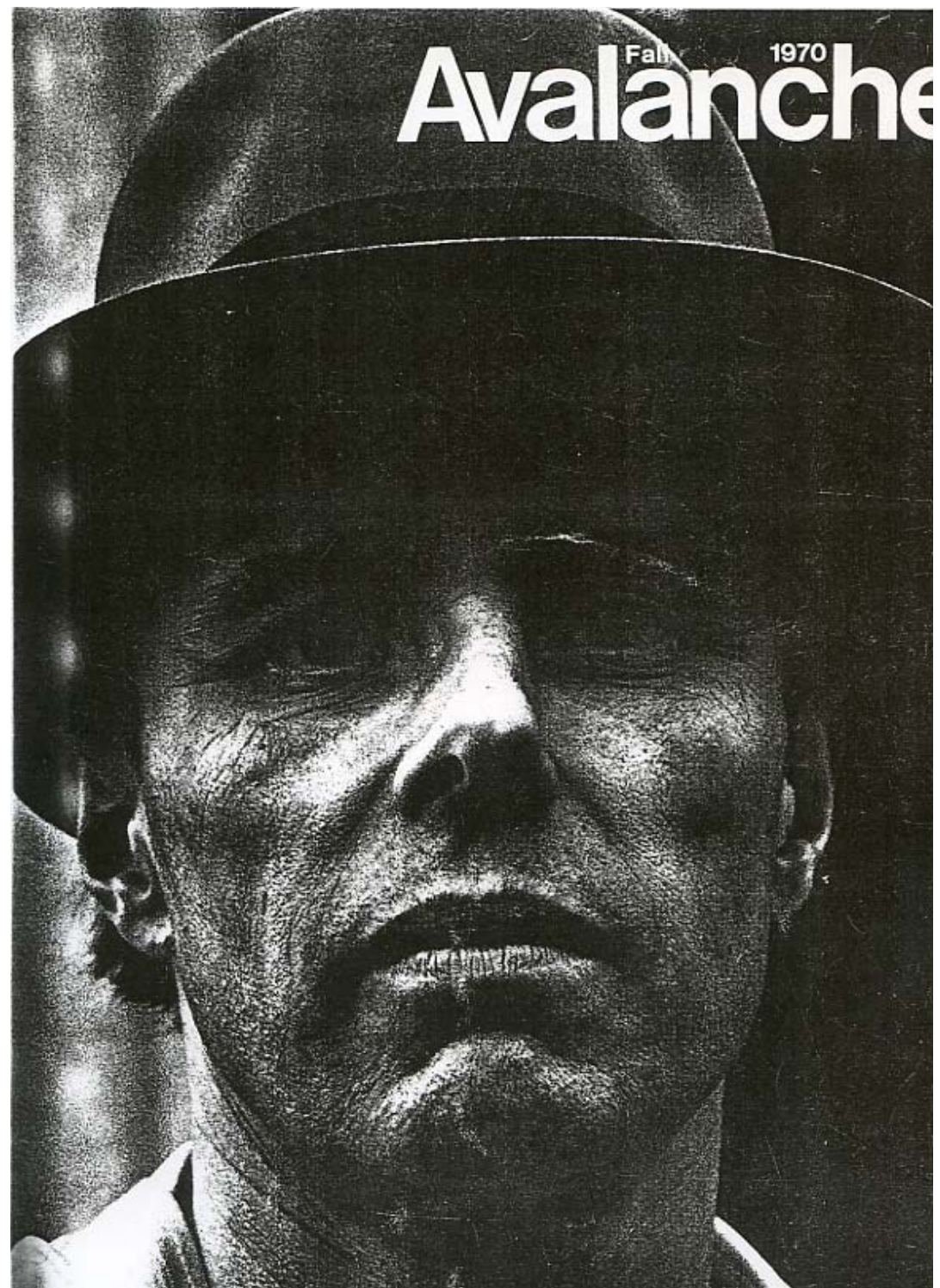


**Black and white
and radical all over:
Avalanche only lasted
13 issues, but was
a landmark in art
publishing**

Text by Lisa Le Feuvre

Joseph Beuys





Avalanche

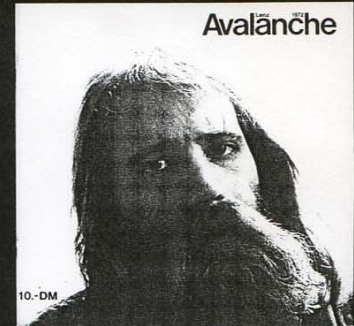
\$2

1971 che

Bruce Nauman

Publishers Liza Bear and Willoughby Sharp conceived *Avalanche* in a spirit of opposition. The singular intention of the magazine, founded in New York in 1970, was to foreground artistic ideas without mediation from critics and writers. Taking interviews with artists and artists' projects as the mainstays of the magazine, Bear and Sharp aimed to cut directly to the creative quick, assembling a serious publication with an artist-led voice. It was initially designed as a square-shaped journal, a form reminiscent of the dimensions of *Artforum*, the house magazine of the US art establishment, while dispensing with that magazine's cornerstones, the review and the critical essay. (For its final five issues, *Avalanche* mutated into a tabloid format.) Another key design element was the fact that *Avalanche* was published in black and white. This was in part an economic move, but was also intended to emphasise the magazine's status as a "document" rather than an interpretative publication on art and artists. (This intention ran into problems from issue one, though, when esteemed artist Carl Andre stated in an interview that simply using a photograph of an artwork was already akin to "a kind of pornography of art.")

Avalanche existed at a period when printed matter had a very particular importance within artistic practice. In the name of investigating the possibilities of counteracting the idea of artwork as "object," growing ranks of artists were questioning the parameters of the art establishment. In the artists' quest to extend those boundaries, magazines became legitimate sites for artistic involvement. Other publications such as *ArtRite* and *Studio International* also embraced this development, but only *Avalanche* made intervention a *raison d'être*, extending the idea even to its advertising section. Gordon Matta-Clark's collaborative restaurant-as-artwork project *Food* one year advertised its "Food Family's Fiscal Facts," a list of everything from the quantity of mushrooms consumed to the number of mundane disputes that had taken place between the all-artist *Food* staff: "2 Acres of mushrooms," "2 rebellions: the Dishwasher Rebellion of Feb '72 and the Radio Rebellion of '72". Shrewd advertising by major galleries also used this kind of approach. Konrad Fisher took a page to show a photograph of Daniel Buren's work that had been controversially removed from the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition.



10-DM

Lawrence Weiner

Avalanche

December 1974

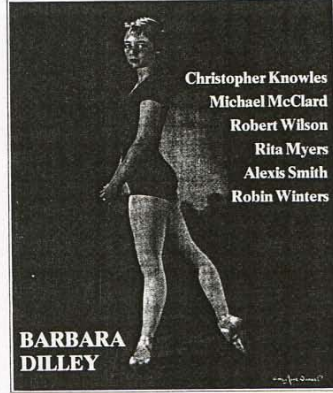


JACK SMITH

Joel Fisher Terry Fox
Daniel Buren Simone Forti
Hans Haacke Stephen Laub
Gordon Matta-Clark Phil Glass Ensemble

Avalanche

Winter 1975 / 72



BARBARA DILLEY

Christopher Knowles
Michael McClard
Robert Wilson
Rita Myers
Alexis Smith
Robin Winters

Barbara Dilley

The magazine's policy was to feature a single, often close-cropped, portrait of an artist on every cover. As with Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine launched a year earlier, those covers, lined up in their published sequence, comprise a gallery of the central figures of the scene at the time. Only two female artists made it on to the cover of *Avalanche* in its lifetime, but they again the magazine only existed for 13 issues and six years. Bankruptcy brought a halt to its run in 1976. The last issue broke with convention and featured, instead, a table of its accounts. Unlike Matta-Clark's humorous *Food* advertisement, it revealed the financial impossibility of *Avalanche's* continued survival, in black and white.

Avalanche

Summer 1976

Number 13

Three Dollars

TRIAL BALANCE

Acct #	DESCRIPTION	1976					
		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
100	Revenue, total recorded & adjusted	154850	103115	667	124850	117050	1649
200	General factotum (suspense account)	114	13689	-14983	6753	301	597
300	Mag subscriptions & renewals, individuals & institutions	158	288	210	13550	62	128
301	Back issues, Magazine & tabloid, nos 2 -> 19	35250	27825	7350	177	3350	80
302	Newsstands, bookstores, in and out of town	133	11530	20850	17	12	48
303	Advertising, full, half & quarter page	350		75	589	450	1135
304	State funds: NYSCA						
305	Federal funds						
306	Contributions						
400	Expenses, total	163534	820	73138	1185	119925	150465
401	Chief consultant	10391	220	267		25	143
402	Printing: negatives, shipping, plates, paper & press time	300			100		
403	Typesetting: body, copy, subheads & heads	12				-5502	30408
404	Layout & paste-up				12		93
405	Photography					12	4450
406	Audio/visual & video		450	3294	19	117	2015
407	Fees for correspondence & transcribing	11091	60	80	25	20	
408	Telephone contact	13373		88		26969	
409	Rent for ground floor & basement	300	350		400		100
410	Postage & shipping	6445	1306	1254	5974	6575	1318
411	Stationery & supplies	3228	772		2087	1851	4029
412	Xerox			4	803	385	4
413	Travel		1		2562		850
414	Maintenance	35	901	1618	100	2450	378
415	Miscellaneous				25		