

ARTISTS SPACE

38 GREENE ST.

NYC 10013

212 226 3970

fax 212 966 1439

For information call: 212/226 3970

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mr. Dead & Mrs. Free: The History of Squat Theatre

March 30-May 25, 1996

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 30, 6 to 8 p.m.
with **Roy Nathanson** of the Jazz Passengers performing

Artists Space is pleased to present **Mr. Dead & Mrs. Free: The History of Squat Theatre**, a two month-long exhibition of original Squat Theatre stage props, films, and videos. This retrospective, curated by Squat Theatre's Eva Buchmuller and Artists Space director Claudia Gould, will provide audiences with the rare opportunity to experience first-hand some of the most audacious theater created anywhere during the seventies and eighties.

An integral part of the downtown avant garde during the 1970s and '80s, Squat Theatre was founded in Budapest in 1969 by Anna Koos, Peter (Breznyik) Berg and Peter Halasz, members of the University Theater of Budapest. The group moved to New York in 1977 because of troubles with Hungarian authorities, where it quickly became famous for the Artaudian fireworks that were part of that era. At its storefront theatre on West 23rd Street, just down the block from the Chelsea Hotel, the action within frequently spilled out onto the street. Passers-by would also press their faces against the glass and peer inside, simultaneously putting the paying audience on display and becoming part of the performance themselves. In this way the unrehearsed authenticity of the street became juxtaposed with Squat Theatre's highly stylized images, infusing the proscribed theatrical experience with the energy and excitement of real-life unpredictability. This, then, is the essential quality of Squat Theatre that we hope to recreate for audiences at Artists Space.

Artists Space's two month-long exhibition will include the sets of *Pig Child Fire!* 1977; *Andy Warhol's Last Love*, 1978; *Mr. Dead & Mrs. Free*, 1981; *Dreamland Burns*, 1986; and *L-Train to Eldorado*, 1989. Original Squat Theatre 16mm films will be screened on two Saturdays, April 6 and 13, 4 to 6 p.m.

In what is normally the **Project Space**, Artists Space will re-create the Squat Cafe, where the history of Squat will be recorded in photographs on the walls and videos of Squat performances will be shown during gallery hours. In addition, evening events are scheduled every Tuesday and Thursday night in May.

This exhibition is made possible by the generous support of the Mark Rothko Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation Inc., Robert Frank, June Leaf Frank, and Louise H. McCagg.