



It's 1978 and the UC theatre in Berkeley, California is humming with anticipation as German film director *Werner Herzog* slowly begins to eat one of his shoes. To explain, this bizarre act of public consumption was the outcome of a deal made by *Herzog* with rookie filmmaker *Errol Morris*. As the wager went, if *Morris* - a protégé of *Herzog's* known at the time for his brilliant though distracted creativity - was to complete his debut film project *Gates of Heaven*, then *Herzog* agreed that he would come to Berkeley and eat his shoe at the film's West Coast premiere.

**Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe**, the documentary film, comes courtesy of yet another maverick filmmaker - Sausalito's finest, **Les Blank**, and was shown through March at *SEVENTEEN*, London. Those who missed it can locate the film, either edited or in full, quite easily online.

*Herzog* provides a commentary to the film, sounding a battle cry for unrestrained creativity and advocating any means at all (theft, fraud, subterfuge) to realise a film project. As he argues, 'that's the way to do it, if you want to make a film steal cameras, steal raw stock, sneak into a lab and do it'. *Herzog's* commitment to production at any costs transforms the undeniable farce and humour, the high ceremonial pantomime and performance of this particular public consumption, revealing a further, deeper, truth.

When *Herzog* addresses both audience and camera, he does so with the jouissance of a man bathed in the light of another's creative emergence against all odds. *Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe* is a testament work by *Blank*, a lesson to all striving to create in any field. The near messianic zeal that infuses the film is designed to motivate and inspire with its simple message: in the face of the limitations we all experience on a daily basis, the only ever viable answer is action, relentless action. Aesthetes everywhere are warned, this film will inspire.

• Paul Pironi • [Seventeengallery.com](http://Seventeengallery.com)

There is that classic Situationist tale where the screening of *Guy Debord's Hurlements en faveur de Sade*, a film that leaves its audience in the dark, caused such a commotion amongst its viewers, that, instead of persuading the awaiting audience to go home, they had become more excited to stay. I thought about this as I stood amassed with others on a sidewalk in SoHo awaiting to enter the **Dark Fair**. There was the commotion and the excitement, but when I finally got in (a day later), I was not disappointed. The *Dark Fair*, held at the *Swiss Institute*, and coinciding with New York's other art fairs (as well as March 29th's *Earth Hour*), was a 'subversive and miniature art fair' held without natural or electric light. Included amongst the international selection of galleries and artists were *Air de Paris*, *Gavin Brown's Enterprise*, *China Art Objects*, *Frieze International*, *James Fuentes*, *Golden Age*, *Jack Hanley Gallery*, *Leo Koenig*, *Maureen Paley*, *PictureBox*, *United Bamboo*, *White Columns*, *Willy Wonka*, *Hiromi Yoshii* and many others. There were candles, glow sticks, and flashlights. You had to get really close to fully see what was going on. A kind of intimacy was generated between people and with the artworks, something that you don't often find at other fairs (aka shopping malls in disguise). Probably what was most memorable was *Wendy Yao's* subversive permeation of the fair with her black-market under-the-jacket *Ooga Booga* display. Overall, the fair was quite refreshing. There was a reassurance that it's not all about money. As I walked out I held a free work by *Claire Fontaine* (represented by *Air de Paris*). I read to myself, '...it means we believe our lives, impoverished by commerce and information, are ready to rise in the wave that retakes the means of production of the present.' • David Horvitz

• 'Please visit [Davidhorvitz.com](http://Davidhorvitz.com), I will send you a picture of the sky for everyday.'

*Martin Syme and Maria Kane  
Brainwasher of Golden Age,  
Dark Fair, Swiss Institute, New York,  
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