

"Aluminum Moments." *The School of Visual Arts Continuing Education Blog* (April 16, 2011)



Aluminum Nights Poster, Robert Longo, 1981



## Aluminum Moments

Saturday, April 16th, 2011

<http://cebblog.sva.edu/tag/bush-tetras/>

Thirty years ago was Aluminum Nights, a two-night performance series celebrating the tenth anniversary of The Kitchen. Fast forward: to celebrate the fortieth anniversary season, The Kitchen has reincarnated the event as Aluminum Music, featuring a selection of the Aluminum Nights roster. On Friday, the first of two nights, avant-kabbalah percussionist Z'EV performed with the post-punk Bush Tetras...

After a few minutes for us to come back to earth, Nick Hallett introduced the Bush Tetras. They opened with Cowboys in Africa, then urged the audience to "unhinge" from their seats and start a punky reggae party. Scratchy caribbean rhythms and Pat Place's shredded wheeze got the kids dancing, and the not-so-kids.

"Thirty years is like five minutes!" shouted a blonde woman who danced from the first thump to the last shard. "We're glad to be alive" said Cynthia Sley. Is that all? Just alive? They were more than alive.

Tetras founder Pat Place made her guitar shriek in the climbs to chorus, chirp through the twitchy verses, and holler at the climax. She leaned into it till the whammy bar itself unhinged and clattered to the floor. For Punch Drunk and the encore Voodoo, she whipped out a bottleneck slide and stroked the neck with enough fervor to make me cross my legs and blush. Cynthia Sley (Womersley), magically gaunt (and a near twin of Chris Robinson of the Black Crowes) and ready to hop, thrust, and shake, rapped out a dual gear vocal style combining rhythmic muttering and adrenaline howling. Her sound seems suited to any survivor who was there, man – and any punishment-happy thrillseeker who would have wanted to be "there" in the first place.

"This song is about living in the East Village; we didn't like when people came into our neighborhood," said Cynthia Sley, chatting before "Stare You Down."