

# Urban Experience

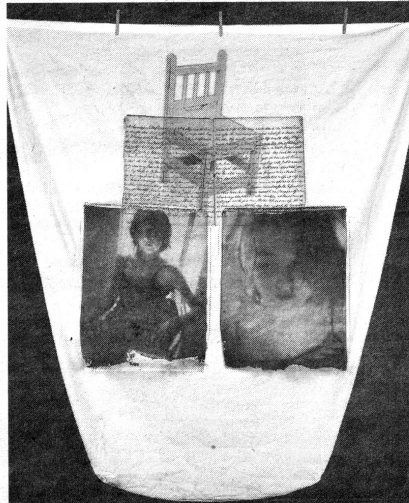
## Dirty Laundry Magdalene victims given voice

BY JOYCE SLATON

From the early 1800s until the 1960s, an estimated 30,000 Irish women were forced into church-run slave labor camps. Their "crimes" were varied. At first the Catholic Sisters of the Magdalene Order jailed prostitutes, but later they locked up girls who'd become pregnant out of wedlock (whether via rape or consensual sex), those who were illegitimate, or even vixenish lasses they considered in "moral danger." Incarcerated without trials and often for life, the women worked from dawn until dusk doing domestic tasks, especially laundering institutional linens and uniforms. The last Magdalene internment facility closed in 1996.

Now artists Diane Fenster and Michael McNabb recall the brutal confinements in "Secrets of the Magdalen Laundries," a room-size installation that combines photographic images of imprisoned women

imprinted on hanging bedsheets with text written by survivors. As viewers move among the maze of sheets, they hear a digital soundtrack playing the voices of former inmates — reminiscences that hauntingly, creepily, bring the internees' ordeal to life. "Secrets" opens with a reception tonight at 6 (and runs through Oct. 17) at the Blue Room



Diane Fenster's *Magdalen chair*.

Gallery, 2331 Mission (at 19th Street), S.F. Admission is free; call 282-8411 or visit [www.blueroomgallery.org](http://www.blueroomgallery.org).

## Girly Men

*Queer Beats: Not a book about odd music*

BY HIYA SWANHUYSER

Somehow, the Beat writers have come to stand for all that is manly in literature. This situation is both accurate and ironic: Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and their cohort were definitely men's men. But an often-ignored aspect of their writing and their lives is that they weren't straight.

The oversight is worse than just puritanical or prejudiced — it undermines one of the group's major philosophies. In *Queer Beats*, a new book that focuses on Beat sexuality, editor Regina Marler encapsulates this belief with an epigram from William Blake: "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires." From writing poetry (an endeavor that can call one's manliness into question, then and now) to rejecting the enforced materialism and family worship of the 1950s, Beat writers didn't follow the rules. Why should they have accepted the conventional wisdom about whom to shtup? Marler reads from *Queer Beats* at 7 p.m. at City Lights, 261 Columbus (at Broadway), S.F. Admission is free; call 362-8193 or visit [www.citylights.com](http://www.citylights.com).

TUES  
9/21



Just a Kid Like You: Hank Williams.

### For Hank's Sake

Tonight, Hank Williams would have been 81. In celebration, the New Drifting Cowboys play live while you warble and wail at the "Hank Williams Sr. Birthday Tribute Country Western Karaoke." "Hey, Good Lookin'" or "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive": The choice is yours. Sign up at 8:30 and perform (or watch) at 9 p.m. at the Elbo Room, 647 Valencia (at 18th Street), S.F. Admission is \$10; call 552-7788 or visit [www.elbo.com](http://www.elbo.com). — Hiya Swanhuysen

FRI  
9/17

{<http://>}

For additional event listings, visit our website at [sfweekly.com](http://sfweekly.com)

## It's Not Gargling

Tuvan throat-singing comes to town

BY JOYCE SLATON

Am I the only one who walked out of *Genghis Blues* convinced that I had a latent gift for throat-singing? Sorry, fellow amateurs and shower singers, but practitioners of the remarkable vocal art developed in the weensy Republic of Tuva can actually produce two distinctive tones simultaneously: a bagpipelike drone

plus a flutelike melody that can mimic everything from an opera singer to the whistle of a bird. Hear some of the finest performers of the art at the "Tuvan Throat Singing Performance," featuring the Siberian group Sabjilar presenting songs both ancient and new, at 7 p.m. at the Asian Art Museum, 200 Larkin (at McAllister), S.F. Admission is \$5-10; call 581-3500 or visit [www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org).



Sabjilar's got a buzz on.

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