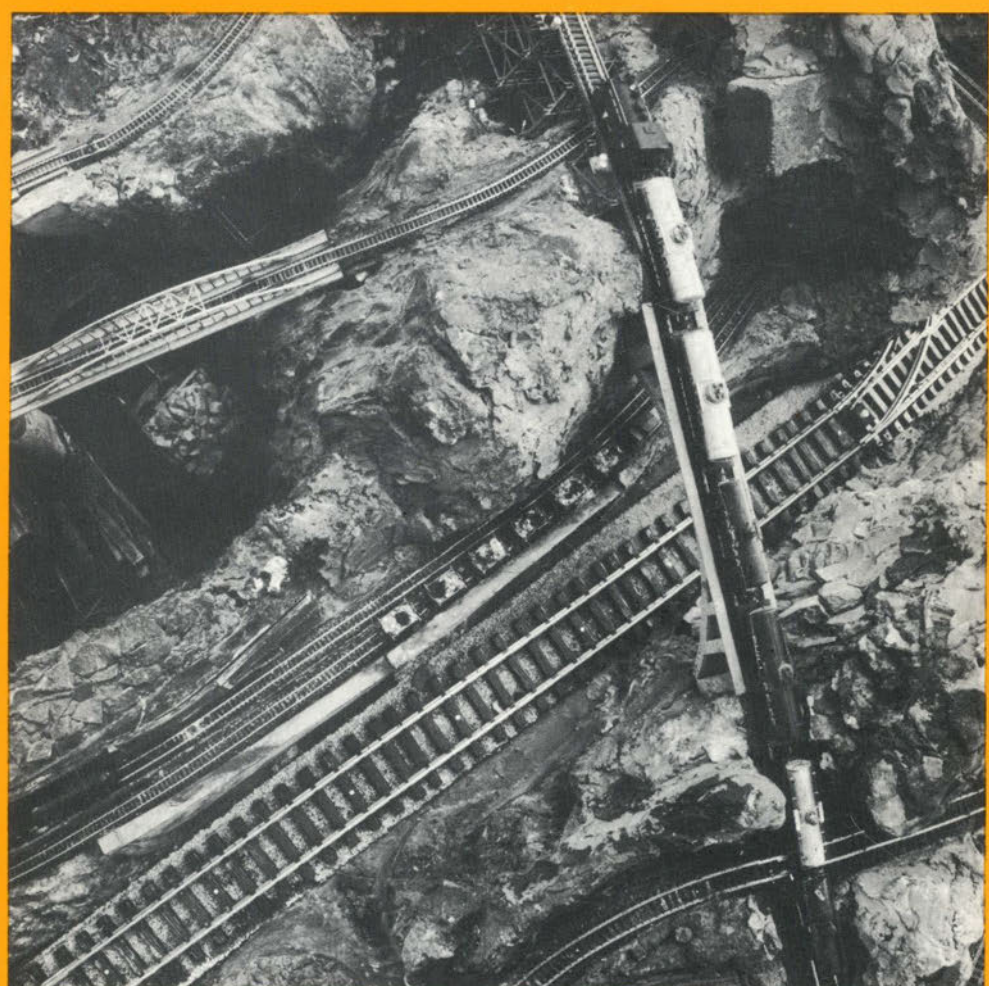
Performance

November 1990 No 62 **£4.50**



SPECIAL ISSUE: SEVEN OBSESSIONS AT THE WHITECHAPEL

plus: Maria Klonaris & Katherina Thomadaki

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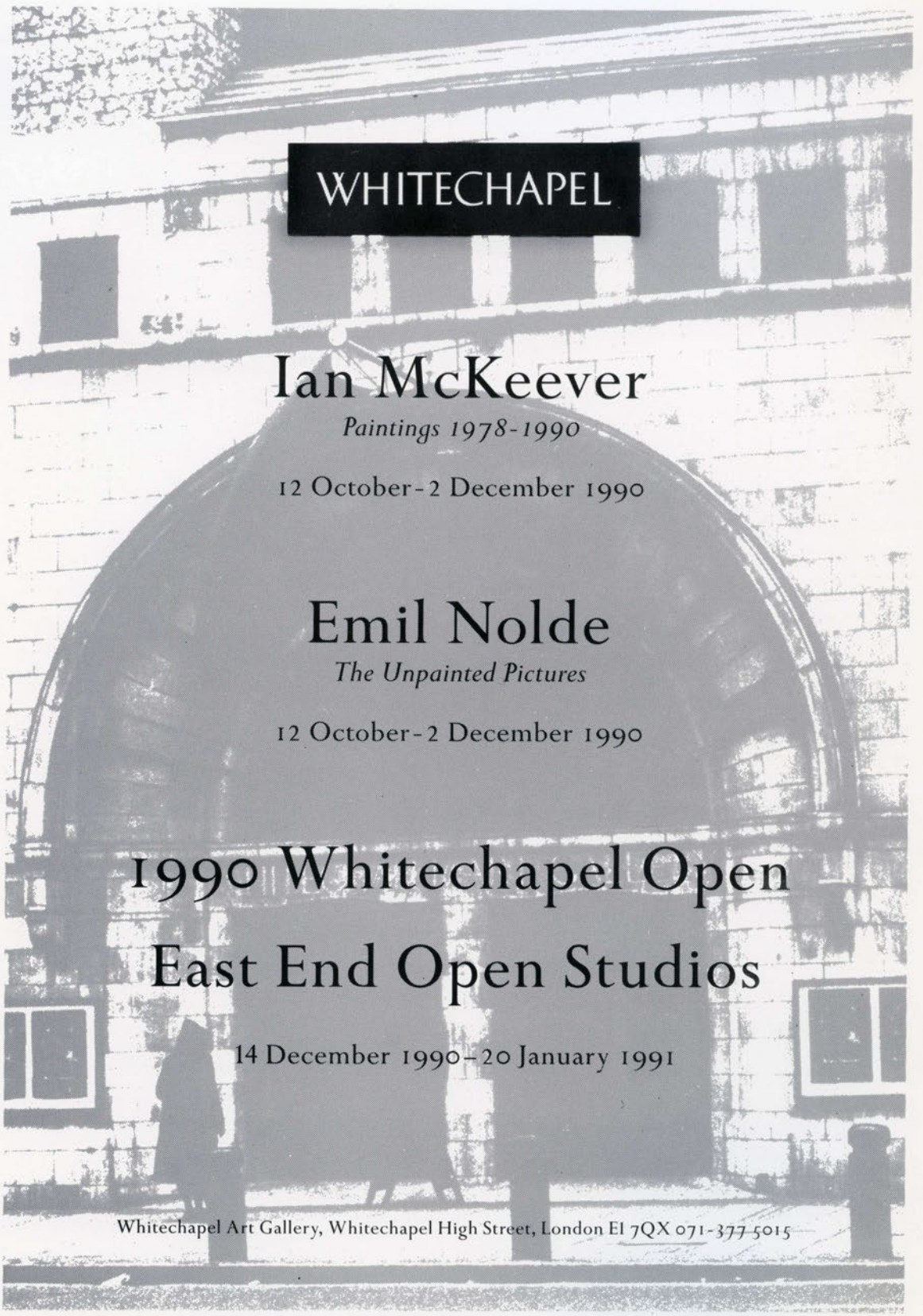
US $11 — Can $13 — Aus $13 — Ind Rs 195



Performance No 62
November 1990

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ISSN No. 0 144 5901

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Performance gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from the Arts Council of Great Britain.

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DECEMBER

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LONDON

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AND THIRD EYE CENTRE GLASGOW

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SUSAN HILLER

THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE PUBLICATION
ON SUSAN HILLER'S TIME-BASED WORKS
PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION
OF THE COMMISSIONING OF
AN ENTERTAINMENT

WITH A TEXT BY JEAN FISHER

MATT'S GALLERY
MAPPIN ART GALLERY
THIRD EYE CENTRE

AVAILABLE FROM DECEMBER

Editorial

This issue of *Performance* consists of two main parts. The first four articles have been produced in collaboration with the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, and take the place of a catalogue for their recent exhibition 'Seven Obsessions', featuring the work of Angela Bulloch, Chris Burden, Sophie Calle, Melanie Counsell, Tim Head, Mark Thompson and Darrell Viner. There then follows an in-depth account, printed both in the original French and in English translation, of their own work by the Greek-born, Paris-based artists Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki.

One of the main reasons for the Whitechapel's choosing to collaborate with a magazine appearing after the event, rather than producing a conventional catalogue before the event, was that over half the work in the 'Seven Obsessions' exhibition — Bulloch's, Counsell's, Head's and Thompson's — was specially commissioned for it. Only during and after the process of installation has the nature of the work become clear. For its part, *Performance* is particularly pleased to be associated with this exhibition, since it reveals a close affinity of aim and a shared understanding of at least one of the ways in which avant-garde art can most usefully function.

If, in physical terms, the thread connecting the work in 'Seven Obsessions' is that it can all to a greater or lesser extent be termed 'installation' work, this is not the sort of more narrowly conceptualist installation, typical of the late '60s and early '70s, which confined itself to removing a floorboard here or altering a skylight there. What such work achieved, more often than not in a spirit of quirky tautology, was the enhancement of the viewer's awareness of the gallery space, and perhaps by extension their understanding of the functioning of art as an area of activity within our culture. 'Seven Obsessions', by contrast, goes much further than this. It presents seven windows, each precisely delineated by the artists' individual sensibilities, through which can be glimpsed new perspectives onto the present human and indeed planetary situation.

These views of reality are undoubtedly partial and limited. It is as if each artist has deliberately screened out by far the greater part of reality, in order to create meaningful form out of the particular aspect on which he or she has chosen — or felt compelled — to concentrate. In this respect, for what it is worth, the work is perhaps typical of the present. For while it has always been inevitable that any one person's view of reality is limited, by cultural as well as by individual factors, this limitation has come to be far more emphasized in recent years; so that it would appear out of place for an artist working now even to aspire to the universality claimed by, say, Mondrian. But if this justifies the use of the word 'obsession', this in no way relegates these artists' concerns to the category of the merely private. However narrow the windows through which reality is viewed may appear, the ramifications of the views which these afford are not only exceedingly wide but of the greatest public relevance.

One theme in particular runs through all the work in 'Seven Obsessions': a concern with technology and/or ecology, that is to say with the relationship between humanity and the non-human world, including both that which pre-existed us and that which is of our own making. A note of anxiety is undoubtedly present throughout, but it is not appropriate to speak of pessimism. Fears are expressed — Bulloch's monitoring system, Head's supermarket prison and Counsell's sense of pervasive pollution being only amongst the most obvious — but there are also respects in which some of the work points towards new possibilities for ecological harmony — Thompson's bee-keeping or Viner's use only of recycled or discarded materials. Perhaps the most elegant statement of ambiguity is Burden's *Medusa's Head:* by showing the globe completely encrusted in railway tracks, a nineteenth century ecological nightmare which never came to pass, it points simultaneously to the fact that it is seldom the thing which we fear that actually poses the problem in the end (but rather something quite unexpected) and to the way in which our fears can induce paralysis.

One of the most encouraging developments of the last decade has been the coming in of ecological thinking from the fringes into the mainstream of political debate. The assumption, until recently common to both right and left, that the increased production of material wealth is in itself desirable — whoever may own the means of production and however the wealth may be distributed — has at long last been seriously questioned. The predominant perspectives still remain, however, essentially practical, merely a matter of making external adjustments in the face of newly perceived necessity. The terms of debate need to be taken on yet a further stage: to take due account of that dimension which, according to one's ideological preferences, one might refer to as spiritual, psychological or subjective. It is precisely in relation to this dimension that a massive contribution can be made by avant-garde art.

In particular, the extent to which the development of technology is itself a manifestation of a certain state of the human spirit — as pointed to in very different ways by, amongst others, William Blake and Martin Heidegger — needs to be far more fully taken on board. There is of course a considerable strain within feminist thinking which links an exploitative attitude towards the world in general, arguably characteristic of modern science and technology, directly to masculine domination: social domination of women by men, intrapsyschic domination of a 'feminine principle' by a 'masculine' one, or both. And while there is a great danger of oversimplification, a danger which has not been avoided for example by many who have latched onto the concept of Gaia, the need for a better understanding of the complex interactions between the psychological, sociological and ecological domains, certainly including an understanding of the part played by gender, is of paramount importance.

Throughout their career of working together, Maria Klonaris and Katherina

Thomadaki have consistently explored these interactions with the greatest subtlety and sophistication. Despite their considerable success on the European continent, and their exposure at such venues as the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, their work is still almost unknown in Britain. *Performance* is therefore particularly proud to be publishing their own extensive account of their oeuvre to date.

While many of Klonaris and Thomadaki's concerns — notably their recent exploration of the symbolism of angels — may seem to some people to be so esoteric as to have no conceivable relevance to the present human or planetary predicament, a careful and sensitive reading reveals that this is not at all the case. They are not, furthermore, alone in their interest in angels. Alice Aycock's sculpture points, for example, to the psychological and historical links between the aspirations manifested in the notion of angels and the aspirations manifested in the scientific comprehension of the universe; most specifically, in the invention of aeroplanes and space rockets. Nor should one forget the centrality of the image of the angel in Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry — the indirect yet fundamental relevance of which to an understanding of technology and ecology is brought out by Heidegger.

It is clear that art cannot provide any answers. But, by provoking certain associations — inevitably somewhat different in every member of its audience — it can create the opportunity for new, unexpected and more accurate perceptions of the world. Both the work in 'Seven Obsessions' and that of Klonaris and Thomadaki have plenty to offer in this respect. One of the most encouraging features of 'Seven Obsessions', apart from its high attendance figures, was the amount of public discussion which it elicited about a wide range of subjects other than art. That the work of Klonaris and Thomadaki naturally leads out of itself into a richer engagement with life, at both an individual and a social level, is apparent immediately upon encountering it.

The conception of artists, if they are any good, as being the antennae of society is not as outmoded as many cynics maintain; the problem, of course, is that society does not at present make use of these antennae. This is best combatted, however, not by producing ever more abstruse theoretical explanations of art's supposed impotence, but by creatively following up the questions raised within the art itself, in such a way that their relevance and potential usefulness are fully realized.

Gray Watson

SEVEN

WHITECHAPEL

17 August – 30 September 1990

Sponsored by The Henry Moore Foundation and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. with additional support from Bovis Construction Ltd. and Virgin Communications Ltd.
Organized by Whitechapel Gallery.

Many organisations made important contributions to the successful realisation of the exhibition. In particular, the Whitechapel Art Gallery wishes to thank the following for their invaluable assistance with the project:

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Fred Hoffman Gallery, Santa Monica
Josh Baer Gallery, New York
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Spencer-Phillipps Bee Farms

OBSESSIONS

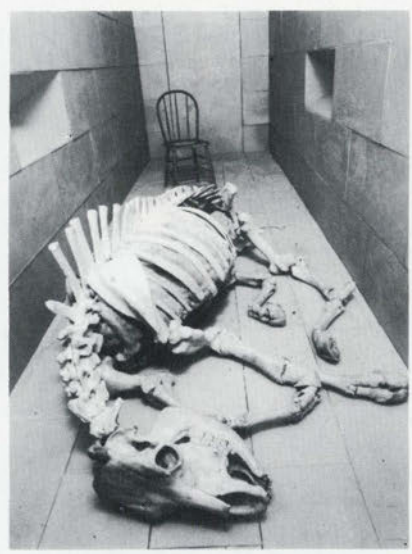
New Installation Work

Angela Bulloch
Chris Burden
Sophie Calle
Melanie Counsell
Tim Head
Mark Thompson
Darrell Viner

Liz Brooks

THE SPIRIT OF THE HIVE

Mark Thompson's Invocations



Mark Thompson, *Invocations*, 1990, interior view. (Photo Jeremy Young)

Mark Thompson, *Invocations*, 1990, exterior view. (Photo Jeremy Young)

'I try to cut things right to the bone, to be as lean as I can and still have content.' (Mark Thompson)

Mark Thompson's *Invocations* is addressed to the senses and the intuition, not the intellect. The experience is of something perfectly clean, wholesome and mysterious. It will not yield to a linear traversal, but demands a slow, meditative tour, homing in from the mantric hum of the bees and the warm scent and amber light emanating from the wax edifice, to the spare myth inside: a flow of bees to and from the skeleton of a bull, a drift of pollen on an empty chair. To enforce this quality of attention, the original plan envisaged a dark sealed room, illuminated only by a muted light from the inner chamber, with concealed speakers adding a second layer of sound: the unearthly whoops and cries of a Yugoslavian animal-calling ritual.

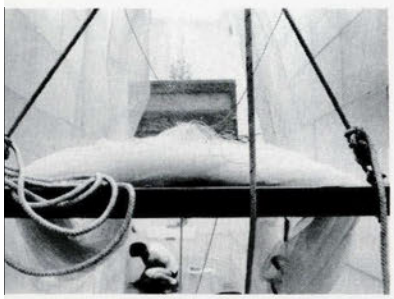
Thompson invokes a visceral, non-mediated relationship with nature, lost with industrialization, and now lying buried beneath an accretion of representations, which it has required 'an almost freakish level of commitment' on the part of the artist to break through. The project began in the California of the early '70s, a wellspring for ecological ideas: it has surfaced in a climate where 'nature' is handled gingerly between the calipers of scare-quotes: persisting as a rhetorical weapon in the green revolution, but at the same time threatened by deconstruction as an ideological chimera. Within this context, Thompson's projects could seem like the ultimate in 'Post-Nature' side-shows, with the honeybees as the exotic denizens of a beleagured fifth world, served up for the delectation of the urban tourist. Thompson believes the clean sensual address and palpable commitment of his work can cut through such misreadings:

> 'If the materials are allowed to sing out, they will have a presence that you feel in a different way: the commitment that went into this work, the level of engagement will come through. And then — maybe through an article read a year later, maybe through more in-depth research — extra layers will emerge, in a way that fleshes out the experience.'

It is in keeping with the spirit of the thing that this 'fleshing out' demands commitment on the part of the onlooker. Thompson passes as lightly through the world as the honeybees which have led his investigations through the last seventeen years, leaving few traces, records or permament landmarks. So it seems pertinent here to piece together a schematic history of his work as it develops from science to myth, from physics to metaphysics.

Mark Thompson, *Invocations*, 1990, view of work being installed at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. (Photo Joao Quintino)

Thompson started out as a lone inventor in the 19th century mould, winning prizes at the age of sixteen for his invention of a biological fuel cell. He embarked



Mark Thompson, *Invocations*, 1990, view of work being installed at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. (Photo Joao Quintino)

on a degree in electrical engineering, but was frustrated by the collaborative nature of contemporary science, and transferred to the art BA at Berkeley in 1970. His early explorations of natural cycles in the landscape retained the investigative, enquiring focus of scientific experiments. They were entirely solitary and personal, with a sculptural rather than performance bias, in the manner of Richard Long's ruminative walks. In one such experiment, with a lyrical period feel, he hiked to a quiet forest, where he stripped naked, drenched himself in honey, and lay in the grass, as human banquet for the butterflies and bees. The experiment failed — only a few flies came to sip the honey — so he read up on honeybees, and, fascinated by their life-cycle, began to work directly with the hive. After further research he started work on a film, *Immersion*, (still 'in progress'), which involved a head-to-waist covering in bees.

In 1974, while Thompson was working on *Immersion*, Joseph Beuys was in New York, sharing space with a wild coyote at the René Block Gallery. Three years earlier, Chris Burden had had a friend shoot him through the arm, and the year before had been arrested during the notorious performance of *Deadman* where he lay in the middle of a Los Angeles boulevard, clad in a canvas sack. Thompson shares with Beuys and Burden the impulse to blow away the sediment of representations, and reconnect with the physical world in a dramatic and risky way. But the social space Beuys and Burden explored lies at the other end of the telescope from the atomistic focus of *Immersion*.

A pure blue sky fills the opening frames, traversed by the flight-path of a single honeybee; over a period the sky is blotted out by the accruing swarm. As the bee-ratio intensifies, the camera speed slows from 24 frames per second (arbitrarily representing 'human time') down to 2 frames per second, so that the bees, which had begun as material particles, gradually dissolve into an intensely viscious weave of lines, a macrocosmic energy field.

Analogous to a 'quantum leap' in energy levels, the pace abruptly shoots up to 150 frames per second — a dance-like space, into which Thompson's head gently emerges. With the switch to a human point of view, the speed returns to 'human time' and, over the next 45 minutes, 40,000 or so bees gradually fall from the space to settle over Thompson's head and torso, culminating in the final image of a dark, fermenting silhouette against a clear sky.

Both a scientific study of bee space-time and a meditative act of communion, *Immersion* has an obviously sensational side, appealing to the media, which likes to cast Thompson in the light of a latter-day snake charmer. After this work he began to explore ways to share his work more in tune with its spirit, inspired by the highly adaptive way that the hive interacts with its environment.

In 1977 he undertook his first city exploration project, for the San Francisco Art Institute. In these projects, Thompson uses the honeybees as a compass to orient himself in a city: by deciphering their complicated dance-language, he is able to

follow them on their forages. Along the way a new mental map of the city is evolved, similar to the kind the bees themselves would be forming, and chance encounters and discovering generate an entirely fresh impression of the city and its people. This provides him with material for the subsequent installation and performances, which typically centre on the figure-of-eight, circle and waggle-tail dances of the bees.

At the philosophical heart of these city explorations is an analogy between the bees' foraging activities and human language. A bee bringing nectar back to the hive begins the process of transforming it with its own enzymes; the product is then passed along from mouth to mouth by the bees, each of which adds its own enzymes and in the process the nectar is slowly transformed into honey or wax; along the food exchange chain the nectar picks up the pheromones of the queen, so with the exchange of food, each bee is at the same time informed of her welfare. Thompson sees this as analogous to the way in which language is passed from mouth to mouth, each member of the linguistic community leaving his or her mark and contributing to an elaborate architecture of words, the human equivalent of the honeybees' combs.

The most dramatic and fully realized city exploration to date took place in Berlin in 1989 as part of 'Resource Kunst'. The Künstlerhaus Bethanien, located in a 19th century psychiatric institution bordering the Berlin wall, was the site for *A House Divided*, which united the city-exploration with the immersion aspect of Thompson's work. Using a 19th century bee-hunting box, he located a suitable hive nearby and transferred it to a glass immersion chamber in the gallery, from which the bees could pass in and out to forage in a two mile radius, straddling both sides of the wall. Wax from East Berlin was smuggled across the border by various subterfuges, at one point involving a nerve-wracking detention at Checkpoint Charlie, where Thompson had to concoct a convincing explanation for his rucksack full of beeswax.

Once amassed, the wax from East and West was blended together to fill a pair of huge arched windows in the space. Unexpected variations in its colour and consistency gave the windows the dramatic effect of sulphurous cloud-paintings; Thompson accepted this as expressing the frenetic nature of the city and the project. When the installation opened, Thompson would spend two to three hours every morning with his head immersed in the glass hive, meditating on the new waxen city which the bees were founding.

The Berlin project marks a new mythic dimension to Thomson's projects, more fully evident in the *Idiot Boy* installation earlier this year, which was based on a letter in Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selbourne*, relating the story of a local simpleton obsessed with bees and wasps, who 'died before arriving at manhood'. The boy represents the creative-obsessive in everyone which is killed by the pressures to conform in adulthood.

Mark Thompson, *A House Divided,* 1989. West Berlin.

At the same time as he undertook these mythic projects, Thompson was refining the formal proposition at their heart in the site-specific installations *Tidal Well* (1987) and *Springhouse* (1989). These works present simple architectural spaces, invaded by the regenerative force of nature, here in the guise of water, rather than honeybees. *Tidal Well*, which still stands on the site, is a small boat-house constructed on the water's edge, with a floor which slopes down into the water, and a slit window giving across the bay. The interior is lined with copper, magical and luminous as beeswax, which is gradually oxidized by moisture to record both the marks of high tide and the imprints of various human and animal visitors. *Springhouse*, made for the Artpark in New York, involved the reconstruction of a defunct pump-house on the edge of the Niagara River. The doors and windows were sealed with copper sheets and a small stream diverted into the interior, filling the house with water which sluiced out over the narrow gaps between copper lining and walls, and percolated through the chimney to cascade off the roof, covering the structure in a shimmering fluid film, a minimal visual echo of the powerful Niagara Falls glimpsed in the distance.

In contrast with these spare chambers of light, the 1990 installation of the First Tyne International, *Rivers of Fire*, involved an almost theatrical elaboration, perhaps suggested by the Dickensian character of the building — a disused 1840's whisky still on the banks of the Tyne. Thompson filled the empty warehouse space with oak distilling casks and other detritus of defunct industry. The smell of beeswax, together with a distant buzzing noise and muted light-source, drew the visitor upstairs to the loading bays, whose windows were blocked off with wax, broken by an irregular aperture through which the bees passed freely in between the river and their hive. On a heavy carpenter's bench by one window, amid abandoned tools and wax shavings, stood an unfinished ark-like structure formed with the spine of a small animal radiating waxen ribs. From here the visitor followed the sight line of bees to a small antechamber where they passed in and out of the mouth of a human skeleton, shrouded in a muslin sheet.

The polarization between the hives as regenerative force and human mortality entered Thompson's work with *Idiot Boy*, and traces of a human or animal death have oddly coincided with those works from which Thompson has withdrawn as an active performer, taking the diffident role of caretaker for the hives. The story he imagined for the Tyne installation is that of an old caretaker, rendered redundant by the expiry of the river as a concourse, who has sealed himself off to die, leaving an ambiguous symbol of a new covenant between man and the natural world; while his corpse, regenerated by the hive of bees, suggests the primitive myth of metamorphosis, in which the soul passes from the body in the form of a swarm.

A version of this myth provided the springboard for the Whitechapel installation

Invocations. The 'Oxbourne bee myth', as it is known, seems to have originated in ancient Egypt. Virgil recounts a later version in the *Georgics*, with a recipe for generating a new hive from the body of a bull. The bull is taken to a sealed room, strewn with herbs and beaten to death, taking care not to break the skin. Its orifices are then stopped with herbs and wax, and the room completely sealed. After two weeks, a fresh hive of bees will miraculously emerge from the carcass. For Thompson, the hive, as the model of a perfect symbiotic relationship with nature, emerging from the remains of the old order, stands at the inception of a *new* mythology.

The problems introduced by this use of myth are largely aesthetic ones: an ambivalence and slippage of meaning in the recent installations that has troubled their reception; the incipient cluttering of a Shaker-like purity of expression. But at the same time the conceptual difficulties in Thompson's romantic vision of nature — nature as benevolent, harmonious, balanced — slip away when that vision is expressly upheld as an idealization, a poetic torch to light the way into the next century. In this, Thompson is following the ideas of the mythologist Joseph Campbell, who has written of the need for scientists and artists to come together in generating a new mythology. For Thompson, the perennial scientific-philosophical fascination of honeybees is as good a point as any from which to start:

'Traditional myths, the myths that grew out of Christianity in the last 2000 years, have lost their viability in the last part of the 20th century, and new models have had to take their place. I think we're in the period of model-making, of myth-making. It's no longer a question of the boat looking for the shore: we are the shore and that is the new order. We have screwed up what were beautiful, self-sustaining systems and the solution lies with us. I hope these works suggest other ways of looking at nature, other relationships to it that can begin a new pattern.'

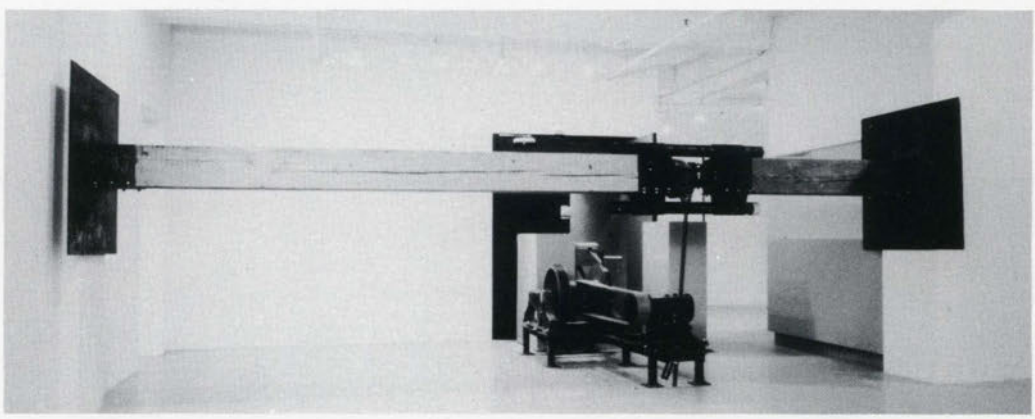
NOTE

1. All quotations are from a recorded conversation between Mark Thompson and the author, 1990.

Lucy Hughes-Hallett

PEACE ON EARTH?

Chris Burden's Investigations



Chris Burden, *Samson*, 1985. Installation at Josh Baer Gallery, New York. (Photo courtesy Josh Baer Gallery and Kent Fine Art, Inc., New York)

Chris Burden, *Medusa's Head*, 1989. (Photo Jeremy Young)

Of all the toys the Californian artist Chris Burden possessed as a child his favourite were those in his army collection. 'They were the ones I didn't ding up or scratch.' In this, of course, he was not an unusual boy. He was at boarding school in Switzerland for a spell in his early teens and he has vivid memories of one of the other children there. 'He was from South America and he had fifty or sixty tanks and he laid them out on a big table top and he'd just sit there and move them around and make war noises all day long. Mm hmmm. Well, where's that guy now?' Possibly moving real tanks around. When Burden came to London this summer there were two institutions he was looking forward to visiting. One was the Imperial War Museum, the other was Hamley's. In the toy shop he bought a couple of battleships. In the museum he found himself recognising, one after another, the uniforms and weapons familiar to him from nursery days. '"Oh, there's that Dinky toy I used to have! . . . And, my God, there's that one!" All the things that my father bought me as a child were there for real. So where does it all begin?'

The connection between toytown war-games and real-life war is not one that Burden is alone in making. What is unusual is that, rather than turning away from such deadly childish things with disapproval, he continues to play with them in his art, capitalizing on the universality of the human fascination with war and its trappings to explore the limits and permutations and possible consequences of that obsession. When, earlier this year, the authorities in Newcastle upon Tyne invited him to make an installation in their city, they offered him a real-life destroyer to play with. '"Would I be interested in using that?" Well, of course I would be, I flew over.' He wanted to take the Destroyer, a three hundred foot iron-clad relic of World War II, sailing. For logistical reason his fantasy has not been realized. Even with second-hand sails bought from a Whitbread racer the cost of converting the Destroyer was going to be somewhere around £3 million, too much for Burden's backers. But the image lives, as superbly grandiose and as ambiguous as any of Burden's previous projects. 'It's a mixed metaphor,' he explains, 'the greening of a warship. Swords to ploughshares, except that this one can still cut. The engineers kept saying [such things] as "If we take the cannons off we might be able to balance it," but I said "You can't. The cannons are a very, very important part of this."' His concept takes the romantic associations of the sailing ship — its beauty, its benign relationship with wind and water, its independence of fossil fuel — and forces them into conjunction with the technology of killing. 'So what is it? It's still a warship. Is it a good warship? To me that's interesting.'

'Interesting' is one of Burden's favourite words. 'I don't think art should have any purpose,' he says, and he likens himself to a scientific researcher, dispassionately conducting experiments just to see what happens. 'Art is a free spot where you can investigate things. It's not a vehicle for improving society. You don't tell a scientist "Go and make a better toaster", you just give him a lab

and some liquid nitrogen and say "Have fun!" So as an artist you don't start going *there*. You just start going. If you have a purpose in mind, or a political agenda, you've knocked out 359 degrees of possibility.' For over ten years now he has been making sculptures and installations using or portraying military technology. He has been attacked as a war-monger and defended as a realist asking his public to think seriously about war in the interests of peace. He himself is not saying what his intentions are. He is normally an articulate man, but this is his answer to a question about the meaning of *A Tale of Two Cities*, a massive installation involving over 5,000 battle toys: 'It's just sort of about . . . er . . . I don't know exactly . . . War's pretty strange.'

Burden is a short, broad, bull-necked forty-four year old. He sits four-square in a chair, feet firmly planted, big thighs set apart, so that he is capable of almost total immobility, a sure index of physical strength. He has a blunt way of cutting through intellectual flim-flam. Here he is on the role of the museum as an institution: 'The building is just a shed to keep the rain off the art' — and on those who can't fathom what he is doing: 'People come in and expect to understand art. Of course they can't. Art is elitist.' 'I can see myself being hostile and aggressive and violent,' he says; and he does have the gift (sometimes useful when he used to make performances) of inspiring awe. In public he plays an intimidating role, part prima donna, part forceful brute, part technician impatient of cissy theorizing. It is a useful mask, a way of holding off the fools he would rather not suffer. But his art, for all that violence is so often its subject, is characterized more by rigorous discipline than by aggression.

His contribution to the Whitechapel Gallery's show 'Seven Obsessions' was an artificial asteroid of stone and concrete and metal, weighing five tons and measuring some fourteen foot across. Like the Gorgon's head it was covered with sinuous foreign bodies which seemed both to feed off it and to lend it their own power to appall. This death's-head was wreathed not in snakes, but in toy trains. Seven different gauges of railway track looped and squirmed over viaducts and through tunnels and cuttings in the blackened, rocky landscape. The trains had neither drivers nor passengers. They were loaded only with rocks, tree trunks, gravel, earth, as though the trains had taken possession of the planet and were engaged in a ceaseless earthworm-like exercise of consuming and regurgitating it to no useful end. With uncharacteristic directness Burden has revealed that 'the sculpture is metaphor for a world engulfed in its own technology.' But it is not quite the piece of eco-prop that description might suggest, for this is a vision of a calamity which did not happen, a teasing allusion to the fact that a hundred years back people were worried that railways would engulf the planet, whereas 'Now we see railroads as romantic, good, ecologically correct.' Human inability to sort real dangers from imaginary ones is one of the things that intrigues Burden. 'We worried about the atom bomb and now we have AIDS. That's kind of interesting.'

I met him in August, just after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. 'Two weeks ago it was "Aaah, glasnost! . . . Peace on earth! . . . It's all going to be fine from now on." And now all of a sudden this man in Iraq is claiming to have the fourth largest land army on earth. Well, gee, nobody was talking about that a coupla weeks ago. They can pull that rug out on you at any time.'

One way of avoiding toppling when such a rug is pulled is to pull it out yourself first. A great deal of Chris Burden's work could only be described as ways of forestalling fate, art as a series of pre-emptive strikes against pain, fear and mortality. 'It's a way of taking control.' Power, its use and abuse, has been his abiding concern; and his performances and sculptures are all, one way or another, experiments in the use of force — whether it be simple muscle power, psychological control or the power of sophisticated technology. Even his do-it-yourself car-making and television-building are ways of flouting the power of producers. 'Nobody has any idea how a television works. When it breaks down — boom! out it goes. I wanted to understand it. Making things from scratch made me feel less at the mercy of this consumer society.'

Burden grew up here and there around the world. His father, an engineer, worked for the Rockefeller Foundation in the Middle East and Europe. He went to school in Switzerland, Italy and France. 'My folks went back to the States, split up, shuttled back and forth. It wasn't terribly pleasant.' Finally he fetched up in California, studying first architecture and then physics, finally lighting on sculpture as his metier.

His teachers were Minimalists, and as a student he produced works, inspired by exercise equipment, which were designed to be, not art-objects, but 'apparatus to make you do art'. The pieces supposedly came to life only when a person mounted them and performed the gestures and movements they were designed to elicit. But 'there was a problem. They were in stainless steel and people would say, "Oh what a beautiful object!"' Burden's response was *Five Day Locker Piece*, which he presented as his MA in 1971. For five days he was padlocked into a metal locker two foot square by three foot deep. 'It was a real break-through for me because I realized I didn't have to make an object to make art. The locker was a locker before and a locker after. It was only charged while I was there.' It is typical of the man that he offers such a down-beat and negative explanation of his route to a starkly, distressingly eloquent work. (He'll tell you why he chose to represent 50,000 Soviet tanks with dimes and matchsticks, but he won't tell you whether in doing so he intended to justify or to condemn an arms build-up.) But whatever put him into that locker, a desire for a perfectly object-free art or, as seems more likely, a more complex ambition, to explore the extremes of human tyranny and human endurance, it marked the beginning of a series of extraordinary art works — performances, installations and sculptures — in which Burden has conducted experiments in the aggressive use of power and actual or

threatened physical force.

In some of his 1970s performances he terrorised his public. In *Shout Piece* he shone 500 watt lights in their eyes and yelled 'Get the fuck out!' through three amplifiers. In *Jaizu* he took the opposite line, asserting authority by his own silence. People were invited to enter, one at a time, a room where he sat, immobile and speechless, wearing dark glasses, in the only chair. 'Many people tried to talk to me, one assaulted me, and one left sobbing hysterically.' More often though, he cast himself in the role of victim: having himself strapped to the floor with copper bands next to a bucket of water in which a live electrical wire had been immersed, lying down on the tarmac of one of Los Angeles' busiest boulevards, inviting a volunteer to stick pins into him, inhaling water while a gallery-full of people listened to him choking and, most notoriously, getting a friend to shoot him in the arm with a rifle.

Chris Burden, *Medusa's Head,* 1989, view of work being installed at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1990. (Photo Joao Quintino)

These performances raise complex questions about the responsibilities of the public ('witnesses' Burden calls them) who stood by while he risked his life, and in some cases assisted him to do so. They were led into complicity by a morally ambiguous mix of incomprehension, indifference, respect for the artist's free will and freedom of expression, curiosity, morbid excitement and plain embarrassment. The performances made people angry. By willingly making himself a victim Burden scrambled power relations and undercut normal responses. For those who have nightmares about being shot and for those who dream of shooting alike, a man who willingly stands there and takes a bullet in his arm is defusing a popular fantasy. The action arouses, but at the same time denies and discredits, the emotions — compassion, vengeful indignation, excitement — usually associated with the firing of a bullet into human flesh. Nineteen years after the performance, Burden is still receiving threatening telephone calls provoked by *Shoot*.

Potently though the performances worked on their public, Burden maintains that they were essentially private acts, exercises in self-knowledge. 'You have this fantasy about something. Then you go "What if you do that? What if . . .? Then what?" and you keep just flipping it over.' By voluntarily undergoing the ordeal which had been the subject of so much preliminary dread, he could master the fear. 'When . . . kidnappers put you in a locker it's a completely different situation. I did it willingly.' The principle appears to be that of homeopathy. Protect yourself against the torturer by torturing yourself a bit first.

This, as Burden would say, is 'interesting'. But does it have value for the public as well as the practitioner? Burden sometimes claims not to care. 'I wasn't Alice Cooper,' he says. 'I wasn't selling tickets.' In his teens he was in hospital for a year. Convalescent, he took up photography, wandering around Italy with a camera. 'It was a solitary activity, with no audience, and it was very sustaining for me spiritually. I trace becoming an artist to that experience.' It might sound solipsistic but Burden, like most artists worth their salt, is evasive, even

deliberately misleading, when discussing his work. His performances were very carefully planned, and they were designed to have an afterlife. 'I'd think about them for months. My wife would go to work and come back: "What did you do today?" "I thought." So for months they were fantasies in my mind. Then they dipped into the real, the short ones just for a fraction of a second, and then they became myth.'

A piece like *White Light, White Heat*, for which Burden lay on a shelf two feet below the ceiling of the Ronald Feldman Gallery for three weeks without eating, talking, or seeing or being seen by anyone, was clearly a private endurance test. But it also constitutes a haunting image: the bare room, the shelf, the man doggedly starving unseen. "In no sense of the word were those performances theatre,' says Burden. They were not repeatable entertainments: they were not illusions. But they were intensely dramatic. Whether poking live electric wires into the flesh of his bare chest, emerging from a garage with his hands nailed to the roof of a Volkswagen or lying quite still and silent for days on end, Burden has produced a series of resonantly emotive tableaux. He rejects the analogy with theatre but he might accept one with a more exalted form of symbolic action. 'Being crucified on the back of a Volkswagen, yes, it's pretty obvious.' He's not claiming to be a second Jesus Christ, but like Christ he does things, and permits things to be done to him, with an eye to their symbolic meaning, their potential to become fable and, in the form of remembered and recounted stories, to unsettle and excite, to do what he believes art ought to do, 'push your head around a little.'

Burden's notoriety became such that when he performed *Doomed*, lying prone for three days behind a sheet of plate glass, the museum guards had to protect him from a hostile crowd. People who cared nothing about art heard of him. He acquired the kind of fame Carl Andre endures. Eventually the 'avalanche of sensationalism' discouraged him — or perhaps he had reached the limits of what he could do as an artist with his own body. In 1978 he showed *The Citadel*, an installation-cum-performance involving over five hundred tiny metal spaceships, and ever since he has been making installations involving war and war-games, weaponry and toys.

The most elaborate of these, *A Tale of Two Cities*, did not begin life as an art work, but simply as a serendipitous arrangement of things Burden happened to have about: his girl-friend's pot-plants, some real bullets and some toy soldiers. If his work acts as a commentary on the adult male desire to play violent boys' games it does so from inside. The desire is his own. 'I'm not a pacifist at all,' he says. 'I'd fight.'

Chris Burden, *Medusa's Head,* 1989, view of work being installed at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1990. (Photo Joao Quintino)

What he would not do is join an army. 'After the war crimes of World War II I can't understand how anybody could take orders. I have a real problem with my contemporaries who went to Vietnam and never questioned what they were

doing.' He now teaches at UCLA and he tells his students that he would not permit them to perform the kind of risk-taking actions that he himself has performed in the name of art. 'If they want to drop out and become artists, fine. But not as students. By definition a student cannot make art.' An artist, in other words, must step outside all protective institutions and assume personal responsibility for his or her work. By the same token one who fights and kills must be individually accountable. Obedience to officers, loyalty to country, and also the big abstractions of right and wrong: these are inadequate justifications which only serve to camouflage reality. Burden's peripatetic upbringing cured him of patriotism — 'I saw enough nations to know that no one country is worth dying for' — while *A Tale of Two Cities* is, among other things, a parody of the goodies-and-baddies mythology of warfare. 'It's about the big city stomping the little city. The little city's more agrarian, the big city's more industrial. There's a white cruise missile taking off from the little city and a black bomber taking off from the big city. It's good and bad and all those kind of polar opposites.' Polarities which, Burden suggests, have precious little validity.

He wouldn't fight for his country, he wouldn't fight for 'goodness', but he might just fight. Burden's refusal to impose a moral on his art is at its most disturbing in his recent work. Whatever an artist's intention, images of warfare will never be received as morally neutral. He has made a series of 'warships' from found objects, toys and bric-à-brac; dotty, playful constructions (one has a wine-bottle for a prow, another a 'slinky' toy for a funnel) which are nonetheless recognizable models of something deadly. Like the destroyer under sail, they combine the semiology of pleasure and grace with that of slaughter. *A Tale of Two Cities*, equally, is colourful, comical, jolly, differing only in its size and its miniaturist beauty from the war-game that might be laid out in a play-room. But this kind of play is not innocuous, as Burden explicitly acknowledges. Cyrus Vance, former U.S. Secretary of State for Defence, once asked permission to hold a meeting in a gallery Burden had filled with six hundred and twenty-five tiny cardboard submarines (an equivalent for each real sub the US had ever had). The spectacle was both awful in its implications and as delicately lovely as a cloud of butterflies. Simultaneously absolutely straightforward and bafflingly unreadable, it was typical of Burden's best, most infuriating and most memorable work.

'It seems like most of human advancement is made in response to wars,' says Burden. 'And when you talk to men who have been to war you find it's the highlight of their life. A lot of them are traumatized by it but, for a lot more, that's when they travelled, that's when they met their wives, that's when they became culturally cognizant. In the short run war is horrific and negative, but in the long run it may be positive for humankind. I don't know. It may be something that is programmed to moosh people around.'

Programmed, that is, into the male gene. 'Men are innately more aggressive,

there's just no doubt about it.' Burden once had a studio next to an infants' school playground. 'Toys would get tossed over the fence and invariably they were blue. I had the whole collection of these little bits of blue plastic. I never saw a pink one.' In his work, whether testing his own physical endurance, building model landscapes for model trains, or collecting pen-knives and fishing lines and the ingredients for gunpowder for his assemblages, Burden is playing masculine games. So is he celebrating masculinity, and therefore, by extension, the aggressiveness he considers inherently masculine? 'People have said a lot of things about my art. If you say that, it's going to roll off me like water off a duck.' The reader will note that, once again, he has avoided answering the question.

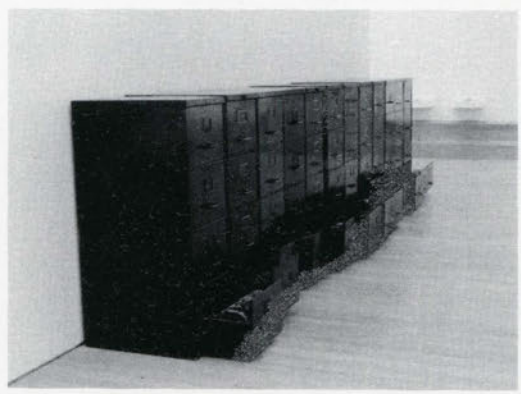
He doesn't want to be pigeon-holed, he says. Nor does he want to preach. 'Art is a mirror.' In creating images of physical and technological force he is engaging with something from which many artists shy away. His *Sampson*, a 100-ton jack set so that it could, if left in place indefinitely, have broken down the museum which housed it, was a metaphor for the artist's creativity bursting out of a constricting institution; but it was also, more interestingly, an eloquent image of simple physical strength, its magnificence, its destructiveness and the thrill it can generate. Just as Burden's own courage in risking pain and death in his performances disturbs and impresses, so do his sculptures with their suggestions of mute superhuman power. And so do his war-pieces with their allusion to a state in which the fidgety concerns of a civilization at peace are rendered trivial. 'War gives meaning to your life. It makes it clear what has to be done, and people like a clear path. There's no *Angst* in time of war.'

True. As we spoke the British and American public alike were reacting with self-righteous excitement to the emergence of an unmistakable baddy on the world scene. Burden's images of force may be dangerously enticing but they are also salutarily thought-provoking; and the subject-matter with which he is engaging is not going to go away. 'I was describing the destroyer piece to a French man not long ago and he said "But now we're in this great period of *détente*, does this work have any meaning?" And I just looked at him and I said "What do you think? You think there's going to be peace on earth from now on? *Get serious!*"'

Oliver Bennett

VEILED STORIES

Sophie Calle and Melanie Counsell



Melanie Counsell, *12 filing cabinets, 12 rolled carpets & water,* 1990. (Photo Antonia Reeve)

Sophie Calle, *Autobiographical Stories,* 1988-89. (Photo Jeremy Young)

'In casual speech it is easily agreed that a type of art called "installation" exists. That is about as far as we can easily get before the troubling divergences of assumption appear: is installation a genre? a medium? a mode of conceptual practise? Is it permanent or temporary? Belief in the irrelevance of defined categories is indigenous to the art practise of installation. Part of the point is a relief from the strictures of form and a distance from the hierarchies of tradition. And while that distance may prove to be real or imagined . . . it is nonetheless essential to note that provisional definitions and explanations that work at all for this phenomenon are those which are open and inclusive, deliberately flexible.'[1]

Both Sophie Calle and Melanie Counsell have been willingly identified as producers of installations, though their work differs widely. Calle constructs photographs and text wall pieces, while Counsell creates three-dimensional work made from a variety of materials, composing a loosely symbolic ecology. Calle's work takes cues from performance, insofar as it mostly documents previous events. Counsell comes firmly from a sculpture background, and her work's values of formal, material and spatial manipulation for associative and atmospheric ends are consistent with the methodology of art school training. Calle is untrained as an artist: fortune led her into the art system.

Both Calle and Counsell provide an entry point for the imagination rather than narrative resolution (though Calle's work often employs a narrative form). They possess a keen sense of pathos, promoting a response of melancholia, dislocation and poignancy. They would both prefer to inspire uneasiness — cognitive dissonance — than a resolved response. There is a sense of the irrational about their work: Counsell's in its intractable evocation of pollution penetrating a membrane; Calle's in its psychic reportage and twilight eroticism.

Their coalescence at 'Seven Obsessions' has cast a veil, an etiolated silvery translucence over the entry to the exhibition. This funeral pall is delineated in symmetrical form by Counsell's installation, which sits centrally, its large net reminiscent of the discreet domestic curtain, shrouding a morbid, palpable space.

It is tempting to read Melanie Counsell's untitled contribution to 'Seven Obsessions' as a critique of airborne pollution. The display board, with a quotation from Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Years*, points in this direction. But the work — and the artist — deny a single interpretation. Counsell doesn't title work, preferring her pieces to be identified by location and date, an ambivalent gesture that mirrors her desire not to proselytize. By withholding exhaustive information she forces a dynamic human response: some see a mosquito net in her 'Seven Obsessions' piece, others visualize their own poisoned

respiratory systems. Either way, the sense of some external menace getting through an undefined tissue is fraught with social complexity and personal anxiety. Counsell herself recently said, 'I wouldn't commit myself to specific readings — the implications should be quite varied. The sense of the splats is the sense of the people coming in, the air coming in, the process of time and the passing through the membrane. They're like a lot of things: viruses, insects, little nipples, shit, spit, spunk.'[2]

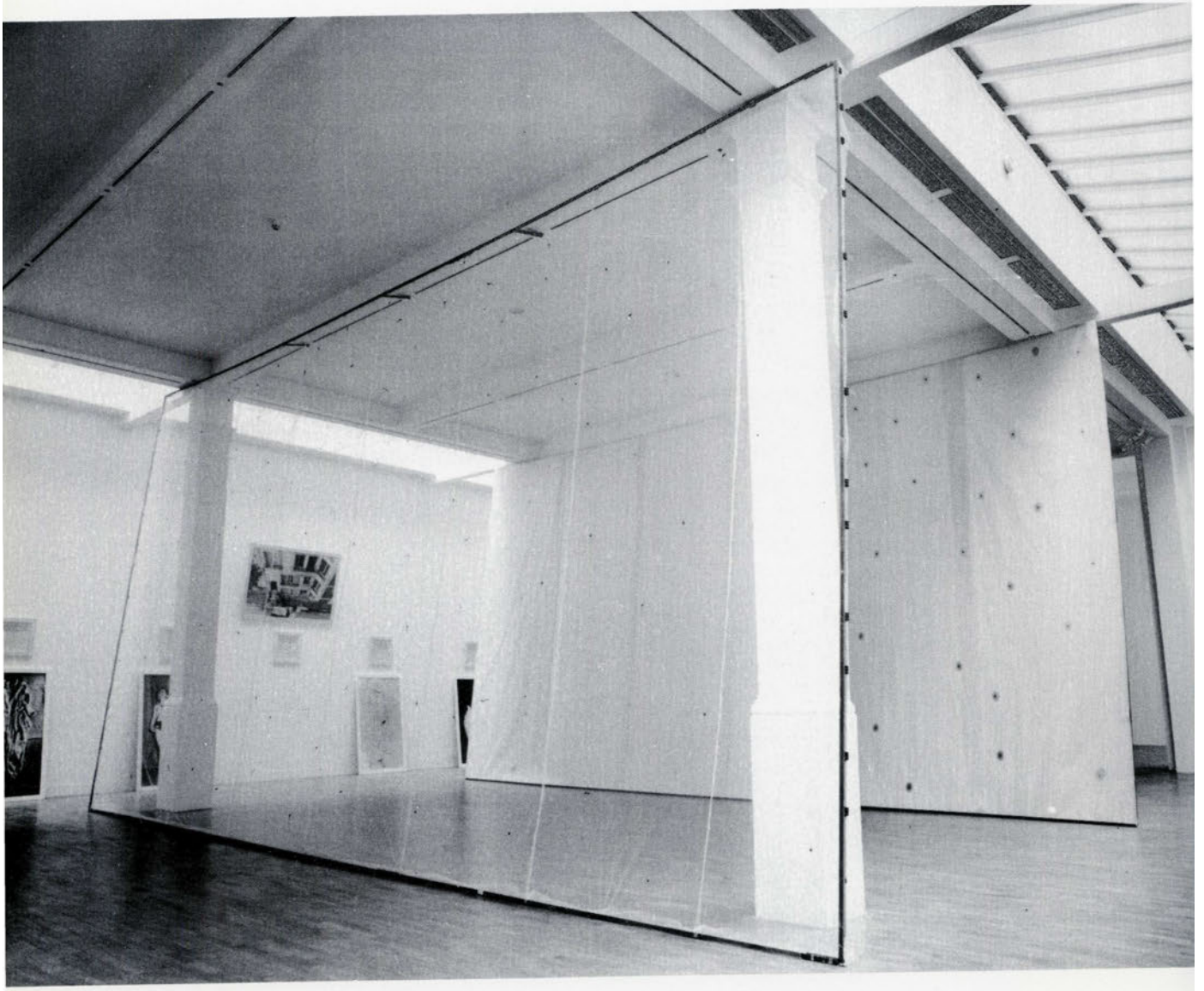
The axle grease 'splats', formless, almost painterly on the first net membrane, are coalesced into tight blobs on the second, paper membrane about ten yards behind. At the bottom right hand corner of the paper, a small film loop shows in microcosmic form the oozing life-cycle of the grease. After the grease on the second layer, endpaper from the news-printing process, has been absorbed by inexorable capillary action, one can see a shadow of Chris Burden's piece *Medusa's Head* through the spreading aureolae of the oily spots on the porous paper.

Counsell's rise to prominence has been prompted by her confident post-graduate show at the Slade. This installation was sited at a semi-outdoor drainage space, covered by glass roofs, irrigated by hoses. The water cascaded down the drainpipes, whilst at ground level, manhole covers had been replaced by glass, reflecting the water on the roof. A small chamber, positioned laterally, featured a row of plumbed lockers, adding an anthropomorphic element of 'tears' seeping from the gills. At the end of the space was a tank full of still water, within which an electric fan had been submerged, introducing an element of danger, triggering that domestic fear of the hairdryer in the bath.

The constant flow of water prompted feelings and fears about the symbology of water: expressed benignly as renewal, growth and Tao-like cyclic spiritualism, but equally in malignant form as the agent of decay, stagnation and human weeping. At 'Seven Obsessions', the active, moving part of the installation is the small spray of grease, rather than water, all danger and malignance subsumed into this near-invisible agent of contagion.

This active element, in opposition to the passive, brooding component of the 'curtains' Counsell has often employed in her work, creates a dialogue of durable resonance. After leaving the Slade, she created an installation in a partly-used mental hospital in Tooting Bec, London. Counsell reiterated her doleful use of water, dripping from a plumbed rail down over a calico curtain, which shielded — like a dead patient, or some atrocity hidden by the institution — an unseen and morbid hyperspace from the eye. The water dripped down into a tiled trough, over time decomposing the curtain, leading to a depressing dereliction: her figurative response to the neglect of the building and, by implication, the Health Service.

Her subsequent installation at Matt's Gallery, London, in late 1989 worked further with this atmosphere: the curtain motif extended and transformed into a



cheery chintz swag overlooking a sodden carpet in a tiled, urinal-like trough. The time-based element of decay, reminiscent of neglected housing, contributed to an atmosphere of deep melancholy. But as with Counsell's other work, there was a redemptive twist with social implications: the notion of life in the urban detritus, a biological culture, as much 'nature' as any arcadia. 'A carpet is the most dead, hopeless thing that no-one wants; but the sense of a micro-life was a positive element within all that,' she said about this work.

Counsell's British Art Show piece, often singled out for critical aggression by the press, is her most widely seen work. It consists of twelve megalithic filing cabinets, each with a roll of carpet in a drawer, submerged in water — on one level like a Surrealist meeting of chance objects, on another an emblem of information paranoia to match Tim Head's *Techno-Prison* (upstairs in 'Seven Obsessions') and on yet another a generalized frustration of expectation.

A sense of violation and ethereal danger also suffuses Sophie Calle's work. The French artist has spent eleven years recording normally private aspects of life, exquisitely manipulated, documented and laid out as photograph and text installations. She has provided two works for 'Seven Obsessions': *The Graves* (1990) on one side of the gallery, and *Autobiographical Stories* (1988-89) on the other. The former consists of large photographs of graves which the artist encountered in California. Calle first photographed these graves a decade ago and two of her original pictures are included here, presented in little kitsch frames. Using the syntactical progression of left to right, we read Father, Mother, Brother, Sister — no names, just tragic archetypes with universal familial poignancy. Just one, labelled Husband, stands alone, a discreet disruption of the order. At first, we can relate to the *The Graves* as a thanatopsis, a meditation on death. The monumentality of the images — they are 'life-size' photographs, relating oppressively to the viewer's body — underscores the grandly sombre mood of the piece.

Though the two pieces are presented as separate, Calle recently stated that she considers them part of the same work in view of her return to the theme after a ten-year interval: '*The Graves* was part of my autobiography, because I went back there.' And despite the ostensible interest in others that her often voyeuristic work of the intervening period supposes, it leads back to her original subject: herself, as experienced through the shadow of others.

Autobiographical Stories is a series of ten photographs and texts relating isolated incidents from her childhood, which have acquired deterministic resonance over the course of time. Calle's artistic identity as voyeur is turned inward here, her life reconstructed by forensic, circumstantial investigation, in which uncontrollable, fateful, yet compelling patterns are revealed. A photograph of Calle nonchalantly stripping onstage is accompanied by a text: 'I was six. I lived on a street named Rosa Bonheur with my grandparents. A daily ritual obliged me to undress

Melanie Counsell, *No Title,* 1990. (Photo Jeremy Young)

completely in the elevator on my way up to the sixth floor . . . as soon as I reached the apartment I would jump into bed. Twenty years later I found myself repeating the same ceremony every night in public, on the stage of one of the strip joints that line the boulevard in Pigalle, wearing a blond wig in case my grandparents who lived in the neighbourhood should happen to pass by.'

Where possible, the photographs used in *Autobiographical Stores* are real — that is, of the actual subject. Others were reconstructed to complete the visual requirement, a process also used in *The Blind* (*Les Aveugles*) of 1986. Here Calle produced a photo-series where she asked people blind from birth to describe beauty. In the finished work a black and white photograph of each subject sat next to their typeset descriptions, and underneath these were Calle's photographic interpretations of their descriptions: intimate figurations of their subjective 'beauty'. These ranged from the sublime to the almost unbearably sad. One man's image of beauty was a blank frame: 'I have already grieved for beauty. I do not need beauty. I don't need images in my mind. As I can't appreciate beauty, I have always fled from it.' Though *The Blind* is 'ideologically disquieting'[3], it is also moving, with a tragic, lonely atmosphere.

But Calle's concerns are not to provide solace, nor to communicate moral information. Before she became an artist she kept diaries and photographs of serial events for herself, and it was apparently only after creating *The Sleepers* (1979) — where she photographed a series of complicit strangers sleeping in her own bed — that this marginal activity was brought into the art world. 'I followed people as a girl. It was a game, a ritual, for my own pleasure. When did it become art? Someone decided for me. One of the people who slept in my bed (I hadn't known) was the wife of an art critic. He thought this was a performance that could be shown, and he prompted me to show it in Paris. I knew what the context of art was: my father was an art collector. But it was not an obvious position for me.' Roland Barthes writes in *Camera Lucida*: 'Society is concerned to tame the photograph . . . to do this it possesses two means. The first consists of making photography into an art, for no art is mad.'[4]

A year after *The Sleepers*, Calle made *Suite Venitienne*, which unequivocally established her artist-as-voyeur persona. After following a man in Paris, and losing him, Calle goes to an opening, where she meets him. They talk; he is going to Venice on holiday. She decides to trail him, using disguise, a variety of complicit contacts and obsessive dedication. The holiday is fairly prosaic, and they meet inconclusively, but the seductive thrill of Calle's ethically dubious sojourn is charged with both vicarious intrigue (like Belgian artist Ria Pacquée's documents of her day-trips in disguise) and the pleasure of literary narrative. Done, as Calle puts it, for 'the pleasure of following', *Suite Venitienne* is saturated with 'the sexually charged mystique upon which infatuation feeds.'[5] But her followee is far from a love-object. It turns out that Calle isn't interested in him at all.

Sophie Calle, *The Graves,* 1990, view of work being installed. (Photo Joao Quintino)

Commanded by something else entirely, she says, 'I wanted to fabricate an emotion in an arbitrary way, out of an absolutely arbitrary situation. The people are distant, or I don't know them. It's the pleasure of doing it, it's liberating. You can build emotion.'[6]

Although the word 'victim' is often used to describe her subjects, Calle prefers to see them as 'shadows': she is the true subject. Her pieces have been described as 'a kind of conceptual portraiture, one which dramatizes the relationship between the artist and the subject . . .'[7] There is a melodramatic edge to Calle's investigations: all her pieces are elegantly stylized, meticulously planned and laid out with strategic delight, but this does not eliminate the castrative edge of *Suite Venitienne* — nor the fixation on the faceless 'he' which forms an antagonistic motif throughout her work. In nine of the ten captions in *Autobiographical Stories*, an anonymous 'he' is referred to — 'Whenever he came to visit . . .'; 'He opened the door.'; 'He wanted to take my picture . . .' As with Melanie Counsell's splattered net, Calle's interest is simultaneously threatening and protective ('To follow the other is to take charge of his itinerary; it is to watch over his life without him knowing it.'[8])

Another arbitrary situation involving a similarly unknown man was manufactured in 1983, in *L'Homme au Carnet*. Here, the serendipitous entry point was an address book, found on the street. Calle sent it back after copying it, and telephoned the owner's contacts to construct an elaborate picture of the subject. The results were published in the French newspaper *Libération* over the course of a month. When the man came back to France to find this out, he replied by printing his reaction: a piece in the same paper, saying who he was, and what his problems were with the work. He had also managed to dig out a nude photograph of Calle. She was happy with what she calls an 'active' response to her invasion, as 'it gave the idea of truth to my story. People could otherwise have said that I invented it,' an accusation to which it has indeed been prey. For Calle, the reason for the action is her own delight. 'I couldn't have got that pleasure writing fiction.' And as Raoul Vaneigem puts it, 'Too bad if the taste for pleasure is a fine source of error.'[9]

The ethical considerations of voyeurism, usually taken to be an act of psychopathic sexuality, are somewhat neutralized in the art field. As Michael Archer says, 'The message from the institutions that show her work is, "don't worry, this is acceptable behaviour because it is done in the name of art", but this does not assuage one's anxieties.'[10] But Calle, perhaps disingenuously, shrugs off any of the psychological and ethical complexities: if others have ethical problems with the work, 'why should I be bothered what they think?' Her purpose is an entirely subjective quest. 'I began to do photo and text just for the purpose of keeping traces. I've always liked to get people by the details of their lives — not to know what they do, what they think, not directly, but through circles.'

The widespread use of photography has made privacy perhaps less inviolate, if more of a social issue, and in many parts of the world photography is still considered to be psychic theft. Indeed, in one section of *Autobiographical Stories*, there is a specific nod to the magical use of photography: 'He wanted to take my picture with his polaroid. When the image appeared, there was visible a red line marking my neck . . . Two weeks later a man tried to strangle me.' But this is also part of the game. 'I'm very superstitious. Well, I play to be superstitious, but I believe it . . . It's a game, but I believe in it.' Susan Sontag, in *On Photography*, discusses the genesis of photography in the middle-class *flâneur*: 'The photographer is an armed version of the solitary walker reconnoitering, stalking, cruising the urban inferno, the voyeuristic stroller who discovers the city as a landscape of voluptuous extremes.'[11] Calle as both voyeur and *flâneur* is most evident in work like *L'Hôtel*, 1983. Here Calle got a job as a chambermaid and recorded fragments of the guests' conversations, diaries, suitcases; using her privileged position to present dispassionately the mundane and absurd stuff of their lives.

Voyeurism is thought in classical psychoanalysis to express the fantasy of

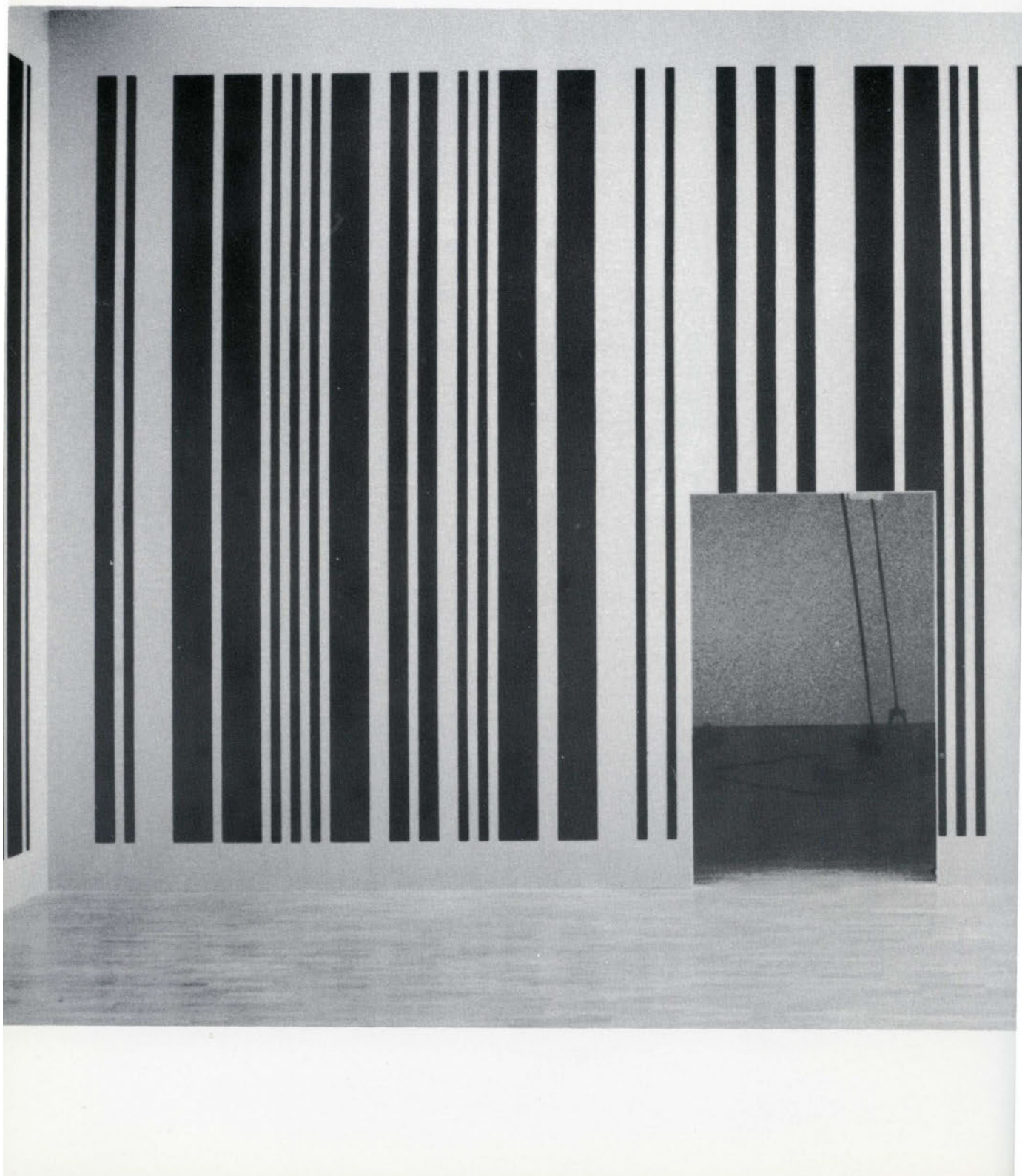
control over the object viewed, and the denial of exclusion from the relationship being spied on. And in our own looking — her artworks *are* alluring — we are accomplices of her game, inclusive and complicitous. By bridging the gaps between herself, her subjects and her audience, Calle provokes an insecurity of identity which is compelling, dangerous, and fascinating.

This ability to ensnare the viewer, so that we are forced to become part of the dynamics of the piece, serves as a point of conjunction between Calle's work and that of Melanie Counsell. We wander through Counsell's 'Seven Obsessions' installation, watching others through the netting, whilst the sense of airborne pollution and the scale of the piece give the uncanny impression that the air in the gallery, the very air we are breathing, is part of the work: 'I'm concerned with the spectator's physical engagement with the work, which is fundamentally different to one's engagement with a painting.'

In the space of phosphoric, lunar intensity which together they create in the downstairs gallery, Counsell's three-dimensional piece provides an intriguing counterpoint to the two-dimensional pieces of Sophie Calle, their juxtaposition a testament to the vitality and diversity of installation.

NOTES

1. Ellen Handy, *Arts Magazine*, February 1989.
2. All quotes from the artists come from conversations held around the time of the opening of 'Seven Obsessions', August 1990.
3. Sheena Wagstaff, *Parkett*, Volume 24, 1990.
4. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1982.
5. David Pagel, *Arts Magazine*, November 1989.
6. This piece is reminiscent of Vito Acconci's *Following Piece* (part of *Street Works IV*, 1969), which consisted of his following random and unaware members of the public on the street until they disappeared into buildings. Calle found this out, met Acconci and told him what she had done.
7. Robert L. Pincus, *Art in America*, October 1989.
8. Jean Baudrillard, 'Please Follow Me' in Sophie Calle, *Suite Venitienne*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1988.
9. Raoul Vaneigem, *The Book of Pleasures*, London; Pending Press, 1983.
10. Michael Archer, 'The Moral Gap Between Art and Everyday Life', Edge '90 catalogue.
11. Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 1977.



Andrew Renton

PLOTTING

Angela Bulloch, Tim Head and Darrell Viner

Angela Bulloch, *Blue Horizons,* 1990, view of work being installed at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. (Photo Joao Quintino)

Tim Head, *Techno-prison,* 1990, detail. (Photo Jeremy Young)

Where now? What now? Old habits die hard, and there still remains a perpetual obligation towards making. It has now become quite plausible that any neo-expressionist tendencies witnessed at the beginning of the last decade, which appeared to be so predominant for a few years, emerged as a phenomenal necessity. With hindsight, there was a need for a temporary pause in the self-eradicating trajectory of late Modernism. The blank canvases, the blank spaces, needed time to settle. It might be argued, therefore, that there has been no revival in conceptualism at all, but a slow grinding back to life of the machinery which just needed a little oiling.

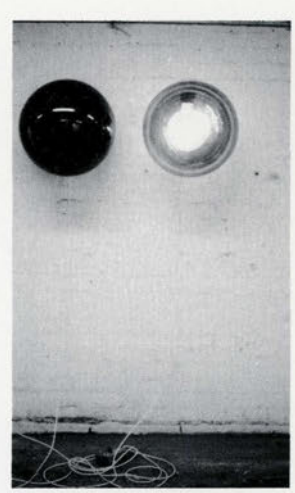
The metaphor of machinery is particularly apt in the context of the work of Angela Bulloch, Tim Head and Darrell Viner. Not that the works are metaphorical *per se* (although perhaps the artists might wish them to be read in such a way); but rather there has been a gradual exclusion of metaphor from the realm of making, and we are left with epiphenomenal generative structures. That is to say, what we witness in these works is not the object of contemplation itself, but the object towards contemplation. The object on, and in its way. The mechanisms established by these artists are about the impossibility of progressing along a 'creative' path, combined with a desire to impede that path. The object has become, to all intents and purposes, the objection.

And what is left to do, therefore? Perhaps the only thing that may justifiably be presented by the artist, at this moment, is a documentation of sorts. There is no history any more, only a kind of historiography. There is no truth-value to be attained, only a turning, a deferral. Perhaps, accordingly, there are only residual effects to be offered in the artwork's wake. (And, dare one say, *at* the artwork's wake?) The artist is left with the obligation to position him/herself against the inevitability of a lapidary history. There is a consequent act of verification, where the artist seeks to be rooted, seeks co-ordinates for him/herself, whilst at the same time being already rooted to the spot.

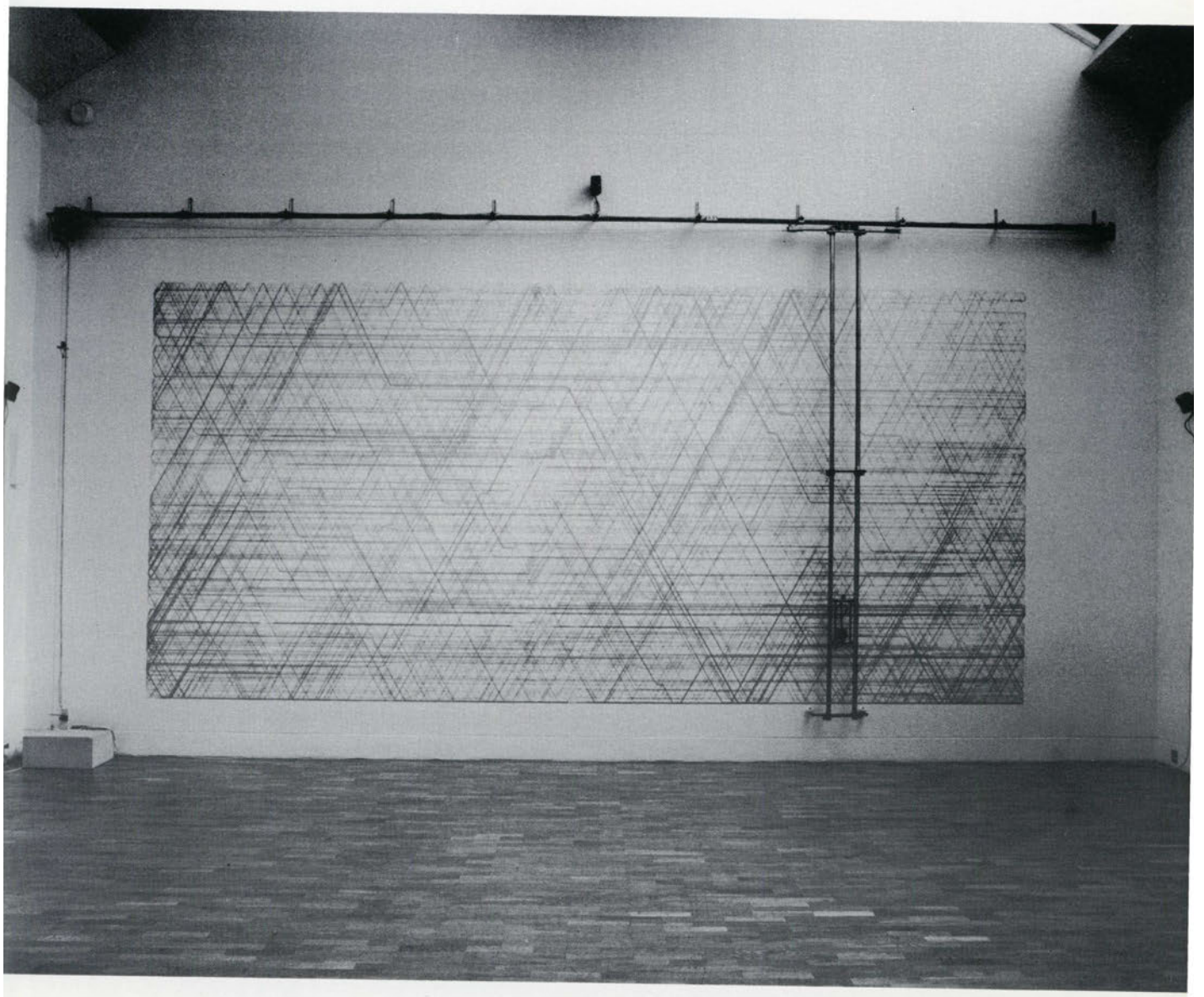
YOU ARE HERE

'You are here.' Of course, it is not quite so simple. Whenever one encounters this convention, one does so with a complicity, and an *a priori* acceptance of certain givens. The codes are inbuilt, and although the directive is offered as unequivocal evidence, it is of necessity a translation, or perhaps a transliteration. The works of Angela Bulloch, Tim Head and Darrell Viner offer such transpositions, not by means of some weakened mimesis, but rather by an allegorical simulation.

Despite its title, Angela Bulloch's *Blue Horizons* is perhaps the least allegorical of the three. It is a drawing machine, which creates an image directly on the wall. There are precedents for such an invention within an historical context. Unlike, say, Jean Tinguely's drawing machine, however, the transliterative process



Angela Bulloch, *Smoke Switch*, 1989. (Photo courtesy Interim Art, London)



Angela Bulloch, *Blue Horizons,* 1990. (Photo Jeremy Young)

implicates the spectator beyond the banalization of the art commodity. In Tinguely's work, our attention was certainly drawn to the machine as kinetic sculpture, but the take-home drawing offered to any eager passer-by was the consequence of an insertion into an uninterrupted motion. The machinery had its own dynamic, and it functioned as machinery. It rendered new objects. *Blue Horizons* shares more with the drawing and painting machines of Rebecca Horn's

recent work, although for Horn, an erotics of desire renders the sensual, metaphorical form of the rendering machine. Bulloch's mechanism, on the other hand, is based on the variable of interruption. There is diminished metaphor: even the blue of the horizontal effaces its natural reference by its absolute, inevitable composition. As sculpture, it might be termed 'aesthetically transparent', which is to say, more or less, that function informs form.

There are no secrets to Bulloch's work. In her light and sound pieces nothing is hidden. An understanding of the work must start with the inevitability and pure functionalism of trailing cables and technological hardware. The work seems to be about exposing its own *modus operandi*. A recent installation featured a simple light-metering device, placed on a plinth within a sky-lit gallery. It was an all but static piece, but changed gently with the light of day. It became self-generating, and whatever judgments of variation there were, by means of human shadows, or the vagaries of the weather, aesthetic qualities accrued to the work independently of its own intentions.

In this way, perhaps, we might be able to read *Blue Horizons* as an exercise in self-generating Minimalism. The effect may be there, but this is secondary. The marker begins to track the wall along the horizontal, and the fundamental action of the whole mechanism is the slow movement from left to right. Isolated from the need to be perceived within the gallery confines, the work would certainly come to resemble the purest of aesthetics, as it moves towards the completion of the rectangle. But more than this, the work is as much about the interruptions which its cycle suffers as about the cycle itself. These interruptions are a direct consequence of that very act of perceiving the work. Sensors monitor movements around the piece within the gallery, and the viewer may intentionally or otherwise change the very nature of the trajectory of the marker.

This is not a direct plotting of movements within the gallery (although that too might be a valid exercise), but rather it reads the interruption of its pattern, and switches into the opposing mode of vertical. Just as Bulloch's light pieces play with the essential binary encoding and polyvalent possibilities of on and off, so *Blue Horizons* find this transposed into a conflict between the horizontal and the vertical. Of course, the vertical is never achieved, because it cannot stem the flow of the horizon. The result is a series of lines which cut across the image-making at an angle of 45°. The work comes to be about the passage of time — even the chairs which invite the viewer to sit before it seem to confirm this. We are watching an image of time.

But is this, indeed, image-making at all, or is it closer to a kind of self-effacement? The rectangle which slowly outlines itself, and fills itself in, is a convention of perception. But the agent of disclosure becomes its very opposite. We know what will happen in the end and, despite the essential fact that the drawing is composed by the presence of the machine in time and space, the evidence of that self-definition will be effaced by itself.

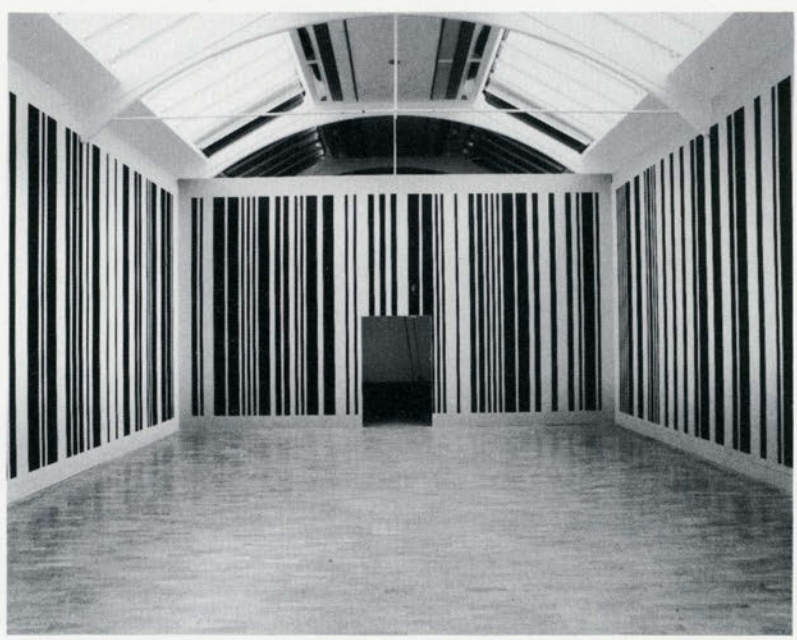
Tim Head, *Techno-prison*, 1990, view of work being installed. (Photo Joao Quintino)

WE KNOW YOU ARE HERE

In the late '70s, there was a mildly rebellious, anonymous artist who would spray the walls of downtown Toronto with a neat stencil, bearing the phrase: 'I.D. Therefore I Am.' This corruption of the Cartesian *cogito* does not fall far from the anxieties betrayed in Tim Head's *Techno-Prison*. Head returns to the image of the bar-code — something which occurred in his work as long as ten years ago. As a sign, it offers the kind of technological allegory which may be found in Head's paintings, where motifs and patterns of the everyday and the manufactured are amplified and distorted into images of self-generational growth and viral degeneration.

The bar-code itself is both convention and icon. It may be read, or translated, into a prescribed language. It is a declaration of origin or intent. Most importantly, it documents and offers evidence of an object's 'thereness'. An object may exist, therefore, only if it is documented as such, only if it appears within the system. The supermarket (or the art market, for that matter) cannot accommodate extraneities, without due reference. The emphasis is on containment, without which the books will not balance.

Like the 'You Are Here' sign, the bar-code cannot exist independently. It relies on semiotic convention, and relies on the transliterative abilities of the infra-red scan to render the information readable. (One might note almost the reverse of this process in Bulloch's work, where infra-red sensors re-codify movements



Tim Head, *Techno-prison*, 1990.
(Photo Jeremy Young)

within the gallery back onto the wall. Both, however, rely upon an on/off, break/connect to read or be read.)

In Head's earlier use of the bar-code, he make a kind of mosaic of individual units, some of which revealed their source. The final colour-copied version was a gesture towards over- or dis-information. *Techno-Prison*, on the other hand, employs four hybrid bar-codes. They have become generic types, and while they convey an emotive exposition of the age of information, they signify nothing according to their self-compromising principle of function. In a sense, they have become pure sign, markers of an a-signifying semiotics.

Yet they are simulations writ large, and in so being, accrue a variety of qualities and implications. After all, we enter upon a square room where the bars on each wall almost parody the prison cell. The arbitrary strong, almost acid, pastel colours distort the immediate perception of the bar-code (which, presumably, in reality, would function most efficiently only with white on black.) Even on a purely aesthetic level, *Techno-Prison* shares obvious qualities with the work of, say, Daniel Buren and Bridget Riley. Indeed, these two present useful extreme points of comparison, where the former evolved his strategies of stripe-making to change anything and everything in its path, and the latter developed an art out of optical illusion. Head's room stands between these two realms of political and aesthetic abstraction.

These are the non-referential colours, perhaps, of the new prison, where the monochrome shades have given way to technicolour with the new technology. There is a vision of the future prison, where the hard edges have been softened, and the punishment consists precisely in the impossibility of reacting against the system. The ultimate prison, after all, has no walls. It is already with us, where tagging the offender provides as much restriction upon him as any physical incarceration. *Techno-Prison* might suggest that there is always a sub- or meta-text at work in everything we do. It need be political only insofar as it implicates the determination of the individual. The system which should serve the individual here must overface him. Such is the way of methodologies and accounting. We know that any census of the body of the public is an offence against the body of the individual. The consequence of the infinite storage and retrieval of information is that one's place is always already determined. In other words: Where you are is where we say you are.

WISH YOU WERE HERE?

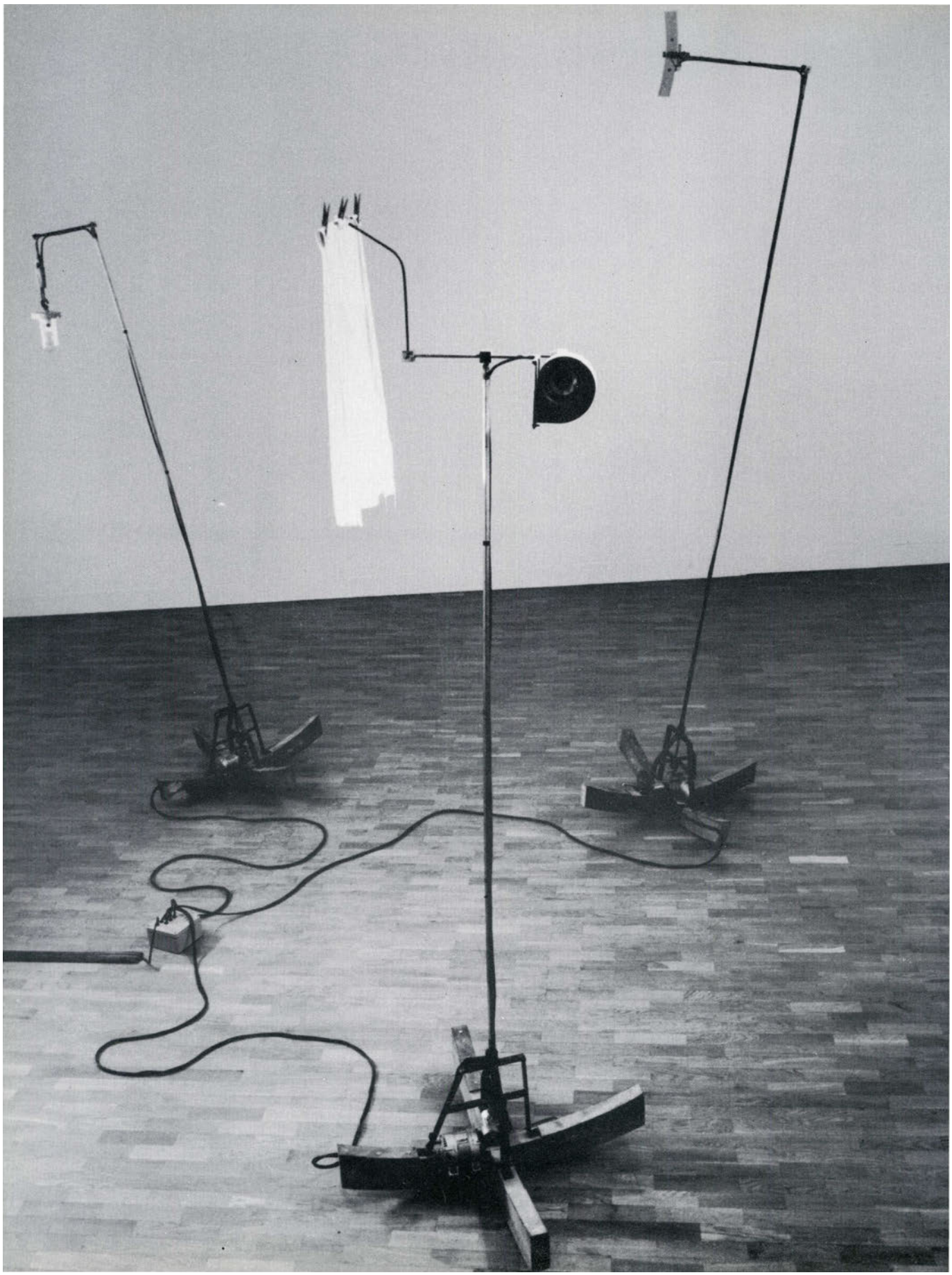
If the implication of Head's work is that someone is watching you, Darrell Viner's *Conversation Piece* reverses that notion so wholly as to suggest that you are watching someone, and furthermore, someone like yourself. Like Head's exercise, there is an attempt at the reconstruction of a language; but whereas for Head the

discourse seems to occur beyond the gallery, implicating a body of information stored at some remove, Viner offers us a stimulating or parodic dialogue head on. The viewer may only bear witness uncomfortably to thrashings of this foreign but familiar language.

But is this all hot air, as the gawky figure, topped with an air blower, suggests? *Conversation Piece* appears to be as much about the anticipation of events, or eventualities, within a spatial and temporal dynamic. Three figures, uncomfortable in their own construction, are each imbued with a specific characteristic, 'personality' or even language. One blows air, putting the wind up the sail of a tea towel, another operates a buzzer, while another still swings a lamp. Not only are the visual and aural senses engaged here, but memories and experiences are also brought into the game. The notion of engagement is perhaps a little strong; what may be perceived is the *reference* to the senses, rather than any direct implication of the spectator's senses themselves. Memory or reference, on the other hand, such as a suggestion of Stevie Smith's poem 'Not Waving but Drowning' in the tea towel fluttering in the machine-generated breeze, becomes displaced in the deliberate misprision into the new sculptural object.

The spectator's role is one of anticipation of that object. Each of the three figures operates according to its own time-scale. Accordingly, there is an ever-changing polyphony which emerges from these variants — it is infinitely variable by definition. Each figure suddenly lumbers from an absolute statis to a manic, unstable motion. The anticipation which this engenders stems from the possibility that these pieces have closed themselves down, exhausted themselves or have never even come to life.

Unlike Bulloch's and Head's pieces, Viner's *Conversation Piece* does not seek to translate experience, only imitate, even parody it. It establishes parameters of action and stasis, interaction and sculptural composition, in order to generate something beyond itself. This is to suggest something not only more complex than the sum of its parts, but also something which stands outside itself. It functions according to prescribed characteristics of motility but sometimes transcends them. There is always the risk of that transcendence but, more importantly, there is always the risk that this system which displays non-communication should succeed according to its own precepts to such an extent that it falls prey to the danger of even closing down that second dialogue, between the work in action and its spectator. Viner first conceived the motions of the piece according to principles of Morse code, but even this most elemental of codifications is hardly necessary to convey the impossibility of such a fruitless exchange. Closed systems can only project themselves as closed systems. That is to say, the object of non-communication becomes, paradoxically, the object in itself, where something is constructed quite positively from a non-conductive semiotics. It is this projection of that closed system which designates the object *qua* object.



If the re/markings of *Blue Horizons* are a consequence of the spectator — indeed, infinite number of spectators — *Conversation Piece* refuses that dialogue, just as the elements within it refuse the possibilities of dialogue between themselves. Perhaps, because they are conceived according to principles of generic difference, they can never communicate, and are committed to the tragi-comic 'near-miss' of a dialogue of similar but irreconcilable types. In the same way, Head's *Techno-Prison* offers that irreconcilability by means of a paradoxical subtraction of information, combined with a sensual delight in the encodings of that information.

The plot thickens.

Darrell Viner, *Conversation Piece,*
1988-90. (Photo Jeremy Young)

Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki

L'INSAISISSABLE

THE UNGRASPABLE

Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *Mystère I: Hermaphrodite Endormi/e,* 1982, multi-media installation at the XII Biennale de Paris.

Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *Incendie de l'Ange,* 1985.

Il y a un dédoublement de personnalité qui se produit lorsque l'artiste se met à parler, *a posteriori*, de son oeuvre. Lorsque le sujet se retourne pour regarder ce qui est déjà du créé, du passé, du dehors. Regarder comme une Autre cet objet à la fois entièrement intime et étranger. *Unheimlich*.

Dédoublement qui, dans notre cas, est déjà là depuis la conception et la réalisation de ces oeuvres à double auteur. Double auteur qui dédouble en plus ses fonctions en devenant tour à tour filmante et filmée, conceptrice et actante possédée par un regard à double tranchant posé à la fois sur elle-même et sur l'Autre.

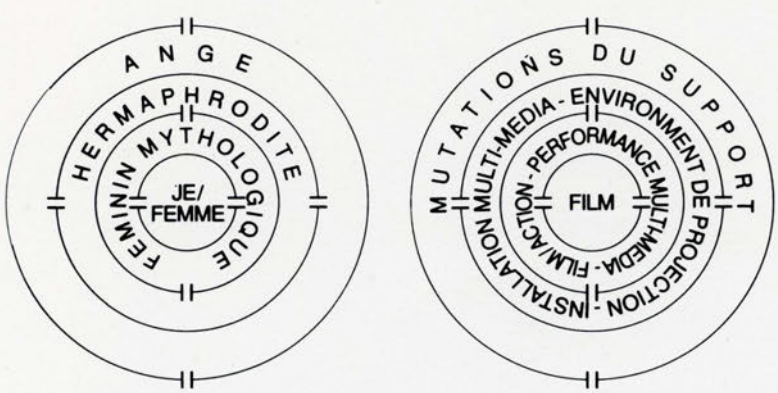
Il y a constamment un effet croisé de miroir: inversion, chiasme, comme s'il fallait que le monde se renverse à l'infini pour exister. Mise en abyme.

Le *Je* qui crée et celui qui analyse sa propre création sont-ils deux énergies bien distinctes ou bien une seule et unique énergie en décalage de phase? *Deux moments d'une même idée*?

Auscultation. Parler de quinze ans de création: 1975-1990. Traverser le labyrinthe à rebours. Le fil rouge, les plans superposés de l'édifice, l'odeur de l'obscurité (Knossos incrustée dans le corps). Ici le Minotaure est absent. Ce qui compte, c'est la traversée. Ce labyrinthe n'a pas de centre. Ou, n'a d'autre centre que le miroir. Il n'a donc pas de fin. C'est un système de cercles concentriques rayonnés du noyau, là où l'objet dense a frappé le miroir de l'eau.

STRUCTURE: LES CERCLES CONCENTRIQUES

Notre création de ces quinze dernières années pourrait être décrite par le schéma suivant:



Les cercles de gauche concerneraient la thématique. Les cercles de droite concerneraient les supports utilisés. Le mouvement ressemble à une dilatation

A split personality takes effect when the artist discusses his or her work *a posteriori*, when the subject turns back to observe what now belongs to the realm of the created, the past, the external, seeing as Other this object at once entirely intimate and alien. *Unheimlich*.

In our case this doubling is in place from the very conception and realisation of these double-authored works. We, the double author who further doubles her functions by becoming alternately filmer and filmed, conceiver and *actante*, possessed by a double-edged gaze resting at once on herself and on the Other.

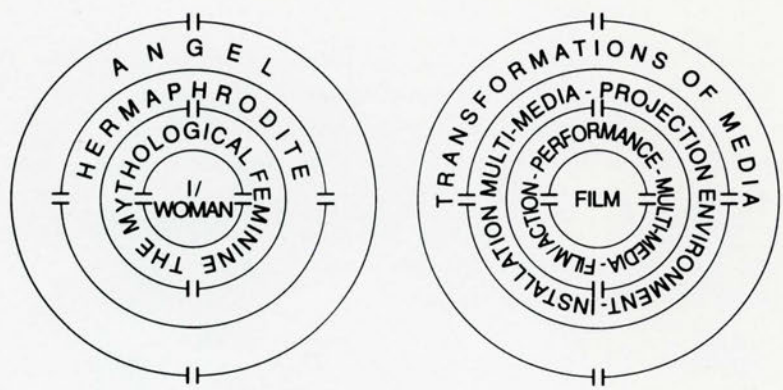
There is a constant crossed-mirror effect: inversion, chiasmus, as if the world must invert itself ad infinitum in order to exist. *Mise en abyme*.

Are the I who creates and the I who analyses her own creation two quite distinct energies or are they one single and unique energy at different stages of being? *Two separate moments of one and the same idea?*

Auscultation. Talking about fifteen years of creation: 1975-1990. Tracing the labyrinth backwards. The red thread, the superimposed planes of the edifice, the smell of obscurity (Knossos embedded in our bodies). Here the Minotaur is absent. What counts is the journey. This labyrinth has no centre. Or has no centre but the mirror. Hence it has no end. It is a system of concentric circles radiating from the nucleus, the point at which the dense object struck the watery mirror.

STRUCTURE: CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

Our creation of these past fifteen years could be described by the following diagram:



The left-hand circles would refer to the themes treated; the right-hand ones to the media employed. The movement resembles a progressive dilation or a slow

progressive ou à une lente explosion du noyau.

Même si chronologiquement notre thématique a évolué dans le sens: je/femme → féminin mythologique → hermaphrodite → ange, cette évolution n'est pas linéaire. Parfois ces préoccupations s'enchevêtrent, reviennent, font irruption l'une dans l'autre.

De même pour les supports. Si le besoin d'élargir l'espace de projection cinématographique nous a conduites à multiplier les écrans et à progresser vers les espaces tridimensionnels des environnements de projection, nous n'avons pas pour autant abandonné le film

Il faudrait imaginer ce schéma comme un miroir où chaque partie est mobile et se reflète dans les autres. Le labyrinthe double est en fait multiple. Ouvert.

DETAIL BIOGRAPHIQUE: L' EXIL

Nous quittons Athènes en 1975 juste après la fin de la dictature. Marquées par l'expérience de la répression sous toutes ses formes: politique, sociale, sexuelle, culturelle. Tendues de révolte nous découvrirons la nouvelle terre qui ne pourra être que celle de la liberté. Par un heureux hasard c'est Paris des années '70. Flottent encore les idées de mai '68, la pensée retentit partout, flambent le mouvement anti-psychiatrique, le mouvement des femmes, l'art corporel. Nous sommes happées par l'effervescence. Même si la création qui a suivi s'est développée en vases communicants avec ce contexte, notre adhésion n'y sera jamais totale. Nous demeurerons des étrangères, 'les Grecques'.

> 'Il y a de la fuite toujours dans l'exil et la fuite n'est pas seulement hors du territoire qu'on a quitté, elle est aussi hors du territoire dans lequel on a trouvé refuge.'[1]

Une autre culture bouge en nous. Les mythes jaillissent de la peau. Les rituels structurent la pensée. Les symboles vivent: résonnances diachroniques. Il y a quelques années l'ami archéologue grec V.B. a dormi pendant trois nuits consécutives d'hiver et de neige dans la tombe d'Oreste à Mycènes. Rituel d'initiation vécue dans le corps.

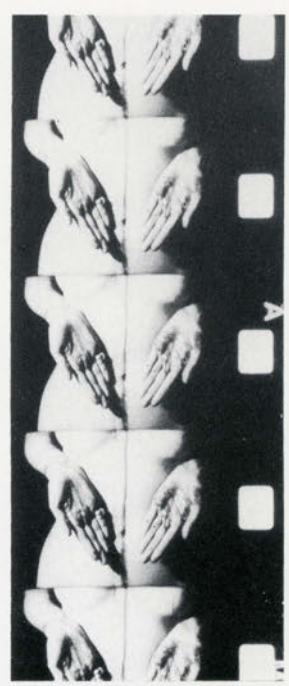
La tombe, le nid, la matrice. La terre, le corps, le rêve. Dans cette ancienne culture la mort vibre d'amour et fait naître la vie. Une vie qui sera en retour traversée par La Passion des Origines.

JE / FEMME, AUTOREPRESENTATION, INTERCORPOREITE

1976-1979: **La Tétralogie Corporelle**

1976: **Double Labyrinthe**, film, 55 min.

1977: **L'Enfant qui a pissé des paillettes**, film-action, 110 min.



Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *Double Labyrinthe,* 1976, film

Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *Double Labyrinthe,* 1976, film.

explosion of the nucleus.

Even if our themes have evolved chronologically thus: I/woman → mythological feminine → hermaphrodite → angel, this evolution has not been linear. Occasionally, these preoccupations may become entangled, or reappear, or erupt one into the other.

The same is true of our media. If the need to expand the space of cinematographic projection has led to our multiplying the screens and moving towards the three-dimensionality of projection environments, this is not to say that we have abandoned film.

This diagram should be imagined as a mirror of which each part is mobile and is reflected in the others. The double labyrinth is in fact multiple. Open.

BIOGRAPHIC DETAIL: EXILE

We leave Athens in 1975 just after the end of the dictatorship. Marked by the experience of repression in all its forms: political, social, sexual, cultural. Straining for revolt we discover the new land which can only be one of freedom. By a happy coincidence it is the Paris of the '70s. The ideas of May '68 are still in the air, thought reverberates everywhere, the anti-psychiatric movement, the women's movement, body art, are in full swing. We are snatched up by the effervescence. Even if the creation that followed developed in communion with this context, our adhesion to it will never be total. We remain foreigners, 'the Greek women'.

> 'There is always flight in exile: flight not only from the territory which one has left, but also from the territory in which one has found refuge.'[1]

Another culture moves within us. Myths spring up from under our skin. Rituals structure our thought. Symbols have life: diachronic resonances. A few years ago a Greek archaeologist friend of ours, V.B., spent three consecutive nights of winter snow in the tomb of Orestes at Mycenae. A ritual of initiation experienced in the body.

Tomb, nest, womb. Earth, body, dream. In this ancient culture, death vibrates with love and gives birth to life. A life which will in turn be permeated with The Passion for Origins.

I/WOMAN, AUTOREPRESENTATION, INTERCORPOREITY

1976-1979: **The Tetralogy of the Body**

1976: **Double Labyrinth**, film, 55 mins.

1977: **The Child Who Peed Sequins**, film-action, 110 mins.

1978: **Soma**, film-action, 50 mins.

1979: **Arteria Magna in Dolore Laterali**, multi-media performance, 110 mins.

1978: **Soma**, film-action, 50 min.
1979: **Arteria Magna in dolore laterali**, performance multi-media, 110 min.
et en 1977: **Ouverture**, performance, 20 min.
Tri-X-Pan Double Exposure, séquence photographique.

Double labyrinthe. Structure en miroir. Symétrie. Première partie: six actions de Katerina filmées par Maria. Deuxième partie: six actions de Maria filmées par Katerina. Double (auto)portrait sur fond noir avec fleurs, sang, dentelles, riz, farine (Katerina) ou ciseaux, fil rouge, coton blanc, coquillages, ex-votos, miroirs et une tête d'agneau écorchée (Maria). Extrême lenteur d'un temps intérieur. Silence de cri retenu.

Immersion. Dès lors notre scène privilégiée sera celle de l'inconscient et de l'imaginaire. Des événements agis de l'autre côté du miroir. Le corps comme identité, l'identité comme territoire du corps, l'objet comme substantif, le geste comme verbe, l'objectif de la caméra comme miroir, le regard amoureux comme révélateur.

Théorie: 'La mise en place du procédé de la reversibilité des rôles filmante/filmée (passer successivement derrière et devant l'objectif), que nous avons longtemps pratiquée, vient d'une intention de démontage de certains schémas idéologiques. Bouleverser les rôles figés, abolir les rapports de pouvoir, demeurer *sujet* des deux côtés de la caméra. Ainsi l'existence d'un sujet filmant, traditionnellement sujet du désir, ne suppose plus un objet filmé = objet du désir, mais, par un renversement désaliénant, l'objet du regard se transforme à tel degré par son propre imaginaire qu'il s'impose comme sujet regardé. Nous introduisons alors le terme "actante" pour désigner notre fonction devant l'objectif par opposition au terme "actrice". Nous appelons notre cinéma *corporel*.'[2] Et le corps n'est pas que matière charnelle, c'est le moi tout entier.

L'Enfant qui a pissé des paillettes. Arrivée de l'image fixe (diapositive) comme rupture du flux de la projection cinématographique. Le fixe saisit le mobile. *Ma violence est celle des choses immobilisées et ainsi rendues absolues.* Mises en scène baroques d'une enfance plâtrée, ornée, pailletée, reflétée, gisante, sublimée. Figure-miroir, un buste en plâtre de petite fille. Dans ce miroir se réfléchissent 'Artémis' et 'Kyvéli' (K. et M.). Identification. L'enfance morte et vivante en moi. Moi fillette. Travestissements mortuaires de la statue. De la mort mise en scène à la mort transcendée. Le rite est une action vitale.

Installées dans la salle de projection nous manipulons les projecteurs et disons des textes au micro en direct. Par notre présence nous corporalisons le rituel de la projection qui d'habitude suppose l'absence, l'effacement physique de l'auteur.

Soma.[3] Une étude intercorporelle. Rouge extrême. L'image du corps féminin agie et perçue dans un état d'engagement physique et psychique. Projection simultanée sur double écran. En diapositives et en film, des parties de nos corps

Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *L'enfant qui a pissé des paillettes,* 1977. Maria Klonaris in multi-media projection.

photographiées en macrophotographie monochrome (rouge). Une broche de cristal (héritage maternel) manipulée devant l'objectif du projecteur de diapositives fait éclater les images fixes et brise les limites rectangulaires de l'écran — norme rationelle à laquelle toute image projetée doit se conformer. Explosion répétée de chaque vue au rythme du seul son entendu, un battement cardiaque.

Images du corps actives. Traces optiques de sensations tactiles. L'érogénéité du corps féminin, un paysage explosif en constant éclatement radial. Le regard transcende le corps (peau? viscères? extérieur? intérieur? épaule? genou? — océan rouge) pour lui rendre son impact imaginaire et le faire re-naître comme vision du désir. Corps d'Amour.

Arteria magna in dolore laterali.[4] L'éventail des images s'ouvre dans l'espace en hémicycle. La frontalité de la projection est progressivement abandonnée. Sur quatre écrans des autoportraits réciproques obsédés par les traces mnésiques de traumatismes personnels, secrets d'une biographie ne se laissant dévoiler que partiellement. La naissance, la mort. Ciseaux, embryons, planches médicales incrustés sur nos visages. Litanie silencieuse de violences et d'enigmes soudain emportée par le constat d'un traumatisme social inscrit sur le corps féminin: les mutilations sexuelles subies par les femmes africaines au nom d'une économie sociale qui les réduit à des machines de reproduction.

'Car le sens du corps est violent
Car mon corps est danger de vie et de mort
Car mon corps est de femme sujet
Car mes images naissent de tous les corps de mon corps
Car mes images sont du sang manifeste
Car faire exister mes images c'est faire exister ma révolte
Car mon corps n'est toujours pas libre
Car je ne suis pas libre et mon corps est enragé

Car mes images sont brillance du regard amoureux
Car mes images sont peau de regard
Car mon regard est folie de toucher
Car ma beauté est celle du corps exposé dans ses désirs et ses blessures
Car ma violence est celle du corps exposé dans son vécu
Car mon vécu mis à nu est désir d'abolir la scission entre vie et création
Car ma nudité fait ma force et ma parole
Car me dévoiler c'est être présente
Car ma présence est amour et menace
Car mon corps est obsession de liberté

Car mes rituels sont cri intérieur
Car
mon feu de cristal'[5]

and in 1977: **Ouverture**, performance, 20 mins.
Tri-X-Pan Double Exposure, photographic sequence.

Double Labyrinth. Mirror structure. Symmetry. Part One: six actions performed by Katerina and filmed by Maria. Part Two: six actions performed by Maria and filmed by Katerina. Double (self-) portrait on black ground with flowers, blood, lace, rice, flour (Katerina) or scissors, red thread, white cotton, shells, ex-votos, mirrors and a skinned lamb's head (Maria). The extreme slowness of interior time. The silence of a scream held in.

Immersion. From now on our focal point will be the unconscious and the domain of the imaginary. Events taking place on the other side of the mirror. The body as identity, the identity as territory of the body, the object as noun, the act as verb, the camera lens as mirror, the loving gaze as revelation.

Theory: 'The procedure of the reversibility of the roles of filmer/filmed (moving successively behind and in front of the lens), which we set up and have been practising for a long time, comes from our intention to dismantle certain ideological schemata. To shatter ossified roles, to abolish power relations, to remain *subject* on both sides of the camera. Thus the existence of a filming subject, traditionally subject of desire, no longer presupposes a filmed object = object of desire, but, by a disalienating reversal, the object of the gaze is transformed to such a degree by its own processes of imagination that it imposes itself as viewed subject. Hence we introduce the term "actante" to denote our function in front of the lens in contrast to the term "actress". We call our cinema *a cinema of the body*.'[2] And the body is not only carnal matter, but the entire self.

The Child Who Peed Sequins. Arrival of the static image (the slide) as rupture of the flux of cinematographic projection. The static grasps hold of the moving. *My violence is that of things immobilised and thus rendered absolute*. Baroque *mises en scene* of a plastered, ornate, sequined, mirrored, recumbent, sublimated childhood. Mirror-figure, a plaster bust of a little girl. In this mirror, 'Artemis' and 'Kyveli' (K. and M.) are reflected. Identification. Childhood dead and alive within me. Myself as child. Dressing up the statue in funeral garb. From death acted out to death transcended. Ritual is a vital act.

Installed in the projection room, we handle the projectors and read texts live into the microphone. By our presence we embody the ritual of the projection which usually presupposes the absence, the physical effacement of the author.

Soma.[3] An intercorporeal study. Extreme red. The image of the female body physically and psychologically engrossed. Simultaneous projection on double screen. On slide and on film, parts of our bodies photographed in monochrome (red) macrophotography. A crystal brooch (maternal legacy) handled in front of the slide projector lens makes the static images erupt and shatters the rectangular limits of the screen — the rational norm to which all projected images have to

conform. The repeated explosion of each shot to the rhythm of the only sound, a heart beat.

Active body images. Optical traces of tactile sensations. The erogeneity of the female body, a seismic landscape in constant radial eruption. The gaze transcends the body (skin? viscera? exterior? interior? shoulder? knee? — red ocean) to restore its phantastic impact and give birth to it again as a vision of desire. Body of Love.

Arteria Magna in Dolore Laterali.[4] The fan of images opens up in the semicircular space. The frontality of the projection is progressively abandoned. On four screens reciprocal self-portraits haunted by memory traces of personal traumas, biographical secrets which reveal themselves only fragmentarily. Birth, death. Scissors, embryos, medical plates incrusted on our faces. Silent litany of violence and enigma suddenly swept away on the acknowledgement of a social trauma inscribed upon the female body: the sexual mutilations suffered by African women in the name of a social economy which reduces them to machines for reproduction.

* * *

THE FEMININE AS UNHEIMLICH, THE MYTHOLOGICAL FEMININE

1977-78: **The Unheimlich Cycle**

1977-79: **Unheimlich I: Secret Dialogue**, film, 75 mins.

1979-80: **Unheimlich II: Astarte**, film, 180 mins.

1979-80: **Kha. Women Embalmed** (by M.K.), film, 60 mins.

1980-81: **Unheimlich III: The Mothers**, multi-media performance and film, 120 mins.

Unheimlich, the term which Freud explored,[6] denotes the disconcerting, the strangely disquieting, the enigmatic, the familiar turned strange, the repressed which reveals itself anew. 'One terms "unheimlich" all that should remain secret, hidden, but which manifests itself' (Schelling). Associating the feminine with the repressed, we posited the return of the feminine as *unheimlich*. What should remain hidden makes itself manifest. The feminine surges up from the unconscious and the unconscious leaps onto the sensitive surface of the film. Does that imply that feminine and unconscious are similar in substance? 'It seems to me that the first question one should ask is what the repressed feminine could be in what is currently termed unconscious . . . Whether the feminine *has* an unconscious or *is* the unconscious.'[7]

Unheimlich I: Secret Dialogue, Unheimlich II: Astarte, Kha — Women Embalmed: Behind closed eyes. Muted chromatic range. The only colours black, white, gold, silver. Veils, drapes, the suavity of the fold. Caravaggist lighting: the

Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *Unheimlich II: Astarti,* 1980, film.

LE FEMININ COMME UNHEIMLICH, LE FEMININ MYTHOLOGIQUE

1977-78: **Le Cycle de l'Unheimlich**

1977-79: **Unheimlich I: Dialogue secret**, film, 75 min.

1979-80: **Unheimlich II: Astarti**, film, 180 min.

1979-80: **Kha. Les Embaumées** (de M.K.), film, 60 min.

1980-81: **Unheimlich III: Les Mères**, performance multi-media et film, 120 min.

Unheimlich, le terme exploré par Freud,[6] désigne le déconcertant, l'étrangement inquiétant, l'énigmatique, le familier tourné en étrange, le refoulé qui se montre à nouveau. 'On appelle "unheimlich" tout ce qui devrait rester secret, caché et qui se manifeste' (Schelling). Associant le féminin au refoulé, nous avons posé le retour du féminin comme *unheimlich*. Ce qui devrait rester caché, se manifeste. Le féminin surgit de l'inconscient et l'inconscient bondit sur la surface sensible de la pellicule. Est-ce que cela implique que féminin et inconscient seraient de matière semblable? 'Il me semble que la première question à se poser, c'est de savoir ce qui, dans ce qu'on désigne actuellement comme inconscient, serait du féminin refoulé . . . Si le féminin *a* un inconscient ou s'il *est* l'inconscient.'[7]

Unheimlich I: Dialogue secret, Unheimlich II: Astarti, Kha — Les Embaumées: derrière les paupières closes. Gamme chromatique restreinte. Seules couleurs le noir, le blanc, l'or, l'argent. Voiles, drappés, suavité du pli. Eclairage caravaggiste: la violence faite par la lumière sur l'ombre du corps. Toute puissance du reflet, de tout ce qui reflète la lumière et de tout ce qui multiplie le visible révélant les limites du corps opaque. Identité baroque.

> 'Au centre de l'écran, icône japonaise sur fond noir, une figure majestueuse vêtue d'un somptueux brocart. Or. Masque noir sur les yeux, visage peint à la poudre de riz. Blanc. Cheveux recouverts d'un châle de velours. Noir. La bordure de franges est suspendue comme une grille de soie devant le visage. Une riche fleur dorée orne la tempe gauche. Les mains, gantées de cuir noir, tiennent un éventail en bois de santal ajouré. Silencieuse, tout en nous fixant du regard, l'actante (M.K.) s'adonne à la manipulation rituelle de l'éventail. Ouverture vers le bas, ouverture vers le haut, fermeture — gestes visiblement empruntés à la tradition du Nô. Soudain on verra l'or du drapé s'agiter. Tremblement de lumière. La figure semble vouloir se débarrasser de sa tenue hiératique. D'un mouvement fou de la tête elle défait son châle qui glisse et découvre des cheveux poudrés d'or . . . Le brocart fondu en pulsations lumineuses donne lieu à une longue séquence de trajectoires en paraboles et de calligraphies en or. Désir d'annuler l'image et sa charge symbolique? Iconoclasme? Révélation du caractère provisoire de la représentation?

violence which light does to the shadows of the body. Omnipotence of the reflection, of all that reflects light and of all that multiplies the visible revealing the limits of the opaque body. Baroque identity.

> 'In the centre of the screen, a Japanese icon on black ground, a majestic figure clad in sumptuous brocade. Gold. A black mask over the eyes, the face painted with rice powder. White. Hair covered with a velvet shawl. Black. The fringe border hangs like a silken grille in front of the face. A rich golden flower adorns the right temple. The hands, gloved in black leather, hold an openwork sandalwood fan. Silently, staring at us, the *actante* (M.K.) gives herself over to the ritual manipulation of the fan. Opening it at the bottom, opening it at the top, closing it — her gestures visibly borrowed from the Noh tradition. Suddenly one sees the gold of the drapery stirring. The light trembles. The figure seems to want to rid herself of her hieratic clothing. In a wild shake of the head she dislodges her shawl which slides down to reveal gold-spangled hair . . . The brocade dissolves in luminous pulsations generating a long sequence of parabolic trajectories and golden calligraphies. The desire to annul the image and its symbolic weight? Iconoclasm? Revelation of the provisional nature of representation? The desire to destroy the artifice, the *appearance*? Life-force manifesting itself in abstraction? The represented is now the light, the music of the camera, the momentum of the hand that films, the trace of movement. Space explodes, hence time is shattered.
>
> Thus the Persona is eclipsed in favour of light and the subject reveals itself as pure energy.
>
> Thus the baroque gold disappears and is transmuted.'[8]

Astarte. Greek name for Ishtar, the Moon goddess whose cult was perhaps the most widespread during antiquity. By uprooting her from her religious context we approached Astarte as concept, feminine principle, activation of a latent memory. The awakening of ancient signs. Rediscovery and incorporation of the symbolism of the lunar feminine.

Black ground and montage in black, chasm in which faces, apparitions doomed to disappear, come to implode in silence. Everything slips and flees. The film, mirror-river, mobile collection of reflections.

The Mothers. Our first film shot in the open in a familiar and haunted place: the Greek landscape. Ritual of the return to the maternal earth. After five years of intense work on identity (limitless), after eight nocturnal works made in the closed space, decked in black drapes, of our Parisian apartment, the diurnal space erupts. Greece within me: the ruins and the sea. Waves, foam, vestiges of abandoned houses, homes pierced by the wind, inside shot through with outside. Drawing

> Désir de détruire l'artifice, le paraître? Force vitale qui se manifeste par l'abstraction? Le représenté est maintenant la lumière, la musique de la caméra, l'élan du poignet filmant, la trace du mouvement. L'espace éclate, le temps en est bouleversé.
> Ainsi s'éclipse la Persona au profit de la lumière et le sujet se manifeste comme pure énergie.
> Ainsi s'évanouit et se transmue l'or baroque.'[8]

Astarti. Nom grec d'Ishtar, la déesse Lune dont le culte fut peut-être le plus répandu pendant l'antiquité. En la déracinant de son contexte religieux, nous avons abordé Astarti comme concept, principe féminin, activation d'une mémoire latente. Eveil de signes anciens. Redécouverte et incorporation de la symbolique du féminin lunaire.

Fond noir et montage au noir, abîme où viennent imploser silencieusement les visages, apparitions vouées à la disparition. Tout glisse et fuit. La pellicule, miroir fleuve, collection mobile de reflets.

Les Mères. Notre premier film tourné à l'extérieur en un lieu familier et hanté: le paysage grec. Rituel de retour à la terre maternelle. Après cinq ans d'intense travail sur l'identité (illimitée), après huit oeuvres nocturnes réalisées dans l'espace clos, recouvert de fonds noirs, de notre appartement parisien, éclate l'espace diurne. La Gréce en moi: les ruines et les mers. Vagues, écume, vestiges de maisons abandonnées, foyers percés par le vent, dedans traversé par le dehors. Retirant la limite entre espace extérieur et espace intérieur, *Les Mères* plongent dans nos origines. Neuf femmes apparaissent dans le film, des amies, nos mères, nous-mêmes. Elles surgissent du paysage comme des réminiscences d'un temps antique, matrilinéaire, mythes diffus, spectres des éléments. Inquiétante étrangeté de la mémoire.

Et comme si cette grande étendue de l'extérieur ne pouvait pas s'accommoder d'un espace restreint de projection, nous avons multiplié les écrans de telle manière que le dehors entoure le public. Habillées de blanc, nous sommes nous-mêmes devenues écrans — projection du dehors sur nos corps. Deux paravents, écrans mobiles spécialement construits permettaient des variations de l'angle de projection et des effets de profondeur spatiale. Dans l'un étaient incrustés un miroir, une vitre et une porte qui s'ouvrait. Dans l'autre une fenêtre. Ouvertures vers le dehors, vers le dedans. Sorties.

L'HERMAPHRODITE

1982-1985: **Le Cycle des Hermaphrodites**

1982: **Mystère I: Hermaphrodite endormi/e,** installation multi-media.

back the boundary between exterior and interior space, *The Mothers* plunge into our origins. Nine women appear in the film, friends, our mothers, ourselves. They surge up from the landscape like reminiscences of an antique time, diffuse myths, spectres of the elements. Disquieting strangeness of memory.

And as if this vast experience of the exterior were unable to accommodate itself to a restricted projection space, we multiplied the screens so as to make the outside surround the public. Dressed in white, we ourselves became screens — the outside projected onto our bodies. Two specially constructed mobile screens allowed for variations in the angle of projection and effects of spatial depth. In one there was a mirror, a glass pane and a door which opened. In the other a window. Opening outwards, inwards. Exits.

THE HERMAPHRODITE

1982-85: **The Hermaphrodite Cycle**

1982: **Mystery I: Sleeping hermaphrodite**, multi-media installation.
1983: **Orlando — Hermaphrodite III**, multi-media performance, 40 mins.
1984: **Hermaphrodites**, radiophonic film, 140 mins.
1982-1985: **Gardens of the Sleeping Hermaphrodite**, film, 80 mins.

The hermaphrodite enters the scene.

> 'Your treatment of the myth of the hermaphrodite seems to me to be the outcome of the work that you have done around an aesthetic of the artificial. I think of your own masked, made-up, costumed, *transvested* images. Sooner or later you were going to arrive at the theme of the androgyne which is the summit of the artificial poetic body, so desirable in its impossible completeness.
> Moreover, the mystique of the synthetic body seems with you to go hand in hand with that of technology . . . The presence of the technique which is at once the great step forward and the great myth of the twentieth century, underlines the double character — archaic and up-to-the-minute — of your filmic and environmental work.'[9]

From Woman as All to the Hermaphrodite, there is only a sliding of images. In certain sources, Astarte appears as androgynous goddess and announces the alchemical figures of the *coincidentia oppositorum*.

The Louvre Hermaphrodite is an adolescent. A Hellenistic statue of unknown authorship, reclining on a mattress by Bernini — a meeting of two eras of the collapse of classicism: alexandrism and the baroque.

The hermaphrodite is asleep. The active passivity of the sleeper. Sleep as abandon and passage to the other scene. The installation which we presented at the

1983: **Orlando — Hermaphrodite II**, performance multi-media, 40 min.
1984: **Hermaphrodites**, film radiophonique, 140 min.
1982-1985: **Jardins de l'Hermaphrodite endormi/e**, film, 80 min.

Entrée en scène de l'Hermaphrodite.

> 'Votre traitement du mythe de l'hermaphrodite me paraît être l'aboutissement du travail que vous avez accompli à partir d'une esthétique de l'artificiel. Je pense à vos propres images masquées, maquillées, constumées, travesties. Vous deviez tôt ou tard en arriver à la thématique de l'androgyne qui est le comble du corps poétique artificiel, si désirable dans son impossible complétude.
> La mystique du corps synthétique semble de reste marcher de pair chez-vous avec celle de la technologie . . . La présence de la technique qui est à la fois le grand progrès et le grand mythe du 20e siècle, souligne le double caractère archaïque et actuel de votre oeuvre filmique et environnementale.'[9]

De la Femme comme Tout à l'Hermaphrodite, il n'y a qu'un glissement d'images. Dans certaines sources, Astarti apparaît comme déesse androgyne et annonce les figures alchimiques de la *coïncidentia oppositorum*.

L'Hermaphrodite du Louvre est un adolescent. Statue hellénistique de sculpteur inconnu, allongée sur un matelas réalisé par Bernini — rencontre de deux ères d'effondrement des classicismes: l'alexandrisme et le baroque.

L'hermaphrodite est endormi. Passivité active du dormeur. Le sommeil comme abandon et passage à l'autre scène. L'installation que nous avons présentée à la XIIe Biennale de Paris était imaginée non seulement comme une transposition de la statue dans le temps et l'espace de l'histoire de l'art (dú Louvre au Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris), mais aussi comme un Retour: immersion dans quelque chose de magique, nostalgie d'une harmonie perdue, quête amoureuse. Un travail sur l'insaisissable.

Un grand espace de 25 x 6m était rituellement divisé en trois parties et pratiquement recouvert de projections — boucles de films et diapositives: la statue projetée sur des écrans de tulle, des roses ou des nuages sur des écrans circulaires posés au sol, des lueurs en fuite sur un écran en forme de trapèze, deux portraits de nous somptueusement costumées et tenant des coupes de cristal remplies de roses. Univers visuel reflété dans le son. Fragments de musiques baroques, voix voluptueuses de haute-contre, bribes de textes répétés. La répétition comme incantation, comme réminiscence et comme prophétie qui vous met face à la structure plane du temps (le temps serait-il un miroir sans bords?).

C'est ainsi que l'installation multi-media devient Salle de Miroirs. Miroirs

12th Paris Biennale was envisaged not merely as a transposition of the statue in the time and space of art history (from the Louvre to the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris), but also as a Return: an immersion in something magical, a nostalgia for a lost harmony, an amorous quest. A work on the ungraspable.

A large space of 25 x 6 m was ritually divided into three parts and covered with projections — loops of films and slides: the statue was projected onto tulle screens, roses or clouds were projected onto circular screens placed on the floor, fleeting rays onto a trapezoid screen, two portraits of ourselves sumptuously costumed and holding crystal goblets filled with roses. A visual universe reflected in sound. Fragments of baroque music, voluptuous counter-tenor voices, snippets of repeated texts. Repetition as incantation, as reminiscence and as prophecy which places you face to face with the planar structure of time (could time be a mirror without edges?)

It is thus that the multi-media installation becomes Hall of Mirrors. Distorting mirrors doubtless. Also, mirrors which look at themselves at the same time as they look at you.

Orlando. On a theatre set,[10] installed behind a battery of projectors we project fixed and mobile images which animate the mosaic of Orlando: visions in black and white occasionally clouded with magenta and cyan. Frames, positives, negatives, shades of grey, textures of light. Water, naked trees, luminous trails, a revolver, tigers. Above all, masked games inverted, *transvestments*, slippages on the transparency of the frontier of the sexes. Vague atmosphere of a crime thriller.

> 'About there being a change in Orlando the man and Orlando the woman, was ceasing to be altogether true.
> The change of clothes had much to do with it.
> His neat breaches his braided coat
> a woman's satin bodice
> Different though the sexes are they intermix
> For it was this mixture in her of man and woman the curious of her own sex.'[11]

A text in echoes, nocturnal, elliptic. Account of the transformation of the hero into a woman in Virginia Woolf's novel. The poetic dimension of this natural sliding from one sex to the other in sleep calls for a voyage into the fragile appearances of the Persona and nocturnal light. Fragments of rock music punctuate and suspend the images. Seduction suspended. Second engagement with the ungraspable.

Marie Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *Orlando — Hermaphrodite II,* 1983, multi-media projection.

anamorphosants sans doute. Aussi, miroirs qui se regardent en vous regardant.

Orlando. Sur une scène de théâtre,[10] installées derrière une batterie de projecteurs nous projetons les images fixes et mobiles qui animent la mosaïque d'Orlando: visions en noir et blanc parfois troublées de magenta et de cyan. Trames, positifs, négatifs, degrés de gris, textures de lumière. L'eau, des arbres nus, des traînées lumineuses, un revolver, des tigres. Surtout des jeux de masques inversés, travestissements, glissements sur la transparence de la frontière des sexes. Vague atmosphère de film de série noire.

> 'About there being a change in Orlando the man and Orlando the woman, was ceasing to be altogether true.
> The change of clothes had much to do with it.
> His neat breaches his braided coat
> a woman's satin bodice
> Different though the sexes are they intermix
> For it was this mixture in her of man and woman
> the curious of her own sex.'[11]

Un texte en échos, nocturne, elliptique. Récit de la transformation du héros en femme dans le roman de Virginia Woolf. La dimension poétique de ce glissement naturel d'un sexe à l'autre opéré dans le sommeil, appelle à un voyage dans les apparences fragiles de la Persona et de la lumière nocturne. Des fragments de musique rock rythment et suspendent les images. Suspendue la séduction. Deuxième essai sur l'insaisissable.

COUPE DIAGONALE: LE REVE D'ELECTRA

L'installation multi-media *Le Rêve d'Electra* a été conçue directement après *Mystère I: Hermaphrodite endormi/e*[12] et réalisée par étapes jusqu'à sa forme la plus complète en 1987. Elle est donc contemporaine d'*Orlando* et du *Cycle Anges et Archanges*. C'est une oeuvre de croisements.

Des dernières oeuvres du *Cycle de l'Unheimlich* elle prolonge le rêve du Retour à la Mère par un renversement non violent. De l'Hermaphrodite elle partage le sommeil: Electra est présentée sous les apparences de la dormeuse dans la fameuse séquence de *Métropolis* de Fritz Lang où a lieu la transfusion psychique de l'héroïne en état d'hypnose à son double inanimé, l'androïde-femme (Clytemnestre dans notre interprétation).

> 'Le sommeil c'est le lieu du rêve. Le Théâtre des transformations. Orlando change de sexe au cours du sommeil. Tous les possibles sont réalisables dans le rêve puisque l'opacité physique du monde de l'éveil ne fait plus obstacle. La loi de la causalité ne fonctionne pas, aucune des lois

Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *L'Ange: Corps des Etoiles*, 1986.

DIAGONAL SECTION: THE DREAM OF ELECTRA

The multi-media installation *The Dream of Electra* was conceived directly after *Mystery I: Sleeping Hermaphrodite*[12] and realised in stages until it reached its most complete form in 1987. It is thus contemporaneous with *Orlando* and the *Cycle of Angels and Archangels*. It is a crossroads work.

Of the final works of the *Unheimlich Cycle*, it prolongs the dream of the Return of the Mother by a non-violent reversal. With the Hermaphrodite it shares sleep: Electra is introduced under the guise of the sleeping woman in the famous sequence of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* in which the heroine is psychically transfused in a state of hypnosis into her inanimate double, the android woman (in our account Clytemnestra).

> de la physique Newtonnienne n'y fonctionne, le temps peut devenir un réseau de temps divergents, convergeants et parallèles, comme dans ce jardin de Borges ou dans cette interprétation de la mécanique quantique par Everett et Wheeler qui postulent l'existence de plusieurs mondes parallèles. En fin de compte le rêve c'est ce qui met en échec le pouvoir absolu que notre culture confère au monde dit extérieur ou réel et qui n'est, semble-t-il, qu'une construction parmi d'autres de la conscience. Le sommeil c'est l'état charismatique qui nous ouvre à notre propre transparence et la transparence du monde.'[13]

La transparence du monde nous mène à l'Ange. De l'Ange, le *Rêve d'Electra* annonce l'espace stellaire.

L'ANGE, CORPS DES ETOILES

1985: **Anges et Archanges**

1985: **Mystère II: Incendie de l'Ange**, performance multi-media, 40 min.

1986: **L'Ange. Corps des Etoiles**, séquence photographique.

1986: **Incendie de l'Ange suive de Petit Traité d'Angélologie**, film radiophonique, 120 min.

1987-88: **Angélophanies**, sequence photo-typographique.

1988: **Incendie de l'Ange**, livre d'artiste, édition originale limitée.

1988-90: **Voies Lactées. Palimpsestes**, séquence photographique sur palette graphique.
En projet: vidéo.

Au départ une photographie trouvée, portrait 'clinique' d'hermaphrodite, découverte par Maria dans les archives de son père gynécologue-chirurgien. Personnage mystérieux aux yeux bandés, sexe de femme et corps d'homme. Ange annonciateur? Il opère le glissement dans l'imaginaire: de l'hermaphrodite à l'ange. Du double sexe à l'"horsexe'[14]. Double inversé, négatif et revers, miroir magique.

> 'L'Ange est non pas l'un et l'autre sexe, comme l'hermaphrodite, mais ni l'un ni l'autre. C'est une autre forme de toute puissance. Une toute puissance par abstraction.'[15]

L'espace que ce corps nous a ouvert est celui des constellations. Nébuleuses, galaxies, amas globulaires aspirés par la surface de ce corps qu'elles viennent sublimer, violenter, dévorer pour révéler une intime parenté. Jamais nous n'avons autant creusé une image. Plus vivant qu'un corps vivant, plus mythologique que tout corps désiré, plus plein qu'une page vide, plus vide qu'un jardin zen, plus

> 'Sleep is the site of the dream. The Theatre of transformations. Orlando changes sex whilst asleep. All things are realisable in the dream since the physical opacity of the waking world is no longer an obstacle. The law of causality no longer functions, none of the laws of Newtonian physics function, time can become a network of divergent, convergent and parallel times, as in that garden of Borges or in that interpretation of quantum mechanics by Everett and Wheeler which postulates the existence of several parallel worlds. Ultimately, the dream is what puts a check on the absolute power that our culture confers upon the so-called real or exterior world and which, it seems, is only one construct of the consciousness among others.
> Sleep is the charismatic state which opens us up to our own transparency and the transparency of the world.'[13]

The transparency of the world leads us to the Angel. *The Dream of Electra* announces the Angel's stellar space.

THE ANGEL, BODY OF THE STARS

1985- : **Angels and Archangels**
1985: **Mystery II: The Angel Ablaze**, multi-media performance, 40 mins.
1986: **The Angel. Body of the Stars**, photographic sequence.
1986: **The Angel Ablaze followed by Short Treaty on Angelology**, radiophonic film, 120 mins.
1987-88: **Angelophanies**, photo-typographical sequence.
1988: **The Angel Ablaze**, artist's book, original limited edition.
1988-90: **Milky Ways. Palimpsests**, photographic sequence on graphic palette.
Planned: video.

Maria Klonaris and Katherina Thomadaki, *Incendie de l'Ange,* 1985. Stephane Nigard plays electric guitar and multi-media performance. (Photo Véronique Boutroux)

As point of departure, a photograph, the 'clinical' portrait of a hermaphrodite, which Maria had found amongst the archives of her father, a gynaecological surgeon. Mysterious blindfolded character, with female genitalia and male body. Heralding angel? It performs the slippage into the imaginary: from the hermaphrodite to the angel. From the double sex to the 'horsexe'.[14] Double inversion, negative and reverse, magic mirror.

> 'The angel is not both sexes at once, like the hermaphrodite, but neither one sex nor the other. It is another form of omnipotence. An omnipotence by abstraction.'[15]

The space which this body revealed to us is that of the constellations. Nebulae, galaxies, globular masses sucked in by the surface of this body which they then

sombre qu'un trou noir, plus lumineux que le sabre de feu de l'Archange, ce corps détient un immense secret. Nous le laissons nous guider dans les métamorphoses des formes et dans les mutations des supports. Il génère des sons, des poèmes, des musiques, des espaces, des centaines de tirages photographiques, nous pousse à inventer des techniques (en phototypographie par exemple), nous attire à de nouveaux outils (ordinateurs, palettes électroniques), cherche de nouvelles transparences.

Le corps lumineux qui s'auto-transforme et s'auto-génère sur fond de ciel est une Intelligence fluide. Miroir Brûlant. Cordon ombilical entre la mémoire du corps et la mémoire du monde.

> 'Les yeux bandés, le sexe à nu, l'ange est en feu.
> Ce trou noir où par excès de gravité la courbure de l'espace devient négative, je ne me le représente pas.
> Ce temps semblable à une Voie Lactée où les noyés remontent à reculons, je ne me le représente pas. Si le temps remonte à vitesse infinie, il n'y a plus au monde que du présent?
> Le sexe ni l'ange n'est objet de représentation.'[16]

Paris, July 1990.

NOTES

1. Marie-José Mondzain, 'Corps Mousaion', Catalogue *Klonaris / Thomadaki: Dix ans de cinéma à Paris*, Galerie Donguy, A.S.T.A.R.T.I. Archives, 1985.
2. Klonaris / Thomadaki, *Portaits / Miroirs*, Cinéma du Musée, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1984.
3. Soma = corps en grec. Breuvage sacré provoquant l'extase chez les Hindous.
4. Titre inspiré des planches anatomiques de Andreas Vesalius, XVIe siècle.
5. M.K.-K.T.: 'Manifeste pour un cinéma corporel', 1978.
6. Sigmund Freud, 'L'Inquiétante étrangeté' ('Das Unheimliche'), *Essais de psychanalyse appliquée*, Paris: Idées/Gallimard, 1956.
7. Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*, Paris: Minuit, 1977.
8. Extrait d' *Identité baroque*, texte inédit de K. Thomadaki.
9. Aline Dallier, entretien pour *Hermaphrodites* par M.K.-K.T., Atelier de Création Radiophonique, France Culture 1984.
10. Première présentation à la Grande Salle du Centre Pompidou.
11. Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (fragments).
12. Projet pour l'exposition 'Electra' au Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1983.
13. M.K.-K.T., entretien par Madeleine Van Doren, Catalogue *Le Rêve d'Electra*, Galerie Edouard Manet, Gennevilliers, 1987.
14. *Horsexe* est un néologisme de Lacan que Catherine Millot a choisi comme titre de son *Essai sur le Transsexualisme*, Paris: Point Hors Ligne, 1983.
15. Catherine Millot, entretien pour *Petit Traité d'Angélologie*, par M.K.-K.T., A.C.R., France Culture, 1986.
16. Bernard Teyssèdre, 'Six regards sur le Sexe de l'Ange', préface pour *Incendie de l'Ange* de M.K.-K.T., Paris: Editions Tierce, 1988.

sublimate, assault, devour in order to reveal an intimate kinship. Never before have we explored an image in such depth. More alive than a living body, more mythological than any desired body, fuller than an empty page, emptier than a Zen garden, darker than a black hole, more luminous than the Archangel's fiery sword, this body holds an immense secret. We allow it to guide us in the metamorphosis of forms and in the transformation of materials. It engenders sounds, poems, music, spaces, hundreds of photographic prints, pushes us to invent new techniques (for example photo-typographical ones), draws us towards new tools (computers, electronic palettes), seeks out new transparencies.

The brilliant body which transforms itself and generates itself against the celestial backdrop is a fluid Intelligence. Burning mirror. Umbilical cord linking the memory of the body and the memory of the world.

* * *

Translated by Kate Winskell

NOTES

1. Marie-José Mondzain, 'Corps Mousaion', Catalogue *Klonaris/Thomadaki: Dix ans de cinéma à Paris*, Galerie Donguy, A.S.T.A.R.T.I. Archives, 1985.
2. Klonaris/Thomadaki *Portraits/Mirrors*, Cinéma de Musée, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1984.
3. Soma = body in Greek. Sacred drink which provokes ecstasy in Hindu rite.
4. Title inspired by the anatomical plates of Andreas Vesalius, 16th century.
5. M.K.-K.T.: 'Manifeste pour un cinéma corporel', 1978.
6. Sigmund Freud, 'L'Inquiétante Etrangeté' ('Das Unheimliche'), *Essais de psychanalse appliquée*, Paris: Idées/Gallimard, 1956.
7. Luce Iragaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*, Paris: Minuit, 1977.
8. Extract from *Baroque Identity*, unpublished text by K. Thomadaki.
9. Aline Dallier, interview for *Hermaphrodites* by M.K.-K.T., Atelier de Création Radiophonique, France Culture 1984.
10. First presented in the Grande Salle of the Centre Pompidou.
11. Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (fragments).
12. Plan for the exhibition 'Electra' at the Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1983.
13. M.K.-K.T., interviewed by Madeleine Van Doren, Catalogue *Le Rêve d'Electra*, Galerie Edouard Manet, Gennevilliers, 1987.
14. *Horsexe* (beyond-the-sexes) is a neologism of Lacan which Catherine Millot chose as title for her *Essai sur le Transsexualisme*, Paris: Point Hors Ligne, 1983.
15. Catherine Millot, interview for *Petit Traité d'Angélologie*, by M.K.-K.T., A.C.R., France Culture, 1986.

Reviews

Reviews are arranged geographically, by the venue at which the performance, exhibition, event or installation being reviewed took place: firstly London; then other towns and cities in the United Kingdom, in alphabetical order; and lastly towns and cities in other countries.

LONDON

Joseph Beuys

The End of the Twentieth Century

Anthony d'Offay Gallery

Reviewed by Stuart Morgan

Since Joseph Beuys' death re-mounted versions of his work have acquired a different status. It is no use remarking, as one hapless reviewer did, that the arrangement of thirty-one floorbound basalt chunks that make up *The End of the Twentieth Century* are reminiscent of the way the sleds cascade from the van in Beuys' *The Pack*; he is comparing the artist's own version of the latter with a revival of the former carried out in the artist's absence. Saying so may seem to violate all the assumptions on which the genre rests, but nowadays any installation of Beuys' sculpture must be regarded as a critical interpretation of the "original". Photographs of Beuys' own version of *The End of the Twentieth Century* at the Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf in 1983 show the viewer's gradual approach to the work down a staircase. In a basement space the basalt lozenges — thirty-nine of them, at least — were ranged in rows, the circular incisions on the upper part of one end, where a face would be on a body, all pointing in the same direction except where one seemed to have toppled over another. In London, thirty-one of these were placed in a space on a level with the incoming visitor, who suddenly made intimate contact with a set of forms now less reminiscent of sarcophagi and more of petrified tree-trunks that may have fallen that way thousands of years before, but with that flowing motion the reviewer mentioned.

Making the arrangement appear haphazard encouraged one particular emphasis in

London reconstruction of Beuyss' installation the idea of death as sleep — regarded by Ariès as an archetype of medieval Western Christian thinking — has been replaced by the suggestion of a voyage, which squares well with Beuyss' interest in shamanism. Is a defensible alternative interpretation the sole criterion for a successful revival of a classic installation? The success of the London exhibition might suggest that it should be.

interpretation. Much of the visual interest of the work lies in the difference between each stone, achieved by slicing away a circular section from each and replacing it. After this, each disc sits differently because of the addition of felt and fat, usual symbols of energy, warmth and transformation in Beuys' thinking, plus clay, perhaps the most ancient symbol of fertility. However slight the indentation, the stones have become sealed vessels. The body in general, not only the human body, has turned inwards, perhaps as a response to attack. They seem to exist in a state of suspended animation. In the past, the millenium has been synonymous with the sense of an ending. If reports of the year 1000 are to be trusted, the end of this century, which is also the end of the millenium, will bring a heightened sense of an ending. Beuys' *End of the Twentieth Century*, however, is concerned with neither resurrection nor afterlife, but with a dichotomy between spirit and its vehicle, a division it has become impossible to entertain in a "me"-orientated society. (Two friendships between Beuys and other famous men blossomed during the 80s: with Andy Warhol, who had reduced his own presence to a cipher so that a team of imitators could double for him at parties; and with the Dalai Lama, whom Buddhists believe to be the thirteenth consecutive incarnation of the same spirit). In the

Jane Mulfinger

Deluge

Camerawork

Reviewed by Tony White

Jane Mulfinger's installation *Deluge* begins before you enter the building. The glass store-front of Camerawork is lined completely with clothes. At first glance the identity of the building is concealed. There's nothing unusual about a shop window full of clothes in this part of London, it could be another of the several thousand wholesale rag-trade outlets that crowd the East End from Stepney through Whitechapel and Shoreditch to Bethnal Green.

But the clothes are pressed right up against the glass. They are all blue. The kagoules, underwear, cardigans and pyjamas are all sewn together, effectively blocking any view of the gallery beyond. Inside, a dark blue rectangular space is

defined by sheets of silky cloth, which hang beneath a false perspex roof, itself lined with more clothes. The only thing which is not blue is a single, finely embroidered white baptismal gown in the centre of the ceiling.

In the extensive and anonymous catalogue essay, it is suggested that *Deluge* challenges the legitimating narratives of religion and that, as participants in this installation, we are caught in a moment which inscribes a vacillation between birth (through baptism) and death (by drowning). *Deluge*, it continues, 'secularizes the great religious mysteries of life and death' and suggests that the only way to reconcile this birth-death scenario and transcend our mortality is through an awareness of history (represented by the clothes) rather than by regarding these experiences as moments in a pre-ordained cycle. The trouble is that the attempt to problematize the unquestioning acceptance of one legitimating meta-narrative in effect replaces it with a new narrative that is equally hermetic.

The distance between the catalogue essay and what was actually there in the space was dramatic: for 'fleeting human presences fading . . . in and out of view with the delicacy of holy apparitions', read 'two Kodak carousels project images onto a curtain'. There is no mystery here. There *is* metaphor and the use of metaphor in this context is negotiated implicitly, like it or not, through the location of the work within certain language games: notably, radical art discourse of the last twenty years and the knowledge of how language is used in this kind of work. The catalogue's reading of the piece demands that, to borrow Baudrillard's words, we 'take flight from appearances and watch over the depth of meaning . . . dismiss[ing] appearances as a malefaction.' Perhaps the Baudrillardean position, that there are 'no more illusions . . . everything [is] immediately transparent, visible, exposed', is quite useful in the face of such overstated exegesis, which I found to be annoying and counter-productive. In fact, after looking at the catalogue notes my reading of the piece became almost wilfully aphasic.

It was a shame that the strengths of the piece were undermined by this accompanying text, since aside from this problem, *Deluge*, was a well executed installation, with genuine moments of beauty: the after image left on the drapes each time the slides faded out, the white baptismal gown alone in a field of blue. There were also accidental incongruities. Much is made in the catalogue essay of the references to water (baptism, drowning, the 'submarine setting'). Seemingly reinforcing these references was the low gurgling noise of the water running through pipes, but on inspection this turned out to be the gallery's hot water system. Far from compromising the work, however, such accidents as these served rather to enrich it and to open it out to a multiplicity of other, perhaps more modest, but also more pertinent readings.

Peter Zegveld

Situaties

ICA

Reviewed by alex x fraser

Recently, in Utrecht, Peter Zegveld exhibited an installation consisting of a metal chamber 6 x 2.5 x 2.5 metres; black externally, shining white internally. A red carpet led the solitary audience member inside where s/he sat in a chrome dentist's chair wearing headphones and listening to 'aeroplane music'. The chamber was closed. Then the person was 'blown up'. A very loud explosion accompanied the blast and smoke of a bomb. On one day he blew up 120 people. Some became addicted to it, returning several times. The work was entitled *God's slap on the back*.

Zegveld, however, is not a man for self-congratulation. Unwilling to reperform a piece for the two years he calculates it would take to establish a significant audience in his native Holland, he is prolific, making about four pieces a year.

His third this year is entitled *Situaties (Situations)*. Like much of his work this is a melodrama, one 'in which simplicity and sentiment becomes chaos and sensation.' In it we witness a sinister and stylish fairy-tale of personal memory and fantasy about the power relations in Zegveld's childhood. Reminiscent of Hansel and Gretel, with discreet references to Duchamp and Massaccio, *Situaties* is a fine example of a multi-media, multi-discipline work which allows us all to 'step outside the frame'. Influenced by Wagner, Zegveld's productions are bombastic, yet there is also a subtle and refined attention to the smallest detail which can shift the perception of the audience from mere amusement to dark wonderment. He is a manipulator, benign in real life, yet disquietingly ferocious in his latest role. Whenever he plays the witch/shaman/father and controls the children figures, he is delighted but still surprised at his own power. At one point he dictates the children's recitation by projecting letter-forms from a series of powerful torches. Their chanting becomes P-A, P-A, P-A, P-A. When 'Ma-ma' is invoked his rage has him threatening to incinerate the girl. Carrying her like a demented ballerina towards the ever fiercer flames, he is easily distracted by the flickering black-and-white home movies of, in fact, Zegveld's own 1950s childhood.

The piece achieves a delicate balance between many disparate means of telling. By keeping all but two key, chilling, lines in the original Dutch ('Only that that burns, lives' and 'Energy-sucking women'), Zegveld has further abstracted, for his too small British audience, a work that is clear yet open to a myriad of interpretations — a richness of response which Zegveld promotes by the multi-layering of messages and ironies, always giving his audience time and space to appreciate them without slackening the pace.

Although undeniably theatrical, *Situaties* reveals the conception of a visual artist. It originated in the small figurative drawings in which, each day, he depicts the situations which he perceives. The set is of starkly

monochromatic cut-outs. Within it Zegveld's framed effects become more than tricks: when the moon plummets and shatters, it is more than a plate that cracks up; and when a chair responds sonorously when moved by the Boy but not by the Man, it is more than the child's winding up of the adult — it is an expression of the directness of relationship with the world and its objects that is lost with growing up. *Situaties* was a mere three weeks in the rehearsing, demonstrating Zegveld's excellence as a director. He performs with Beatrice van der Poel and Freddie Beckmans, also both visual artists. All three bring in extremely strong performances and exhibit a seamless teamwork: but the difference between this and 'acting' in the theatrical sense is immense.

In his next work, an 'opera', Zegveld plans to tackle the theme of the family again, but this time laying more stress on its members' relation to the outside world. I have no doubt that it will be richly illuminating.

Anna Homler

The Queen of Ooga Booga

Recommended Records, Stockwell

Reviewed by David Hughes

Anna Homler got into her car one day in L.A. and started singing in a language she didn't

understand; but she was convinced that it was, indeed, a language. A primal language, the building blocks of all languages, where all languages are one. At about the same time she submitted to the compulsion to wear hollowed-out loaves of bread over her head. She was becoming Breadwoman, what Homler describes as a kind of Jungian archetype.

At Recommended Records, Homler performed a number of the songs which were created for — and, one suspects, through — the Breadwoman persona, but without the aid of latex prosthesis (when the bakery stopped making loaves big enough to fit over her head, she had had a bread mask made). She did, however, work with a number of props: a flashing red heart (a child's toy activated by body heat and held in the palm) and a giant wooden fork. There is the distinct sense with Homler that things never remain stable. Breadwoman metamorphosed into and out of existence, while material from within that period turns up on recordings, as songs in her live performance and in the installation *Pharmacia Poetica*, an audio-visual work with sculptural and textual ingredients.

Although Homler speaks of her new 'language', it is in practice less the vehicle for semantic communication than a tonal palette which she uses for its emotive and expressive qualities. It has strong echoes of American Indian languages in its syllabic components, and her songs in it have both a space-age, Laurie Anderson kind of feel, and a West Coast/Jefferson Airplane quality; and although she speaks of archetypes, her totemic objects are from within our own culture, so that she fuses the primitive (not the primal) and the modern.

Mainly her work seemed sensual. The combing of her hair with the fork, her 'lover', was distinctly erotic, as her 'hand' piece, in which, with her head alone spotlighted, her face emerged from caressing hands.

She is an accomplished improviser. Her surprise guest at Recommended was Dan Weaver, who played a 'cello of his own making which was effectively a multi-instrument with percussive augmentations. Homler contributed vocal, visual and instrumental improvisations. They worked with tact and sensitivity, allowing each other a space rare within improvised performance: knowing when to give each other the floor and, crucially, knowing when to stop.

The problem with work such as this is the explanatory texts which surround it. Casting it in

mystical terms gives the rational observer a problem. It smacks of post-hippy hokum. But the fact of the matter is that the work is transportive, mesmerizing (as the handbill rightly claimed), witty, sexy and intelligent. It also has the power to transform the kitsch artifacts and consumerist culture into something ethereal, surreal and beautiful.

Barbara Bloom

The Reign of Narcissicism

Serpentine Gallery

Reviewed by Adrian Searle

Barbara Bloom's installation *The Reign of Narcissism* calls to mind one of those side rooms one peers into and passes by on a wet afternoon's ramble through a country house; a minor detour on a tourist's itinery — some mildly interesting, faintly eccentric eighteenth or early nineteenth century collection footnoted in Baedeker. Already one smells the furniture wax, senses the solitary guard checking his watch, impatient for the last visitor to depart.

Guidebook in hand — and there is a guidebook, a thick tome in German and English with decorated endpapers — the persevering visitor soon discovers that the first impression is a deception. Sure, there are the usual museum cases, busts on pedestals, chairs for looking at but not for sitting on, but all at once the installation, which might have been especially designed to instil boredom, presents the viewer with the fact that they have crawled into a narcissist's vanity case.

Previously shown in New York, Los Angeles, Stuttgart and Zürich, *The Reign of Narcissism* is more than an evocation of cultural *ennui*. It is a travelling mausoleum for an invented figure, a fake museum dedicated to obsessional self-regard. Barbara Bloom's ostensible persona is all pervasive; she is both as seemingly real and as ludicrous a fiction as *Dynasty*'s Alexis — though somewhat better read. She is everywhere: her etiolated features stare from the bottom of porcelain teacups and from cameo brooches presented as cabinet-curios; her silhouette adorns the upholstery of a high-backed chair (her dental X-ray, her racily graphic signature and her astrology chart appear on others); her classically sculpted profile graces plaster reliefs (as classical muse measuring and painting her own face) and portrait busts, both complete and damaged; her visage decorates the handmade chocolates and champagne bottles which can be bought — at a price — from the gallery shop; while her name is printed on the tooled spines of a collection of fake books — *My Echo, my Shadow and Me, Cut off your nose to spite your face, Der Doppelgänger* — and inscribed on the Barbara Bloom tombstones in the collection (date of death — deferred).

But the impression that this is only a marketing exercise, ushering in Bloom-mania, is misleading. Her self-celebration plays on other late twentieth century preoccupations too — questioning uniqueness, deconstructing mythologies of 'genius, counting out the debased coinage of great names, commemorations and lauded

individuals. She borrows, she steals, she simulates and appropriates: a welter of classical allusion, academic reference, and more than a hint of the psychoanalytic hangs over the work. Compulsive repetition, prolixity and mimicry abound. A picture of a parrot is mirrored by a detail of the same picture on the opposite wall — it echoes and reflects itself, parrot-fashion.

The guidebook adumbrates the installation at absurd length and with obscurantist fervour: Ovid, Plotinus and others on the classical myth of Narcissus and Echo; Walter Benjamin on unpacking his library; a section from Bruce Chatwyn's *Utz* and a great chunk of *Dorian Gray*; and other delights from Gombrich on portraiture to Hegel on the Greek profile and some botanical texts on the taxonomy of narcissi. The guidebook is as much an illustration of the collector's mania as it is a meditation on it.

This magpie-horde of material is cast about by Bloom as scholarly Lady Bountiful. Perhaps, like Freud, with his collection of figurines, little statues and deities, she is assembling her own secret audience. The question of The Gaze, of primary and secondary narcissisms, the 'mirror-stage' and the position of the Feminine Other spring to the reviewer's mind: reach for Deleuze, quote Irigary, re-open the Cabinet of Doctor Lacan. It is a temptation to be avoided. Like the V-Girls' recent ICA performance *The Question of Manet's Olympia — Posed and Skirted*, Bloom's work is engaged in a subtle seduction, sending up and gratifying the audience's expectations at the same time. It is an appeal to one's own narcissism.

EDINBURGH

Bobby Baker

Drawing on a Mother's Experience

Richard Demarco Gallery

Reviewed by Griselda Pollock

It's always nice to be in on the joke. Bobby Baker's performance offers lots of opportunities. Her domestic parody of action painting does not so much explode as crack along laugh lines the inflated existential anguish which Hans Namuth consolidated in his famous photographs of Jackson Pollock at work in his East Hampton studio back in 1950. Baker lays out her white bed sheet (a double sheet, bought, because of her considerable experience as a mother, in the sales) in place of Pollock's unprimed rolls of cotton duck. But artists' studios — and Pollock's was paradigmatic — are messy, paint-splattered and begrimed places. Bobby Baker's work place is scrupulously clean. Her canvas/sheet lies on a sensibly provided expanse of polythene sheeting which catches all the stains and drips and is neatly folded back into the carrier bags at the end, when the artist leaves her performance space pristine, leaving not a trace.

That's where her 'drawing' is so different. The artist in his studio performs the ritual act of self-affirmation, leaving on as well as all around the canvas the physical signs of presence, the traces in that assertive gesture. These are the gifts which attract the money, carry the investment of name, persona, art and value. Domesticating that at once private self and public commodity does not produce neat inversions or parallels. Women's work leaves no traces — the creation of life and its daily sustenance are a perpetual round of erased activities. They are surely pretty messy with all that sweat and blood, dribble, food and shit. But the skilled mother is one who makes all this disappear. Like Baker during her performance, all the mess is tidied away and she has a damp cloth always to hand. The signs of art are a socially validated form of dirt, mess, or symbolic shit. The traces of motherhood and childhood are taboo. The

'experienced mother', the key figure evoked in Baker's monologue, is the one who knows how to clean up.

There is then something profoundly shocking in what Baker is doing; using food, and food symbolic of this domestic maternal work, to make art. The treacle does look quite like the enamel paint which Pollock used in his drip paintings. Creamed eggs do add a bold touch of colour. And from a viewer's distance, we can obliterate the abject side of these foods splattered on the sheet and hold onto the delicate and calculated patterns as if they were paint. But at key points Baker rubs our noses in it. She treads on the blackcurrants and grinds them into the yoghurt; she lies down in the mess to make a powerful image of immobilization in the midst of this sanity-threatening chaos which women are required to negotiate and organize.

This disorder of the early moments, days, months and years of taking care of children, which is so disruptive of any normal scheduling or routine, and of simple things like one's own meals, which must be perpetually cleared up, leaves its traces written in the memory of women. These experiences of dislocation and multiplicity form the special psychological patterns of our adult existence. Feminist artists have found this dilemma — publicly accredited creativity as one of the boys, and feminist-valourized experiences of an otherwise invisible maternity and domesticity — a rich and necessary resource for their practice. Baker's performance shares this dilemma and offers a powerful and disturbing as well as wry and ironic reading of it.

Sensible adult people have babies but with that birth adulthood is mortgaged to the total demands of a tiny helpless creature. Its absolute dependency inverts the image we have of large strong mothers and protected infants. The child dominates. Its feeding, shitting and sleeping control the adult's time, needs, body. The sensible thing to do is give in and allow yourself to swim in this continuum of work, love, mess, dirt, muddle, rage and joy. But what if you remember what it was like to feel creative and empowered through the work you did before this catastrophe about which you were never properly warned befell you? Baker's performance is much more than a clever compilation of Joyce Grenfell vignettes — stories of a troubled mother. It reads as part of a massive effort to win control, to create an identity amidst those unconsidered daily processes which threaten entirely to erode 'you' and leave only 'mother'. To make art, to perform, to speak as an adult woman, making meaning, these possibilities had been at risk — threatened not just by *being* a mother but by the fact that, in being required to clean up the traces of motherhood, the mother becomes invisible too. The times and processes of parenting for women and the times and processes for adult work, being in the social world, are in dire contradiction.

Any artist who comes to the point of making work about their experiences as a mother has already lived through that contradiction and won this space to be making the art at some real cost. With superb and subtle management of emotions, Baker takes us back through the years she did not make art, calling for recognition of those shared lunacies which only humour can allow us to recall, and momentarily halting the laughter with poignant moments of deep pathos. Then she obliterates the drawing, covering it with a deep layer of white flour. The painful memories will not be left, sanitized by their aesthetic look, assimilated back to the action painting they cleverly resemble.

Then comes a shocking final image. Baker takes back all these memories, still visible as marks so insistingly staining the reverse of her canvas/sheet, by rolling it around her and then dancing to Nina Simone's 'My Baby Loves Me'. The effect is profoundly ambiguous. We have to see the mess, no longer clinically erased, but all over her. Yet she dances in a subdued celebration. She is not talking to us any more. Her monologue having made us often complicit, her silence or humming forces us to acknowledge her particularlity and the assertion of the mother and the artist in one complex and disturbing figure.

GLASGOW

DV8

"if only . . ."

Tramway Theatre

Reviewed by Lucy Nias

"*if only . . .*" is not a piece about ideas, but rather a portrayal of feelings — of fear, hope, wistfulness and longing. A less than universal view of the painful but frequently comic pattern of human relations. Here there are no secret desires, no hidden hurt, no false modesty: every feeling is on the surface. Each performer fights for his/her own expression — seeking attention while denying opportunity to the others in the cruellest, most outrageously honest of ways. It is at times only sheer physical skill and timing which holds together the exuberant antagonism of each dancer's isolation in a world of emotional chance.

There is a god (or something very much like one): a caring watchful eye, a steering presence. Yet from his perch, dangling on the end of a rope high above the stage, he is powerless to guide. A picture of human perfection, he sings with the voice of an angel to the unhearing solitude of a lonely builder of sand-castles. Below him too, separated by a vast theatrical darkness from the castle-builder, a child bullies her unco-operative playmate, feeling nobody's presence but her own, seeking no one's pleasure but her own: desperate for attention, yet ignorant of the castle-builder; unaware of an auditorium full of spectators; oblivious of the voice above her, until it appears to mock. She rejects the god-like figure's invitation to see the world from his stance, instead swinging him wickedly in ever increasing circles on his rope: he cannot show her anything.

Into the middle of these competitions of skill and cruel rebuff descends a kamakaze on a rope. He hurls himself with terrifying force and intention into mid-air, across the stage and out towards the audience with apparent abandon of his life, but pushing before him in the thin air an almost audible cry 'Save me!'

It works! The games end abruptly and we all focus on him. He has our undivided attention, our desire to save him. Another one of the dancers craves such care, such *power* to attract attention. Seeing it achieved by self-destructive tactics, she too leaps and flings herself into the space between the kamakaze flier and his catcher, but is allowed to fall to the ground. Undaunted and apparently unhurt, she tries again and again, meeting the floor unregarded each time with a sickening thud. Finally in rage she crosses the stage, and with a single violent sweep, destroys the lonely castle builder's encroaching fortifications. Hurt for hurt.

Still the god-like figure looks on: unmoved or impotent?

"*if only . . .*" is a wish, a need, an attempt. The wish is for power; the need for love; the attempt to gain recognition and find strength.

DV8's use of the currently popular paradigm of children's games is particularly sensitive and is employed to great effect in this raw and naive presentation of human behaviour. Their displays of skill and bravado, their jealousies and disappointments are an analogue of the muted displays of similar emotions we allow ourselves in adulthood.

Is this then the solitude of our existence? Do we meet, play, compete and fight? Is there no confluence of human desire in the universality of our natures which allows us, if only occasionally, to move together without passion or violence?

There is, of course, no answer to the perennial question of the human condition, but might we not hope for a more deliberate conclusion to the portrayal of the powers unbridled earlier in the piece? There is sadly no choreographic resolution to this otherwise beautiful and superbly

witty piece. Lloyd Newson's sense of the dramatic stumbles and falters. The sense of loss we experience at the end is not because we find no answer, nor that there is in fact no end. We sense a loss because there is no expectation, no continuing search, no echo of jarring emotion: just a weak dwindling of movement and light. The final tableau is of two dancers, one upright and moving slowly towards the front of the stage, the other crawling and sliding along the floor, dragging at the first one's legs, and hindering her progress. The image is reminiscent of the alchemical symbol for unity and perfection, but the final feeling is more one of absent-minded acquiescence in the supposed necessity of an ending.

MANCHESTER

Manchester Olympic Video Exhibition (MOVE)

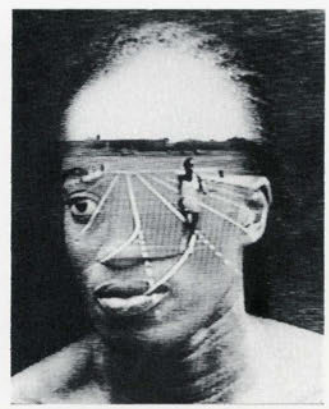
Cornerhouse and various venues

Reviewed by Sean Cubitt

Sport as subject matter for art has thrown up some monsters. Video is in a different position, however. The tradition of Olympic films, since Riefenstahl, of physical culture and film generally, the tradition of sport on TV and the sporting iconographies for electronic games: all offer immediate resources. As does the video wall, itself an obligatory part of the '80s sport spectacular.

Queueing for Granada Studio Tours — one of the North West's most popular paying attractions — visitors had the chance for several weeks to watch a video wall showcasing five video pieces associated with Manchester's bid for the 1994 Olympics. More familiar as devices for showcasing BNFL than artists' concerns, the video wall turns into a matchless fabric for large scale video. Where the video projector thins and vapourizes the light from a tape, a wall is still a light-source, solidifying the images across and between screens. Choreographing across a twenty-four screen wall is time-consuming and delicate: the results, here, as entrancing for casual visitors as for video buffs.

Mike Jones and Simon Robertshow spin an acid-tinged short, *Faster Manchester: Seoul to Salford*, developing on the theme of what happens during the 9.79 seconds it takes to win a 100m dash through ecological and electronic themes. The electronic medium pulses the electronic imagery up to the 'surface' of the tape, in a gesture that keeps the tape firmly within Greenberg's modernism, even while it moves outwards from the impasse of painting. Tina Keane's *Olympic Diver* is an exquisite silent piece: predominantly blue tones with flashes of orange, orchestrating the movements of women swimming and diving from sports archives, Hollywood swim spectaculars and a performance piece set up by Keane in London two years ago. For a male



viewer, the reworking of the fetishized female bodies into a feminine space is both bewitching and disturbing, the male gaze suddenly and radically decentred. Again, this seems to be a property of the video wall: its refusal of Renaissance perspective a preliminary to the refusal of defining male perspectives, even when the archival sources derive from them.

Susan Collins' and Julie Myers' *Going for Goldfish* is a fine piece of visual comedy built around the gaps between real women, the aerobicized bodies idealized for them, and the Amazonian athletes of Greek ceramics, with their phalluses and Corinthian columns. The rational form of the healthy body and the healthy mind succumbs to irreverance, as the screens present massed phalanxes of golden carrots in livid Amiga-colour.

Far more serious, though perhaps over-reliant on sound given the screening circumstances, is Keith Piper's *The Nation's Finest*, a radical

look at the racial stereotyping of the Olympiad. Within the 'stadium or enclosure' it is possible, briefly, to recognize the black athlete as the representative of the nation. Yet that brief acknowledgement is hedged around with other discourses: the naturalness of the black athlete's achievement, the distance from training, discipline, sacrifice, obsession, ambition. The tape's ironic voiceover is most poignantly carried through the visuals in the figure of Ben Johnson: hero in the stadium, disgraced once out in the normal world.

In the storefront windows of Kendall's department store on Deansgate, you can often see pictures hanging, advertising prints or framing services. In one window hangs a bold golden frame, ornate, roccoco. Inside it, a black woman's face looks out at you as you glance in from the street. Then blinks. This is Marty St James and Anne Wilson's *Running Woman: A Video-Portrait of Paula Dunn*. In all the splendour of sport, the personal comes through again, this slightly embarrassed look as the head turns to one side, then the other, while within the profile or the forehead roll images of the purpose that has brought her this fame: to run. Only the frame gives it away: the purpose of the portrait is to capture, to frame for possession. Dunn is still running. The contradiction doesn't fail to harness the passers-by.

Showreels of the works were on show at Cornerhouse, co-organizers with Film and Video Umbrella, and at a city-centre HMV store. Among the artists, St James and Wilson and Keane, the most experienced in public commissions, forwent sound. *Goldfish* makes it as pure visuals, despite the added humour of the soundtrack, Jones and Robertshaw make it. But Piper's piece, in many ways the most powerful of them all, is weakened by its reliance on the voice-over for an actor to the images, which otherwise wrestle with the theme of circumscribed freedoms and dignities, but cannot carry so precise an analysis alone. On the other hand, perhaps we should begin to move towards a public art that recognizes the public's ability to listen?

Illustration: Marty St James and Anne Wilson

NEWCASTLE

Ward

St Nicholas Psychiatric Hospital

Reviewed by Nick Stewart

To prevent damage by vandals the hospital authorities had boarded up all the windows of Ward 1 in an empty almost derelict part of the building, thus amplifying an already intense atmosphere. Pat Naldi, Annalisa Smith, Louse Wilson and Alexa Wright simply divided the space into four and each worked with the conditions and history of the site as they perceived them.

Alexa Wright chose to work in what was formerly the dining area. *The Table of the Immovable Feast* constellated ideas about eating, desire, decay and language. A large spotlit table bedecked with rotting food and crockery appeared to have lurched violently to one side of the space. Lengths of sound tape literally linked the table to photographic images of mouths on the surrounding walls, blown-up images of hair filled high windows on two sides, while small green strip lights illuminated the main windows. Taped ambient sounds of people eating and talking permeated the space, as did the nauseating smell of rotting food, communicating a sense of the decay of language itself, and suggested a psycho-social break-down.

Pat Naldi created an altogether different, sparse and cerebral mood in her area. Three beds from the ward, each with a white-painted corrugated steel base, were fused into one triptych-like form. The central bed was illuminated by an

anglepoise lamp clamped at its head, the ensemble being jacked up and tilted to an angle of 30 degrees to face the viewer. A small rectangular mirror, lit from above, hung on the wall opposite. The understated symbolism was a sublimated crucifixion, or, more accurately, a scene of torture or interrogation, with the mirror casting the viewer in the alarming role of passive voyeur, implying that we are all to a greater or lesser degree responsible for this institutionalized half-life existing on the periphery of our society.

Annalisa Smith's work also centred around three beds; but these represented individuation, the coming into being of integrated personalities. The fragility and vulnerability of materials like honey, feathers, flowers, light and molded wax was juxtaposed with symbols of controlling drug chemistry — bell jars and laboratory equipment — which formed a barrier around the beds. The work was given an elegiac twist by the inclusion of a slide projection, into a large half-empty fish tank, of the names of people who had lived in the surrounding wards.

Two small rooms were used by Louise Wilson to create a disturbing dislocation of interior and exterior worlds. In one room salt covered the floor to a depth of several inches and caked the lower reaches of the walls. Amber-pink light filtered down from a small bulb high in the ceiling, while on the door a small brass plaque offered the word SALT. A blue substance apparently seeping under one wall led the viewer to the second space where the copper sulphate extended over two thirds of the floor, seemingly emanating from a gap in the back wall of the space where some boards had been loosened. Small lights under a slightly raised glass floor bathed the space in an artificial glow. On the ledge of the window in the door, a small brass plaque read LAKE, lending the room a tantalizing perspective and presenting imaginative transformation as the only possible strategy in circumstances of such extreme institutionalization.

OXFORD

Marina Abramović

Boat Emptying — Stream Entering

MOMA

Reviewed by Katy Sender

Marina Abramović's work has always been concerned with shifts in spiritual and physical perceptions, risky and uncompromising. Physical and emotional limits are again extended and tested in her new solo performance, *Boat Emptying — Stream Entering*.

In a circle of spotlit ice blocks, elegantly power dressed in an executive black suit, stockings, black heels and hat, she sat utterly motionless. Around her torso coiled three five foot pythons and two more made a Medusa toque on top of the hat. Her meditative concentration of energy elicited a reverential silence from the audience as they entered the gallery and collected in a semicircle in front of the ice circle. Slowly as the lights dimmed, the snakes began to move. A head or a tail would appear at odd angles and vanish; one snake coiled itself around her arm and sniffed a finger; another disappeared from view; a third crossed her body as if looking for an opening in her jacket.

Abramović remained still and expressionless as though in an hypnotic state. She was freed of her headdress of snakes when

their movement caused her hat to topple. As they fell to the floor her hair flowed onto her shoulders; but her pose remained rigid. Initially stunned, the two snakes on the floor began an exploration of their surroundings. We had been assured that the ice blocks would keep the snakes within the circle but one of them edged through a gap in the blocks and made its way towards the fire exit. An anxious frisson rippled through the ever-darkening room to be replaced by relieved relaxation as the snake minder caught the escapee and returned it to its basket. In the semi-lit gallery, tears ran down Marina Abramović's face: brought on by the lights, the effort of physical endurance?

If the black suit and white ice, the stillness of Marina and the insistent slow movement of the snakes were visually stunning and emotionally moving, the vulnerability that is part of this performance is not something picturesque. There is real danger involved, and the hearsay from another performance is that the minder had to release a snake from coiling round her neck before the audience entered.

PARIS

Miguel Chevalier

Anthropométrie

Hôpital de Kremlin-Bicêtre

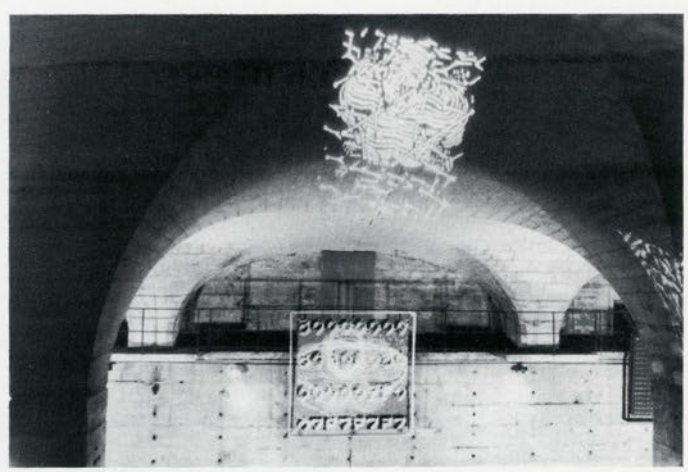
Reviewed by Fiona Dunlop

Taking the eighteenth century reservoir of a Parisian hospital as his starting-point, Miguel Chevalier recreated what is most natural and familiar, the human body, in its most artificial form — computerized images. Firmly believing that the micro-chip is amongst the most important ingredients of our late twentieth century society, Chevalier explores the double-take of expressing corporality through decomposed, immaterial images.

With an increasing amount of rich visual material pouring out of sophisticated hospital machinery, the project was begun using the hospital laboratories. Images which are usually relegated to patients' archives or even destroyed thus take on a new lease of life. After being recycled in Chevalier's computer and undergoing numeric and colour treatment, scanner images, echographs and thermographs reemerge as chimerical visions. Their normal diagnostic function is inverted and they are proposed as allegories of the human body. And yet they actually exist, these invisible components of our bodies. It is our own perception which fails to see them.

Polychromatic, dislocated, decomposed, codified, superimposed: we have gone a long way from the Renaissance approach to the human body when Leonardo Da Vinci, for example, explored its purely anatomical mechanism in his intricate examinations of muscular and osseous systems. In Chevalier's images, the eye of the camera, or of optic fibres, has penetrated the outer skin to reach the invisible. At their most extreme we see images of the brain, touching on thought and therefore pure abstraction.

By choosing to use a 60 metre deep well as a framework, he was hardly shy of symbols. Looking into its watery depths it seems bottomless, the mutant and open-ended world of research or electronic progress. A rapidly changing series of images is projected from above, down onto a synthetic screen fixed just



above the water level and accompanied by electronic music specially composed by Fred Wallich and Thierry David. Spectators gazing bottomwards were aided by sets of binoculars fixed to the rim and so providing a choice of vision, macro or micro, and the illusion of stereoscopic 3D. Simulation is complete.

Adjoining the well is a vaulted stone hall, three enlarged images of vinyl and synthetic felt were hung while six projectors cast further images onto archways and the ceiling. Again bowing to technicity these were not slides, which would have burnt out, but stencils cut into steel.

With every project he undertakes, whether intervening on the TV screens of Montreal Airport, or creating a series based on the numeric screens of the Stock Exchange, Chevalier is intent on drawing parallels and proving that the computer systems which have infiltrated our lives can be stretched even further. As he points out, the development of viruses in a man's body detected by a scanner is echoed in our computers — the notorious 'bug'. By his manipulation of these images Chevalier stresses the duality of their effect: both fascination and anxiety are present. At the same time he is challenging both the chip and man.

SALZBURG

Marie-Jo Lafontaine

Pandora's Box

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac

Reviewed by Otto Neumaier

Marie-Jo Lafontaine presented two contiguous and complementary facets of her work in Salzburg this summer. Whilst her new video sculpture, *Passio*, was at the Kunstverein, the Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac was showing her new cycle of monochrome paintings combined with photographs.

The title 'Pandora's Box' refers both to the entire seven-work cycle and to one individual's work. Taking 'Pandora' (she who has *all* gifts) as her cue, Lafontaine addresses a variety of indivisible aspects of human existence: enticement, radiating from Pandora (a woman endowed with powers of seduction by all the gods) and her doom-bringing vessel; the hope which endures in it; the pain that emanates from the 'things of life'; and not least the fate of Pandora as *woman* — enticing by virtue of her natural gifts, she becomes the victim of those she has led astray as they turn away in disappointment or horror from the 'Other', which reveals itself behind the allure of beauty. Hence the title work shows a woman's lap in which a man's head is lying (or a man laying his head in a woman's lap). Whilst Lafontaine usually prefers to 'sky' her pictures, so that one must look up at them, this picture is hung relatively low (doubtless also making a virtue of the low-ceilinged rooms): the viewer looks down on the lap, in which the man seeks *his* fulfilment (and thus completes/brings to an end the relationship). The large photograph, flanked by black monochromes, looks like a window, whose seductively opened shutters could swing closed at any moment, so that the viewer — if he is to sustain

his sense of participation in the picture — must give up the perspective of voyeur and substitute himself in the picture.

The Pandora motif is pursued in the other works (which form two triptychs) where it finds its reflection in the life of Nature as a whole: *Pandora's Box* is surrounded by pictures of red roses (with large red monochrome panels and narrow black lateral sections), Lafontaine's first paintings with colour photographs. Even the beauty of these roses is seductive; but at the same time it warns of transience, for the roses are, as underlined by the title, 'à fleur du mal' — on the edge of disease, at the transition between full bloom and the first signs of wilting. This is evident in the fact that the red of the blooms and the black of their shadow hold each other in equilibrium.

The second triptych is divided between two other rooms. The photographic motif of these works with the title 'What is to happen is already accomplished' are clouds in phases of transition: they could just as easily allow the sun to break through as veil themselves definitively in black. Like the *Pandora's Box*, these photographs are black and white and accompanied by black monochromes. Both groups of works hang relatively low, such that the viewer recognises himself in the roses and the extreme moods of the clouds, fusing the cycle into a symphonic unity.

Translated by Kate Winskell

Books

Henry M. Sayre
The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970
University of Chicago Press, £31.25

Reviewed by David Hughes

The account which Gray Watson (*Performance* 61) gave of Sayre's view of the centrality of the notion of performance within the avant-garde since 1970, is full enough to enable me to move to the periphery of *The Object of Performance*.

Most readily the book begs comparison with Roselee Goldberg's *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*, and it should, in my opinion, take its place firmly alongside that work, possibly supplanting it in certain respects. Goldberg's *Performance* provided an ostensive definition of the field (until then poorly defined) by documenting uncritically, from the perspective of an art historian, the antecedents of the great spread of phenomena which we now take to constitute that expanse of overlapping groups, linked by family resemblances, which is performance or performance art. Much of what Sayre documents overlaps with Goldberg, but what distinguishes *The Object of Performance* is the conceptual and criticial perspectives which inform and underpin it. Sayre writes from within a post-

modern/post-structuralist 'sensibility', and his vocabulary is full of Derridean tags. The chapter on dance, for example, is titled 'Tracing Dance'. He brings one extremely valuable term from that repository which provides us with a productive key to critical appraisal and direct experience of performance work, 'undecidable'. He writes: 'the art of the avant-garde is always in process . . . purposefully *undecidable*. Its meanings are explosive, ricocheting and fragmenting throughout its audience. The work becomes a situation, full of suggestive potentialities, rather than a self-contained whole, determined and final.'

Two effects of Sayre's more literary approach is that he gives a great deal of space to developments in oral poetry, what he describes as 'any poet[ry which] can be placed in the Williams/Olson tradition which conceives of the poem as a "field of action".' It has always been my contention that the presence of Charles Olson and M.C. Richards as performing poets at John Cage's 1952 Black Mountain event, has been grossly overlooked. Sayre refers to Olson's seminal text 'Projective Verse' and links it to Pollock's remark on being 'in the painting'. He brings out the emphasis on the act of making rather than the thing made, the doing rather than the done — process.

As a 'postmodern cultural critic' Sayre broadens the scope of Goldberg's *Performance* in the crucial respect of acknowledging

that work which, rather than starting from 'art' and extending into showbiz, operates in the opposite direction, David Byrne's output, for example.

Perhaps the most important departure for Sayre is to be found in his final chapter, 'Critical Performance'. Here he appoints the critic as a participant within the field of performance, and whilst his actual account of Barthes' work seems to have been loaded in from a quite separate academic project — it doesn't exactly fulful its promise within the book's context — it does open the possibility of the critical activity as another level of making in its own right.

There are criticisms which could be levelled at the book. Foremost, perhaps, is its price. I look forward to a paperback very soon. Also, it is overly descriptive — Goldberg's *Performance* and a number of journals provide such material; it cannot contain itself within the chronological bracket it sets itself ('since 1970'); and the post-structuralist material is gestured towards with less than acceptable rigour. But it is a visionary work which, like Olson's 'Projective Verse', opens the field, a set of inspiring notes towards a profitable definition of the avant-garde, and a critical vocabulary which is able, at last, to address performance on its own terms.

John Hodgson and Valerie Preston Dunlop
Rudolph Laban: An Introduction to his Work and Influence
Northcote House, £12.95

Reviewed by Sarah Rubidge

This book offers itself as an introduction to Laban and his work which it hopes will lead to a 'genuine understanding and perspective for application of his ideas in dancing and every other art of moving and being today' (Preface). In has two sections, the first outlining the development of Laban's work in dance, the second a rigorously researched reference file detailing information about Laban which has never before been published in one place.

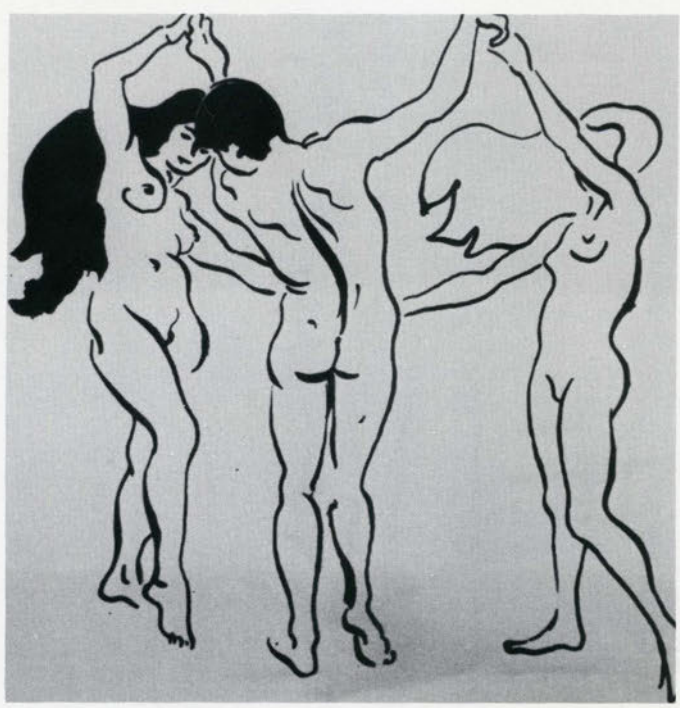
Laban's life abounds with myths, or at least colourful stories. His legendary attraction to women, his summer courses in Switzerland, his flight from Nazi Germany. The first section of this book doesn't quite avoid

the trap they offer, with spurious mention of his success with women, and perhaps a too uncritical enumeration of his ideas for a book published in 1990. 52 pages long, and separated into numerous sub-sections — the man; his ideas on movement; his approach to training the dancer; his concept of Choreology; his fight for the status of dance; his visions of education and of community dance, to mention but a few — it fairly gallops along the surface of Laban's life and times. The latter is unfortunately paid scant attention resulting in the sense of a life lacking in historical, social or political context and a system of movement study which has been formulated in isolation from the intellectual developments which were taking place all around him. Nevertheless it does highlight the vivacity of Laban's mind — his extraordinary capacity to think laterally, to initiate whole new areas of study and to devise a multitude of ways of describing the phenomenon of movement. Here we have the spirit of the man, a tireless pioneer, who leaves the somewhat less invigorating job of consolidating and developing his ideas to his faithful followers.

Unfortunately this section is not entirely satisfying even as an introduction: one feels that, with more rigour and detail, a more balanced picture of Laban and some backing for the claim that '[he] is arguably the most influential figure in dance in the 20th century' (Preface) might have been achieved.

Indeed, it is in the major part of the book, the Reference File, that its main value lies. A meticulous collection of carefully gathered facts on Laban's life, it comprises: a biography; a list of all his dance works; two separate bibliographies, one of his own writings, one on writings about him; a list of archive collections; and a list of individuals mentioned by Laban in his texts, and their relationship to him and his work. There are even lists of movement choirs and their leaders, of local groups affiliated to the Laban Art of Movement Guild and, still more arcane, of the founder members of support groups for his newly formulated notation system in Germany. The final chapter moves into other realms, and brings us back to the man. The re-prints of Laban's drawings give us an insight into the racier side of his character as well as graphic evidence of the mathematical rigour he could apply to the development of his ideas.

Interesting though this is, ultimately the book does not meet its claim to set Laban's work in perspective; and it fails to give a sound case for the 'profound influence' he is supposed to have had on dance in this century. Nevertheless the second section is an immensely valuable library resource, and the book will consequently be of use not only to the general student of Laban, but also to the serious researcher.



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International Festivals and Art Gatherings

1990		
September	*24 Sep-3 Nov*	**Swansea Festival of Music and the Arts** Swansea, Wales tel 0792-302 130
	Sep-Oct	**TWSA Four Cities Project** Derry, Newcastle, Glasgow, Plymouth tel 071-734 2596 or 081-981 6811
October	*Oct-Dec*	**Octobre des Arts** Lyons, France tel (33) 78-30 50 66
	10-14 Oct	**National Review of Live Art** Glasgow tel 041-332 7521
	18-22 Oct	**Lineart** Ghent, Belgium
	23-27 Oct	**Viper '90** experimental film and video festival Lucerne, Switzerland tel (41) 41-517 407
	25 Oct-1 Nov	**FIAC International Contemporary Art Fair** Paris, France tel (33) 1-45 62 84 58
	2 Oct-10 Nov	**Dance Umbrella** Newcastle upon Tyne, England tel 081-741 4040
November	*5-17 Nov*	**Sigma 26** contemporary performing, cinematic and plastic arts festival Bordeaux, France tel (33) 56-50 39 85
	12-17 Nov	**International Symposium for Electronic Art (SISEA)** Groningen, Netherlands tel (31) 50-138 160 and (31) 50-138 343
	15-20 Nov	**Cologne Art Fair** Cologne, Germany tel (49) 221-237 295

	15-21 Nov	**4th International Classical and Contemporary Dance Competitions** Paris, France tel (33) 1-45 22 28 78
	17-24 Nov	**Audio Visueel Experimenteel Festival** Arnhem, Netherlands tel (31) 84-420 571 and (31) 85-511 300
December	*4-17 Dec*	**Latin American Film Festival** Havana, Cuba tel c/o Cuban Embassy Information Office 071-240 2488
	6-11 Dec	**Art Hamburg** Hamburg, Germany
	11-17 Dec	**Mevlana Festival of Mystical Dance** Konya, Turkey tel c/o Turkish Bureau of Culture and Tourism 071-734 8681/2
1991		
February		**7th Indian Triennale** New Delhi, India tel c/o British Council (Anne Eliot) 071-389 3030
March		**Art Frankfurt 1991** Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany tel (49) 69-440 226
April		**International Festival of Modern Dance and Movement** Utrecht, Netherlands tel (31) 30-332 032
May		**London International Opera Festival** London, England tel 071-359 9926

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All information is subject to change closer to the date.

Performance BACK ISSUES

1* Ken Campbell / Welfare State / Kipper Kids / Heartache & Sorrow

2* Roland Miller & Shirley Cameron / Demolition Decorators / Mods / Nuttall on Money

3* Genesis P. Orridge / Hummer Sisters / Happenings / Performance from Poland

4* Mary Longford / Academia Ruchu / Welfare State / Kaboodle Theatre

5+ Charlie Drake / Silvia Ziranek / Sonia Knox / Stuart Brisley & Ian Robertson

6+ Fiona Richmond / Steve Cripps / Naked Art / Politics of Drag

7+ John Cage / Merce Cunningham / Lumière & Son / Tadeusz Kantor / Women's Images

8* Pip Simmons / Tom Saddington / Women's Performance

9 Ivor Cutler / Performed Music / Showbiz / San Franciso Mime Troupe

10 Roland Miller & Shirley Cameron / Chris Burden / Belgian Performance / New Video

11+ Brion Gysin / Lizzie Cox / Stuart Brisley / Steve Paxton

12 Caberet Futura / Richard Layzell / State Performances / Artists Enquiry into Art

13 Roland Muldoon / Gay Culture & Performance / Theatre of the 8th Day / Gilbert & George / Provisorium

14 Laurie Anderson / Acme Gallery / Miranda Tufnell / Music in Performance

15+ Yoshi Oida / Magic & Performance / Sex & Public Spectacle / Station House Opera

16+ Andre Stitt / Video Libraries / Circus Lumiere / Forkbeard Fantasy

17+ Geraldine Pilgrim / Hesitate & Demonstrate / Irish Performance / Women & Jazz

18 Robyn Archer / John Cage & Laurie Anderson / IOU Theatre / Independent Video

19+ Cathy Berberian / Neo-Naturism / New Image / New York Live / Nuovo Spettacolorita

20/21+ Psychic TV / Anne Bean / Philip Glass & Rhys Chatham / Rational Theatre / New York Video

22 Impact Theatre / Bloodgroup / Video Afterimage / Basement Group

23 Nan Hoover / Zap Club / Hermine / Paperpool / Sheffield Expanded Media

24+ Kazuko Hohki (Frank Chickens) / John Maybury / Urban Sax / New York Performance / Charlie Hooker

25 Joseph Beuys / Jan Fabre / Notting Hill Carnival / Marty St James & Anne Wilson / Music Supplement

26 Lindsay Kemp / Burnt Wreckage, Sculpture / Lumiere & Son / Performance Journeys

27 Silvia Ziranek / Philip Glass / Fashion / Camp Art / Ddart / John Stalin

28 Derek Jarman / Kenneth Anger / African Magic / Performance Artists from Outer Space / Carnival

29 Gilbert & George / Ideal Home, Crufts, Boat Show / Freud & Performance / Bellringing

30 Molissa Fenley / Images of Deviancy / The Wooster Group / Adult Puppetry

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55+ EDGE 88 Special / Articles by Dan Cameron / Sylvia Eiblmayr / Steven Durland / Gray Watson

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58+ Fluxus / Arte Povera / Situationism / Marie-Jo Lafontaine / New Dance

59+ Carolee Schneeman / Performance Art & Opera / Beuys & Abramović-Ulay / Cage & Kantor

60* Beckett's Last Works / Theatre in Poland / Tim Brennan / Voice and Shadow / Dance and Language

61+ Richard Foreman / Jeff Koons / Goat Island / Erotic Films by Women / Ecstasy

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