

**The Artist as Subject in Creative *Stasis* and *Drasis*,  
Explored through Performative Subjectivity  
in Media Art and Diary Practice**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the London Institute for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This PhD research was made possible through the generous support of The London Institute,  
The Arts and Humanities Research Board and the State Scholarship Foundation of Greece (IKY).

# The Artist as Subject in Creative *Stasis* and *Drasis*, Explored through Performative Subjectivity in Media Art and Diary Practice

a PhD thesis  
by Angeliki Avgitidou

## Abstract

This research began as an investigation of the artist's subjectivity within the process of creating art. The focus of the research was the state of *stasis*, experienced by the artist as absence of action and nothingness.

Reflexive methodology and autobiography were chosen as the basic epistemological and methodological approaches in order to fulfil the framework, questions and needs of this research. Diaries and Meta-Diaries as tools of the methodological approach were significant in the understanding of the artist's subjectivity and its manifestation in the written document. Diary entries were treated as instances of subjectivity rather than symptoms of the truth of the subject. I referred to diaries as part of a 'diary practice' which is inclusive of the time not writing in the diary. Additionally diaries developed an exchange with the artist's practice, became part of the concerns of this research and finally became part of the practice as much as a way of exploring it.

*Stasis* was examined through diary practice and artworks and its characteristics were mapped out. These characteristics were uncertainty, frustration and anticipation of action for the subject. The artist's own diaries and works were examined within the contemporary artistic and theoretical context to determine the strategies the artist adopts to escape *stasis*. These strategies were initially determined as:

Repetition creating a refuge for the subject;  
Submission to *arkhê* as a way of providing continuity and  
The creation of a network of complicity as an affirmation of existence.

*Drasis*, a Greek concept the meaning of which includes both 'act' and the 'performance', was adopted to describe the strategy by which the *eventisation* of *stasis* is performed. In *drasis* the focus of my artwork would become *stasis* and not action. Through *drasis* the *eventisation* of *stasis* was carried out, marking a strategy of the artist in *stasis*. *Drasis*, a strategy for the artist as subject in *stasis*, is, together with the creative work, my main contribution to knowledge in this research.

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## NOTE FOR READING THE THESIS

Quotes from my written diaries are in Times New Roman font and italics with preserved grammar and spelling errors. For example:

*I still think I can remember important thoughts and there is a second side to that. I think that if something is not important enough I will forget it.*

Quotes from my Meta-Diaries are in Arial font and italics with preserved grammar and spelling errors. For example:

*Surely completely stripping the texts of their materiality was not possible (for example my handwriting could reveal to me things about my mood). What was important in this procedure was what I hoped to find out: new associations between my remarks, not the ones I was making at the time but hidden connections I was not aware of when I was writing. There might be a remark whose relevance I was unsure of when I was writing it that could trigger this association. What I hoped for in my retrospective reading of my writings was a revelatory moment that everything would connect.*

Quotes from *Video Diary 2* are in Arial font and italics within single quotes. For example:

*'I was quite eager to collect everything I had thought about and everything I had started to design as a project or to draw ... I don't (know) how to say, how to describe this activity happening before you actually start doing something. I wanted to do this because I wanted to concentrate my mind but also I had this sort of fluid idea about what it was that I was actually doing all this time, how much was it, how many projects had I felt that I was doing.'*

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Aim of the research**

The aim of this research was to examine the experience of making art as a process through which the subjectivity of the artist is constructed. Specifically I have examined the process of creating art and the subjective states of the artist within this process through the dynamic mapping of my artworks and diaries.

#### **1.2 PhD elements**

This PhD has been conducted through practice-based research. It was based on the fine art practice of the researcher carried out throughout the course of the PhD. Thus, the final thesis consists of this written part and the media artworks and diaries included in the end of this document and in the DVD-Rom. These artworks are by no way illustrative of the text but rather the text in relation to the artworks constitutes a linked narrative.

#### **1.3 Research into subjective states**

There is extensive research into subjectivity being carried out by cognitive scientists and philosophers of the mind. They understand subjectivity as a constitutive element of consciousness, that is nonetheless susceptible to scientific examination (Searle, 2000). John Searle asks questions like 'how do brain processes cause conscious states?' and 'how are these states realised in the brain structures?' Thomas Nagel is also concerned with exploring the connection between the physical and the mental (1998), while Daniel Dennett attests that consciousness can be explained through objective science (2003). My research has a different domain, focus and methodology, dictated by the context of fine art practice. My aim and intention was to find a methodology that was appropriate for the particular process and analysis of this practice-based research. My interest in subjectivity and more accurately subjectification is not based on questions such as 'how do we experience what we experience' but 'rather 'what is it that we think we



experience?’ and ‘what part does it play in our idea about who we are?’ In this way my approach to subjectivity is through art practice itself but as a field that can be explored and examined through a methodology, language and critical approach that are closely allied to this practice. So rather than an interest in the connections between the physiological and the phenomenological my research examines the phenomenological with the view ultimately of contributing to an epistemology of practice.

#### **1.4 Background to the research**

The aims of the research have been modified since the research proposal stage. In the beginning the project was proposed as an examination of the ways in which the experience of employing computer technology during the creative process might affect the artist’s subjectivity. As included in the research proposal the aim was:

To use practical and theoretical research to investigate the way in which characteristics of computer aided art (c.a.a.) may affect the relationship between artist and artwork and consequently the way the artist perceives him/herself.

The PhD proposal charted the specific characteristics of computer-aided art: the non-materiality of c.a.a, the technologizing of the artistic gesture, the physical distance between artist and artwork (screen as border) and the immediate reversibility of the artistic gesture.

During the course of the research the focus was modified. My main interest shifted from the computer-aided aspect of the research towards the construction of the artist’s subjectivity in the process of creating art. This change was gradually developed through my diary and art practice. The issues that emerged through these parallel practices were taken into account to reassess the original aims of the research. Another aspect of my research that was adjusted was my reference to my practice as computer-aided art. Although a great part of the art produced falls in the category of what is currently described as new media - and all the works went through computer manipulation at one stage or another - I did not consider it essential that all work produced should be computer-related. More specifically, the medium ceased to be the main focus of the research.



During the research my practice was fundamentally discontinuous. In this way I became particularly interested in those moments in the process of creating art when work originates. I recognised my own difficulty in making work as an artistic ‘problem’ faced by other artists and documented in diaries such as those of Franz Kafka. Through this research the state of discontinuity was identified as *stasis* and its characteristics were mapped out. In this way, my interest, developed through diary practice and artworks, shifted towards the process of creating art and the artist as subject-in-process. My own practice was contextualised within the practice of other artists to determine the strategies they adopted within *stasis* in order to contemplate, overcome or escape *stasis*. I adopted the term *drasis* to identify strategies of the artist in *stasis*. The artist’s subjectivity was examined as a negotiation taking place in the tension between *stasis* and *drasis*.

Below I outline the main contents of the following chapters.

## 1.5 Chapters

### 1.5.1. Chapter 2: Methodology.

The main approach for this research has been a self-reflexive methodology. Autobiographical practices were employed as research tools. They included written and video diaries and ‘Meta-diaries’. Meta-diaries were reflections on my diaries and are used in this research as *hypomnēmata*, a Greek concept that has been re-introduced to western philosophy by Michel Foucault. Another tool was *My Artists’ Database*, a record of artists I considered as close to my practice, used during the beginning of the research and indicative of my methodological explorations at that time. After the development of my artworks, artists selected from *My Artists Database* partly formed the contemporary artistic context of this research. This treats the practice of the other artists as an equivalent to the place reference to other texts would have in an exclusively theoretical research.

The Diaries and Meta-diaries were analysed by qualitative methodological analytical tools. Their analysis was further enhanced by comparisons with the historical and contemporary context of diary writing. Methodologically my own practice was perceived within the context of the reflective practitioner (Schön 2002).



### 1.5.2 Chapter 3: Written diaries: Diary practice and the artist's subjectivity.

In the section on written diaries I examine the 5 diaries that were written during the research and investigate the relationship between diaries and the artist's subjectivity. I examine the different functions of the diaries and focus on the idea of the diary as 'autopsy' and the diary as continuity 'tool' (Lejeune 2001). Further examination of my own diaries and comparison with others' diaries reveal the significance of the issues of self-editing, appropriateness, immediacy and truth, and the issue of 'time-freezing'. By the end of this chapter, diaries are reassessed as part of the art practice as well as a way of exploring this practice. 'Diary practice', as defined by Lejeune (1999), for this research included the time when not writing in the diaries. My diaries became intertwined with practice and finally developed into a part of practice as much as a way of exploring it.

### 1.5.3 Chapter 4: Repetition, *archê* and the strategies of the artist as subject in *stasis*.

In this chapter and during the examination of *Video Diary 1* I explore how the still images captured in this diary were images of repetition. They were images in which I either copied the aesthetic and subject matter of media imagery or images in which I recycled my previous artworks (actually copying myself). I later explore how *Video Diary 1* acted as a means of exorcising the experience of the discontinuity of time. The repetition of images transformed these images into 'blank' images. Meaning was instead invested in an act of repetition: the act of capturing the video. In this chapter I also present Hanne Darboven, On Kawara and Yayoi Kusama as a contemporary artistic context in order to try and decipher the different meanings that repetition may hold for them and to discover the connections with *VD1* and the artworks that I subsequently produced. The notion of *arkhê* (from the Greek) with the double meaning of 'beginning' and 'authority' was employed in order to elucidate these connections. My artworks included *Doing It Yourself*, *Art Rules*, *Procrastinator*, *Perfect Day* and *diary01*. The examination of my works within the contemporary artistic context led to the identification of the following strategies of the artist as subject in stasis:



- Repetition creating the refuge for the subject;
- Submission to *arkhê* as provision of continuity and
- Creating a network of complicity as affirmation of existence.

#### 1.5.4 Chapter 5: *Stasis* and *drasis*.

In this chapter I examine the notion of the *event*, demonstrated through my diaries, as crucial in my understanding of the process of making art. In the examination of my diaries it became evident that the 'proper event' was perceived as identical to the interesting event and consequently the important event. The rest of the time not recorded in the diary was experienced as nothingness ie. the absence of what was supposed to be there (Cousins 2000). Discontinuity of action is further examined in this research with the use of my *Never Realised Projects* as documented in my *Video Diary 2*. *Never Realised Projects* were a series of projects that, as their name indicates, were never realised. *Video Diary 2* was an attempt to recover these projects and document them in an attempt to resist loss and re-establish continuity. Freud's concept of sublimation, the work of conceptual artists, and the film *Persona* (1965) by Ingmar Bergman are introduced in an attempt to examine different approaches, manifestations and manipulations of discontinuity.

In the works presented in this chapter I am dealing with the position of the artist in *stasis*. I am immersed in situations of banality (*Self-portrait of the Artist as Banality Queen*), boredom (*A Series of Unnecessary Deaths*, *Self-portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic*) and daydreaming about action (*A Series of Unnecessary Deaths*). *Stasis* then becomes the centre of my attention, and the works are created *about* and *by* the performance of *stasis*. I also present the works of other artists that produce work by creating 'a mock anthropology of selfhood' (Durden: 2002); this has the effect of investing the everyday and the banal with meaning by putting it at the centre of scientific attention.

In the previously mentioned works I perform the situation I am immersed in: the state of *stasis*. The concept *drasis* involves the meaning of 'performance'. Just as 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action' in performative language (Austin 1975),

*drasis* is the performative expression of an act. Through *drasis* the *event-isation* of *stasis* is carried out, marking a strategy of the artist in *stasis*.

### **1.5.5 Chapter 6: Conclusion.**

In this chapter the strategies of the artist as subject in *stasis* and *drasis* are explicitly reviewed. My main contribution to knowledge in this field is the establishment of the concepts of *drasis* and *stasis* as an exploration of their relationship in art practice.

## **1.6 Issues negotiated throughout the course of the research.**

### **1.6.1 Artist / Researcher.**

Describing the work after it has been completed or rather describing the process of developing the work has been an awkward situation for me as an artist. Either as a method of saving memory space in my mind's 'hard drive' or as a defence mechanism against the emotional distress that remembering parts of the process can cause, I had previously tended to forget this process. The 'final product' would become the artwork and the memory of how it was developed would be forgotten.

However, recalling, describing and analysing is a crucial part of a researcher's work and this is what I set out to do in this research. At times, during the course of this project, the artist / researcher divide was experienced more acutely. At one stage I feared that my reluctance to keep track of change in a documented form recognisable by others (eg. diary entries) would seriously endanger the continuation of the research. At other times I felt that testing and documenting as I had proposed to do was affecting the artistic production in a negative way (for example it was making me too self-conscious of my actions). This constant negotiation became a part of the research process and at times even constituted the subject matter of the research.



### 1.6.2 Past Self - Present Self.

During the analysis it proved quite crucial to maintain the diaries and *Meta-diaries* in the condition that they were created, in the light of the importance that any moment in the process may hold. Clifford Geertz, in the Preface to his influential book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1993, 1973<sup>1</sup>) notes how our constant striving for improvement can have an effect on the accurate portrayal of our 'past self'.

To try to find the figure in the carpet of one's own writings can be as chilling as trying to find it in one's own life; to weave, *post facto*, a figure in - 'this is what I *meant* to say' - is an intense temptation (vii).

In chapter three I describe how the article 'Performing Subjectivity' written for the CADE conference (2001), was my attempt to 'improve' *Meta-Diary 2* into a *Meta-Diary 3* ('this is what I *meant* to say' ...). In this improvement exercise the uncertainties that run through *Meta-Diary 2* were assessed as a danger to the more detailed examinations that might have existed in the same text. It was not until later in the research that I realised that a state of uncertainty was not a state to be overcome but a valid state for the artist as subject-in-process.

I would additionally like to acknowledge the temptation to make a 'good story' out of this research, especially the temptation to leave out works or arguments that did not quite fit with my main argument. I am aware of how inappropriate this might be for any research. However it would be particularly inappropriate for research which focused on process and its discontinuities. Process and its discontinuities are examined in the following chapters starting, in chapter three, with the manifestation of discontinuity in the written diaries.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Introduction

Reflexive methodology and autobiography have been chosen as the basic epistemological and methodological approach in order to fulfil the framework, questions and needs of this research. My analysis has been based on a qualitative analytical approach as introduced by Miles and Huberman (1994). My methodological tools have included five written diaries, two video diaries and what I have called *My Artists' Database*. In my analysis I relate my own practice to the contemporary art context. The following is a description of the methodology and a general presentation of the methods employed.

My employment of diaries and the focus of my research on autobiography forced me to pay attention to self-reflexive qualitative research methods. According to Giddens (1984), self-reflexivity is one of the main characteristics of modern individuals and thus constitutes a crucial aspect in research methodology. The question of self-reflexivity has been taken into serious consideration by anthropologists more than by other social scientists. Among the various disciplines, Social Anthropology was early in acknowledging the fact that the researcher is located 'inside' the research project. This has been the result of developments occurring in anthropological ethnographic research during the last decades (Clifford and Marcus 1986).

In order to explain my role in the research process I will outline the recent methodological ethnographic concerns arising from the work of social anthropologists. I will continue by examining reflexivity and autobiography as key elements of my methodology. Finally, I will present the diaries as the basic method of my research and I will discuss the process of analysing them to come up with my research results. Further methodological concepts are also developed in later chapters.



## 2.2 The researcher researched

Charlotte Aull Davies notes that, until recently, researchers assumed that what is being examined is 'outside' ourselves (1990: 3). This was the result of evolutionary positivism as it developed since the Enlightenment. The position that the researcher is 'outside' the research was contested within the western scientific community of the 1920s at the moment that Werner Heisenberg, a quantum mechanics physicist, presented the *Uncertainty Principle*. According to the *Uncertainty Principle* a subject matter cannot be observed 'objectively' as, in the act of observing (recording) it, the observer impacts upon it. Nevertheless, as Davies notes, researchers have found it difficult to reconcile themselves with this situation, opting instead to alienate a part of themselves. Introducing the self into the analysis and taking into consideration the multiple relationships between researcher and researched lead to alternative writing methodologies. In the case of ethnography, researchers, even when they are their own key informants, commonly find their ethnographic self engaged in a process of 'othering' their social self. For example, Clifford and Marcus (1986), Church (1995), Murphy (1987), Seremetakis (1991) and Panourgia (1995) all explicitly report how in different guises, they were using their professional selves to deny or isolate their other selves. However as Davies stresses

... it is precisely in this process of interaction between ethnographer as self and ethnographer as other that social knowledge of general interest and significance is produced (189).

An idea that was useful to me as part of the effort to negotiate my research and personal selves in the process of conducting my research comes from the work of Neni Panourgia. In her own research *Fragments of Death, Fables of Identity: An Athenian Anthropography* (1995) Neni Panourgia examines the death of her grandfather from an anthropological perspective and includes her own personal account of the event. The way she negotiates this double position in the text is by dividing each page in two, allocating the bottom to her 'researcher voice' and the top to her 'personal voice' for whom she invents a different name. Her personal account of events is titled 'Thanatos' (a reference to the Greek word for death but also a reference to this word as used in the psychoanalytic theory of Freud) and her analysis 'Parerga' (meaning -in Greek- a piece of work which is done alongside the main work).



## 2.3 Reflexive methodology

As Alvesson and Sköldberg point out, 'self-examination and self-reflection are to some extent ingredients in all research' (2001: 243). They stress that, rather than establishing 'truths', reflexive methodology *opens up* an understanding.

Reflection (reflexivity) is thus above all a question of recognising fully the notoriously ambivalent relation of a researcher's text to the realities studied. Reflection means interpreting one's own interpretations, looking at one's own perspectives from other perspectives, and turning a self-critical eye onto one's own authority as interpreter and author (vii).

For Davies

Reflexivity, broadly defined means a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference. In the context of social research, reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research (*ibid.* 4).

What Alvesson and Sköldberg refer to as 'the relation of a researcher's text to the realities studied' is further complicated in the case of this research where the subject of the research is actually the researcher's actions and the researcher as subject. There are two critical points frequently made against self-reflexive methodology. One is that it is narcissistic, thus distancing the researcher from the 'proper' research subject, and the other is that, by engaging in an autobiographical method, the researcher aligns herself with the tradition of the autobiography of 'great' men (Davies *ibid.*).

### 2.3.1 The issue of narcissism

The potential dangers of 'self-absorption' in a reflexive study have been frequently discussed (Alvesson & Sköldberg *op. cit.*, Davies *op. cit.*, Morse 1994). Self-reflexive research has been accused of being narcissistic. Narcissus, in Greek mythology, was a beautiful young man who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool and died of sorrow when his love was not returned. In the myth his scorn for his admirers isolates him and his self-love finally destroys him. The failure of Narcissus to 'reach a "real" self' is where Jeffrey Mehlman (1974) detects the failure of autobiography, as quoted by Susan Stanford (Stanford 1988: 37). Not only might the researcher take on insignificant,



irrelevant or even unscientific issues because of an indulgent self-absorption, but also by doing so she may destroy herself. Thus narcissism becomes connected with loss and even death (*Thanatos*). In my own practice the connection of self-reflexivity with loss and death became part of the subject of my artwork in pieces such as *A Series of Unnecessary Deaths* (included in chapter five).

Within my own research I have frequently experienced a feeling of 'going around in circles' which the conditions of isolation during my research accentuated. The ambivalence in my own research towards the positions of researcher and subject matter, and the positions of researcher as artist have, to a great extent, defined the subject matter of the research and the ways in which it was negotiated. In the course of this research methodological decisions acquired importance beyond their role as research tools. They actually developed into part of the subject matter of the research.

### 2.3.2 Autobiography as method

Returning to the second criticism that using self-reflexive methodology as autobiography the researcher would put herself in the context of the autobiography of the 'great' men, Meskimmon notes

Conventionally, then, autobiography shows obvious biases towards the celebration of "great men" and towards a particular version of history, narrative chronology and mimetic representation and historical truth (1996: 66).

Susan Stanford adds that through 'the emphasis on individualism' implicit in it, autobiography has alienated marginalised groups which have been historically denied the privilege of individualism (1988: 39). However autobiographical practices have been adopted by marginalised groups especially with connection to *visibility politics*. Autobiographical practices have included art, and more specifically the self-portrait. The connection between self-portraiture and autobiography has already been made in the past in reference to individual artists or artist's groups<sup>1</sup>. Phelan notes that 'within the diverse genre of autobiography the real is considered the motivation for self-representation' (1993: 3). Self-portraiture in terms of autobiography is a self-exploration as much as it is a self-representation. Gallop describes in her book *Thinking through the*



*body* how she is thinking *through* autobiography (Gallop 1988). Self-portraiture becomes the visual equivalent of the thinking through, the search for the 'real me': *I see/show myself in order to find out who/how I am.*

The key to this exploration of the self is that there is not one fixed self to find. Artists have taken up this notion to produce self-portraits that explore, act out, or perform the self. It is not unexpected that artists who come from 'marginalised' groups, women, gays, and lesbians have embraced this genre. Self-portraiture has played a role in visibility politics as *a visual statement of: 'I exist.'* Besides this, the self-portrait proved the perfect medium for the exploration of an identity socially and culturally stereotyped. These groups appropriated their stereotypical image and used it in order to subvert its meanings<sup>2</sup>. Meskimmon sums this up for women artists:

Women artists over the course of the twentieth century have challenged simple psychobiography in the form of serial self-portraiture, subverted easy "historical" or "biographical" accuracy, queried the significance of mimesis and revealed the ways in which their "selves" were the products of shifting social constructs and definitions of "woman" (Meskimmon 1996: 73).

Examples of the examination of stereotypical identities through self-portraiture in contemporary art are Mark Wallinger's 'Passport Control'<sup>3</sup> (1998) in which he paints stereotypical characteristics of race over passport photos of himself; Yong Soon Min's 'Make Me'<sup>4</sup> (1989) in which she presents photographs of herself with overlapping writings like 'Assimilated Other'; and Alex Bag's '6<sup>th</sup> Semester Art School Girl'<sup>5</sup> (1995), a fictional video diary in which she performs a female student at the School of Visual Arts in different stages in her study, but also in her mentality and the language she adopts. Self-portrait in the context of autobiography was used in my own practice to explore narratives of subjectivity and belonging; see for example *Parallel Lives*.

## 2.4 Methods

### 2.4.1 Diaries

Diaries have been extensively used by writers and artists. On some occasions they have been used as a starting point for works (Louise Bourgeois) and for others they have



mainly included thoughts and ideas about the artist's everyday life (Franz Kafka, Frida Kalho).

Newbury notes that the research diary's purpose 'is not primarily about the communication of research to others' (2003) but about the facilitation of the research process. He points out that the value of the research diary is that it does not exclude observations that may appear to be of no immediate theoretical value.

My own diaries were initially proposed as a tool for autobiography as method. Being an artist engaging in academic research, my diaries were not entirely part of either discipline. In the *Exchange 2000* conference (UWE, Watershed Bristol), while I was two years into my research, I made a presentation called 'The secret diaries of the artist: Fraud or fiction?' My ambivalence towards the role they held in my research was demonstrated in my preoccupation with issues such as 'what should be included in the diary?' Such concerns led me to further investigate what inclusion and exclusion in diaries signified for the subject and to define the notion of the *event* for this research.

In the end the diaries were neither research diaries nor artists' diaries. Moreover as I explain in the next chapter diaries are not perceived as documents but as practice (according to Lejeune 2000), with the visual or written document being a part of this practice. Additionally for this research diaries developed from a methodological concern into an element of my art practice. Connections are more evident in my works such as *Perfect Day*, *diary01* and *Portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic*.

## Written Diaries

In my research there were four written diaries and the *Show Book*. The first written diary was the *Mirage Diary*. Three of them I call the *Red Books* (because of the colour of their cover). They are the *Better Write Book*, the *Response Book* and the *Plan-a-Day Book*. The last 'written diary' was the *Show Book*. This specific diary was closer to the idea of the diary as sketchbook, that is a book that includes preliminary ideas about projects. It contained written notes, photographs, cut outs from the press and other printed matter. Written diaries are extensively presented in the next chapter.

## Video Diaries

Included in this research are two video diaries. *Video Diary 1 (VD1)* contained captured still images, each also including 7 seconds of audio, and live action video recordings. *VD1* was used as 'a way of experiencing time' and is extensively presented in chapter four. *Video Diary 2 (VD2)* was shot in my work/living space. Here I captured the surrounding space including notes for projects, pictures and sketches on the wall etc. while also trying to explain the projects and the process of working. Whilst recording *Video Diary 2* I was also writing in the *Red Books* about the experience of recording and contemplating in parallel the issues of *VD2*. In this way I attempted to offer an alternative account of events and take advantage of the different qualities that the written diary held. *VD2* is presented in chapter five.

### 2.4.2 The Meta-Diaries (MDs)

In addition to the five written and two video diaries there were two *Meta Diaries*: *Meta Diary 1* (end date: 1/3/2000) and *Meta Diary 2* (end date: 1/6/2000). *Meta-Diaries* were reflections on my diaries. In writing them I tried to decipher the diaries and the process of writing in them. There is a diary-like element to *MDs* in that they present my views on the diaries at the time that they were written. In this way they provide some insight into how I was thinking about the diaries as well as the process of working. I treat these texts in the same way that I have treated diary texts: When I review or quote them I do not change their wording or correct the grammar or spelling. *MD 2* is more extensive than *MD1*. In *MD2* there exist my first attempts to discuss the subject in process within the production of art and the diary writing.

### 2.4.3 *My Artists' Database* and other artists' works

*My Artists' Database* was an archive of artists' works that I started close to the beginning of my research. The Database consisted of files each one of them representing one artist/work. Except for the illustration or short video of the work (if available at all) the file included the following fields:



- 'Artist' (the name of the artist);
- 'Artwork' (the title of the artwork);
- 'Year' (the year the artwork was produced);
- 'Media' (the medium of the artwork);
- 'Reference' (the bibliographical reference of the artwork and text written in 'text');
- 'Library' (the reference number in the library that the reference was retrieved from);
- 'Page' (the page of the reference);
- 'Category 1' (a general category that I had chosen for the artwork, ex. artworks, digital art);
- 'Category 2' ( a different categorisation, sometimes overlapping with category 1, that connected to the areas of my research, ex. self-portrait);
- 'Connect to' (how the artwork related to the concerns that emerged from my research, ex. authenticity, rejection);
- 'My Comments' (any specific observation on the artwork that I wanted to keep track of);
- Empty text field (a text field for any textual bibliographical reference on the work).

During the development of *My Artists' Database* I had also made a more extensive archive called Visual Data with image files of artworks that intrigued me or I felt were connected to my research. I would periodically go through *My Artists' Database*, at times using a keyword, looking for connections with other artists' works, or for inspiration or comparison.

It has to be noted that *My Artists' Database* is specific to a particular period at the beginning of the research. It is presented here not as an exhaustive research on the artists that could potentially inhabit it but as an indication of the nature and method of enquiry that I had adopted at that specific time. My treatment of certain artists in greater depth within the thesis is thus more central to my methodology than the *Artists' Database* which represents more the *process* of seeking and defining a methodology.

The use in my research and this thesis of other art practitioners' works displaying similar manipulation of concepts or similar subject matter to my own was in order to understand my own practice and its critical context. I have treated the practice of the other artists as an equivalent to the place reference to other texts would have in an exclusively

theoretical research. After the examination of other artists’ work the key issues of my own research became clearer.

2.5 Analysing the Diaries

Each diary form was examined separately, then categories established. These were cross-checked in order to determine similarities and subsequently to identify the important groups (key issues) for analysis. Initially extracts from the written diaries were isolated in a table column. A brief description of the ‘issue’ described in the diary was written in the next column under the title ‘Autopsy of extract’. In the third column, under the title ‘General theme’ a further summary of the ‘autopsy’ included my attempt at coding.

Table 1. Coding example with extracts of the *Mirage Diary*.

Diary Extract	Autopsy of extract	General theme
<i>Why (keep a diary)? For you, for others to record when you're famous?</i>	Purpose of the diary	Purpose of diary
<i>Do people really write in the manner that they appear to exist/ lead their lives?</i>	Truthfulness of diary entries:	Truth
<i>Sometimes I think I can contain everything in my mind without having to write or invent a symbol to remind me ...</i>	Necessity of the diary: Do I have to write it down?	Importance of documentation

According to Miles and Huberman

Coding is analysis. To review a set of field notes, transcribed or synthesized, and to dissect them meaningfully, while keeping the relations between the parts intact, is the stuff of analysis. This part of analysis involves how you differentiate and combine the data you have retrieved and the reflections you make about this information (1994: 56).



Although Morse suggests that the four processes of analysis (comprehending, synthesising, theorising, and recontextualising) can only be done sequentially (Morse 1994: 26) in my research this process was non-linear and at times overlapping.

## 2.6 The Reflective practitioner

Throughout this research I developed a number of artworks. I have concentrated on the process of creating these artworks and documented this process through my diaries. Donald Schön has developed the term 'reflective practitioner' as an approach to an epistemology of practice (2002). He states

When we go about the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life, we show ourselves to be knowledgeable in a special way. ... Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is *in* our action (49).

He suggests that practice is not only an arena where knowledge is put in action but a process through which knowledge is generated. The practitioner questions, criticises and tries to understand his decisions and actions. Schön develops his idea of 'reflection-in-action' to demonstrate 'the "art" by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict' (*ibid.* 50). My examination of my own practice has been partly based on the idea of the *reflective practitioner* and the notion of practice as a way of discovering questions and understanding and developing theories.

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the connection between autobiography and the self-portrait see Marsha Meskimmon's *The Art of Reflection* (1996).

<sup>2</sup> For examples of this type of self-portraiture see works by Claude Cahun, Della Grace, Jürgen Klauke and others. Also see: Bate, D. 1994. *Claude Cahun 1894-1954: The Mise en Scène of Desire*. Exhibition catalogue. London: ICA.

<sup>3</sup> *Passport Control*, 1988, colour photographs, six parts, each 132X101.5 cm. Published in Wallinger, M. 1995. *Mark Wallinger*. Exhibition catalogue. Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, London: Serpentine Gallery, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Make Me*, 1989, sequence of photographs. Published in Chicago, J. Smith E. L. 1999. *Women and Art: Contested Territory*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 180.

<sup>5</sup> *Fall 95*, 1995, colour video. Published in Goldberg R. 1998. *Performance: Live Art since the 60s*. London: Thames & Hudson, p. 206.



CHAPTER 3  
WRITTEN DIARIES: DIARY PRACTICE AND THE ARTIST’S SUBJECTIVITY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce describe and analyse the written diaries. In examining the written diaries I was interested in finding out the way that written diaries were eventually used in this research and the role they held. More specifically I wanted to find out:

- How was my subjectivity demonstrated in the written diaries?
- What role did the diaries have in the construction of my subjectivity?
- What was their connection with practice and the research in general?

During the analysis of the written diaries a number of issues emerged as significant and subsequently these issues shifted the focus of the analysis. Some of them, such as the preoccupation with time, continuity and *arkê* are also explored in the following chapters.

During this research I produced four written and two video diaries. Additionally I produced the *Show Book*, which started as a written entry but developed towards what is typically considered a sketchbook<sup>1</sup>. The written diaries were the *Mirage<sup>2</sup> Diary* and the *Red Books* (3). Video Diaries were *Video Diary 1* (VD1) and *Video Diary 2* (VD2). *Mirage Diary* was the first diary written. Absolute chronological sequence cannot be established, as I have, at times, been writing in different diaries simultaneously. In addition to the diaries mentioned there were two Meta-Diaries: *Meta-Diary 1* (MD1) and *Meta-Diary 2* (MD2).



Figure 1. The *Mirage Diary*.



Figure 2. A page from *Show Book*.



Figure 3. The *Better Write Book*



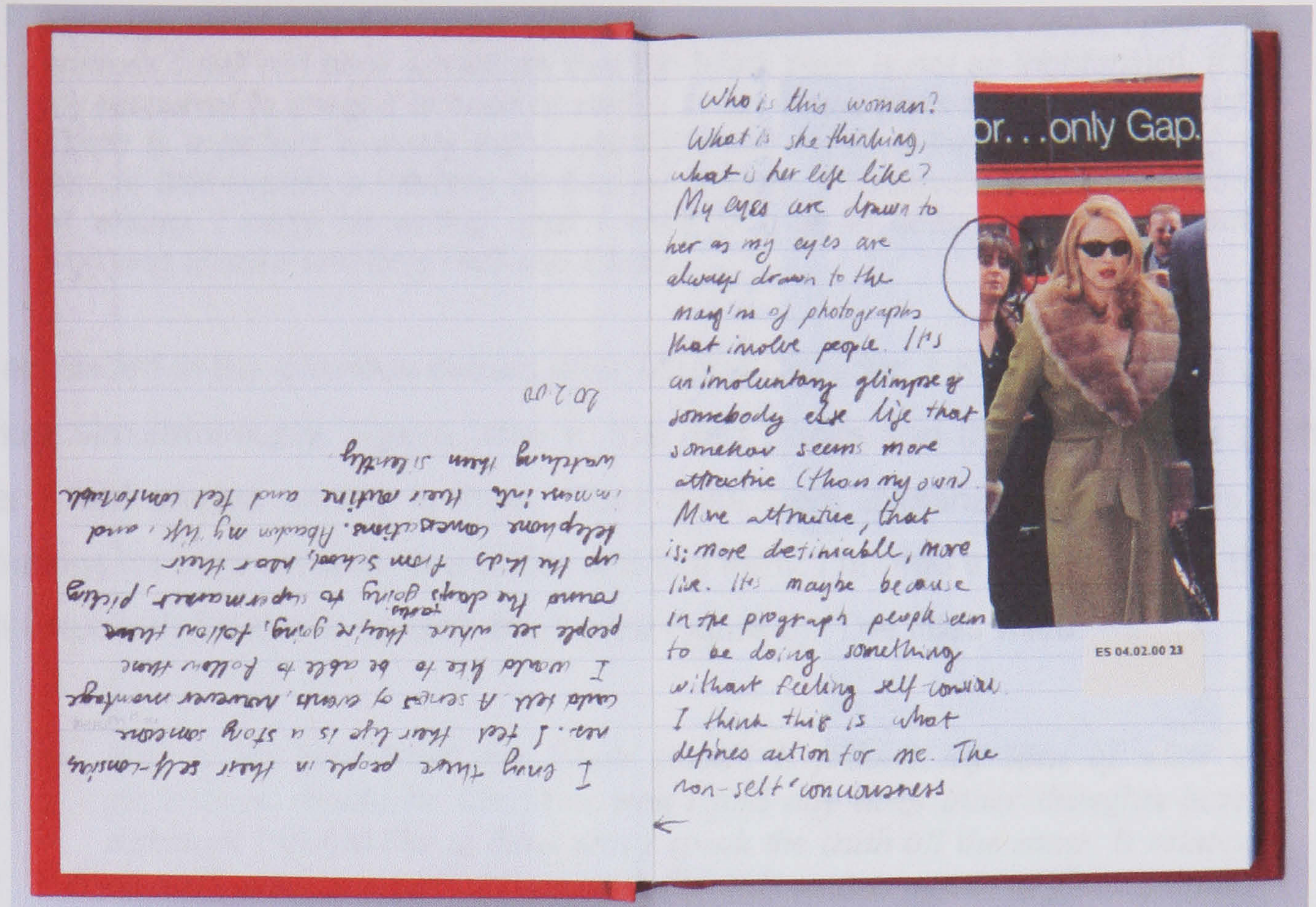


Figure 4. A two-page spread from the *Response Book*.

### 3.2 Description of the written diaries

*Mirage Diary* was the first written for this research. This diary is the most uniform, in that it contains only written entries, with similar appearance and each clearly distinguishable from the other. Here is a description of how I started the *Mirage Diary* from MD1:

*Intending to write a diary. A diary to include general remarks about my artwork or just general remarks. I choose an unusually shaped booklet seeking to intrigue myself into writing.*

In the same text I explain how after *Video Diary 1* (what I was at the time referring to as 'Dated Image Collection') there was a gap in the writing.

*There is a gap after the application of 'dated image collection'. No writing. I buy a new book -a small red one. I start by writing down what it is that I thought I was going to do. A few pages and then again nothing. After about three weeks I write a few quotes with capital letters, not really a text, with the title 'Frustration'. I carry on to write short thoughts about theories, writing, nihilism. They are all in capital letters and each statement has a different page. There is no intention of creating a coherent text. I find that liberating. But now I want to write more;*



*although about different things. Somehow they do not fit into this book. I pick up another small red book (small, so that the blank page is not so frightening). It's my response to images or book of stories book. These texts are more coherent. There is a picture in every entry, usually a cut out from the national press, a picture that evokes a memory an emotion a story. This develops into a method of writing. I carry on writing what I want to write in different books without worrying about if and how I will use it later.*

As explained in the previous extract after *Mirage Diary* the 3 Red Books were written, almost simultaneously. I gave titles to the Red Books and the Show Book a while after I had started writing in them. Their titles were explanatory sentences of my intentions for their content, in a statement-like form. I printed these titles in a title box that I stuck on the cover of each book (see Figure 3). The titles were:

- *This is the first book, my 'Show Book'. It follows my idea of what a sketchbook should be like. You won't find any deep inner thoughts here although I would like to think that I speak the truth all the same. It relates directly to my practice and research (?) and consists mostly of photographs.*
- *This is my 'Better write about it than go mad Book'. I put down my preoccupations in the form of notes, which I might later develop into something more if I find it worthwhile but would rather not think about it while I am writing them.*
- *This is my 'Response to pictures or Great expectations Book'. It doesn't seem to relate directly to my research but I have a secret hope that a remarkable idea is lurking in its pages or that maybe I will discover some truth about my work if I read it retrospectively.*
- *This is intended to be my 'Plan-a-day' book but God knows what will become of it.*

In this thesis I refer to these Books with the following concise titles, respectively:

- *Show Book*
- *Better Write Book*
- *Response Book*
- *Plan-a-Day Book*

At the bottom of the title box of each Book I had printed the word 'Disclosability:' followed by a gap which I had intended to fill with the degree of disclosability of the particular diary to others. This was actually never done.



### 3.3 Presenting the diaries: from classification to *de-reading*

In preparing this thesis my initial thoughts were to present the diaries in groups that would be determined by the uniformity in their appearance and the way in which their content was displayed. From this rationale, *Mirage Diary* and *Red Books* would be presented together as written diaries, *Show Book*, which was one of a kind would be presented alone and *Video Diaries 1* and *2* jointly.

I became aware that classifying my diaries for presentation and analysis purposes would come to represent a judgement on their content. During this research I discovered that categorising diary entries is a common problem for editors of diary anthologies. This led me to review a number of historical incidences of the diary form. Thomas Mallon in *A Book of One's Own* (1995) distinguishes between diarists using the following categories: *Chroniclers*, *Travellers*, *Pilgrims*, *Creators*, *Apologists*, *Confessors* and *Prisoners*. Ronald Blythe in *Each Returning Day: The Pleasure of Diaries* (1989) lays them in groups according to the situation in which the diarist is immersed: *The Diarist as Eye-Witness*, *The Diarist in Love*, *The Diarist as Artist* and *The Diarist in Despair* are some of them. Cynthia Huff in *British Women's Diaries: A Descriptive Bibliography of Selected Nineteenth Century Women's Manuscript Diaries* (1985) develops a detailed code that designates the social class of the diarists, the profession of the head of their household and the date the diaries first appeared<sup>3</sup>.

Simon Brett specifies in *The Faber Book of Diaries* (1989) that, although he realises that diaries can be classified in multiple ways, categorisation does not necessarily add to the pleasure of reading them or their understanding. He accounts for his own attempt at categorisation in his *Introduction* in the same book.

As my collection of suitable entries grew, I experimented with various methods of layout. I quickly rejected the dire predictability of year-by-year chronology. I tried categorizing the material by subject matter, filing entries under 'Spiritual life', 'Weather Reports', 'Illness', 'Sex', and so on. But I found that almost every entry deserved its own heading and rather than helping the reader, the expanding categorization would only serve to confuse. I toyed with breaking the material down by the professions of diarists – 'Clergymen', 'Writers', 'Courtiers', 'Politicians', but I soon ran into the same problem (Brett 1987: ix).

Eventually, Brett decided to include the entries in the form of a calendar year, each entry put in a 'slot' according to the date it was written thus creating a diary of diaries.



Taylor and Taylor adopted the same manner of categorisation for their anthology *The Assassin's Cloak: An Anthology of the World's Greatest Diarists* (2000).

As I mentioned above I had initially thought of presenting my diaries based on their form. At a later stage in my research, while analysing my own diaries, I observed associations between diaries and stages in the art process causing a change in my initial thoughts on their presentation, mentioned in the beginning of this section. These observations became evident after analysing *Video Diary 1* and part of the written diaries. It surfaced that certain diaries such as *VD1* had a connection with a certain period in the process of art-production and consequently a certain state of subjectivity. However, there were subjects or themes that arose across the written diaries. During *coding* the diary entries, groups of subjects started emerging from the coded texts. As an indication of the significance of one such subject I would take the following factors into account:

- The repetition of a subject in different entries;
- Whether it assisted the revelation of the process of my thinking or the strategies which I tested, what is referred to as 'implied meaning' in qualitative analysis (Morse, 1994) and
- Whether it revealed connections with the production of artworks what is referred to as 'linkages to other concepts or contexts' (Morse *ibid.*)

I eventually decided to concentrate on 'content' rather than form and present the diaries based on the subjects which emerged from them. The process I went through, that is my journey from a generalised perception of 'categories of diaries' to a reading of the diaries determined by the particularities of its 'content', is referred to by Cynthia Huff as *de-reading*.

This whole notion of resistance gets in the way of reading women's manuscript diaries inductively - letting the material determine the reading strategies to assume. Instead of a first reading or a re-reading of a text, *de-reading* must occur as one first opens a diary and is confronted by a text radically different, radically heterogeneous (2000: 507).

What follows in this chapter is an exploration of the subjects that emerged from my diaries and an investigation of the role the diaries had in the construction of my subjectivity during the process of this research.



### 3.4 Diary entries and subjectivity: diary writing as understanding

Towards the end of the research I examined the written diaries in order to consider the different subject positions that I adopted within the art process. Although the diary entries were viewed as indications of these different positions, their examination was not based on the assumption that the artist's written testimony is a direct link to the artist's subjectivity. The subject was not perceived as identical to its manifestation, in this case the written document. It was however easy to presume that the clarity of a diary entry could provide a link to a 'knowing' of the subject. In anthologies or articles, diaries are regularly referred to as 'open windows' to this 'true self'. Moreover, the pleasure from reading other people's diaries seems to be based on the assumption that the documented self in the text is the 'true self'. Indeed my own preconceptions of the connection between diaries and self were demonstrated in the *Mirage Diary* where I coupled the verisimilitude of a diary entry with narratives of self-criticism and self-deprecation.

*It's such a pleasure reading other people's diaries though. Edited or unedited. Their doubts about what they are doing, their fear that they write absolute shit or that they are absolutely worthless, their contempt for themselves - I know it all sounds negative but it is more (these kind of things that) make names seem human than (writings of) success and euphoria (first entry).*

Franz Kafka comments on the impossibility of transferring the 'inner self' in writings when he contemplates the inability to match 'feelings' and 'letters'. He contests that our ability to comprehend others from their writings is possible only in our limitation of our experience of others to the 'letter' (what they have written about themselves).

If our letters cannot match our own feelings ... then as if in compensation we have been given the ability to comprehend what another person has written with at least the same degree of calm exactitude which we lack when we confront our own letter-writing. Our ignorance of those feelings which alternate make us crumple up and pull open again the letter in front of us, this very ignorance becomes knowledge the moment we are compelled to limit ourselves to this letter, to believe only what it says, and thus to find it perfectly expressed and perfect in expression, as is only right, if we are to see a clear road into what is most human (1982: 134-5).

Although it may be impossible to 'match' 'feelings' and 'letters', to transfer experience in text, writing diaries was for this research beneficial in diverse ways. Writing my diaries has been a way of documenting the process as much as it has been a way of understanding it. Even if my diaries had not been a *transcript of my subjectivity* they were at the time of their writing a way of exploring it. Corbett, while contemplating the



link between autobiography and experience, contests that 'an autobiography is not experience itself – "the real thing" – but a representation of experience' (1992: 8-9). She adds, however, that 'something crucial would be lost by considering autobiographies as "mere" representation.' Joan Scott also cautions against taking experience as 'the origin of knowledge', as 'uncontestable evidence' and as the 'foundation on which analysis is based' (1991: 777). Scott explains

It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced (*ibid*: 779-8).

In this analysis the diaries were not perceived to be a transference of experience, 'the origin' of knowledge. However they have been a means of keeping track of change (the changes in my views, thoughts, interests, etc.) They are used along with Meta-Diaries as the starting point for locating and analysing these changes.

#### **3.4.1 Diary entries and subjectivity: the representation of experience**

In one of my *Red Books* I wrote: '*AT LEAST I'M NOT LYING!*' On the *Mirage Diary* there was another reference to truth/lie: '*Do people really write in the manner that they appear to exist/lead their lives?*' (*Mirage Diary*, 1<sup>st</sup> entry). My disbelief (*do people really...*) may have been a product of the conviction that it is actually possible to transfer your experience to paper 'truthfully'.

On many occasions diaries start with a promise to tell the truth (Brett 1987, Blythe 1991). Timothy Dow Adams, who examines autobiography, a genre related to the diary, cites Shirley Neuman (1981) and attests that 'telling the truth' is not possible.

A promise to tell the truth is one of autobiography's earliest premises. "The assumption that, from his privileged position vis-à-vis himself, the autobiographer will tell the truth," according to Shirley Neuman<sup>4</sup>, is "the most fundamental article of good faith between autobiographer and his readers." As fundamental as truth is to autobiography, modern readers have increasingly come to realize that telling the truth about oneself on paper is virtually impossible (1990: 9).

Meskimmon writes on the issue of the representation of the self in autobiography and explains how a self in transition cannot be the author of conventional autobiography (1996: 67). As a result, not only is it impossible for the subject to



transfer its 'truth' convincingly in its writings but it is not feasible to attempt to 'write' a self in transition.

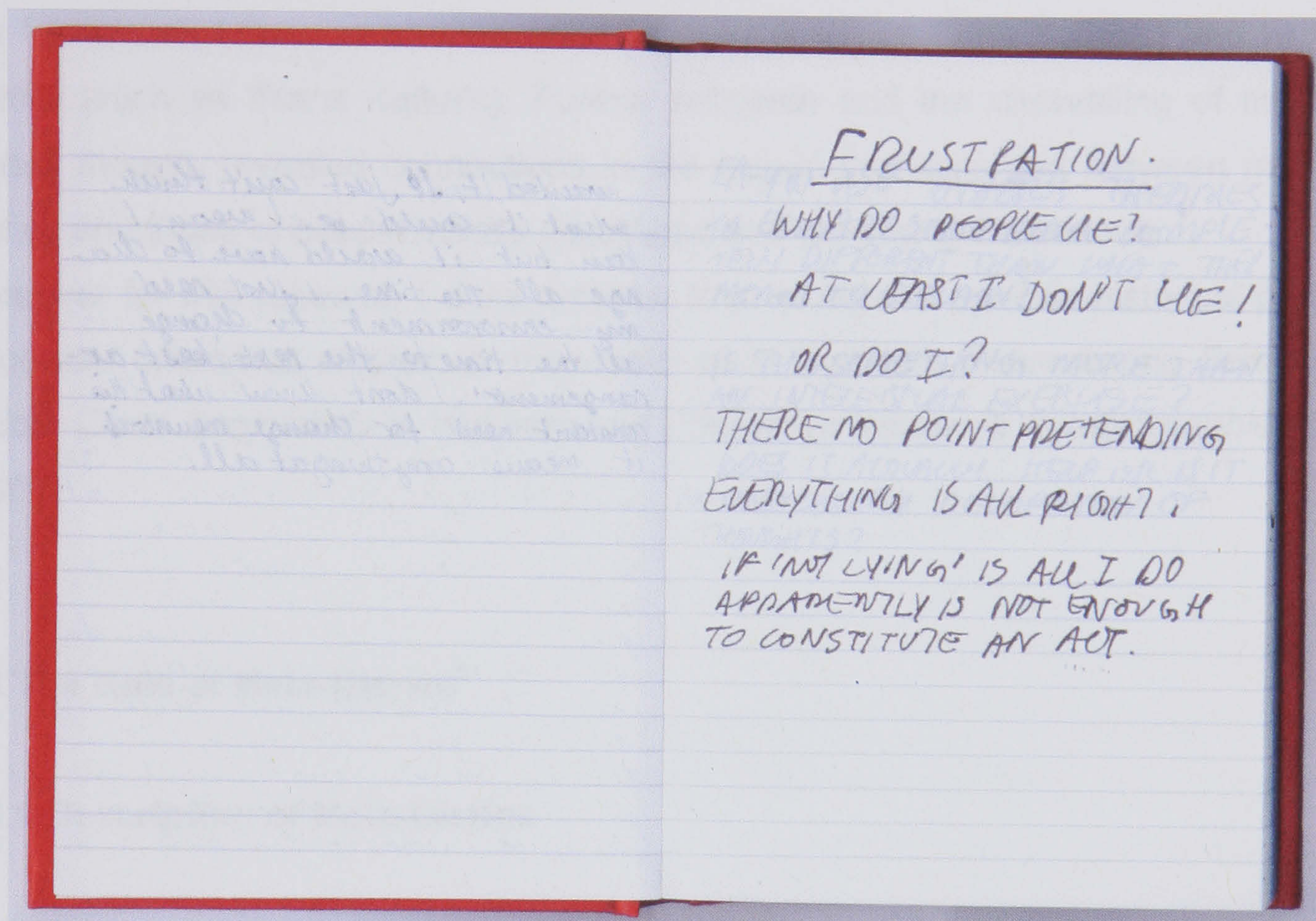


Figure 5. Two-page spread from the *Better Write Book*.

The relationship between lived experience and the documentation of this experience was put into question in the previous section (3.4). In this section we saw that universal truth cannot be expected from a self 'in flux'. Could it then be that the written entry is connected to a specific instance of subjectivity? In this way diary entries would form a trace of the 'becoming' of the subject without compromising the notion of the ever-changing subject. Based on Scott's account that 'it is not individuals who have experience but subjects who are constituted through experience' (1991: 779) I therefore treat my diary entries as an indication of the *becoming* of the subject, instances of subjectivity rather than as symptoms of the truth of the subject.



### 3.5 Elements of the analysis

In this analysis I use my diaries and Meta-Diaries. I also employ extracts from diaries of people from various professional backgrounds - and not exclusively art - published in anthologies of diaries. My first approach had been to read artists' diaries and autobiographies exclusively, with a concession being made for creative writers. In this framework I likewise studied artists' diaries (such as Frida Kalho's) and writers' diaries (such as Franz Kafka's). Further research and the unravelling of my own diaries though, revealed connections in the issues that emerged between my own diaries and those of people across disciplines and chronological periods.

Moreover for this research I drew material from studies of specific historical periods or gender orientated studies (or from both as in Corbett's *Representing Femininity: Middle-Class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women's Autobiographies* from 1992).

### 3.6 The Role of Meta-Diaries<sup>5</sup>

#### 3.6.1 Description of Meta-Diaries

The data collected from the diary entries (usually quotes but also sketches, photographs, etc.) was coded and then compared with Meta-Diaries. Meta-Diaries were texts written in parallel with or after the diaries. They contained my first reflections on the diaries and on the process of keeping them. There were two such Meta-Diaries: *Meta Diary 1 (MD1)* is a collection of texts under the title *Measuring Experience*, dated 1-3-2000 and *Meta Diary 2 (MD2)* titled *The Secret Diaries of the Artist: Fraud or Fiction*, dated 1-6-2000 is the other (see Appendix).

My Meta-Diaries -especially *Meta-Diary 2*- were attempts to understand the conditions under which the diaries were written. In my analysis Meta-Diaries are perceived as indications of the way I evaluated the diaries at the specific period of their writing. For their presentation in this thesis I treat *Meta-Diary* entries in the same way I treat diary entries: I print them unchanged with grammar and/or spelling mistakes preserved.



### 3.6.2 Writing and Rewriting

*MD2* was understood to be a further improvement on *MD1*, and was later itself 'refined' to produce a text for a conference paper presentation<sup>6</sup>. However the older versions were not erased in the rewriting of the *Meta-Diary*. In this *writing over* in time, every rendering was perceived to have its own significance, as each one was connected to the specific time and subjective position of its writing. The whole concept of Meta-Diaries was based on the notion of *understanding through writing* mentioned in section 3.4. *Writing and rewriting*, part of phenomenological analysis (Morse 1994: 36), was important in this understanding. According to Janice Morse

Refinement of the methodological reflection is attained through writing and rewriting. This process sensitizes the investigator by providing new insights, increasing the level of abstraction, and moving the descriptions away from the particular to a more universal sphere (*ibid.*)

While producing the last version of *MD2* though, I became aware of the limitations of *re-writing the same*. The temporal distance from the diary practice, the limitations of rewriting the *same* and my reluctance to let go of what, in my eyes, appeared like my only 'objective' writing (*MD2*) cancelled any aspirations to create *MD3*. This failure could be interpreted by what Morse refers to as 'premature closure' in qualitative research methodology: 'If premature closure occurs, the resulting theory may have gaps, be thin, be weak, and may even be wrong' (*ibid.*: 33). In the case of this research my urge to reach a conclusive argument (after *MD2*) had as a result that I could no longer take advantage of the benefits of *Meta-Diary* writing.

### 3.6.3 Meta-Diaries and performative writing

On the occasions at which I presented Meta-Diaries (*MDs*) publicly I received a mixed reaction. In meetings or conferences the response of the audience was either silence or enthusiasm. In discussions with members of the academic community I encountered different views regarding the advantage of the directness employed in *MDs*. These extreme reactions were added to my own speculations on the potential value or validity of Meta-Diaries as elements of my research analysis. Further encounters with performative texts nonetheless, led me to reflect on Meta-Diaries as texts that engage in a performative writing which refuses the language of a sometimes over-simplified certainty. Pollock demonstrates how:



Contemporary discourses of history, culture, and identity seem still to be spinning in 'textuality', feeling the loss of reference as a loss of bearings, feeling suddenly, uneasily lifted from ready cartologies of meaning into an Oz-like world not of meaninglessness exactly but of duplicity, doubleness, and simulation (1998: 73).

She later explains:

Performative, evocative writing confounds normative distinctions between critical and creative (hard and soft, true and false, masculine and feminine), allying itself with logics of possibility rather than of validity or causality, the scientific principles underlying positivist distinctions between 'true' and 'false' (*ibid.*: 81).

Within the context of performative writing I was able to understand how the 'fragility' of Meta-Diaries as *analysis texts* could be legitimised. My consideration of MDs shifted from texts of failed 'objective' to *documents of subjectification* and as such are incorporated in this research.

#### 3.6.4 Meta-Diaries and *hypomnēmata*

The function of Meta-Diaries and the part they have played in the research process is explained further by reference to the Greek notion of *hypomnēmata* as interpreted by Michel Foucault in *Ethics* (1997). In the following quote Foucault refers to the different forms of *hypomnēmata* as 'memory aids' but cautions that they 'ought not to be understood as intimate journals' (210). (A diary is typically referred to as an *aide-mémoire*<sup>7</sup>). Foucault goes on to say

*Hypomnēmata*, in the technical sense, could be account books, public registers, or individual notebooks serving as memory aids. Their use as books of life, as guides for conduct, seems to have become a common thing for the whole cultivated public. One writes down quotes in them, extracts from books, examples, and actions that one had witnessed or read about, reflections or reasonings that one had heard... or that had come to mind. They constituted a material record of things read, heard, or thought, thus offering them up as a kind of accumulated treasure for subsequent rereading and meditation. They also formed a raw material for the drafting of more systematic treatises, in which one presented arguments and means for struggling against some weakness (such as anger, envy, gossip, flattery) or for overcoming some difficult circumstance (a grief, an exile, ruin, disgrace) (209-10).

Meta-Diaries take on some of the functions of *hypomnēmata* in that (in antithesis to diaries) 'they try to capture the already said' (*ibid.*: 210-11) 'for subsequent rereading and meditation' (209-10). I therefore believe that my Meta-Diaries have operated as



*hypomnêmata*, for this research ‘a means of establishing a relationship of oneself with oneself’ (211).

### 3.7 Types of diaries and the different functions of the diary for the subject

Philippe Lejeune registers four functions of diaries: *expression*, *reflection*, *freezing of time* (the diarist as archivist/collector) and *the pleasure of writing* (2001). Blythe informs us that:

Many diaries declare that they exist for posterity, some are clearly the result of a pleasure-seeking, or of a passion for secrecy, some are records of the inner life, a lot are outlets for gossip and tale-telling, some are confessionals and some, by their faithfulness to the humdrum, are major historical documents. (1991: 1)

Brett adds to the functions of the diary that of *therapy*, *reference*, *assessment*, *conscience* and *experiment* for the professional writer (1987). Mallon adds ‘The cheating of death, staying alive ...’ (1995: xvii). Kafka reports on the advantages of keeping a diary, namely keeping track of change and recognising ‘recurring’ experiences.

One advantage in keeping a diary is that you become aware with reassuring clarity of the changes which you constantly suffer and which in a general way are naturally believed, surmised, and admitted by you, but which you’ll unconsciously deny when it comes to the point of gaining hope or peace from this admission. In the diary you find proof that in situations which today would seem unbearable, you lived, looked around and wrote down observations, that this right hand moved then as it does today, when we may be wiser because we are able to look back upon our former condition, and for that very reason, have got to admit the courage of the earlier striving in which we persisted even in sheer ignorance (1982: 145).

For Stratis Tsirkas, a novelist himself, writing in the diary is a way of escaping the ‘stagnation’ his novel has fallen to: ‘I cannot see my novel as a whole. Think about it, that is, as an organic entity. They say that in such difficulties it helps to think with the pen in your hand. This is what I am trying to do. So...’ (1973: 48). Tsirkas attempts to use his diary as *assessment*, according to Brett (*ibid.*) Retrospectively reviewing this entry Tsirkas remarks: ‘This note which does not take up more than a page, could take up to fifty pages to comment upon. The autopsy, with pen in hand, proved very useful’ (*ibid.*: 48). The idea of the *diary as autopsy* is not new and was first referred to in connection with religious discourse. As Schlaeger attests, in medieval times, diaries were a way of getting closer to God rather than an exploration of the self with an end to an affirmation of individuality (1999).



The word taken as an 'anatomizing knife' with which to dissect the innermost self is a clear description of the autobiographical activities of increasing numbers of people under the influence of Protestantism and Puritanism (31).

But *autopsy*, a post-mortem examination, originates from the Greek *autoptês* = eye witness. Vanesa Agnew refers to this meaning of autopsy, the diary as an unmediated document of experience: 'I was there and I saw it with my own eyes' (1999: 50). She also refers to the claim for truth made in the name of *autopsy* for diaries (what we already discussed in 3.4 and 3.4.1).

In this research Meta-Diaries were the ones that functioned as *autopsy* (in the anatomical sense). The *Mirage Diary* fell into the category of the *reflection diary* in that it intended to analyse the self but also itself while other functions of a diary are contemplated as possibilities in its entries. All of the entries in *Mirage Diary* are self-referential in that they contemplated the act of writing a diary. Writings in the rest of the diaries (*Red Books*, *Show Book*) slowly moved away from the theme area of diary writing towards ideas which related to works (*experiment*), some of which developed throughout or after the diary entries. In the following sections I will be referring to some of the functions of the diary that were taken advantage of in my own diaries, such as the function of the *freezing of time* (see section 3.7.2).

### 3.7.1 *Journal intime vs journal publique*

The first of the questions which appear in the *Mirage Diary* is: '*Why (keep a diary)? For you, for others to (have as a) record (for) when you're famous?*' (first entry). The function of the diary beyond a record for research was contemplated. The question was not addressed to me, but the impersonal 'you'. It was an attempt to find out the consensus on diary writing, the *canon* of diary writing. But it was moreover an indication of my need to belong to a group of people who have agreed to abide by the same rules.

I discussed two options for the diary writer: One was writing a diary for oneself, an intimate diary; another was while assuming an audience. I begun *Mirage Diary* by stating that a diary should not be written with a presupposed readership in mind: '*anyway I have (already) started to write as if somebody will read this...*' I remark disapprovingly (first entry). Writing a diary as *journal intime* has been viewed with



suspicion by editors of diaries and relates to the issue of appropriateness. But my diaries were from the outset part of a formal academic study, and there was always the possibility that they would be made public in this context. In *Mirage Diary* I tried to overcome the anxiety, induced by the possibility of scrutiny, by prompting myself:

*Don't think about what happens next. Do not act (out) other people's eyes for yourself. Don't think of time, deadlines, meetings. Just go on, keep doing it and evaluate later (second entry).*

I was not able to follow this prompt effortlessly. This is expressed in the following extract, in which it is obvious as well that pleasure is something that I would expect to gain from diary writing.

*It's hard to be spontaneous again. It's as if I've grown up. I've seen and understood how it's functioning and I don't enjoy the game anymore (Mirage Diary, second entry).*

Spontaneity, immediacy (*don't think about what happen next / just go on*) and continuity (*keep doing it*) were my tools for writing my diaries as *journaux intimes*. The immediacy of diary writing has been praised by diarists and editors alike (Brett *op.cit.*, Mallon *op.cit.*) They refer to immediacy as *automatic writing* and associate it with truth. Automatic writing is historically located in the art movement of surrealism in the 1920s, although mention of it in diaries is earlier than that. For the surrealists automatism and truth were interconnected.

For the early Breton, automatism guaranteed fidelity in the transcription of the voice without implying a conventional connection between artist and expression; and years later, during paranoid and duplicitous moments of the thirties, he returned to automatism as a source of authenticity (Spector 1997: 97).

The fame issue is also brought up in connection with the justification of the diary in my diary entry in the beginning of this section. Famous people would keep a diary as a record of their important lives (*... for others to (have as a) record (for) when you're famous?*) My assumption would have the implication that an 'ordinary person' would be discouraged from keeping a diary. Autobiography, a form of recording life, allied to that of the diary, has always been understood as an activity for the 'famous' or 'important'. As Marsha Meskimmon argues autobiography had historically been the arena of 'great men', 'a particular version of history, narrative chronology and mimetic representation and historical truth' (1996: 66). In the case of the 'famous' or 'the great men' not only is it that these two categories of people are 'allowed' to have a written



testimony of their lives made public but that in doing so their version of history becomes History. The choice between *journal intime* and *journal publique* is in this way further complicated. My own negotiation of the subject is carried out in chapter five, where the notion of the *event* (as that which is included in the diary) is clarified.

### 3.7.2 The freezing of time as function and forgetfulness as method

A primary reason for writing a diary is often to remember what once was or once happened: an *aide-mémoire*. Fanny Burney includes her motives for writing a diary in her 27<sup>th</sup> March 1768 entry:

To have some account of my thoughts, manners, acquaintance and actions when the hour arrives in which time is more nimble than memory, is the reason, which induces me to keep a journal. A journal in which I must confess my every thought, must open my whole heart! (Brett 1987: 111).

In *Mirage Diary* I expressed my doubts about the use of the diary as record, the function of *freezing time*: *'Sometimes I think I can contain everything in my mind without having to write or invent a symbol to remind me ...'* Further on I wrote: *'I still think I can remember important thoughts and there is a second side to that. I think that if something is not important enough I will forget it'* (first entry). These statements may form an explanation of my resistance to keeping a diary: I perceived forgetfulness as a method for eliminating the unimportant.

Forgetfulness was consequently utilised in the diaries in a different way: Every time I would put a new entry in the diary I would refrain from looking at the previous entries. I would from time to time revisit the entries when my memory of them had faded. From *Meta-Diary 2*:

*It (what I am referring to above) was a decision driven not only by my belief that my previous entry would influence the mood or the content of my current entry but also my belief in retrospective evaluation. And this is what I meant by it: As time would progress and my memory would fade my texts would become more alienated from me. This would result in the texts getting disassociated with the physicality of their conditions of writing. I would not remember the exact moment I had written them, where I was sitting, the rest of the events of that particular day. This would help me concentrate on the text and would somehow put the diary entries on an equal basis: that of the de-materialised text. Surely completely stripping the texts of their materiality was not possible (for example my handwriting could reveal to me things about my mood). What was important in this procedure was what I hoped to find out: new associations between my remarks, not the ones I was making at the time but hidden connections I was not aware of when I was writing. There might be a remark whose relevance I was*



*unsure of when I was writing it that could trigger this association. What I hoped for in my retrospective reading of my writings was a revelatory moment that everything would connect.*

In *MD2* I conceived the *de-materialised text* as a text stripped from the memories of the occurrence of its writing. Elements such as handwriting, that could form an indication of mood, would be forgotten in a deliberate act of *voluntary amnesia*. My intention in this undressing of materiality was to get closer to content - to the purest form of ideas, undistracted. I ignored visual or formal clues and made a conscious effort not to take them into account. I believed that after this 'stripping' had occurred I could concentrate on the content of the documentation as sole memory of the event. From this standpoint 'content' could be compared and examined on an equal basis. Forgetfulness then rather than memory would become the beginning of knowledge.

Huff refers to her journey in reading other people's diaries:

Because I'd been trained to read primarily for content and for the formal properties presented in a published text, I was unprepared to use my senses of touch and smell, even to interpret the spaces and gaps frequently present in manuscript diaries (*ibid*: 507).

In contrast to this approach I assumed that by not recalling my senses I was objectifying the process of reading my diary, I was distancing it from my self. My concern in this approach was how using one's own diary and analysing it would fit into the research processes utilised by the research community. However I was already recording 'material' type of clues (for example, my comments on the form and format of *the Red Books* in *MD1*). Also in the course of the analysis and following the coding the diaries and referring to my coded notes I would regularly revisit the actual diary pages to refresh my memory of the original entry and view coded notes in context and original form.

### 3.7.3 Continuity diaries and *stasis*

In the diary there is always expectation present: the expectation of the next day and the expectation of the next entry. The diary constructs the framework for this *next day*. Lejeune writes that



... by writing today, you prepare yourself to be able to live tomorrow, and to piece together in a predetermined framework of writing, the story that you have lived (2001: 100).

Lejeune goes on to establish that a diary is a kind of protection against the death of the diarist, this protection awarded by the conviction that the diary will continue (*ibid.*) The continuity of the diary, its re-emergence in an extended form by every entry, is a common expectation as function of the diary. In my research I also expected my diaries to provide me with continuity. In *MD1* I made the following remark about *Mirage Diary*:

*Three entries were too few to give me a sense of continuity of time and the remarks I made -although significant to me- did not relate directly to my artwork.*

Writing systematically, with a view to the creation of continuity, is not the only form of diary writing recognisable in the study of diaries. Lejeune distinguishes between two kinds of writers: The ones who write every day, ritually following this rhythm of writing and disturbed when it is discontinued and the ones who write at odd times when they feel the need to (*ibid.*) An example of the former was Anais Nin who used to admit that the time without her diary was an ordeal (Blythe 1991: 2) while Kafka, an example of the latter, frequently recorded his despair at not having written anything: '(8<sup>th</sup> April 1914) Yesterday incapable of writing even one word. Today no better. Who will save me ...' (1982: 267). This discontinuous practice of diary writing is also evident in Frida Kahlo. As Loewy informs us,

unlike the classic intimate journalist, Kahlo is inattentive to day-to-day goings-on, and uses her journal (as did Virginia Woolf) as a repository for feelings (and images) that do not fit anywhere else' (Loewy 1995: 26).

Taylor and Taylor themselves testify that: 'There are few things quite as capable of inducing guilt as an empty diary' (2000: vii). They include in their anthology Walter Scott's diary entry from January 1829:

Having omitted to carry on my diary for two or three days, I lost heart to make it up, and left it unfilled (sic) for many a month and day. During this period nothing has happened (sic) worth particular notice. The same occupations, the same amusements, the same occasional alterations of spirits, gay or depressed (sic), the same absence of all sensible or rational cause for the one or the other – I half grieve to take up my pen, and doubt if it worth while to record such an infinite quantity of nothing. But hang it! I hate to be beat so here goes for better behaviour (*ibid*: 3).

Although in *Meta-Diary 2* I attempted to rationalise discontinuity, at the time of writing the Meta-Diaries, I apprehended discontinuity as failure: '*If a diary has anything to do*



*with systematic writing* (in terms of frequency) *this is definitely not it*' (*Mirage Diary*, third entry). My response to discontinuity as far as diaries were concerned had been to start fresh with different diaries for different thoughts (as mentioned in *Meta-Diary 1*). In order to cancel any self-censoring that potentially could have caused my discontinuous diary keeping I would start a new book for every new set of thoughts. This was how the *Red Books* were created. This approach had results for a period of time, during which I created three different diaries, but discontinuity did consequently re-emerge.

Discontinuity is one of the characteristics of *stasis*. Although I have chosen the term *stasis* to describe the state when the artist considers that no action (in terms of artistic production) is taking place, *stasis* is demonstrated in the diaries and the gaps of writing on the diaries. *Stasis* as discontinuity is connected in the diary with experiences of failure and despair. The notion of discontinuity however is further amplified by its correlation with the *event* and the *interesting*, developed in chapter five.

Discontinuity and its connection with *self-censorship* (what should be included in the diary?) will be further explored in the next section.

### 3.7.4 Editing the self, editing myself

By editing myself I refer to the issue of *self-censorship* in the diaries. If I had censored my diaries in their transcription my analysis of the process, as expressed in the diaries, would have been affected. I could have also - wittingly or unwittingly - manipulated my diary entries aiming at a more advantageous presentation of myself, or a more desirable research outcome as motive. The latter type of self-editing was actually a widespread practice in Renaissance literature and is cited as *self-fashioning* with reference to a shaping of the self to create a favourable public image. Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* is mentioned by Woods-Marsden as an example of this self-fashioning (1998: 16).

The 'suspicion' of self-editing is expressed frequently by editors of diaries who claim that diarists had always intended to publish them. Thomas Mallon speaks of the diarist who indeed *counts on* the fact that 'an audience will turn up' (1995: xvii). Alan



Taylor speaks of Pepys' diary, probably the most well-known diary in the English language:

His diary, his lasting memorial, which was written in shorthand, he had bound in leather in six volumes, not the act of a man who did not want to see them preserved. With the rest of his library, they were deposited at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where they lay undeciphered until 1825 (2000, xii).

There is nevertheless another sort of censorship, and that is the one practised by the editors of published diaries themselves. Though the editor of my diaries for this research *is* myself and they are only made public to a limited degree, I believe censorship is a significant critical issue for *this* research. In the posthumous publications of diaries, editors have often removed or altered parts of the diary they deemed 'inappropriate'. Well-known examples are *The Diary of Anne Frank*, her diary undergoing different 'editing' according to the country in which it was being published (Loewy 1999), or Anne Lister's Diary in which the entries were initially edited to conceal her homosexuality (Liddington 1998). Cheryl Cline reports that

The urge to make a 'good story' out of a diary that seems rambling and disjointed, or from a correspondence too far-ranging and voluminous, is the motive which guides many an editor's blue pencil... While many diaries and letters are written around a theme (such as pregnancy journals) or an event (letters on an elk hunt), most private writings are disjointed and far - ranging. In this case, material may be extracted from them and shaped into a more cohesive narrative (1989: Cline xxviii).

She adds that while this kind of behaviour would be perceived as inappropriate by her contemporaries, in the past it would have been normal practice to 'shape' the diarist into 'an idealised public persona' (*ibid*: xxix).

The previously mentioned examples illustrate how the issue of *appropriateness* is contemplated by the editors of diaries whose aim is to manipulate the views of the readers of diaries. In the case of my research the issue of *appropriateness* appears right at the start of the first written diary and from the very beginning is presented as a problem to be solved.

*Or is this my second problem? The way I think it (the diary) should be. The way I've seen it realised, published, read even. I believe I have to follow a formula, have certain kind(s) of statements, put a date - something that I hate (Mirage Diary, first entry).*



'*Should*' in this entry is my reference to appropriateness and keeps reappearing as a reference in different entries. The form of the diary is also a concern. But this concern concentrates on how I believe it should be. I already have some preferences, for example the absence of date from my entries, but I see this preference as problematic because I think that a 'proper' entry should have a date. My contemplation of the canon of diary writing is the first indication of the significance of authority (later to be defined as *arkhê*) in my negotiation of the process and its documentation and is further explored in the next chapter.

### 3.8 Diaries, practice and *diary practice*

It might be that artists' diaries are closer to the form of the working diary as a 'container' of thoughts and preliminary sketches of works. This kind of diary has been used by artists and writers alike. Marie-Laure Bernadac, introduces Louise Bourgeois' diaries in the following way

The diaries chart her days, her encounters and appointments, and transcribe her emotion and the movement of her thoughts. Sometimes they also serve as a laboratory of writing, a starting point for her work with the written word (1998: 18).

But this description of the artist's diary is distinct from that of Lowe's on Frida Kalho's diary as 'a repository for feelings (and images) that do not fit anywhere else' (*op.cit.*: 26) with contents which hardly ever end up as works of art.

The fact that Kalho included artwork in her diary makes it almost unique among *journals intimes*. Yet it differs from the typical artist's sketchbook, which is usually a place for preparatory drawings or working out solutions in a small format to be applied to large works. Only once did Kalho transform an ink drawing from the diary into a full scale painting (*ibid*: 26).

This is also the case for Kafka as described by Max Brod. In his 1948 postscript to *The Diaries of Franz Kafka* he describes the occasions where diary entries develop into a literary work as 'exceptionally happy cases'.

The writer notes down literary ideas, the beginning of stories, or reflections passing through his head. ... In exceptionally happy cases the result, whether long or short, is a finished literary work in every respect.

...

Thus, amid daily notations which serve the writer as a kind of springboard for literary creation, one sees many things that could have been published as independent fragments (1982: 491-2).



Discontinuity and a loose relationship with professional practice (Kalho, Kafka) have been characteristics of diaries as much as continuity and preliminary practice experiment have (Bourgeois).



Figure 6. A two-page spread from *The Diary of Frida Kahlo*, published in 1995 (London: Bloomsbury Publishing).

In the analysis of my own diaries the fact that the written or the visual documentation in the diaries were the only element that I could analyse was a restriction in my experience of diary-keeping. My diaries were kept over a wide period of time which included gaps, work produced (performed self-portraits and movies on the experience of the everyday) and work not produced (as in *Never Realised Projects* presented in chapter five). Discontinuity in the diary-writing is commented on in the diaries themselves and negotiated in the Meta-Diaries. Lejeune affirms that:

The second limitation of concentrating upon published journals is that before becoming a text, the private diary is a *practice*. The text itself is a mere by-product, a residue (1999: 187).



Although I would not choose to refer to diary texts as *residue* I embrace the reference to diaries as *practice* rather than as *documents*. Diaries as *practice* include the time when the diary is *not* written. Furthermore, for this research, the diaries developed into something more than being a record for the practice. Diaries as a way of keeping track of process and the states of subjectivity became a strategy that was utilised in art works for this research. Visual and multimedia works developed into diaries or in diary-like forms (for example *Perfect Day* and *Not Made in Greece*). Eventually diaries became a part of the practice as much as a way of exploring it.

### 3.9 Conclusions and connections with other chapters

The connection of diary writing and subjectivity was investigated in this chapter in the examination of the written diaries. The manifestation of the subject - the written document - was not perceived as identical to the subject but as an indication of the *becoming* of the subject. I therefore treated my diary as instances of subjectivity rather than symptoms of the truth of the subject.

Examining the written diaries I initially approached them by employing 'forgetfulness as method' and the notion of the *de-materialised text* as a text stripped from the memories of the occurrence of its writing. I believed that in this way 'content' could be compared and examined on an equal basis. Forgetfulness then rather than memory would become the beginning of knowledge. However I later adopted the notion of 'de-reading' as defined by Huff (2000): a reading of the diaries determined by the particularities of its 'content'.

Meta-Diaries played a significant role in the analysis of my written diaries and the examination of their connection to my subjectivity. The whole concept of Meta-Diaries was based on the notion of *understanding through writing*. Meta-Diaries used performative writing and are viewed in this research as *documents of subjectification*. The role of Meta-Diaries in the analysis is further explained by the notion of *hypomnēmata*: Meta-Diaries, in contrast to diaries, were concerned with 'the already said' (Foucault 1997: 210-11) and have been 'a means of establishing a relationship of oneself with oneself'. Another aspect of Meta-Diaries can be found in the use of the word *autopsy* as a post-mortem examination.



*Stasis* is connected in this chapter with discontinuity and its experience through the discontinuous writings in the diary. A first connection is also made between continuity and *arkhê*. I expect and pursue continuity, one of the functions of the diary, but *self-censorship* (What is appropriate for inclusion in the diary?) causes disruptions. The notion of discontinuity however is further amplified by its correlation with *arkhê* in the next chapter and the *event* and the *interesting*, developed in chapter five.

Finally I embrace the reference to diaries as *practice* (Leujeune 1999: 187) rather than as *documents*. Diaries as *practice* include the time when the diary is *not* written. Furthermore, for this research, the diaries developed into something more than a methodological tool. They became part of the concerns of this research, were intertwined with practice and finally became a part of practice as much as a way of exploring it.



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<sup>1</sup> I will be referring to *Show Book* in the next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> I called it *Mirage Diary* because it has 'Mirage' printed on the front cover along with a sketch of a 'Mirage' aircraft.

<sup>3</sup> In this case some characteristics of the diaries of this era determine the classification system. For example the fact that the role of family chronicler was embraced by or distributed to some of the women diarists from this era rendered the profession of the head of the household important (Huff: 1985).

<sup>4</sup> Adams refers to Shirley Neuman's article: 'The Observer Observed: Distancing the Self in Autobiography' which appeared in *Prose Studies*, 4 (1981), pp. 217-36.

<sup>5</sup> Meta-Diaries are included the Appendix in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> This is the text 'Performing Subjectivity' and 'Performing Subjectivity: Incorporating Discontinuity, Boredom and Nothingness as Rightful Elements of the Research Process' different versions of the same text presented at the CADE: Digital Creativity (Glasgow, 2001) and 7th Performance Studies International Conference (Mainz, 2001) respectively.

<sup>7</sup> However Langford and West refer to *Hypomnēmata* in connection with diaries in their 1999 article.



## CHAPTER 4

### REPETITION, *ARKHÊ* AND THE STRATEGIES OF THE ARTIST AS SUBJECT IN *STASIS*

#### 4.1 Introduction to the terms used in this chapter

In this chapter I discuss *Video Diary 1* (VD1), the first visual diary I kept. I started it after I was no longer writing in *Mirage Diary*. A notion I use in this chapter in order to clarify the role VD1 played in my subjectivity is *arkhê*. The meaning of *arkhê* is double: ‘beginning’ and ‘authority’. Jacques Derrida uses *arkhê* to discuss one of its derivatives, the ‘archive’ in his book *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. He introduces *arkhê* in the following extract.

*Arkhe*, we recall, names at once a *commencement* and the *commandment*. This name apparently coordinates two principles in one: the principle according to nature or history, *there* where things *commence* -physical, historical, or ontological principle -but also the principle according to the law, *there* where men and gods *command*, there where authority, social order are exercised, in *this place* from which *order* is given -nomological principle (1995: 1).

For Derrida the ‘archival technology’ determines ‘the very institution of the archivable event’ (*ibid.* 18). The function of the archive, presented by Derrida as being more about archiving and less about the content of the archive, is additionally employed in this chapter to debate the role of VD1.

In this research there have been periods that I perceived as *nothingness*. *Stasis* in this research is the period that, according to the artist, *nothing* is happening (in terms of the process of creating art). *Stasis* and *nothingness* is further explained by the employment of the notion of the *event* made explicit in the following chapter.

‘Recording’ and ‘capturing’ in this chapter refers to the act of keeping the video diary. Components of the video diary are referred to as ‘stills’ (still images), ‘video’ and ‘video recordings’ (live video).



## 4.2 Introduction to *Video Diary 1*

In the following section I describe the components of *Video Diary 1* (digital still and video recordings) and the way it was recorded. I then try to investigate the role of *Video Diary 1* in the construction of my subjectivity. More specifically I attempt to answer the following questions:

- What was the role that *VD1* played in the art process?
- In what way(s) was my subjectivity manifested through the capturing of *VD1*?
- Can these ways be articulated as a recognised strategy of subject manifestation within the art process?
- How are these ways negotiated within a contemporary art context?

In order to answer these questions, and in addition to examining the components of *VD1* I will use the following:

- Extracts from *Meta-Diary 1 (MD1)*.
- The works of artists Hanne Darboven, On Kawara and Yayoi Kusama. I chose these works from *My Artists' Database*. They were chosen because of similarities in the subject matter of their artwork or in the manner they negotiated their artwork to my own work. Their published work, along with critical articles of others on their work, and extracts of the artists' interviews are used in order to contextualise and comprehend *VD1* and assist in the analysis of *VD1*.

## 4.3 *VD1* Description

*Video Diary 1* was recorded from November 1999 until March 2000. It consisted of digital still and video recordings. Every digital still recording comprised the image captured and the sounds recorded while capturing (around seven seconds of audio). The video recordings were captured with the camera from a static position. All stills and video were recorded with the date-data display turned on. A selection of stills can be seen in Figure 1 and a selection of video (stills) is in Figure 2.



Recordings were captured on an irregular temporal basis. There were instances when a number of recordings were captured on the same day while in other instances only one still or video was captured in one day. There were also days when nothing was captured.



Figure 1. Video Stills from VD1.



When I started *VD1* I had already begun working with other types of diaries (written diaries and the *Show Book*). For the video diary I intended to use my digital video camera on a daily basis in order to capture digital stills. The fact that the sound would be recorded by default at the time of capturing was not taken into account. Only the visual part of the capturing was, at that time, intended for use.

A digital video device was used instead of a digital photographic device. In the first instance this was because of the familiarity of the researcher with the device. The choice of digital rather than analogue was made because in this way the problem of 'what to do with the photographs' could be avoided. A photograph was perceived as an 'object' entity in which choices about its materiality (size, paper texture, storage) had to be taken. At that moment I thought that these choices could be avoided in the digital medium because the image could be viewed at different sizes while retaining its original structure (something not entirely true) but also viewed on screen thus avoiding choices of display format, material (paper, etc). Although the problematic of materiality in the digital and analogue image was not pursued further, I include this argument as the first indication of my concern with 'choice', this concern reappearing in a more detailed examination later in this chapter.

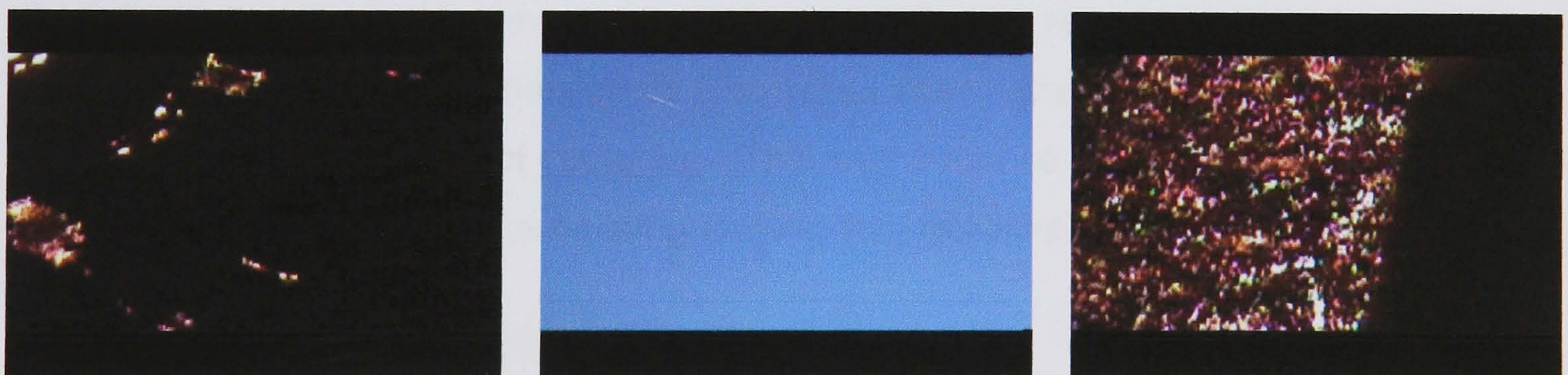


Figure 2. Video Stills from the video footage of *VD1*.

In the period that I was keeping *VD1* I did not rewind the tape to view the images that I had already captured. I also did not show the diary to anyone before it was completed. My response to the diary after I had stopped recording it was that 'there is nothing there to see' as noted in a discussion of the diary. I thought of *VD1* as a diary that anyone could have recorded and not one specifically connected to myself. However I felt



uncomfortable while watching it and appalled by the blandness of it: I somehow experienced it as 'too close to me'.

In a set of presentations of this diary and subsequent discussions I was encouraged to examine *VD1* anew. The fact that a considerable amount of time had passed since I had stopped recording the diary contributed to creating the distance necessary to do so.

#### 4.4 Analysing *VD1*

I made a number of attempts to describe *VD1* before I accepted the one presented later in this chapter. The first one was a list of descriptions of the stills and videos. When I finished this I realised that the list was a mere description of the visual part of *VD1* and decided that it was not useful. On various presentations of *VD1*<sup>1</sup> the audio component of the video still was discussed. Below I have summarised the main remarks and comments:

- The sound created an unsettling effect,
- In the instances when you could not hear a sound, you would think that 'something' was happening, and
- On the occasions that there was sound audible the attention of the viewer would concentrate on where the picture was taken from - the position of the artist rather than the visual subject of capturing. (This was because most of the recordings were made from the inside of a building looking out, resulting in the sound being from the inside of the building.)

After receiving these remarks I made a new description of *VD1*. It was a table that consisted of two columns. In one column there was a description of the visual part of the capture and in the other, a description of the audio part of the capture. Although at times I was able to observe interesting contrasts between the visual and the audio part of the capture I concluded that this contrast was not indicative of anything that could be used in the analysis. I assessed this attempt as a new transcription of *VD1*. I then went back to rethink what I was trying to find out about *VD1*. I re-examined my comments and realised that first I had to explain my views on what *VD1* was and meant and then work from the



very personal nature of these comments towards a more abstract perception of *VD1* and its connection with my subjectivity.

I subsequently proceeded to describe and examine the content of *VD1* and attempted to group its contents in categories in terms of visual similarities (Table 1) and in terms of contemporary aesthetic and personal context (Table 2).

Table 1: Grouping of images in terms of camera position / theme and visual content (Image/Sound).

<i>VD1</i> COMPONENTS	CAMERA POSITION	
	Inside Looking Outside (Image/Sound)	Inside Looking Inside (Image/Sound)
Digital Stills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Close ups of office buildings with employees in computer rooms / Coughing, telephone conversation</li><li>• Close ups of empty offices / Phone ringing, humming sound</li><li>• Cityscapes with dramatic sky / Silent or people talking loudly while passing by</li><li>• Road surface close-ups / Silent</li><li>• House windows / Radio sounds or Silent</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Close up of kitchen sink and utensils, lamp shade/My voice naming of objects or songs and advertisements on the radio</li><li>• Close ups of stains, holes on the walls, furniture / Background conversation or silent</li></ul>
Video recordings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ripples of rain water in puddles / Sound of cars and rain and domestic sounds</li><li>• Rain drops falling on the window / sound of rain or domestic sounds</li><li>• Car lights travelling through the video frame /</li><li>• Sky view / Steps on the pavement</li></ul>	

Following my initial comments on *VD1* that ‘there is nothing there to see’ and that ‘anyone could have captured it’ I tried to examine the groups created in Table 1 to determine whether they had any reference to my personal experience at all. I tried to demonstrate this in Table 2. In this table I illustrated the personal context of *VD1* and the connection of *VD1* with the aesthetic contemporary context.



Table 2: Categorisation of images in terms of contemporary aesthetic and personal context.

	CONTEMPORARY AESTHETIC CONTEXT	PERSONAL CONTEXT	
	A. 'Postcard' images	B. Recycled images	
		B1.Repeated images	B2. Images in which I imitate myself
Characteristics	'Detached' (non-personal images) commonly accepted as 'beautiful' images	Images in the style that I would have used in the beginning of my photographic career. Abstract type images, what is perceived as 'artistic' in glossy magazines	Actually copying myself. Images I have previously used in my artwork as in <i>Home Is Not</i> (1998).
Corresponding images from Table 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cityscapes with dramatic sky.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Close up of kitchen sink, utensils and lamp shade</li><li>Road surface close-ups</li></ul>	Close ups of stains, holes on the walls, furniture

As described in Table 2 the contents of *VD1* were in one way or another copied from a different context. In 'A'. I copied the media aesthetic and in ' B.' I recycled my previous 'styles' and works.

At the point that I started to consciously repeat the images I had previously used in my artwork (*Home is Not*, 1998), I reassessed *VD1* and concluded that the act of keeping it had become too self-conscious to be useful and decided to discontinue the diary.

4.4.1 The discontinuity of time and *VD1* as antidote

As I have explained in discussing my methodology (chapter 3), *Meta-Diaries (MDs)* were used as a cache for thoughts and ideas about the experience of keeping my diaries. The *MDs* were written after or at times in tandem with keeping the diaries. In the beginning of *Meta-Diary 1* I expressed my frustration with time.

*Time obsession; the need to measure time, count it and account for it. Experience it fully, be able to contemplate it. Why? And what for? Is this an attempt to justify my existence beyond a passive acceptance of being alive, an attempt to not merely be*



*but act? Is this what time is for me then? A series of consequent 'actions'? In that case this is why I cannot define time, identify it, grasp it. My time is not a series of actions it is not a 'proper time'.*

My frustration, created by the fact that I was not producing any work, was in *MD1* connected with my perception of time; if time was a series of 'actions', in this research these 'actions' were missing. The discontinuity of time was actually discontinuity of action: what I refer to as *stasis*. The result of *stasis* was frustration and out of this frustration came *VD1*. At the time *MD1* was written, I thought of *VD1* as way of filling the gap of non-action but also a way of experiencing time, a means of creating continuity.

In *Meta-Diary1* I call *VD1* '*Dated Image Collection*'. The fact that I included a derivative of 'date' in the title of the diary is an indication of the importance of 'date' and my investment in it. As I explained further on in *MD1* the 'problem' with time was negotiated in the following way. On the digital camera there was the possibility of displaying the date automatically with every still. In this way this elemental component of a diary, time as date, could exist as information. The fact that the date would be displayed automatically was at the time perceived as freeing the researcher (myself) from having to think about recording it. But there was also something else here:

*... Choosing to have the day's date automatically displayed on the image gave me a sense of continuity of time (and a reminiscence of bad snapshots). More than the granted feel of the continuity what seemed to be important was the fact that this continuity was imposed, externally decided and displayed regardless of my actions but of course due to my decision. Choosing the date to be displayed was really the acceptance of my inadequacy to keep track of time and my desire to have a plan, rule or just a way of keeping time imposed on me, a way I would nevertheless have to invent and restrict my self to it.*

In the previous extract from *MD1* I appeared to seek out authority as an externally imposed rule that I had submitted myself to. This externally imposed rule is close to the notion of *arkhê* as defined in the beginning of this chapter. In *MD1* I noted that '*My time is not a series of actions it is not a proper time.*' Appropriateness, also referred to in the previous chapter in relation to the diary entries, became linked to my ambivalent relationship with legitimacy and authority (referred to in the next chapter with regard to the event). The role of *arkhê*, as explained in *MD1*, was the provision of *continuity*.



#### 4.4.2 The two levels of repetition and *VD1* as refuge for the subject

Discussing the video stills in *Meta-Diary1* I wrote:

*The images I chose were these of my non-original surroundings: close ups of employees at the opposite office building, abstract views of my house, the weather conditions changing, street views. All the views were taken (from the) inside a building or from its window. I did not intend these images to be part of my artwork I just used them as a background that would provide me the sense of time I needed. A background against which to measure time.*

In *MD1* I referred to the captured stills as ‘my non-original surroundings’, undermining what I capture in terms of content but also in terms of *intention* for content. I did not bother to make a choice for originality or specific intention: I captured what was there (‘close ups of employees in the opposite office building’, ‘abstract views of my house’, etc). I also attached, in this text, a tag of banality to these captures: ‘my non-original surroundings’. As I explained in this extract, my initial intention for the stills captured in *VD1* was irrelevant to their content: I used these images as ‘a background’. In *VD1* it did not matter what I would capture, but that I would go on capturing it. The emphasis was thus transferred from the content to the act of capturing. This act was an act of repetition and it was through this repetition that *VD1* became the means of keeping track of time and creating continuity.

Where did this situation leave the content of *VD1*? The digital still was perceived as ‘any-still’. It didn’t matter what the still depicted, it was in fact perceived as a *blank image*. But as I demonstrated in Table 2 these stills were by no means blank images. They were either images in which I imitated myself (imitating previous works or styles) or images in which I copied contemporary media imagery. They were indeed images of some kind of repetition. By copying and imitating I had ‘regressed’ to some kind of de facto authority: the authority of the past (what has already happened or existed) or the authority of contemporary media imagery (what already exists as an image) which I call *arkhê*. Repetition had protected me from making choices. I was again avoiding the performance of one of the acts that define a subject: *to choose*<sup>2</sup>.

What I had created for myself was a kind of *legitimate emptiness* (emptiness of content or intention) in which the subject (myself) did not have to perform as one (to choose). Through the avoidance of choices and the retreat to a de facto authority the subject hid



and disappeared. Repetition created the alibi of action, the absence of which had been frustrating the subject. In this *legitimate emptiness* the subject hibernated in a state of uncertainty and anticipation of action.

Uncertainty as a characteristic of *stasis* within the process of making art is further explored in the following chapter. *VD1* was my first experience, in the context of this research project, of how repetition may form a strategy for the subject in *stasis*. However my research led me to understand that repetition as a strategy had already been intentionally adopted, particularly in the works of Hanne Darboven, On Kawara and Yayoi Kusama.

#### **4.5 Establishing parallels with Hanne Darboven, On Kawara and Yayoi Kusama**

In order to contextualise the issues raised through the process of keeping *VD1*, I examine the work of three artists that I have chosen from *My Artists' Database*. I am seeking to establish whether notions of repetition, submission to *arkhê*, disappearance of the subject and emptiness as a refuge for the subject, actually form some kind of strategy that the subject adopts during the creative process. The artists were chosen because of similarities between my work and theirs, either in the theme of their artwork or in the manner they negotiated it. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, photographs of artworks, artists' books, interviews, articles in exhibition catalogues as well as critics' texts are used in order to comment on the artists' works.

##### **4.5.1 Hanne Darboven: repetition and time**

Hanne Darboven has been exhibiting work since the nineteen sixties. While living in New York she had contacts with conceptual artists, particularly Sol Le Wit, Donald Judd and Carl Andre. In her New York years she developed an approach to producing works by using writing and calculations carried out in a disciplined and formal way. For her exhibitions, Hanne Darboven mostly devised the catalogues herself, using the book as an independent art form (Burgbacher-Krupka 1994: 9).



Darboven's works, including *Bismarckzeit* (1972) or *World-views 00-99* (1982), are produced through writing (see Figures 3 and 5). The writing takes a repetitive, continuous circular shape. This shape only resembles written text from afar. It is writing that is placed line below line, like a 'normal' text, but is not 'readable'. But what you cannot read you can see<sup>3</sup>. And what is indeed visible in this writing is the movement by which it has been written: a repetitive, almost circular movement of the hand. Repetition is central to Darboven's work. Even on the occasions that her writing is complemented by a series of calculations, decipherable to the eager viewer (see Figure 6), the repetition of format, logic or style becomes more central than the content. It is the extensive scale of repetition and the discipline with which Darboven follows the rules she has imposed on herself that bestow significance on this repetition. The writing, the numbers, the calculations become elements that serve the repetition. But what does repetition serve? Jean Pierre Bordaz attests

By accepting the constraints of the format of a sheet of plain paper or the lines of the ruled paper, the artist submits her writing to a kind of time calculation. By all sorts of reference marks, figure notation, musical notation and repeated annotations, the artist breaks down the moments of writing the words and signs, as she had already begun to do in Venice in 1982. The writing therefore symbolises this time dimension, using a large number of indices that evoke the real (postcards / pictures of the world) and subjective experience (signs / messages) (Bordaz 1986: 110).

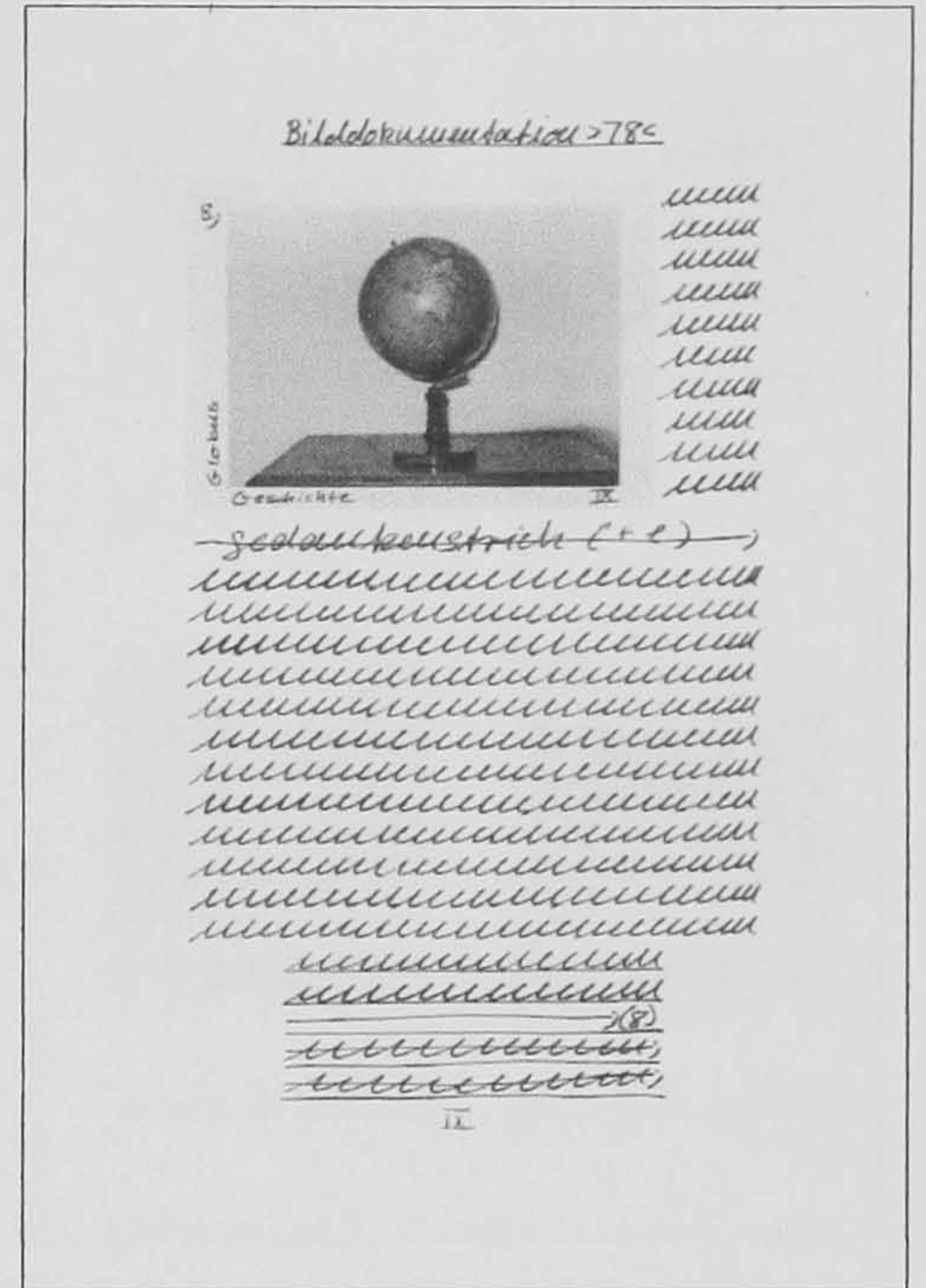


Figure 3. *Bismarckzeit*, 1979.

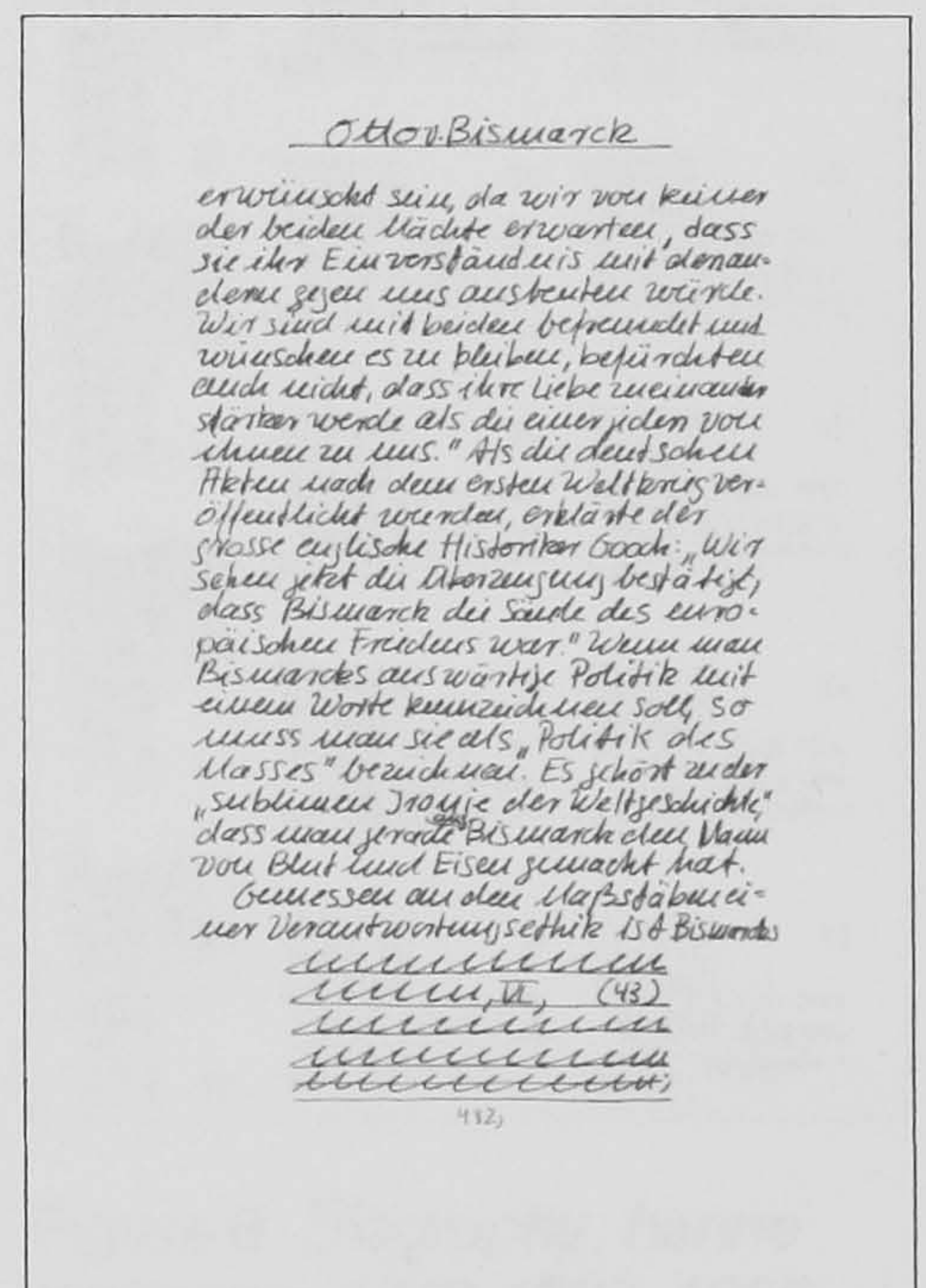


Figure 4. *Bismarckzeit*, 1979.



For Darboven repetition is 'time as writing time' (Kaak 2000: 26). Newman suggest that in Darboven's work 'there is something essential – not to be avoided – about the experience of monotony and its repetitions.' (Newman forthcoming 2004). He states

Repetition, close to ritual, is the mark of what Lacan calls a 'missed encounter': 'only a rite, an endlessly repeated act, can commemorate this not very memorable encounter ...'

...

The historical implication of this is that what cannot be approached in terms of meaning or representation may be approached through repetition. Repetition –we could say the repetition of a date– marks the absolute singularity of the event, but does so in a way that must necessarily sacrifice that singularity. 'Today' is erased, crossed out, as soon as it is written, and repeated in any number of other dates. There is no commemoration that is not also a forgetting. There is no memory that does not expose that which is remembered to destruction.

Darboven's writing creates meaning in repetition. But it is through this repetition that meaning for the content of repetition is destroyed, invested instead in the act of repetition. The act of repetition then becomes for Darboven the way of keeping time.

#### Arkhê order and discipline

In *Bismarckzeit* Darboven (a German herself) copies or retranscribes the seminal texts of German authors such as Goethe and Rilke. Isabella Graw suggests that 'a desire to be part and parcel of this official culture' could possibly be the reason she does so (1994: 248).

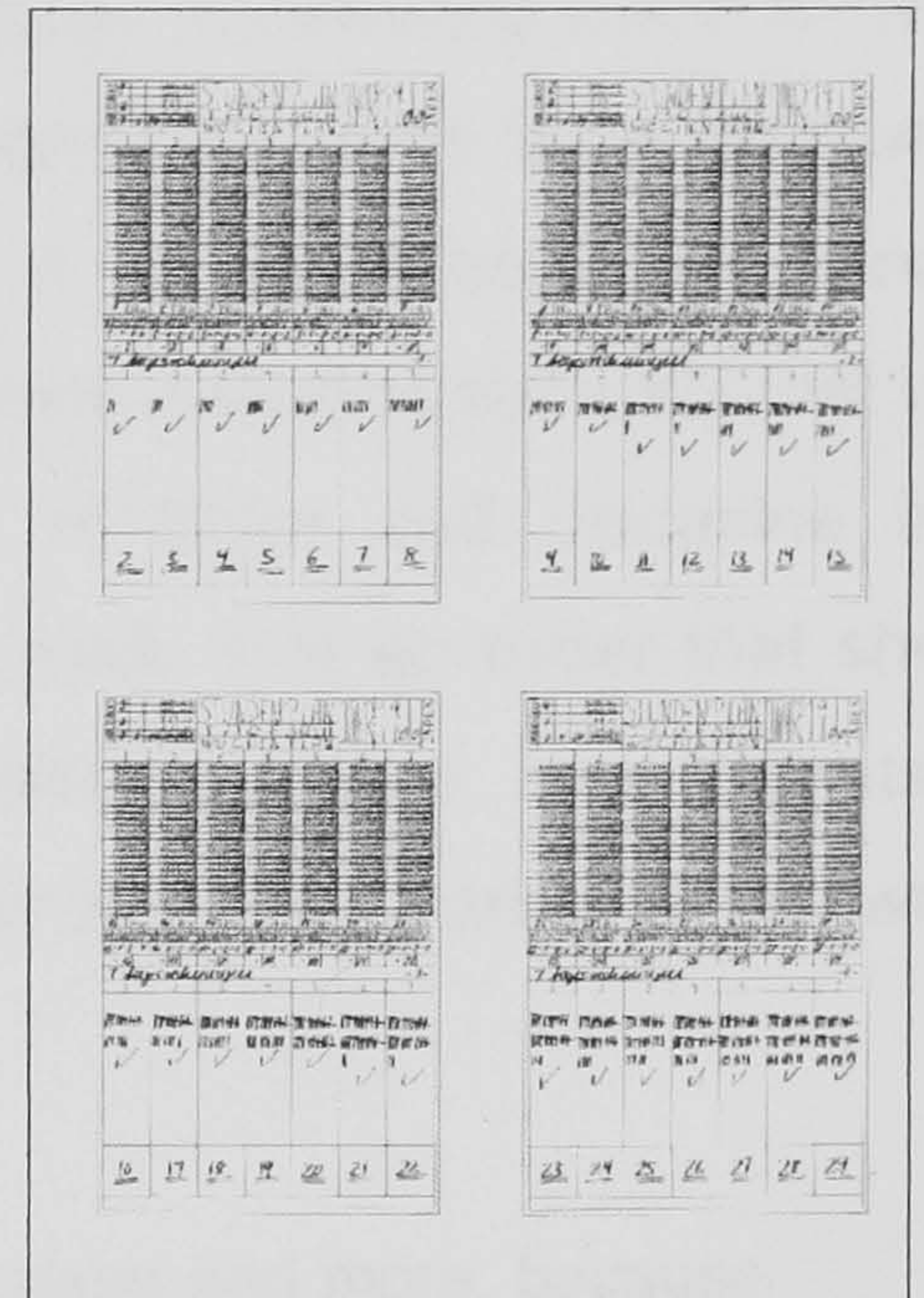


Figure 5. *World-views 00-99*, detail, 1982.

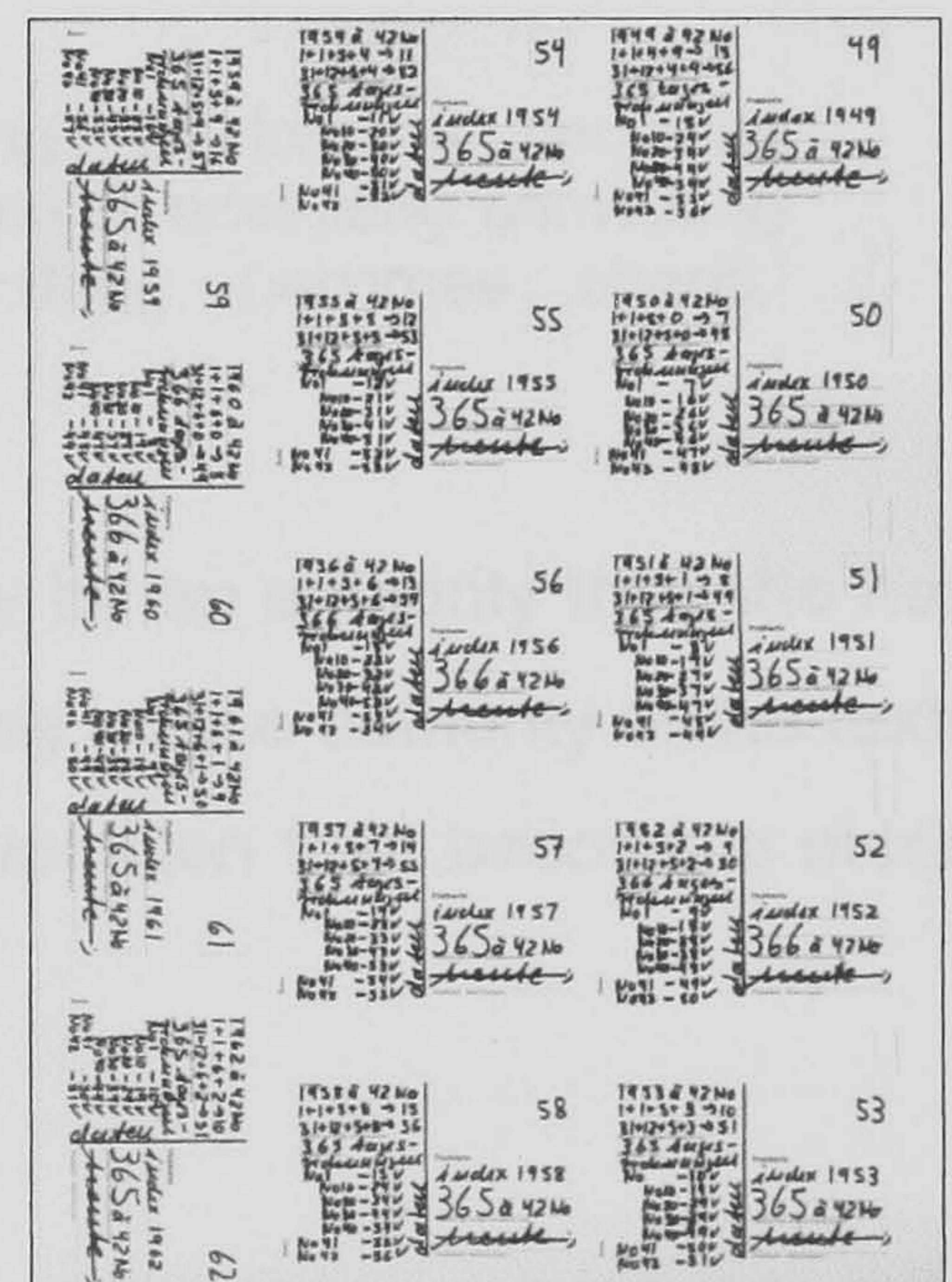


Figure 6. *Biography, hanne darboven: 1949-1983*, 1986.



Graw also remarks that the copying of texts that goes on in Darboven's work is typical of the kind of work that is encouraged in educational institutions. In rewriting there is her voluntary obedience to authority and rules. Together with carrying out the tasks that are set in school comes reward and satisfaction. Is it then a sense of belonging, and belonging to something established or something that assumes a kind of authority that is the artist's intention? Let us first examine the notions of order and discipline in Darboven's work. Order is evident throughout Darboven's work. It is an order that she had imposed on herself: an order of repetition, calculations, forms and formats. Burgbacher-Krupka comments on an extract from an interview with Darboven shown here within single quotation marks.

'So I learn where I came from. By doing it, it becomes not more and more, because it's already there, but clearer and clearer.' Writing, for her, is thus the development of models of order. For this, a human decision – a plan – is not enough: 'To exist they must be executed, written' (1994: 41).

In another extract Darboven confirms<sup>4</sup>:

'I build up something by having disturbed something. Destruction becomes construction. Action interrupts contemplation as the means of accepting something among many given alternatives, for accepting nothing becomes chaos.' (Burgbacher-Krupka 1994: 38).

For Darboven copying is a submission to an *arkhé*. It may be an authority that she has created, a set of rules that she follows meticulously or it may be the authority of the texts of the 'great men' of intellectual Germany. Copying and repetition then become a mode of order, a protection from and a way to escape chaos.

#### 4.5.2 On Kawara

On Kawara worked in Tokyo between 1952 and 1956. He left Japan in 1959, and since 1965 has been producing work outside Japan (Masuda 1991:6). On Kawara made a series of daily postcards sent to Lucy Lippard over four months and to other friends at other times and for different durations. On every postcard he would state the date, the time the artist got up on that date, his name, address and where the postcard would be posted to, all in rubber-stamped characters.



In *My Artists' Database* I noted that the time he gets up is a condition that he chooses to describe his day with. The condition (the time he gets up every day) is not significant but the regularity of his gesture is. Thus it is the systematic way in which it is carried out (the regular sending of postcards) and not the content of the statement ('I got up ...') that invests this work with meaning.

Kawara also made a series of 'Date Paintings' on canvas (see Figure 8). He also made the *I Read, I Went* and *I Met* works where he would note down what he read (at times including newspaper clippings), where he had been (including a map) and who he had met on that day (see Figures 10, 11). The repetition of the arbitrary activity chosen to describe each day provided Kawara a structure that counteracted the chaos of daily life. Or as René Denizot puts it: 'The continuity of ritual exorcises the discontinuity of existence' (1979: 37). Lippard supports the argument of ritual repetition as an affirmation of existence

Kawara is one of the most important, and one of the most elusive and isolated artists working in this general direction. ... The fascination exerted by Kawara's obsessive and precise notations of his place in the world (time and location) imply a kind of self-reassurance that the artist does in fact exist. At the same time, they are totally without pathos, their objectivity establishing the self-imposed isolation which marks his way of life as well as his art (1997: 45-46).

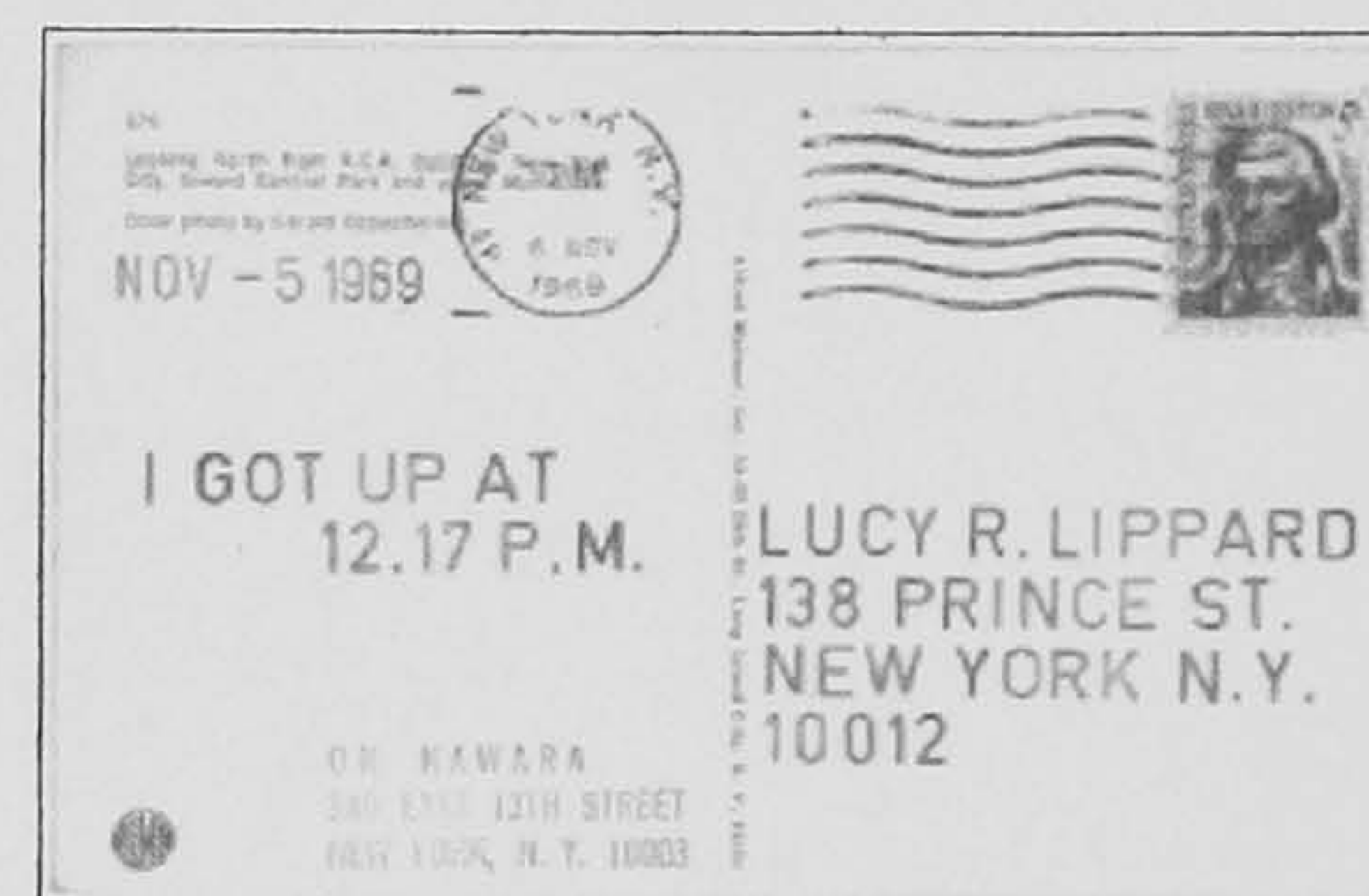


Figure 7. *I Got Up*, postcard (back), 1969.

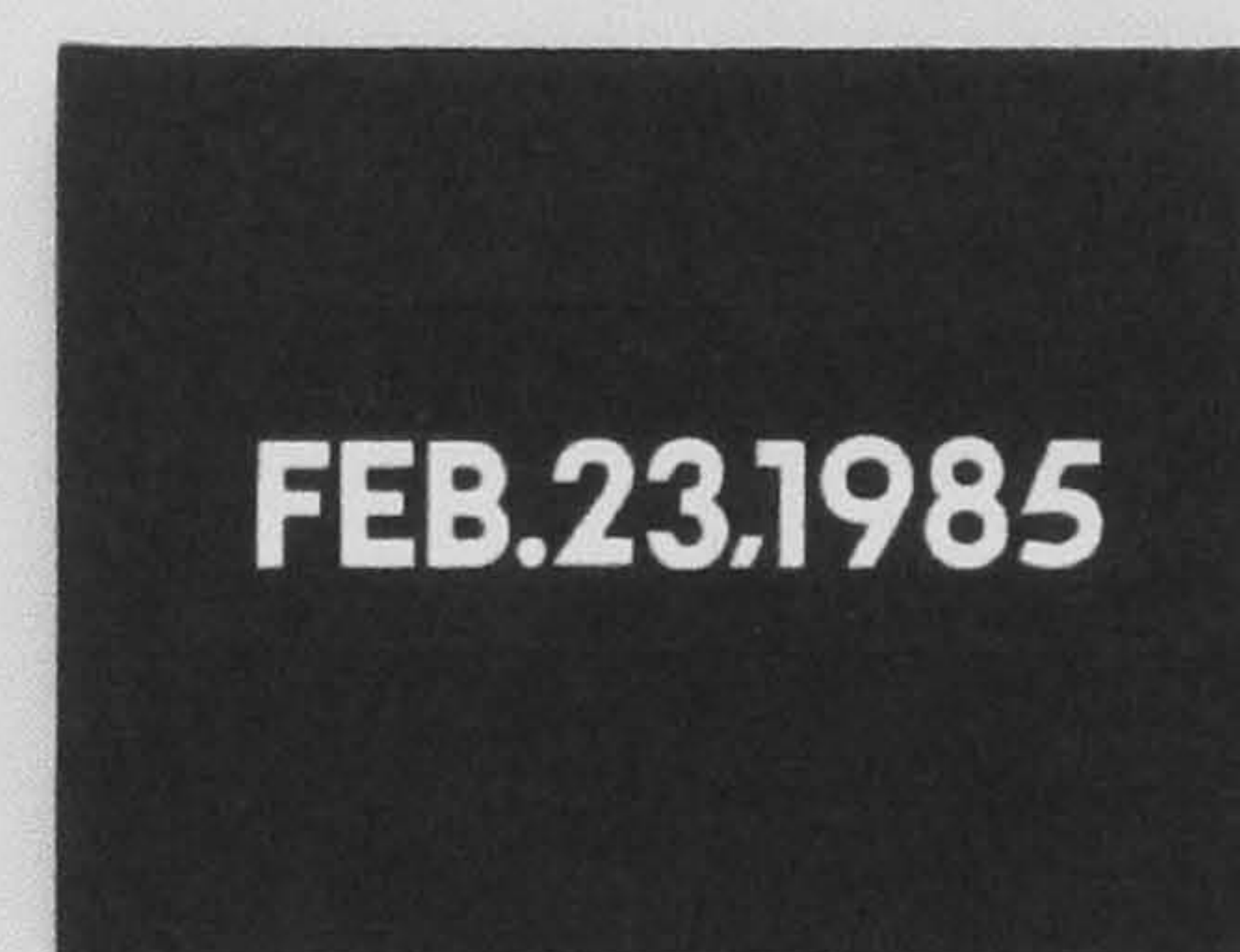


Figure 8. *Date Painting* Kawara, oil on canvas, 1994.

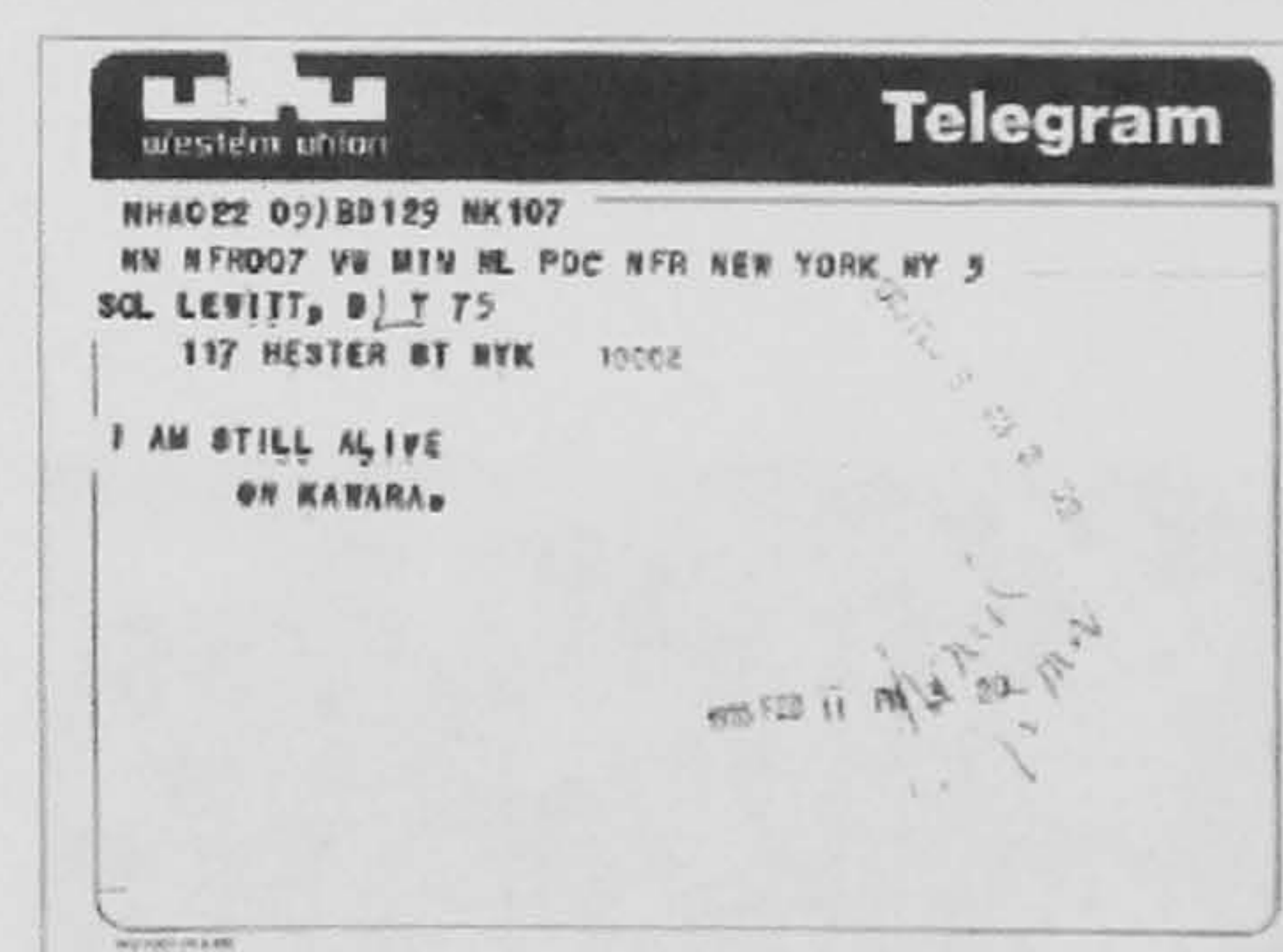


Figure 9. *Telegram*, send to Sol Le Witt on 11.02.1970.







Kusama would frequently have herself photographed among these works, at times completely incorporated visually in the work by wearing a costume with a similar pattern to the one used in the installation. In *Narcissus Garden* (1966), presented at the *Venice Biennale*, she made fifteen hundred pumpkin-sized plastic mirrored balls laid down on the lawn in front of the Italian Pavilion. She was photographed lying among them wearing a red leotard (see Figure 13).



Figure 13. *Narcissus Garden*, 1500 plastic mirror balls 20 cm diameter, 1966.

Kusama also made a number of performances presented in New York and Europe, which she called *Self-Obliterations*. Performers, usually including herself, would be 'dressed' in polka dots at times offering polka-dots to the passers-by. This is Kusama's introduction to *Self-Obliterations*:

As I wrote on the poster for my first 'Self-Obliteration' performance: 'Become one with eternity. Obliterate your personality. Forget yourself. Self-destruction is the only way out.' My performances are a kind of symbolic philosophy with polka-dots. A polka-dot has the form of the sun which is a symbol of the energy of the whole world and our living life, and also the form of the moon which is calm. Round, soft colourful, senseless and unknowing. Polka-dots can't stay alone; like the communicative life of people, two or three or more polka-dots become movement. Our earth is only one polka-dot among a million stars in the cosmos. Polka-dots are a way to infinity. When we obliterate nature and our bodies with polka-dots, we become part of the unity of our environment. I become part of the eternal and we obliterate ourselves in Love (Yalkut 2001: 112).



Figure 14. *Mirror Room (Pumpkin)*, mirrors, wood, papier mâché, paint, 200X200X200, 1991.



Kusama suffered from obsessional neurosis, something that she never hid from the public. A lot of speculation was made about how this illness had been used by the artist as a vehicle of self-promotion vehicle or a material for art therapy, the latter frequently stated by the artist herself. Frick Thomas comments that

It is crucial, in engaging in these issues (her illness), neither to mythologise Kusama as a mad, visionary artist nor to pathologise her achievement (1998:14).

Kusama herself often referred to her work as 'salvation through self-obliteration' (Tatehata 2000: 14). The loss of the self that she claims to experience within her work is also visually manifested in the photographs where she immerses herself in her work: loss of the self in repetition. Laura Hoptman offers another dimension to the use of the self-obliteration techniques:

Her unceasing restatement of the *Infinity Net* is also a reaffirmation of her persona a defiant 'I exist'. With its dizzying monotony and labour-intensive intricacy, the making of her obsessive work is, paradoxically, both an act of self-obliteration as well as one of artistic transubstantiation through which the physical self is erased only to be re-asserted in the artist's signature patterns (2000:34).

This is a crucial observation that brings Kusama and Kawara together: repetition as manifestation of existence.

#### **4.5.4 Repetition and *arkhé* in Darboven, Kawara and Kusama**

All three artists employ repetition in their work. For Kawara and Darboven repetition becomes a way of solidifying time and through this a way of reassuring - us and them - of their existence. For Kusama repetition is a loss and a reaffirmation of the self at the same time.

*Time through repetition* in Darboven is intrinsically tied to a sense of order: an order that is externally imposed by an authority of some kind, something which I include within the concept *arkhé*. According to Derrida 'Archivable meaning is also and in advance codetermined by the structure that archives' (*ibid.* 18). This structure is created in



Darboven's work through repetition, her repetitive submission to an *arkhê* creates meaning.

In Kawara's work there is an arbitrariness inherent in the choice of the condition he chooses to describe his day with. It almost seems that there could have been another everyday, equally mundane, event chosen to describe his day in *I Got Up* without the gesture of his artwork being affected. However personal the event he describes the investment lies in the repetition of the gesture rather than the content. He tells us something about himself but in the end tells us nothing. Repetition almost de-subjectifies the work. In this manner he is close to Darboven's use of repetition as a repetition of something foreign to the self.

For Yayoi Kusama repetition is neither the instrument of *arkhê* (Darboven) nor an arbitrary condition (Kawara). The repetition of the 'polka-dots' derives from her personal experience and is transformed in the artwork into an instrument of losing and re-affirming the self. As Ruth Blue commented<sup>5</sup> in her speech *Art Habit and Metamorphosis* at 'The Poetics of Immateriality' conference, for Kusama, habitual movement is a form of hypnosis that gets transmitted in the artwork. Illusions of nothingness and disappearance run across her work.

#### 4.5.5 Connections with *VD1*

*Video Diary 1* was one of my first attempts to counteract *stasis*. Through its analysis I identified some of the characteristics of *stasis* and explored the role that *VD1* played in the construction of my subjectivity. As a subject in *stasis* I remained in a state of uncertainty and anticipation, an almost hibernating subject. *VD1* was the antidote to *stasis* providing continuity through repetition and my submission to *arkhê*. Although *VD1* was not conceived as part of my artistic practice, as I discovered through the analysis of works by Kusama, Kawara and Darboven, repetition and submission to *arkhê* had actually been used in a way parallel to the way I used them in *VD1*.

Although *VD1* was not made with an intention of creating an artwork, I subsequently developed works that dealt with discontinuity in the art process, what I understand as *stasis*. I developed these works at different stages in the research. Their connections



have to do with their specific preoccupations with process and *stasis*. I am presenting them in the next section and analyse them with a view to establishing the strategies of the artist as subject in *stasis*. The works are:

- *Doing it Yourself*
- *Art Rules*
- *Procrastinator*
- *Perfect Day*
- *Diary 01*

## 4.6 Works

### 4.6.1 *Doing It Yourself: A Step by Step Guide to Fine Art Research*

Video, 3.47 min

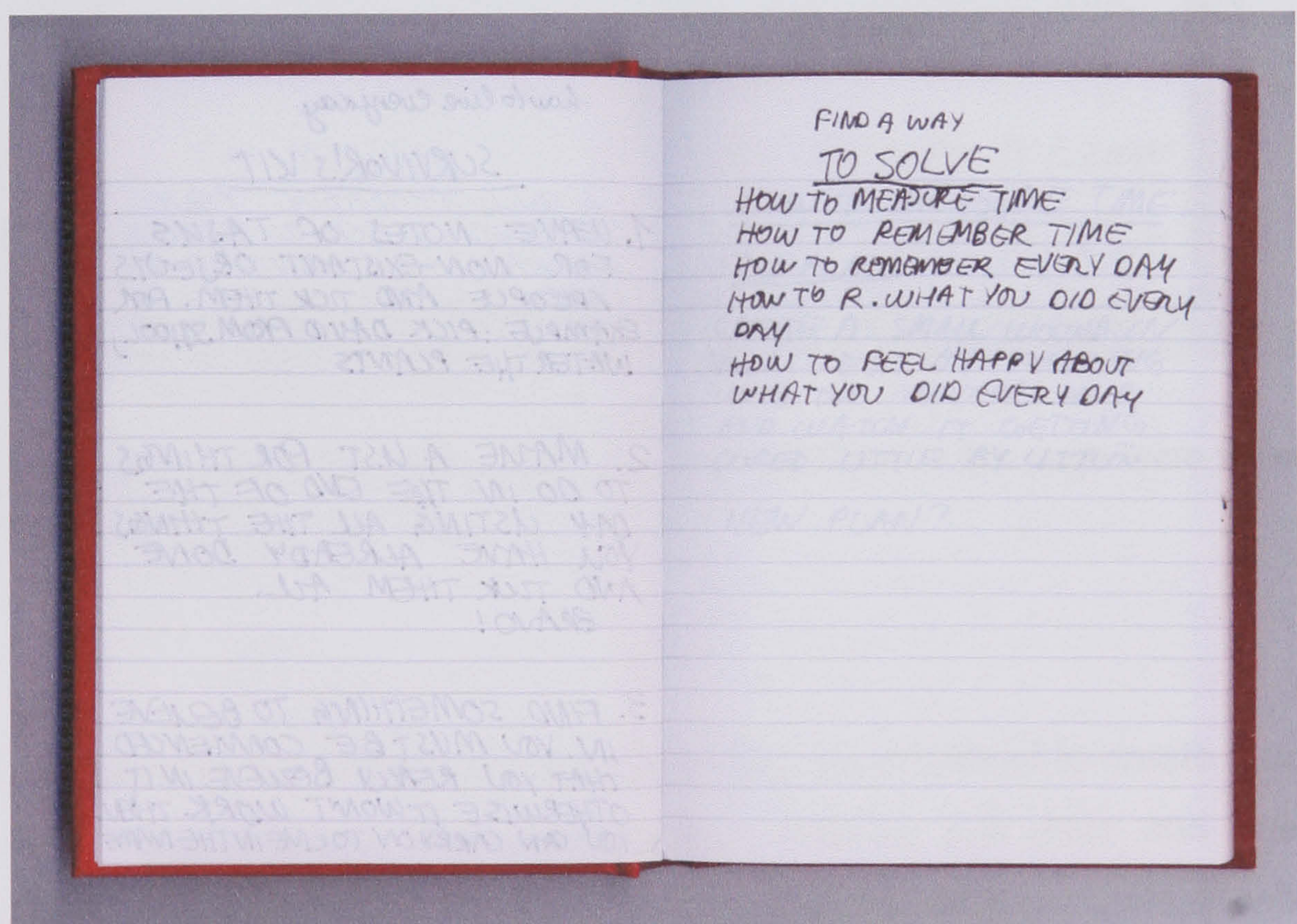


Figure 15. Page from the *Better Write Book*.



*Doing It Yourself* started as notes in the *Better Write Diary*. My preoccupation with the way things are done ('How to...'), time, memory and work satisfaction is expressed in the diary page in Figure 15.

On a page following the one in Figure 15 I had made a number of notes under the title 'Survivor's Kit' with 'how to live everyday' written over it (Figure 16). On a later date I made another entry, again titled 'Survivor's Kit'. Under this title I printed: 'Invent a new system everyday. Never follow it'.

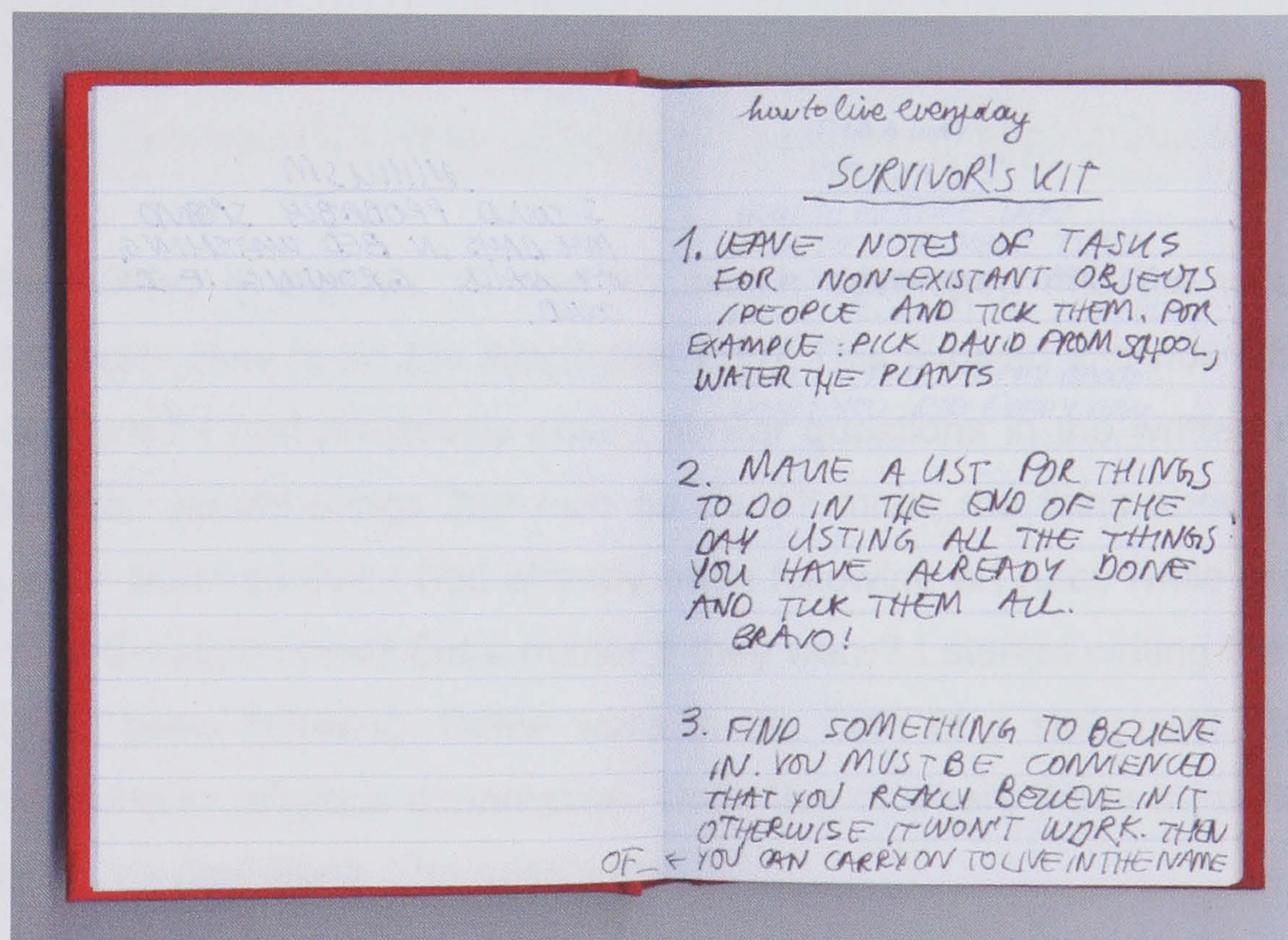


Figure 16. Page from the *Better Write Book*. Some of the ideas in this page were utilised in the script of *Doing It Yourself*.

The ideas included in the previously mentioned diary were utilised to create a script of a mock self-help documentary. The actors' roles were for one male and one female presenter who would introduce the documentary and for three academics who would offer their advice on the themes of *Writing*, *Planning* and *Task Listing*. A number of



people collaborated in the shooting of the video. The video imitates the language of self-help literature, and the aesthetics and staging of educational television programmes.

*Doing It Yourself* addresses discontinuity in the process. It is an attempt to overcome the difficulties, hang ups and ultimately an inability to carry on with work - what I have already described as *stasis*. I attempted to demystify the process of doing research by introducing humour and irony, usual parts of my previous work. I presented strategies for overcoming difficulties with writing the thesis, multitasking, and planning the day and the research.

#### 4.6.2 **Art Rules**

Web-site/CD-Rom

Work-in-progress. Call for participation available at <http://artrules.20m.com>

In the diary entries in Figures 15 and 16, which developed into the video *Doing It Yourself*, I wonder *How to do the things that I do?* This evolved into *how should things that I do be done?* I had previously posed similar questions in the written diaries (see Chapter 3). *How should things that I do be done?* made me think about the rules of producing art. I believed that I had already been following art rules while producing my art. Were they the right ones? Did it matter if they were? I started writing the rules that I believed I had been following. Some were in the form of a statement. Some had a 'heroic', manifesto or religious connotation. Uncertain of where these rules fitted in I put them in my *Plan-a-Day Book*. The rules were:

- *Art is a solitary act.*
- *Be prepared to lose everything.*
- *Push ideas to extremes.*
- *There is no borderline between life and art.*
- *Shut out the world in order to create.*
- *Things are important because you notice them.*
- *There is a right time for ideas to emerge.*
- *Best conditions may impede creativity.*
- *Immersion is necessary.*
- *Take notice of things coming your way.*



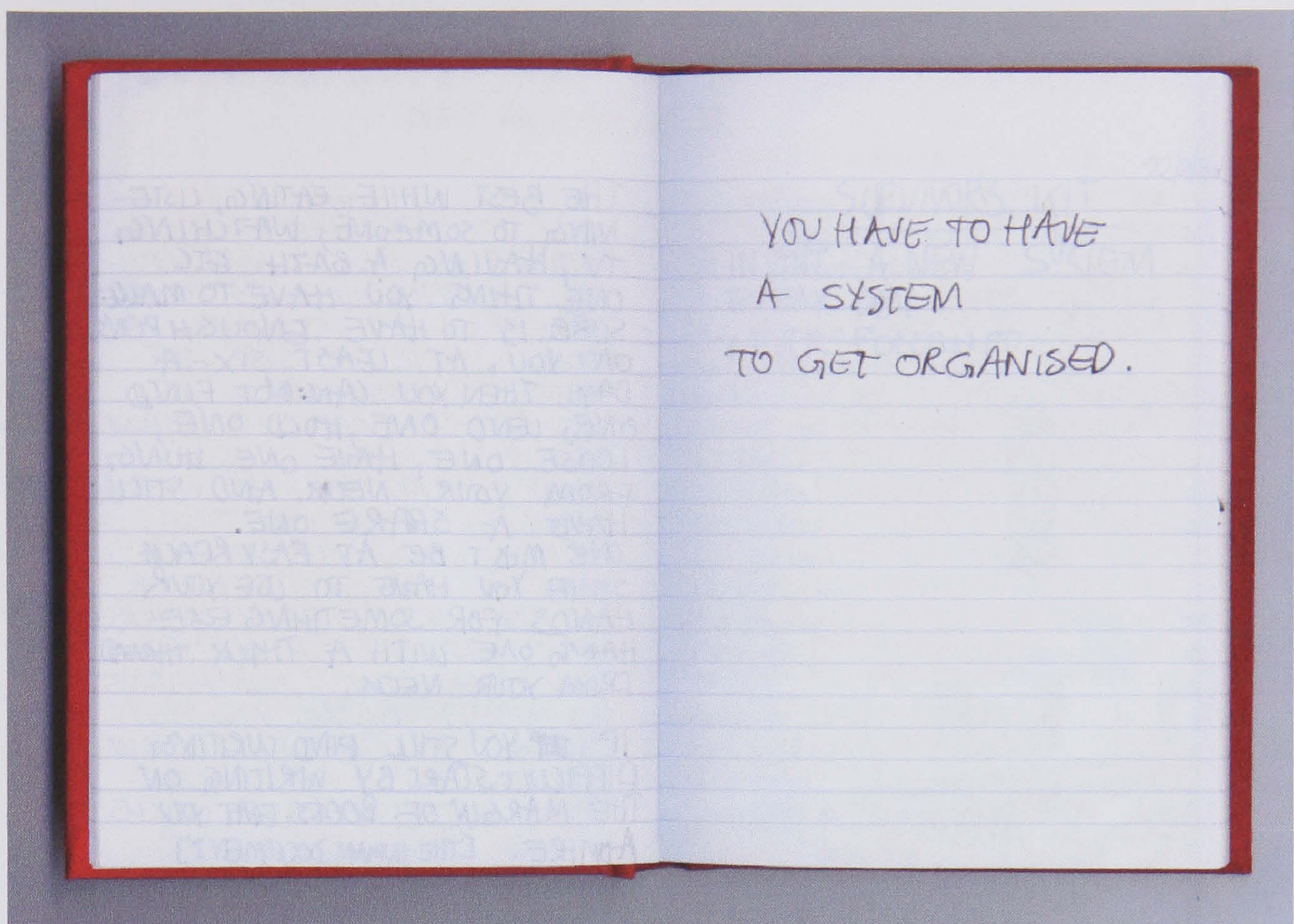


Figure 17. An example of a rule from the *Better Write Book*.

I wondered whether these rules made sense to anyone other than myself. I also wondered whether I had always been following them, if it mattered whether I did and if they changed throughout time. I produced these rules as stickers and stuck them around the Central Saint Martins College sites. I also distributed them at the *Exchange 2000* conference (organised by the University of the West of England) where I was doing a poster presentation entitled *The Secret Diaries of the Artist: Fraud or Fiction?* (see Figure 18). Following this presentation I decided to produce some more stickers with an email address on, in case someone wanted to contact me about them. I also devised a call sent to e-mail lists asking people to send in their own rules. In the call I was proposing to use the feedback sent to create a 'Universal Art Rules Machine' (call still available at <http://www.artrules.20m.com>). The call had a high level of response; in total, 300 rules were included in the responses. I then developed my original idea of the 'Universal Art Rules Machine' into a 'slot-machine' in which the user could actually win rules which you would then choose to follow or not.





Figure 18. *Art Rules* as presented at the *Exchange 2000* Art and Design conference at the Watershed Media Centre in Bristol organised by the University of the West of England (Poster presentation).



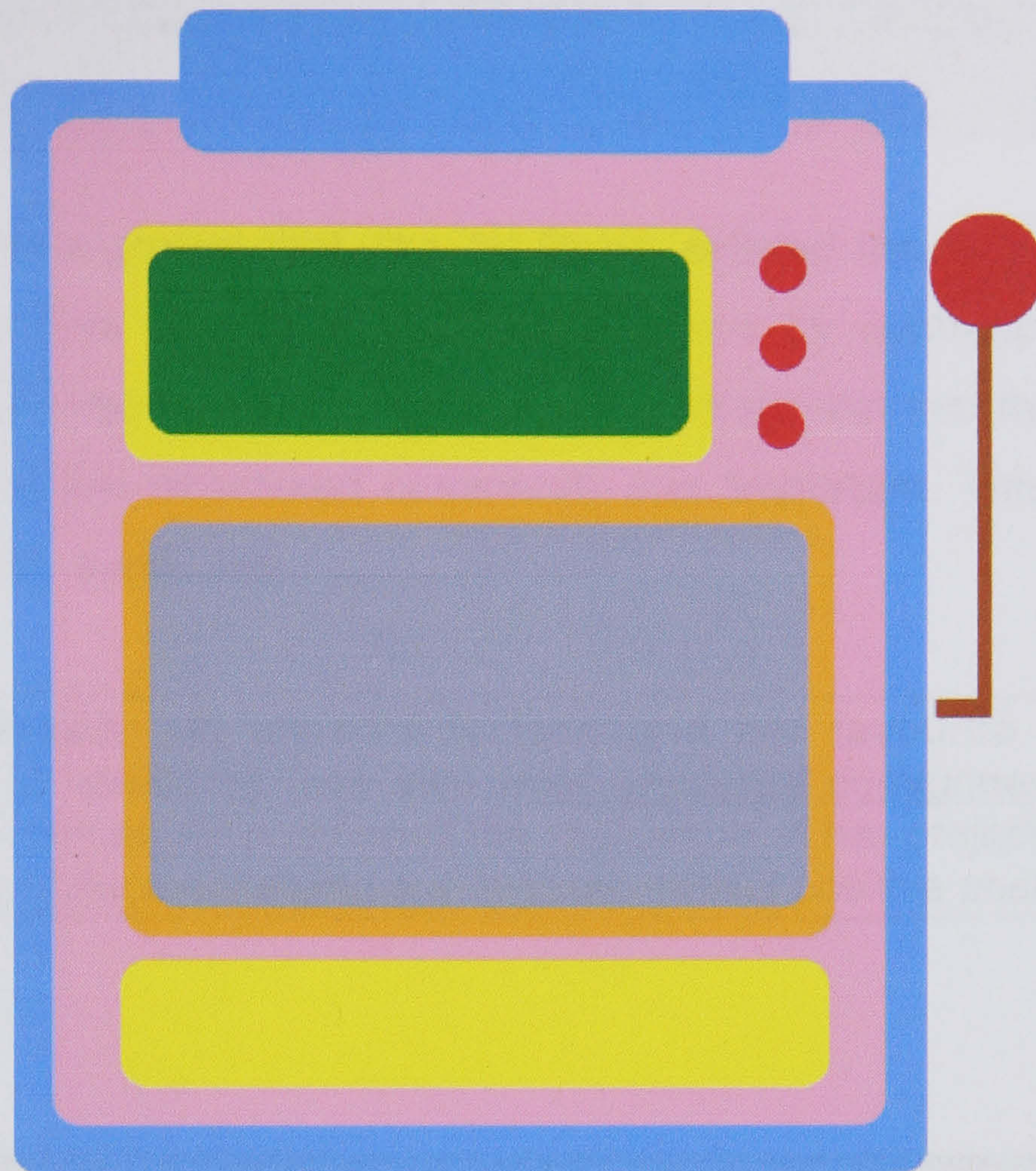


Figure 19. Model for the Universal Art Rules Machine.

This work exists as work in progress. This is how I plan to continue with this project. The collected rules along with my own rules will be put into a database. The Universal Art Rules machine will be build according to the model displayed in Figure 19. In the top yellow rectangle there will be 3 different letters 'a', 'r' and 't' that will potentially form the word art in the winning entry. A user of the machine will be able to play in the following way. By pressing the big red circle (where the handle is in Figure 19) the letters on the top yellow rectangle will revolve to randomly stop in a position. If the letters will form 'art' then an art rule will be displayed in bottom grey square. The process will be manipulated so that there is a 'win' at least once in three times. The 3 red circles on the right of the machine will be interactive buttons. On clicking the top button the user will be relocated to a new page holding information on the project. On clicking the middle button the user will be relocated to new page where he will be able to contribute to the project with a new rule. On clicking the bottom page the user will be able to print the 'rule' on display in the page.



4.6.3 *Procrastinator*

Interactive animation, Flash Player, audio  
available at <http://www.arealartist.com/procrastinator/theprocrastinator.html>

Procrastinator was a project that, like *Art Rules*, enlisted the help of others in order to exist. It was another attempt to get out of stasis by contemplating inactivity and uncertainty and incorporating them in the work. But the fact that this attempt was made in the confines of the networked community was important. This is how I circulated procrastinator in my e-mail lists.

Caught between an uncertainty loop and her favourite unproductive behaviour of nail-biting (see also [www.arealartist.com/unnecessary.html](http://www.arealartist.com/unnecessary.html)), the artist continuously postpones the realisation of her projects. The viewer is given the chance of helping out by some careful positive positioning.

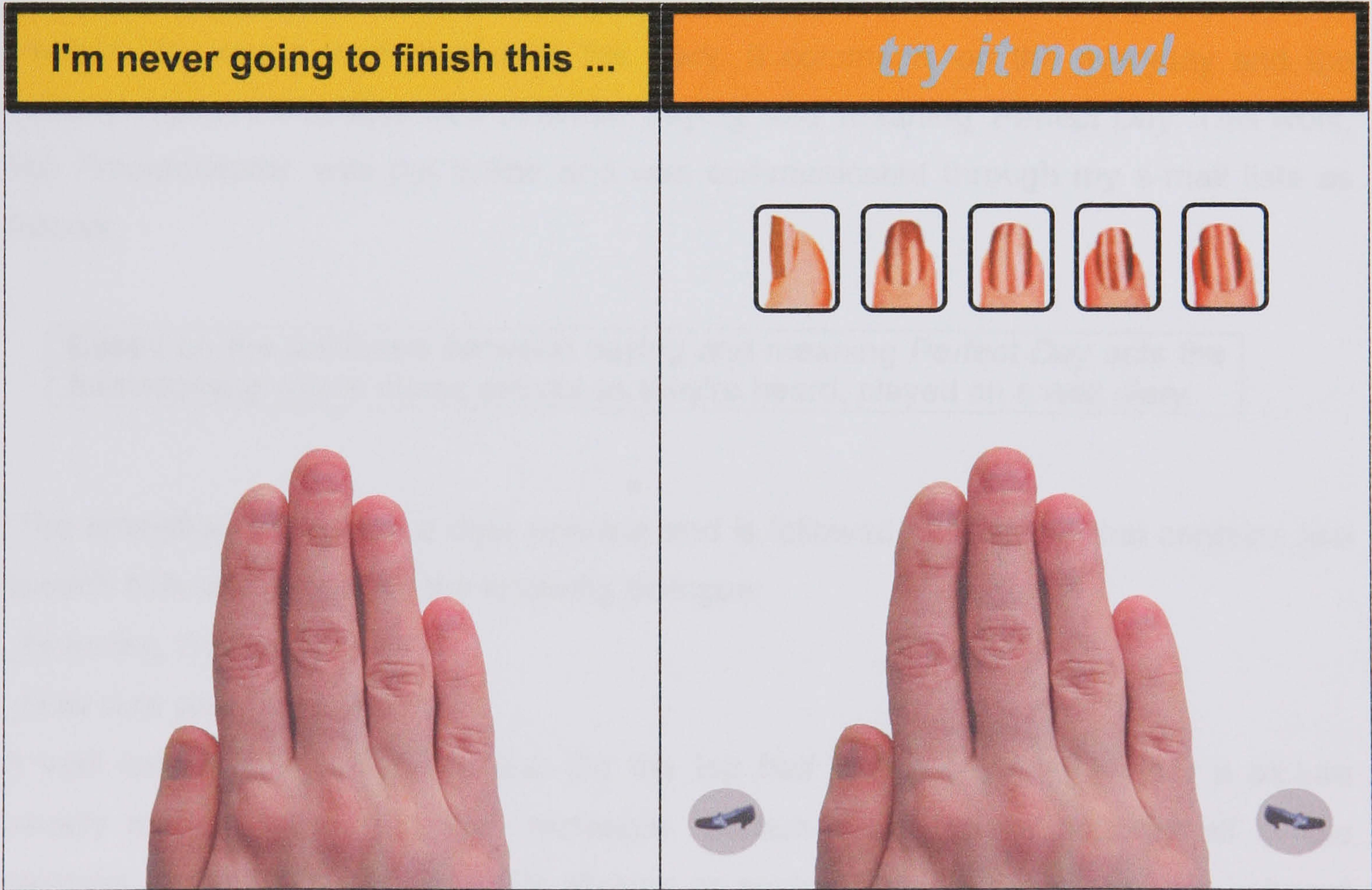


Figure 20. Two stills from consecutive scenes of *Procrastinator*.



In the interactive animation my right hand is on view. My bitten nails are interactive buttons that when pressed present a number of 'failure narratives' such as 'I am never going to finish this' while an unsettling repetitive sound is heard. In the next scene the viewer is urged to help 'procrastinator'. A set of long painted nails is now on screen. Each nail is an interactive button which, if clicked, is placed on top of the bitten nail on screen. A sound that resembles television game sound effects is then heard. In the next scene an image of myself on a cloud rises to the top of the screen while an 'ambient' uplifting sound is heard. 'Thank you' is displayed when the ascent stops.

#### 4.6.4 *Perfect Day*

Interactive animation, Flash Player, audio

available at <http://www.arealartist.com/perfectday/perfect.html>

and as flash movie in DVD-Rom

Voice by Elaine Arkell

*Perfect Day* was a work based on the diary. It comments on the everyday and the socially imposed discrepancies between 'saying' and 'meaning' *Perfect Day*. This work, like *Procrastinator*, was put online and was communicated through my e-mail lists as follows.

Based on the antithesis between saying and meaning *Perfect Day* acts the *homecoming* where things are not as they're heard, played on a wall diary.

The animation starts with a door opening and is followed by a scene that contains two speech balloons displaying the following dialogue:

\_Hi honey, I'm home!

\_How was your day dear?

A wall calendar is then displayed. On the top half of the calendar (where a picture usually stands) there is a blue rectangle. Certain dates on the bottom half of the calendar are interactive buttons. On clicking on such a button a woman's voice is heard recounting her day in a sentence. What the woman recounts is a 'happy' incident. For example: 'Everyone seemed to agree with me today, the easiest day of my life.' On the top half of the diary another sentence is displayed, word by word, during the voiceover.



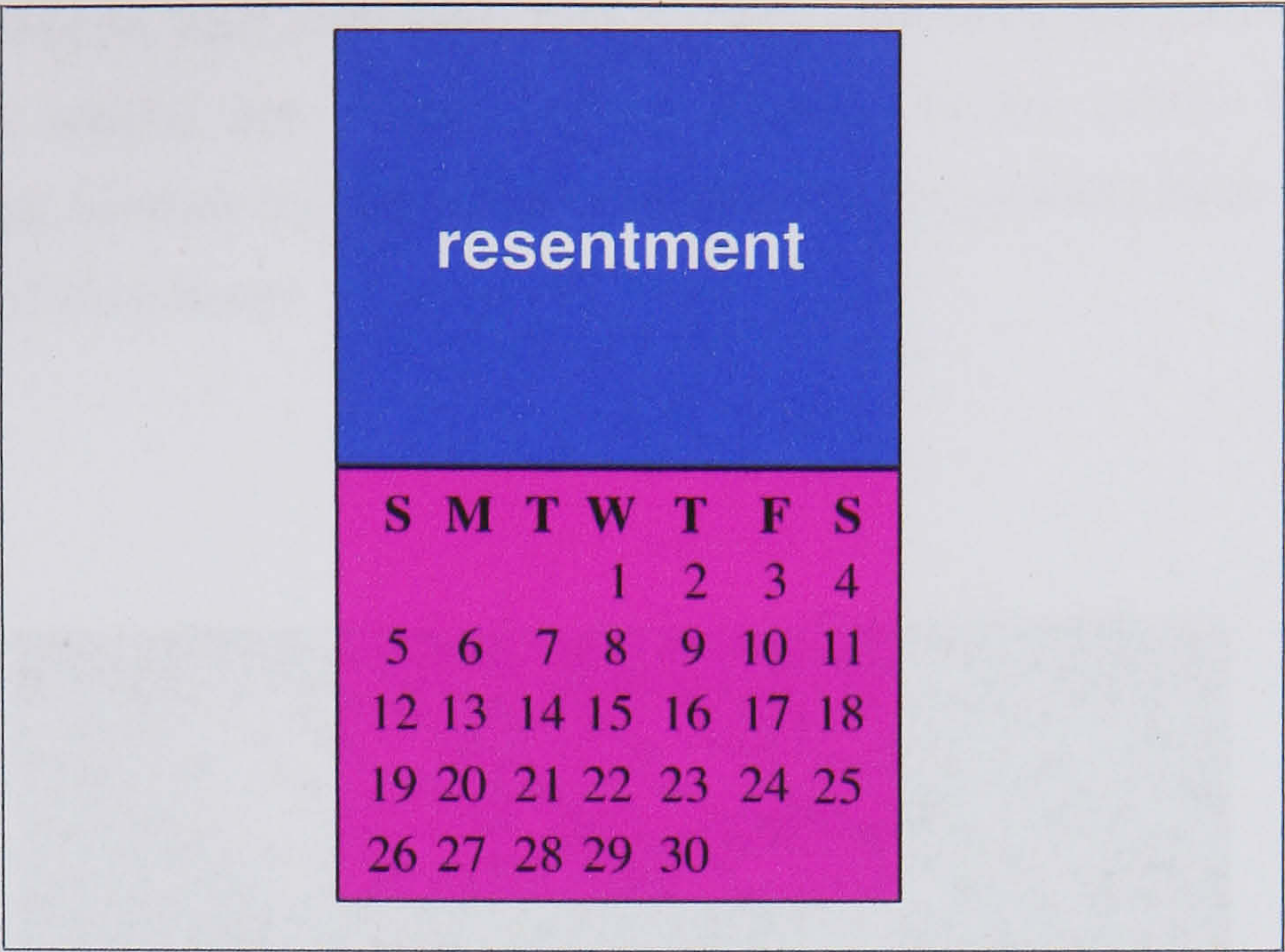


Figure 21. Still from *Perfect Day*.

What is recounted in this sentence is an ‘unhappy’ incident: ‘Awful, but everyone else seemed to be doing alright.’ Initially a list of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ reactions were recorded as voice-overs. In the end the ‘good’ reactions were used as voice-overs to create the antithesis with the written word.

**4.6.5 *diary01***

single screen projection  
Director projector including Quick Time movies, looped, no audio  
Included in DVD-Rom

*Diary01* is a single screen projection that comprises nine different Quick Time movies (originally recorded as digital video). The video recordings for this work were inspired by the video recording of *VD1*. The videos utilised were not the ones of *VD1* but drew on observations I made on *VD1*. I was attracted by the minimal and repetitive movement in these video recordings and believed that they had a mesmerising effect that created an almost hypnotic feeling. The videos in *diary01* are parts of video footage that I have recorded from the inside of my house, the camera facing outwards. The videos are created by repetition and light. There is a looping of minimal movement that is usually



induced by the elements (rain and wind) and is made visible by artificial light (road lamps or car lights). The videos are almost monochromatic. These videos seem to hold a mesmerising quality created by repetition while retaining some aesthetic complexity that holds the interest of the viewer.



Figure 22. Stills of two of the quick time movies that comprise *diary01*.

The videos had a kind of 'emptying' effect on me. It was a hypnotising effect, a kind of losing of the self within a safe environment. Previously in this chapter I connected this



hypnotic feeling with *VD1* as refuge for the subject. *Diary01* was recorded throughout the research and from the windows of two different houses that I lived in during this period. The nine videos that make up the projection take advantage of the different degrees of complication in the movement visible in each of them to create a projection with visible effects of repetition and different complexity.

#### 4.7 Strategies of the artist as subject in *stasis*

In the previous chapter *stasis* was connected with *discontinuity* in the written diaries. In this chapter the state of the artist as subject in *stasis* was further defined. *Stasis* during the recording of *VD1* was connected with *emptiness* of content and intention and the experience of *stasis* by the artist was connected with *frustration* and *uncertainty*. I have detected how repetition and *arkhê* were used as antidote to *stasis* in *VD1*. I have also shown how they have been employed by Darboven, Kawara and Kusama in their artworks. My own works presented in this chapter were different negotiations of *stasis*. I will now try to combine the research made so far and my own works in order to determine the strategies of the artist as subject in *stasis*.

##### 4.7.1 Repetition creating a refuge for the subject

In Yayoi Kusama's work, repetition was intentionally employed in what she called 'self-obliteration', a losing of the self in repetition. By analysing *Video Diary 1* I discovered how repetition had formed a refuge where my self as subject was hibernating by avoiding choice. *Stasis*, emptied of what I would have perceived as the action of the artist was transformed through the repetition of an act (a 'false' act), that created the *alibi* of action.

Avoiding the act of choosing was one of the characteristics of my behaviour while recording *VD1*. By this I created a legitimate emptiness (emptiness of content or intention) where I did not have to perform one of the defining attributes of the subject: choice. According to Jean Paul Sartre, freedom to choose is the domain of the subject



but the subject usually flees this responsibility (what he calls *Bad Faith*). He explains in *Being and Nothingness* (1943<sup>1</sup>, 2000):

The essential consequence of our earlier remarks is that man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being. We are taking the word 'responsibility' in its ordinary sense as a '*consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or of an object*' (553, my italics).

In the same book he also talks of the state of anxiety ('anguish') as the state in which the meaning of being can be apprehended. It is in this state that the subject can 'decide the meaning of being - within it and everywhere outside of it' (*ibid.* 556). What Sartre has described as 'anguish' (anxiety) I include in the characteristics of *stasis*. In the case of *VD1* anxiety and frustration was dealt through repetition in the role of '*alibi* of action'. In *diary01*, a work developed after *VD1*, I consciously employed repetition to recreate a losing of the self, and a refuge for the subject. *diary01* focused on scenes of minimal activity and repetition. The movies that comprise this piece were created by zooming on the scenes created by the elements and artificial light on surfaces in the urban environment. The resulting frame allowed the viewer to see parts of these scenes at the limits of them being recognisable. The bigger picture of which these scenes were a part was barely decipherable. I was seduced by this fact, commenting on one of the recordings: 'it is magical' and 'it is computer-like' (audible comments on original recording). The hypnotising seductive feeling of *diary01* formed not only a loss of the self, similar to that mentioned by Kusama, but my *refuge* within the state of *stasis*. In this way I believe that repetition was shown to form a potential strategy for the artist in *stasis*, a way of enduring the uncertainty and absence of action that this state entails.

#### 4.7.2 Submission to *arkhê* as a way of providing continuity.

Michel Foucault speaks of the mode of subjection (*mode d' assujettissement*); as a 'way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice' (1984: 27). This function of subjection has been demonstrated in the work of Hanne Darboven in an exemplary way and was made possible through the tool of repetition and repetition through copying. I am relating submission to *arkhê* to Foucault's mode of subjection. In my works *Art-Rules* and *Doing*



*It Yourself* I dealt with submission to *arkhê* as a way of overpowering discontinuity, discontinuity being one of the characteristics of *stasis*. However, contrary to Darboven, I have retained an ambivalent relationship with *arkhê*. While *Art-Rules* potentially produces rules of making art that the artist could choose to follow, these would be arbitrarily produced. There is no sense of hierarchy about them and it is as if *it doesn't matter* which one you would choose to follow. In *Doing It Yourself* I proposed a *mode d'emploi* for carrying out what I had already undertaken: research in fine art. This is another work developed and produced during *stasis*. In *Doing It Yourself* I embraced positivism as a way of avoiding discontinuity. However in practice I was not able to follow my own suggestions, discontinuity was not 'mastered' and I retained an ambivalent relationship with *arkhê* throughout the research. I deemed it significant however to address the issue of *arkhê* for these works and make the connection they had with periods of *stasis*. Submission to *arkhê* was carried out 'successfully' in the case of Hanne Darboven. In my case I retained an irresolute position towards 'submission to *arkhê*' opting to remain in constant contemplation of its potential benefits in overcoming the state of *stasis*. I would like to propose submission to *arkhê* as a way of providing continuity as a strategy employed by artists in a state of *stasis*.

#### **4.7.3 The creation of a network of complicity as an affirmation of existence.**

For On Kawara, his existence was constantly acknowledged, through a network of people with whom he regularly communicated (see works *I Got Up* and *Telegram*). The fact that these people were aware that he existed convinced him he was indeed 'still alive'! In my works *Procrastinator*, *Perfect Day* and *Art Rules* I create my own network, communicating through the Internet my response to discontinuity, the despair of the everyday and my frustration. In this way I enlisted others to resolve aspects of *stasis* in a way that preserved the understanding of the everyday. I would like to propose creating a network of complicity as another strategy that artists adopt in periods of *stasis*.



#### 4.8 Recognising myself

The different strategies were developed initially with the use of *Video Diary 1* and later with the production of my artworks. The study of the artists however was what helped me recognise the strategies that I was adopting, by discovering the similarities and differences with the strategies already adopted by other artists. For example Darboven had a systematic approach to order and *arkhé*. My relationship with *arkhé* was 'littered' with erratic resistance, discontinuity and occasional compliance. However the study of Darboven's work helped me to recognise the significance *arkhé* had attained in my own work and established it as a strategy in the contemporary art context. Although all the strategies I propose had already been employed by other artists, my contribution lies in connecting them with the state of *stasis* as a state that the artist potentially wishes to escape from.



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<sup>1</sup> CADE Postgraduate Forum and CADE conference, Glasgow.

<sup>2</sup> Choice as one of the main elements that constitute the subject is developed in the next chapter with reference to the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre.

<sup>3</sup> Cladders touches one side of this issue when he writes that: 'Darboven has been writing since the late nineteen sixties. And it's writing she does, not making texts. Her field is not literature but the visual arts.' (Cladders 1982: no page numbers).

<sup>4</sup> Statement made on the occasion of the Art in Series exhibition, Finch College Museum of Art, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Presented at the conference *The poetics of (im)materiality*, ICA/Central Saint Martins College, London, ICA 24 June 2000.



## 5. STASIS and DRASIS

### 5.1 The Artists' action

One of my presuppositions (of what would be included in the diary) was that the diary would be a record of my *actions* and of the results of these *actions*. These *actions* I considered to be part of the elements that defined my *role* as artist / researcher. An illustration of this can be found in my first entry in the *Better Write Book*. In this entry I attempted an overview of the research by listing all of my actions up to that point. My past actions were: collecting material (specifically articles with keywords such as *digital* and *computer*), looking at the bibliography of these articles and researching their references, collecting articles on the *self* and *autobiography* and reading actual autobiographies. After listing what I had already done during that research period I concluded:

*I am not sure I quite remember what I did since October. Or, more accurately, the things I remember don't add up to the time (2/3-2-2000, Better Write Book).*

The *actions* that I remembered/accounted for in the diary entry, occupied only part of the time that had passed. There was a time in between actions described in the diary, that remained unaccounted for: '*What happened all this time. I am lost.*' I remark later in the same entry. Is it that *nothing* had happened?

### 5.2 The meaning(s) of nothingness

#### 5.2.1 Thought time and pre-action

An examination of the periods of supposed inactivity, included in *MD2* (see Appendix), led me to the definition of a *pre-action* period, which I claimed to be an inherent part of *acting* (creating art). In the same text I concluded that *action* could not actually have happened without this *pre-action* period taking place first. This examination was largely based on Bachelard's study of time in *The Dialectic of Duration* (1950<sup>1</sup>, 2000) and particularly on his definition of *function*. In his analysis he speaks of 'thought time' (2000:



37) as the time before we allow an action to begin. He views nothingness as possibility, the possibility of action.

We need to give ourselves the *temporal alternative* that can be analysed by these two observations: either in this instant, nothing is happening or else in this instant, something is happening. Time is thus continuous as possibility, as nothingness (*ibid.* 44).

In *MD2* periods of inactivity, initially perceived as nothingness, were analysed as *pre-acting* periods, inherent parts of their subsequent *actions*. However *pre-action* did not always conclude in *action* in the context of this research. The piece (*Model Citizens*) I had referred to in the end of *MD2* (see Appendix), was never completed. Additionally, a series of works that I had been preparing at the time, which I have since named *Never-Realised Projects*, are still at the stage which their name indicates. Consequently, very frequently, time for these works remained ‘anchored’ in *pre-action*. Finally, if the time not recorded in the diaries was not the time of *pre-action* was it true that *nothing* had happened?

### 5.2.2 The nothing that *is* there and the nothing that *is not*

In the analysis of *Video Diary 1* in chapter four, I speak of the occasion when I introduced *VD1* in the following manner: ‘There is nothing there to see.’ An analysis of *VD1* revealed however that *nothing* was actually *something*, but not what I would have regarded as *something interesting* (mentioned in *MD1* as ‘my non-original surroundings’) or *something appropriate*.

Furthermore, as Cousins has noted, nothingness can be defined by the absence of the *proper* event: ‘what was supposed to be there.’<sup>1</sup> The absence of the *proper* event in the case of my research is the production of art, what I call *action*, the absence of which renders the process of making art as nothingness. In the previously mentioned *Better Write Book* entry I write:

*Practically though it didn’t really happen. It is a practice-base research without a practice.*



*Nothing written* is regularly reported in diaries published in different historical periods. Alan Taylor attests that: 'There are few things quite as capable of inducing guilt as an empty diary' (2000: vii) while Thomas Mallon informs us that 'nothing never happens' (1995: xii). Here are some examples of the 'types' of nothingness we have already encountered, found in extracts of diaries:

- An incomplete action is *not* the *proper* action. In the case of Franz Kafka *nothing written* refers to his literary work, his practice. In this example the absence of the *proper* action is connected with a sense of *lack* and *loss*.

20 October 1913

...  
Perhaps I am really lost. The sadness of this morning will return again, I shall not be able to resist it for long, it deprives me of all hope. I don't even have the desire to keep a diary, perhaps because there is already too much lacking in it, perhaps because I should perpetually have to describe incomplete – by all appearances *necessarily* incomplete – actions, perhaps because writing itself adds to my sadness (1982: 233).

- Nothingness as repetition of the same: A repeated act is *not* the *proper* action. In this case the absence of the *proper* action is connected with a state of banality and boredom: it is worth recalling the diary of Walter Scott included in chapter three.

January 1829

Having omitted to carry on my diary for two or three days, I lost heart to make it up, and left it unfild (sic) for many a month and day. During this period nothing has happend (sic) worth particular notice. The same occupations, the same amusements, the same occasional alterations of spirits, gay or depressd (sic), the same absence of all sensible or rational cause for the one or the other – I half grieve to take up my pen, and doubt if it worth while to record such an infinite quantity of nothing. But hang it! I hate to be beat so here goes for better behaviour (2000: 3).

Thus nothingness is connected in these two occasions with the perception of that which constitutes the *proper action*, within the process of creating art. I will call the *proper* action and its result the *event*. The *event* includes the interesting action and the important action and is considered 'entitled' to an inclusion in the diary. The absence of the *event* is perceived as nothingness.



### 5.2.3 Something *interesting*

*Actions* that went unrecorded in my diaries were the ones I assessed as uninteresting or unimportant. So periods of inactivity or 'nothingness' were periods of unrecorded (assessed as uninteresting) *actions* rather than periods when nothing occurred. The *interesting* in social sciences as well as in History is connected with the extraordinary event. Brekhus attests

The study of social life often neglects the ordinary in favor of the extraordinary. Historians study 'eventful' time periods more than 'uneventful' ones, cultural anthropologists are generally drawn to distant and exotic cultures rather than familiar ones, sociologists tend to study important social problems over quotidian reality, and journalists focus more on extraordinary individuals and groups than ordinary ones (2000: 89-90).

He adds that 'the marking process exaggerates the importance and distinctiveness of the marked' (ibid. 86). Following from that statement, in this research, a marked *action* would become an *event* by its recording in the diary. Marking the *action* by including it in the diary would elevate its status to the interesting, thus important, *action* and would already be an assessment of the *action*. In this manner, by listing in my diary the *actions* referred to in the beginning of the chapter ('research on the digital', 'looked at resources' etc) as *named* ('marked') activities, not only have I rendered them distinguishable from unnamed ones, but I have also presented them with importance *by the act* of naming / 'marking' them.

But what have been the criteria for marking these activities as *legitimate* or *interesting* research activities, in contrast to the rest of the 'unmarked' ones, the latter making up the rest of the time that 'doesn't add up' (*Better Write Book*)? In short what is it that constitutes the (proper) *event* for the artist? In the cases of the diarists in the previous section, the *event* was defined by *exclusion of what it was not*. For Kafka an incomplete action was not an event, while in the case of Walter Scott the event was not a repeated (banal) action.



### 5.3 *Stasis* and *Drasis*: states of the artist as subject

*Stasis* for this research was perceived as a state of the artist as subject, in the process of creating art. *Stasis* has already been examined in the previous chapters and defined as a state of discontinuity, uncertainty and anxiety. In this chapter *stasis* was connected with the *event*. The absence of the *event* rendered the position of the subject as *stasis*. However by analysing the diary entries, employing the notion of the *interesting* from social sciences and taking advantage of the historical context of the diary-keeping it became clear that the notion of the *event* privileged certain *actions* to the exclusion of others. While the artist perceived herself as subject in *stasis*, this was not the consequence of no *events* having taken place. However the fact that the artist perceived herself in *stasis*, at certain stages during the research, remained.

The artworks that I developed since that time reflected on the idea of *stasis* and at times incorporated it as the subject matter of the artwork itself. In my artworks the performance of *stasis* was in a way the *eventisation* of *stasis*. I have developed the term *drasis* to designate a concept that is intended to include the *eventisation* of *stasis*. *Drasis* (from ancient Greek) denotes action but also performance in the theatrical context (hence 'drama'). *Drasis* encompasses what I have already explained as the artist's *action* but also includes the performance of the subject in the works which I will be describing and analysing later in this chapter. By *Drasis* I refer to the performance of subjectivity by which the artist escapes *stasis* and I will be presenting it in this chapter as a strategy of the artist as subject in *stasis*.



## 5.4 Discontinuity and *Never-Realised Projects*

In this section I am presenting *Video Diary 2*, a diary which I kept with the intention of addressing the discontinuity inherent in my work *Never-Realised Projects*. Through the analysis of VD2 and the corresponding written diary entries I attempt to understand how discontinuity was perceived in my own research and what role it held in my practice. Later in this section I study an alternative approach to discontinuity in the work of conceptual artists and an explanation of discontinuity in Freud's theory of sublimation.

### 5.4.1 VD2, written entries and 'space'

*Video Diary 2* was shot in September 2000, in my bedroom, a corner of which I was making use of as work / research space. This space consisted of a desk and some wall space on which visual materials were put. This space (hereafter referred to as *space*) was set up following a period of inactivity. I attempted to recreate the space that had previously proved to enable my creativity. This place was my room

*'a private place and a place of isolation and a place where I could create.'*

I attempted to recreate this space by personalising it. I placed my self-portraits, family photographs and postcards received from friends, on its walls. I describe them in VD2.

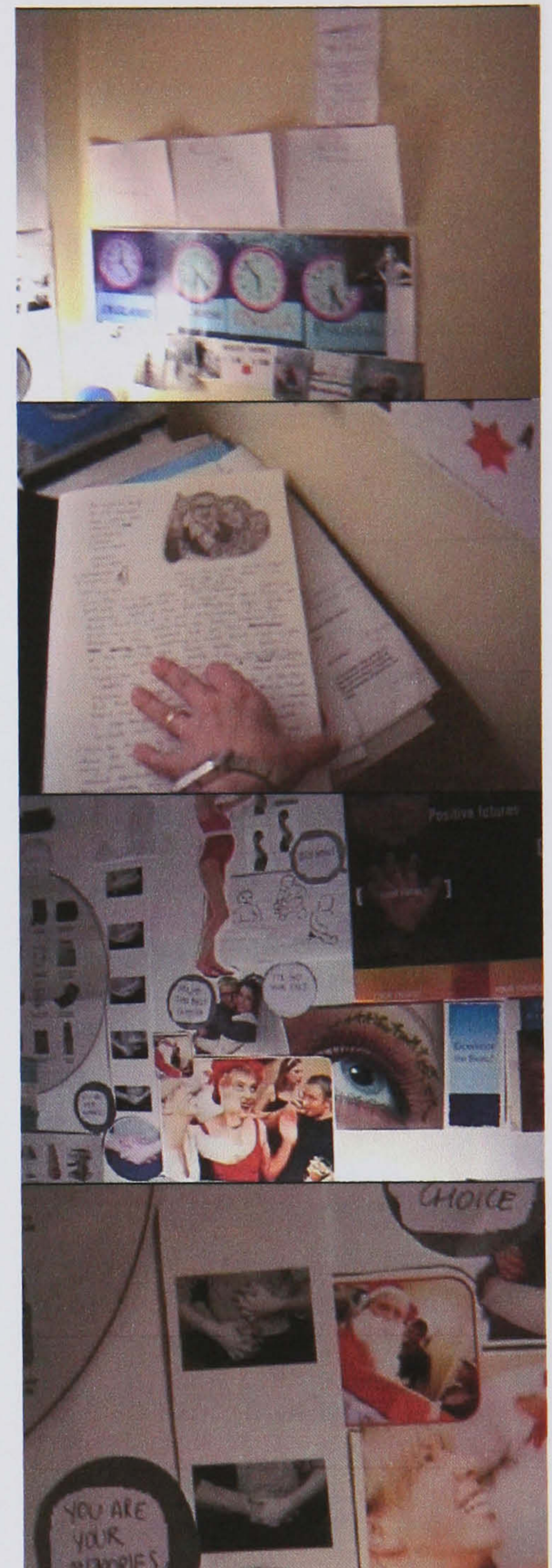


Figure 1. Video stills from VD2.



*'These are old photographs of mine and they are here to remind me of who I am cause I need to be reminded of who I am... cause sometimes I think that I do not exist and these photographs are here for me to tell me that I have been so I probably am right now as well.'*

I then put up on the walls images, photographs sketches and notes for projects not completed yet.

Video diary was shot in three different takes (takes 1,2 and 3). By the term 'take' I refer to a continuous recording. The first two takes were recorded on the same day (24-9-2000) while the third take was recorded on the following day. At the time of shooting the video diary I also made diary entries in the *Better Write Book*. There are two such entries, written at the end of each day of recording. These written diary entries were intended as an alternative way of recording thoughts, one that might bring about different ideas to those included in the video diary. And here is why I believed this would happen:

*I cannot concentrate in live recording(s) as much as in writing. This is partly the language barrier but I think I know it's my way of thinking as well. I was always better in expressing thoughts through writing. (25-9-2000, Better Write Book).*

The written entry on the first day is a recapitulation of the earlier two takes of VD2 but the written entry of the second day concentrates more on evaluation. The video diary was shot in the following way: I was holding the camera while moving around the space and pointing the camera towards the record (sketch, newspaper cutting or

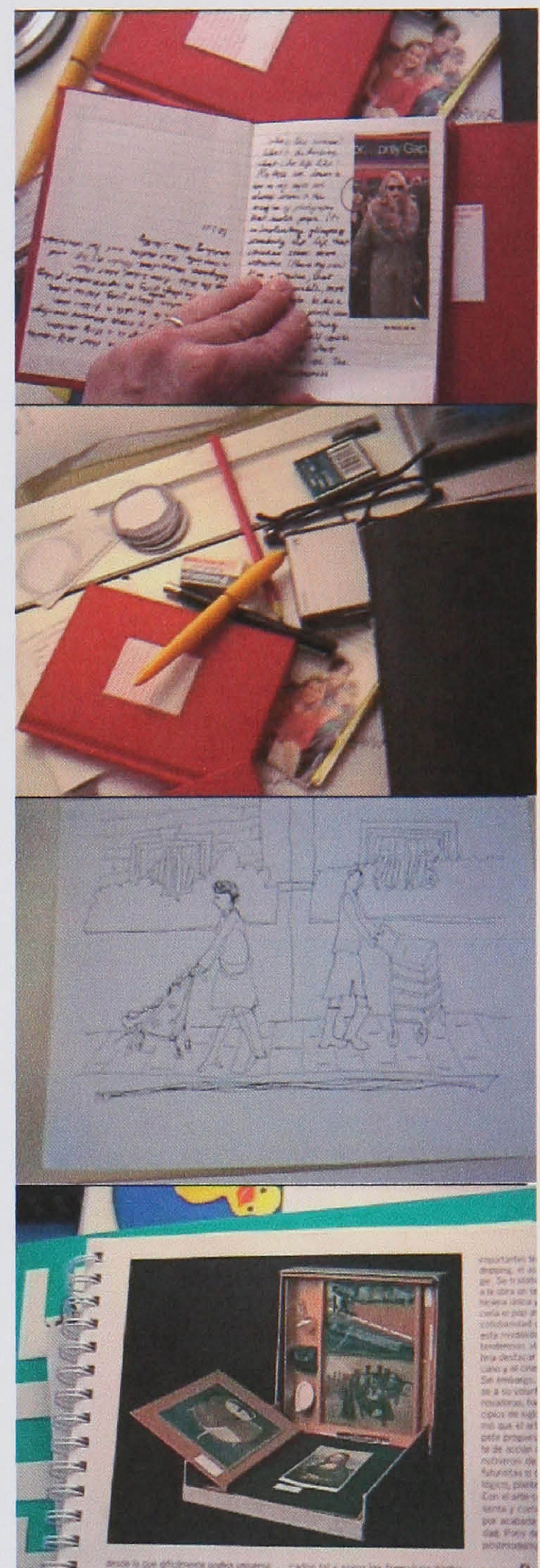


Figure 2. Video stills from VD2.



photograph) that I was discussing. In VD2 I intended to talk about my work as if explaining it to somebody else. Of course there was nobody in conversation with me. However I intentionally put on this performance of (confessional) discussion in an attempt to recreate the constructive experience of understanding through communicating my ideas to others.

*'Having said that there is something about the live recording that resembles conversation. This is a hint of the 'revelatory moment' that I am at times experiencing in conversation. Something that is there that you do not know of.'*

Normally I would have felt uneasy talking to someone about my work at such an early stage. The fact that there was no one listening helped me relax and concentrate on what I was saying.

#### **5.4.2 The Never Realised Projects**

In *Video Diary 2* I describe the *Never Realised Projects* as works which either started as ideas in the *Show Book* or other diaries but were never realised

*'That's all I did, I didn't do anything about it after that.'*

or works for which initial research was carried out but had at the time of the recording not progressed to the next stage

*'There are some things that I collect and maybe they will make sense afterwards and maybe not.'*

These works now exist in the form of notes, photographs, diary extracts, newspaper clippings and sketches. In VD2 I narrate each work starting from my initial intention and explain the visual material on the wall or the extracts of diary that refer to each work. I state my thoughts on what the outcome of these works might be and try to explain why they were never realised. My intention in creating this space and accumulating these items on the wall and table is explained in an extract from VD2.

*'I was quite eager to collect everything I had thought about and everything I had started to design as a project or to draw ... I don't (know) how to say, how to*



*describe this activity happening before you actually start doing something. I wanted to do this because I wanted to concentrate my mind but also I had this sort of fluid idea about what it was that I was actually doing all this time, how much was it, how many projects had I felt that I was doing.'*

This attempt was an attempt of overview, an attempt at an accumulation of everything: activities that I struggle to name ('*design as project or to draw...*'), but which I clearly do not want to call art. This gathering is more than a gathering of thoughts. It is an attempt at creating *continuity* ('*what it was that I was actually doing all this time, how much ..., how many...*'). It is also an attempt at resisting loss. There is a fear of loss of something that has not yet been grasped, but also a fear of my intentional or unintentional downsizing of potentially important ideas.

*I am glad I am doing this documentation of the stages of the project(s) because as projects go on and also as projects get rejected I tend to diminish the account of their development, on the first case, and not to mention anything about them on the latter.*

*By diminishing the account of project I mean to be more concise and accurate and also interesting. Sometimes I do it unintentionally because I'm just forgetting (25-9-2000, Better Write Book).*

By the end of take 1 I was already talking about my desire not to take these projects any further and my frustration at the point when I have realised that this desire was somehow in conflict with my decision to undertake practice-based research. The conflict was apparently the non-production of art (I have already explained that I did not consider as art the research which I had carried out by that time). I resolved this conflict by accepting the projects as autonomous pieces and by naming them *Never-Realised Projects*.

*'So I collected all these designs of projects, I put them up, I thought, maybe, this is what it is, designs about what you think you will do and that's all. And because of the isolation I was feeling I was into, somehow I thought that it didn't really matter if they were executed and that this is in itself an artwork of these projects that were never realised. The never-realised projects.'*

Previous to recording VD2 I had considered problematic the fact that the above mentioned projects remained as ideas or preliminary sketches that did not evolve into what I would have called a finished project. I used VD2 as an attempt to assess the future of the projects (will they ever be finished?), to identify the projects (which were they?) but also as a means of closure ('... *maybe, this is what it is ...*').



### 5.4.3 *Never-Realised Projects* and closure

At the point at which I name them *Never-Realised Projects* the problem of their unfinished state appeared to get resolved. However ‘*I was interested in making something with that, something that I would be pleased about*’, mentioned in VD2, indicates that the reason why I could not proceed was because I was not pleased with what I was producing.

*‘Because some of these things I was thinking of creating, seemed too much explainable, like a premeditated act that you carried out in a good way, and I wasn’t so sure that this is the way that I wanted it to be.’*

I thought of my artwork as being too self-explanatory. I was disillusioned with the process: the end of the project was too predictable. The process of creating art was in that way devoid of the qualities of *discovery* and *becoming* because of this predictability. Hilary Lawson refers to the dissatisfaction caused by the ‘immediacy and obviousness of closure’ in the experience of art (2001: 219). David Rosand provides another exegesis to the question of projects dropped by their creators in his explanation of Leonardo Da Vinci’s numerous abandoned projects.

Leonardo’s long trail of abandoned projects, lamented by a disapproving Vasari, bears witness to the new attitude: the artistic problem, once it has been defined and the barest lineaments of its solution indicated, ceases to interest; bringing the solution to finished form, the merely mechanical, servile realization of *idea*, no longer challenges the creative mind (1981:21).

Leonardo Da Vinci was actually famously discussed as a case study by Sigmund Freud to explain discontinuity through his theory of ‘sublimation’. I will be referring to this theory in the next section in order to enhance the discourse on discontinuity in the process.

### 5.4.4 Discontinuity and sublimation

Freud referred to sublimation sporadically in his writings while his original paper on the subject is considered lost. He sums up his theory of sublimation in the following extract from *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1962<sup>1</sup>, 1995).



We know of a far more expedient process of development, called '*sublimation*', in which the energy of the infantile wishful impulses is not cut off but remains ready for use - the unserviceable aim of the various impulses being replaced by one that is higher, and perhaps no longer sexual. It happens to be precisely the components of the *sexual* instinct that are specially marked by a capacity of this kind for sublimation, for exchanging their sexual aim for another one which is comparatively remote and socially valuable (1995: 88).

Freud found a perfect paradigm of sublimation in art (*ibid*: 81). In his 1910 essay *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood* Freud attempted to explain the reputation of Da Vinci as somebody who painted slowly, at times staring for hours at his work and doing nothing, through his theory of sublimation. He presents some anecdotes from his life as follows.

One of his contemporaries, Matteo Bandelli, the story-writer, who at the time was a young monk in the convent, tells how Leonardo used to often climb up the scaffolding early in the morning and remain there till twilight never once laying his brush aside, and with no thought of eating or drinking. Then days would pass without his putting his hand to it. Sometimes he would remain for hours in front of the painting, merely examining it in his mind. At other times he would come straight to the convent from the court in the castle of Milan, where he was making the model of the equestrian statue for Francesco Sforza, in order to add a few strokes of the brush to a figure and then immediately break off (1910: 156).

Freud found this behaviour problematic. In his theory of sublimation, art is the replacement (sublimation) of lower aims with higher (art). Additionally Leonardo's endless preoccupation with research is seen by Freud as *regression*, again a failure to sublimate fully.

For Freud there is a hierarchy whereby one moves from sex to science (in the general sense of research) to artistic creation. He thinks that art is the better form of sublimation, because it is further away than scientific research from the original impulse in the sense of being a greater transformation of these impulses (La Caze 2000: 264).

An important point in Freud's analysis was when he pointed out that Leonardo himself assessed his own works as unfinished. He added that the finished artwork could be perceived by the artist as 'an unsatisfactory embodiment of what he intended' (*ibid*. 154). He thus marked a distinction between the artist's and the others' perception of the state of the artist's work and implied that the pursuit of perfection could too easily lead to dissatisfaction.



#### 5.4.5 Never-Realised Projects and Conceptual Art (1960-1975)

For Freud the fact that Leonardo did not succeed in sublimating his repressed sexuality into art was problematic. Lawrence Kritzman, in the preface to a special issue of *New York Literary Forum: 'Fragments: incompleteness & discontinuity'*, explains how discontinuity in the finished work of art, what he calls fragmentary work, has been considered as lesser work since Aristotelean times.

Since the time of Aristotle we have been taught to strive for harmony, order and unity at the expense of discordance, disorder and dispersion. Consequently, fragmentary work has developed an indefinite status and been relegated to a marginal position in the great chain of art (Kritzman 1981: vii).

Kritzman traced the appreciation of fragmentary work to the sixth-century Pre-Socratic philosophers and referred to various moments in the history of art such as the Renaissance *nonfinito*. An exemplary contemporary example can be found in the case of *conceptual art*. In conceptual art discontinuity was incorporated in the work of art. Continuity between idea and execution was furthermore deemed unnecessary. Lucy Lippard in an article for *Art International* co-authored with J. Chandler traced the emergence of this movement.

During the 1960's the anti-intellectual, emotional intuitive processes of art-making characteristic of the last two decades have begun to give way to an ultra-conceptual art that emphasizes the thinking process almost exclusively. As more and more work is designed in the studio, but executed elsewhere by professional craftsmen, as the object becomes merely the end product, a number of artists are losing interest in the physical evolution of the work of art. The studio is again becoming a study. Such a trend appears to be provoking a profound dematerialization of art, especially of art as object, and if it continues to prevail, it may result in the object's becoming wholly obsolete. (1968: 42-43)

Conceptual art often produced works in the form of ideas, sketches or parts of the process. Lawrence Weiner included the following text in a catalogue of the exhibition 'Barry, Huebner, Kosuth, Weiner' at Seth Siegelaub in 1969, in New York (Lippard 1997: 80).

1. The artist may construct the piece
2. The piece may be fabricated
3. The piece need not be built

Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist, the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership.



Lippard adds that 'in 1970 (Art in the Mind) Weiner amplified this statement' (ibid.)

As to construction, please remember that as stated above there is no correct way to construct it. If the piece is built it constitutes not how the piece looks but only how it could look.

Constructing the piece was not deemed necessary; there was not really an *end* to the piece. Furthermore, in the case that there was an end to a piece, this was considered only a version of the piece, the important part being the idea behind the piece, as stated in an extract from an article in *Artforum* in which Sol Le Wit first coined the term *conceptual art*:

I will refer to the kind of art in which I am involved as conceptual art. In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. (In other forms of art the concept may be changed in the process of execution.) When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art ... (Lippard 1997: 28-29)

Other characteristic examples of conceptual art are Jonathan Borofsky's *Thought Process* (1969-70), xeroxed copies of illustrated thought processes (included in *My Artists' Database*) or Bruce Mc Lean's *King for a Day plus 99 other pieces incorporating 'The Piece a Minute Show' and the 'World's Fastest Piece in the World'*. Bruce McLean

planned a "retrospective" of a 1000 works, mostly imaginary, including many proposals for performances, and typed them out on sheets of paper which were shown in 1970 at the Nova Scotia College of Art Gallery<sup>2</sup> (Brown 1980: 6).

Sarah Kent commented that 'it was not a set of recipes for success, nor a catalogue of McLean's own work.'

Instead it demonstrated his contempt for the system by parodying the antics of those who took it seriously enough to attempt the struggle to the top. Instead of exploring the possibilities of his own suggestions, he simply listed them and so destroyed all curiosity as to their actual potential as strategies worth exploiting (1980: 12).

Barry Robert stated for his *Telepathic Piece* (1969):

During the exhibition I will try to communicate telepathically a work of art, the nature of which is a series of thoughts that are not applicable to language or image.



At the conclusion of the exhibition the information about the work of art was made known in this catalogue (Lippard 1997: 98).

For conceptual artists such as Sho Kazakura, Donald Burgy and Christine Kozlov (see *My Artists' Database*) the non-execution of art works was not considered problematic as the work would actually usually take the form of a stage in the execution of the artwork: idea, sketch, title, etc.

## 5.5 The subject in *stasis*

I have previously detected discontinuity as one of the characteristics of *stasis*. In this chapter I presented Freud's concept of sublimation as a significant attempt to explain discontinuity in the artist's action. The example of conceptual art was introduced to demonstrate how artists incorporated the concepts of discontinuity, the unfinished and artwork as idea in the artworks themselves. However, during my research I was unable to complete *Never-Realised Projects*, uncertain of whether they were a work of art and despite my attempt to accept them as such by naming them.

In the following sections I will attempt to further map out the characteristics of the artist as subject in *stasis* by examining projects and works and employing the narrative of the film *Persona* by Ingmar Bergman as an exemplary case of presentation of the subject in *stasis*.

### 5.5.1 *Stasis* in *Persona*

I have discovered a parallel between my concept of *stasis* and certain films; for example Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979) and Wim Wenders's *Until the End of the World* (1995). I shall consider one film in particular that exemplifies *stasis* as a state the artist as subject sustains in the process of making art. This film is *Persona* by Ingmar Bergman (1965). Bergman frequently deals with the artist's quest for autonomy (Livingstone 1982) and the artist's self-criticism (Petric 1981). In *Persona* the main character 'challenges with her voluntary silence the very possibility of art's continuation' (Livingstone 1982: 180).



Narrative synopsis:

Mrs Vogler (Elisabeth), an actress, while playing her role as Electra, in the theatre, momentarily stops speaking and does not take the cue from her co-actor. After that she then carries on as normal. The next day, at her house, she has given up speaking. A series of tests show that there is nothing wrong with her, either physically or mentally. The doctor assigns a young nurse, nurse Alma, to take care of her.

Elisabeth, while watching television at the hospital, sees a Buddhist monk setting himself on fire in protest. She gets upset and starts screaming loudly. The doctor comes in and proposes her to spend some time at the doctor's isolated beach house, accompanied by Alma.

In the beach house Alma increasingly becomes more open with Elisabeth and confides in her personal incidents in her life for which she feels remorse. She remarks that they look quite alike. At one point she goes to the post office to send a letter of Elisabeth's to the doctor which she reads. In the letter Elisabeth writes that Alma was 'extremely amusing to study.' Back in the house, Alma accidentally breaks a glass in the porch. She then leaves a piece of the glass lying about. Elisabeth steps on the glass and cuts herself.

Alma gets aggressive about Elisabeth not speaking to her. She wishes that Elisabeth would talk, then says that she actually 'needs' her to talk. Alma then accuses Elisabeth of using her. She grabs



Figure 3. Elisabeth as Electra.



Figure 4. Elisabeth in the hospital.



Figure 5. Elisabeth and Alma comparing their facial characteristics.



Elisabeth: 'Now you're going to talk.' She attempts to throw boiling water at her.

Elisabeth then talks: 'No, stop it'.

Alma asks: 'Is it so important not to lie?' Alma wonders if it is not when Elisabeth is considered healthy that she 'acts'. Elisabeth walks towards the beach and Alma asks for her forgiveness. Mr Vogler visits them and speaks to Alma as if she was his wife. Alma reacts but then starts responding as if she were Mrs Vogler.

Elisabeth is dressed in Alma's uniform. Both place their hands on the table. Elisabeth repeats Alma's words. Alma talks: 'I'll never be like you'. Elisabeth holds a picture of her son. Alma sees it. Alma talks as if she were Mrs Vogler of how being a mother was another role that Mrs Vogler wanted to play but which scared her. 'I am not you' she repeats.

Mrs Vogler talks, she says 'nothing'. The doctor speaks of how she knew Mrs Vogler would recover. Alma and Elisabeth appear to have inter-changable faces on screen.

### Stasis in *Persona*

Discontinuity in *Persona* exists at two levels. In the refusal of the actress (Mrs Vogler) to speak and in the materiality/narrative language of the film (Johns Blackwell 1986). At the first level the artist's refusal to speak is an avoidance of role-paying (*ibid.*) In the extract of dialogue below, silence is presented as the only way not to lie: *Stasis* as truth. The doctor addresses Mrs Vogler in the hospital.

I do understand, you know. The hopeless dream of being. Not doing, just being. Aware and watchful every second. And at the same time the abyss between what you are for others and what you are for yourself. The feeling of dizziness and the continual burning need to be unmasked. At last to be seen through, reduced, perhaps extinguished. Every tone of voice a lie, an act of treason. Every gesture false. Every smile a grimace. The role of wife, the role of friend, the roles of mother and mistress, which is worst? Which has tortured you most? Playing the actress with the interesting face? Keeping all the pieces together with an iron hand and getting them to fit? Where did it break? Where did you fail? Was it the role of mother that finally did it? it certainly wasn't your role as Electra. That gave you a rest. She actually got you to hold out a while more. She was an excuse for the more perfunctory performances you gave in your other roles, your 'real-life roles'. But when *Electra* was over, you had nothing left to hide behind, nothing to keep you going. No excuses. And so you were left with your demand for truth and your disgust. Kill yourself? No - too nasty, not to be done. But you could be immobile. You can keep quiet. Then at least you're not lying. You can cut yourself off, close yourself in. Then you don't have to play a part, put on a face, make false gestures. Or so you think. But reality plays tricks on you. Your hiding place isn't watertight enough. Life starts leaking in everywhere. And you're forced to react. No one asks whether its genuine or not, whether you're true or false. It's only in the theatre that's an important question. Hardly even there, for that matter. Elisabeth, I understand



that you're keeping quiet, not moving, that you have put this lack of will into a fantastic system. I understand it and admire you for it. I think you should keep playing this part until you've lost interest in it. When you've played it to the end, you can drop it as you drop your other parts (Bergman 1972: 41-2).

In *Persona*'s narrative the *doctor* describes some of the characteristics of the anxiety of *stasis*. She talks of *self-awareness*: 'The hopeless dream of being. Not doing, just being. Aware and watchful every second.' She also speaks of *stasis* as an alternative to lying-through-doing (action as lie): 'But you could be immobile. You can keep quiet. Then at least you're not lying.' *Stasis*, in *Persona*, is also as a state in which someone becomes 'almost extinguished' as mentioned in the script of the film.

Mrs Vogler's stay by the sea does her good. The apathy that crippled her while in hospital begins to retire in the face of long walks, fishing trips, cooking, letter-writing and other diversions. At times, however, she sinks back into a vast melancholy, a petrified pain. At such times she becomes immobile, lethargic, almost extinguished (Bergman 1972: 43).

But the doctor also points out that being is inescapable: 'But reality plays tricks on you. Your hiding place isn't watertight enough. Life starts leaking in everywhere. And you're forced to react.' At the end of the movie Alma forces Mrs Vogler to react. The actor then utters the word 'nothing'. Denzin explains

By forcing Elisabeth to relive her experiences as a mother, Alma brings her out of her muteness. This involves a confrontation with the word *nothing*. Alma knows and Elisabeth now understands that being must involve a transcendence of nothingness. As reality leaks into the everyday, action of any sort is meaningful. There is no escaping being (Denzin 1992: 19).

Mrs Vogler refuses to act. This is a form of protest (Bergman 1973: 211). She perceives acting as lying. In this state she starts to lose herself. Her identity and the nurse's identity become intertwined. In the film this is apparent when both women's faces merge, when the nurse speaks with Elisabeth's voice, when Elisabeth puts on Alma's uniform and when they are comparing their facial characteristics (Figure 5). But being is inescapable. Elisabeth is forced to act back into being.

In *Persona* *stasis* is perceived as truth while doing (acting) is lying. Extreme self-awareness is presented as one of the characteristics of *stasis*. But in *stasis* a loss of identity is also experienced, as if doing is being. In fact it is in search of a (re)action that



Alma attacks Elisabeth with a jug of boiling water and forces the word 'nothing' out of her. In the next sections I will be referring to different approaches to *stasis* by artists that deal directly with nothingness and the self. Their works relate to my own practice, which is later presented later in this chapter to further determine the strategies of the artist as subject in *stasis*.

### 5.5.2 *Stasis* in Arnatt, Bayard and Klein

Keith Arnatt, in his piece *Is it Possible for Me to do Nothing as My Contribution to this exhibition?* (1970, 76.2 x 101.6 cm), contemplates the meanings, implications and consequences of his statement / question. He creates work about process and nothingness, by contemplating nothingness and finally by including it in his art. Another two of Arnatt's works, this time 'concerned with doing something but ending up with nothing' (Seymour 1972: 66-68) were *Digital Counter* which counted down the number of seconds to the end of the exhibition and *Self Burial TV Interference Project* (1969).



Figure 19. *Self-Burial TV Interference Project*, silverprints, 1969.



In *Self-Burial TV Interference Project* Arnatt

used a series of photographic images of the artist burying himself in a hole which were broadcast on television over a period of a week or so; one at a time they were literally dropped, unannounced and unexplained, into the televisual flow. It endures as a work because amongst other things it traversed video art as anti-television, conceptualist practices, performance, and photography at a specific historical moment when new agendas and paradigms were emerging (McCabe 1997: 1).

Keith Arnatt's works deal with nothingness, *stasis* and the disappearance of the self. *Stasis* is not conceived as a state that the artist wishes to escape from but a state to be explored and contemplated. In contrast to Arnatt Hippolyte Bayard's photograph *Self-portrait as a Drowned Man* connects nothingness with narratives of despair and death. He invented the process for the direct printing of photographs in 1839, in France. However he was let down by the scientific establishment who kept his discovery from public exposure in favour of the method of the daguerrotype.



Figure 20. *Self-portrait as a Drowned Man* (1840 direct paper positive).

As a result of his disappointment he made a self-portrait as a suicide victim (Figure 20). On the photograph (quote available from <http://www.getty.edu/art/collections/bio/a1876-1.html>) he wrote:



The corpse which you see here is that of M. Bayard, inventor of the process that has just been shown to you. As far as I know this indefatigable experimenter has been occupied for about three years with his discovery.

The Government, which has been only too generous to Monsieur Daguerre, has said it can do nothing for Monsieur Bayard, and the poor wretch has drowned himself. Oh the vagaries of human life...!

Yves Klein, an artist who operated in the most well-known part of his career under the influence of Sartrean existentialism, exhibited *The Void* in 1958. In this exhibition the invited guests were confronted with the empty walls and display cases in the gallery space. In *Leap into the Void* (1960) he originally fell from a two-storey building. He later restaged the performance to be documented as a photograph (Goldberg 1998: 33). Klein viewed nothingness as closer to the disappearance of the self, the void and death.

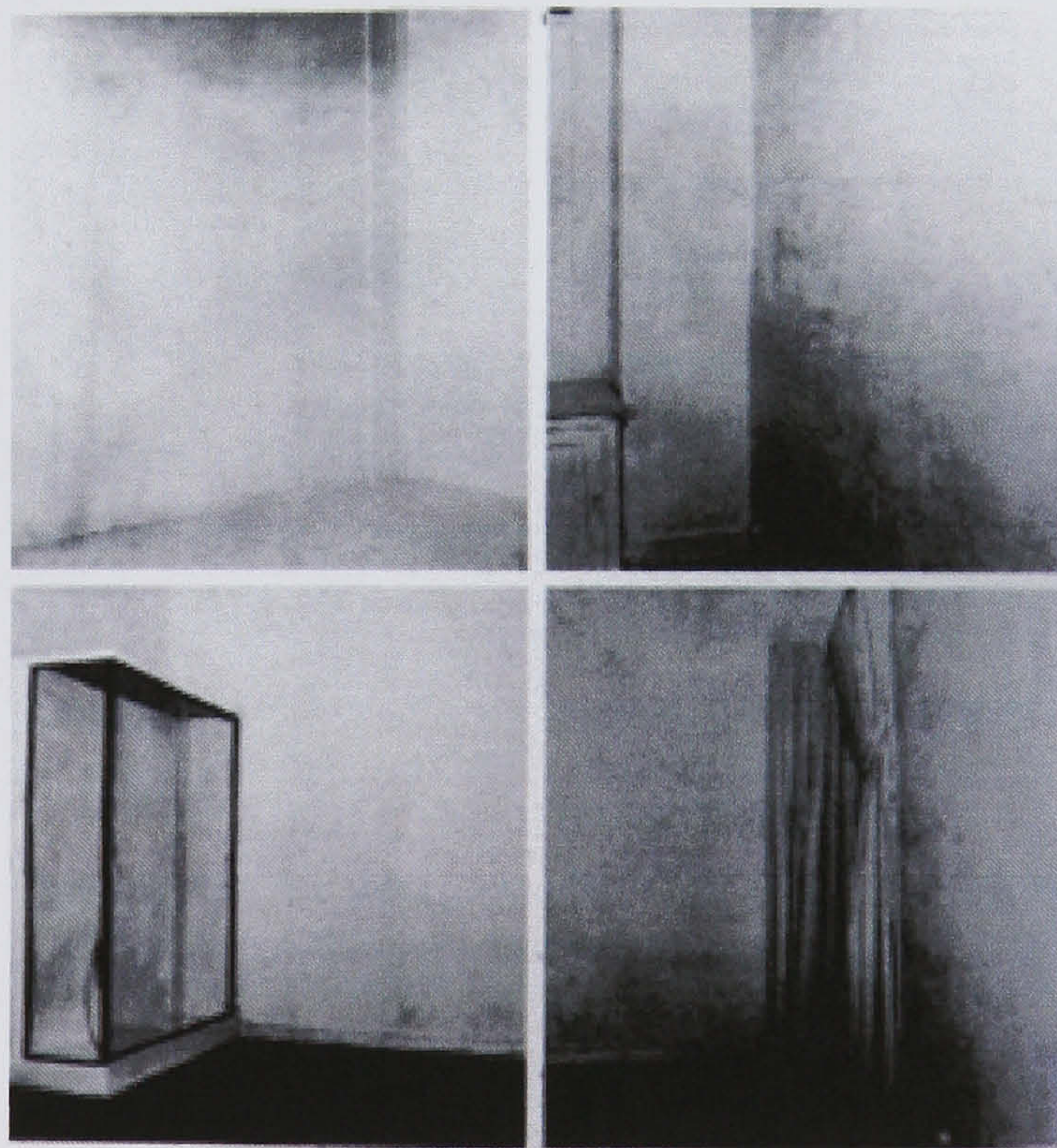


Figure 21. *The Void*. 1958.

For Arnatt *stasis* is a state to be explored while for Bayard *stasis* is connected with despair and death. For Klein it is a state associated with the disappearance of the self, the void and death. Arnatt's manipulation of *stasis* can also be perceived as *performing stasis*. The performance of *stasis* is a concept significant in the understanding of *drasis*. In the next section I will introduce two artists that perform the self and combine the



performance of the self and the performance of *stasis* to define *drasis* as a strategy of the artist.

### 5.5.3 The performance of the self in Tracey Emin and Alex Bag

In his article *The Authority of Authenticity: Tracey Emin* (2002) Mark Durden comments on Emin's show: *My First Major Retrospective* (White Cube, 1994) calling it 'a mock anthropology of selfhood' (2002: 30). In the previous exhibition Emin presented personal 'memorabilia', displaying them in a museum-like way. Durden points out how the importance of Emin's work is based on what she is telling us about herself, *her testimony*. Her autobiographical ways become a legitimising vehicle that transforms the personal to the significant in its own right.



Figure No 21. *Untitled Fall 95*<sup>3</sup> (1995).

Alex Bag in her work *Untitled Fall 95*<sup>4</sup> presents herself as an art student at the School of Visual Arts. In *Untitled Fall 95* Bag presents herself at different stages in her study but



also in her mentality and her relationship with others. Her attire, language and subject matter changes from one semester to the next. She begins the video by talking about her parents then goes on to speak of her co-students or 'the world' while noting down her enthusiasm, frustration and disappointment. She presents how her identity is defined by her relationships with the people around her. Shaila Dewan investigates the reasons why watching Alex Bag's video is painful (1998).

You don't have to be an artist to recognize the mental rites of passage as the student goes from the wonders of shading and foreshortening to 'like, ideas' to her inarticulate frustration with a blinkered professor. Our voyeuristic superiority over this hapless girl is weakened by strong identification, by the realization that no matter how far past adolescence we think we have come, our wisdom is limited and the available guidance grossly inadequate (1998).

The performances of the self in Alex Bag and Tracey Emin can be accurately included in the term coined by Mark Durden as 'a mock anthropology of selfhood'. Both artists invent narratives that relate to their own experience and include them in their work in a way that invests the everyday and the mundane with significance.

In the next section I will present those of my works that relate to the issues of *stasis* and *drasis*. I will then employ the elements that have arisen from the presentation of other artists' works to demonstrate *drasis* as a strategy of the artist as subject in *stasis*.



5.6 The subject in stasis: My works and the strategies of the artist

**5.6.1 A Series of Unnecessary Deaths**  
Computer animation.  
Director projector, 1min, 800X600 pixels, audio.  
Included in DVD-Rom.

The first trace of *A Series of Unnecessary Deaths* is found as diary entry extract in the *Better Write Diary*:

*‘I could probably spend my days in bed watching my nails growing if I could.’*

At the time that I wrote this entry I was not producing any work. The frustration, uncertainty, boredom and insecurity that I was experiencing has already been discussed in connection with diaries and the event, in this and the previous chapter.

I started this piece by staging photographs of myself lying in several positions within my space, photographed as if I were dead. Colour digital photographs were then produced. The positions in which I staged the shooting did not aim to be perceived as ‘realistic’, or ‘convincing’. I subsequently manipulated these photographs producing black and white grainy images to resemble the quality of newspaper-produced photographs or archival material. My original idea was to create files on desktop publishing software to include a folder-like outline, a photo of myself feigning death, a title for the project and an empty

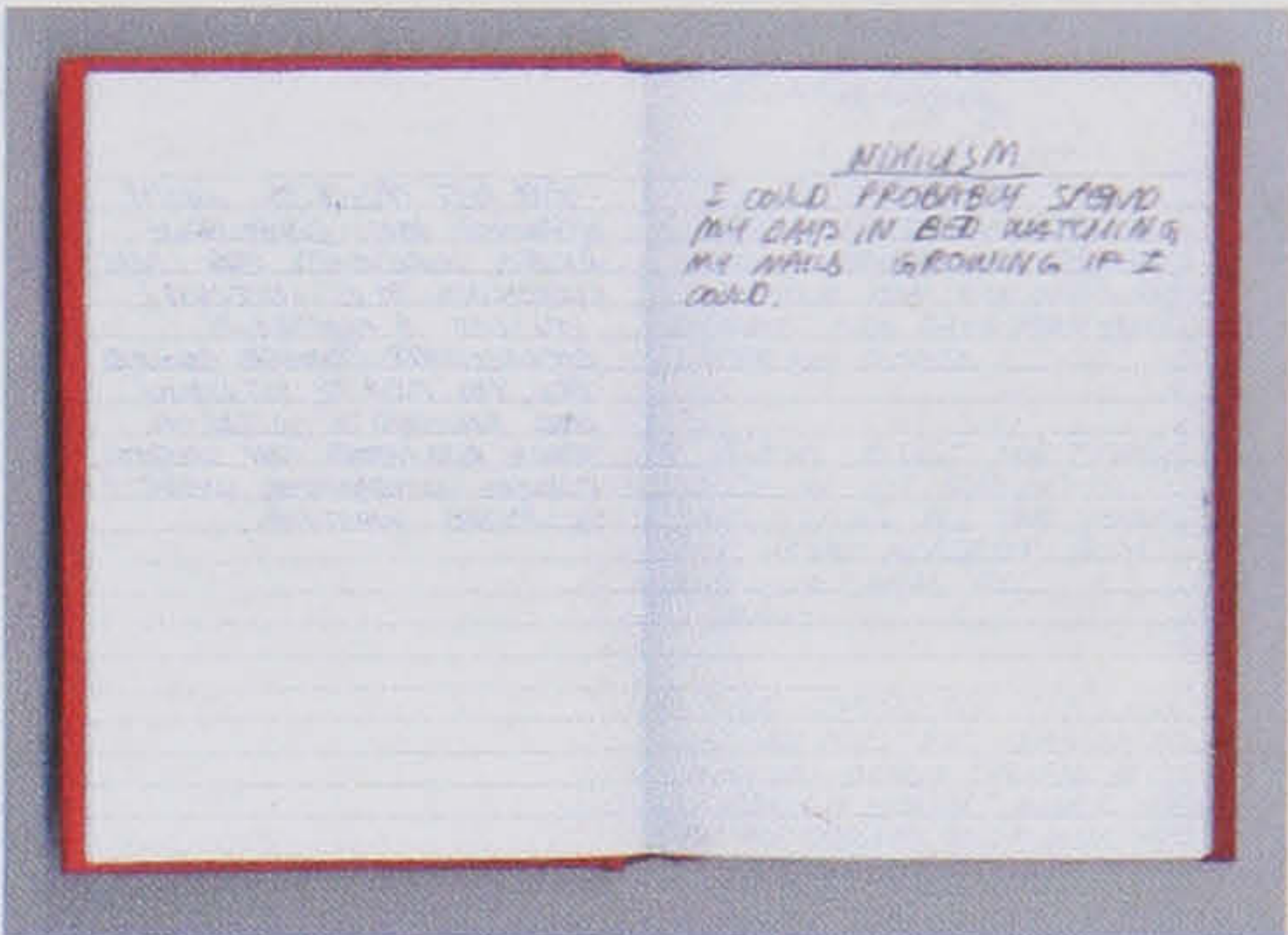


Figure 5. Page from the *Better Write Book*.



Figure 6. Original digital picture used in *A Series of Unnecessary Deaths*.



Figure 7. First example of an attempt to create a file with desktop publishing software.



Figure 8. Second example of an attempt to create a file with desktop publishing software.



data field to be hand-written with the 'cause of death'. I produced a couple of examples as before and then reassessed my intentions.

Two important issues seemed to emerge: one was to use the 'cause of death' to illustrate my experience of inactivity and the other was to present the files in a way that would cause them to resemble parts of an archive. How would the resulting files be presented? I considered their display on the wall as not appropriate for archiving material. I thought that a box was more suitable for the type of form that they represented. But what about the material qualities of the files (paper, size, etc). What were the criteria for choosing them? And also how would the viewer of the work be able to physically experience the archive? Would they open the box and go through the files? I did not wish to get involved in a material manifestation, the elements of which might take over the message I was trying to get across. I was also struggling to see (experience) the work as a whole.

I subsequently made an attempt to create an entirely digital work. Somehow it seemed to me that I could overcome all the limitations of size, etc. and I could create a more 'whole' experience. The work concluded as a series of files digitally produced in an animation sequence in which the cause of death would gradually appear, as if written in real time, with the sound of the keyboard simultaneously audible. I titled the piece *A Series of Unnecessary Deaths*. This work drew of my own experience of inactivity during the course of my

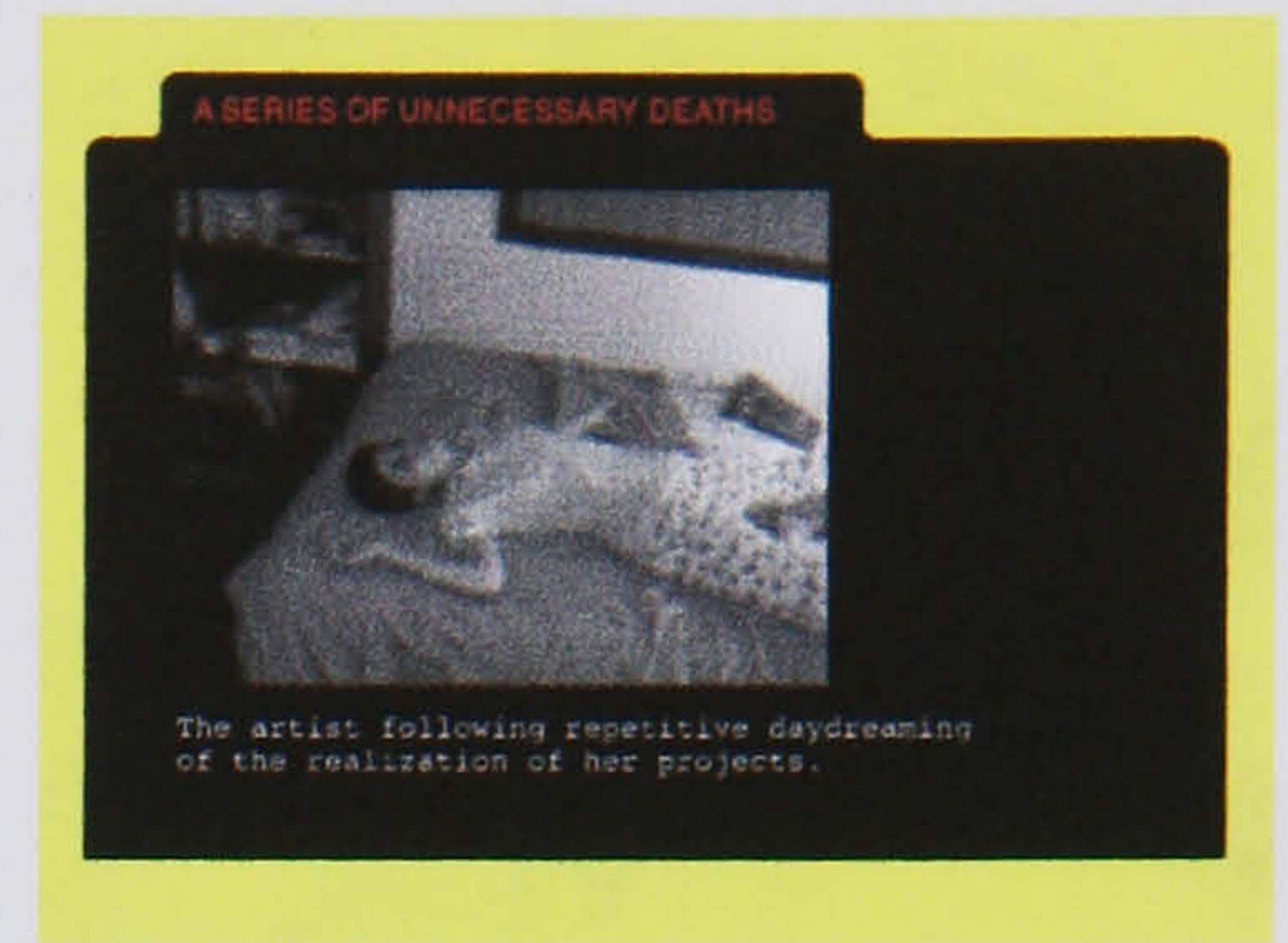


Figure 9. *A Series of Unnecessary Deaths* as realised: animation still.



research. By drawing on the issues of inaction and discontinuity which had achieved unprecedented significance in my everyday experience I was able to overcome them. However the '*Unnecessary*' in the title indicates my reluctance to come to terms with accepting inactivity as part of the artist's action.

### 5.6.2 *Self-portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic*

Series of 6 Lambda prints.

50X37.50 or 20X16 in.

Included in Appendix II.

*Self-portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic* is a series of images of myself lying in a hotel bed and watching television, drinking from a *Burger King* cup, putting my glasses on, rubbing my eyes and changing channels. The photographs for this work originated from a video I took of myself in a hotel room in Mainz, Germany. I was there to present my work and an exhibition I had curated for the 7<sup>th</sup> Performance Studies international conference (October 2001). The video was captured as follows: I was in my hotel room at night, after a tiring day, I was watching television in a language I did not understand, feeling completely disinterested and waiting to fall asleep. I decided to record myself in this situation with the video camera, without having any specific idea of if and how I would use the footage.

I had for some time been interested in recording



Figure 1). Images from a website that uses a web-cam. Images illustrate 'how many times the fridge opened'. Downloaded from <http://www.icepick.com>



myself while 'doing' work as a way keeping a record, having some kind of dated data to employ in the analysis. I saw an obvious connection with surveillance cameras in this effort: this act would be a sort of self-surveillance. The height from which I had captured the Mainz video though (desk height) and the small range of the lens -unlike the extra wide lenses used in surveillance cameras (see image No)- suggested a web-cam, more than a surveillance camera. I researched various sites of web-cams (such as <http://www.camarades.com> visited 22-11-2001) and observed the aesthetics, thematology and characteristics of the real time footage on screen. There was usually minimum activity in the footage displayed. Sometimes the web-cam was placed on top of a personal computer, at the recording end, and sometimes it was left pointing towards a specific corner of a room. Frequently a static view of the room would be on display. The result was that I, as a viewer, could hardly recognise the image as a moving one. At other web-cam sites elaborate diagrams of everyday activities were kept. For example: *How many times the microwave was used, or how many times the doorbell rang* in <http://icepick.com> visited 19-11-2001.

Web-cam sites are enticing in the way diary entries are as a glimpse of the everyday. The visual/audio footage is of extreme banality. At times the digital clock on display with the image is the only indication that something is happening. Yet they are strangely compelling and there is probably a voyeuristic element involved in this.

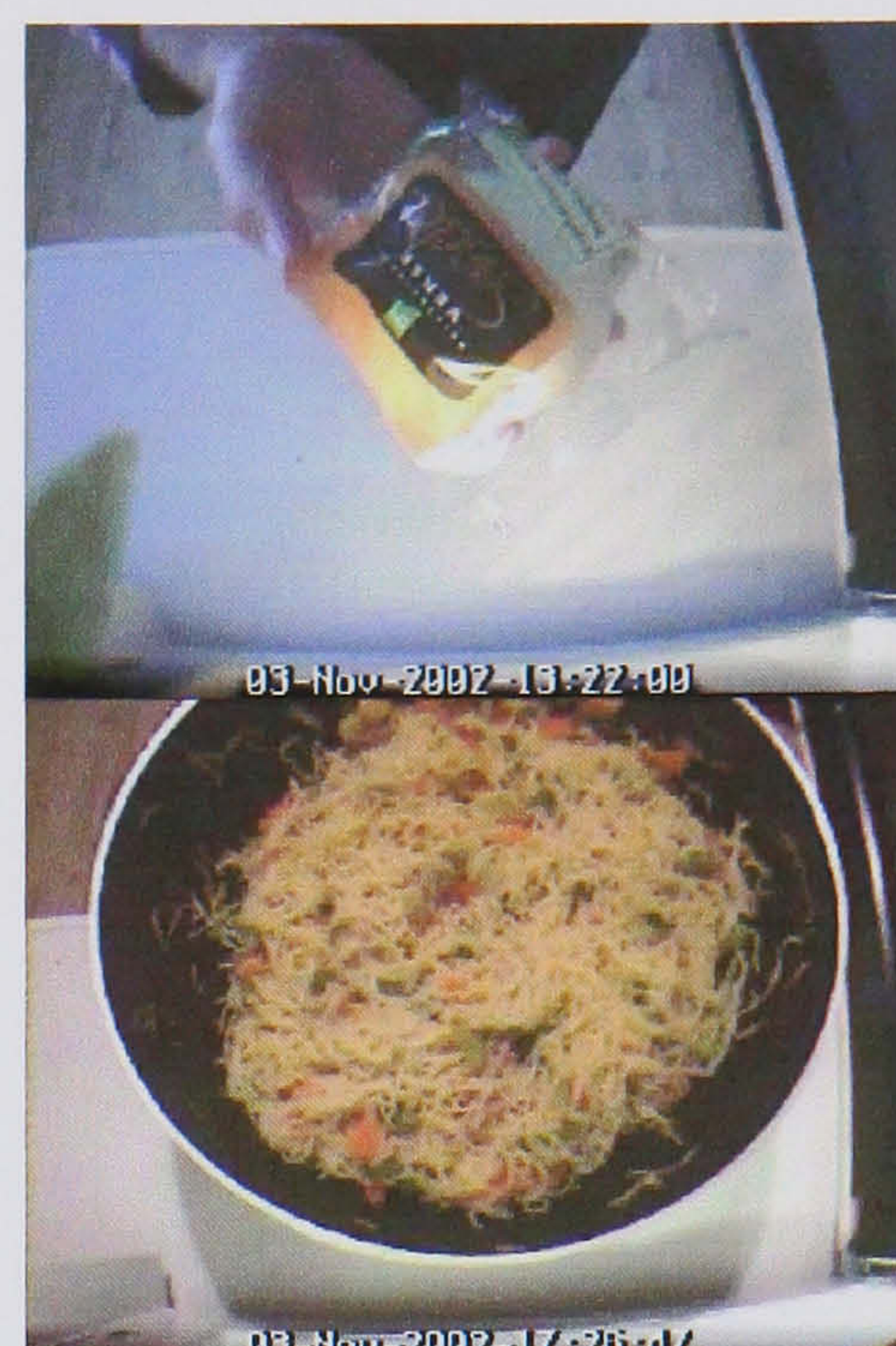


Figure 11. (What went into the microwave). Images downloaded from <http://www.icepick.com>



Figure 12. Security camera still downloaded from commercial site <http://www.citnow.com>



Figure 13. *Self-portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic*, part of series, Lambda print, 50X37.50 cm.



I proceeded to create stills from the Mainz video in an attempt to create events out of the hour-long video in which nothing is happening. In every image there is an event. I rub my nose, put on my glasses, drink from a Burger-King cup or change the channels. I went on to add a date and time, in the type of security surveillance video or web-cam footage, in each image.

### 5.6.3 *Self-portrait of the Artist as Banality Queen*

Lambda print.

Dimensions: 101X65 cm or 40X30 in.

Included in Appendix II.

In the tradition of the Renaissance self-portrait, *Self-portrait of the Artist as Banality Queen* is, at least in its title, an aspirational one. In the Renaissance self-portrait the painter performed the artist with the use of props, surroundings, background and posture in an attempt to attain an elevated social status (Woods-Marsden, 1998). In *Portrait of the Artist as Banality Queen* the aspiration is for a regal status of banality. The props and status symbols that I include in the self-portrait are a pink tartan blanket wrapped around my shoulders and a tissue box. The surroundings are: the fireplace in my living room, a picture of my wedding on the mantelpiece, and a mauve velour armchair. In the photographs I am in my usual attire (fleece pyjamas and blanket) about the house. I sit in the armchair looking away from the



Figure 14. *Self-portrait of the Artist as Banality Queen*, Lambda print, 101X65 cm.



lens. In my expression I attempt to communicate an acceptance of the melancholy that my role as *Banality Queen* entails. I am mimicking the stereotype of the melancholic princess and claiming the authority stance of regality for banality.

#### 5.6.4 *Not Made in Greece*

Video.

Single screen projection, 3,57 min, audio.

Included in DVD-Rom in Quick Time format.

This video consists of three different takes. In two of them I am standing in front of my bedroom window. The curtain is drawn to reveal the view: part of the downstairs garden, surrounding houses and the road running between them. In these two videos I am singing Pontic songs as I remember them (some of the words I cannot remember and murmur instead). They are songs that I like, I remember from family gatherings and wedding parties and used to sing when happy or when unhappy in order to cheer myself up. On the third video I am sitting on my bed, manicuring my nails and singing a *rembetiko* song. It is one of the songs that I remember my mother singing and which I liked and also used to sing. The background of the shot is the corner of the room: walls. In the video the songs/takes follow one another.

There is a diary-like element in this work in that the performance that is taking place is attached to the

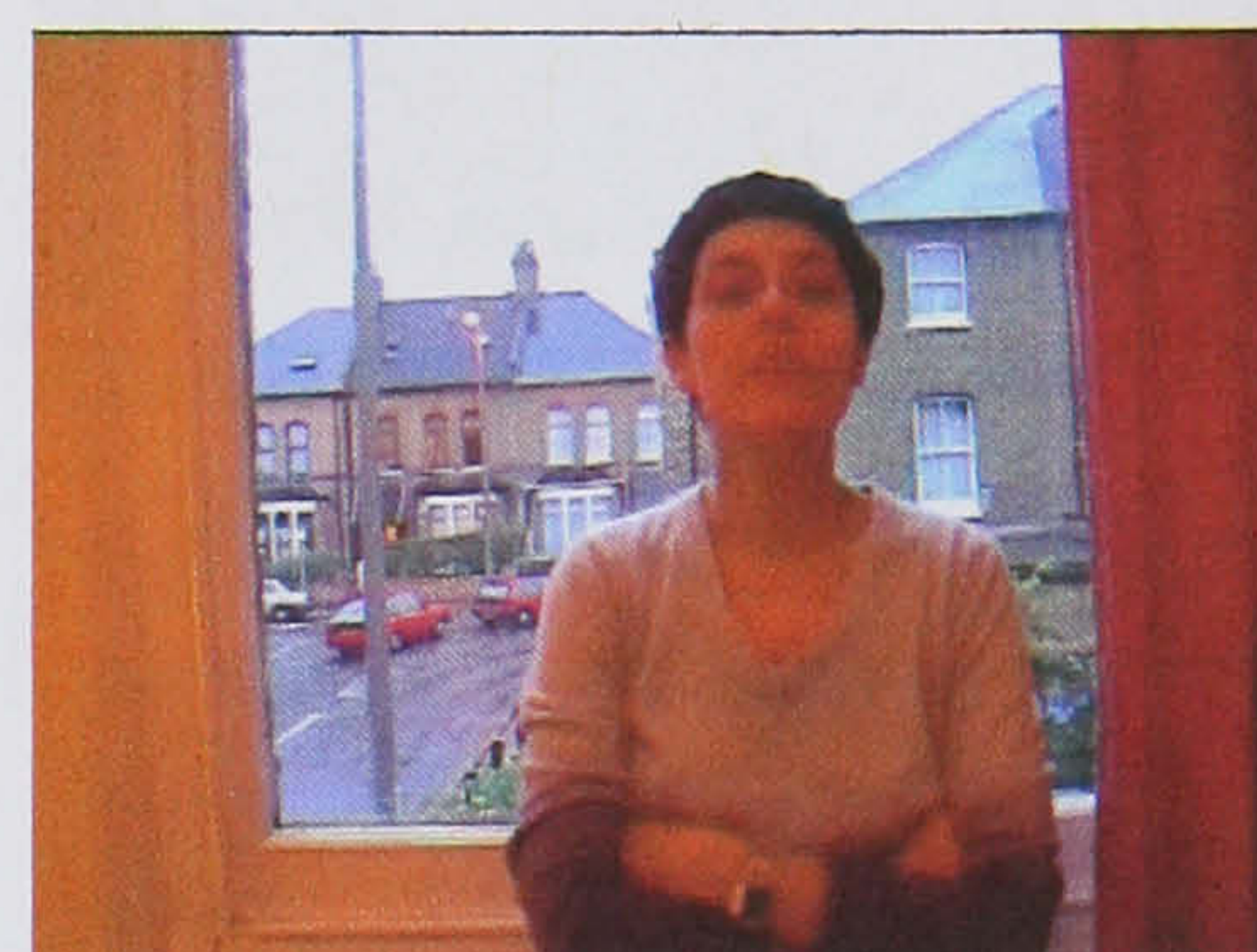


Figure 15. *Not Made in Greece*, video still.

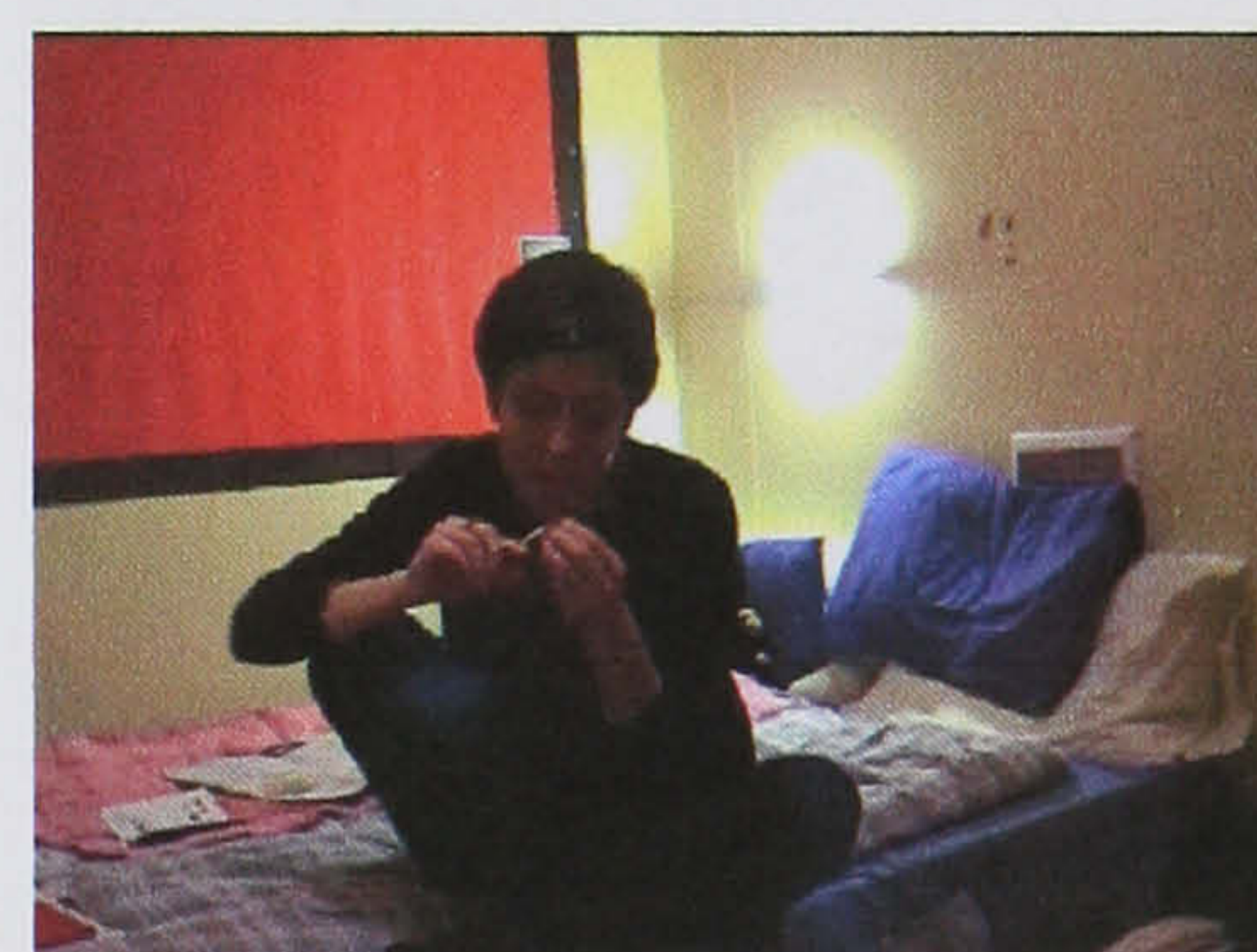


Figure 16. *Not Made in Greece*, video still.



specific time when it was performed. Subsequently I have thought about adding more performed songs to this work, but something was disturbing me. I think that it as much as this was a pre-thought work, a staged performance, I was reluctant to go back and add to it as I would be reluctant to go back and add to a diary entry. This work was important for me in a performative way. I created a kind of belonging by performing a kind of belonging. However there is also a sense of isolation. The background is a moving image too, yet I am almost surprised to see the cars moving. That this is not a static picture but that the world 'outside' actually exists and 'moves'. In the second take, in which I am sitting in my bed at night, the feeling of isolation is complete. There is only inside the self.

#### 5.6.5 *Wish List (Parallel Lives)*

Series of 5 Lambda prints.

Dimensions: 50X67 cm or 20X26 in.

Included in Appendix II.

In *Wish List (Parallel Lives)*, I am depicted in various images of my 'ideal' home-life. Waving at friends over the kitchen window, making small talk on the dinner table, being on the phone etc. In the images there is always another person implied, a person that is never seen. It is the person I am supposed to be talking to or the person passing by my bedroom or kitchen window the person I listen to attentively at the dinner table or the one I am opening my house door for.



Figure 17. *Wish List (Parallel Lives)*, ), Lambda print, 50X67 cm.



Figure 18. *Wish List (Parallel Lives)*, Lambda print, 50X67 cm.



The images imitate printing errors by multiplying the image of the self on the photographic paper. *Parallel Lives* would be days of communication, exchange and belonging. While in the beginning the viewer may be fooled into thinking that communication, exchange and belonging are indeed being portrayed in these images it gradually becomes clear that these are instead images of longing, absence and loss.

### 5.7 *Drasis* as strategy

In *Persona* *stasis* is perceived as truth by the artist in contrast to acting which is thought of as lying. *Stasis* as a state is connected with extreme self-awareness and loss of the self. In Arnatt's work *stasis* is a state of nothingness and, contrary to the way *stasis* is dealt with in *Persona*, a state to explore and not to flee from. In *Self-portrait as a Drowned Man* Bayard illustrates the ultimate *stasis* - death - and connects it with narratives of despair and disillusionment. Death, the disappearance of the self and the void is also the focus of Klein's works.

Michel de Certeau's man of extreme inaction is the dying man (1988: 191), as he notes in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. It is the dying person of extreme inaction that I perform in *A Series of Unnecessary Deaths*. That work, as well my other works presented in this chapter, were developed in periods of *stasis*. In these works I am dealing with the position of the artist in *stasis*. I am immersed in situations of banality (*Self-portrait of the Artist as Banality Queen*), boredom (*A Series of Unnecessary Deaths*, *Self-portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic*) and daydreaming of action (*A Series of Unnecessary Deaths*). *Stasis* then becomes the centre of my attention, and the works are created *about* and *by* the performance of *stasis*.

My *Parallel Lives* and *Not Made in Greece* can be placed in the context of Alex Bag's and Tracey Emin's works in that they present in a diary-like manner a narrative history of the self recreated for the camera. In pseudo-scientific way my works are presented as an examination of the self. Immersion and absorption is significant in these works in order to convince the self of its own significance. Creating 'a mock anthropology of selfhood' has the effect of investing the everyday and the banal with meaning by putting it in into the centre of scientific attention.



J. Austin explains how in a *performative* expression *to say* is *to do*, for example the word 'promise'.

In these examples it seems clear that to utter a sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do (1975: 6).

In the previously mentioned works I am performing the situation I am immersed in: the state of *stasis*. I have already talked about how *drasis* actually involves the meaning of performance. In the manner that 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action' in language (*ibid.* 6-7), *drasis* is the performative expression of act. Through *drasis* the *event-isation* of *stasis* is carried out, marking a strategy of the artist in *stasis*.

Nothingness, death and the disappearance of the self have been dealt with by the artists mentioned above. In the same way the performance of the self has been employed by artists in order to deal with the everyday, banality and boredom. For this research these works were perceived as dealing with *stasis*. *Drasis* was the strategy that I developed in order to deal with *stasis*. In *drasis* the focus of the work becomes *stasis* and not action. In this way significance is bestowed on *stasis*: what I call the *eventisation of stasis*. *Stasis* then becomes a rightful state in the process of creating art.



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<sup>1</sup> Mark Cousins distinguishes between the nothingness that is there and the nothingness as absence of what was supposed to be there. Communicated at the 17-11-2000 lecture, part of the *Psyche and Space* series, held at the Architectural Association in London.

<sup>2</sup> Full 1000 pieces were published in *Avalanche*, no 2, winter 1971 (Lippard 1997: 194).

<sup>3</sup> This work was presented in London as part of a showreel of New York artists in Lux Gallery.



## 6. CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

Although my research began by focusing on issues of the medium in computer-aided art, I 'discovered' through my practice the 'problem' of *stasis*. Thus this research is an example of practice as the "discovered-problem" finding approach as understood by Hurlestone (2000). The significance that *stasis* had attained in my own practice led to a detailed examination of its characteristics and of the response of the artist as subject in *stasis*, through my diaries and works. My practice was investigated and contextualised within its contemporary artistic and theoretical context to determine the strategies the artist as subject in *stasis* adopts. The examination of my own practice was also based on the idea of the *reflective practitioner* and the notion of practice as a way of understanding and developing theories.

### 6.2 The 'problem' of *stasis*

*Stasis* was first identified in this research in the documentation of my experience, in the discontinuous writings in the diaries. Through the examination of my diaries and Meta-diaries I attempted to find a language that could articulate the state of *stasis*. The 'problem' of *stasis* disguised itself in the diaries and Meta-diaries as the issue of the absence of action which itself appeared to cancel the process of creating art.

Inaction and discontinuity were the first characteristics of *stasis* detected. My own frustration with discontinuity during the production of *Video Diary 1* was connected with my perception of time; if time was to be understood as a series of 'actions', in this research these 'actions' were missing. *VD1* was perceived as way of filling the gap that the absence of action had created, a way of experiencing time and a means of creating continuity. As a subject in *stasis* I remained in a state of uncertainty and anticipation, an almost hibernating subject. Through the use of repetition *VD1* became the antidote to *stasis*, providing continuity through repetition and my submission to *arkhê*.



### 6.3 *Drasis* as strategy

In works developed after *VD1*, *stasis* became the focus of my attention, and the works were created *about* and *by stasis*. I interpret Keith Arnatt and Tracey Emin to have employed the performance of *stasis* and the performance of the self respectively. Likewise in my own works I consider I was performing the situation I was immersed in: the state of *stasis*. My art practice in this PhD was situated within a continuity of practice about nothingness, absence of action and performance of the self. My artworks inform this practice by the practice and theory based paradigm of *drasis*.

I developed the term *drasis* to designate a concept that is intended to include the *eventisation* of *stasis*. *Drasis* (from ancient Greek) denotes action but also performance in the theatrical context (hence 'drama'). In the manner that 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action' in language (Austin 1975), *drasis* is the performative expression of act in the creative process. In *drasis* the focus of the artwork becomes *stasis* and not action. Through *drasis* the *eventisation* of *stasis* is carried out, marking a strategy of the artist in *stasis*. *Stasis*, in this way is recognised as a rightful state in the process of creating art.

### 6.4 Beyond method

A characteristic of this research has been that methodological concerns became intertwined with the content of the research. For example diaries developed from a methodological tool into an element of my art practice. In the end diaries were not perceived as documents but as *practice* (Lejeune 1999), with the visual or written document being a part of this practice. Diaries as *practice* include the time when the diary is *not* written thus incorporating *stasis* in the time of the diary. Diaries as part of the concerns of this research became a part of the practice as much as a way of exploring it. The development of this aspect of the research, where method and practice became intertwined and where I recognised *stasis* as a significant element within the diaries was aided by finding parallels with the dilemma of other artists like Franz Kafka. As a result of the integration between methodology and the art practice itself, I believe my main research contribution to have been in the *form* of reflexivity, its concepts and language,



as applied by a practitioner. Thus this contribution is neither separately the practical work produced nor the critical concepts developed but their combination in a reflexive practice and its epistemology.

## 6.5 Contributing to an epistemology of practice

Donald Schön, in his book *The Reflective Practitioner* suggests:

Let us search instead for an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive process which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict (1983<sup>1</sup>, 2002: 49).

Mike King recently noted that ‘we are at a time where epistemological questions about art have resurfaced’ and that an opportunity presents itself ‘to reframe art practice as an enquiry’ (2002). This PhD, thus, contributes to an epistemology of fine art practice by the methodological paradigm of the dynamic mapping of diary ‘writing’, in its different forms and formats, within a self-reflexive approach. It additionally contributes by explicitly charting *stasis* within the creative process and by the framing of the definition of *drasis* as strategy of the artist.

## 6.6 Future Research: ‘Writing Art’

Going through my notes at the end of this research I encountered expressions such as ‘uncertainty remedy’ and ‘legitimate state’. In chapter three I refer to *VD1* as an ‘alibi for action’. It was not surprising that three references to the ‘big sciences’ of medicine and law such as *remedy*, *legitimate* and *alibi* existed in my research. I had already scrutinized my relationship with *arkhê*. However these words were a reminder, of my early speculations about the language that this research would be written in. *Meta-diaries*, for example, had been an attempt to adopt a performative language to describe the process of creating in art. Although they were incorporated in the research they were not indicative of the language adopted to describe them. There is currently a research project being carried out at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design by Kate Love, that attempts to articulate a performative description of the experience of the artist (‘Examining the Concept of Experience in the Context of Contemporary Visual Art’). In a



related area I would be interested in pursuing and contributing to a way of articulating a language for the artist, which while remaining within the context of academic research, did not necessarily require the validation of an established science. In this context there are other different, but not necessarily contrasting, approaches to art and its critical language. Michael Foucault underlines the inappropriateness of speaking in the name of somebody else. However, Joan Scott underlines the political failing of the notion that the person who has had an experience is the most suitable to articulate it. Similarly, Mieke Bal, in an examination of Louise Bourgeois' work 'Spider', cautions that 'the explicit statement of the artist *about* her work cannot account for the spider's most decisive contribution to the work's *affect*' (2001). Bearing these different approaches in mind, through future research and practice I hope to contribute to the development of a language *about* and *for* art and *about* and *for* the subjective in art practice building on my use of the concepts *stasis* and *drasis* as articulated in this thesis.



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## APPENDICES



## LIST OF APPENDICES

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**Appendix II:** Reproductions of printed works

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*Wish List (Parallel Lives)*

*Self-portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic*

**Appendix III:** Meta-Diaries

*Meta-Diary 1*

*Meta-Diary 2*

**Appendix IV:** *My Artists' Database*

**Appendix V:** Publications

**Appendix VI:** Exhibitions

**Appendix VII:** DVD-Rom



# APPENDIX I: LIST OF WORKS AND DIARIES AND LOCATIONS AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING

TITLE OF WORK	In Thesis as hard copy	In DVD-Rom included in PhD projector	In DVD-Rom as individual file	On the Internet
<i>Doing It Yourself</i>				<a href="http://www.arealartist.com/index/doingit.html">http://www.arealartist.com/index/doingit.html</a>
<i>Art-Rules</i> [work-in-progress]				call for participation available at <a href="http://www.artrules.20m.com">http://www.artrules.20m.com</a>
<i>Procrastinator</i>				<a href="http://www.arealartist.com/procrastinator/theprocrastinator.html">http://www.arealartist.com/procrastinator/theprocrastinator.html</a>
<i>Perfect Day</i>		✓	/DVDfiles/perfec.swf	<a href="http://www.arealartist.com/perfectday/perfect.html">http://www.arealartist.com/perfectday/perfect.html</a>
<i>diary01</i>		✓	/DVDfiles/diary01p	
<i>Self-portrait of the Artist as Banality Queen</i>	✓			
<i>Self-portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic</i>	✓			
<i>Wish List (Parallel Lives)</i>	✓			
<i>A Series of Unnecessary Deaths</i>		✓	/DVDfiles/deaths	<a href="http://www.arealartist.com/index/deaths.html">http://www.arealartist.com/index/deaths.html</a>
<i>Not Made in Greece</i>		✓	/DVDfiles/notmade.mov	
<b>TITLE OF DIARY</b>				
<i>Video Diary 1</i>		✓	/DVDfiles/VD1.mov	
<i>Video Diary 2</i> Take 1		✓	/DVDfiles/VD2/take1.mov	
<i>Video Diary 2</i> Take 2		✓	/DVDfiles/VD2/take2.mov	
<i>Video Diary 2</i> Take 3		✓	/DVDfiles/VD2/take3.mov	

To view the works as individual files or on the Internet you will need to have the following plug-ins installed in your computer: Quick Time Player, Flash Player and Shockwave Player. They are available for free from the Macromedia site at the addresses below:

<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/flash>

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/shockwaveplayer/>



## **Appendix II**

### **Reproductions of printed works**



Work Title	<b><i>Self-portrait of the Artist as Banality Queen</i></b>
Medium	Lambda print mounted on 5mm poly.
Part of a Series	No.
Dimensions	101X65 cm or 40X30 in.
Assisted by	Minos Zarifopoulos (original digital photograph).







Work Title	<b><i>Wish List (Parallel Lives)</i></b>
Medium	Lambda print mounted on 5mm poly.
Part of a Series	Yes [5 prints].
Dimensions	50X67 cm or 20X26 in.
Assisted by	Manos Skoufias (original digital photographs).























Work Title	<b><i>Portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic</i></b>
Medium	Lambda print mounted on 5mm poly.
Part of a Series	Yes [6 prints].
Dimensions	50X37.50 cm or 20X16 in.
Assisted by	n. a.

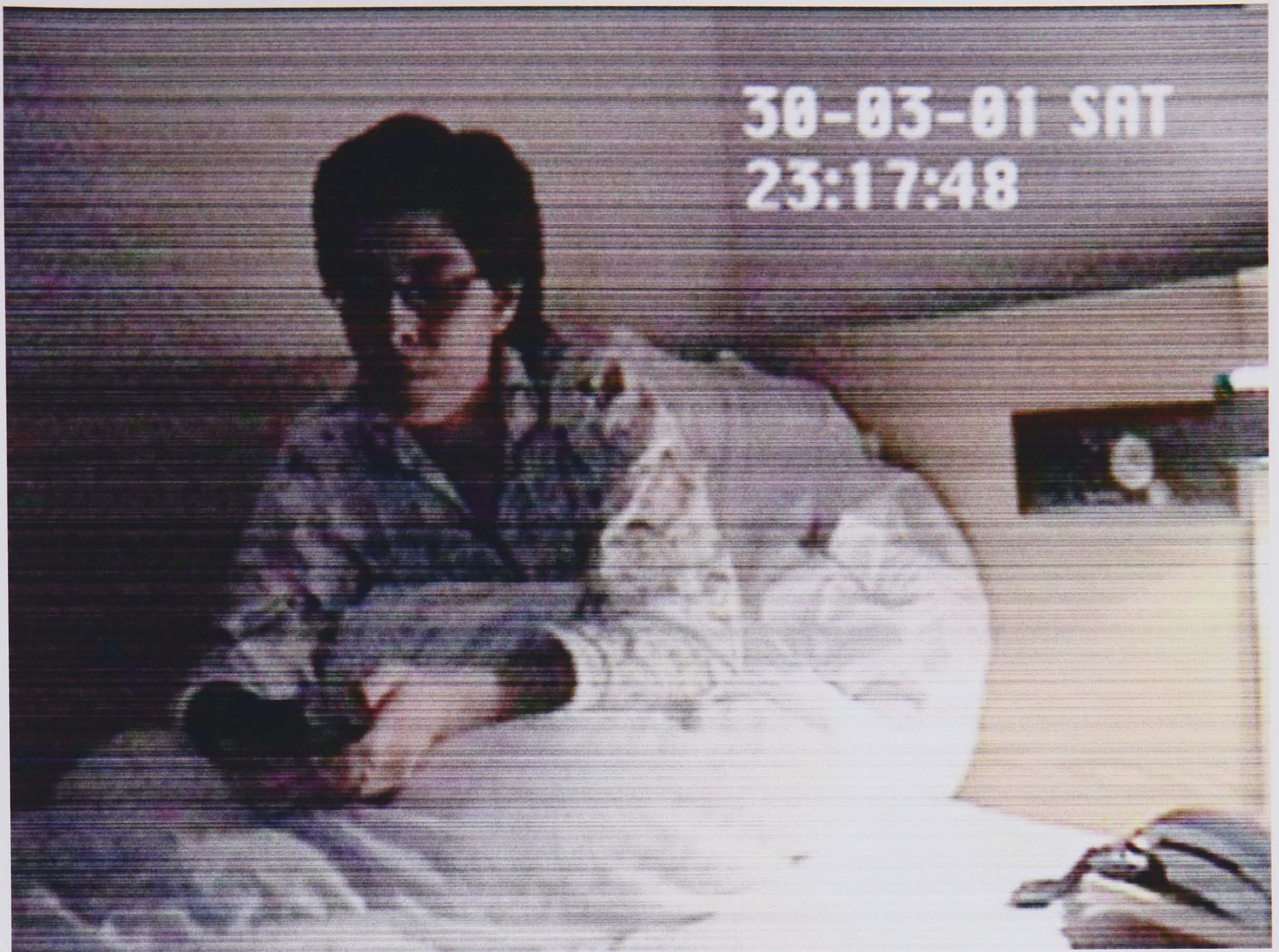


























## **Appendix III**

### **Meta-Diaries**



## **Appendix IIIa**

### **Meta Diary 1**

Note: *Meta-Diary 1* is printed in its original version. No grammatical or spelling corrections were made.



## 2. MEASURING EXPERIENCE

### 2.1 The methodology of time counting

Time obsession. The need to measure time, count it and account for it. Experience it fully, be able to contemplate it. Why? And what for? Is this an attempt to justify my existence beyond a passive acceptance of being alive, an attempt to not merely be but act? Is this what time is for me then? A series of consequent 'actions'? In that case this is why I cannot define time, identify it, grasp it. My time is not a series of actions it is not a *proper time*.

What follows is my quest for proper time and *my* proper time. An account of a series of dispersed and even desperate actions seemingly unconnected at the time they were produced, and my endeavour to trace a relation, a pattern, or indeed a methodology.

#### 2.1.1 The secret diaries of the artist: fraud or fiction

##### ATTEMPT 1: Writing a diary

Intending to write a diary. A diary to include general remarks about my artwork or just general remarks. I choose an unusually shaped booklet seeking to intrigue myself into writing.

I make two entries during summertime and one, slightly forced, entry in October. The last one is a recapitulation of the previous ones although these weren't read beforehand. Three entries were too few to give me a sense of continuity of time and the remarks I made -although significant to me- did not relate directly to my artwork. Strangely enough the diary entries were commenting on the implications of keeping a diary more than anything else.

I registered this attempt as a failure and concluded that I had to find a way of engaging more in the documentation of my experience and the reflection on this experience. One of the issues that emerged out of my diary entries was my reluctance to date these documents. Somehow keeping in touch with *the date* became important. I felt that this, pretty standard, element of diary entry I wouldn't convince myself to use, was a way of connecting experience and time. Date was a formal way of counting time ultimately a rule, a discipline I was looking to be subject to.



## **ATTEMPT 2: Dated Image Collection**

This involved taking video stills with my camera on a daily basis. The images I chose were these of my non-original surroundings: close ups of employees at the opposite office building, abstract views of my house, the weather conditions changing, street views. All the views were taken inside a building or from its window. I did not intend these images to be part of my artwork I just used them as a background that would provide me the sense of time I needed. A background against which to measure time. That's why I chose these images to be detached from my work yet connected directly to my everyday experience.

Another reason for electing this method of documentation was the fact that I could have the date automatically displayed in every image. Choosing to have the day's date automatically displayed on the image gave me a sense of continuity of time (and a reminiscence of bad snapshots). More than the granted feel of the continuity what seemed to be important was the fact that this continuity was imposed, externally decided and displayed regardless of my actions but of course due to my decision. Choosing the date to be displayed was really the acceptance of my inadequacy to keep track of time and my desire to have a plan, rule or just a way of keeping time imposed on me, a way I would nevertheless have to invent and restrict my self to it.

## **ATTEMPTS 3, ...: Cette c'est ne pas une methodologie**

There is a gap after the application of 'dated image collection'. No writing. I buy a new book -a small red one. I start by writing down what it is that I thought I was going to do. A few pages and then again nothing. After about three weeks I write a few quotes with capital letters, not really a text, with the title 'Frustration'. I carry on to write short thoughts about theories, writing, nihilism. They are all in capital letters and each statement has a different page. There is no intention of creating a coherent text. I find that liberating. But now I want to write more; although about different things. Somehow they do not fit into this book. I pick up another small red book (small, so that the blank page is not so frightening). It's my response to images or book of stories book. These texts are more coherent. there is a picture in every entry, usually a cut out from the national press, a picture that evokes a memory an emotion a story. This develops into a method of writing. I carry on writing what I want to write in different books without worrying about if and how I will use it later.



After putting some entries to these books I decide to give them some titles, recognise which is which and determine in what extend I would communicate their contents to others. The titles are:

This is my 'Response to pictures or Great expectations Book'. It doesn't seem to relate directly to my research but I have a secret hope that a remarkable idea is (to be) lurking in its pages or that maybe I will discover some truth about my work if I read it retrospectively.

DISCLOSABILITY:

This is my 'Better write about it than go mad Book'. I put down my preoccupations in the form of notes, which I might develop into something more later if I find it worthwhile but would rather not think about it while I am writing them.

DISCLOSABILITY:

This is intended to be my plan a day book but God knows what will become of it.

DISCLOSABILITY:

This is the first book, my 'Show Book'. It follows my idea of what a sketch book should be like. You won't find any deep inner thoughts here although I would like to think that I speak the truth all the same. It relates directly to my practice and research (?) and consists mostly of photographs.

DISCLOSABILITY:

At the end of each title there is a space for a disclosability indicator that I haven't yet filled.



## **Appendix IIIb**

### ***Meta Diary 2***

Note: *Meta-Diary 2* is printed in its original version. No grammatical or spelling corrections were made.



THE SECRET DIARIES OF THE ARTIST: FRAUD OR FICTION?

2

ANGELIKI AVGITIDOU

1.6.00

A



As outlined in my proposal one of the methods I intended to employ was that of diary writing. Diary writing would be my attempt to document the evolution of my project and my response to it.

My first attempt to keep this kind of diary was in the summer after the submission of my proposal (June 99). But this was not a smooth process. I had in the past tried to write a diary but always felt that I failed the undertaking. I felt this because I thought there were a number of “diary rules” that my undertaking lacked. One was *consistency*, which meant writing systematically as well as writing over a long period of time. In the cases that I forced myself to write regularly I felt that the content lacked interest and after a while the desire to write would wear off. I was determined that this time I would comply with the rules of *regularity* and *devotion*. I failed to comply with both.

### **Staging the revelatory moment**

I started by buying an unusually shaped booklet to intrigue myself into writing. I made two entries in the summer (1999) and when I came back in October (1999) I made another one, without looking at the earlier ones first. This is another rule that I decided to comply to: not to read what I had previously written before making my current entry. But rather than the two other rules that had to do with my experience of other people’s writings, other people’s *should*, this was a rule I developed out of my own experience. It was a decision driven not only by my belief that my previous entry would influence the mood or the content of my current entry but also my belief in *retrospective evaluation*. And this is what I meant by it: As time would progress and my memory would fade my texts would become more alienated from me. This would result in the texts getting disassociated with the physicality of their conditions of writing. I would not remember the exact moment I had written them, where I was sitting, the rest of the events of that particular day. This would help me concentrate on the text and would somehow put the diary entries on an equal basis: that of the *de-materialised text*. Surely completely stripping the texts of their materiality was not possible (for example my handwriting could reveal to me things about my mood). What was important in this procedure was what I hoped to find out: new associations between my remarks, not the ones I was making at the time but hidden connections I was not aware of when I was writing. There might be a remark whose relevance I was unsure of when I was writing it that could trigger this association. What I hoped for in my retrospective reading of my writings was



a revelatory moment that everything would connect. As Cixous states in “Three steps in the Ladder of Writing”:

Painting is trying to paint what you cannot paint and writing is writing what you cannot know before you have written: it is pre-knowing and not knowing, blindly, with words (1993: 38).

### **The time is right?**

Reading retrospectively these entries it was clear that they were not about a specific project. I had already finished my project “Safety First®” (summer 1999) when I started writing. But what I wrote was not about this particular project. More specifically, what I was writing about it was not about this particular time. These thoughts were accumulated in my mind for a long time. I could recognise their fragments, like parts of an incomplete story waiting to be completed before being written. It seemed that *the time was right* for these thoughts to be expressed. I did not realise this while writing them but I formed this opinion again by retrospective evaluation. My connection of writing-as-documentation to the right time contradicted my previous rule of systematic documentation (regularity). Of course the time could not be right at regular intervals. Another rule was being revised.

### **What is to be included? Documentation, evaluation and self-authorisation.**

Thinking about documenting the experience of the creative process I found out that I had to decide *what formed the evidence of this experience*. Was it documentation (images probably) of the various stages of the project? But what would determine a stage as such, was that to be evaluated retrospectively? Wouldn't then this mean that all data had to be kept? And what about my remarks and my diary entries: what part of my daily routine could be isolated to form the evidence of my experience?

I was again called to evaluate and to choose. In order to carry this out I searched once more for rules. I had opted for an autobiographical method of documentation and was looking to fit into an existing mode. Was I an author? According to Foucault's description of one as a formal construction I wasn't:

Consequently, we can say that in our culture, the name of an author is a variable that accompanies only certain texts to the exclusion of others: a private letter may have a signatory, but it does not have an author: a contract can have an underwriter, but not an author; and, similarly an anonymous poster attached to a wall may have a writer, but he cannot be an author. In this sense, the function of author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within society (1969: 10).

He adds:



Assuming that we are dealing with an author, is everything he (*sic*) wrote and said, everything he left behind, to be included in his work? ... But what if, in a notebook filled with aphorisms, we find a reference, a reminder of an appointment, an address, or a laundry bill, should this be included in his works? (1969: 16).

And what about a shopping list, a comment on your health, what you heard on the street what you dreamed last night? Could these be part of an author's oeuvre? I felt that my notes were similar to those that Foucault was questioning. But this was not because I doubted their importance. I went on looking for a mode I could fit in.

Marsha Meskimmon sketches the history of autobiography and remarks something that has always been on the back of my mind:

Clearly the first traditional assumption about the subjects of autobiography is that they are significant individuals, in other words the 'great men' of history, deserving a singular work about their lives (1996: 65-66).

Unable to find an existing mode I decided I had to invent the mode that I wanted to belong to. What this search was getting down to was, first of all, the issue of *permission to write*, what Kate Miller calls "self-authorization" (1991: 132). Actually *granting myself permission* to write as opposed to *be given permission*. Secondly it was the issue of the relevance of my experience. And by that I mean being able to focus the blurred borderline between my relevant experience and the rest of my experience. But having a blurred borderline and sometimes disregarding the borderline was a condition of practicing art for me. I finally decided to resolve this by following this rule: to write whatever I want, but to put it in different books and decide about their relevance retrospectively. This is the description of how this method developed.

There is a gap after the application of 'data image collection'. No writing. I buy a new book -a small red one. I start by writing down what it is that I thought I was going to do. A few pages and then again nothing. After about three weeks I write a few quotes with capital letters, not really a text, with the title 'Frustration'. I carry on to write short thoughts about theories, writing, and nihilism. They are all in capital letters and each statement has a different page. There is no intention of creating a coherent text. I find that liberating. But now I want to write more, although about different things. Somehow they do not fit into this book. I pick up another small red book (small, so that the blank page is not so frightening). It's my response to images or book of stories book. These texts are more coherent. there is a picture in every entry, usually a cut out from the national press, a picture that evokes a memory an emotion a story. This develops into a method of writing. I carry on writing what I want to write in different books without worrying about if and how I will use it later.



## Writing autobiography = Writing the truth?

Is writing autobiography writing the truth? In one of my red books I write: “at least I’m not lying!”. That means I’m telling the truth, doesn’t it? Who’s truth is that? And what does it prove? Cixous writes:

We have to lie to live. But to write we must try to unlie (1993: 36).

I try to unlie, get rid of my preconceptions, throw away the clichés. It is not a brave or shinny or universal truth I claim to express; it is my truth. But is this enough? Does this claim not lead to the claim of the “authenticity of experience?” (Meskimmon 1996: 20).

J. W. Scott in her text “the evidence of experience” speaks of experience as something which

...is at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted. What counts as experience is neither self evident nor straight -forward; it is always contested, and always therefore political (1986: 412).

She has already explained how:

It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced (1986: 401).

So this account is not based on the *authenticity of experience* but rather on the belief that subjects are *constituted through experience* (*op. cit*) and the belief that truth is not self-identical and self-equivalent in its content (Baktin 1999: 46).

## Time and the continuity of action: recounting the gaps

There are gaps between my described attempts. Gaps that nothing seems to have happened. Nothing describable or nothing worthy of description. In one of red books I note: “the things I remember don’t add up to the time”. But is this just a question of short memory? Gaston Bachellard re-states a common fact when he writes:

...(our soul) has only retained the memory of events that have created us at the decisive instants of our pasts” (2000,1950<sup>1</sup>: 52).

But it is also true that:

we would like to have a continuum of acts to narrate (2000,1950<sup>1</sup>: 50-51).

The gaps exist between the actions described. It seems that I perceive the process as a series of actions. But when I am accounting for actions I am not describing everything



that has happened. Because there is something that has not happened. But how do you account for what has not happened? How do you account for *nothingness*?

What my diary entry actually points out is that there is a connection between my perception of *time* and my perception of *action*. I perceive time as the addition of the duration of actions. Bachellard supports that:

... there is nothing more normal or more necessary than going to the limit and establishing the relaxation of function, the repose of function, the non-functioning of function, since function must obviously often stop functioning (2000,1950<sup>1</sup>: 29).

But my perception of time is disturbed by the gaps in the actions, the gaps deprive me of “proper time”.

I return to action and its duration: when did the action start? As my attempt to trace the beginning of the action sends me further back in time, before any visual or written evidence of my project existed, I start to doubt about the actual moment of its commencement. There seems to be a *pre-acting period* directly related to acting.

Bachellard again speaks about that:

... for temporal behaviour, the essential thing is to begin the movement or better, to permit it to begin. All action is our by virtue of such permission... There is then above lived time, thought time (2000,1950<sup>1</sup>, 37).

This “thought time” is the possibility of action:

... time is thus continuous as possibility, as nothingness (Bachellard 2000,1950<sup>1</sup>: 44).

Looking at the gaps of possibility where action had already begun as “thought time” I see these gaps as a prerequisite of action itself. Actions could not exist without them. In fact they are part of the action itself.

I am at the moment preparing my project “Model Citizens”. In the light of my latest discovery I could say, “I have already commenced it”. It is in the back of my mind, developing, changing emerging. Nothing has been put down on image yet. But it has started. It needs this time of “not happening” in order to happen. As Cixous says “it emits its beams” to me (1993, 58). This is another time, *the time of anticipation*. Cixous describes it when she speaks about reading a desired book:

Here’s a book ‘I read’ but haven’t finished reading. I don’t make an effort either to read it or not to read it. I let it be, it’s in the room where I am, often I don’t read it and during this time it beams obscurely. It’s a form of reading” (1993: 58).

As this is a form of acting.



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## **Appendix IV**

### ***My Artists' Database***

**Note:**

This is a hard copy version of *My Artists' Database*.

My Artists' Database holds 46 records of artworks, produced by 31 artists. Each record is represented in this hard copy as one page. This database is searchable in its original (digital) version. Movies are represented by still images in this copy.



**ARTIST** **ARNATT KEITH**

**ARTWORK** Is It Possible for me to Do Nothing as My Contribution To This Exhibition?

**Year** 1970 **media** text

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

**page** 172

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** nothingness, time counting

**my comments** *more on bibliography data*

To put forward the idea 'I have done nothing' as my contribution to this exhibition would appear to be slightly unreasonable. Moreover the request to utilize a certain amount of gallery space in which 'to do nothing' seems to compound this unreasonableness. Nevertheless, in putting forward the above idea as my contribution to this exhibition, it becomes necessary to examine the implications of such a decision.

The questions that come immediately to mind are: In the context of this exhibition am I simply putting forward the idea 'I have done nothing' as an idea (abstraction), or, am I claiming to have fulfilled what is asserted by the statement, namely, that I have done nothing (here implying, that I have done nothing as my contribution to this exhibition). If the latter is the case, what do I mean by 'I have done nothing'?

...



**ARTIST BAG ALEX**

**ARTWORK** 6th Semester Art School Girl  
(still from color video 'Fall 95')

**Year** 1995 **media** video performance

**REFERENCE** Goldberg, RoseLee. 1998. Performance: Live Art since the 60's. Singapore:  
Thames and Hudson

**library** own

**page** 206

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** performance

**connects to** performance of the self

**my comments**



In this hour-long fictional video diary of an art student, Bag plays with stereotypes. She mimics television's deadpan compination of advertising and life style with the circular questioning of a young artist trying to find her way into the art world. She abandons notions of authenticity, and uses instead the mawkish language of her peer group as a mark of belonging.



**ARTIST BALDESSARI JOHN**

**ARTWORK [not specified]**

**Year 1970 media**

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library 709.04075 page 14**

**category 1 Artworks category 2 Conceptual Art**

**connects to**

**my comments**

John Baldessari stops making works by his own hand and signature. He has been working with words since c. 1959; by 1966, ‘I was beginning to suspect that information could be interesting in its own right and need not be visual as in Cubist, etc. art.’

c



**ARTIST BARRY ROBERT**

**ARTWORK Telepathic Piece**

**Year 1969**

**media telepathy**

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library 709.04075**

**page 98**

**category 1 Artworks**

**category 2 Conceptual Art**

**connects to never realised projects**

**my comments**

During the exhibition I will try to communicate telepathically a work of art, the nature of which is a series of thoughts that are not applicable to language or image. At the conclusion of the exhibition the information about the work of art was made known in this catalogue.

D



**ARTIST BARRY ROBERT**

**ARTWORK** All the things I know but of which I am not at the moment thinking  
1:36 P.M. 15 June 1969, New York

**Year** 1969 **media** (text)

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object  
from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

**page** 112

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** idea art

**my comments**



ARTIST **BARTHELME FREDERICK**

ARTWORK Substitution (no) 15

Year 1970

media card

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

library 709.04075

page 144

category 1 Artworks

category 2 Conceptual Art

connects to nothingness, time counting

my comments *picture: Substitution 15 February 6, 1970.*

DATE: February 6, 1970  
SUBSTITUTION: 15

INSTEAD OF MAKING ART I filled  
out this form.

---

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exerpt from a text of February 4, 1970:

Instead of presenting information to be perceived, most of my recent work locates the presentation-perception process in the individual. But so that it can be said that I am making art or anything else, some presentation is required. Because any presentation contains information, each of those presentations contains information. But the information is such that it declines the central role of object or object substitute. In the 'being' pieces the information is either peripheral (facing north, facing south, etc.), or it is hopelessly central and unavoidable (tired, refreshed, etc.). Thus it is not the type of information that can successfully accept serious study. the 'art' or 'meaning' of the work does not come directly from the represented information, but must be inferred individually by each audience member. In these works I am not interested in presenting anything for people to see, experience or think about. I am interested in suggesting conditions which, defining an art context, allow the inference of any meaning.



**ARTIST BAYARD HIPPOLYTE**

**ARTWORK Self-portrait as a Drowned Man**

**Year 1840**

**media Direct paper positive**

**REFERENCE** Rosenblum, Naomi. 1997. A World History of Photography. New York, London & Paris: Abbeville Press

**library own**

**page 32-33**

**category 1 photography**

**category 2 self-portrait**

**connects to unnecessary deaths**

**my comments** *Societe Francais de Photographie, Paris.*



1839 Daguerre's discovery  
1841 Tablot patents calotype

Actually, a paper process had been discovered independently in France. Early in 1839, Hippolyte Bayard, a civil servant in the Ministry of Finance, had made and exhibited both photogenic drawings and direct positive paper images exposed in a camera, among them a view of a rural enclave in Paris in the process of being urbanised. these works were produced soon after the first reports of Talbot's process reached France but before the official announcement in August of Daguerre's process. However political pressure, especially from Arago, who had committed himself to the promotion of the daguerreotype, kept the discovery from the public. Bayard expressed his indignation at this shabby treatment by the French establishment by creating an image of himself as a suicide victim; nevertheless, he soon went on to become a prominent member of the photographic community in Paris.



**ARTIST BEERY GENE**

**ARTWORK** Note ... (*Planning for the Endless Aesthetic Visualisation*)

**Year** 1969

**media** acrylic, canvas 5'X5'

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

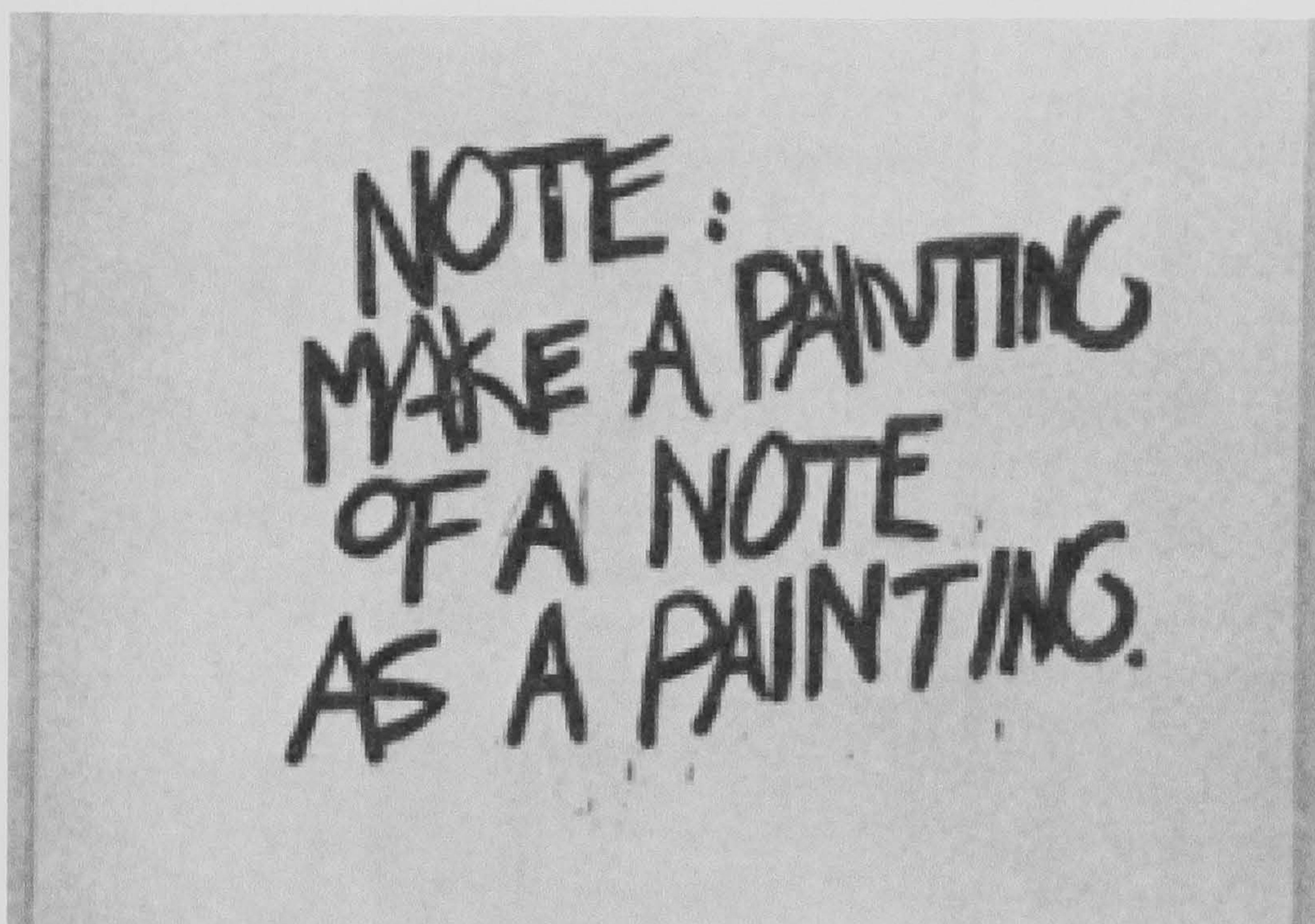
**page** 110

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** self-criticism, evaluation

**my comments**



This painting echoes Beery's roughly executed word paintings made in New York in the early 1960's and shown at the Iola's Gallery, New York, February-March 1963, the anti-estheticism of which seemed at the time to be aimed at the dominating 'formalist' approach to art, 'self-criticism', art about art, 'valid and invalid' approaches to 'high' art. Examples: 'Sorry This Painting Temporarily OUT OF STYLE Closed Updating Watch for Aesthetic Reopening', 'Death in the Family. Pinting CLOSED till further notice'. The Iolas show included painting-signs such as 'The exhibition Continues Around the Corner', etc.



ARTIST **BOROFSKY JONATHAN**

ARTWORK Thought Process

Year 1969-70

media unique copy (xerox)

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

library 709.04075

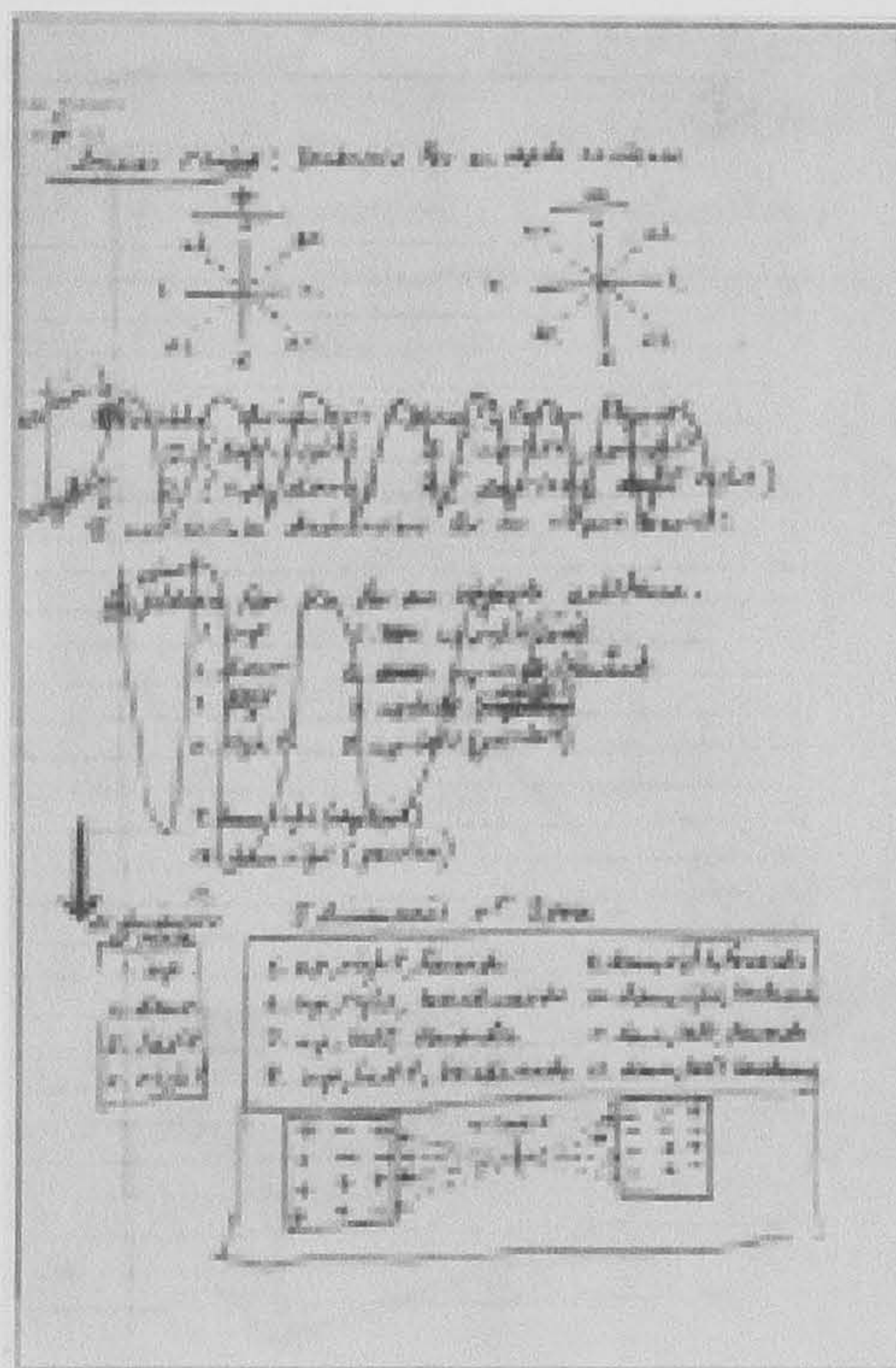
page 68

category 1 Artworks

category 2 Conceptual Art

connects to diaries

my comments



Contents:

- (1) Thought nos. 1-36;
- (2) Time thoughts nos. 5-9;
- (3) Brain exercises nos. 16-22, 25, 27, 28, 29 (August, 1969);
- (4) Thought process M, pages 1-118: illustrations regarding the meaning of time (August-December, 1969);
- (5) Brain exercises no. 31, with procedural diagrams (December, 1969);
- (6) Thought process M continued, pages 119-178;
- (7) Brain exercise no 32, with procedural diagram (January, 1970). (Rep.)

I



ARTIST **BOROFSKY JONATHAN**

ARTWORK "I dreamed my model for the universe ..."

Year 1969-70

media unique copy (xerox)

REFERENCE Prinz, Jessica. 1991. Art Discourse / Discourse in Art. NJ: Rutgers University Press

library own

page 158

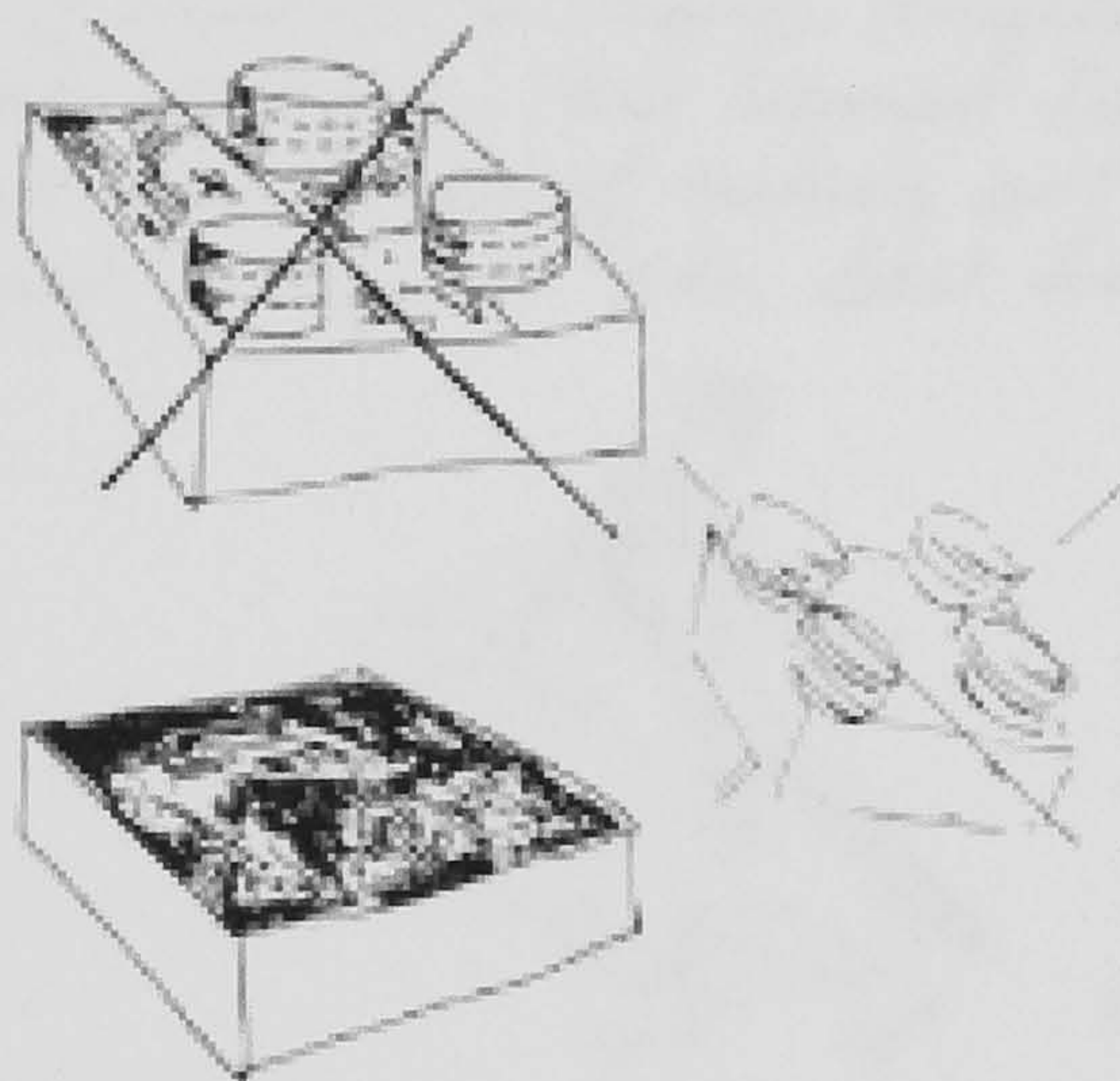
category 1 Artworks

category 2 Conceptual Art

connects to

my comments

*I dreamed my model for  
the universe was much better  
after I removed 3 cylinders  
(each made of 3 layers of construction  
board) from on top.*





ARTIST **BOROFKY JONATHAN**

ARTWORK "I dreamed that some Hitler -type person ..."

Year 1969-70

media unique copy (xerox)

REFERENCE Prinz, Jessica. 1991. Art Discourse / Discourse in Art. NJ: Rutgers University Press

library own

page 157

category 1 Artworks

category 2 Conceptual Art

connects to

my comments

*I dreamed that some Hitler-type person was not allowing everyone to roller-skate in public places. I decided to assassinate him, but I was informed by my friend that Hitler had been dead a long time and if I wanted to change anything, I should go into politics. This seemed like a good idea since I was tired of making art and was wondering what to do with the last half of my life.*





**ARTIST** **BURGY DONALD**

**ARTWORK** Art Ideas for the Year 4000

**Year** 1969 **media** (text)

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075 **page** 135

**category 1** Artworks **category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** randomness of conditions, ideas

**my comments** *Addison Gallery of American art, Andover, Mass.*

Time-Information Idea no2

Select, at random, seven different things, events or ideas.

Study the seven selections until you discover one factor common to all.

Record that factor.

Repeat this process once each day for one week, without even repeating a selection of a common factor.

Reduce this group of seven to one common factor.

L



**ARTIST** CASTORO ROSEMARIE

**ARTWORK** Love's Time

**Year** 1970 **media** text

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075 **page** 152

**category 1** Artworks **category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** time counting

**my comments**

Minutes	Activity
0-22/7	From History thinking to over compensation
0-42/14	From leaving stoned out of my mind to look for someone to buy me a whip
0-13	From the search for a whip to the finding of a friend
0-34/24 <sup>1/2</sup>	From an unorganised sense of order to putting something there
0-20/7	From breathtaking to slandering and cursing
0-135/15	From starting to make time at St. Adrian's to arousing into the day and somehow being carried
...	



**ARTIST** COOK CRISTOPHER

**ARTWORK** A Book of Instances (Autobiographic Actuality)

**Year** 1970

**media** Book

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

**page** 137

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** randomness of conditions, ideas

**my comments** Andover, Mass., 1970

First pages:

November 21, 1844, 9:40 a.m.

June 30, 1875, 6:15 a.m.

December 22, 1883, 6:04 p.m.

May 28, 1932, 2:05 a.m.

...

N



**ARTIST D' URBANO ALBA**

**ARTWORK Touch Me**

**Year 1995**

**media Interactive sculpture**

**REFERENCE** (Catalogue) Media-Art-History; Media Museum; ZKM. 1997. Picht Rebecca, Birgit Sto(:)ckmann eds, Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, ZKM

**library 709.04078**

**page 158-9**

**category 1 digital art**

**category 2 self-portrait**

**connects to**

**my comments** *realisation: Alba d' urbano, Nicolas Reichelt*

*Programming and technical assistance: Nicolas Reichelt, Tobias Kircho(:)fer*

*Cooperation: Institut fur(:) Neue Medien, Frankfurt/Main*



A monitor is in a square column at eye level. The image on the monitor displays a frontal picture of a woman's head. When the monitor is touched, the portrait changes, becomes partially fragmented, combines with structures, and is completed with a live video image of the visitor. *Touch Me*, the title of the work is clearly a demand, one which is a daring violation of good upbringing - if it is not seen in connection with technical interaction. This aspect is emphasized by the artist's kiss in the self-portrait. This lightly frivolous gesture forms the prelude for a game of interaction. The portrait changes if one touches the screen on the eyes, nose or mouth. An image arises which reminds one of flaking color, imitating old frescoes, and at the same time demonstrating the process of digital image assembly. The human face will be eaten away by sickness and decomposition; the portrait is partially destroyed. One is surprised by a superimposition if one stands patiently in front of the strange, half alive part of the moving picture. The person opposite almost becomes a mirror-image of the portrait of the observer. Alba d' Urbano presents a change in the traditional portrait genre, the concept of representation through the use of media technology, and the eventual loss of validity of the static self-portrait. A new liaison is created for each interactive observer, but the image offered will always go back to the starting point. Its expression stays untouched, inexperienced. Only the automatic demand and the mechanical process of image transformation functions. The game is futile, the conquest inconsistent. Only the impression of one's own reflection in the electronic mirror, and its temporary revival through a mimic sequence, stand in the way of the insurmountable technical logic.



**ARTIST D' URBANO ALBA**

**ARTWORK** Hautnah (Close to the Skin)

**Year** 1995

**media** installation

**REFERENCE** (Catalogue) Media-Art-History; Media Museum; ZKM. 1997. Picht Rebecca, Birgit Sto(:)ckmann eds, Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, ZKM

**library** 709.04078

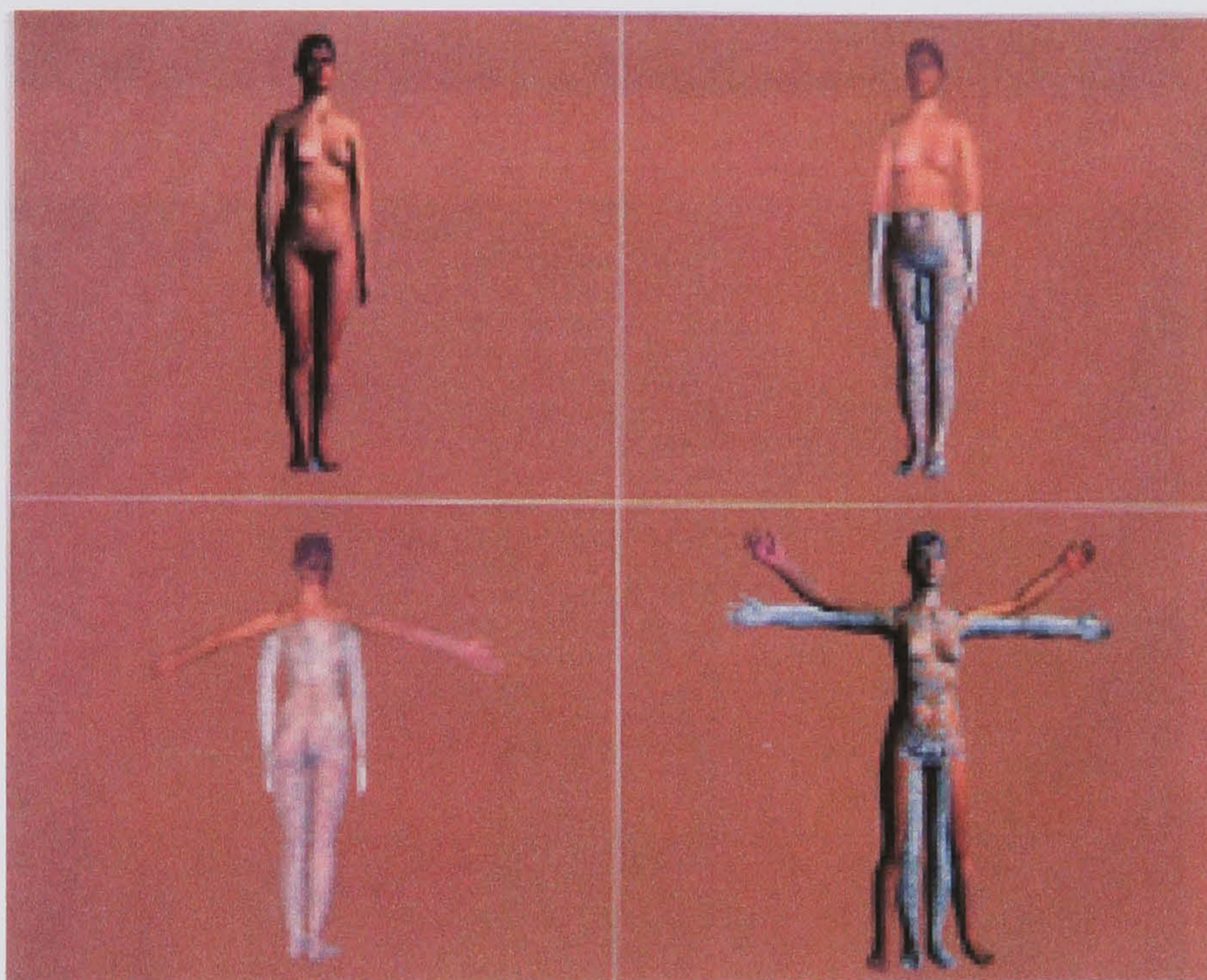
**page** 158-9

**category 1** digital art

**category 2** self-portrait

**connects to**

**my comments** *Participants in this installation in the Sindelfingen Gallery: Nico Reichelt (Assistant), Ruby Wambold (tailor); in addition Institut für Neue Medien Frankfurt, the Sindelfingen City Gallery, and Pfaff, Stuttgart.*



P



ARTIST **DARBOVEN HANNE**

ARTWORK One page of Jan. 23, 1968  
From one of six volumes of the year 1968

Year 1967 media calender strips

REFERENCE Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object  
from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

library 709.04075

page 39

category 1 Artworks

category 2 Conceptual Art

connects to diaries

my comments

1=1 and 1+1=2 is 1 2 -  
one is one and one plus one is  
two is one two -  
I write and don't describe  
and I do like to write and  
don't like to read - writing:  
one two  
one two three four five six seven eight  
nine ten eleven twelve thirteen fourteen  
fifteen sixteen seventeen eighteen nineteen  
twenty twenty one twenty two twenty three  
twenty four twenty five twenty six twenty seven  
twenty eight twenty nine thirty thirty one  
thirty two thirty three thirty four thirty five  
thirty six thirty seven thirty eight thirty nine  
forty forty one forty two forty three forty four  
forty five forty six forty seven forty eight  
forty nine fifty fifty one fifty two fifty three  
fifty four fifty five fifty six fifty seven  
fifty eight fifty nine sixty sixty one  
sixty two sixty three sixty four sixty five  
sixty six sixty seven sixty eight sixty nine  
seventy seventy one seventy two seventy three  
seventy four seventy five seventy six seventy seven  
seventy eight seventy nine eighty eighty one  
eighty two eighty three eighty four eighty five  
eighty six eighty seven eighty eight eighty nine  
ninety ninety one ninety two ninety three  
ninety four ninety five ninety six ninety seven  
ninety eight ninety nine one hundred  
writing program. that i have done -  
one hundred and one hundred and two hundred and

Q



**ARTIST FEININGER ANDREAS**

**ARTWORK** The Photojournalist

**Year** 1955

**media** Gelatin silver print

**REFERENCE** Rosenblum, Naomi. 1997. *A World History of Photography*. New York, London & Paris: Abbeville Press

**library** own

**page** 480,483

**category 1** photography

**category 2** self-portrait

**connects to**

**my comments** *Life Magazine c1955*



Photographs reproduced in *Life*, *Look*, and other picture journals from 1936 on were by no means solely concerned with war and destruction. The peripatetic photojournalist, pictured in a self-portrait by Andrea Feininger as an odd looking creature of indeterminate sex, age, and nationality with camera lenses for eyes, roamed widely during the mid-century flowering of print journalism.

R



**ARTIST   HERSHMAN LYNN**

**ARTWORK   A Room of One's Own**

**Year   1992**

**media   interactive video installation**

**REFERENCE** (Catalogue) Media-Art-History; Media Museum; ZKM. 1997. Picht Rebecca, Birgit Sto(:)ckmann eds, Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, ZKM

**library   709.04078**

**page   83**

**category 1   digital art**

**category 2   interactive art**

**connects to**

**my comments**

“Are our eyes targets?” This still provocative question leaps at the viewer who is demoted to a voyer in the presence of Lynn Hershman’s interactive video installation *Room of One's Own*, and it could be seen as something of a leitmotif for the whole early phase of media art.



**ARTIST HERSHMAN LYNN**

**ARTWORK Lorna**

**Year 1992**

**media interactive environment**

**REFERENCE** (Catalogue) Media-Art-History; Media Museum; ZKM. 1997. Picht Rebecca, Birgit Sto(:)ckmann eds, Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, ZKM

**library 709.04078**

**page 86-87**

**category 1 media art**

**category 2 interactive art**

**connects to**

**my comments** *see how terms change with time*

*more at bibliography*



Help Lorna to solve her problems! For Lorna has huge problems. She has not left the apartment for months, and her only links with the outside world are telephone and television - mediatized language and mediatized vision.

Described in this way *Lorna*, the first interactive video disc with any claim to be art, could be one of these well intentioned socially committed film epics which are bought by dozen as B movies and fill our screens daily.

But - thanks to the interactive strategies Lynn Hershman's intallation, we are not asked to make a donation after the credits at this case. We have to react directly, give the film a positive or negative, exciting or ironic twist. What Lynn Hershmann has succeeded in doing with *Lorna*, her interactive video disc, is no less than a change in paradigm, long overdue and well-prepared.

....

At the start the viwer is given instructions on use of the installation system. If he obeys the rules, he is rewarded. A seductively made-up female mouth communicates the text message: "Congratulations! You have just become a participant in the first interactive video-disc game worldwide!"

Then Lorna is introduced, the main heroine of the film event, and together with her arrives our central problem, namely increasing isolation due to a link with the outside world orientated solely to mediatized communication structures.



**ARTIST HERSHMAN LYNN**

**ARTWORK Lorna**

**Year 1992**

**media interactive environment**

**REFERENCE** (Catalogue) Media-Art-History; Media Museum; ZKM. 1997. Picht Rebecca, Birgit Sto(:)ckmann eds, Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, ZKM

**library 709.04078**

**page 86-87**

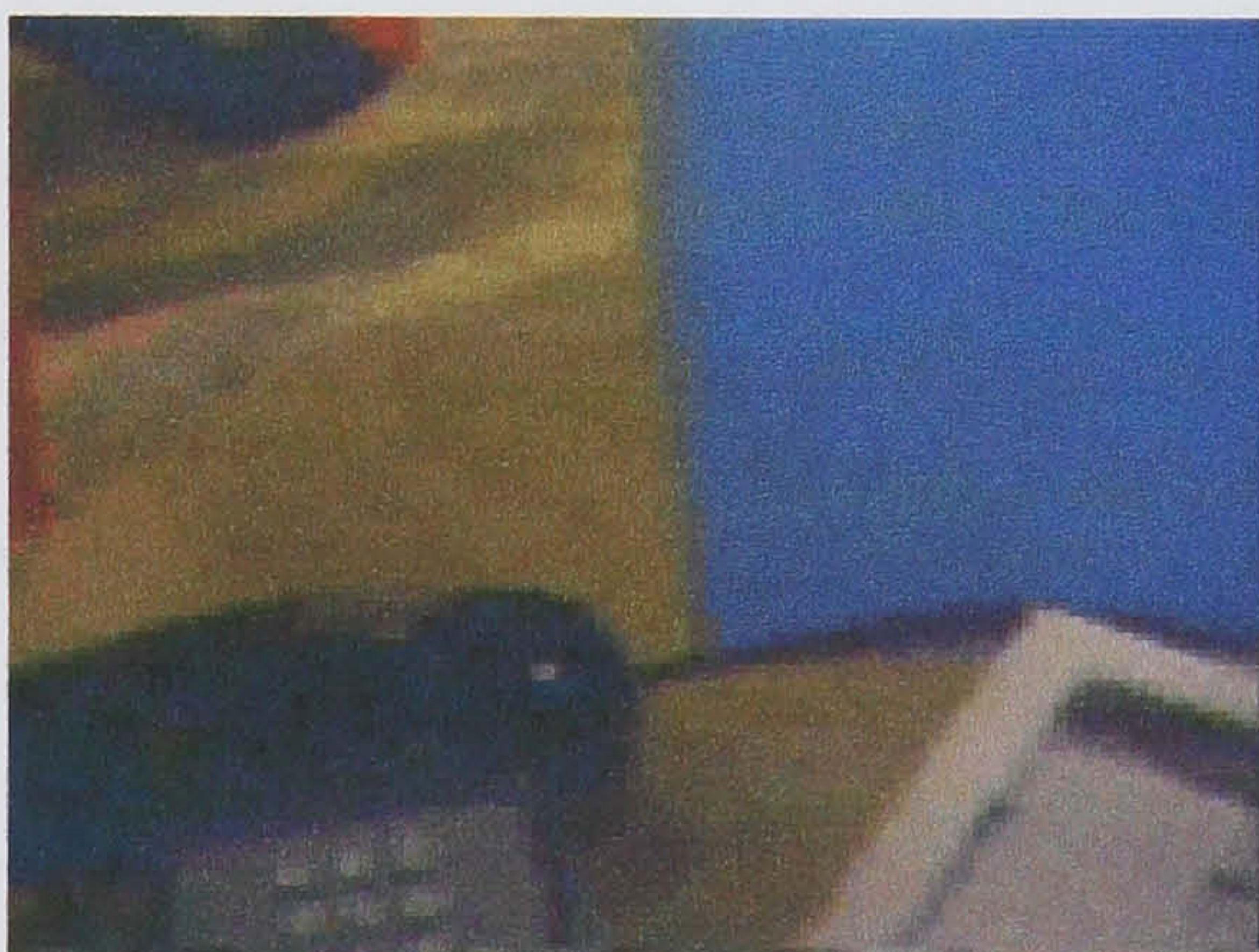
**category 1 media art**

**category 2 interactive art**

**connects to**

**my comments** *see how terms change with time*

*more at bibliography*



Help Lorna to solve her problems! For Lorna has huge problems. She has not left the apartment for months, and her only links with the outside world are telephone and television - mediatized language and mediatized vision.

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**ARTIST HOOVER, NAN**

**ARTWORK** Coming and Going

**Year** 1980

**media** photography

**REFERENCE** The Promise of Photography: The DG Bank Collection. 1998. Sabau L. ed.  
Munich, London & New York: Prestel

**library** 770.1/SAB

**page** 179

**category 1** artworks

**category 2** time

**connects to**

**my comments**



Born in New York in 1931, Nan Hoover trained as a painter, graphic artist, and sculptor. She later applied for Dutch citizenship and now lives in Amsterdam. From 1973 she expanded her field of activity to include the medium of video. In the mid-eighties she returned to drawing. For ten years she stopped working with video, but since then she has switched enthusiastically backwards and forwards between traditional and electronic media.

The successful performer, video, installation, and photoartist has cooperated several times with avant-garde choreographers. In 1992, for Lucinda Child's ballet Naama, set to the music of the Greek composer Iannis Xenakis, she designed the lighting and costumes for dancers from Charleroi, Belgium. In 1996 Hoover produced a video projection for Susanne Linke's Hamletszenen for the Hebbel Theater in Berlin and the Bremen Theater. In the videotape Desert, from 1985, Hoover allowed the camera to glide lazily across a sheet of paper, with strong lighting developing a materiality that transformed the paper suggestively. Hoover's art always shows the discourse about art as an open movement. She declares it to be an almost timeless activity, closely connected to meditation, not yet manipulated by goals stipulated in advance.

In the centre of her work stands the theme of the dialectics of time versus timelessness. This corresponds to her handling of time in the social and individual sense. It is the artist's primary concern "to check the pressure of time, to withstand it, and to transform it into the state of timelessness. If she is successful in this processing of sensations-she herself compares the process to that of digestion-the artwork will be created, so to speak, intuitively" Her pictures show slow, extremely protracted movements of the body through rooms. The body moves through zones of light and shadow, freezes, and pauses. It plumbs the depths of the room, but it is also a direct part of a two-dimensional pictorial system.





**ARTIST KABAKOV, ILYA**

**ARTWORK** The untalanted man [part of '10 Personages']

**Year** 1994

**media** installation

**REFERENCE** The Promise of Photography: The DG Bank Collection. 1998. Sabau L. ed.  
Munich, London & New York: Prestel

**library** 770.1/SAB

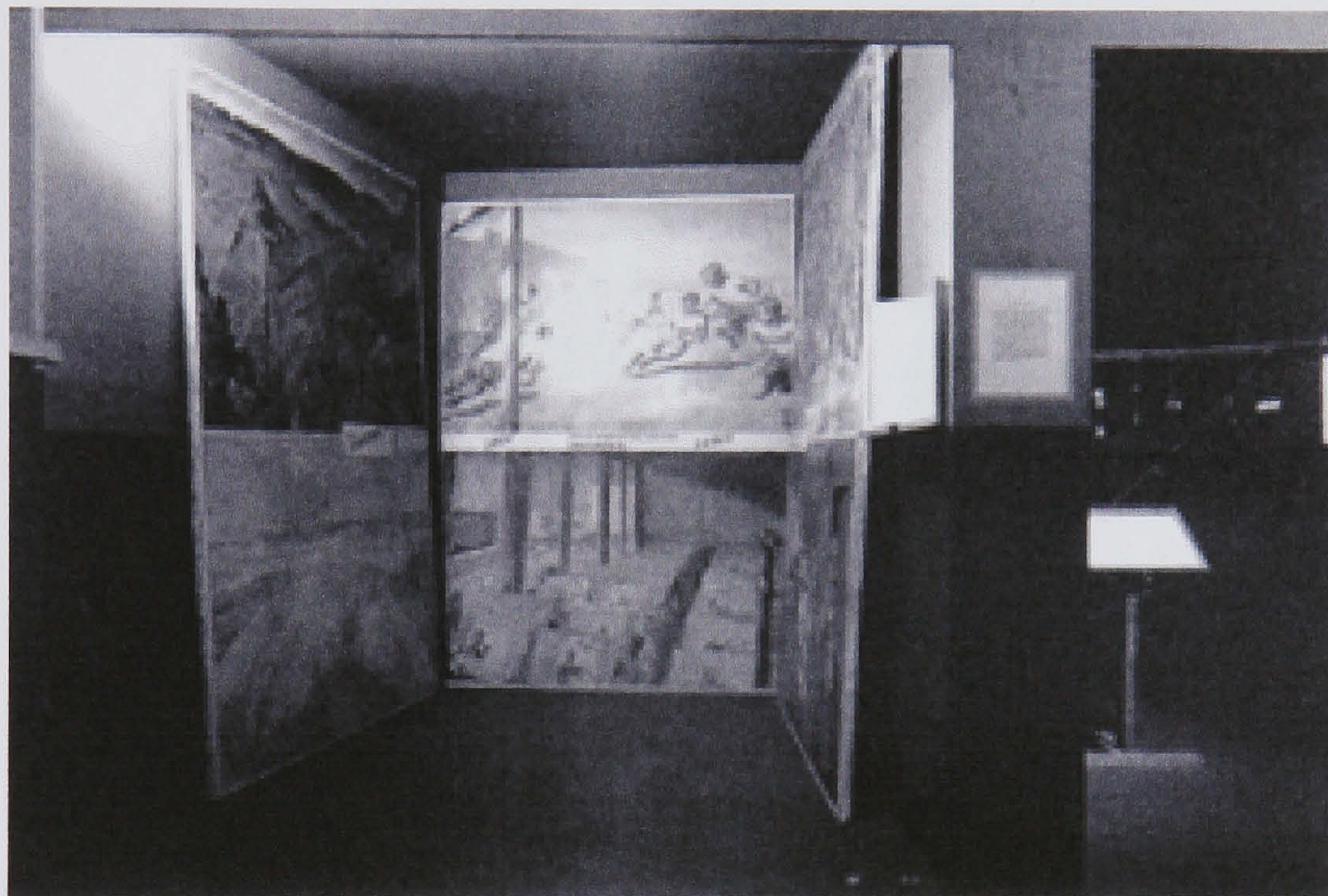
**page** 197

**category 1**

**category 2**

**connects to**

**my comments** 1



Ilya Kabakov is the artistic undertaker of socialist bureaucracy. His Personages, paradoxically devoid of human beings, depict in oppressively matter-of-fact photographs-installations of Kafkaesque dimensions from which the person has been eliminated. One can only still sense the elapsed time, the dispatching, the passage. In the rooms and hallways that Kabakov has staged and that he records photographically prior to their dismantling, questionnaires lie spread out and, official forms are scattered around; evidence is stuck up on the walls, protocols and snapshots are stockpiled on worn out, battered furniture. "My context is Soviet and I suffer from it," the artist has confessed. The Western world greedily immerses itself in the dreary poetry of the remains of the ruined system.

Ilya Kabakov reached the West in 1987, still bearing Russia upon his shoulders: "I have brought my own hell along with me and I'd like to display it to the dwellers of paradise." While in Moscow he was always deemed an "unofficial artist" today, as a resident of New York, he carries on a double existence as illustrator and bookkeeper of the defunct communist form of existence. The photographic records of his installations deliver their report: neatly ordered scenes of misery in the narrative tradition of Dostoyevsky, Gogol, and Mayakovsky-but the sarcastic satires of a Mikhail Zoshchenko would also be at home here. Kabakov reconstructs the places of his own personal biography as lived in the collective-and in fact it always seems as if the collective sets forth its existence in some spectral form. He encircles it in depressingly allegorical installations from which only the photos, sketches, cartographical representations, and written commentaries are destined

W



**ARTIST KABAKOV, ILYA**

**ARTWORK** The composer [part of '10 Personages']

**Year** 1994

**media** installation

**REFERENCE** The Promise of Photography: The DG Bank Collection. 1998. Sabau L. ed.  
Munich, London & New York: Prestel

**library** 770.1/SAB

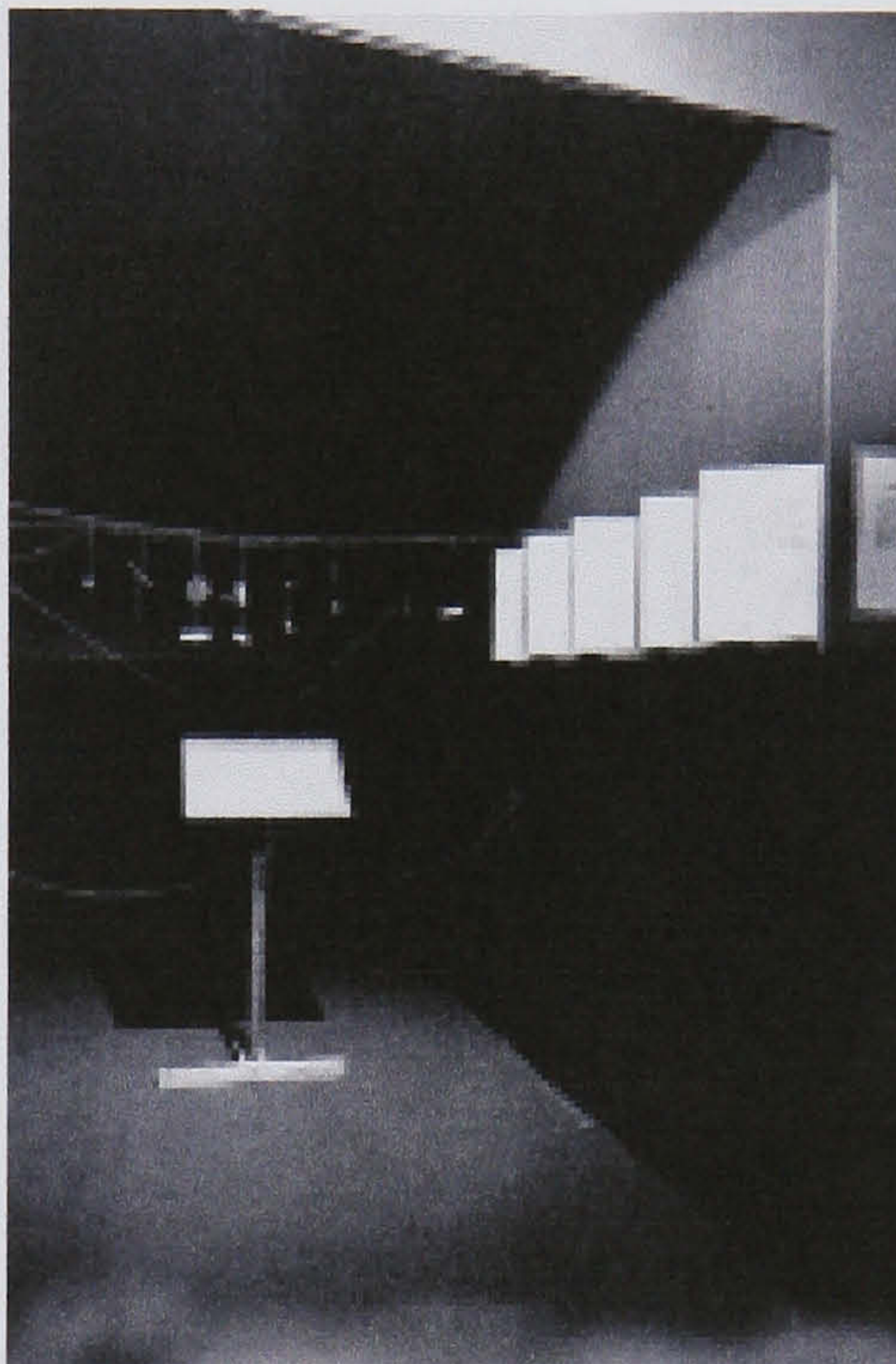
**page** 196

**category 1**

**category 2**

**connects to**

**my comments** 2



... (continued from previous record)

Kabakov discovered the relationship between art and angst at an early stage. It is no wonder then that he has made himself comfortable with the latter. Even as a student of his academy (formerly in Leningrad -today St. Petersburg-but later relocated to Samarkand during the war), he drew his inspiration from forbidden books. In the conspiratorial community of artists, his subversive work has thrived since 1957. During the seventies he became the leading theoretician of the Second Generation, which struggled to attain a critically detached standpoint to Soviet ideology. This was actually the germ cell of Moscow Conceptualism, which became known in some circles as "Soc-Art" and endowed common, everyday socialism with a second, satirical viewpoint. The cultural bureaucrats of the regime viewed this with mixed feelings. In both the private and public spheres Kabakov continued to uncover evidence of tremendous social dreariness.

The vain wish to flee is the theme of the first satirical installation, The man who flew into space from his apartment. The photo shows the spot where a tenant succeeded in catapulting himself through the ceiling of a Moscow public housing apartment with the assistance of a slingshot stretched between the walls of his dwelling. This symbolic act of liberation was later reconstructed in the Centre Pompidou in Paris.



**ARTIST KABAKOV, ILYA**

**ARTWORK** The short man [part of '10 Personages']

**Year** 1994

**media** installation

**REFERENCE** The Promise of Photography: The DG Bank Collection. 1998. Sabau L. ed.  
Munich, London & New York: Prestel

**library** 770.1/SAB

**page** 196

**category 1**

**category 2**

**connects to**

**my comments** 3



... (continued from previous record)

The shared apartment is the birthplace of the installations. In documentary fashion, life is laid out bare in the corridor; here, nothing is private anymore. Here one finds the ultimate destitution. State totalitarianism sets forth its destructive effects even in family life-but these are constructively recorded in cynical inversion, Ilya Kabakov builds a communal home for the Russian family and its regulators. Once, in Moscow, he had visitors who wished to see one of his artistic works. He led them through the decrepit house, over filthy stairs, up to his attic filled with garbage, and from there to a studio full of useless junk. There he opened a drawer, pointed to its contents and designated it as a work of art: "It's not important what you show-important alone is the act of demonstrating" His final point: "I myself am also a piece of garbage that nobody has swept away." More fatalism is scarcely imaginable.

Kabakov lives mainly from commissions and prize money, for instance from the Frankfurt Beckman Prize, which, however, also financed his expenses for the Russian pavilion at the

Venice Biennale in 1993. He carries on his work together with his partner Emilia Kanevsky, writes tens of thousands of personal documents, hammers every nail home, positions each piece of garbage where it should be-and takes keep- ...

4



ARTIST **KALTENBACH STEPHEN**

ARTWORK (letter)

Year 1969

media written communication

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

library 709.04075

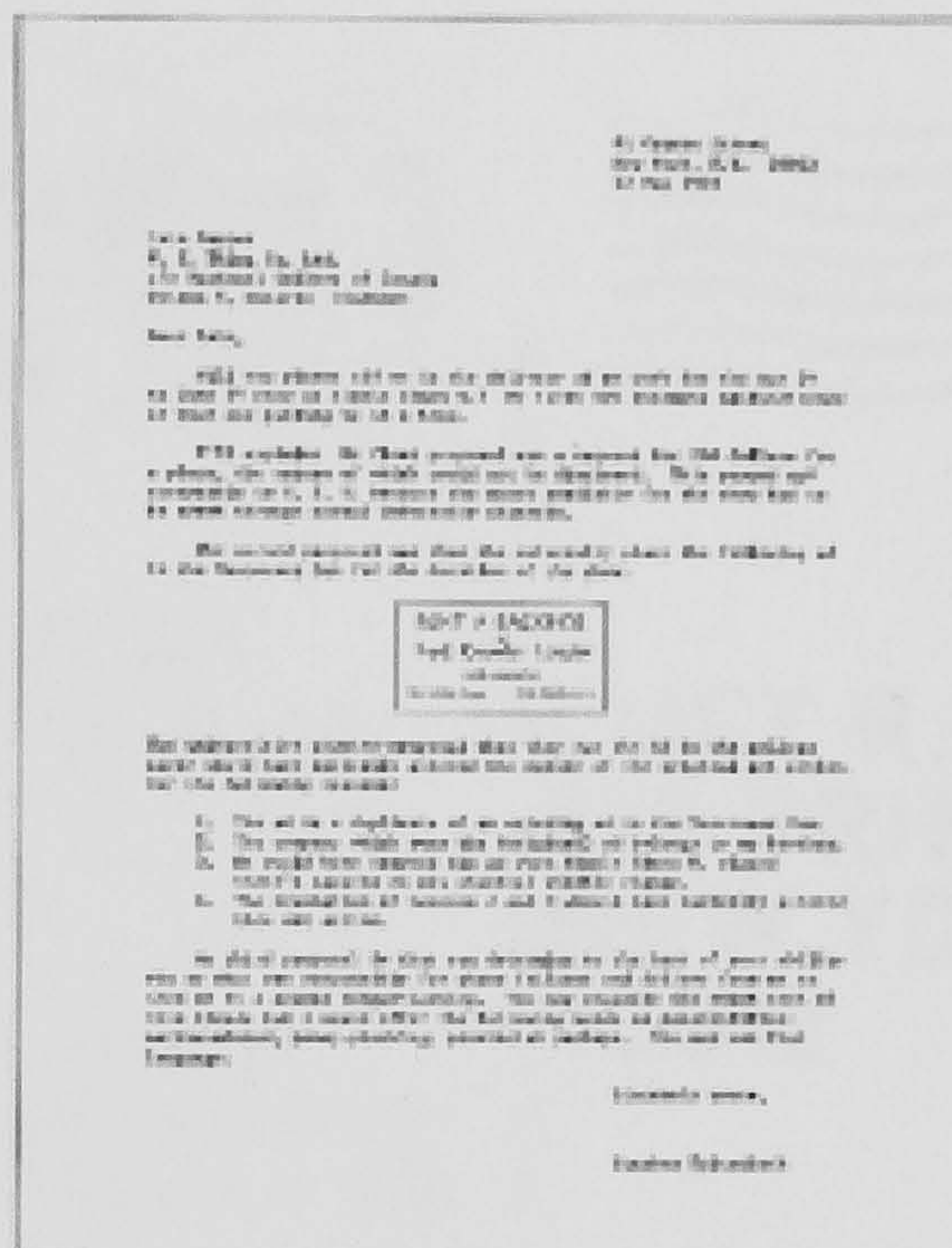
page 99

category 1 Artworks

category 2 Conceptual Art

connects to Doing it yourself video

my comments



POSTULATE: University administrations are set to function in certain patterns which in certain patterns which allow very minimal latitude for response.

COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE:

Act 1. Offer problems which cannot be dealt with through existing (postulated) channels.

Act 2. Determine which aspects of the system were responsible for failures produced by Act no. 1.

Act 3. Address criticism toward these areas.



**ARTIST KAWARA ON**

**ARTWORK I Got Up ...**

**Year** 1969 **media** postcards

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

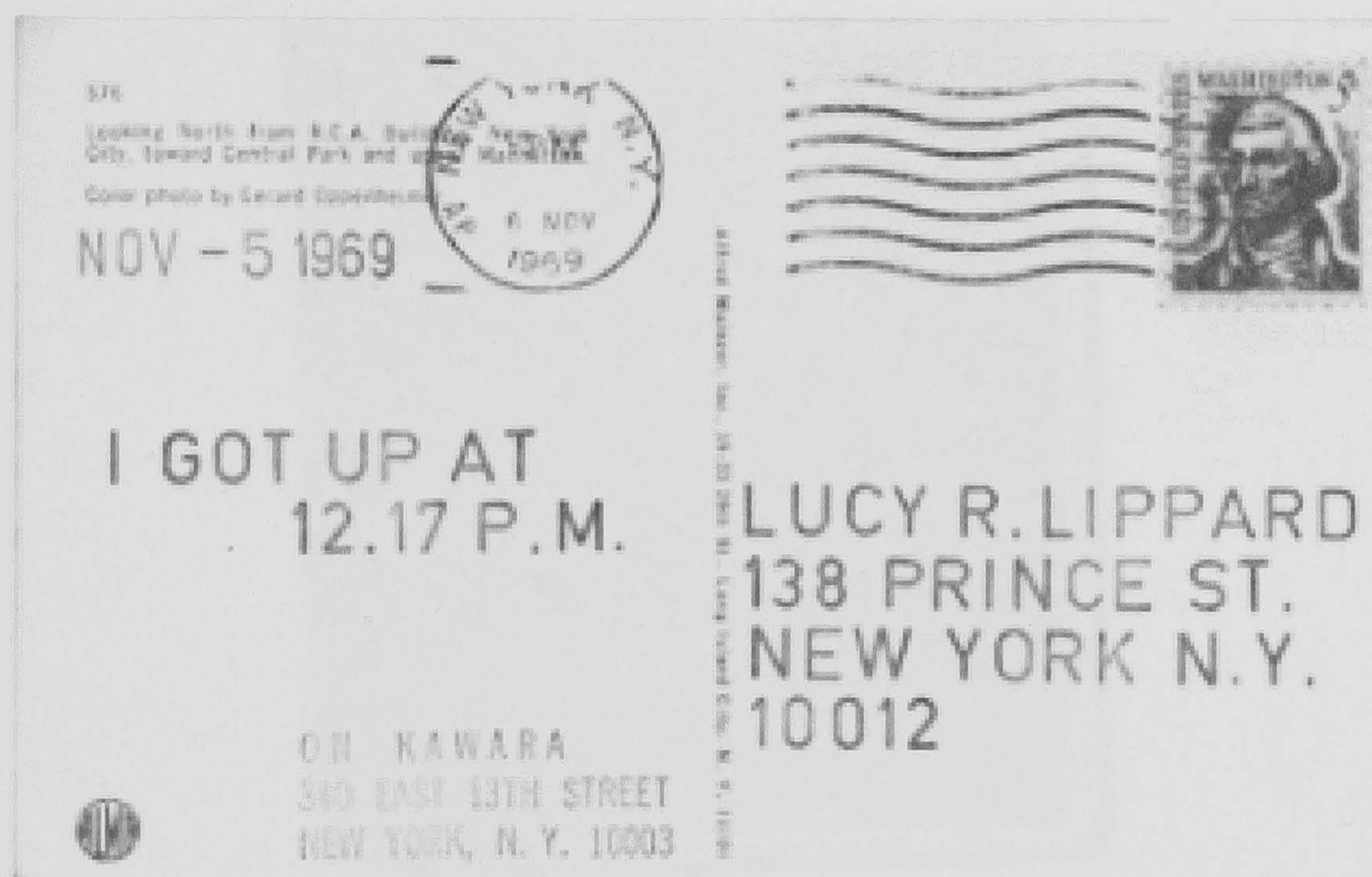
**page** 123-125

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** video tasks and diary survivor's kit, also rules

**my comments** *Set of condition by which to describe the day (time of waking up in this case). The condition does not seem to be important. It is the regularity that the rule provides.*



Nov-1 1969 I got up at 4.28 P.M.  
Nov-2 1969 I got up at 3.13 P.M.  
Nov-3 1969 I got up at 1.15 P.M.  
Nov-4 1969 I got up at 1.54 P.M.  
Nov-5 1969 I got up at 12.17 P.M.

... (p. 124)

One month from a series of daily postcards of New York scenes sent to L.R.L. for four months (and at different times to other friends), stating the date, the time the artist got up that day, his name and address, and L.R.L.'s address, all in rubber-stamped letters (p. 123).



**ARTIST KAWARA ON**

**ARTWORK** 1. I met  
2. I went

**Year** 1968-69 **media notebook series**

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

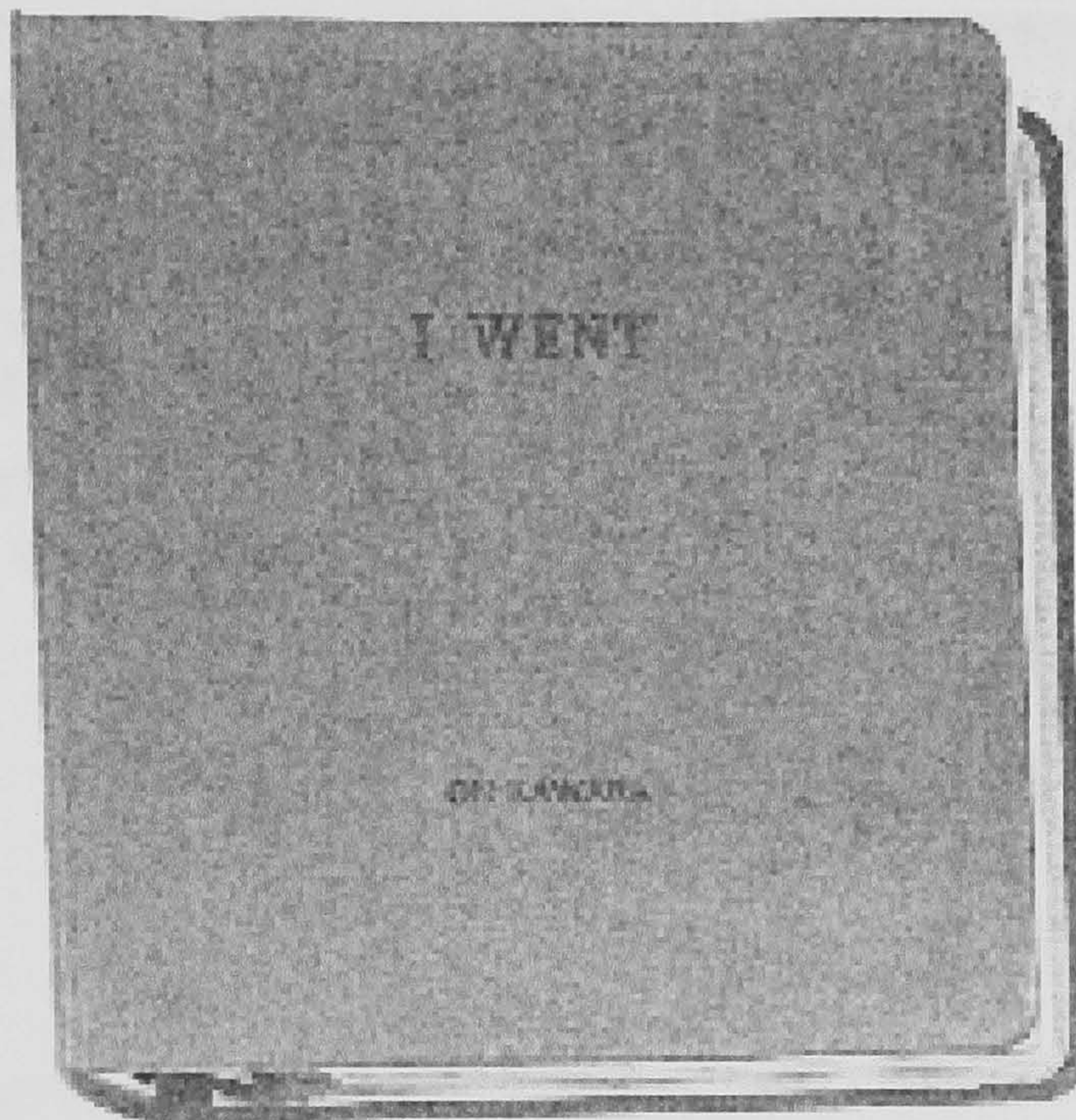
**page** 49-50

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** diaries

**my comments** *L.L.'s explanation to Kawara's 'isolation'.*



Kawara is one of the most important, and one of the most elusive and isolated, artist working in this general direction. In 1966, he began an immense and continuing series of 'date paintings,' small canvases with the stenciled date, executed almost daily and accompanied by a clipping from the day's newspaper, kept in notebooks. He also made a series of paintings marking location by longitude and latitude, a continuing series of 'I got up' postcards and of telegrams, a numerical cipher piece, and the One Million Years book. The fascination exerted by Kawara's obsessive and precise notations of his place in the world (time and location) imply a kind of self-reassurance that the artist does in fact exist. At the same time, they are totally without pathos, their objectivity establishing the self-imposed isolation which marks his way of life as well as his art.



ARTIST **KAWARA ON**

ARTWORK Confirmation

Year 1968-69

media telegram

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

library 709.04075

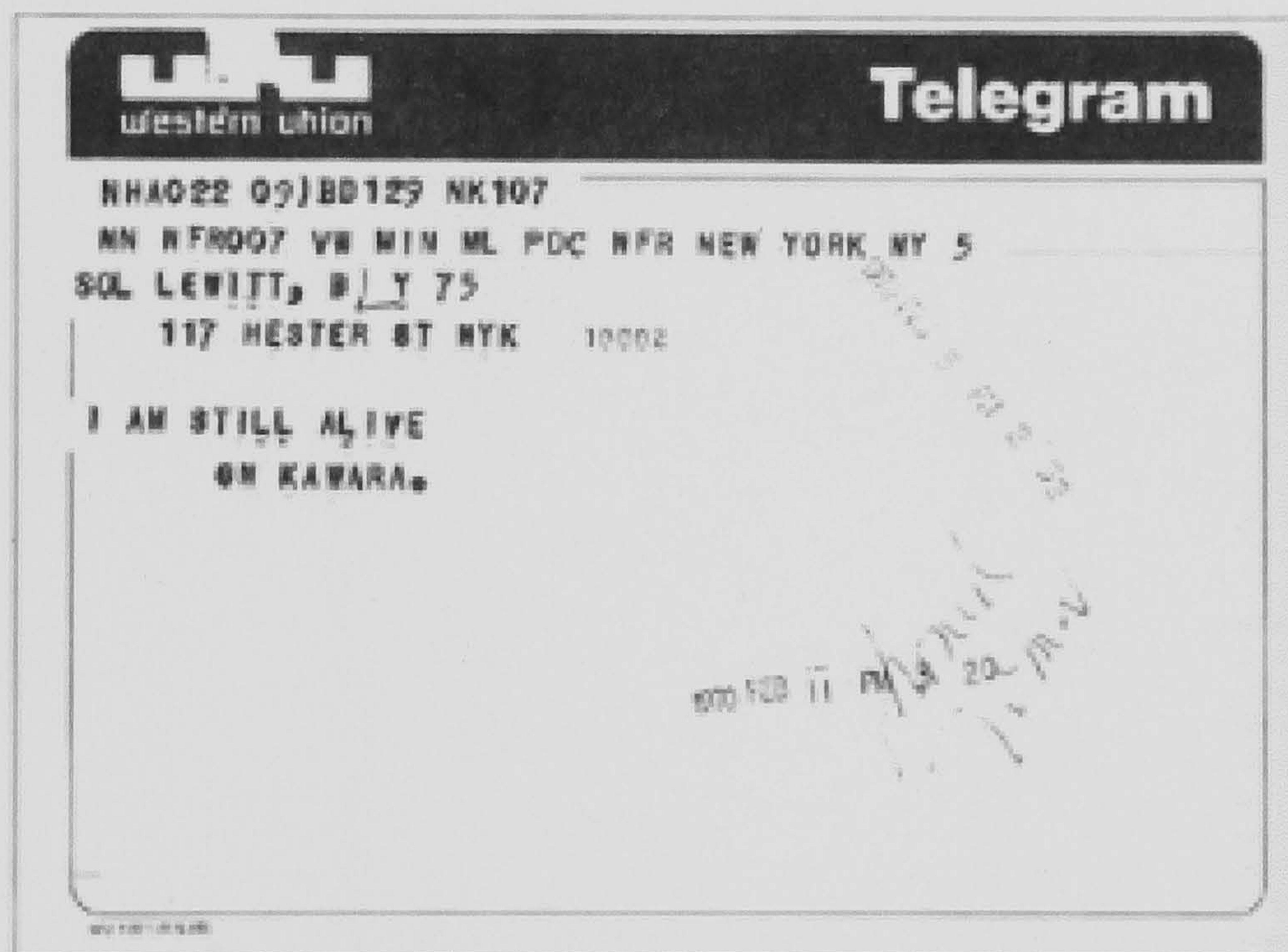
page 180

category 1 Artworks

category 2 Conceptual Art

connects to

my comments



On Kawara. *Confirmation*. Telegram sent to Sol LeWitt, February, 1970. Weiner's "instructions" to Kawara were: "Dear On Kawara, I must apologize but the only situation I can bring myself to impose upon you would be my hopes for your having a good day. Fond Regards, Lawrence Weiner." Kawara's telegram constituted his piece as well as the situation passed on to Sol LeWitt, who in turn made 74 permutations on the telegram's message for his piece.

Ac



**ARTIST KAZAKURA SHO**

**ARTWORK The Real Thing**

**Year 1962 media performance**

**REFERENCE** Goldberg, RoseLee. 1998. Performance: Live Art since the 60's. Singapore: Thames and Hudson

**library own page 16**

**category 1 Artworks category 2 performance**

**connects to nothingness, presence**

**my comments**

Simply ‘being,’ or presence was the essence of Kazakura Sho’s exhibition on a Tokyo gallery in 1962. A protest against police threats to close his outdoor exhibition, Sho’s work *The Real Thing* consisted only of the artist himself standing still and naked in the gallery space, devoid of accouterments or references of any kind. Simply being there in real time, Sho presented himself as the art object, in contrast to the traditional art product with its commodity value. In this sense, viewers were reminded that creativity resides first in the mind and body of the artist.



ARTIST KIENHOLZ EDWARD

ARTWORK The Art Show

Year 1963

media concept tableau (formalised in 1966)

REFERENCE Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

library 709.04075

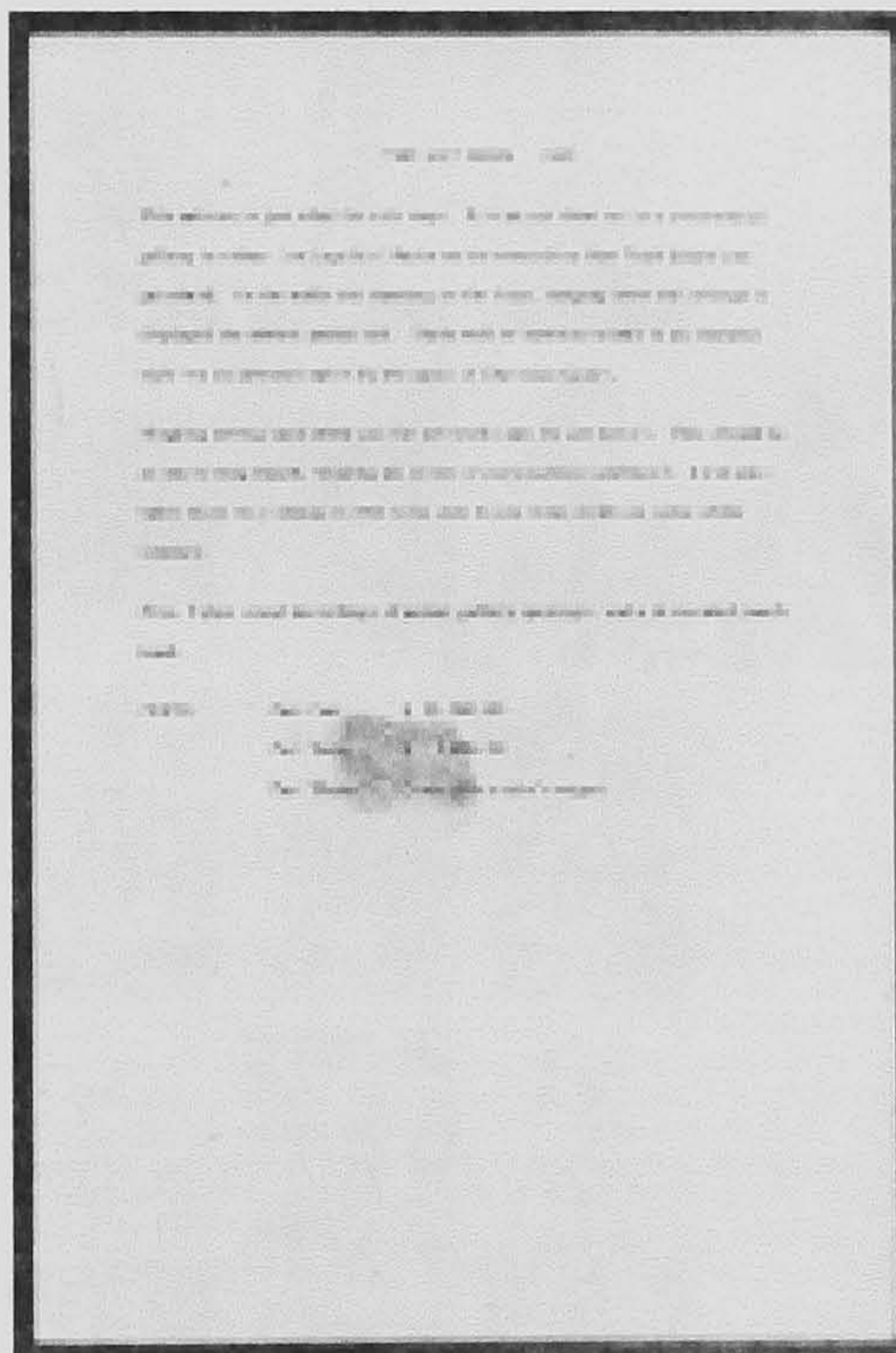
page 15

category 1 Artworks

category 2 Conceptual Art

connects to

my comments *The description of the artwork as artwork*





**ARTIST KLAUKE JURGEN**

**ARTWORK Self- Performance**

**Year 1972-73**

**media photography**

**REFERENCE** The Promise of Photography: The DG Bank Collection. 1998. Sabau L. ed. Prestel USA

**library 770.1/SAB**

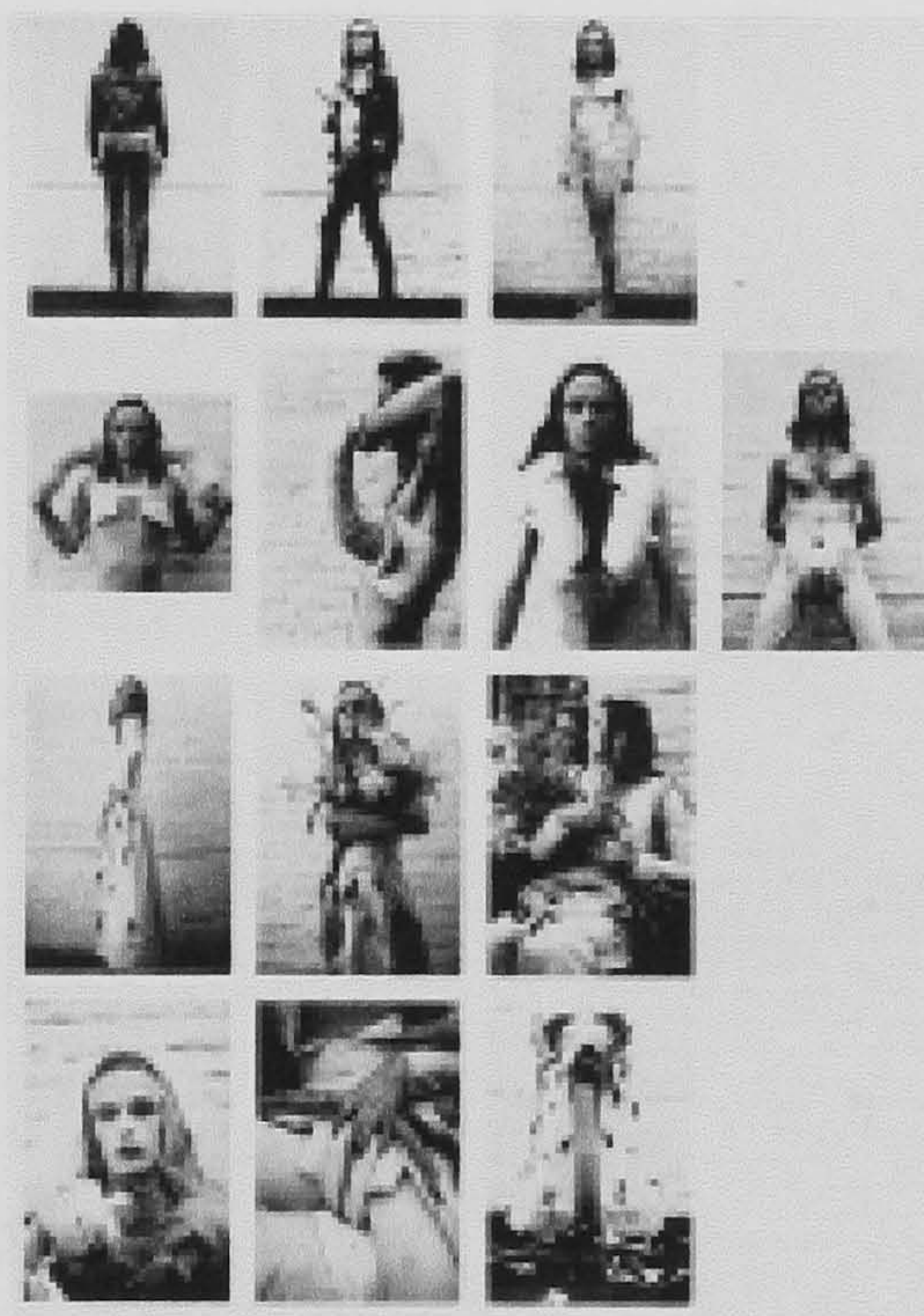
**page 200-1**

**category 1 performed photography**

**category 2 self-portraiture**

**connects to unnecessary deaths**

**my comments** *orders for overcoming Sunday neuroses*



Jurgen Klauke photographs himself profusely. Whether sketching or painting, he prepares himself for representations which call forth his 'inner millieu', in the representative form of hybrid role and transformation games (transformer allegories) in the staged interaction of his own person with insidious objects. Via photography the performance is shot as a ritual sequence. The black, alternating photo shows the course of a dialogue with fetish props. The action, conceived and carried out on several visual levels of expression (a kind of existentialist pantomime), appears in freeze frames as an intimate and subdued connection between objects incorporated as shadows and the artist's body. As the realistic fiction of a play of meaning, Klauke's photography is in the painting tradition of Magical Realism, whereby the individual picture always suggests the appearance of an original print made in the early days of the medium; neuroses and psychoses are rooted in the past. The artist interprets his obsessive inheritance of his social environment- in the style of the theater of the absurd. The sequence *Dritte Wiener Richtung* (third Viennese school: 1992) shows ceremonial orders for overcoming 'Sunday neuroses', which Jurgen Klauke linked to his cycle *Formalisierung der Langeweile* (formalization of boredom: 1981).



**ARTIST KLEIN YVES**

**ARTWORK The Void**

**Year 1958**

**media empty room with white walls**

**REFERENCE** Goldberg, RoseLee. 1998. Performance: Live Art since the 60's. Singapore: Thames and Hudson

**library own**

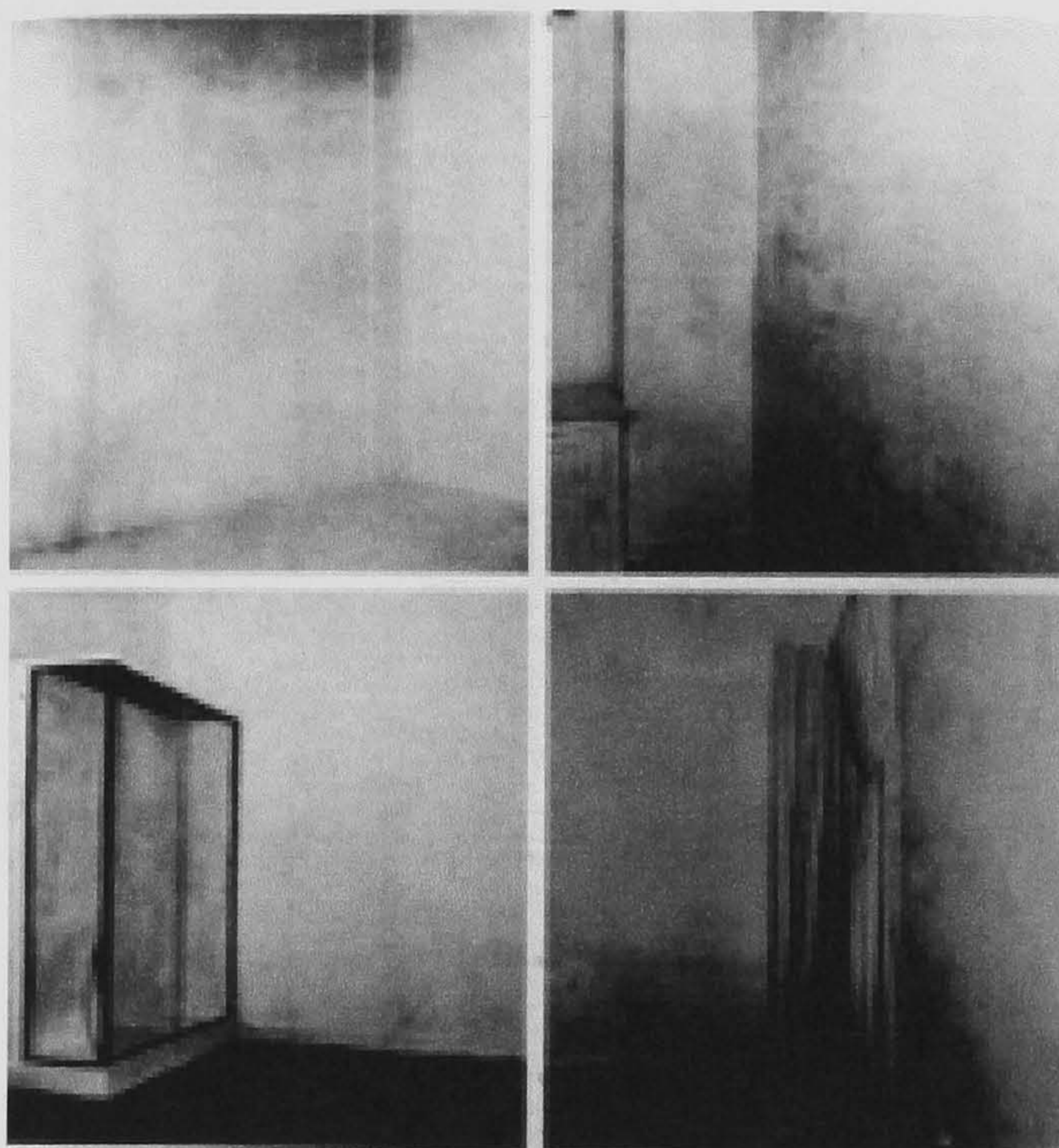
**page 15-16**

**category 1 Artworks**

**category 2 Conceptual Art**

**connects to nothingness**

**my comments**



Emerging from the angst of post-war Existentialism in the 50's, artists of the 60's created public gestures that were poetic and harsh at the same time. The spirit of the work often contained traces of Sartrean Existentialism. A sense of 'nothingness', or absence, pervaded Yves Klein's famous exhibition in 1958 in Paris entitled 'The Void'. It consisted of nothing but the whitewashed rooms of an empty gallery to which a select audience was invited. Those who entered had nothing to confront but themselves, making self-definition the metaphor embedded in the experience of being marked by the very absence of anything at all.



ARTIST **KLEIN YVES**

ARTWORK Leap into the void

Year 1960

media performance

REFERENCE Goldberg, RoseLee. 1998. Performance: Live Art since the 60's. Singapore: Thames and Hudson

library own

page 33

category 1 Artworks

category 2 performance

connects to performance of the self

my comments



Yves Klein's leap from the second storey of a building was restaged for photographer Harry Shunk ten months after the first undocumented leap. Klein usually had a photographer on hand to freeze the action into an iconic image.

The final photograph of Klein's self-endangering and bold feat would profoundly influence generations of artists, yet the fact that he went to such great lengths to create a very particular image of this action (and all the others that were photographed or filmed), makes clear Klein's canny understanding of the photograph as an essential element of his performances. It was his way of making concrete the 'immateriality' that was a key tenet of his work. It also emblematizes an important point in Mikhail Bakhtin's philosophy, the difference between what is *now* and what is *after-now*.



**ARTIST KLEIN YVES**

**ARTWORK** Immaterial Pictorial Sensitivity Zone 5

**Year** 26 Jan 1962      **media** performance

**REFERENCE** Goldberg, RoseLee. 1988. Performance Art: From Futurism to the present.  
Yugoslavia: Thames and Hudson

**library** own

**page** 121

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Performance

**connects to** immateriality

**my comments**



Klein throwing 20g of gold leaf into the Seine for Immaterial Pictorial Sensitivity Zone 5, 26 January 1962. The buyer is burning his check.

...

Moreover, Klein sought a way to evaluate his 'immaterial pictorial sensitivity' and decided that pure gold would be a fair exchange. He offered to sell it to any person willing to purchase such an extraordinary, if intangible, commodity, in exchange for gold leaf. Several 'sales ceremonies' were conducted: one took place on the banks of river Seine on 10 February 1962. Gold leaf and a receipt changed hands between the artist and the purchaser. But since 'immaterial sensitivity' could be nothing but a spiritual quality, Klein insisted that all remains of the transaction be destroyed: he threw the gold leaf into the river and requested that the purchaser burn the receipt. There were seven purchasers in all.



**ARTIST KOZLOV CHRISTINE**

**ARTWORK** *Information: No Theory*

**Year** spring 1969      **media** (text)

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

**page** 80

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to**

**my comments**

(revised edition of piece in March catalogue)

1. The recorder is equipped with a continuous loop tape.
2. The recorder will be set at *record*. All the sounds audible in the room will be recorded.
3. The nature of the loop tape necessitates that new information erases old information. The 'life' of the information, that is, the time it takes for the information to go from 'new' to 'old' is the time it takes the tape to make one complete cycle.
4. Proof of the existence of the information does in fact not exist in actuality, but is based on probability.

AJ



**ARTIST KOZLOV CRISTINE**

**ARTWORK** Xeroxed calender stips, send out, systematically canceled

**Year** 1967 **media** calendar strips

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997,1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

**page** 23

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** rejection

**my comments**

Ak



**ARTIST KUSAMA YAOI**

**ARTWORK Infinity Mirror Room**

**Year 1960**

**media performance**

**REFERENCE** Goldberg, RoseLee. 1998. Performance: Live Art since the 60's. Singapore: Thames and Hudson

**library own**

**page 48-49**

**category 1 Artworks**

**category 2 performance**

**connects to performance of the self, obsession**

**my comments**



Kusama used the term Obsessional Art to describe paintings and environments that emerged as much from her own episodes of acute depression as from observations of the repetitiveness of daily life-what she called 'the consciousness of living in continuation'. 'Think of breathing', she said. 'you have to breath so many times'. Her mirrored rooms gave architectural form to her intense sensations. This piece was part of her solo exhibition 'Floor Show' at the Castellnar Gallery, New York.



**ARTIST LOZANO LEE**

**ARTWORK Dialogue Piece**

**Year 1969**

**media oral and written communication**

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library 709.04075**

**page 98**

**category 1 Artworks**

**category 2 Conceptual Art**

**connects to rules, lists**

**my comments** *Lozano's instructions are directed to herself*

Call, write or speak to people you might not otherwise see for the specific purpose of inviting them to your loft for a dialogue.

In process perpetually from date of first call (April 21, 1969). Date of first interest in dialogues, which exist solely for their own shake as joyous social occasions. (More information available from the artist).

(L.L. text in it.) Lozano's "conceptual" work, conceived simultaneously with the end of a large series of paintings on wave phenomena, combine art and life to an extreme extent. Unlike most "instruction" or "command" pieces, for example, Lozano's are directed to herself and she has carried them out scrupulously, no matter how difficult to sustain they may be. Her art, it has been said, becomes the means by which to transform her life, and, by implication, the lives of others and of the planet itself.

Am



**ARTIST LOZANO LEE**

**ARTWORK** One page from notebook of *I Ching Charts*. 1969.

**Year** 1969

**media** I Ching charts on paper

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

**page** 96-97

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** rules, lists

**my comments**

**Lee Lozano. / *Ching Piece*, started April 21, 1969, and continuing (Rep.):**

Chart 1. (April 21-October 29, 1969)—Hexagrams, time.

Total no. of questions asked: 3,087.

Total no. of days on which questions asked: 165.

Average no. of questions asked per day: 18.7.

Hexagram most frequently refn'd: H.33 (Withdrawal), (117) times.

Hexagram least frequently refn'd: H.15 (Modesty), (60) times.

Chart 2. (April 21-November 20, 1969)—Changing Lines.

Changing line most frequently refn'd: H.23, line 2, (24) times.

Changing line least frequently refn'd: H.63, line 6, (2) times.

Chart 3. (April 21-November 20, 1969)—Subject Matter of Questions.

Subject A: H.33, (17) times.

Subject B: H.47, (26) times.

Subject C: H.18, (15) times.

Chart 4. (Started December 11, 1969 and continuing). Old Yang, Young Yang, Young Yin, *Old Y'm* lines.

AN



**ARTIST MANZONI PIERO**

**ARTWORK** Living Sculpture

**Year** 1961

**media** performance

**REFERENCE** Goldberg, RoseLee. 1998. Performance: Live Art since the 60's. Singapore: Thames and Hudson

**library** own

**page** 16

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** performance

**connects to** authenticity

**my comments**



A year earlier, in 1961, Piero Manzoni had signed his name on the arms and backs of selected visitors to a Milan gallery, declaring each to be a 'living sculpture' and awarding each a 'certificate of authenticity' as a confirmation of his gesture. Executed in the spirit of Marcel Duchamp's 'found objects,' Manzoni's sculptures asserted an artist's prerogative to label an object or a person as a work of art, and to transform for a moment a person's own sense of self into a purely physical status, object-like, of aesthetic interest and contemplation.



**ARTIST McLEAN BRUCE**

**ARTWORK** King for a Day plus 99 other pieces incorporating 'The Piece a Minute Show' and the 'World's Fastest Piece in the World'

**Year** October 1970      **media** list (text)

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

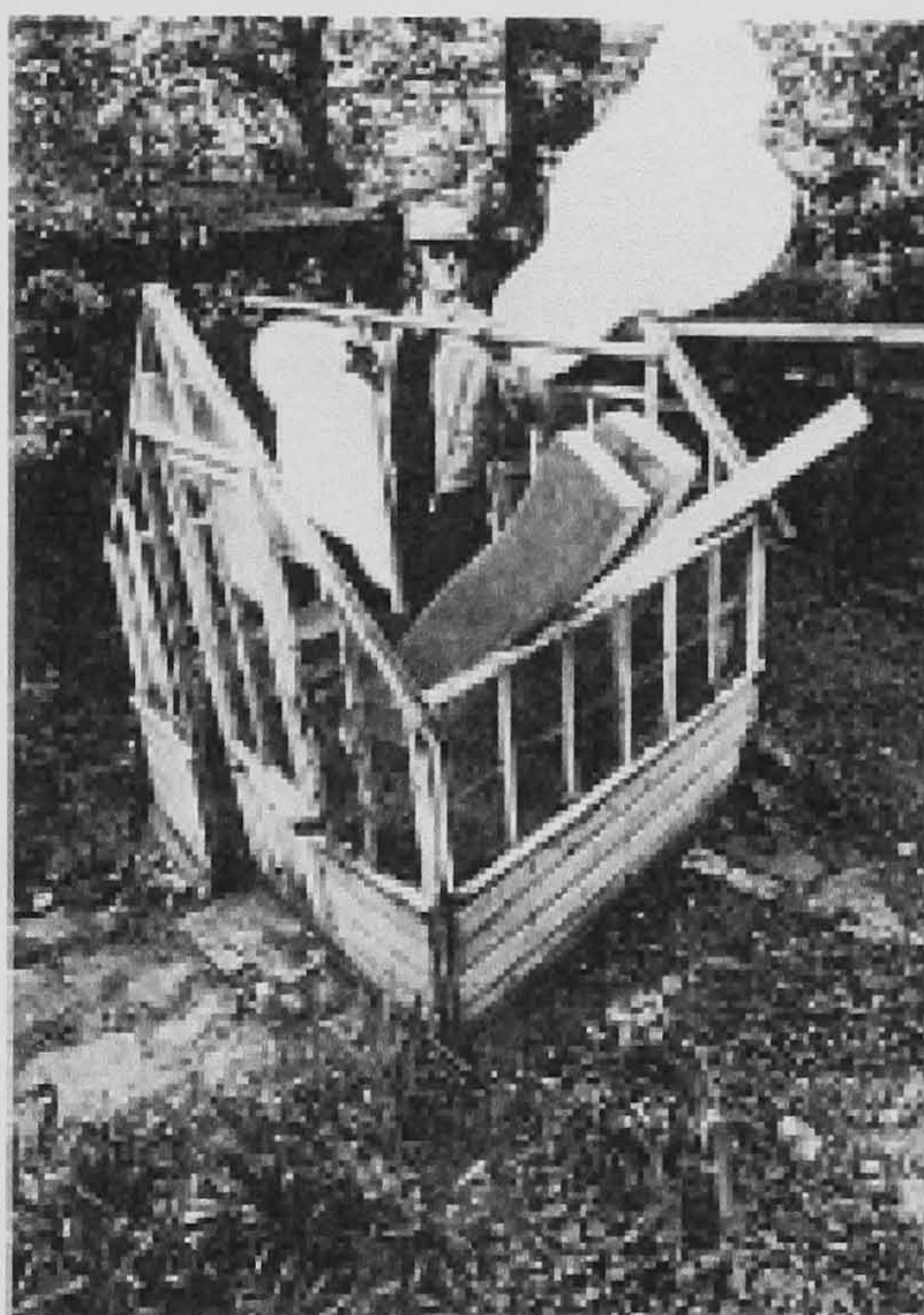
**page** 194

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** idea pieces, lists

**my comments** *Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, October, 1970. Excerpt (full 1000 pieces published in Avalanche, no.2, winter, 1971) (Rep.)*



- 109. Major breakthrough (piece) study.
- 110. Breakthrough 1.
- 111. Breakthrough 2.
- 112. Breakthroughs.
- 113. Small art (study piece).
- 114. Small piece (for specific environment).
- 115. 10 part installation work for heads (specific).
- 116. 25 part installation work for hands (unfinished).
- 117. Work of the Decade thing.
- 118. Last piece of the decade (1970).
- 119. First piece of the Decade.
- 120. Memory piece.
- 121. Remember Alan Davie with his Poddle piece.
- 122. Remember Anthony Caro (piece work).
- 123. Portrait of artists' pub at lunchtime piece.
- 124. Collectors piece.
- 125. Song and dance action and piece work 4th version.
- 126. Eat work.
- 127. Laugh work.

AP



**ARTIST MIN YONG SOON**

**ARTWORK Make Me**

**Year 1989**

**media photography**

**REFERENCE** Chicago, Judy & Lucie-Smith Edward. 1999. Women and Art; Contested Territory. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson

**library own**

**page 180**

**category 1 photography**

**category 2 self-portrait**

**connects to self-portrait**

**my comments**



American Korean artist. In the photographs she manipulates her own face in pursuit of an identity which will be settled and satisfactory, no longer fluid. Inscriptions on her face suggest what her alternatives are: model minority; exotic emigrant; objectified other; assimilated alien.

AQ



**ARTIST WEINER LAWRENCE**

**ARTWORK [statement]**

**Year** spring 1969      **media** text

**REFERENCE** Lippard, Lucy. 1997, 1973 (1). Six years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 ... California: University of California Press

**library** 709.04075

**page** 80

**category 1** Artworks

**category 2** Conceptual Art

**connects to** the possibility of a piece

**my comments** *Text in catalogue  
January 5-31, 1969. Seth Siegelaub, New York. Barry, Huebler, Kosuth,  
Weiner.*

1. The artist may construct the piece
2. The piece may be fabricated
3. The piece need not be built

Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist, the decision as to condition rests with the received upon the occasion of receivership.

In 1970 (Art in the Mind) Weiner amplified this statement somewhat;  
As to construction, please remember that as stated above there is no correct way to construct it. If the piece is built it constitutes not how the piece looks but only how it could look.

AR



**Appendix V**

**Publications**



# Proceedings

Papers

Panels


Round Tables

Poster Sessions

Institutional Presentations

Workshops

Tutorials

ISEA2002, 11th International Symposium on Electronic Art, NAGOYA [Orai] 

電子芸術国際会議 2002 名古屋 [往来]

October 28 – 31, 2002, NAGOYA, JAPAN

Nagoya Harbor Hall



# IN CONTACT WITH THE PROCESS: COMINGS AND GOINGS WITHIN DIGITAL ART PRACTICE

Angeliki Avgitidou

Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design

## Abstract

*The research of the creative activity as a process through which the subjectivity of the artist is constructed led to the identification of periods of non-production, experienced by the artist as 'nothingness'. Nothingness, banality and repetition are explored in this presentation through artworks of Performed photography, multimedia and animation.*

## 1. Main

In the research I carry out at Central Saint Martins College (UK) I am examining the experience of the creative activity as a process of subjectification within digital art.

The process of the creative activity was initially experience as a series of *events*, a connection of *time* and *action*. The frustration of the artist with time not connected with action was expressed in the research diaries: non-production periods were perceived as *nothingness*. An exploration of the gaps in the art production led to the acceptance of this pre-action period as inherent part of the activity of the artist and prerequisite for *action*. Since then these pre-action periods of idleness, banality and nothingness were investigated through the art practice of the artist. Repetition, Performed self-portraiture and exaggerations of the canon of the process have been explored as strategies of the artist.



*'Portrait of the Artist as Bored Academic'*  
digital print, detail

## 2. Methodology

Methodological approaches for the research include self-reflexive methodology and grounded theory. The theoretical

background is based on Foucault's manifestation of subjectivity, phenomenological accounts of time and discourses surrounding autobiography and performativity.

## 3. Acknowledgements

The artist acknowledges the support of the following institutions: IKY, AHRB and The London Institute.



*'Banality Queen'* digital print



*'A Series of Unnecessary Deaths'*  
animation still, animation length: 1 min

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Glasgow, Scotland  
9 - 12 april 2001

# C A D E 2 0 0 1

glasgow

proceedings

Edited by Robin Shaw and John McKay

The Glasgow School of Art Press



# Digital Creativity: Crossing the Border

The Proceedings of CADE 2001:  
the 4<sup>th</sup> Computers in Art and Design  
Education Conference,  
held at the Glasgow School of Art  
9-12 April 2001

Edited by Robin Shaw and John McKay

The Glasgow School of Art Press  
ISBN 0 901904 82 1



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# Performing Subjectivity

Angeliki Avgitidou

Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, The London Institute

**Abstract:** *The paper explores through performative and autobiographical writing the different subjective positions of the artist within the process of making art. It challenges notions of action as a progression of happenings and seeks to incorporate discontinuity, boredom and nothingness into the body of the artist's action.*

## 1. Introduction

This presentation is part of the research I developed during the past two years at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design within the PhD in Fine Art program. The research is titled 'Computer-aided art and the artist: The artist's experience of the creative activity as a process of subjectification'. It is an exploration of the subjective position of the artist within the process of practising digital art and is based on the hypothesis that the artist's subjectivity is constructed through this process.

In this paper I will describe how the use of diaries (written and video ones) as research tool for, what is widely known as, practice-based research led to the identification of the different stages in the artist's action. I will explain these stages and their connection with the perception of time as continuity or nothingness<sup>1</sup>.

### 1.1. Written diaries: the evaluation and evidence of experience

The decision for employing diary writing as a tool for mapping the evolution of the project and my response to it was taken within a self-reflexive and self-critical methodological approach. I would attempt to document and facilitate the evaluation of my experience of the process of practising digital art and my response to this experience. Diaries later took two forms: written diaries (4) and video diaries (1 and 2). Employing a written diary was my first attempt to document my project.

*I had in the past tried to write a diary but always felt that I failed the undertaking. I felt this because I thought there were a number of "diary rules" that my undertaking lacked. One was consistency, which meant writing systematically as well as writing over a long period of time. In the cases that I forced myself to write regularly I felt that the content lacked interest and after a while the desire to write would wear off. I was determined that this time I would comply with the rules of regularity and devotion. I failed to comply with both.*

What is interesting in a diary of working progress is the assumption that what can be entered is an action or an event. The problem with writing the diary on a regular basis occurred when an action, or an event had not taken place. At least not an action or event that was worth annotating. Two issues seemed to emerge, the issue of the evaluation of experience (or entitlement to documentation) and the issue of the evidence of experience.

*Thinking about documenting the experience of the creative process I found out that I had to decide what formed the evidence of this experience. Was it documentation (images probably) of the various stages of the project? But what would determine a stage as such, was that to be evaluated retrospectively? In this case wouldn't all data have to be kept? And what about my remarks and my diary entries: what part of my daily routine could be isolated to form the evidence of my experience? I was again called to evaluate and to choose. I tried to position myself as the subject of these diaries. In order to carry this out I searched once more for rules. I had opted for an autobiographical method of documentation and was looking to fit into an existing mode. Was I an author? According to Foucault's description of one as a formal construction I wasn't:*

---

<sup>1</sup> In the paper extracts of a previous text, a meta-diary, are included in order to indicate an evolution in the research as well as the views of the artist; this text is printed in italics.



*Consequently, we can say that in our culture, the name of an author is a variable that accompanies only certain texts to the exclusion of others: a private letter may have a signatory, but it does not have an author; a contract can have an underwriter, but not an author; and, similarly an anonymous poster attached to a wall may have a writer, but he cannot be an author. In this sense, the function of author is to characterise the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within society (1969: 10).*

*He adds:*

*Assuming that we are dealing with an author, is everything he (sic) wrote and said, everything he left behind, to be included in his work? ... But what if, in a notebook filled with aphorisms, we find a reference, a reminder of an appointment, an address, or a laundry bill, should this be included in his works? (1969: 16).*

*And what about a shopping list, a comment on your health, what you heard on the street what you dreamed last night? Could these be part of an author's oeuvre? I felt that my entries were similar to those that Foucault was questioning. Nevertheless I was unsure of their exclusion on account of unimportance.*

*When Marsha Meskimmon sketches the history of autobiography she remarks something that has always been on the back of my mind:*

*Clearly the first traditional assumption about the subjects of autobiography is that they are significant individuals, in other words the 'great men' of history, deserving a singular work about their lives (1996: 65-66).*

*So what I really needed was a re-evaluation of the everyday experience which was not made on the terms of the canon of autobiography. What this search was getting down to was, first of all, the issue of permission to write, what Kate Miller calls "self-authorisation" (1991: 132). Actually granting myself permission to write as opposed to be given permission and by this way allowing the existence of space in which ideas can evolve. I will come back later to this space and what it might entail.*

## **1.2. Written diaries: voluntary amnesia, the dematerialised text and diary as the trace of self**

Along the issue of the evaluation of my experience, in order to document it, there was the issue of how this documentation would in turn be evaluated by me.

*In order to proceed with the evaluation of the entries I decided to comply with the following rule: not to read what I had previously written before making my current entry. But rather than the rules of regularity and devotion that had to do with my experience of other people's writings, other people's should, this was a rule I developed out of my own experience. It was a decision driven not only by my belief that my previous entry would influence the mood or the content of my current entry but also my belief in retrospective evaluation. And this is what I mean by retrospective evaluation:*

*As time would progress and my memory would fade my texts would become more alienated from me. This would result in the texts getting disassociated with the physicality of their conditions of writing. I would not remember the exact moment I had written them, where I was sitting, the rest of the events of that particular day. This would help me concentrate on the text and would somehow put the diary entries on an equal basis: that of the de-materialised text. Surely completely stripping the texts of their materiality was not possible (for example my handwriting could reveal to me things about my mood). What I hope to find out by this procedure were new associations between my remarks, not the ones I was making at the time but hidden connections I was not aware of when I was writing. There might be a remark whose relevance I was unsure of when I was writing it that could trigger this association. What I hoped for in my retrospective reading of my writings was a moment of revelation that everything would connect. As Cixous states in "Three steps in the Ladder of Writing":*

*Painting is trying to paint what you cannot paint and writing is writing what you cannot know before you have written: it is pre-knowing and not knowing, blindly, with words (1993: 38).*

In the occasion of the written diary the writings are the trace of the self at the moment unknown to the self. Retrospective evaluation allows an understanding of the self as immersed in the situation of that time that was not possible back then.



### 1.3 Video Diary 1: Appearance and disappearance of the subject

*The video diary started a couple of months after the written diary and in a period when there were no writings in the diaries at all. It involved taking video stills with my camera on a daily basis. The images I chose were these of my non-original surroundings: close ups of employees at the opposite office building, abstract views of my house, the weather conditions changing, street views. All the views were taken inside a building or from its window. I did not intend these images to be part of my artwork I just used them as a background that would provide me the sense of continuity of time that I felt was necessary in a diary; a background against which to measure time. That's why I chose these images to be detached from my work yet connected directly to my everyday experience. Another reason for electing this method of documentation was the fact that I could have the date automatically displayed in every image. Choosing to have the day's date automatically displayed on the image gave me a sense of continuity of time (and a reminiscence of bad snapshots). More than the granted feel of the continuity what seemed to be important was the fact that this continuity was imposed, externally decided and displayed regardless of my actions but of course due to my decision. Choosing the date to be displayed was really the acceptance of my inadequacy to keep track of time and my desire to have a plan, rule or just a way of keeping time imposed on me, a way I would nevertheless have to invent and restrict my self to it.*

What this diary actually provided was a refuge in which the subject could retreat and actually temporary disappear; because in these stills and videos the subject behind the camera is not visible. The images are either in the case of stills, images of banality, recycled or repeated images (copies of images made at some time in the past), or in the case of video, images of temporal repetition. By repeating and recycling images the subject (me) refuses authorship, restricting its agency to the repetition of the push of the shutter button while retreating to the empty space created by the act of the video diary. This space is the space of nothingness, which the subject does not have to fill (or prove that has filled). I will carry on to explain how this space of nothingness is a productive space.

### 1.4 Nothingness, thought time and proper time

Mark Cousins distinguishes between the nothingness that is there and the nothingness as absence of what was supposed to be there<sup>1</sup>. In a way the video diary I can be perceived as the later form of nothingness. The use of the video diary for me was to create a kind of legitimate emptiness where ideas were able to evolve before actually getting identified, spoken and acted. Reading from my report I explain how during the video diary there was a period of about 6 months that the creative part of my work did not have any visual equivalent that I would expect to call project or artwork.

I will read here again from my writings:

*There are gaps between my described attempts. Gaps that nothing seems to have happened; nothing describable, or nothing worthy of description. In one of my diaries I note: 'the things I remember don't add up to the time'. But is this just a question of short memory? Gaston Bachellard re-states a common fact when he writes that '(our soul) has only retained the memory of events that have created us at the decisive instants of our past' (ibid. 52). But it is also true that 'we would like to have a continuum of acts to narrate' (Bachellard 2000, 1950<sup>1</sup>: 50-51).*

*The gaps exist between the actions described. It seems that I perceive the process as a series of actions. But when I am accounting for actions I am not describing everything that has happened. Because there is something that has not happened. But how do you account for what has not happened? How do you account for nothingness?*

*What my diary entry actually points out is that there is a connection between my perception of time and my perception of action. I perceive time as the addition of the duration of actions. But my perception of time is disturbed by the gaps in the actions, the gaps deprive me of 'proper time'.*

*I return to action and its duration: when did the action start? As my attempt to trace the beginning of*

---

<sup>1</sup> As communicated at the 17-11-2000 lecture, part of the Psyche and Space series, held at the Architectural Association in London.



*the action sends me further back in time, before any visual or written evidence of my project existed, I start to doubt about the actual moment of its commencement. There seems to be a pre-acting period directly related to acting. This "thought time" is the possibility of action:*

*... time is thus continuous as possibility, as nothingness (Bachelard 2000, 1950<sup>1</sup>: 44).*

*Looking at the gaps of possibility where action had already begun as "thought time" I see these gaps as a prerequisite of action itself. Actions could not exist without them. In fact they are part of the action itself.*

*Action needs this time of "not happening" in order to happen. As Cixous says 'it emits its beams' to me (1993, 58). Thought time is, the time of anticipation. Cixous describes it when she speaks about reading a desired book:*

*Here's a book 'I read' but haven't finished reading. I don't make an effort either to read it or not to read it. I let it be, it's in the room where I am, often I don't read it and during this time it beams obscurely. It's a form of reading" (1993: 58).*

*As this is a form of acting.*

NOTE: The PhD research was made possible through grants from the State Scholarship Foundation of Greece, The London Institute and the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

## References

- Bachelard, G. 2000, 1950<sup>1</sup>. *The Dialectic of Duration*. Manchester: Clinamen Press  
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# 7<sup>th</sup> PERFORMANCE STUDIES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ | GERMANY WEDNESDAY 28 MARCH - SUNDAY 1 APRIL 2001

TRANSLATION/TRANSITION/TRANSFORMATION





Panel 48

P 13

**Magic Maori, Artificial Savages and Martians: (De)constructing Indigenous Identity**

Sharon Mazer  
(University of Canterbury)  
«We of the Tangata Whenua welcome you to our country.»

Lisa Welford  
(Bowling Green University)  
Artificial Savages from the 26th Century: Pocha Nostra's Jurassic Aztlan

Peter Falkenberg  
(University of Canterbury)  
«This is Christchurch, not Mars»

Panel 62

P 206

**Autobiography, Subjectivity and Memory**

Moderation:  
Stephanie Junge  
(Dramaturg, Darmstadt)

Bonnie Eckhard,  
Frederick Corey  
(Arizona State University)  
Missed Callings: Myth, Middle Age and Memory

Ana Bernstein  
(New York University)  
Autobiography, Performance and Transformations of the Self

Angeliki Avgitidou  
(Central Saint Martins College)  
Performing Subjectivity: Incorporating Discontinuity, Boredom and Nothingness into the Artist's Action

Panel 52

P 15

**Bodiescapes III: Body Shapes**

Moderation:  
Peter Boenisch  
(Universität München)

Meike Wagner  
(Universität Mainz)  
Übergangskörper (Bodies in Transition)

André Lepecki  
(New York University)  
Moving Without the Colonial Mirror: Body and the Fibrillation of History in Portuguese Dance

Simon Sheperd  
(Goldsmith's College, London)  
The Shapes of Sensation

Panel 69

P 108

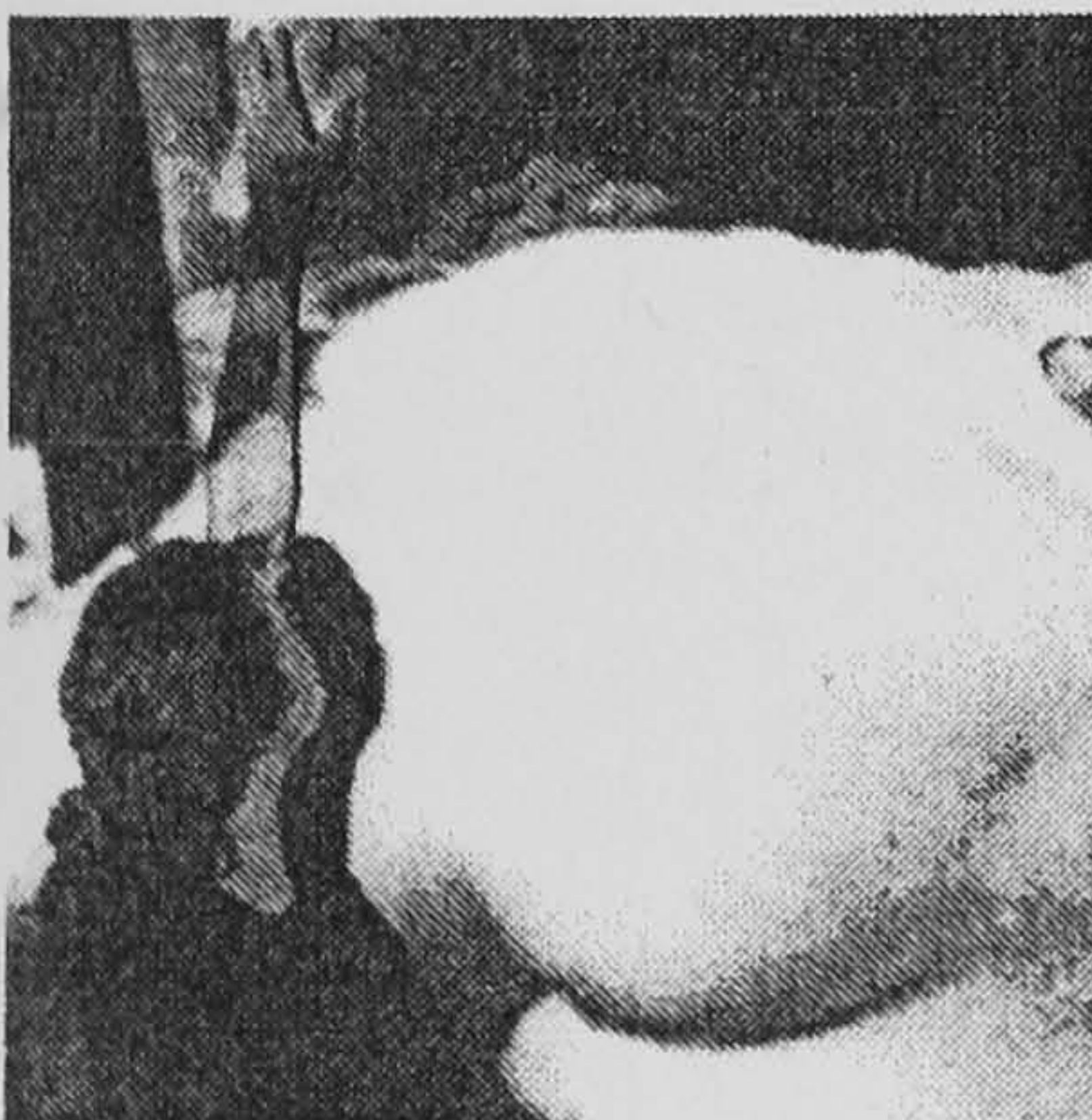
**Performative Turn: Roundtable Discussion**

organised by Zentrum für Performance Studien (ZPS)

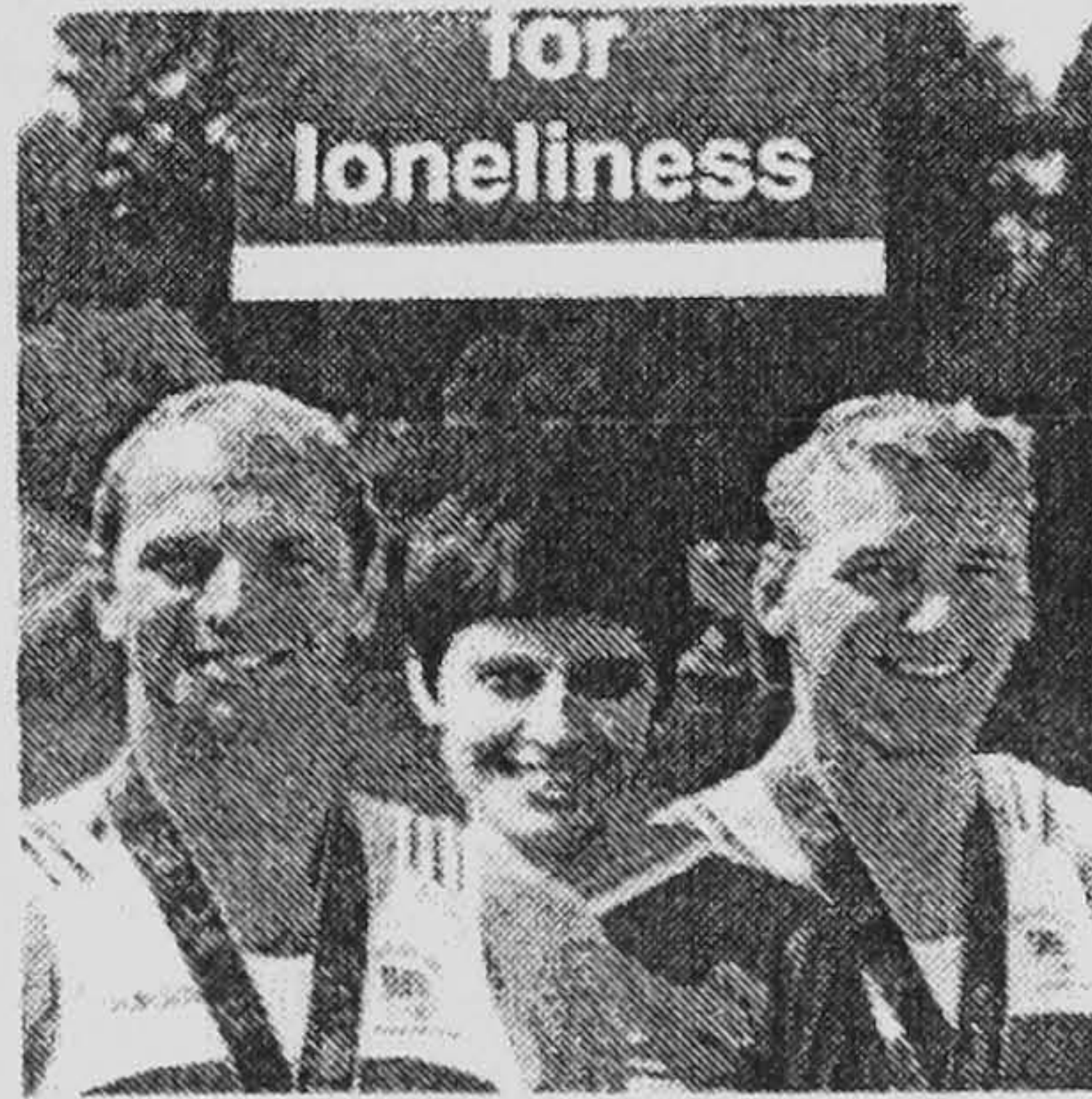
Moderation:  
Richard Gough  
(CPR, Aberystwyth)

Christopher Balme  
(Universität Mainz)  
Rachel Fersham  
(Monash University, Melbourne)  
Ute Ritschel  
(Cultural Management, Darmstadt)  
and other guests

Sue Broadhurst



Angeliki Avgitidou





content editorial contribute contact

**Exchange Online Journal**  
ISSN 1472-9571

Issue 2 - May 2001

Issue 1 - December 2000

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The development of the PhD for the visual arts'

The identity of the real in relation to the experience and concepts of space

The secret diaries of the artist: fraud or fiction?

Design and application of a meaningful methodology

Integrated design: from Delaunay to digital

NEVAC taxonomies and the industrial crafts

...of two worlds

Notes for contributors

E-mail us

Dr Suzette Worden

Professor  
Penny Florence

Professor Paul  
van der Lem

Elena Cologni

Angeliki Avgitidou

Heather Robson and  
Pat Dixon

Katherine Townsend

Judith Carmel-Arthur

Clive Myer



## The secret diaries of the artist: fraud or fiction?

Angeliki Avgitidou

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Links: [http://www.redrival.com/safety\\_first](http://www.redrival.com/safety_first)

<http://www.linst.ac.uk/research/csm-students/angeliki/angeliki.htm>

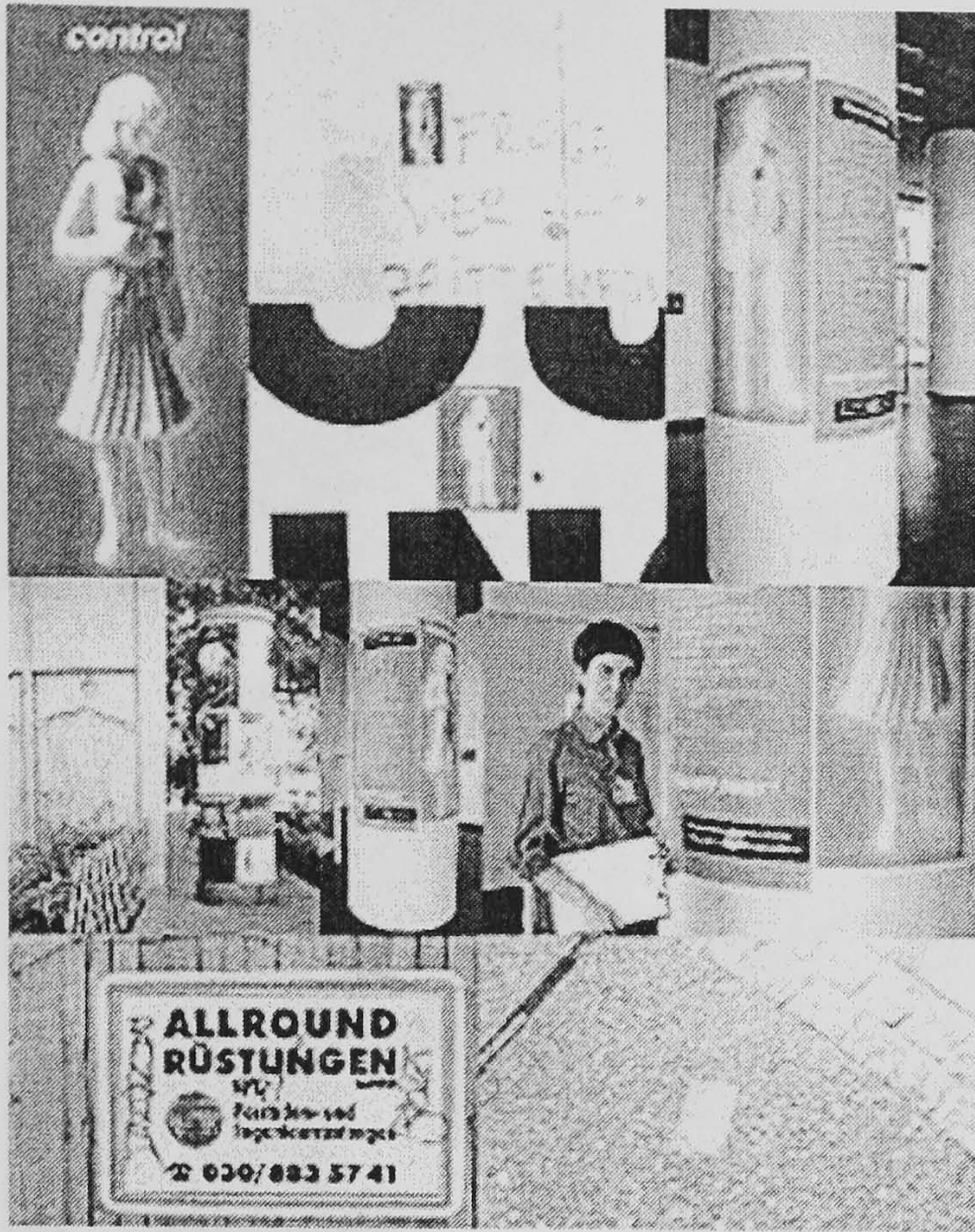
### Abstract

The PhD research is titled: "Computer aided art and the artist. The artist's experience of the creative activity as a process of subjectification." In the poster presentation I addressed the issues that emerged from my decision to employ 'diary keeping' as a tool for researching the process of my own artistic practice. I examined the status of autobiographical writing and the problematic of the relevance of the personal, the quotidian and the banal. In this presentation I give an overview of the research and include a number of artworks.

### Introduction

The PhD research was originally proposed as an investigation into the way in which characteristics of computer aided art might affect the relationship between artists and artworks and consequently the way the artists perceive themselves. The investigation would be carried out through practical and theoretical research. In the proposal I charted the characteristics of computer-aided art, which were based on apparent physical conditions (ex. non-materiality) as well as, on conditions relating to the artist's gesture and intention (ex. immediate reversibility).





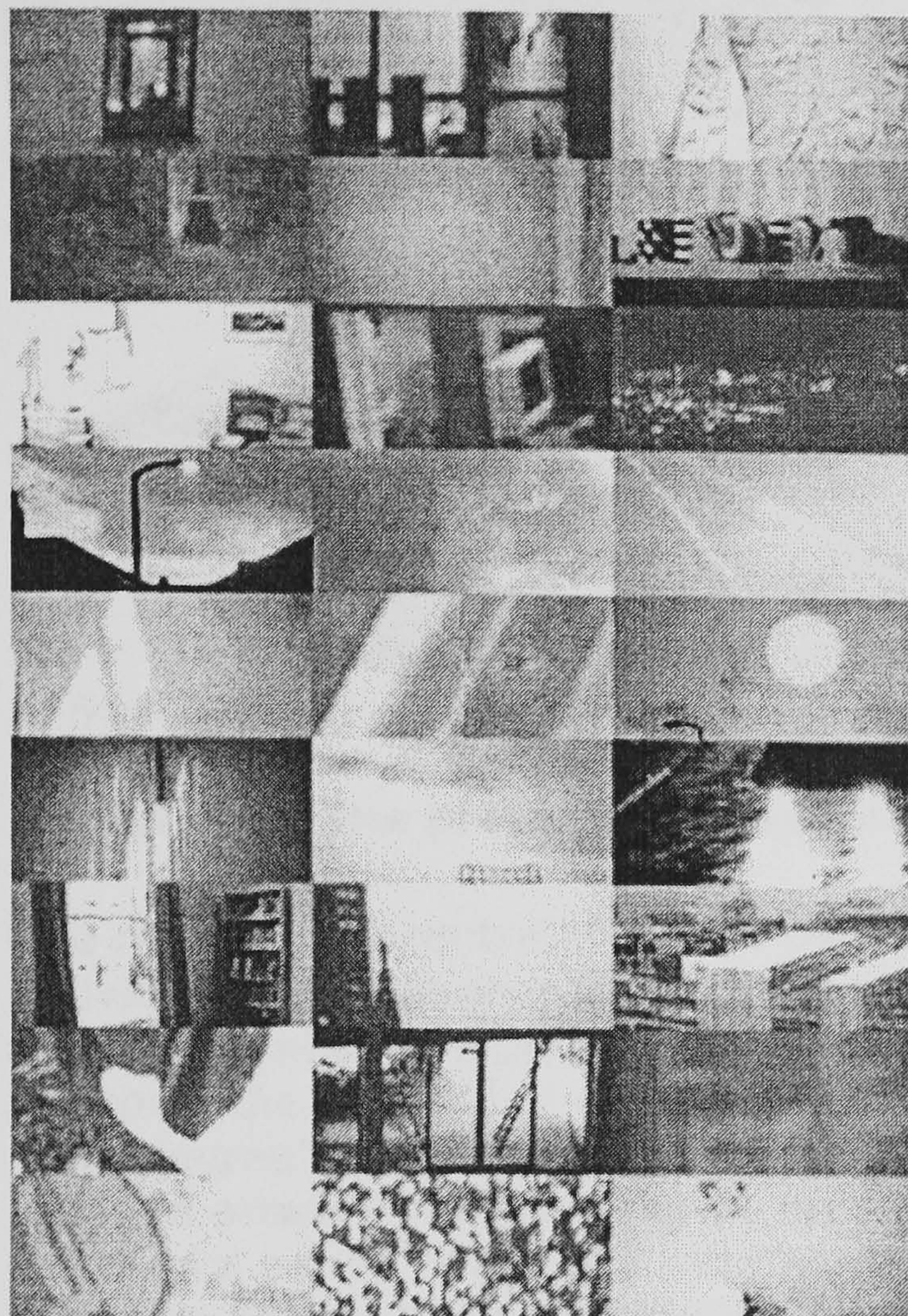
Safety First, Installation-Performance, 1999, Haus des Lehrers, Berlin.  
Also see: [http://www.redrival.com/safety\\_first](http://www.redrival.com/safety_first)

The theoretical research was proposed to concentrate on the analysis of experience through personal criticism, the construction of subjectivity and the context of new technologies. This was informed by Foucault's theory of 'subjectification' as the process of the perpetual creation of oneself in, through and alongside consciousness. Additionally I intended to use discourses surrounding autobiography as a tool for evaluation and interpretation, specifically works by Jane Gallop, Luce Irigaray, Carolyn Heilbrun, J.L. Austin and others.

The contemporary historical and artistic framework included artists who use digital media in their artwork as well as discourses of artists' experience of their artwork being developed (autobiographies, interviews and diaries/sketchbooks).

The methodology concentrated on the documentation of my experience of the creative process in a systematic way that would enable evaluation. This would be carried out through self-reflexive and self-critical research, as a response to my artistic practice. The method selected for the documentation of the creative activity was that of journal keeping.



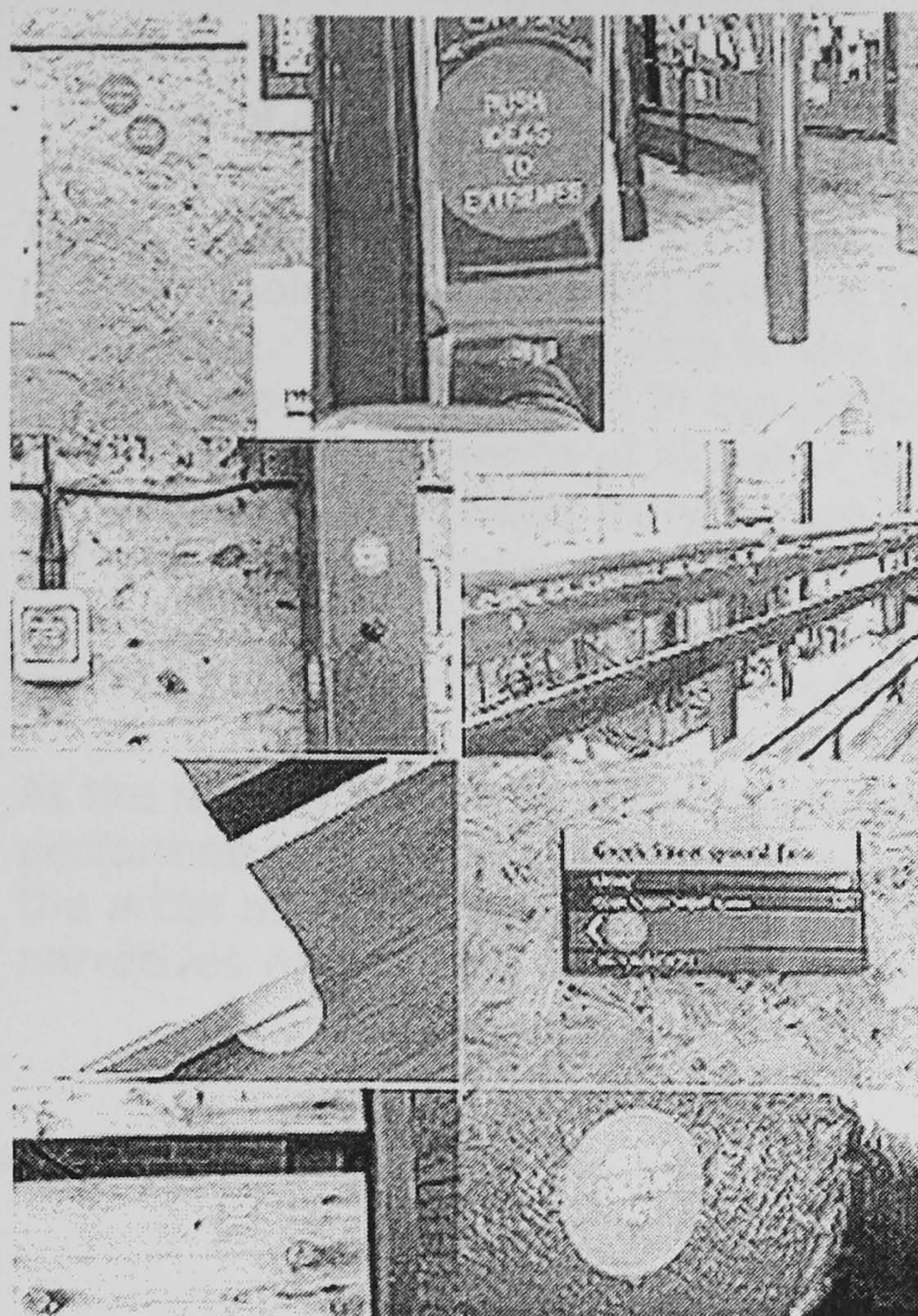


Stills from the Video Diary1, 1999-2000.

Throughout the research a number of diaries, written and video ones were kept. A number of issues arose from the use of the diaries that concerned:

- The status of autobiographical writing and the problematic of the relevance of the personal, the quotidian and the banal;
- Documentation in connection to evaluation, authorship and self-authorisation;
- Documentation and timing;
- Rules of diary writing and the issue of truthfulness.





Art Rules, 2000-ongoing, collection of art rules, send yours to: [art\\_rules2000@yahoo.com](mailto:art_rules2000@yahoo.com)

### Evolution of the project and reviewed aims

The research concentrated on the experience of the creative activity and its documentation. This documentation was carried out in a number of journals and video diaries that progressively occupied the core of the research. Since registration I started using journals and collecting imagery and texts for future projects. After an artwork exhibited during an initial stage of the research, followed a period of about 6 months when the creative part of the research did not have any visual equivalent that I would expect to call project or artwork. The creative part concentrated on writings (in the diaries) and preparation designs for projects that did not materialise. This exploration produced a number of notions that I am at this point exploring through my practice. Some of these notions connect back to my initial proposal, which described the characteristics of computer-aided art, namely immateriality and reversibility. However these notions have now attained a more philosophical role within the research.

It is at this point clear that my interest in the process of the creative activity and its role in the forming of subjectivity has replaced the focus on the characteristics of computer-aided art and the effect they have on subjectivity. This interest is now explored through a practice that loosely encompasses digital media and not computer-aided art exclusively.

The main aim in the research has now become the examination of the different subjective positions of the artist through the process of practicing digital art; Specifically, certain states of the artist's action within art practice in connection to the artist's subjective position. I have identified these stages as:

- imagined action (the possibility of action),



- everyday action (banality) and
- absence of action (nothingness).

These stages link up to the perception of time through phenomenology (Bachelard) and the correlation of visibility and knowledge. This area connects to the practice of diary keeping and my previous reference to the period of no 'provable' art production. The absence of visual or describable action in line with the analysis of the video diary 1 (see picture) led me to the definition of a pre-acting period intrinsic to the artist's action. This period initially perceived as nothingness is actually the possibility of action, a space where ideas emerge and evolve.

At the moment these areas are explored through a series of performed photography and video pieces that are perceived by the artist as "performing acts of subjectivity." They involve narratives of idleness, absence and the everyday.



Volume 12 Number 3

ISSN 1462-6268  
Codex DICRFL

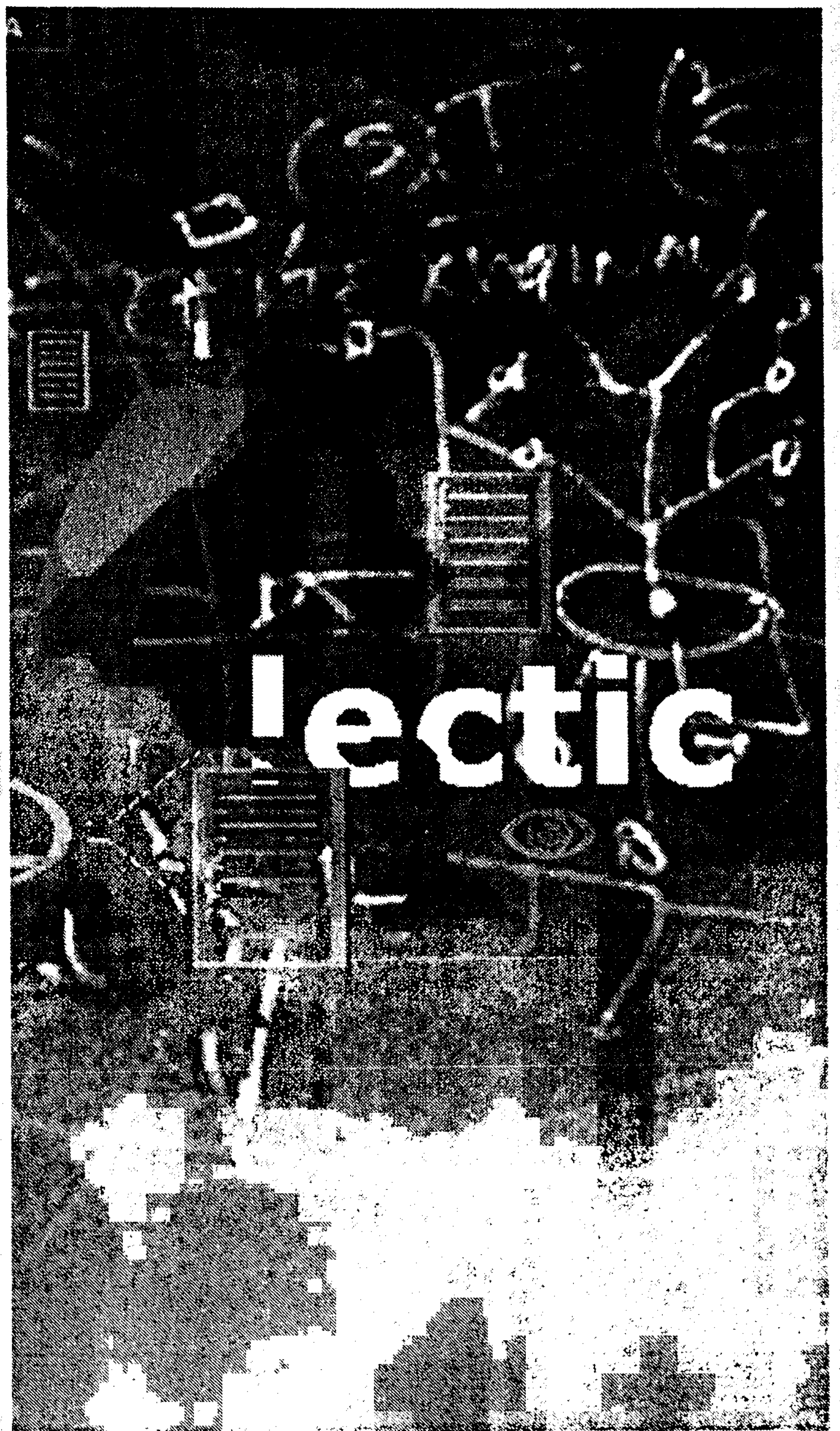
# DIGITAL CREATIVITY

Special issue on

**Towards computer  
game aesthetics**

edited by

Dena Elisabeth Eber and  
Noah Wardrip-Fruin



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# The artist's experience of the creative activity as a process of subjectification within the context of digital art

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Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, UK  
aavg@yahoo.com

## 1. Introduction

This practice-based research has set out to explore the experience of the creative activity (in the case of digital art) as a process through which the subjectivity of the artist is constructed. More specifically it has set out to examine states in the artist's activity that connect to banality, boredom, repetition and nothingness.

## 2. Background

This research was originally proposed as an investigation into the way in which characteristics of digital art might affect the relationship between artists and artworks and consequently the way the artists perceive themselves. The research proposal charted the characteristics of digital art, which were based on apparent physical conditions (ex. non-materiality) as well as on conditions related to the artist's gesture and intention (ex. immediate reversibility). However during the development of the research my interest in the process of the creative activity and its role in the forming of subjectivity replaced the focus on the characteristics of digital art and their effect on subjectivity.

## 3. Theoretical, historical/contemporary context

The historical and contemporary context includes artists that have used diaries (Leonardo,

Bourgeois, Breakwell, Darboven and others) and artists that engage in self-portraiture (mostly in photography and digital media). The theoretical research concentrates on:

- subjectification as the process of the perpetual creation of oneself in, through and alongside consciousness as manifested by Michel Foucault;
- the interpretation of experience through discourses surrounding autobiography and performativity (Gallop, Austin, Miller, Phelan et al.);
- the exploration of the concept of nothingness in connection with the artists activity through phenomenology (Bachelard) and literary criticism (Blanchot, Cixous).



Figure 1. Detail from poster, part of 'Safety First', installation/performance presented at 'The Kamel Trick' exhibition at Haus des Lehrers, Berlin (1999). Further info from [http://www.redrival.com/safety\\_first](http://www.redrival.com/safety_first)

## 4. Methodology

The research was approached through a self-reflexive and self-critical methodology that used diary writing as a research tool. The diaries had the form of written texts and video

poster





Figure 2.  
Video still  
images from  
*Video Diary*  
1', kept  
between  
November  
1999 and  
March 2000.

footage as well as video stills (image and sound combination).

Diary keeping progressively occupied the core of the research. As the diaries developed it became apparent that they were more than a reflection tool. They became part of the art practice. Since registration I started using journals and collecting imagery and texts for future projects. After an artwork exhibited during an initial stage of the research (*Safety First*<sup>®</sup>, Figure 1), followed a period of about 6 months that the creative part of the research did not have any visual equivalent that I would expect to call project or artwork. The creative part concentrated on writings (in the diaries) and preparation designs for projects that did not materialise. This period led to the exploration of the notions of banality, boredom, repetition and nothingness.

The research now revolves around two major areas:

1. *The exploration of diary writing as a method for fine art research and the implications of this decision.*

I examine the status of autobiographical writing and the problematic of the relevance of the personal, the quotidian and the banal. I trace the history of my involvement in autobiographical writing through the use of the diaries and the methods I used: voluntary

amnesia (forgetting the trace of the memory that is the diary entry) and staging the moment of revelation (retrospectively evaluating the entries to discover connecting notions).

I explore documentation in connection to evaluation, authorship and self-authorisation. This is mainly done through the writings of Hélène Cixous, Michel Foucault and Kate Miller. Other issues that emerged from the use of the diaries are documentation and timing, rules of diary writing and the issue of truthfulness. These issues emerged from the diary entries but were also explored through the process of using the diaries.

2. *The examination of the different subjective positions of the artist through the process of practising digital art.*

Specifically, certain states of the artist's action within art practice in connection to the artist's subjective position. I have identified these stages as: imagined action (the possibility of action), everyday action (banality) and absence of action (nothingness). These stages link up to the perception of time through phenomenology (Bachelard) and the correlation of visibility and knowledge.

The notion of nothingness connects to the practice of diary keeping and my previous reference to the period of no 'provable' art production. The absence of visual or describable action in line with the analysis of the *Video Diary 1* (Figure 2) led me to the definition of a pre-acting period intrinsic to the artist's action. This period was initially perceived as nothingness i.e. doing nothing. It was later decoded through the analysis of the video diary as absence of what was supposed to be there<sup>1</sup>.

At the moment nothingness is explored through a series of performed photography and video pieces that are perceived by the artist as 'performing acts of subjectivity'. Some of them involve self-portraiture. The most recent is *A series of unnecessary deaths* (Figure 3), a one-



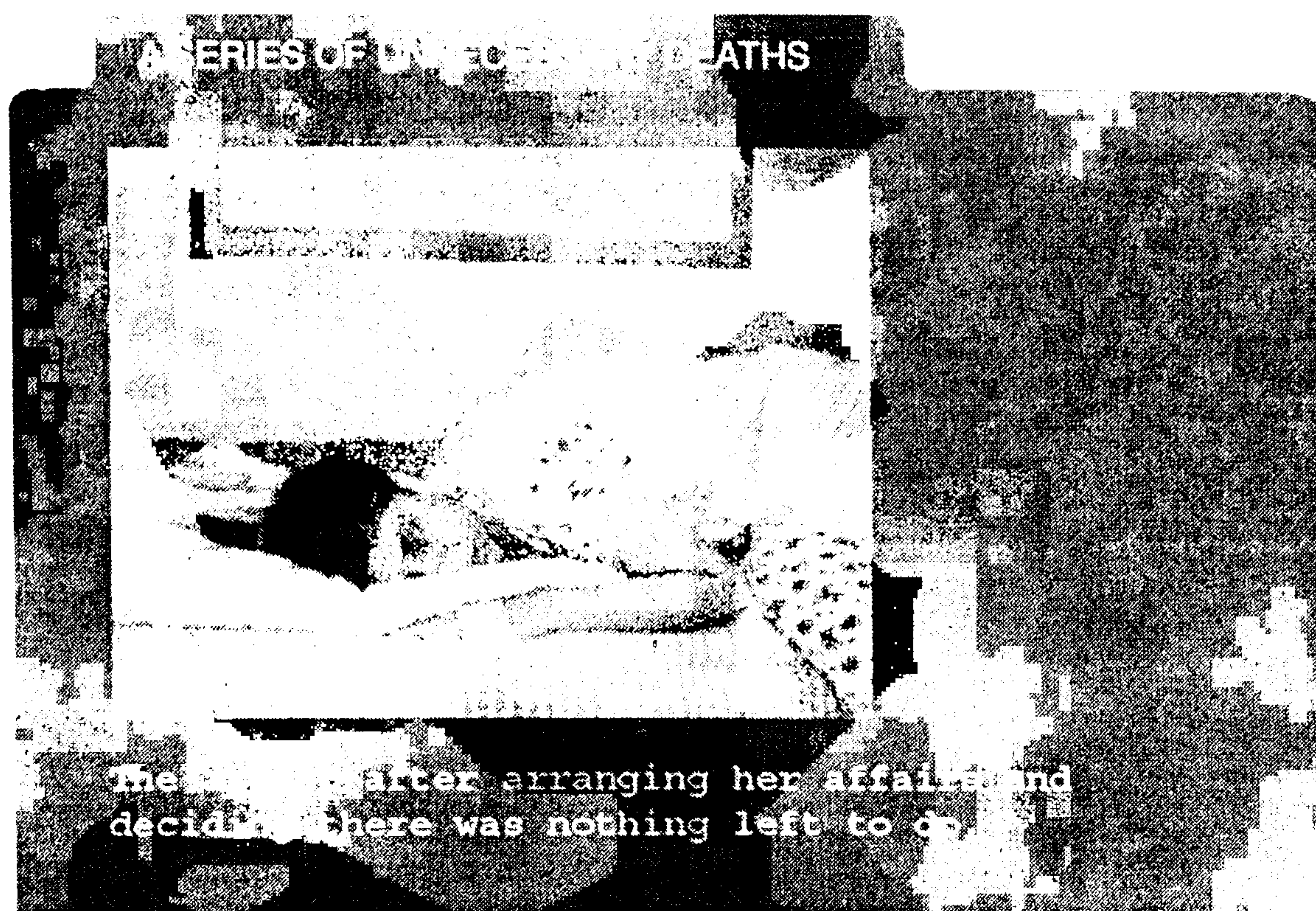


Figure 3.  
'A series of  
unnecessary  
deaths',  
one-minute  
animation,  
produced in  
2001.

minute animation that displays a number of files that document in each occasion the death of the artist and the cause of her death. Ranging from humorous to cynical, these filed reports exhale the desperation of the artist while faced with inactivity, lack of inspiration and nothingness. With no intention for pretend seriousness or believability the artist enacts her 'deaths' in an attempt to bring into focus the less 'creative' part of 'creativity'. Is the space of nothingness a non-productive space?

The research was made possible through grants from the State Scholarship Foundation of Greece, The London Institute and the Arts and Humanities Research Board (UK).

#### Note

- <sup>1</sup> The distinction between nothingness that is there and nothingness as absence of what was supposed to be there was communicated by Mark Cousins at the 17-11-2000 lecture, held at the Architectural Association in London as part of the *Psyche and Space* series.

Angeliki Avgitidou was born in 1968 in Thessaloniki, Greece. After graduating from the School of Architecture (Aristoteleio University of Thessaloniki) in 1992 she worked in Belgium for Antwerp 93 Cultural Capital of Europe (1993). She has since worked as a freelance architect and artist in Greece. Her first solo show was a photographic performance at the Alli Poli Gallery in Thessaloniki (1995). She has exhibited in Paris, Rome, Berlin, London, Thessaloniki and Athens. She represented Greece at the 1994 Biennial of Young Creators in Lisbon. Her work encompasses digital media, video and performed photography.



**Appendix VI**

**Exhibitions**



# XHIBIT 03

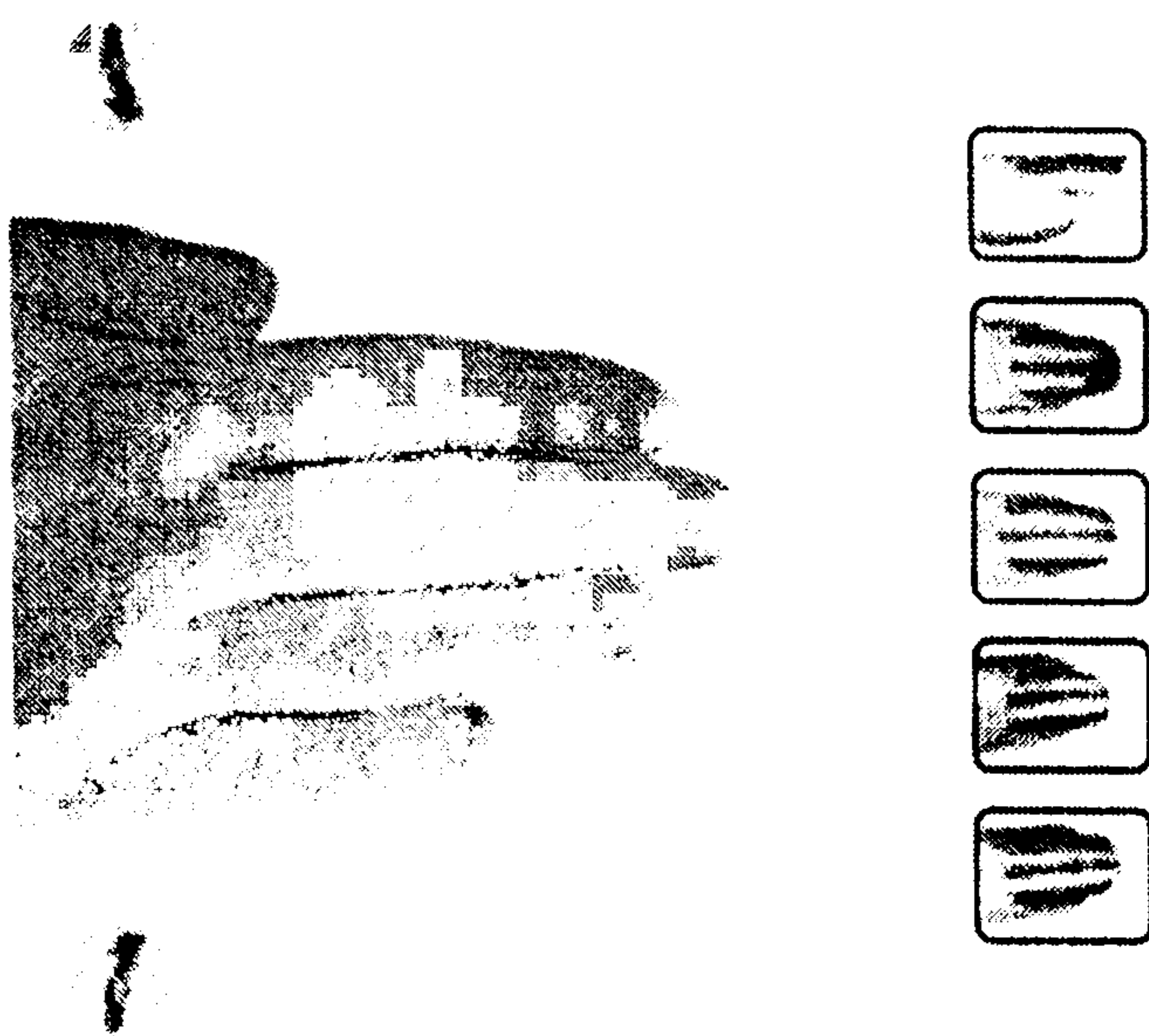
THE LONDON INSTITUTE GALLERY MAYFAIR



20th May - 26th June



Angeliki Avigitidou  
Procrastinator



Christina Benz  
Megaphone

Phillip Barnard  
I'm Disappearing







# 7<sup>th</sup> PERFORMANCE STUDIES CONFERENCE

IN MAINZ, GERMANY - SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 1, 2001





Installation  
Exhibition

Performance (3 Days)

73

P 107

Zeca Ligiero  
(Artist, Brasil)  
**Ze Pelintra's  
Interactive Altar**

Ze Pelintra is a multicultural ambivalent figure adored in Umbanda religion as both, a street-life spirit and a wise old black ancestor – a master who can be simultaneously a rogue and a healer. Visitors will be invited to experience some of his elements and to interact with them.

Zeca Ligiero



74

Angeliki Avgitidou  
Tom Lewis  
Paola Junqueira  
Nigel Grimmer  
(Artists, London)  
**Exhibition:  
Every Me**

«Every Me» consists of artists who employ their own image or physical presence in their artwork. Within this group of artists the personal image is treated as an arbitrary fragment of identity (Lewis), as a consumable commodity (Avgitidou), as a projected image of stereotypical identity (Grimmer) or as a border between space and self (Junqueira). The deconstruction of the personal image (Lewis), the performances of the self (Avgitidou, Grimmer) and the enactment of the body within personal and social space (Junqueira), constitute the artists' speculations on identity narratives and on the definition of the individual within space and time.

P 12

75

Gerhard Dirmoser (Artist, Linz) and  
Boris Nieslony (ASA, Köln)  
**Performative Ansätze in  
Kunst und Wissenschaft  
am Beispiel Performance  
Art**  
4 A0-Plakate als Gedächtnis-  
theater in 32 Sichten – Erarbeitet  
von Boris Nieslony

76

Jordan McKenzie  
(Artist, Nottingham)  
**Untitled (Performing  
Minimalism)**

77

Hallway Philosophicum

Ariane Ritter and Wolfgang Duck  
(Artists, Nürnberg)  
**Global Smacking**

Global Smacking is a «performative market», where you will get traditional regional dishes in exchange for favorite recipes from other regions and nations.

P 103

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Hallway Philosophicum

Helinä Hukkataival  
(Artist, Finland)  
**Pure Art**

Pure Art is an interactive, continuing happening about chewing gum and turning disgusting waste into a piece of pure art.

79

Hallway Philosophicum

Marilyn Arsem  
(Artist, School of the Museum of  
Fine Arts, Boston)  
**«Can this be translated?»  
– Performances for  
Audiences of One**

Helinä Hukkataival, «Pure Art» 1997





| μικροMuseum | Debates Installations Performances Concerts |

01

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medi@terra

Eva Moutakabouva Θεατρικά για  
A Moving Festival for



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AVAILABLE**

**Variable print  
quality**



**RESEARCH**

RECEIVED THE COMMISSION OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF HIGHWAYS  
AND TO BE MET FOR THE EXAMINATION OF THE ROAD

ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΑΝΤΙΣΤΑΝΤΙΑΣ ΣΤΟ ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΔΕΞΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ  
ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΝΑ ΠΡΟΣΦΕΡΕΙ ΤΗΝ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ  
ΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΗΝ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΗΣΤΟΤΗΤΟΣ

[illegible]

content of the first version of the

These are listed in the first version of the package of papers sponsored by the International Programming Language Association, the first number of papers submitted for the 1977 conference did not have a competitive character. Selected are those that could function in the coded language and would be better presented using the ALGOL 68 medium.

The projects for Medjeterra Oil was made known publicly through a "leak" and to some extent through the press.

...and planning aims to start the creation of "a permanent institution for a staff some of the works presented in the festival."

plans for the future to put up exhibitions and organize  
workshops in the pavilions each time.



ARCHIVE: VIDEO ART

# INTERACTIVE OBJECT - INSTALLATION

## INTERNET

ARCHIVE: INTERNET

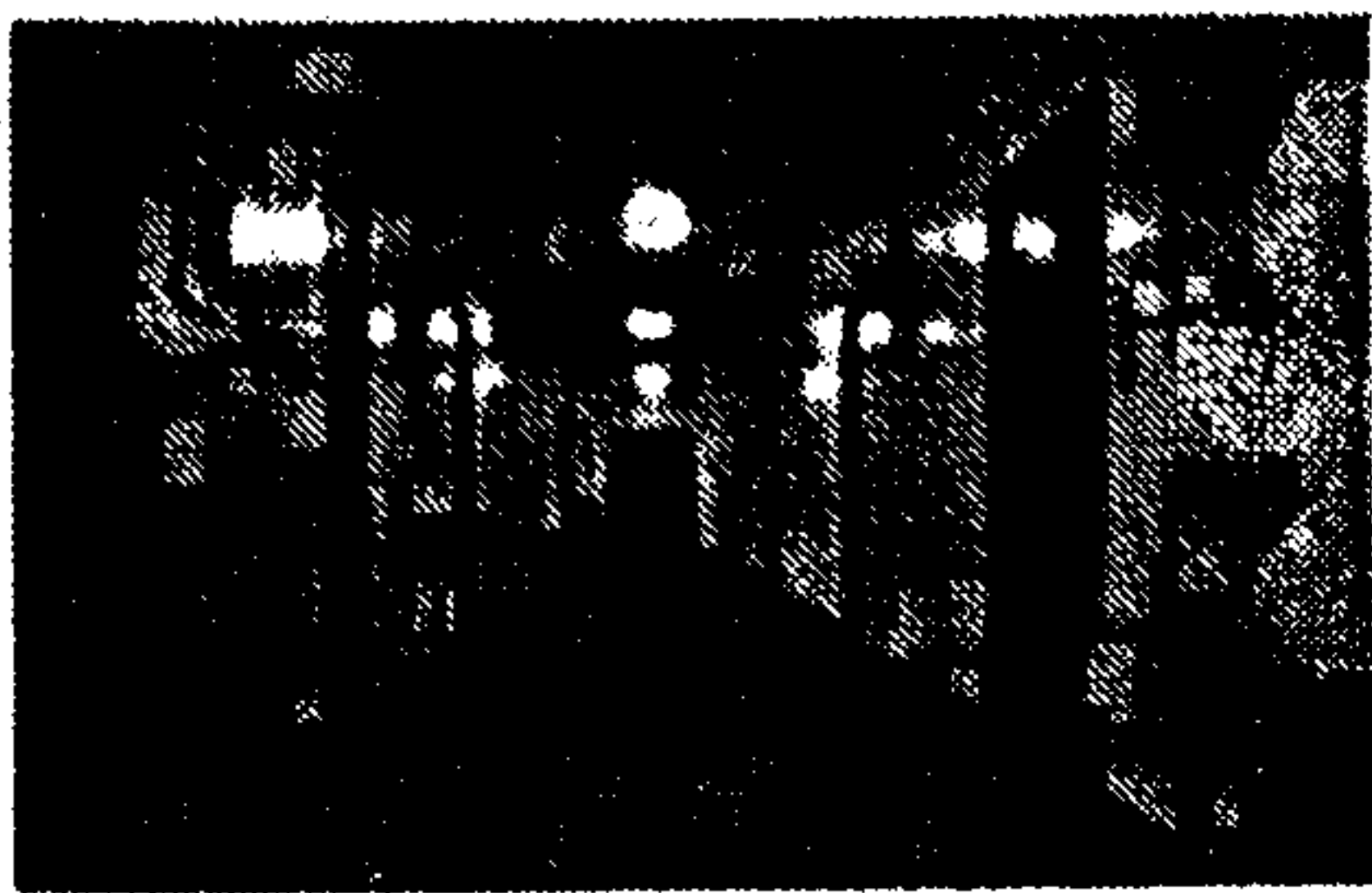
## CD ROM

ARCHIVE: CD ROM

DIGITAL SOUND ART & ELECTRONIC MUSIC

COMPUTER ART & DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY





PROPOSER'S ADDRESS: THE HONOLULU SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND  
ARCHITECTURE

ΚΩΣΤΑΣ ΜΠΑΡΘΑΝΟΣ (Ευρώπη)

Η "insomnia" είναι ένα video loop, διαρκείας 8 λεπτών, που αναπαίζεται από μονοτονούμενα προς υπονοούμενα και δικτυακά κείμενα από όλον τον πιο δικτυακό κόσμο και από το καίμενο. Η χρήση εικονών χαϊφάρη ανάλαφρας έχει ως στόχο μια αόριστη χαϊφάρη τεχνολογίας ενός δικτυακού video σε αντίθεση προς τη συνήθως εστιασμένη τεχνολογία του video. Με τη σειρά του το καίμενο υπονοούμενο και τις εικόνες - προέρχεται κυρίως από δικτυακές κινήσεις επιλέγοντας πολλές - στοιχεία στη δημιουργία μιας υπονοούμενα φορημένης οθόνης ανάμεσα σε μια κίνηση τυφλού τοποθέτησ στο δίκτυο και μια αποδοχή (επιλογή).

Επιπλέον το 2001 το club "Αθήνα", αποτέλεσε μέρος μιας σειράς από club, της σειράς το όνομα της οποίας ήταν της Διοίκησης και αποσκοπούσε να εξασταθεί, μέσω σε προώθηση ενός νέου στο χώρο της υγείας.

**Bress Art Metal Polishing**

## Prastashmagoria

[illegible]

Hasley L. Brown (H-LA)

**Primer**

Επιπλέον και βίντεο χρησιμοποιούνται ιστορικά για να περιγράψουν την παρόξυνση του χρόνου. Το Video χρησιμοποιείται για να παρουσιάσει το βίντεο που υπολογίζεται από το γραφικό.

ΝΙΚΟΣ ΧΑΡΟΛΑΜΠΙΔΗΣ (ΕΥΛΟΟ)

## Bandiera Rossa

**RECEIVED**

Angela Anderson (Cousin)

1990-1991

A Survey of the Unconscious Dreams is an intriguing and original display of a number of files that document each person on the death of the artist and the cause of the dream coming from nightmares to clinical case files, and other, the separation of the artist while faced with marriage, his imagination and nothingness.

With no intention for pretend seriousness or believability the artist enacts her 'death'—in an attempt to bring into focus the less 'creative' part of 'creativity'. Is the space of the woodcut a more productive space?

Original photos by Martin Skoufias and Andrew Rossiter

Kostas Bassanos (Greece)

1992

"Insequila" is a plain video loop, which consists of edited posts from webcam sites collected throughout the world wide web, and text. The use of low-resolution images, like a low resolution video aesthetic in contrast to the sophisticated streaming video technologies. The text alternated to images, taken mostly from www.streamingcitysurveillance.com, which to build up an emotionally charged relationship between an image (casual web location) and an intimate question.

Made in 2001, "Insomnia" is part of a new series of projects, where streaming media through the www are used for real time video installation in a gallery space.

BC365-AD-1116

## Principles

Brass Art transformed a half-built, semi-circular building, the remains of a partially renovated warehouse into a zoetrope device. Drawing on simple Victorian illusionistic toys, images, magna presented a panoramic video projection, aided by revolving mirrors to fit across the space in perpetual motion. Set against the urban skyline, large shadowy forms were seen to interact with roads and train tracks, dive bomber formations, with oversize paper aeroplanes and cars on towed tracks. Targeted landmarks such as Strawinsky House, the former court, were unannounced by shadowy, or insubstantial, figures in black silhouette.

Halsey L. Brown, USA

1992

interiors and exteriors are used metaphorically to describe our process of time. Video imagination is used as a way to describe the internal/psychologic/flow-line.

Nikos Charalambidis (Greece)

740





1002

LIBRARY

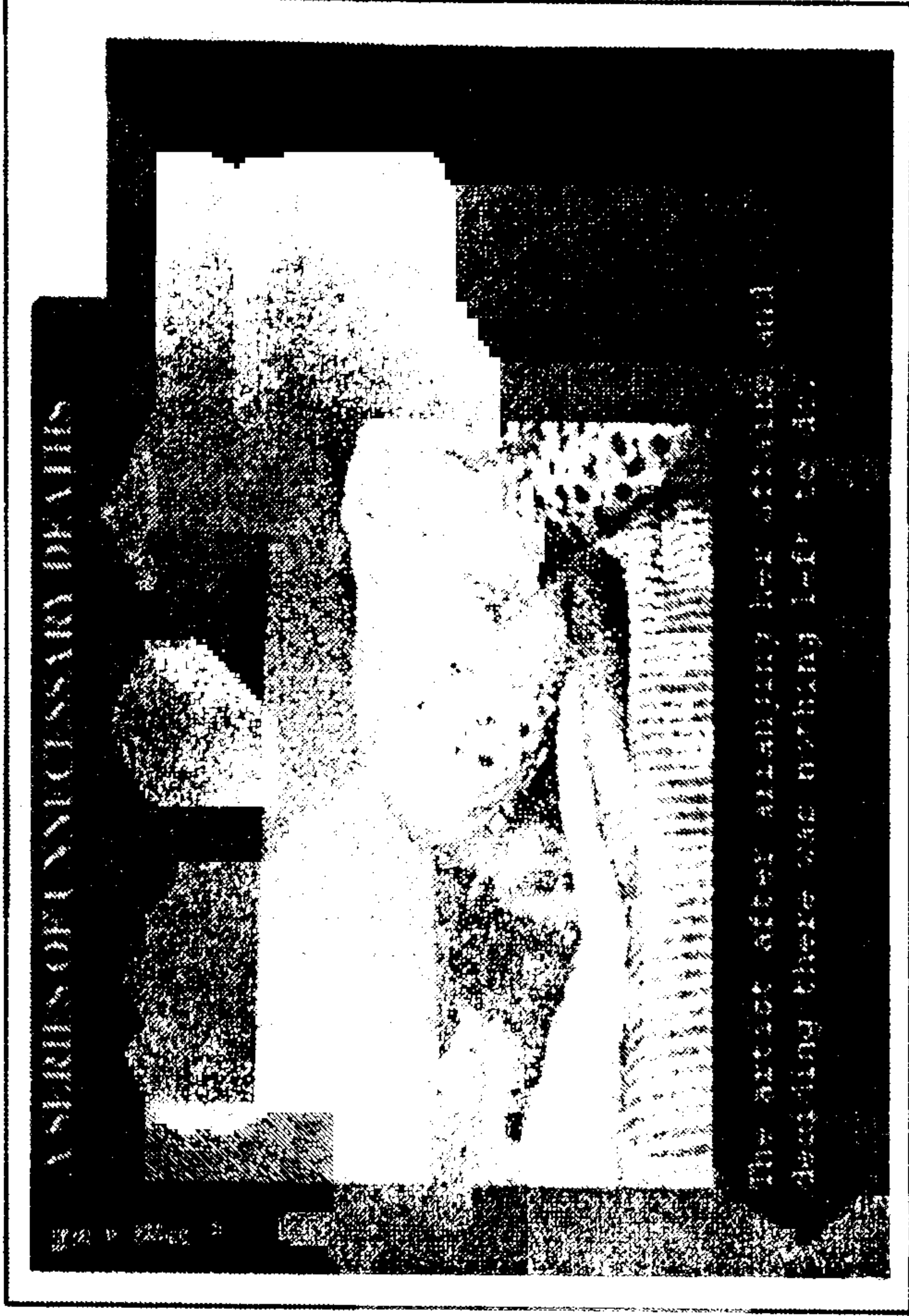
CHAMBERWELL  
CENTRAL  
LONDON



short story about myself

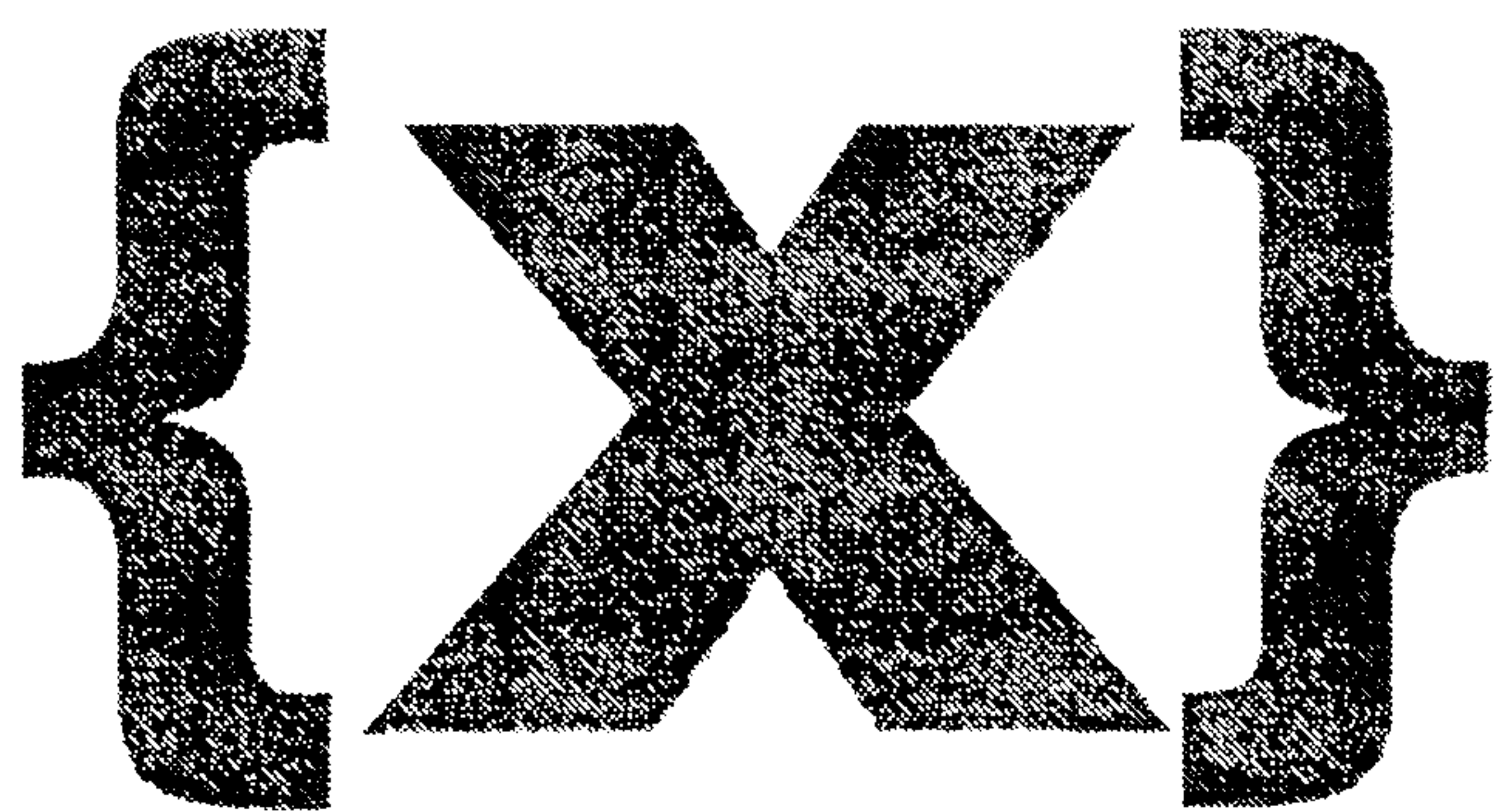
My legs are 3 foot long which carry the other 2 foot and 2 inches of me around. I stride with alternate legs, or push bicycle pedals to get myself around, sometimes I may take a bus, train or underground train to reach further destinations. I am often concerned to reach destinations, often that destination is my home. My home remained the same during my growing time but since I've been 5 foot 2 inches long my home has often changed its location and proportion. I like to sleep with the possibility of stretching out my whole 5 foot 2 inches. I prefer sleeping in my own home. I like dreaming, my nightmares often take place in large buildings where I do not belong. I know more often where I do not belong rather than where I do belong. I often feel that I belong in the transition of one space to another, such as on a bus. Roads which carry buses and other transport, carry people of varying lengths and their belongings to settlements where they sleep. It takes me 100 nights until I feel settled enough to call my sleeping place home.

Short Story About Myself  
**SUZY KEMP**  
MA Scenography  
Central Saint Martins



A Number of Unnecessary Deaths  
**ANGELIKI AVGITIDOU**  
PhD Fine Art  
Central Saint Martins



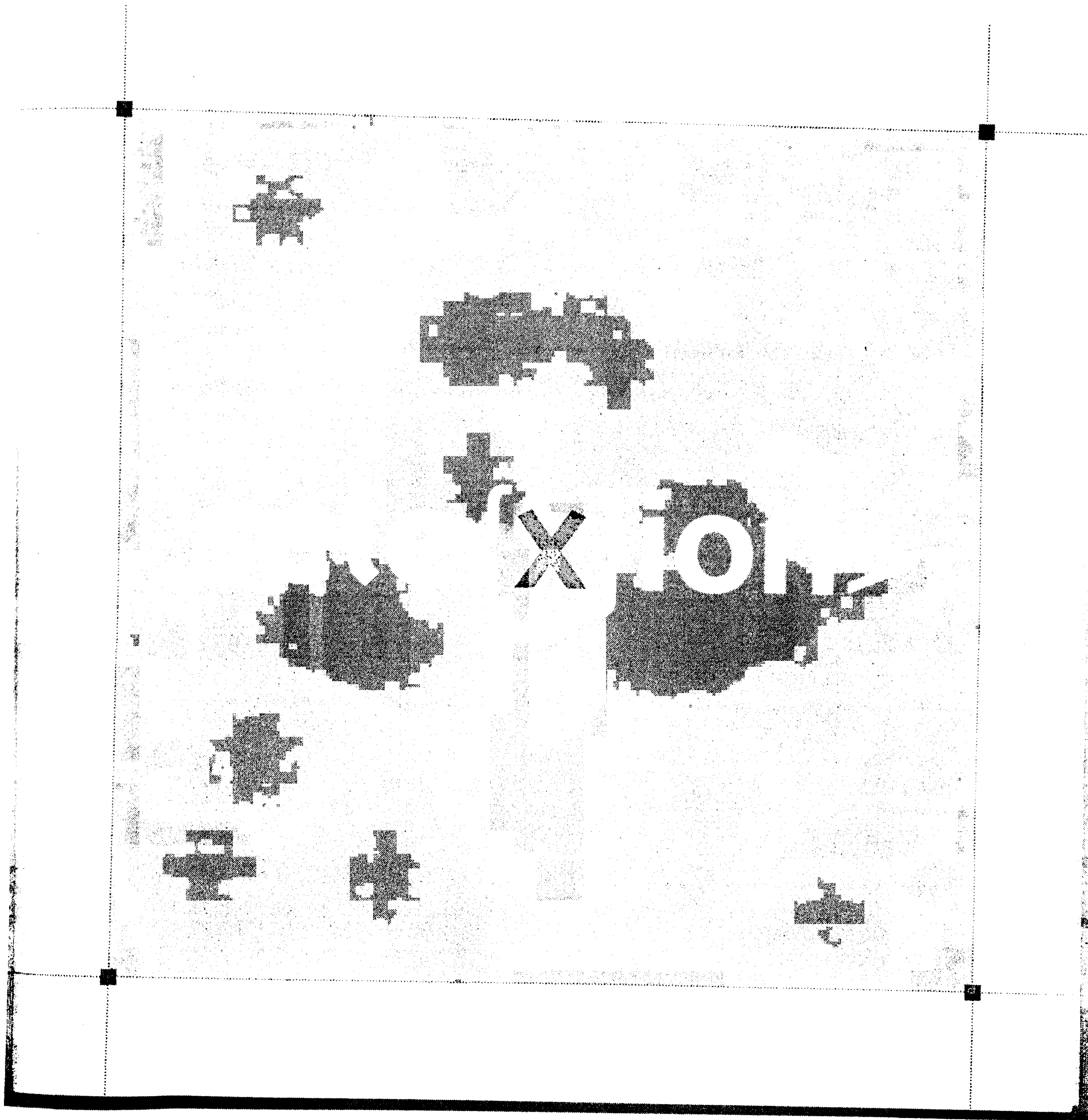


**@ the london institute gallery**

friday 3rd july - friday 24th july 1998

**a LISU project showcasing the work of  
students from the LONDON INSTITUTE**





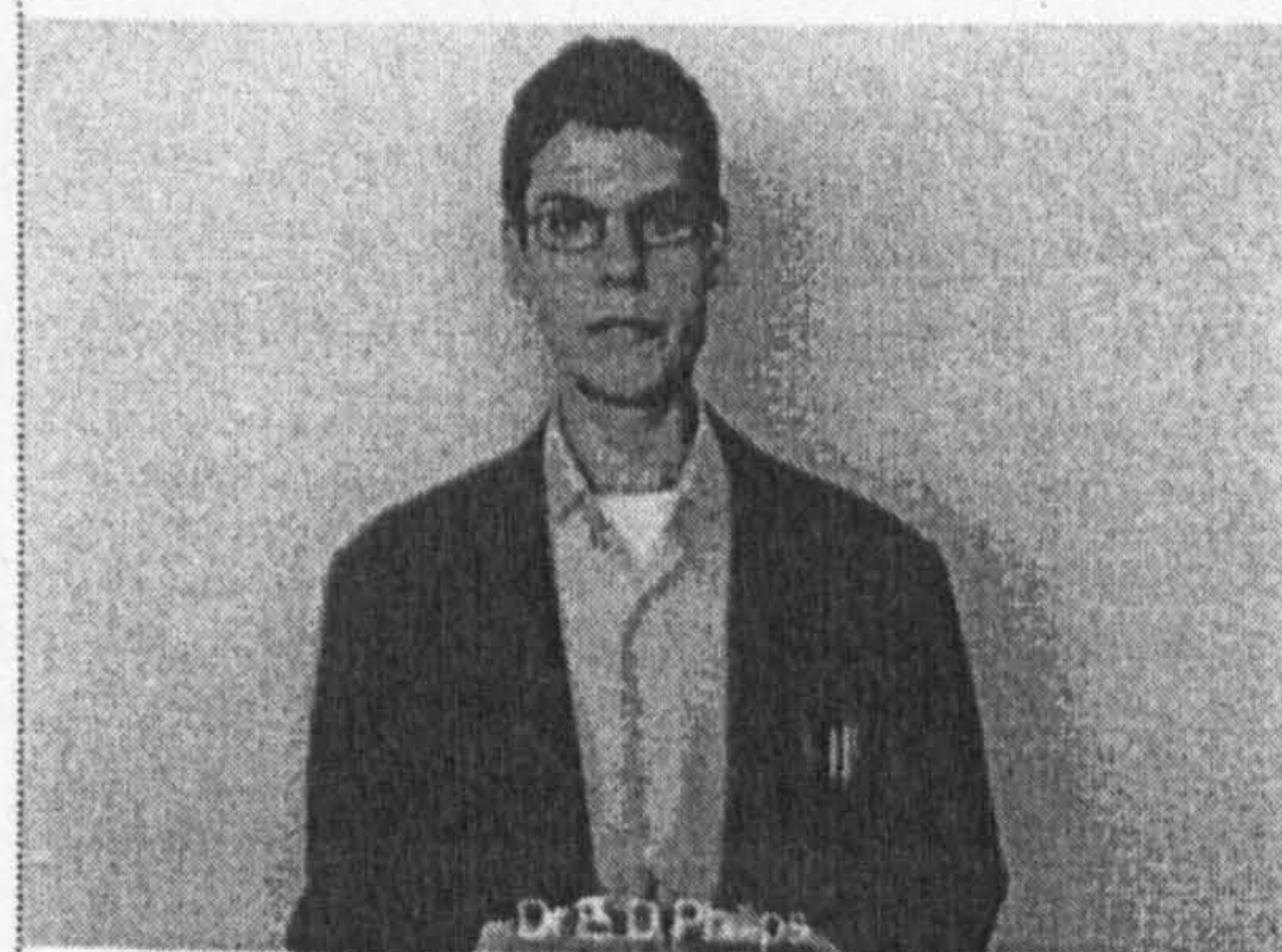




**JUSTINE PEARSALL**

'Gascoyne Goatie' video  
BA FINE ART

Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design



Conception and realisation: Angeliki Avgitidou

male presenter: Yannis Thavros  
female presenter: Jovanna Brobeck  
Dr C. D. Phelps: Dr Sakis Kyriazis  
Professor A. Edwards: Stuart Evans  
Professor G. H. White: Ian Rodgers  
Make up artist: Dora Dimeva  
End titles track: Merry we're all along  
by Stephen Sondheim BWG Music

Thanks to:  
The actors  
Joni Savidge  
Southampton Row Library CSM  
Steve Rankin  
Miss Zafarou

**ANGELIKI AVGITIDOU**

'Doing It Yourself' video  
PHD FINE ART

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