



Leonardo

Russians Leave Europe

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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Leonardo*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1998), pp. 142-143

Published by: [The MIT Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1576520>

Accessed: 15/03/2012 09:20

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the relationship of computer programming and new multimedia software to the physical body. All of our work is movement-based, yet we incorporate camera, video projection, digital sound processing, motion capture, sensor and MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) devices in our choreography and spatial designs, working toward a redefinition of performance. Our intention is to influence technological design and the understanding of corporeal presence in interactive territory, shifting the emphasis from machine applications to narrative content through full, body-conscious interfaces and contemporary prostheses.

Since its formation, AlienNation Co. has worked as a laboratory for cross-cultural, integrated arts research and has evolved organically out of several collaborative performance projects. Over the past 3 years, AlienNation Co. has been exploring the connections between live performance and cinematic/video space-time, inventing new processes of composition that combine dance-theater choreography with video choreography, acoustic and electronic music, poetry and the visual arts. Experimenting with both site-specific and cross-cultural performance materials, the company has been particularly concerned with physical and emotional bodily experience and with the ideology of visual objects and images. Our experimental work, which includes theater and dance pieces, installations and film concerts, evolves along with our video/film production, documentation and writing. The work is committed to addressing issues of our time and our various, overlapping cultural experiences. As collaborative work with artists in other locations, it contributes to the crossing of borders and the exchange of creative dialogues in the world.

Formed in 1993, AlienNation Co. currently has three productions in its repertoire. After the premiere and international touring of *AlienNation* (1993–1994), the second production, *Lovers Fragments* (Fig. 1), was created in two different versions shown in Cleveland, Ohio, and Chicago, Illinois, between April and December 1995. Film versions of *Lovers Fragments* were presented at festivals and conferences in London, Helsinki, Montréal and Havana. The latest project, *Parsifal* (1995–1997), is a sequence of three site-specific opera experiments based on an exploration of myth, religion and the production of sexualities. The com-

pany produces its video works at Xenologue Productions Studio.

Manuscript received 23 April 1996.

RUSSIANS LEAVE EUROPE

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Accepted for publication by Roger F. Malina.

This video installation of new works was based on my ideas and produced by cameraman Kamil Gimazutdinov and other colleagues from the SKB "Prometei" staff [1]. A row of 10–12 TV sets and video tape recorders was displayed along the length of one wall of the exhibition hall. An adjoining wall was inscribed with the word "West" and the wall opposite with the word "East." Videotaped images of tanks moving and rattling were reproduced on each TV set, forming a "row of tanks." Two additional TV sets were mounted on a podium in front of this row, their back sides facing each other and their screens facing outward. On the TV set

facing the audience, the front part of a rattling tank was reproduced, while the rear part of the tank was reproduced on the second TV set, facing the rear wall of the gallery. This piece was called *The Last Soviet Tank Monument* (Fig. 2).

An archival video recording featuring Russian president Boris Yeltsin's visit to Germany for the withdrawal of the last Russian regiments in August 1994 was projected onto a large video screen above the TV sets. Specifically, the video showed a famous episode in which Yeltsin conducted the German military orchestra [2]. This episode was recorded over and over until it filled the entire length of the video tape. A well-known Russian military march, "Farewell of the Slavic Woman," was used as a soundtrack for the recording.

When viewing the entire installation, spectators could see how the Russians left Europe to the music of a well-known march, conducted by no less of a "conductor" than Boris Yeltsin. This is why the installation is entitled *Russians Leave Europe*. The installation was exhibited for the first time at the "Ostranenie" festival in Dessau, Germany, in 1995; its second exhibition took place in Kazan, Russia, in 1996.

Fig. 2. Bulat M. Galejev, partial view of *The Last Soviet Tank Monument*, part of *Russians Leave Europe*, video installation, Kazan, Russia, 1996. This image faced the audience, while a rear-view image of the tank faced the rear wall of the gallery.



References and Notes

1. For more discussion of video works by the SKB group, see Bulat Galejev, "The First Experiments of SKB 'Prometei' in Video Art," *Leonardo*, 27, No. 5, 399–402 (1994).

2. We acknowledge the German broadcasting channel WDR for providing us with footage of the episode.

Manuscript received 17 October 1996.

"LANDSCAPES" FROM SULFANILAMIDE: AN ARTIST EXPERIMENTS WITH MICROCRYSTALS TO REVEAL FRACTAL ORDER

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Accepted for publication by Roger F. Malina.

I use microscopic images as inspiration for painting, etching and drawing. I find that using a monocular polarizing microscope to conduct experiments with crystals heightens my artistic creativity.

Making Crystal Microscope Slides

As the first step in creating crystal microscope slides, I take minute quantities of sulfanilamide crystals on a spatula and place them in the center of a microscope slide. I then squeeze small droplets of a solvent, such as water or acetone, from a pipette onto the tiny crystals, mixing and agitating the combination. This process causes a solution to form, which then recrystallizes at varying speeds, depending on conditions such as ambient temperature and humidity.

I use different approaches during slide preparation, and these often lead to unexpected results. In one approach, when the warm aqueous solution that I have created cools, crystals begin to form. I then observe the exciting evolution of "landscapes" and "floral" patterns through the microscope, as molecules attain their order. I sometimes heat the solution on the slide using a spirit burner. Other times, I place the slides in a metal tray on top of a warm radiator or near a wood-burning stove, allowing the mixture slowly to evaporate and crystallize from its liquid state. When I use acetone with sulfanilamide, the acetone is absorbed instantaneously, forming floral and butterfly shapes. When I mix another type of solvent with sulfa-

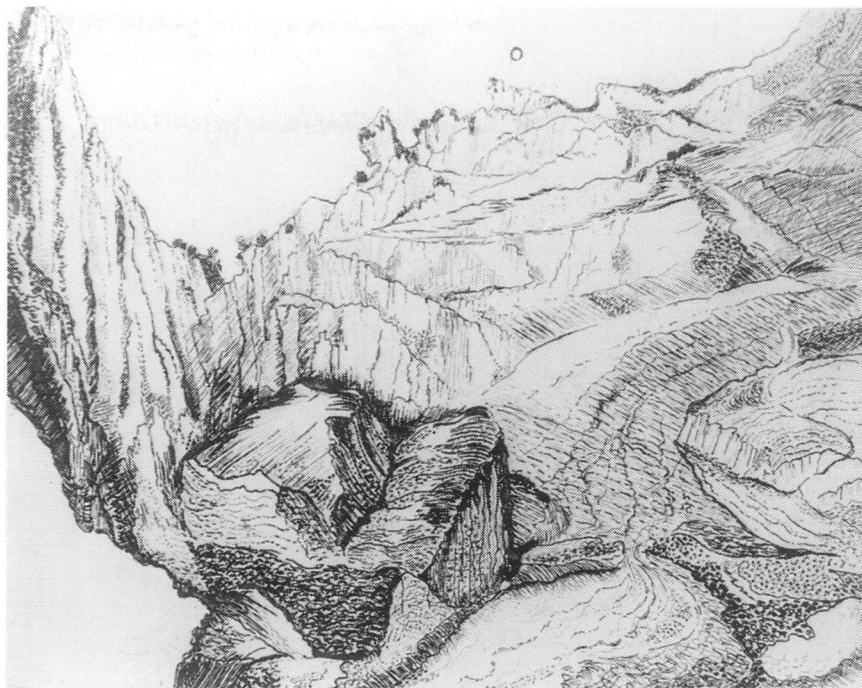


Fig. 3. Gwyneth Thurgood, *Glacier*, limited edition etching, 20 × 25 cm, 1996.

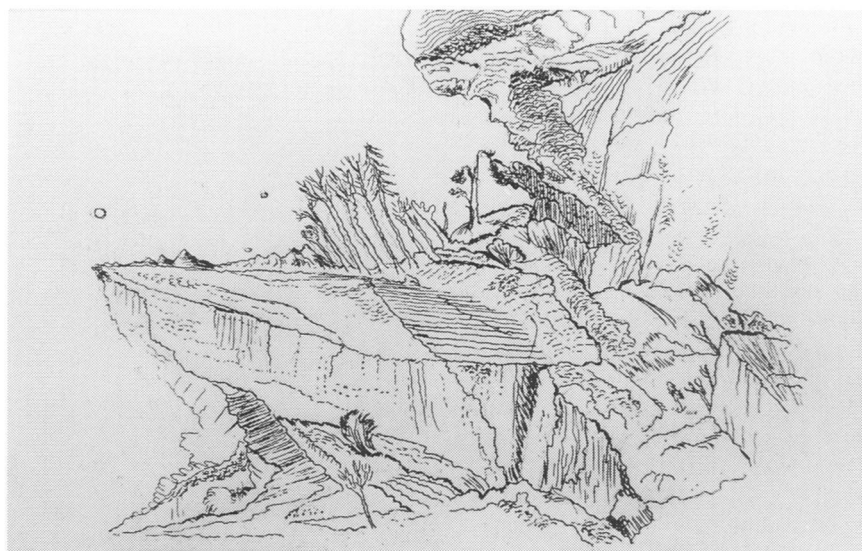


Fig. 4. Gwyneth Thurgood, *Headland*, limited edition etching, 12 × 19 cm, 1996.

nilamide and sodium dichromate, beautiful "ferns" and "trees" appear. The formations are reversible: by adding more solvent, the liquid state returns and the mixture gradually reforms into different patterns.

Artistic Transformations

I find that one of the greatest difficulties in this process is obtaining an image that is large enough to use as reference for an artwork. Most often I make free-hand drawings by looking through the

microscope. Since this process was tiring with a monocular instrument, I purchased an eyepiece camera that is a beam-splitter and attaches to the microscope's eyepiece [1]. This device allows me to view the specimen straight-on, as well as through both eyes.

A more straightforward way to obtain a suitable reference image is to take photomicrographs by coupling a single-lens reflex camera to the eyepiece of the microscope [2]. I then can trace the photomicrographs.