

A Short History of Performance

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UnitedTechnologies



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Whitechapel

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Judith Barry

Gerard Byrne

James Coleman

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Christian Jankowski

Isaac Julien

Barbara Kruger

Aernout Mik

Anna Sanders Films

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Francesco Vezzoli

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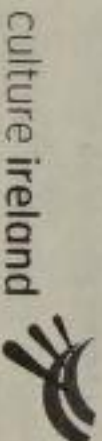


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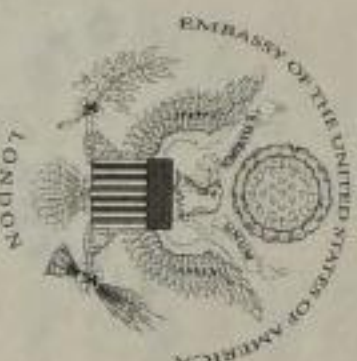
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and emotional vulnerability. Set within a 17th century Medici housing lodge, the film consists of an assortment of self-absorbed and failed characters that include a doctor who performs experiments on peacock eggs, a once famous opera diva now reliant on her memories and possessions, and an aspiring ballerina who is too scared to perform in public. These characters live through artifice, their desires perpetually frustrated and their interaction marked by intensifying feelings of isolation. The film ends with the tragic death, or symbolic sacrifice, of a young American; the only character capable of sincere human interaction.

Like much of Horn's work, **La Ferdinanda**, has a pervasive autobiographical element. The fragility of life is presented across an expanse of objects, sculptures and people, placed within a narrative sequence, and combined to form a dense network of metaphorical and symbolic meaning.

Rebecca Horn

*1944 / Michelstadt, Germany
lives and works in Berlin and Paris

Solo shows include: **Rebecca Horn**, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1993; **Conerto dei Sospiri**, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 1997; **Light imprisoned in the belly of the whale**, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2002; **Body Landscapes**, Galerie de France, Paris (touring to the Hayward Gallery, London and Art/36/Basel, Basel), 2005

Group exhibitions include: **Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art**, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1986; **Between Cinema and a Hard Place**, Tate Modern, London, 2000; **Tempo**, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2002; **From Broodthaers to Horn**, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2003; **Walking & Falling**, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm, 2006

Further reading includes: **Rebecca Horn**, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1993; **Rebecca Horn: Bodylandscapes: Drawings, Sculptures, Installations 1964–2004** (cat), Hayward Gallery, London, 2004; **Rebecca Horn: Moon Mirror – Site-Specific Installations, 1982–2005**, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2005

Above and p15:

Peacock Machine 1, 1979

Film Still from La Ferdinanda,

1981

Photographer: film still /

Rebecca Horn

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Courtesy Rebecca Horn

Archives / Holzwarth

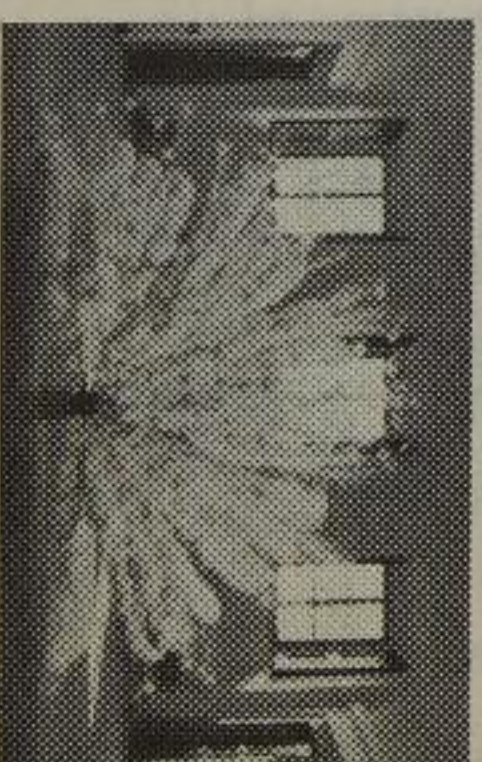
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Fri 14

Rebecca Horn

La Ferdinanda: Sonata for a Medici Villa, 1981

The German artist Rebecca Horn came to prominence in the 1970s with an oeuvre that combines video, performance, installation, and sculpture. Whilst still a student, Horn became seriously ill with lung poisoning, contracted through her use of dangerous materials. Forced to spend considerable time in a sanatorium, the isolation she experienced there has profoundly influenced her work. Horn began producing body-centered art that combines performance with sculpture; reflecting the fragility of the body, they protect and cocoon whilst simultaneously reaching out to embrace the world. Film and video, originally used by Horn to document performances, have subsequently become autonomous mediums in her practice. Her second film, **La Ferdinanda: Sonata for a Medici Villa**, 1981, continues with some of the artist's ongoing concerns: obsession, isolation, and both physical



and at other times turning to more impacting techniques such as rewinding, or dubbing.

Presented here, **10-16** consists of 7 short films depicting middle-aged men and women lip-synching to the recorded testimonies of boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 16 so that, for example, a naked midget in a bath with a 13 year old's voice scolds his lesbian mother; or a grey haired man awkwardly rests on a wall while mouthing the alcoholic confessions of 14 year-old boy.

With this simple yet disconcerting device, Wearing disrupts the conventions of documentary making. Through the disjuncture between the adult's body and the child's word, the artist reveals how a new truth becomes present within the act of concealment. Awkward though they are these testimonies offer incredible insights into early adolescence. They also remind us of both how much and how little our thought processes, concerns and worries change with the advancement of years. Ultimately, Wearing's simple gesture provokes us into reflecting upon our own past in relation to the present, and into looking at assumptions we make about appearance and reality.

Gillian Wearing

*1963 / Birmingham, UK
lives and works in London

Solo exhibitions include: Wiener Secession, Vienna, 1997; Serpentine Gallery, London, 2000; **Unspoken**, Kunstverein München, Munich, 2001; **Mass Observation**, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2002; **Album**, Maureen Paley, London, 2003; Outreach Award, Rencontres d'Arles Festival, Arles, France, 2005

Group exhibitions include: **British Art Show 4**, touring Great Britain, 1995; **Sensation**, Saatchi Collection, Royal Academy of Art, London, 1997; **The Turner Prize**, Tate Gallery, London, 1997; **6th Istanbul Biennial**, Istanbul, 1999; **Biennale de São Paulo**, Sao Paulo, 2002; **Faces in the Crowd – Picturing modern life from Manet to today**, the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London and Castello di Rivoli, Turin, 2004; **Local Stories**, Modern Art Oxford, 2006

Further reading includes: **Gillian Wearing**, Phaidon Press, London, 1999; **Gillian Wearing** (cat), Serpentine Gallery, London, 2000; **Mass Observation** (cat), Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, 2002



Above and p14:
10-16, 1997
Video Display, dimensions
variable

Copyright the artist, courtesy
the artist and Maureen Paley,
London

Thru 13 Gillian Wearing

10-16,
1997

Through photography and video, Gillian Wearing explores the most intimate and complex aspects of human relationships. In the early 1990s, influenced by fly-on-the-wall TV documentaries such as **Seven Up** (begun in 1963), she started to explore how our public and personal lives, together with culturally and socially accepted conventions and systems, define 'normal' behaviour. To this end, in 1992 she began a series titled **Signs that say what you want them to say...**, where she photographed people holding pieces of paper on which they'd spontaneously written what they were thinking or feeling. Her impartial attitude allows her to yield their most secret thoughts and confessions; insights that are, at times, shockingly frank, disturbing, darkly humorous but always honest. During the editing process, Wearing manipulates the collected images and texts, sometimes subtly

on the same subject. In **Rosa**, Jankowski's alter-ego is a young female artist struggling to get an exhibition; the works that she makes, **The Hunt** and **My Life as a Dove**, are in fact earlier work of Jankowski's. The film is peppered throughout with moments in which the characters interrupt the narrative flow and turn straight to camera, giving us their thoughts on art's relationship to value, longing, limitations, humour, beauty, freedom and commerce. **Rosa** explores the relationship between commercial film and art film and asks questions surrounding the issue of how the arts in general function within a completely commercialised world. The film not only explicitly fictionalises these questions within its narrative, but also implicitly raises the same issues in its relation to the commercial film from which it derives.

Christian Jankowski

*1968 / Göttingen, Germany
lives and works in New York

Solo exhibitions include: **Telemista**, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 1999; **Play**, De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam, 2000; **The Holy Artwork**, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, 2002, Carnegie-Museum, Pittsburgh, 2003; **Bravo Jankowski**, Lisson Gallery, London, 2003; **Everything Fell Together**, Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, 2005 touring to MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts and FACT, Liverpool, 2006

Group exhibitions include: **Crash**, ICA, London, 1999; **The Whitney Biennial**, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2002; **Centre of Attraction**, 8th Baltic Triennial of International Art, Vilnius, 2002; **Groteski**, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2003; **State of Play**, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2004; **Loud and Clear Too**, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, 2005

Further reading includes: **Play**, De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam, 2001; **Lehrauftrag**, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Berlin, 2002; **Christian Jankowski**, MACRO, Roma, 2004



Above and p13:
Rosa, 2001
Digital Betacam with DVD and
certificate (PAL)
18min 54sec

Courtesy the artist and
Klosterfelde, Berlin; Maccarone
Inc., New York

Wed

12

Christian Jankowski

Rosa,

2001

German artist Christian Jankowski uses film to explore what happens when art intersects with other disciplines. In facilitating and documenting the meeting point of different and generally unrelated worlds, Jankowski highlights the contingency of truth in any one particular reality. Art is brought together with familiar fragments of popular culture – fortune-tellers (**Telemistica**, 1996), puppets (**Puppet Conference**, 2003), magic (**My Life as a Dove**, 1996) and religion (**The Holy Artwork**, 2001). These elements act as unorthodox yet quotidian catalysts for encounters that are simultaneously staged and real.

In 2001, Jankowski was asked by German filmmaker Lars Kraume if he could use some of the artist's ideas in what was to become a hit German comedy about the art world, **Viktor Vogel – Commercial Man**. Jankowski agreed on condition that he in turn could use the actors and crew to make his own film

four characters in this way face one another from their respective screen, engaging in often private conversation. The viewer is placed at the centre of this series of 12 conversations, an uncomfortable interloper forced to twist and turn to focus on each individual in turn. Running across the bottom of each screen are CNN-style tickertapes that display the inner thoughts of the characters on screen. These internal dialogues speak of the pressures, insecurities and priorities of contemporary life. In displaying these, Kruger is able to highlight the contradictions between what we outwardly say and how we inwardly feel about ourselves. But also, even more disturbingly, how even our most private thoughts have become stereotypes or even caricatures of themselves, part of the same, encroaching uniformity that marks the world we live in.

Barbara Kruger

*1945 / Newark, New Jersey/ US
lives in New York and Los Angeles

Solo exhibitions: P.S.1 Long Island City, New York, 1980; ICA, London, 1983; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 1990, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2000; South London Gallery, London, 2001; Tramway, Glasgow, 2005

Group Shows include: **Documenta 7 and 8**, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, 1982 and 1987; **Magiciens de la Terre**, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1989; **Wall to Wall**, Serpentine Gallery, London, 1994; **Read My Lips: Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman**, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1998; **The American Century: Art and Culture 1950–2000**, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1999; **Belief**, Singapore Biennial, Singapore, 2006

Further reading includes: Kruger, Barbara, **Remote Control: Power, Cultures and the World of Appearances**, The MIT Press, 1994; Goldstein, Ann, **Barbara Kruger**, The MIT Press 1999; **Barbara Kruger: Twelve** (cat), Tramway, Glasgow, 2005



Above and p12:
Twelve, 2004
Four-screen digital video
installation

Courtesy the artist and Mary
Boone Gallery, New York

The 11 Barbara Kruger

Twelve, 2004

Issues such as feminism, consumerism, personal rights, societal hierarchies, stereotypes and human freedom, have dominated Barbara Kruger's work since the early 1970s. Kruger is best known for collages that overlay fragments of images from sources such as fashion magazines, with slogans that criticize the structures and values that the images themselves represent and serve to reproduce. Characterised by a simple graphic treatment in red, white and black, these works have been exhibited in museums and public spaces across the world and have attained iconic status.

Twelve, 2004, marks a departure from Kruger's previous work as it uses actors to play out scripted scenes. A large scale, four-screen installation, **Twelve** has been designed so that each screen takes up an entire wall and is occupied at any one time by a single, projected talking head. Up to



highlighted. We are continually reminded of the arbitrary assigning of dialogue, the scripted and contingent nature of action, and that what we are confronted with could always and easily have been otherwise.

The film is produced by Anna Sanders Films, a Paris-based production company that was created in 1998 by Charles de Meaux, Philippe Parreno, Pierre Huyghe and the Association for Diffusion of Contemporary Art (X.Douroux, F.Gautherot). Dominique Gonzalez Foerster recently joined them. The films they produce explore ideas of place and context in relation to personal narrative. Using the languages of both visual art and cinema, the films produced by Anna Sanders invert common understandings that contemporary reality is always blurred with representations of itself; positing instead that reality can only be reached through attempts to re-create it. Their films seek to create a space within which the viewer can define their own meaning based on the images they are presented with, rather than simply accepting narrative as (pre)determined.

Anna Sanders Films

Liam Gillick *1964, Aylesbury/ UK. Lives and works in London and New York

Solo exhibitions include: **The Wood Way**, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2002 (cat)

Douglas Gordon *1966, Glasgow/ UK. Lives and works in Glasgow

Solo exhibitions include: **The Vanity of Allegory**, Deutsche Guggenheim Museum, Berlin, 2005 (cat)

Carsten Höller *1961, Brussels/ Belgium. Lives and works in Stockholm

Solo exhibitions include: **Half-Fiction**, ICA; Boston, 2003 and the Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London, 2006 (cat)

Pierre Huyghe *1962, Paris/ France. Lives and works in Paris

Solo exhibitions include: Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Torino, 2004 (cat)

Philippe Parreno *1964, Oran, Algeria. Lives and works in Paris

Solo exhibitions include: **Fade Away**, Kunstverein Munchen, Munich, 2004

Rirkrit Tiravanija *1961, Buenos Aires/ Brasilia. Lives and works in New York and Berlin

Solo exhibitions include: Secession, Vienna, 2002 (cat); Arc, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 2005 (cat)



Above and p11:

Vicinato II, 1999/2000

Film Still

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Courtesy Anna Sanders Films,
Dijon and Air de Paris, Paris

Mon To

Anna Sanders Films

Liam Gillick, Douglas Gordon, Carsten
Höllner, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno,
Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Vicinato II*, 1999–2000

Vicinato II is a recreation of a conversation between Liam Gillick, Douglas Gordon, Carsten Höllner, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno and Rirkrit Tiravanija, recorded between 1998 and 1999. The conversation has been divided between four actors so that each speaks the same number of words, rather than assume the role of one of the original participants. The result is artificial and disjointed. This unnatural feeling is exacerbated by a computerised voiceover that describes the scenes and the theatrical mechanics of the action; at times in synch, elsewhere ahead of the action or behind it. Here we are confronted with a play in which gaps, spaces and dislocated communications are

“are there any limits to permissible – or desirable – sexual behaviour?” Byrne took the transcript as the basis for a script, which he asked actors to perform to camera in the setting of Goulding House. The resulting installation comprises three monitors, with the filmed re-enactment randomly distributed across them. The now disjointed dialogue is accompanied by five large photographs of the view from Goulding House – a cantilevered glass building in a remote forest – and two smaller monochromes; one of the exterior of the house and one of a photocopied image of the original magazine. **New Sexual Lifestyles** brings back to life attitudes and ideals of the recent past. In doing so, it confronts us with the inexorable cultural shifts that always occur within society and with the retractions in thinking that have taken place in the last thirty years. The performance highlights the cultural specificity of the original conversation and also the collective amnesia we experience over changing attitudes and behavioural patterns.

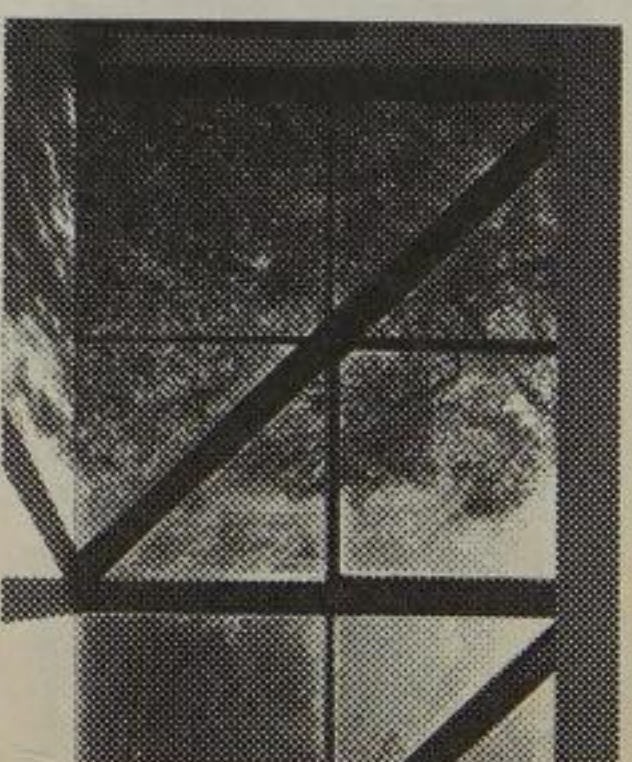
Gerard Byrne

* 1969 / Dublin, Ireland
lives and works Dublin

Solo shows: Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, 2003; BAK, Utrecht, 2004; and Beaumont Public Project Space, Luxembourg, 2005, amongst others. Future shows are planned for the Chisenhale Gallery, London and Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, 2006

Group exhibitions include: **Manifesta 4**, Frankfurt, 2002; **How things turn out**, IMMA, Dublin, 2002; **Poetic Justice**, The 8th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, 2003; **Eindhoven Istanbul**, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2005; the **3rd Tate Triennial**, Tate Britain, London, 2006

Further reading includes: **Op-Ed – Gerard Byrne** (cat), Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 2002; and Baker, George, **Books, Magazines, Newspapers**, Lukas & Sternberg, New York, 2004



Above and p10:
New Sexual Lifestyles, 2003
Photographic detail from
the installation **New Sexual
Lifestyles**

Courtesy the artist and Lisson
Gallery, London

Sun

Gerard Byrne

New Sexual Lifestyles, 2003

Using primary sources such as advertisements and magazines, Gerard Byrne has created a number of works in which he speculatively re-enacts ephemeral historical situations. Through these re-creations he is able to re-read and re-evaluate the original material, exploring how ideals and attitudes have changed over time.

New Sexual Lifestyles takes as its inspiration two late-Modernist artefacts: Goulding House in the Irish countryside – an archetypal example of early 1970s architecture – and a round-table discussion published in **Playboy** magazine in 1973. This transcribed discussion involved a panel of international experts and centred around a series of questions designed to articulate the attitudes and ideologies of the “sexual revolution”: **Playboy** posed questions such as “do affairs ever help marriage?” and

of representations of middleclass white men within the museum, often to the exclusion of any other subject position. The projection comprises nine stories collected by Barry from members of ethnic minorities, scripted and then recited by actors. When animated within the space, a series of dramatically oversized heads recount personal stories and appear to fade in and out of the architecture as if the walls themselves are speaking. Barry acts as a facilitator, giving a voice to those usually denied the privilege in order to contrast American ideology with the reality of immigration. By projecting, both physically and metaphorically, alternative histories onto the architecture, Barry also undermines the perceived stability of space, arguing that it is itself culturally constituted.

Above and p9:
First and Third, 1987
Video/sound projection
Dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and
Rosamund Felsen Gallery,
Santa Monica

Judith Barry

*1954 / Columbus, Ohio/US
lives and works in New York and Berlin

Solo exhibitions include: **Public Fantasy**, ICA, London, 1991; **Imagination, Dead Imagine, Model for Stage and Screen**, The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago, 1992; **Voice Off**, Luis Serpa Galeria, ARCO, Madrid, 2003; Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica, 2004

Group exhibitions include: **La Biennale di Venezia**, Venice, 1988 and 1990; **a/drift: scenes from the penetrable culture**, Bard College, New York, 1996; **Performing Bodies**, Tate Modern, London, 2000; **Fate of Alien Modes**, Secession, Vienna, 2003; **Dark Places: Mapping Enigma**, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, 2006

Further reading includes: Blazwick, Iwona (ed), **Judith Barry: Public Fantasy**, ICA, London, 1991; and **Judith Barry: Projections, Mise En Abyme**, Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver 1997

Sat 8

Judith Barry First and Third, 1987

In the late 1970s American artist and writer Judith Barry produced live performances intended to challenge her audience through extreme social interactions, testing the relational field between space and body. Shifting in the early 80s to the seductive media of video, as well as installation and architectural design, Barry continues to provoke personal responses in a highly activist manner, interrogating how individual subjectivity is formed through social and cultural systems. Barry's work has formal links to both feminist performance art and conceptualism, while her museum installations and large-scale projections are also closely related to institutional critique. These environmental installations are generally site-specific works that superimpose social and historical issues directly onto the architecture's fabric. **First and Third**, originally conceived for the 1987 Whitney Biennial, highlights the predominance



depicts a man and a woman recounting two intertwining narratives, made up of a series of episodes. The character's tales, recited with embellished emphasis in the style of a romantic melodrama, weave together in an intricate and enigmatic narrative about fashion, desire, and the passage of time. Viewed today, the work takes on a new relevance in context to the contemporary interrelationships between fashion, art, and media representation.

Above and p8:
So Different... and Yet, 1980
Video installation
Performed by Olwen Fouéré
and Roger Doyle
...
Courtesy James Coleman ©

James Coleman

Solo exhibitions include: ICA, London, 1986; Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 1989–90; Dia Center for the Arts, New York; 1994–95; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1996; Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 1999; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York / Paris, 2000; Musée du Louvre, Paris: Project for **Léonard de Vinci: dessins et manuscrits**, 2003; Museu do Chiado, Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon, 2004–05

Group exhibitions include: **Between Cinema and a Hard Place**, Tate Modern, London, 2000; **Documenta 11**, Kassel, 2002; **How do we want to be governed?** Miami Art Central, Miami, 2004–05; **Slide Show**, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, 2005; **Flashback: Revisiting the Art of the 80s**, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, 2005

Further reading includes: **James Coleman**, Lenbachhaus / Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2002; **James Coleman**, The MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 2003; **James Coleman**, Museu do Chiado, 2005

Jean Fisher

Professor, Middlesex University, London. Two important essays by Fisher are republished in **James Coleman**, MIT Press, 2003. Publications include: **Vampire in the Text: Narratives in Contemporary Art**, in IVA, 2003; **Over Here: Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture** (ed. Gerardo Mosquera, Jean Fisher), MIT Press, 2005

Liam Gillick

Solo exhibitions include: **Literally**, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2003; **A short text on the possibility of creating an economy of equivalence**, Palais de Tokyo, 2005

Group exhibitions include: **Documenta X**, 1997; **Singular Forms**, Guggenheim Museum, 2004; **Tate Triennale**, Tate Britain, London, 2006

Fri

7

James Coleman

So Different... and Yet,

1980

The presentation of the **So Different... and Yet**, 1980 at the Whitechapel has been specially conceived with a talk by Jean Fisher and mise-en-scène by Liam Gillick.

Since the early 1970s, the work of James Coleman has been recognized in contemporary art for its use of reproductive media such as photography, film and sound, together with live performance and installation. One of the leading figures of post-modern visual representation, Coleman's work explores the relationships between subjectivity, perception and interpretation, and the central role of the viewer in the construction of meaning and affect. Many of Coleman's works operate on an allegorical level. **So Different...and Yet**, a 54 minute video installation from 1980, is one of Coleman's earlier works incorporating the use of video. Structured around the use of storytelling as performance, the video



possible and the mythical to overwhelming effect. Each scene is shot with sumptuous precision, yet the stars advertise a film that does not exist. Lesbian kisses, gold plated dildos and orgies all flash past, as do hyperbolic and non-sensical claims about the stature and importance of the movie. Climaxing in a series of ever more hysterical screams of "Caligula!", the work is more, though, than a dirty joke, echoing more contemporary spectacles of politics, sex and frenzied consumerism. Seducing with its glamour, the trailer has also seemingly been created for the art world's amusement. While providing a critical mirror of this world: premiered at the 2005 Venice Biennale and installed with plush red velvet seating for the comfort of its audience, the film acted out for the art world another, somehow not-so different, scene of over-indulgence and decadence.

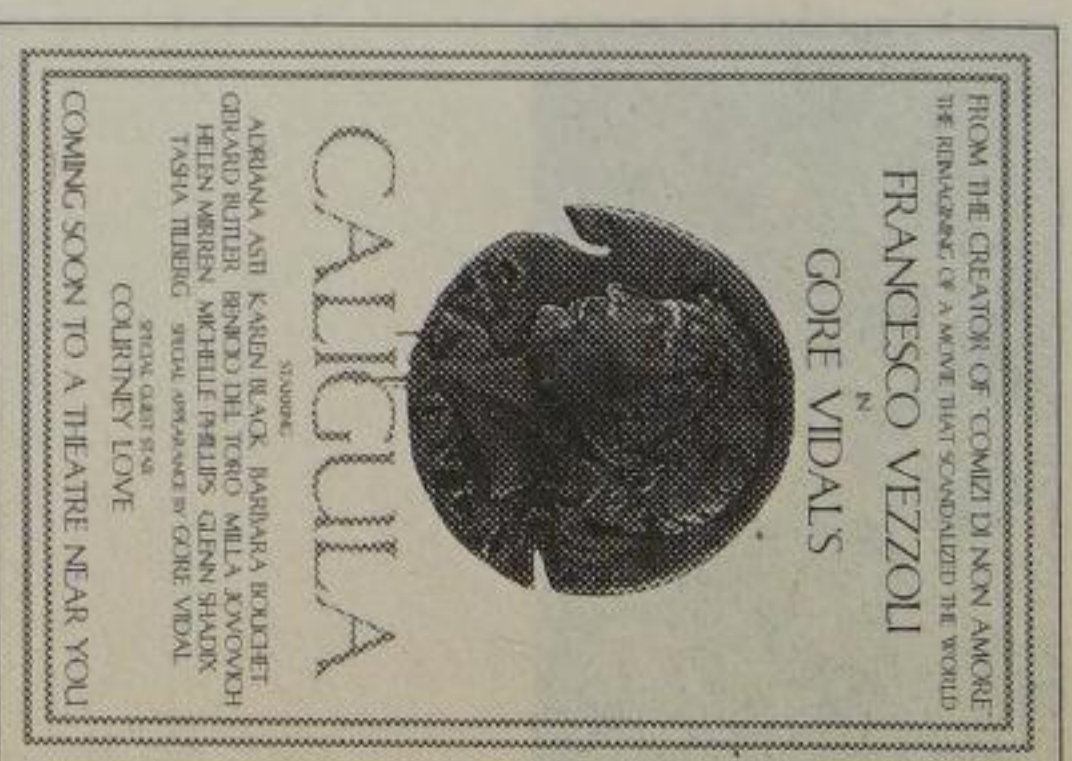
Francesco Vezzoli

*1971 / Brescia, Italy
lives and works in Milan

Solo exhibitions include: **An Embroidered Trilogy**, Centre d'Arte Contemporain, Geneve, 1999; **The Films of Francesco Vezzoli**, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2002; **Francesco Vezzoli – Trilogy of Death**, Fondazione Prada, Milan, 2004; **Francesco Vezzoli**, Museu Serralves – Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Porto, 2005

Group exhibitions: **La Biennale di Venezia**, Venice, 2001; **Second Liverpool Biennial**, Liverpool, 2002; **Fantastic Prophecy**, BAK, Academiegalerie, Utrecht, 2003; **Biennale de Sao Paulo**, Sao Paulo, 2004; **Prague Biennale 2 – Expanded Painting**, Karlin Hall, Prague, 2005; and **The Whitney Biennial**, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2006

Further reading includes: Beccaria, Marcella, **Francesco Vezzoli**, Skira Editore, Milan, 2004; and Winkelmann, Jan (ed), **The Needleworks of Francesco Vezzoli**, Hatje Cantz, 2002



Above top and p7:

Trailer for a remake of Gore Vidal's *Caligula*, 2005

35mm film transferred to DVD – 5min approx

Photo by Matthias Vriens

Courtesy Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli

Thanks to Galleria Giò Marconi, Milan; Galleria Franco Noero, Turin

Above bottom:

Poster for a remake of Gore

Vidal's *Caligula*, 2005

Silkscreen on paper, 140 x 100cm

Courtesy Galleria Giò Marconi, Milan; Galleria Franco Noero, Turin

Thru 6 Francesco Vezzoli

Trailer for a remake of Gore Vidal's *Caligula*, 2005

The work of Francesco Vezzoli owes much to the golden age of cinema; to the glamour of 1950s and 60s divas and the moving image's myth-making potential. Drawing on narrative cinema's every possible marketing device and seduction technique, Vezzoli asks what relationship this long-gone age has with today's celebrity-obsessed age. At times satirical, at others melancholic, always steeped in fantasy, Vezzoli creates for us a world that is bold, lush and hyper-real.

Vezzoli's **Trailer...** is a mock five-minute trailer for a possible re-make of Tinto Brass' infamous 1979 film **Caligula**. With costumes by Donatella Versace and a star-studded cast that includes Helen Mirren, Benicio Del Toro, Milla Jovovich and Courtney Love, the narrative plays itself out at a startling pace – the viewer is bombarded with cliché and fantasy, the shocking and the hilarious, the



theatre in 2002 when it was stormed by Chechen Rebels. Sullivan takes all three sources as her point of departure, referencing key scenes, which she condenses into extreme and repetitive gestures. Each actor performs fifty pantomime-style movements in repeated sequence, individually and within a group, against various settings and across five screens. The resulting installation consists of disjointed, fragmented and nearly hysterical sequences, which together form a compelling and consuming experience comparable to theatre production.

Sullivan's use of repetition is central to her work. In **Ice Floes...**, the same 40 vignettes are played across the work's physical space, referential space and duration. Through this tool the artist interrogates, and to an extent undermines, the performer's traditional aim to represent the real. Instead, Sullivan's melodramatic choreography exposes the mechanics behind expression.

Catherine Sullivan

*1968 / Los Angeles, California/ US
lives and works in Los Angeles

Solo exhibitions include: **Five Economies (big hunt/ little hunt)**, The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago, Chicago, 2002; **The Chironomic Remedy**, UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, 2003; **Ice Floes of Franz Joseph Land**, Gió Marconi, Milan, 2004; **Catherine Sullivan: The Chittendens**, Metro Pictures, New York; Tate, London, 2005; Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, 2005

Group exhibitions include: **Cosima Von Bonin**, Kunstverein Hamburg, Hamburg, 2001; **Fast Forward, Media Art Sammlung Goetz**, ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2003; Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, 2003; **Playlist**, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2004

Further reading includes: **Catherine Sullivan: Five economies (big hunt/little hunt)**, (cat) UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2002; Ruf, Beatrix (ed), **Catherine Sullivan**, JRP Ringier, Zurich, 2006



Above and p6:

Ice Floes of Franz Joseph Land, 2003

Five-channel video installation (transferred from 16mm film), black and white, sound, 5 screens

Screens 1-4 run 20min, screen 5 runs 40min

Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures Gallery, New York

Wved

5

Catherine Sullivan

Ice Floes of Franz Joseph Land, 2003

Los Angeles-based artist Catherine Sullivan trained as an actor before graduating in the visual arts. Best known for her video and theatre work, Sullivan focuses on what it means to perform, to the extent that the dramatic process itself becomes the subject of her work. Although interested in probing the distinctions between live performance and film, Sullivan is more interested in the body's capacity to absorb and convey emotion. Using a wide range of cultural, historical and theatrical references, she extracts individual movements and gestures, transforming them into a new physical language.

Ice floes of Franz Joseph Land, 2003, is a 5-channel black and white video installation based on the musical 'Nord-Ost', which was in turn adapted from Veniamin Kaverin's novel 'Two Captains', 1947 – a romantic adventure story about polar aviation. 'Nord-Ost' was also playing at a Moscow

on the destruction of its contents. No one in the group interacts except two men who roam the store destroying its internal walls and pulling over shelves. The others, intently and unsettlingly absorbed in their tasks, proceed mutely through motions that include shredding toilet rolls, emptying packets and containers, crunching flour into the floor or pulling apart cotton wool. One man sits motionless on the edge of a freezer holding a packet of biscuits.

Pulverous presents no clear linear narrative, no beginning or end, and no motivation or rationale for the behaviour of the characters. However, through the repetition of illogical rituals and torturous routines, they are lulled into a hypnotic and soporific state where the situation becomes almost plausible. Time is clearly flowing but also standing still.

Aernout Mik

*1962 / Groningen, Netherlands
lives and works in Amsterdam

Solo exhibitions include: **Primal Gestures, Minor Roles**, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2000; **3 Crowds**, ICA, London, 2000; **AM in the LAM**, The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik, 2002; **Dispersion Room**, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, 2004; **Refraction**, New Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005; Camden Arts Centre, London, 2006

Group exhibitions: **Post Natural**, Dutch Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 2001; **Liebschaften**, MMK, Frankfurt am Main, 2002; **Istanbul Biennial**, Istanbul, 2003; **26th Biennial de Sao Paulo**, 2004; **Soft Target**, BAK, Utrecht, 2005

Further reading includes: Guldemond, Jaap (ed), **Aernout Mik: Primal Gesture, Minor Roles** (cat), Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, 2000; and Cameron, Dan and Inselmann, Andrea, **Aernout Mik: Refraction** (cat), New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2005



Above and p5:
Pulverous, 2003
Video installation

Courtesy the artist and
carlier | gebauer, Berlin

Tue

4

Aernout Mik

Pulverous, 2003

Aernout Mik creates work that is an amalgamation of sculpture, installation, performance and projected images. In his video installations, he strips standardised spaces and situations of their usual function, and dislocates conventional, socially determined patterns of human behaviour in an ambiguous way. He offers an analysis of group behaviour and social situations that communicates by denying and defying narrative tradition. In **Refraction**, 2005, for example, crews of police officers and medics are first at a disaster scene with no apparent victims, while demonstrators and guards practice a riot in **Glutinosity**, 2001.

In **Pulverous**, an expansive cinemascoppe-style screen shows a grocery store, as though shot on panoramic CCTV. While the camera scans the store slowly, men and women ritualistically embark



shows an old woman in her flat who, voicing her memories and views on society, slips between reality and fantasy. Her identity is ambiguous – she may be the girl's grandmother, or indeed the girl herself grown up. The final screen, 'Dad', reveals the nature of the accident, whilst Ella's bereaved father describes his relationship with both his father and his daughter in desperate and yet inadequate terms. Ahtila's installation draws the viewer into the story through space as well as through narrative: positioned between the three screens, the viewer is uncomfortably situated directly within the conversation. The work presents us with psychologically penetrating and disturbing glimpses into the nature of loss and fragile family bonds, opening up a number of possible interpretations that are suggested but not resolved by the temporal and spatial fragmentation of the images projected. Through rich multi-layering, the artist echoes the fragility of our mental condition in this emotional and physically demanding installation.

Eija-Liisa Ahtila

*1959 / Hämeenlinna, Finland
lives and works in Helsinki, Finland

Solo exhibitions include: **Real Characters, Invented Worlds**, Tate Modern, London, 2002; De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam, 2003; Tokyo Opera City Gallery, Tokyo, 2003; **Intention to Fail**, Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, 2004; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, 2006

Group exhibitions: **End of Story**, Nordic Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 1999; **Organising Freedom**, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 2000; **Reel Sculpture**, SFMOMA, San Francisco, 2003, **Flick Collection**, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2004; **Artes Mundi**, NMGW, Cardiff, 2006

Further reading includes: Hirvi, Maria (ed), **Fantasized Persons and Taped Conversations**, Crystal Eye Ltd, Helsinki, 2002; and

Eija-Liisa Ahtila: Cinematic Works, Crystal Eye Ltd, Helsinki, 2004



Above and p4:
Today, 1996/7

35mm film and DVD installation
for 3 projections with sound
10min

Images Copyright Crystal Eye
Ltd, Helsinki

Images Courtesy the artist and
Marian Goodman Gallery,
New York and Paris

Mon

3

Eija-Liisa Ahtila

Today,

1996/7

Love, sexuality, jealousy, anger, vulnerability and emotional reconciliation are the subjects of Eija-Liisa Ahtila's films. They are woven together to present 'human dramas', stories that dwell on the powerful emotions underlying human relationships. Such stories are both specific and universal, drawn from lengthy research or from memory, and based on a combination of real and fictive events.

Today is a study of the relationship between a man, simply called Dad, and his daughter Ella. Three short episodes are screened on three separate walls, each relating to the accidental death of Ella's grandfather, her dad's father. On the left hand screen Ella, a teenage girl, explains the details of her grandfather's death in a factual and emotionless manner while throwing a ball repeatedly against a wall. Her father's inconsolable crying punctuates the episode. The central screen, entitled 'Verd',

the experiment was terminated after only six days when brutish, even pathological, conduct developed. Zmijewski offered unemployed Poles \$40 a day to participate in the restaging of the experiment and **Repetition**, the resulting documentary-style work, very nearly comes to the same end. The footage, edited from 24-hour surveillance cameras, reveals the group initially playing along with the situation, fully comprehending its artificiality. As time progresses emotions and behaviour intensify, until the game gains its own momentum and starts to turn nasty. Zmijewski's version takes a surprisingly touching twist: the head warden looks into his soul and decides he no longer wants to work within the system.

Repetition perhaps suggests that, even despite imposed rules, there is always choice. Whereas scientists seek answers, Zmijewski is happy to pose questions, probing issues of segregation and victimization, and the fragility of the human condition.

Artur Zmijewski

*1966 / Warsaw, Poland
lives and works in Warsaw

Solo exhibitions include: **The Singing Lesson**, Collective Gallery, Dublin, 2002; **Singing Lesson 1/Singing Lesson 2**, Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw, 2003; **Artur Zmijewski, Selected Works, 1998–2003**, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Boston, 2004; **Einmal ist Keinmal**, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, 2005; **Repetition**, Polish Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, 2005

Group shows include: **After the Wall. Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe**, Moderna Museet, Stockholm; **Hamburger Bahnhof**, Berlin, 1999; **Liverpool Biennial 2002**, Liverpool, 2002; **Pressing Flesh: Skin, Touch, Intimacy**, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, 2003; **Warsaw – Moscow/Moscow – Warsaw**, National Gallery of Art Zacheta, Warsaw, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, 2004; **The Impossible Theatre**, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; **Barbican Art Gallery**, London, 2005/06

Further reading includes: Cichocki, Sebastian; Esche, Charles; Farver, Jane; Mytkowska, Joanna, Szymczyk, Adam and Zmijewski, Artur in **Artur Zmijewski: If It Only Happened Once, It's as If It Never Happened**, Hatje Cantz for Kunsthalle Basel, 2005



Above:
Repetition, 2005
Still from the digital video
39min
Photograph by Aneta Nowicka

p3:
Repetition, 2005
Still from the digital video
39min

Courtesy the artist and Foksal
Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

Sunn

Artur Żmijewski

Repetition, 2005

Polish artist Artur Żmijewski works predominantly in the mediums of film and photography. Assuming the role of instigator, Żmijewski sets up scenarios which introduce groups of people to emotionally challenging situations – deaf children singing Bach's cantatas, Polish émigrés attempting to remember their National Anthem and naked people playing tag in a Nazi gas chamber. Acting as a documenter, Żmijewski rarely interferes with the proceedings, seemingly content to simply record the results.

In early 2005, Żmijewski performed a re-enactment of Professor Phillip Zimbardo's infamous Stanford Prison Experiment of 1971. Still a source of inspiration for psychologists and sociologists, the experiment studied human behaviour within the prison environment. Zimbardo randomly designated student volunteers as either 'prisoners' or 'guards', then studied the ensuing action. Intended to last two weeks,

once, the pair traverse three Baltimore institutions – the Walter Art Museum, the Peabody Library and the Great Blacks in Wax Museum – where they reflect upon a variety of artefacts and the representations of black identity that they variously propose. By appropriating the language and iconography of black urban cinema **Baltimore** is, in part, a celebration of ghetto mythology. Yet it also questions the implications and power of this representation which, initially designed to create a new empowered identity, has now in itself become another black stereotype. The journey Julien takes us on is also as much a metaphorical one in which space and time collide to reveal the co-existence of multiple and different histories.

Isaac Julien

*1960 / London, UK
lives and works in London

Solo exhibitions include: **Vagabondia**, The Studio Museum, Harlem, New York, 2000; **Isaac Julien: Baltimore**, Metro Pictures, New York, 2003; **Baltimore**, The Contemporary, Baltimore, 2004; **Isaac Julien: Fantôme Créole**, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2005; and **Isaac Julien**, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, 2005

Group shows include: **Rhapsodies in Black**, Hayward Gallery, 1997; **Art, Lies and Videotape: Exposing Performance**, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, 2003; **Utopia Station**, Haus der Kunst München, Munich, 2004; **Projected Image**, Tate Modern, 2005

Further reading includes: Frankel, David and Deitcher, David, **The Film Art of Isaac Julien** (cat), Bard College of Art, New York, 2000; Van Assche, Christine, **Isaac Julien** (cat), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2005

Above:

Baltimore Series (Angela in Blue, No.2), 2003
Framed digital print on Epson Premium Photo Glossy, edition of 6, 125.5 x 102cm

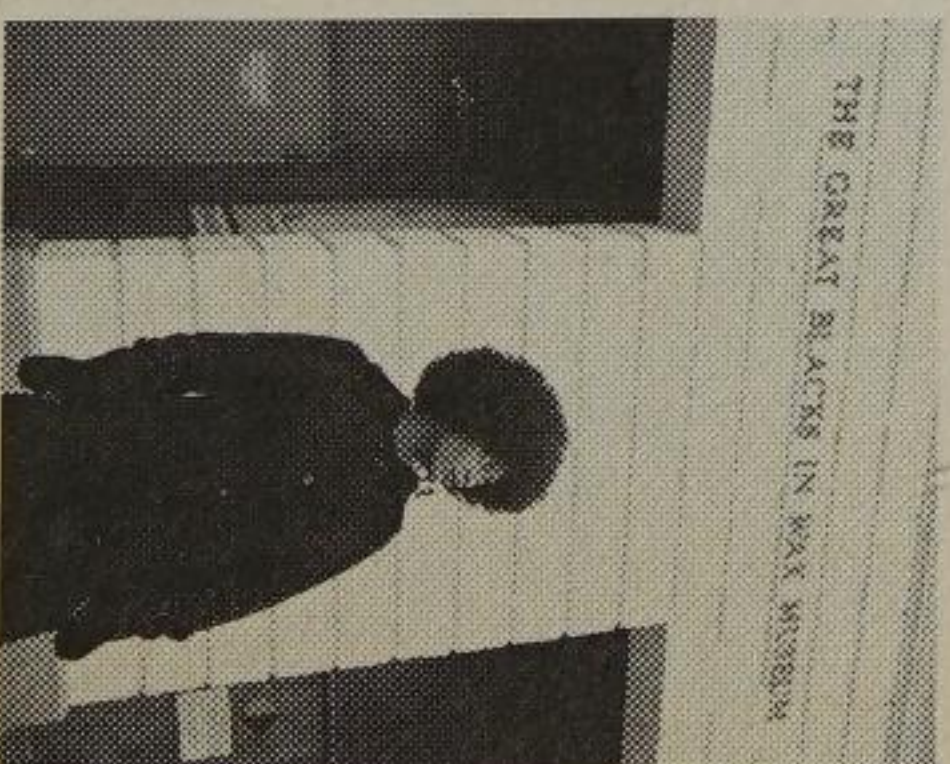
P2:
Baltimore Series (centre image detail), 2004
Triptych of framed digital prints on Epson Premium Photo Glossy, edition of 6
Images 1&3: 102 x 113.5cm, image 2: 102 x 126.5cm with 5cm spaces

Courtesy the artist and
Victoria Miro Gallery, London

Sat 1 Isaac Julien Baltimore, 2003

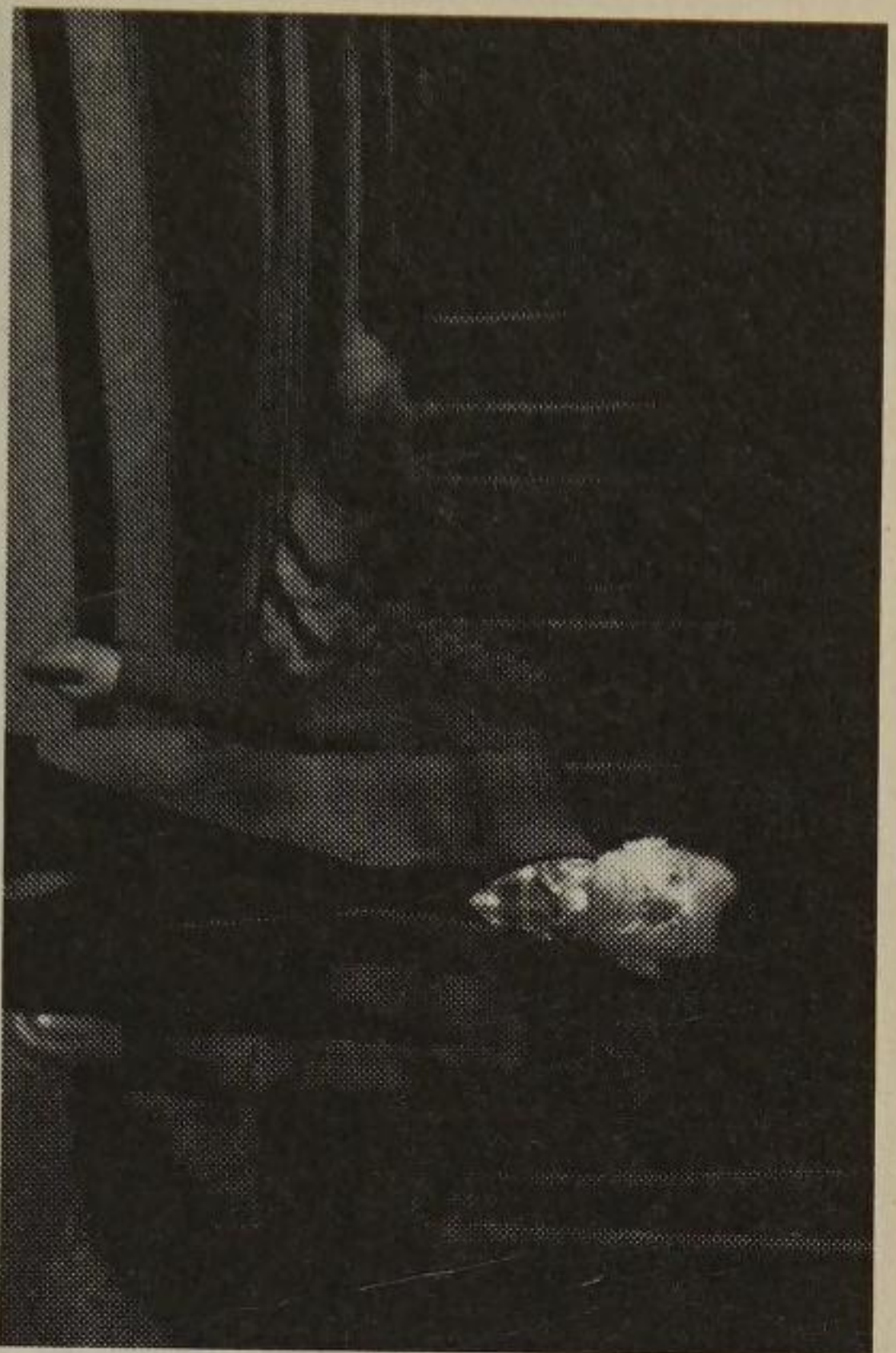
Isaac Julien came to prominence in the early 1980s with a series of films that explore the complexities of black identity. Rich in visual imagery, his films in part follow conventional narratives and in part disrupt these through the use of montage, archival material and spatial juxtapositions. Often taking the museum or gallery as his central location, Julien interweaves a number of disparate elements into the setting, questioning how representation is both historically and fictionally formed.

Baltimore, 2003, is both inspired by and an homage to blaxploitation cinema of the 1970s, and stars the actor and director Melvin Van Peebles, avatar of Baadasssss cinema. The camera tracks Van Peebles and a gun-toting afro-cyborg – reminiscent of both the political icon Angela Davies and Blaxploitation star Pam Grier – on their individual journeys through Baltimore. Crossing paths only



while something happens... You kind of see how it came about... And then something comes out of it, something is left over. Something always remains when you come from an exhibition, but... in the end art evaporates and that's fine." Over two hundred years earlier, Walter Pater reached a similar conclusion, describing the experience of art as "impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them".

Such a description seems to capture not only the nature of the moving image and the nature of our experience of it, but of experience in general, of consciousness and the sense of self that it proposes: unstable, flickering, temporal. Occupying performance's event-based structure rather than its spatial immediacy, the works brought together here shift their emphasis from real experience to an experience of the real. This opens up through windows onto co-existing and parallel temporalities, reached by means of strategies such as repetition, ventriloquism, restaging and remaking. Through them the object of performance may be glimpsed, suspended in the abstract forms of memory, dreams and the unconscious, inferred in the allusive state of poetic metaphor or parables, buried in the artifice of cliché and theatricality and dispersed among the faded documents of history. Like the man whose story is told at the end of **Vicinato II**, the artists brought together here invent new ways of asking the same old questions.



where we see the old man walk up to camera and look at us directly, before lying down on the road and being run over by his son. We could interpret this as a suicide; yet his direct address to the viewer transforms his action into a narrative device that allows the remainder of the work to unfold; and provokes the emotional fall-out that is the true subject of the film. This, in turn, is explored through a disjointed and recontextualised recurrence of images that explicitly

refers to the field of dreams. Within such a field, the old man's killing appears like a traumatic, Oedipal event that resurfaces, releasing ghostly images from the subconscious mind.

James Coleman's **So Different... and Yet**, 1980, similarly derives its organising logic from the structure of the film itself. Here, a woman lounging on a chaise longue adopts a variety of overtly theatrical poses and accents as she recounts a temporally disjointed narrative. This draws together a number of different characters and events, linked only by a dress shop and the shiny green dress that the woman is wearing, described in turns as outdated, updated, fashionable, a fake and then again outmoded. An overtly aestheticised object, its process of re-creation and revival echoes the languages of theatre and television from which the film borrows, positioning *mise en scene*, delivery, gesture and style as the very subjects of the film. - - -

As the main character in Christian Jankowski's **Rosa** states at the end of the film: "exhibitions are black holes, beyond space and time... You go in and somebody has thought something up... After a

Eija-Liisa Ahtila
Today, 1996/7
35mm film and DVD
installation for 3 projections
with sound 10min
Copyright Crystal Eye Ltd,
Helsinki
- - -

Courtesy of the artist and
Marian Goodman Gallery,
New York and Paris

the confines of the film. Artur Zmijewski's **Repetition**, 2005, similarly proposes an encounter with a past event, in this case the re-creation of Professor Philip Zimbardo's 1971 Stanford prison experiment. Mirroring the lens of scientific documentation, reframed within the more contemporary context of CCTV and reality TV, Zmijewski's re-creation appears to cover similar ground, yet ends with the opposite result when the head warden refuses to become complicit with the role demanded of him. Throughout, Zmijewski's overt manipulation of the proceedings draws attention to how the result of the original experiment was already inevitably inscribed within its terms of reference, which set up a clear duality between victim and perpetrator. In the process, it shifts attention onto a more uncomfortable proposition, suggested to the artist by the head warden at the end of the film: "You devised. I did", he states, pinpointing a complicity that echoes throughout the halls of history. Francesco Vezzoli's **Trailer...**, meanwhile, proposes a whole forest of lost referents as a site for action: it is a trailer for an unmade remake of Tinto Brass' infamous 1979 film **Caligula**, itself born of a historically accurate script by Gore Vidal hijacked and transformed by the film's director into a semi-pornographic movie. The heaving mass of naked bodies that appear in Vezzoli's film are also reminiscent of Carolee Schneemann's **Meat Joy**, 1964, re-cast as a more voyeuristic contemporary spectacle. Camp's natural affinity with the intrinsic artificiality of all appearances provides the organising logic of the film, expressed through excessive behavioural and visual styles that couch the film's critique within the folds of its very artifice.

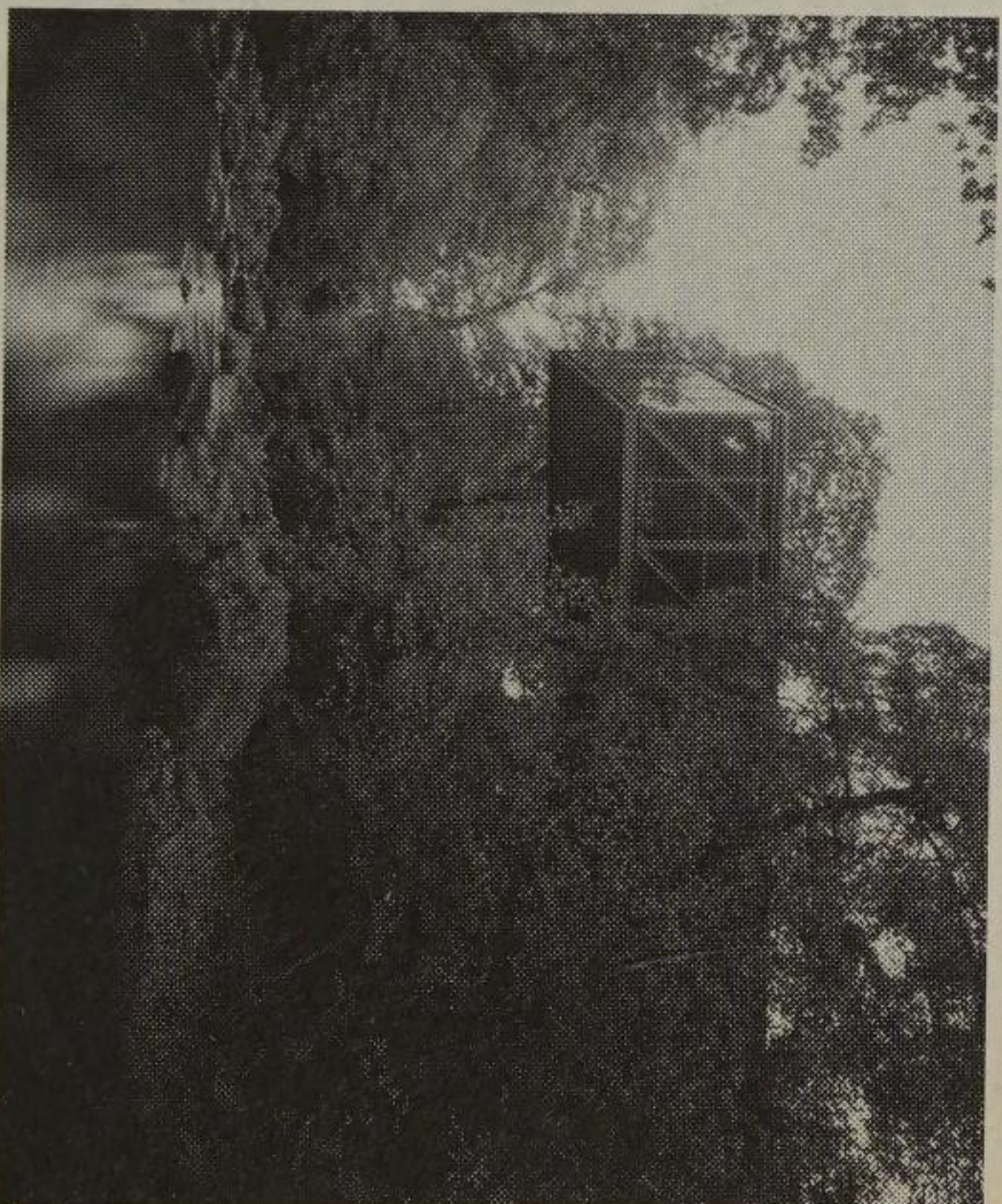
As a trailer for itself, **Trailer...** announces its own arrival, creating its own sense of expectation and simultaneously fulfilling it. Unlike Byrne or Zmijewski, who locate the event that is the subject of their films between past and present, Vezzoli's trailer is its own event, unfolding with a direct immediacy that sizzles, crackles and burns with all the urgent spectacle of fireworks. In Eija-Liisa Ahtila's **Today**, 1996-97, the generative event is internalised within the narrative, but has an ambiguous status there that plays itself out with the slow burn of memory. The film unfolds around the accidental killing of a father by his son, and the emotions that the accident brings to the surface for the dead man's son and granddaughter. The death itself is portrayed in one of the three sequences that make up the film,

Gerard Byrne
New Sexual Lifestyles, 2003
Photographic detail from the
installation New Sexual
Lifestyles, showing the
Goulding House, Co. Wicklow,
Ireland

Courtesy of the artist and
Lisson Gallery, London

turn woven through a succession of institutions that variously represent Afroamerican and Western art history, setting up a tension around the visibility of the black subject that culminates when a number of figures turn to stare straight out through the camera, empowered originators of the gaze. Christian Jankowski's **Rosa**, 2001, similarly unfolds within an explicitly mediated context, although to different ends. Asked by a TV production company to use two of his works in their film, Jankowski agreed on the proviso that he could in turn use their film as the basis for a new work, **Rosa**. A pre-commercial form of barter, the relationship that this gesture proposes between authenticity, authorship, originality, value, high and low culture is the leitmotif of the film, announced in the opening sequence when its main character stops in front of one of Warhol's paintings of Elvis Presley. **Rosa** retains those sequences in which art, film and advertising meet within the narrative of the 'original' film. At these junctures, Jankowski asked the actors to stop the action in order to speak lines that he had written and that ponder the issues raised by the film. Like a virus, he insinuates his work within every formal and structural level of the film, until each performs its own performance. - - -

If the live space of performance has shifted in these works to the field of representation, performance's event-based structure likewise moves from the linear unfolding of real time into the multiple temporal folds afforded by film. Gerard Byrne's **New Sexual Lifestyles**, provokes comparisons with our own sexual mores while also evoking and playing on our perceptions of the 'swinging sixties', addressing the present through the past while also reviewing the past against today's perceptions of it. Although the conversation sees its participants attempting to define a common ground, they often express competing points of view, and voice their disagreement by asking for 'hard evidence'. In the end, all they can assert with any certainty is their own subjective experience which, like ours', remains beyond





on the altar of representation.

For Judith Barry, Gerard Byrne and Isaac Julien, the space of representation is woven into the fabric of the real, sited in a variety of architectural structures. Barry's **First and Third**, 1987, projects a series of talking heads as though they were emerging from within walls. They recount stories that tell of a gap between the rhetoric of American values exhorted beyond its borders and the realities of immigrants' experiences once on American soil. Based on true stories, the use of actors abstracts personal experience into a broader statement about American culture. Originally conceived for the Whitney Biennial, these ghostly apparitions addressed a history and subjectivity traditionally excluded from an institution devoted to precisely such a culture.

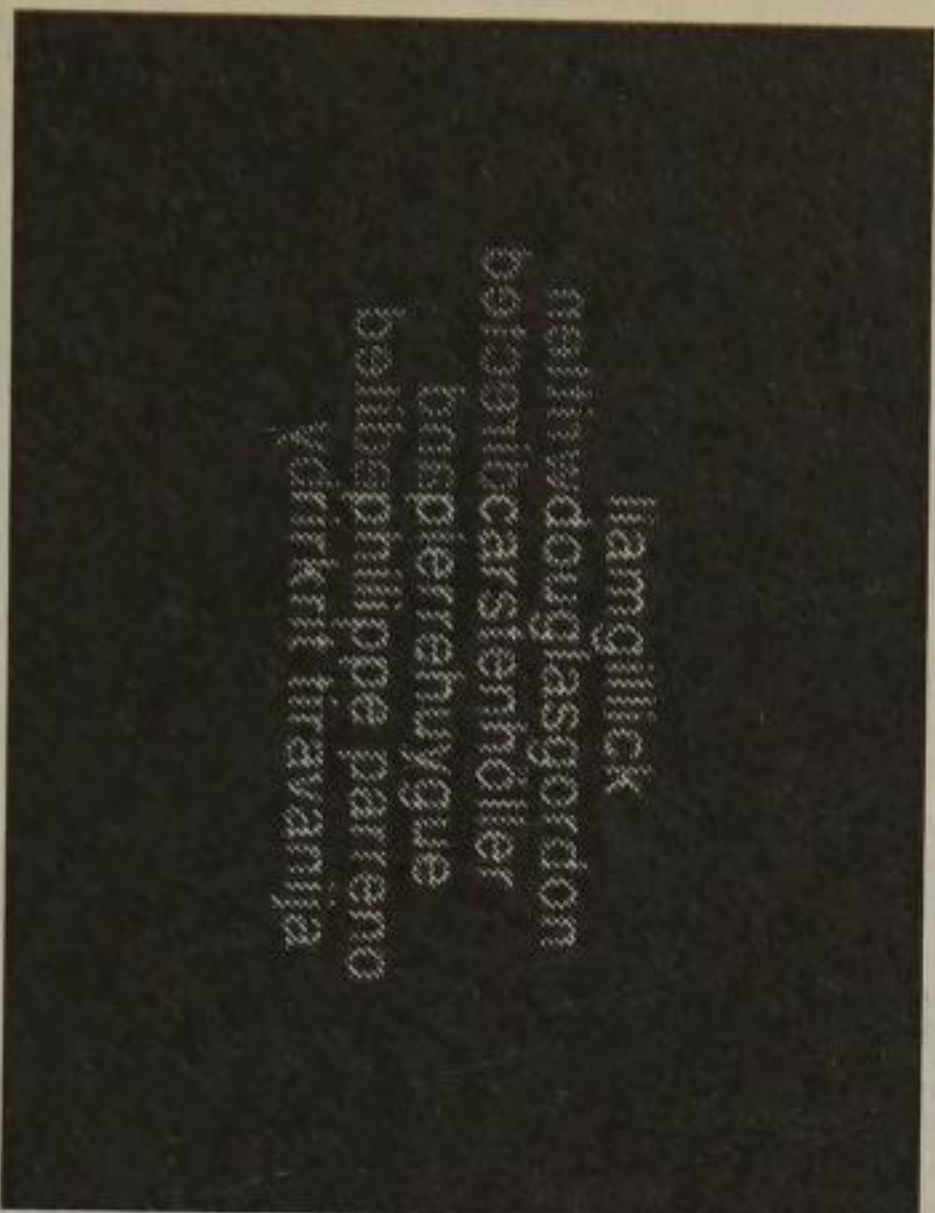
Gerard Byrne's **New Sexual Lifestyles**, 2003, overlays a different, but equally obscured, physical presence onto architecture. The installation includes a filmed re-enactment of a conversation published in **Playboy** magazine in 1973, which addressed the limits of sexual behaviour as defined by the 'sexual revolution'. The re-enactment is staged a late modernist house that is expressive of more functionalist and cerebral ideals. It speaks of the type of clean lines and austere spaces that seem to deny the 'messier' bodily areas of desire, sex and sexuality; dramatising a tension between mind and body that has recurred in the field of modernist representation.

Institutional politics of inclusion and exclusion are also enacted in Isaac Julien's **Baltimore**, 2003, in which the process of the black body coming into view is initially articulated through the language of style: from politicised symbols such as the afro hairdo, to afrofuturism and blaxploitation cinema, the film inhabits representations of an empowered black body from the 1960s and 70s. These are in

Gerard Byrne
New Sexual Lifestyles, 2003
Photographic detail from
the installation **New Sexual
Lifestyles**

Courtesy of the artist and
Lisson Gallery, London

Vicinato II. A group effort and therefore unattributable to a single author or artistic identity, the film's script is derived from a conversation originally held between the artists, fragmented and distributed among the four on-screen characters so that each speak the same number of words but not to retain sense. A computerised voiceover, like a god-like narrator, moves freely through the



film; it confuses any sense of time and fails to clarify the meaning of the words spoken. The film's meaning is in fact expressed *through* the language used rather than by it. Pieced together like a puzzle, the statements present the set of conditions that the film seeks to address; implicitly stated precisely because dealing with them explicitly is rendered impossible by the conditions that the statements themselves define. The film ends with a parable, narrated in voiceover, that tells of a man who decides to only use the word 'yes'. Faced with the inevitability of his answer, his friends are forced to invent new ways of asking the same old questions. - - -

These works, then, enact a transition from the body as live material to the process of acting, in which speech and gesture perform the conditions of their own performance. Such a transition is mirrored by a shift in the site of performance from live space to the field of representation; a shift that is symbolically dramatised in Rebecca Horn's **La Ferdinand**, 1981. The film brings together a cast of characters defined by creative activities they don't quite perform. Bodies divorced from action, they live in a world of artifice and surface appearances, caught between direct experience and representation. The only character capable of exiting this world of inward-looking pretence does so through direct actions rather than affectation, briefly escaping the field of artifice and entering the real. He is, however, killed as a result of his actions; a symbolic sacrifice

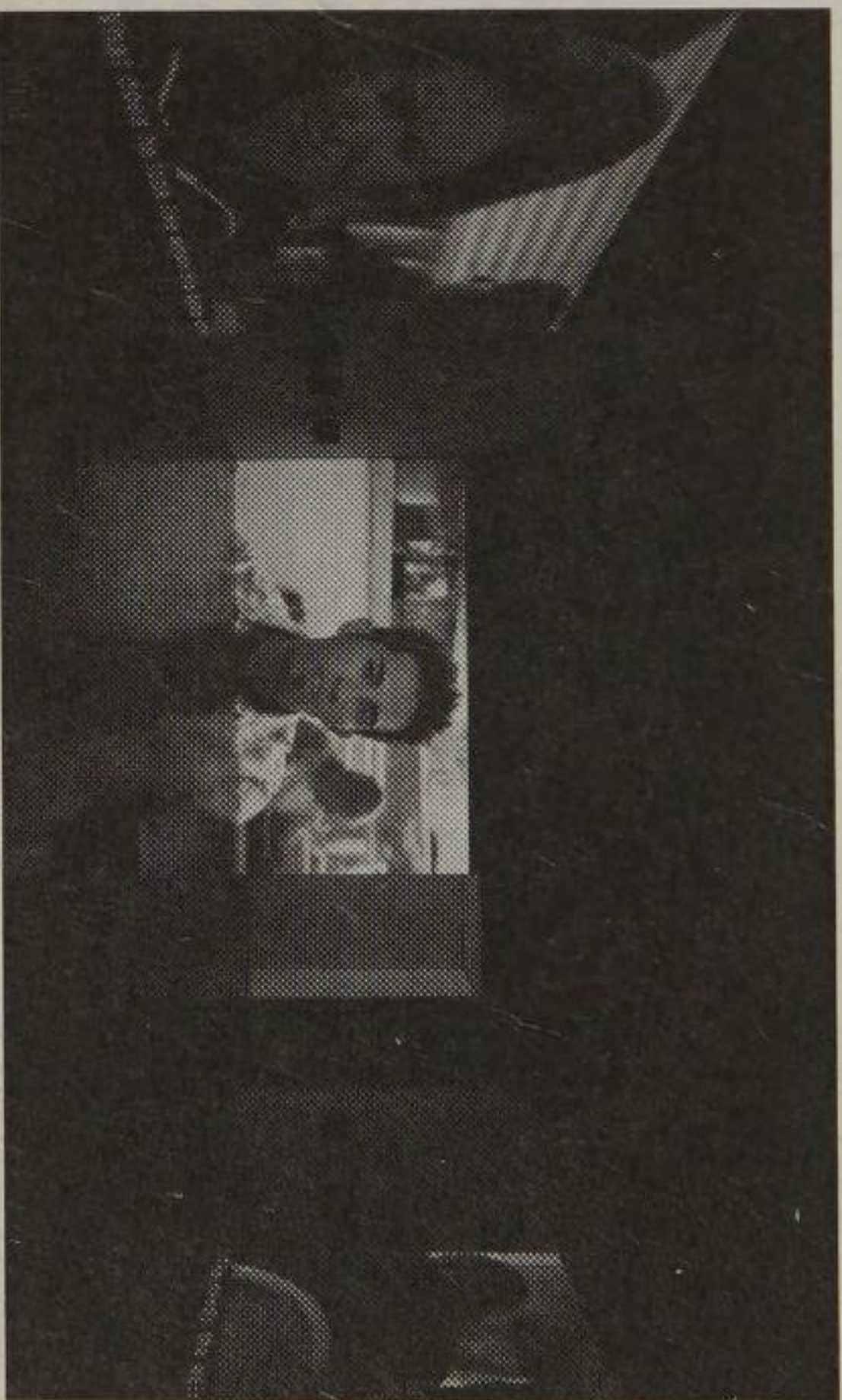
Liam Gillick, Douglas Gordon,
Carsten Höller, Pierre Huyghe,
Philippe Parreno and Rirkrit
Tiravanija
Vicinato II, 1999/2000
Film still from end credits

- - -
Courtesy of Anna Sanders
Films, Dijon and Air de Paris,
Paris

Instead, they open up a gap between intent and action, as though directed by external forces that play themselves through the actors and their locations, beyond temporal specificity and out into the broader theatre of history.

Other artists shift their attentions from gesture to speech, as a similarly performative act that their work inhabits and explores. A recurring notion of ventriloquism is made literally manifest in Gillian Wearing's **10–16**, where adult actors lip-synch to a soundtrack of words spoken by children aged between the ages of 10 and 16. The discrepancy between the sound and subject of children's words and their articulation in an adult form, generate more than absurdist humour or narrative poignancy; they dramatise an instability of appearances by locating it within the medium's own ambiguous relationship to the real. Small gestures or expressions performed by the actors further emphasise the effect by mapping a childish presence onto an adult body, like a buried memory rippling briefly across its surface. Barbara Kruger's video installation **Twelve**, 2004, performs a similarly post-structuralist gesture on language's relationship to meaning. Twelve groups of people appear engaged in conversation, yet speak in statements that hang in isolation. On the screen beneath them inner thoughts rush by, conveyed as simplified and clichéd statements devoid of any originality. Such words perform the same function as the gestures described above; derived from the language of spectacle, the media and entertainment, they are expressions of thoughts and feelings that are already recycled, spoken through the body, and at the same time define it. Positioned at the centre of the space, between these conversations, the viewer is literally situated within the linguistic positioning that is depicted on the screens. Such a condition is also explicitly referred to in Anna Sanders Films' collaborative project,

Barbara Kruger
Twelve, 2004
 Four-screen video installation
 Installation Mary Boone
 Gallery, New York, March
 2004
 . . .
 Courtesy of the artist and
 Mary Boone Gallery, New York





through individual gestures, explored and treated like letters in a physical alphabet. In Sullivan's multi-screen projection **Ice Floes of Franz Joseph Land**, 2003, gestures

ripple and thunder across adjacent screens, co-existent but spatially unconnected, juxtaposed, fragmented, dislocated and endlessly repeated as though they had taken possession of the actors and were giving shape to them. The gestures are derived from a series of literary, theatrical, cinematic and historic sources that reflect Russia's history in the 20th century, and that throw into sharp relief a chilling relationship between politics, idealism and reality. They combine as though in a half forgotten museum of modern gestures, where actions continue to shake convulsively through bodies, refusing to let go. Aernout Mik's works, by contrast, are filled with quiet gestures that sway gently, as though with the force of their own momentum. Each work

dramatises a single action – protesting, rescuing, demonstrating, destroying – contained within a single space that, like a giant tableau vivant or history painting come to life, opens up a window onto some of the fissures of contemporary society. Played out in silence, repeated and endlessly looped without any narrative explanation, these gestures are entirely devoid of any expressive content.

Catherine Sullivan
Ice Floes of Franz Joseph Land,
2003

Five-channel video installation
(transferred from 16mm film),
black and white, sound,
5 screens

Screens 1–4 run 20min,
screen 5 runs 40min

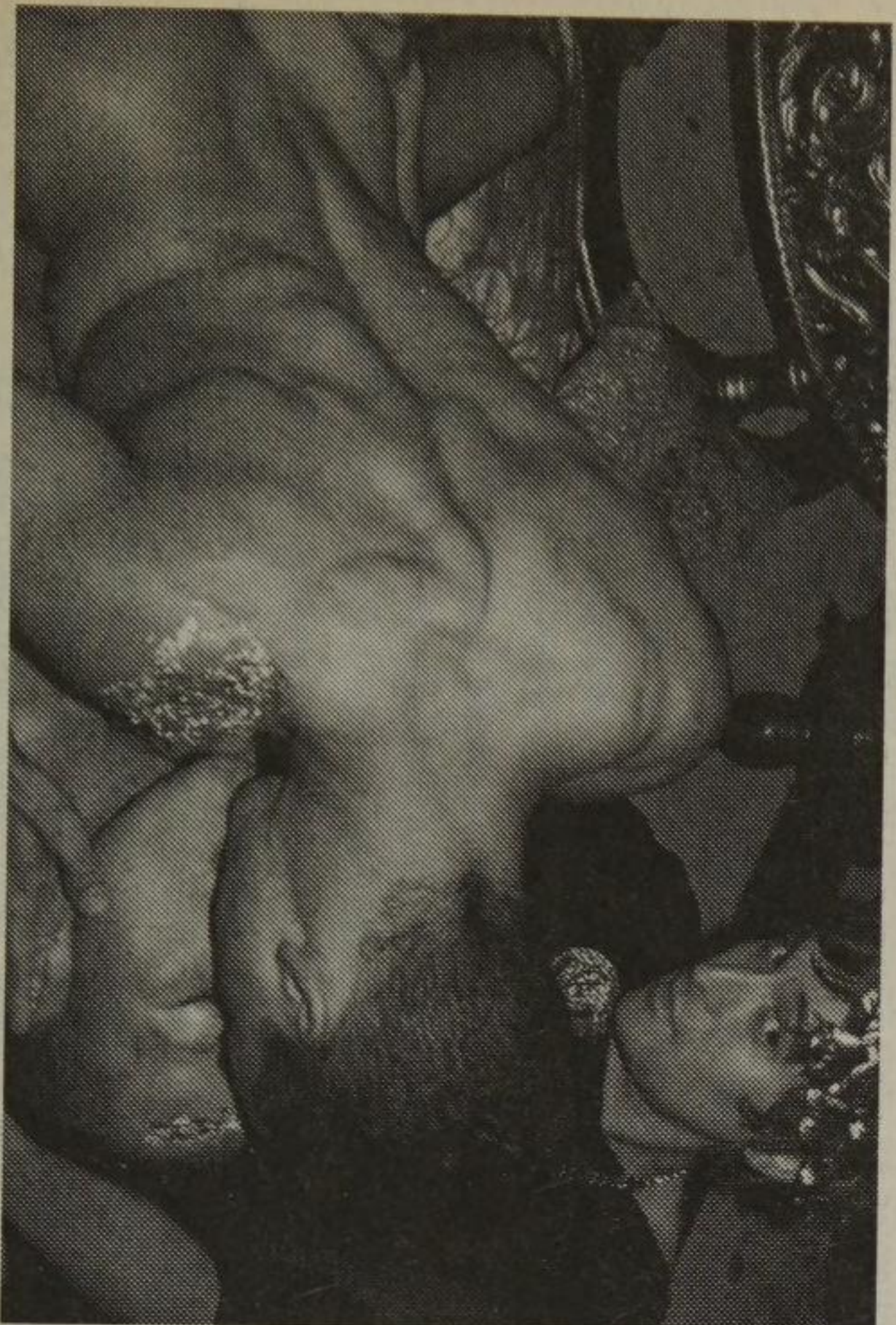
...
Courtesy of the artist and Metro
Pictures Gallery, New York

broadly in terms of a dialogue between presence and absence. Having erupted out of painting and sculpture and into the real, the body occupied an ambiguous physicality. Some artists dramatised post war existentialism through destructive actions, or rituals and feats of endurance where the body exists both physically and metaphorically in a fragile territory; mortified, tested, on the verge of destruction. Others focused on the politics of representation and exclusion, rendering visible issues around gender, race, class and sexuality that were previously elided. Others still focused on the increasingly mediated nature of experience itself, filtered through celluloid, then analogue, then digital technology. Probed and pushed to its limits, deconstructed and laid bare to the discourses that shape it, fragmented in a world of mirrors and dreams, it is perhaps no surprise that the body should perform a conceptual *détournement* and vanish altogether, returning to the space of representation that it had sought to escape. **A Short History of Performance Part IV** tracks its re-emergence in the medium of film.

The body that vanishes is in the first instance the artist's own. Choosing to work with actors rather than their own bodies, the artists brought together here only rarely and vicariously appear. In **10-16**, 1997, a brief shot of Gillian Wearing seen from the back casts her in the role of television interviewer, emphasising and parodying a documentary format that the video's subject matter entirely disrupts. Francesco Vezzoli also makes a brief appearance in his 2005 film, **Trailer for a remake of Gore Vidal's Caligula**, to an almost diametrically opposed effect. If Wearing's presence highlights a disrupted realism, Vezzoli's disrupts the high artifice of his on-screen antics, suggesting that the film is a camp parody of the world in which he operates. In **Vicinato II**, 1999–2000, on the other hand (a collaboration between Liam Gillick, Douglas Gordon, Carsten Höller, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno and Rirkrit Tiravanija) the artists appear elliptically, speaking through bodies of actors whose script is entirely derived from a discussion initially held between the artists.

Actors, then, become the main subjects of these works, but not as fully drawn characters within a defined narrative arc. Instead, they perform their role as actors, occupying and testing the very traditions of acting itself. In the works of Catherine Sullivan and Aernout Mik, these are played out

for example, or Franz West's **Adaptives**); or events that entirely occur within the flotsam and jetsam of contemporary images, exploiting their space, language and experience. We might think, in this instance, of Linda Benglis' **Artforum** repost to Robert Morris' exhibition poster for Castelli-Sonnabend (1974), Cosey Fanni Tutti's 1976 **Sex Magazine Art Action** performances and Barbara Kruger's ongoing text and image works. Others still can present a more fluid and open relationship between object, event and document, as Rebecca Horn, Paul McCarthy or Lygia Pape's simultaneous engagement with sculpture, performance and film/photography testify. Rather than locating performance's significance in a unified spatial and temporal frame, artists such as these take a multiplicity of coexistent spatial temporalities as their starting point, and draw a parallel with broader statements about the nature of contemporary experience. Crucially, their work suggests



that performance art's temporality does not exist on the level of immediacy, of direct experience, of presence; it proposes instead a more nuanced relationship between an event and its residues, between direct experience and its mediation, between presence and absence. It would in fact be possible to view the history of post war performance art more

Francesco Vezzoli
Trailer for a Remake of Gore
Vidal's *Caligula*, 2005
35mm film transferred to
DVD – 5min approx
Photo by Matthias Vriens

Courtesy of the artist and
Castello de Rivoli Museo
d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli
(Turin). Thanks to Galleria
Giò Marconi, Milan; Galleria
Franco Noero, Turin

Starting in the 1970s, the American artist Allan Kaprow embarked on a number of works that situate themselves within this terrain. Exhibited as part of **A Short History of Performance Part III**, they move away from large-scale happenings that characterised his practice in the 1960s and propose instead simple sets of instructions to be undertaken by a restricted number of participants (generally two or three): minimal and intimate gestures connected to the basic functions of the body such as breathing, walking, running, heart beat. The instructions often involve measuring these actions, recording and re-translating them through different media such as tape recorders, Polaroid cameras and film. As each action is repeated and mediated, the original action becomes forever more distant: the very action of breathing, when self-consciously performed, is disconnected from the body and instantly mediated through our awareness of it. Kaprow's intention was that these instructions be 'activated' by anyone at any time, and he presented them in video scores and activity booklets that were intended as precursors to the action rather than its residue or relic; as tools to action rather than its evidence. Despite clear indications to this effect, however, both videos and books were more frequently collected than put to use. In the 1980s, Kaprow moved even further by undertaking a number of actions on his own in the course of daily activities. Only later would he recount these to someone, creating works that ambiguously move between the original action and the naming act that lifts them out of the flow of daily activity, turns them into performance and allows us to perceive them as such; that are situated somewhere between the artist's words and our acceptance of them; between the artist's memory and our imagination. Like Kaprow, a large number of artists in the 1960s and early 70s grasped the potential for a dialectical play-off between ideas of an original event and its mediation through a documentary or 'reliquary' referent, exploiting the fertile ground that lies in between. Their works can on the one hand propose transformative objects, imbued with a latent potentiality (Hélio Oiticica's **Parangolés**,



Allan Kaprow
Time Pieces, 1974
Film Still

Courtesy of the artist and
Hauser & Wirth Zürich London

Like Black Holes in a Bright White Space

Andrea Tarsia

Head of Exhibitions & Projects

Performance art generally proposes an event in real time and space, born of an action generated directly by the artist's body. It presents a direct line of communication between the creative and receptive acts, between artist and audience, between the work and our experience of it, placing each in the same spatial and temporal dimension. For an art form so engaged in the contiguity of artwork and experience, so entirely in and of the moment, however, performance also generates documents and objects – 'residues' – that problematise it's very generative conditions. In an image, the artist's body is no longer vibrantly live. It attains a flattened, a-temporal and iconic status, while a prop or tool becomes imbued with the reliquary aura of its former use. Their frame of reference, if not a universalising truth, is nonetheless a truth that remains beyond the viewer's reach, in need of contextual information that allows for its 'correct' interpretation. Existing outside of the viewer's own experience of space and time, such 'residues' return performance to a representational idiom and set of relations that it had sought to escape. Just as conceptual art was ultimately unable to divest itself of a material presence, so too performance art has been unable to exist on a temporal plane alone.

Preface

Iwona Blazwick

Director

A Short History of Performance Part IV is the fourth in an ongoing series that explores the impact and legacy of performance art from the 1960s to today. This season would not have been possible without the enlightened support of The Felix Trust for Art, who have been firm advocates of the project from the outset; and of The Moose Foundation and The Elephant Trust, who have enthusiastically embraced the project for the second time. In addition we would like to express our heartfelt thanks for the generous support of the Exhibition Circle of Nations: Culture Ireland; Embassy of Finland; Institut Francais, London; Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen; Mondriaan Stichting; Polish Cultural Institute, London; Embassy of the United States of America, London. Pages 58–60 list the many individuals and organisations who have contributed their help, advice and support. We would especially like to thank the artists' galleries, for their invaluable help in organising the project, and Helena Blaker, Achim Borchardt-Hume and Jean Fisher for their contribution to the talks programme that accompanies the season. We would also like to warmly thank Cassandra Needham, who has organised the season and this guide with invaluable energy, dedication and commitment.

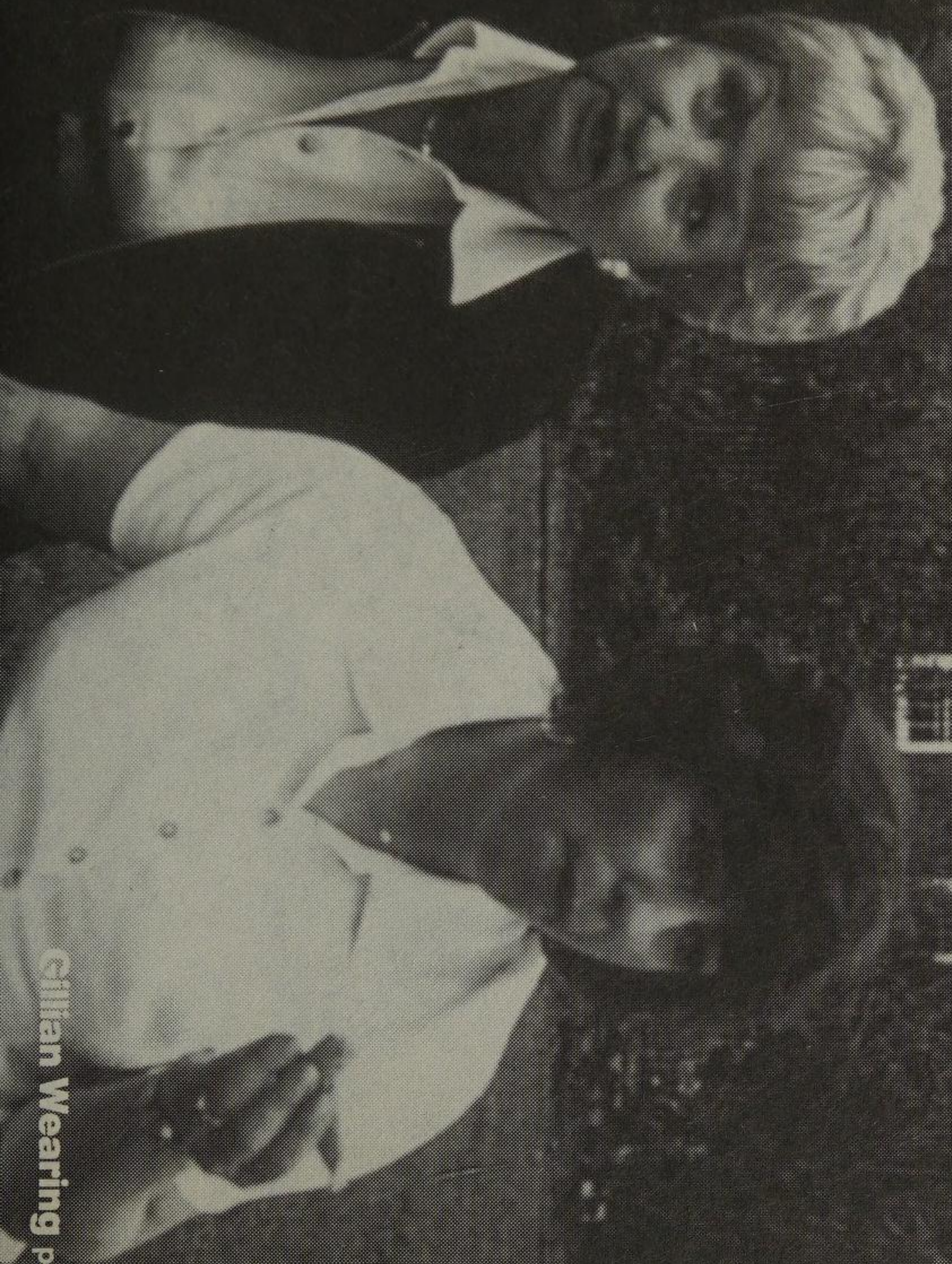
A special thanks goes also to Oliver Klimpel and his team for their excellent work on this guide. Above all we would like to thank all the artists for agreeing to participate in the project. This season is in part being presented in the former Whitechapel Library building, which will soon undergo a major transformation as the Whitechapel Gallery grows. We are delighted that the artists have agreed to engage not only in the ambitions of this project, but to act as the trailer for our newly expanded programme.

Rebecca Horn p56

Fil
74



Thu 13



Cillian Wearing p54

Wed 12



The 11

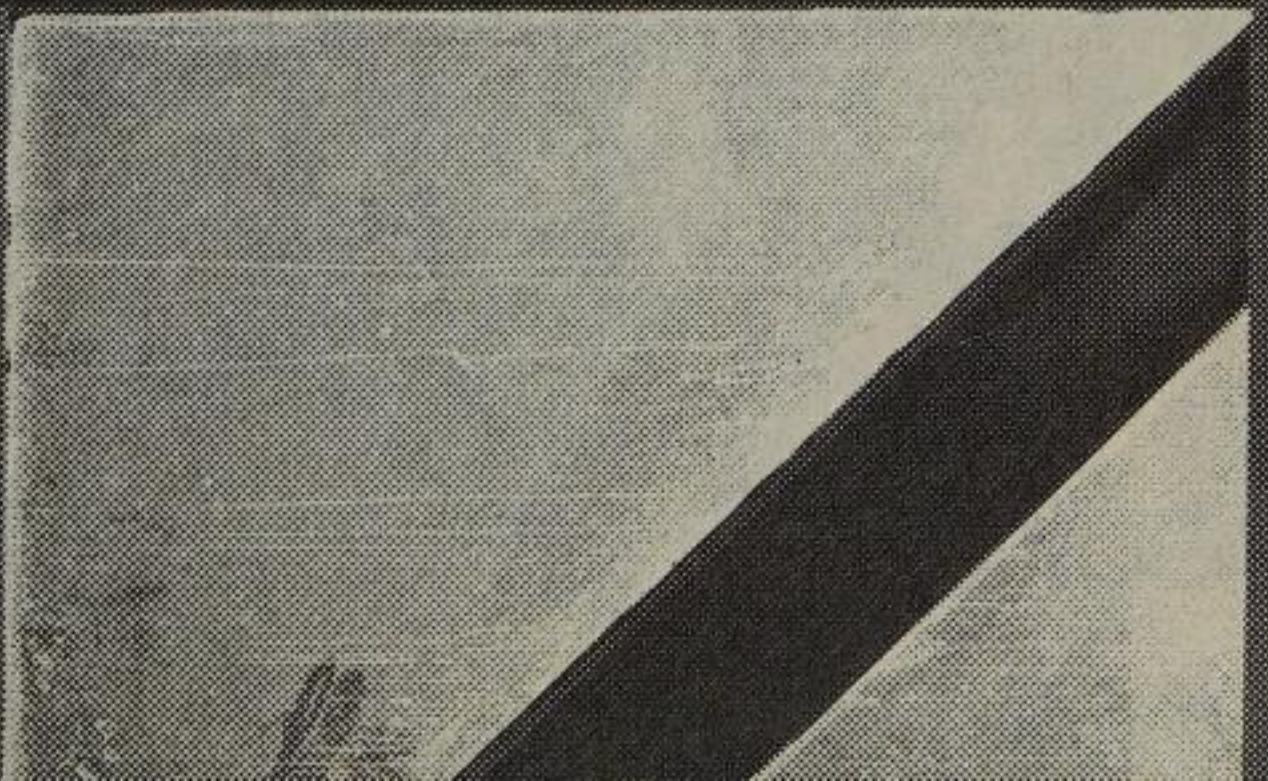


Barbara Kruger p.50

Anna Sanders Films p48

Mon 10

9 Sun



Gerard Byrne p46

8 Sat

Judith Barry p44

Firi 7



James Coleman p42

Francesco Vezzoli p40

Thru
6



5 Weed



Catherine Sullivan p38

Tue 4



Aernout Mik p.36

Moin 3

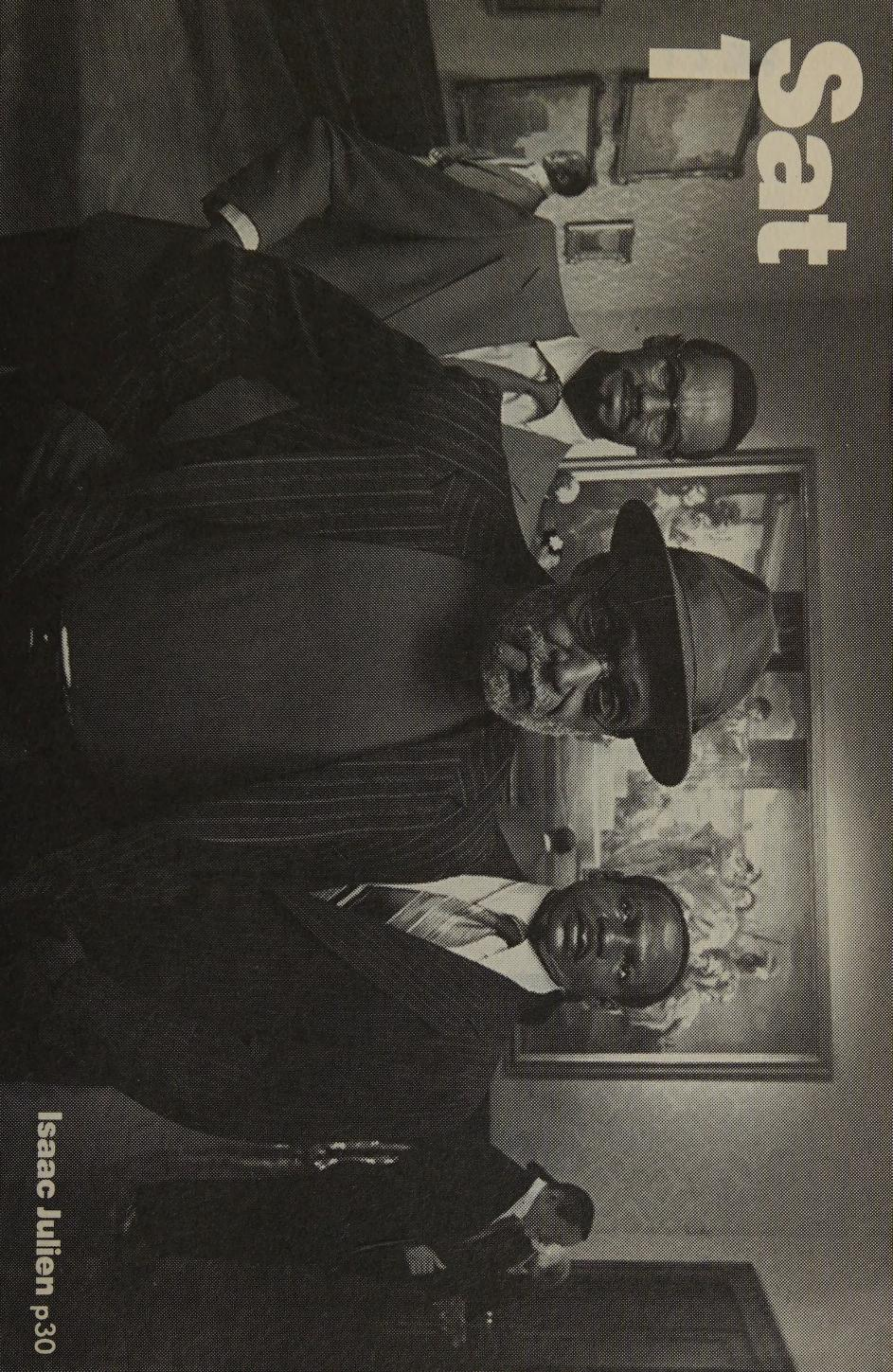


Eija-Liisa Ahvila p34

Artur Żmijewski p 32

**Sun
2**

Sat 1



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8 Judith Barry L

Sun 2 Artur Żmijewski L

9 Gerard Byrne LG

Mon 3 Eija-Liisa Ahtila LG

10 Anna Sanders Films L

Tue 4 Aernout Mik L

11 Barbara Kruger LG

Wed 5 Catherine Sullivan LG

12 Christian Jankowski L

Thu 6 Francesco Vezzoli L

13 Gillian Wearing L

Fri 7 James Coleman LG

14 Rebecca Horn L

PART IV

L Library
LG Lower Gallery