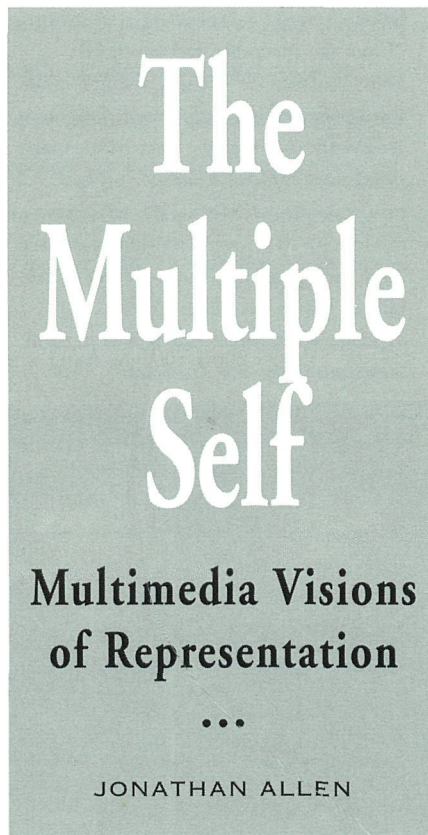
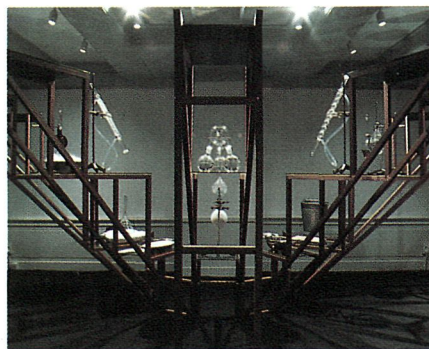


I remember a friend telling me about the effect that the exhibition “Herejías”, (Heresies), had caused him. “The degree of critical sophistication applied to the mechanism of reality and technology by far exceeds the possibilities of our society”. This made me think about the suitability of the “extra-artistic” installation in a European peripheral world such as ours that generates no revolutionary technology or philosophy, and which, at best, is receptor of technological trends. Receptor, refers to a small intellectual élite capable of digesting and analyzing the tenets of exhibitions such as “Heresies”, that get entangled in the multiplicity of interpretations and require a very advanced capacity of technological analysis. I’ll write a commentary as criticism in the classical sense of the word is not possible, for the object of critique has disappeared. How can one be critical when the thesis and the texts of the catalogue meander through philosophical grounds that only tangentially and symbolically seem to be represented in the sum of exposed works? We have already visited similar shows at the CAAM like Manel Clot’s truly and never better named “Hermetic Double”, where art and theory only met in forced comparisons and similarities of intentions that the curator presupposed to exist. Then, as well as now, I got the weird feeling of writing through



disassociation, on one hand separating my experience of the effect each work had on me, retaining this, and then going on to decipher the significances of the theoretical text that “gave life” to the exhibition.

That philosophy searches in extra-artistic art a field of action to reveal its



Louise Sudell. *The Theatre of Ideas*. Picaron, Amsterdam, 1990.

consciousness of the weak subject, the acentral ego, the dangers of virtuality, the mechanisms of representation in the mass media that are the tremendous expression of power of a State that is condescending and agglutinates difference in order to suppress it is stimulating enough. It invests in that “undesirable” status of the artist or madman, who can directly attack the heart of social consensus and subverts the hierarchy of trust that Power employs to tame its subjects. Nonetheless, as I have said elsewhere before, and risking the label of conservative, art, whether painting, installation or multimedia theatre implies an inevitable submission to the process-rite of transformed matter, to the absorbing materialness of every created object, and it can’t simply exist because it is symbolically adaptable to philosophical discourse.

A philosopher puts together a show based only on art-work associations, strangely leaving aside the total, involving universe of art. Art as cement of philosophical discourse is not something that art produces itself but that is imposed and projected by the philosopher, sometimes subordinating the values and meanings in a work without showing respect for their most pure and radical manifestation. It is a problem of fine-tuning approach and understanding the neighbourhood of

things, never losing sight of such a simple principle as the coherence of the created object, that is exhibited and is anthropologically active, and the dialogue that one wants to imprint on it.

In his curatorial essay Jorge Luis Marzo offers a suggestive journey through many of philosophy's present speculations, with particular emphasis on the Foucaultian tradition, with Deleuze, Duvignaud and Rosset. The structural notion of heresy, an historical idea that serves his discourse and purpose, is and is not evident in the exhibition, and this is the crux of the matter. He describes well how heresy sprang from a theocentric world, and how afterwards, Science and the State allied in order to ensure its solidity. Heresy in art lies in its subversive power, in its at times radical and violent opposition to the dictates of constituted power. Nevertheless, the classical resources of heresy belong to the environment of religious doctrine, to philosophical reasonings, and not so much to the plastic arts, that can, while serving the interests of the State attack it forcefully. The story of Western princely patronage has been a method of investing in art's great heretical potential, enlisting it in the service of the Prince, together with the dwarf and the buffoon. The heretical signifies violent and sophisticated verbal argument, the confrontation ensuing in a court room between the morals of constituted Power and the subtle, internal threat posed against it. The artist, I would say to Mr.



Brian Scott. *Limelight*, 1993.  
200 x 200 x 100 cm.

Marzo, is heretical in and through image, and not a priori through language and reason, that are the indicators of Western heresy, and as image has been the empire of his reason, frequently, being heretical, he has escaped trial and punishment because art has a "magical" capacity for recontextualising that the word is lacking.

The investigation of communicative mechanisms that Marzo conducts seems to me more appropriate a theme, together with the idea of representation per se and that of the virtual. Here, in the critiques aimed at the dismantling of individualism and its strong I that sets out to promote confusion between reality and virtuality, we find many pertinent installations and multimedia works, turning the table of the apparent innocuous vacuity of communicative techniques and consensus. Reality, as Vattimo declared a few years back, is now "lighter", for the barriers between fiction and reality have become blurred, and this we owe to

television and global sensationalism in the media.

Both Louise Sudell's installation, "The Theatre of Memory", and Maureen Connor's clinical stage set, wanting to represent by substitution the effect of smell on the other senses, vindicates a recovery of sensorial interrelatedness that is an inalienable individual right, which leads to a consciousness of the integral that will enable the individual to know exactly how the sensorium is being culturally manipulated by the establishment of the mass media. Connor is describing a fundamental intermediation. Culture is the controller of our sense reception, since surrounding each sense and how it acts is a considerable, formal and subliminal paraphernalia. Every epoch mediates the sensorial relation to reality, which is at every instant unique, although mentally and biologically generalisable.

Her installation "An-aesthetic" is suggestive, dramatising the clinical, medical scenery of anaesthesia being administered to a little girl, a vision we see on a monitor. The object is to describe smell, something that she carries out through a symbolic, odourless act. Most of us have "sensed" the neutral smell of anaesthesia, really an olfactory "tone", and above all, if we have experienced it in operations, we recall its disturbing, chaotic effect on body and mind. Connor forces these subtle interrelations to make us reflect on how the senses act upon us, reciprocally, disorderly, and utterly

removed from the crass simplicity of glossy tv ads, that turn perfume infallibly into sexual excitement or make food bestial satisfaction. Marketing strategies have reified the senses to persuade us of how we should react, or how we in effect do, to the stimuli of the psychophysical world.

Louise Sudell, with her enigmatic “Theatre of the Memory” lures our consciousness to Jungian universality, projecting that mysterious quality of memory, that in defiance of empirical science, permits it to retain universal symbols and thus to store the esoteric relations between all things. She bases her installation on the interest and passion that Giulio Camilo’s extravagant “Theatre of Ideas”, first seen in Venice in 1530, caused her. Camilo visually choreographed a transcendent voyage through the inner paths and recesses of mnemonic association. He wanted to lay bare the mechanism of symbol and image. For this he created powerful images that he called “divine attractors”, and which were designed to make the spectator concentrate his mind on a superior, universal level of consciousness. It worked through “multiple immaterial connections”, and it is precisely what Sudell sets out to achieve in her transparent, glass version of the original. The immaterial connection between things is a slippery terrain for philosophy, although in art it is the nexus that brings life to image, to the relation between image and world, on one hand, between image and

emotion, on the other. Sudell sees the microchip or Internet as a possible practical solution to Camilo’s quest for a universal mind. However, the chip merely represents a superior stage of communications, for universality although subconsciously dormant, has to be activated by the user, and to know it

critical method. Very acutely Scott argues that the pace of new technological development by far exceeds our ability to perceive its inner workings and to understand it fully, something that was not happening with Nineteenth Century mechanistic technology. Only when we finally play a



Javier Camarasa. *The Heart of the Forest*, 1995.

requires an advanced level of spirituality and devotion. The satellite is not the Holy Spirit of universality, it is only the satellite.

Perhaps it is Brian Scott’s fun installation, “Travelling Library” that best illustrates in this show, art’s deconstructive and analytical power as

compact disk do we know that it works, that all the information has been properly recorded on its rings. Until that moment it is an unmanifested mystery. We are in the dark as to how the compact disk is made, we simply receive the finished product that anguishes us until we check its validity.

This artist decided to anticipate what was then to become patent technological reality. He designed a travelling library that would ideally solve the spatial problems of book storage, and which could be comfortably consulted by the reader. He created a fictional fabrication process for the disks integrating the library, which was earnestly photographed in order to confer verisimilitude, despite the extravagant contents of the production line. The library disks are edible pancakes, consumer food, technology made for our mouth, (another acute deconstruction of Scott's). A diagram dutifully explained how each great section of knowledge was recorded in a determined area of the pancake. Information resembles an organic map, a geological site, and is a million miles away from the ordered concentric ring patterns of laser disks. Something similar is ritually enacted by an Amazon tribe every time it meets an alien and new technological product replicating it in wood to possess its spirit. Scott's work reveals this anthropological desire to possess the unknown production process that exceeds the user's capacity of understanding, and so art becomes the vehicle of repossession, implementing homocentric control over the mystery of advanced technology that remains unrevealed to the average citizen.

Javier Camarasa reflects states of order and chaos in his installation, "The heart of the Forest". Scott's and Camarasa's heresies are really critiques

of mechanisms, rather than formal, central heresies: paradoxical dramas, ironic propositions aimed at symbolically recovering the processes of knowledge, although in the long run we still ignore how the compact disk is effectually made. "To name and to know is to dominate", and no place is better suited to such activity than the museum, sancta sanctorum of codifications. With three panels for pigeon-holes Camarasa has made a global puzzle of the forest, and on the surface of a green-velvet covered casino type table he has spontaneously littered 168 cubes of different woods, each cube corresponding to a tree species. The game, if you play it, consists of returning each cube to its correct hole, where we find the name and codes of the trees. Thus, the disorder of these blocks disseminated over the table is presented to us as an invitation to solve their anarchic state of non-classification, as an exercise conducive to the re-establishment of rational order. He refers as well,

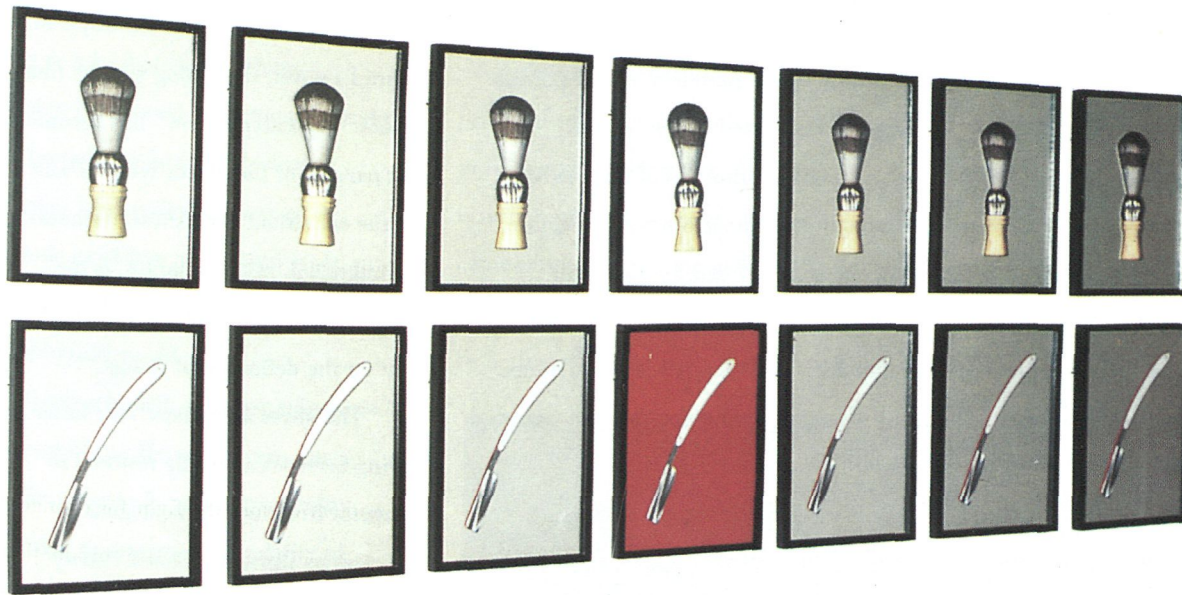


Jordi Martorell. *The Day of the Innocents*, 1992. Light Installation.

somewhat abstrusively, to the abyss in Conrad's novel, that along with its film version "Apocalypse Now" has become a cult parable of the horror lying in wait for the exhausted self. Abyss, darkness, the unknown, says Camarasa, is the most disturbing of heresies for a world bent on the definition of things.

The abyss and chaos. (the latter having been scientifically restored to goodness from its evil theological associations through "Chaos Theory", that simply sets out the profound ordering matrices inherent to chaos in nature), are no doubt consequences or states directly related to the triumph of heresy, though per se, they are not subjects guilty of heresy, that requires clear and vehement formulation.

"The Day of the Innocents" by Jordi Martorell is the daliesque criticoparanoiac response to a moment of intense media confidence and excitement in the success of society and Europe, in the context of Spanish reality, in the words of the artist. It is significant, that without direct allusion, Martorell resorts to one of the sacred automatic weapons of surrealist attack, that cuts through the complex attire of intention and strategy to reveal motivation. Trying to explore different phases in the communication of image, he choreographs through sound and colour the inner mechanisms of subliminal media manipulation, presented as spontaneous, unconscious dramatisation. Inviting us in to his purpose-built dark chamber he cleanly



Luis Sosa.  
*The Barber Shop*,  
 1995. Mixed  
 Media.  
*The Thursday:  
 The Barber and  
 the Surgeon*.  
 14 x (40 x 30) cm  
 e.o.

makes us share his experience. In this dark room, tricks that influence our reception to image are staged, and the image seen on screen or through transparencies is a warning about “the hypercomplex network of falsified messages of the present”. A sharp ear and mind for media-generated euphoria, and towards the scenery of speed that dissolves personhood into a weak Vattimo ego.

Martorell effectively creates heresy in this installation by expressing and thinking aloud his love of luminous, phosphorescent paint. In my opinion, his discovery of manipulating light through a paint product subverts the classically art-held notion of light as the ideal space of representation. Light is something that the painter has laboriously made transparent in his painting as a force emanating from elsewhere, the clarity of Heaven, the diaphanous mind of perception, or divine intervention that human hands can sacredly represent. Martorell’s

luminescent paint parodies the baroque spectacle because it crudely and instantly reproduces the essence and medium of illusion.

Luis Sosa takes us to the eerie world of the barber, a land of shadows, where the barber, a friendly, warm pillar of the neighbourhood, steals our soul and lays bare our intimacy through an ancestral ceremony of politeness. In his description of the project, that really is a confessional essay, narratively lucid, Sosa reveals the loneliness of an artist that still carries out to the end those sincere, moral ideas of Beuys, that demanded a kind of monastic coherence between art, artist and life. All life is thought out as art process. Our anguished relation to all physical object-life, our conduct with objects, are symptoms of the mysterious powers imbedded in created things, and this becomes the axiom of Sosa’s installation-oriented thinking. He sees himself as a “Universal Garbage Merchant”, or the receiver of a legendary postcard that

should be sent to him from Jerusalem but never is, instead he bribes friends and strangers to send him his Jerusalem postcard from different places. The ephemeral for Luis Sosa is thus sacred, and his is a touching ethical art.

In his installation, the neutral, homely space of the barber shop becomes a chamber for theft and intimidation. The vast mirrors in the barber shop enable the practitioner to see the inflections of our soul, to read the repressed self and the silent mind. Politely, kindly, through massage and manipulation the barber sends his client to “sleep”, secretly de-activating his inner alarm systems. However what Sosa allows us to see is a very clean, clinical photograph of himself being quietly shaved one morning. Barber and artist are abstracted in their roles, the routine of everything is immaculate. Heresy dwells in the unstated communication and fear of urban normality.