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Flash Art

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Today

Videoinstallation

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GARETH JONES

CABINET

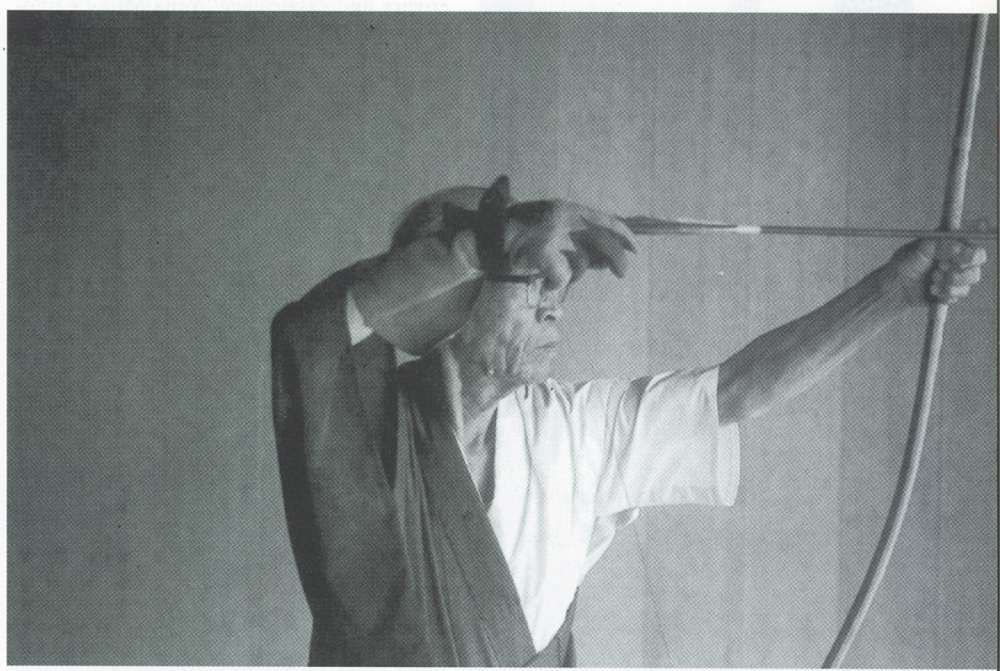
Gareth Jones makes works of exquisite restraint and lightness: a cube axiometrically sliced, so that its alternately black and white units articulate into a syncopated visual rhythm of triangles, squares, and diamonds optically spilling onto a table of pale wood; a three-dimensional structure made of intersecting sheets of cardboard painted blue, orange, and yellow and suspended in such a way that, at any one time, only two colours are visible; a wall relief made from cassettes placed on the floor, their looped tapes pulled out and wound around metal wall brackets positioned at varying heights. Singularly, or as part of a group, they display an elegant economy and fluidity in their elemental displacements of form and regular arrangement, and in their play on the slip between the optical and the sculptural.

Modesty and paradoxical circularity is peculiar to Jones's sculptures. He weaves into his works the barely visible thread of their making to achieve an inherent vulnerability within the parameters he has established. Integral to the apparent solidity and formal rigour of *Sliced Cube*, carefully worked out from a starting point of simple enquiry, is the promise — real or suggested — of being able to take the whole structure apart, or of it being blown away by a strong wind.

Open plinth shares this ambiguity of purpose. An idea dating back several years, Jones had the work put together by a plinth maker so as to be sure of achieving a true "plinth" quality of neutrality and expectation. Seen from one aspect, it is a rather neat, all white, triangular parallelepiped standing upright on the floor to a height of 90 centimetres. A walk around the piece reveals its chipboard frame and a recess dissected by a mirror set at an angle of 45 degrees to the plane of the flat face. Jones achieves a refinement in his practice, which borders on the condition of poetic fiction. Like the stories of Borges, he carefully constructs a work of pure proposition — a fiction of a fiction — giving shape to what can only be imagined, and condensing ideas to series of recurring and overlapping motifs of a whole not yet revealed.

Suzanne Cotter

DARREN ALMOND, Traction.



YANA MILEV, Onshi, Hiraki Ryoichi Sensei, 9. Dan, Kyoto, 1999.

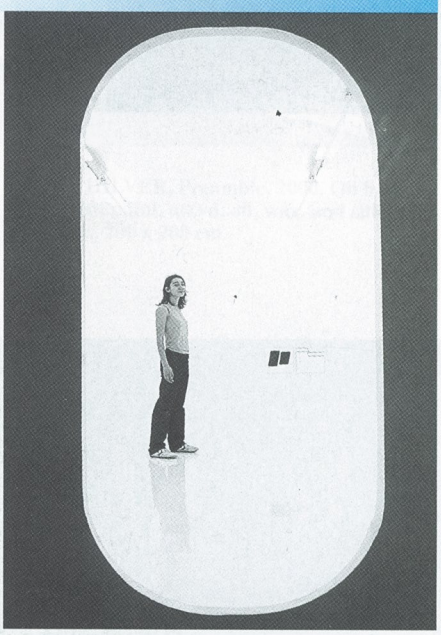
BERLIN

YANA MILEV

EIGEN + ART

To hit the target in Japanese "Kyudo" — archery — you have to aim at the universe, not at the target itself. This point from Zen philosophy was central to Yana Milev's last exhibition "I submit — für die Resonanz!" (for Resonance!). She presents photographs chronologically captur-

He pushes the idea of the white cube into that of a floating chamber whose interiority lifts us off our feet to sense how an atmospheric "surround" can visually defy gravity.



STÉPHANE DAFFLON, Airless, 2000. Installation view.

ing the various phases of this spiritual discipline, which she assimilated during her stay in Japan. An all-female group follows the complicated choreography of the exercise in unison, under the direction of a master — bowing, standing, sitting, and shooting. At the end all the arrows are collected. No physical target is clearly visible, as the exercise's real and only objective is the path described by the shot arrow.

Six years ago Milev set out on behalf of A.O.B.B.M.E. (Association of Black Box Multiple Environment) — an organization she founded. The association is Milev herself and its work is devoted to space research and microtopic experiments — terminology that Milev has collected by teaching herself. Entrusted with the tasks of A.O.B.B.M.E, she explores her own body and psyche. To visualize this idea, she had the institution's initials branded on her back. As ambassador and press officer for herself, Milev uses also an invented terminological structure — "'Resonance' is the technique to practise for becoming permeable as an ego." This newly developed language system is constantly fertilized by Milev's experiments and is accessible to all. It relies on an intuitive understanding arising from the personal cultural background.

In "I submit — für die Resonanz," Milev is dealing with reflections, subversions, and crystallizations we collect on our journey through life. Similarly to the fact that in Zen the shepherd's search for the lost ox symbolizes the path of self-discovery and experience, Yana Milev's photographs indicate the traces of a path that is determinated only by physical experience. "The creative force here is the crisis," she says. "Humility is the source of courage."

Milena Nikolova

(Translated from German by Michael Robinson)

ANSELM REYLE

GITI NOURBAKHSCH

Giti Nourbakhsch runs her gallery in the Prenzlauer Berg district, a considerable distance from the crowd of the well known Berlin Mitte galleries. Her latest show featured young Berlin based artist Anselm Reyle with a body of work including installations of found objects together with his paintings. In the space his intensely day-glow coloured paintings were displayed along with two neon light installations to form a compelling ensemble of clashing, screeching neon light and colour glares. As competing for the viewer's attention, the heterogenic strategies of the paintings counteract their serial appearance. In fact Reyle develops his works in large series, of which he finally keeps just one painting, thereby avoiding many layers, retaining the crispness and the transparency of a sketch-like approach. The lightness of the paintings, the relative smoothness of the surface is violated by the pungent, if not aggressive intensity of the day-glow colours.

A painting of a cross in shades of purple and white indicates a symbol, a point of reference, that distracts from the pure abstract quality of the gestural paint marks of the other paintings, provoking a desire to apply a precise narrative reading. But that is impossible as Reyle's gesture is not expressive, but emotional in a contemporary and reflected way, as in the precision of the lines that mark or emphasise the gestures of comic book heroes. *Treptow* is an installation covering an entire wall of the gallery with rectangular beige wooden panels taken from the artists studio, a disused office space in Treptow. Light pads behind the panels illuminate the grid of the gaps in a fierce turquoise, adding the sinister touch of a gothic eighties-style institution to the light hearted show.

The relaxed and serious way that Reyle approaches his work, avoiding the shoe box of neo-pop or some kind of expressionist or bad boy painting, is utterly convincing by itself. But the way that elements of his paintings reverberate in his ephemeral and simple installations make his work compelling, and — dare I say it: new.

Andreas Schlaegel

HAMBURG

KAI ALTHOFF

ASCAN CRONE

Kai Althoff has boarded up the windows of the gallery with black planks, so it is dark inside, with artificial light only. The interior space turns out to be a crude yet sensitive portrait of the artist. In order to create this effect, Althoff has set up a broad wooden chute, covered with large numbers of slightly protruding nails. The artist sits at the bottom of the chute in the form of a life-size doll. He is looking almost humble; his bottom is bare and bloody. In this gory slide Althoff's alter ego has literally "torn the arse out of himself." In front of him is another doll, again with the artist's face. This one apparently rang a bell to signal that he should slide down, and was waiting for him with a masterful, almost sombre expression. Both figures are dressed in strange, pseudo-historical but not nostalgic costumes combining baroque echoes, playing-card motifs, and a kind of dandified sloppiness.

The artist is portraying himself here within a self-referential, identity-seeking system that shows an image of the artist somewhere between staging and authenticity, between autism and historical, social