

DAN WALSH

LA SYNAGOGUE

Essentially known as a painter, Dan Walsh is also an artist who creates strange installations which, like his work at Delme, are aimed at questioning the conditions of perception. Using a variety of everyday materials (wooden sticks, fabric, carpet, planks of plywood) Walsh highlights the structure and main characteristics of the given space. But humor takes over from the analytical dissection of the place, thanks to the addition of perfectly architectural dysfunctional and senseless elements. The marking-out of the floor and of the building's structure conversely manages to highlight its function as an informative frame for perception. The black tape markings on the ground call to mind the marking-out of security zones, and evoke the gaffer tape used to mark the stage for the positioning of actors in a play. The actors in this case are the spectators, who seem to be directed towards privileged vantage points from which to view the pieces, the best distances at which to stand, and the most appropriate ways to behave in the exhibition setting. Likewise, an alternative system midway between the screen and the lectern seems literally to give several reading templates through which to interpret the exhibition. The Synagogue space, an actual ancient temple, becomes a pretext for an introspective (albeit retrospective) vision. Positioned head-on, taking the place of the altar, are a number of objects amassed in a homemade translation of art of the past ten years, which one might find in a flea market or a car boot sale. A spread of small, colored, translucent cubes evoke a mini jelly Carl Andre, and round mirrors, Lichtenstein tondi. But if the merchants seem to have stormed the temple, their wares, like this ensemble of small red and blue monochromes, propose a hypothesis of a world where meditating on the nature of abstraction could become a popular Sunday pastime, a world in which no one is afraid anymore of red and blue.

Vincent Pécoil

(Translated from French by Rosemary McKisack)

B E R L I N

CHRISTOPH KELLER

SCHIPPER & KROME

It's almost surreal having lunch in the sun without being cold in late November in Berlin. One can't help thinking that the unusually merry weather is due to the exhibition at Schipper & Krome by Christoph Keller with the "cloudbuster" — a machine once constructed by the mad (?) scientist Wilhelm Reich in the '50s and now re-created by Keller. The cloudbuster, originally created to help nature on its natural course make rain fall during droughts, is

placed on the rooftop of the gallery, reprogrammed in order to make the surroundings of Berlin less gloomy and more bright.

The cloudbuster, a device made of copper and wood, is sucking "orgone energy" out of the clouds, which are being filmed and projected in realtime on a satellite dish inside. On a pedestal in front of the dish visitors can use joysticks and become their own menace to the weather conditions. Although everyone is welcome to operate the buster, some rules to be obeyed (or not) are posted on the wall beside. Rule #2 for Cloud Engineering by Reich states "Never play around with rain-making or cloudbusting. [...] You may cause twisters. You may stir a forest fire into the wrong direction. You may do other damage without intending to do so. Never do anything unless you must." The temptation to be master of the weather could actually result in becoming a master of disaster. The ambivalence of the piece is perhaps what really makes the cannon-like cloudbuster pointed at the sky interesting. The human ability, and desire, to fuck up is given a platform here. Speaking of the weather, as we all like to do, is also given a new dimension. Is there a potential Dr. No in all of us?

Power Ekroth

LAURA HORELLI

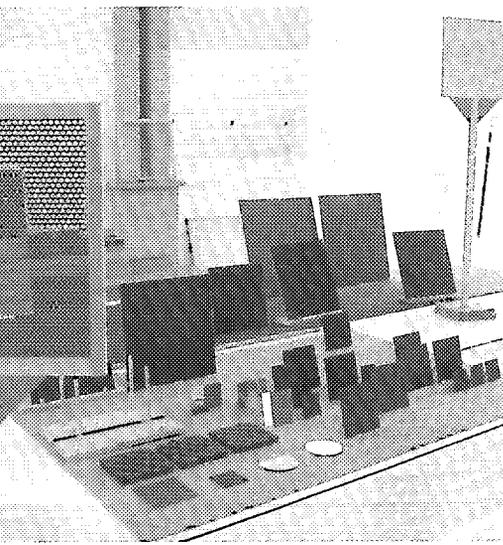
BARBARA WEISS

Are grandmothers trendy these days? From a sociological point of view — which is the one adopted by Laura Horelli — the relationships between grandmothers and granddaughters involve the least envy and the most sympathy. The younger relative often seems able to appreciate the significance of the older relative's life against the backdrop of history.

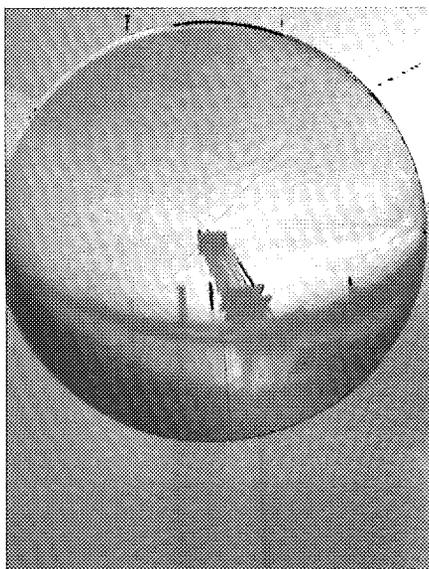
So perhaps it makes sense for an artist to perceive a relative's private life as a public issue replete with political resonances. In her most recent exhibition, by means of a video and seven photos Horelli tells of the life of her own grandmother. The 20-minute video shows a combination of private snapshots and press photography, along with commentary by the artist and her grandma. The grandmother was a dancer at the Berlin Olympics in 1936, became a physician in Helsinki, and later became the wife of a diplomat. We see her in the '30s in Germany, in the '40s in Brazil, in the '50s in the US, and in the '70s in Romania, at receptions with political classes from all over the world. While carrying out her duties as the wife of an ambassador, she was simultaneously working as a physician. Suddenly the video stops. There is no conclusion. Instead, Horelli prefers to leave us with fragments and questions: what has her life been like? What does she think about it all?

Horelli seeks to authenticate the work by referring to literary documentation, with three photos offering a detailed view of her grandparents' bookshelves. In her semi-sociological approach she proceeds like a biographer, and the exhibition reads like some form of preliminary study. In showing some of the many roles undertaken by her grandmother in this way, and by offering clues to other aspects of her life, Horelli pieces together a patchwork that offers insight into her own, as well as her grandmother's identity.

Peter Herbstreuth



DAN WALSH, Installation view, 2003.
Photo: R. Villaggi.



CHRISTOPH KELLER, Cloud Buster Project, 2003. Installation view.

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