

Dia Center for the Arts press release 8/23/1999

TIME TRACED: RODNEY GRAHAM AND VERA LUTTER
OCTOBER 14, 1999 - JUNE 18, 2000

Beginning on October 14, 1999, Dia Center for the Arts will present "Time Traced," an exhibition of work by Vera Lutter and Rodney Graham. This exhibition will be on view on the first floor of Dia's galleries at 548 West 22nd Street through June 18, 2000. Dia is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday, 12 noon to 6 pm.

Like the camera obscura, the pinhole camera proved an influential precursor to that most sophisticated of mechanical tools, the modern multilens camera. At a time when it, in turn, is being challenged by newer reproductive technologies, more rudimentary modes of image making are, paradoxically, once again becoming highly fertile. "Time Traced" will introduce recent works by Canadian artist Rodney Graham, and German Vera Lutter, which draw on such pioneering techniques to construct vividly arresting representations.

Born in Kaiserslautern, Germany, in 1960, Vera Lutter is best known for monumental black-and-white photographs of cityscapes. Her unique silver gelatin prints are negatives made by transforming a room into a pinhole camera obscura chamber. Directly exposed, often over many hours, onto photosensitive paper, these vistas appear as solarized images, their ethereal platinum tones imbuing the scenes with a haunting melancholy. From an early concentration on the Manhattan skyline, Lutter has turned lately to more industrial sites, including a dry dock, a zeppelin factory, an airport runway, a marina and a deserted warehouse.

Born in 1949 in Vancouver where he still lives and works, Rodney Graham has over the last twenty years created a highly charged, yet richly varied, body of work that ranges from photography, film, video, and music to sculpture. A number of works made over the course of his career probe the status and identity of the photographic medium. Based on an eighteenth-century carriage and destined for an outdoor site, Camera Obscura Mobile (1996) offers viewers the opportunity to encounter a "live" camera obscura. By contrast, Graham's Millennial Project for an Urban Plaza (1986) wittily offers a miniature prototype for a structure that would provide an observation point for a proto-cinematic witness to the growth of an oak tree to maturity.

Funding for this exhibition has been provided by Carla Emil and Rich Silverstein, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee, the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc., the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, members of the Dia Art Council, and with the assistance of Donald Young Gallery, Chicago.

Dia Center for the Arts is a tax-exempt charitable organization. Established in 1974, the organization has become one of the largest in the United States dedicated to contemporary art and contemporary culture. In fulfilling this commitment, Dia sustains diverse programming in visual arts, poetry, education, and critical discourse and debate.