



444

apex art

444; a plan by which four individuals who regularly see new work are asked to recommend an "unaffiliated" artist for a four-day exhibition

Several artists jumped to mind when I was first asked to curate a part of 444 '99. But somehow, Anthony James' work seemed to linger the longest. In this new work, where a fish hovers in space, James considers formalist sculptural principles, but only as contemplation of a broader significance. Encased within the confines of stainless steel and glass, there exists a universe. That universe has its own codes and boundaries. Any attempt to cross those boundaries, or break its codes, would mean its demise. Yet, projected further into the space, there exists another universe, in many ways exactly the same as the first. The movement of the first universe creates the impetus for the second, but the second is governed by a wholly distinct set of codes and boundaries.

The fish that mesmerizes within the sculpture is just as elusive as the one floating freely in space. Each cannot survive without its precise surroundings, be it water temperature, food, containment, or refracted light. Although one is completely contingent upon the other, they are singular in nature. Aspects desired in one are sometimes only realized in its projection. Both are dependent on the solidity and translucence of glass.

I've always liked artists who, even at a young age, are continuously reinventing themselves in a fresh way. For me, James does just that. His new work queries the relationship of mind, body and presence, using new technologies. His work follows, stalks and subtly assaults the viewer. They are illusions of reality, presenting a dual existence. It is at once simplistic and complex, tangible and illusory, calming while discomforting.

Spencer Brownstone
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A sea of cast-offs,

A landscape of discarded fragments;

Outcasts all, yet united in abandonment.

Clustered together; spreading en masse across the floor;

Form as a consequence of dys-function;

Severed, cylindrical elements—parts retaining an essence and memory of their whole...

I am struck by the poignancy and humanity of Jean Shin's pants scraps in *Alterations*. They are vulnerability, loneliness and longing incarnate. They are emblems of excess, abnormality, otherness. Each individual component is a reject—an unessential fabric remnant left lying on some tailor's floor—until rescued and reconstituted into a new identity. The individual, the subgroup, and the collective—cylindrical forms of various heights standing stiff, upright, and assembled in groups by similar color: Like a band of bedraggled refugees, they have come together and, in solidarity, form a new and vital entity.

Stiffening, cutting, braiding, sewing, layering, compiling, Jean's handling of materials lends to her work an air of surreality. Using hair as imaginatively as she does fabric, she has created a series of drawings using strands of hair arranged and layered with mylar in suggestive configurations. Framed and hanging on the wall, they are pure gesture at the same time traces—testimony—of the living whole to which they once belonged. By means of discarded materials, Jean manages to reference the human and access the beauty, desire and memory we, as a collective humanity, all nurture within ourselves.

Susan Harris

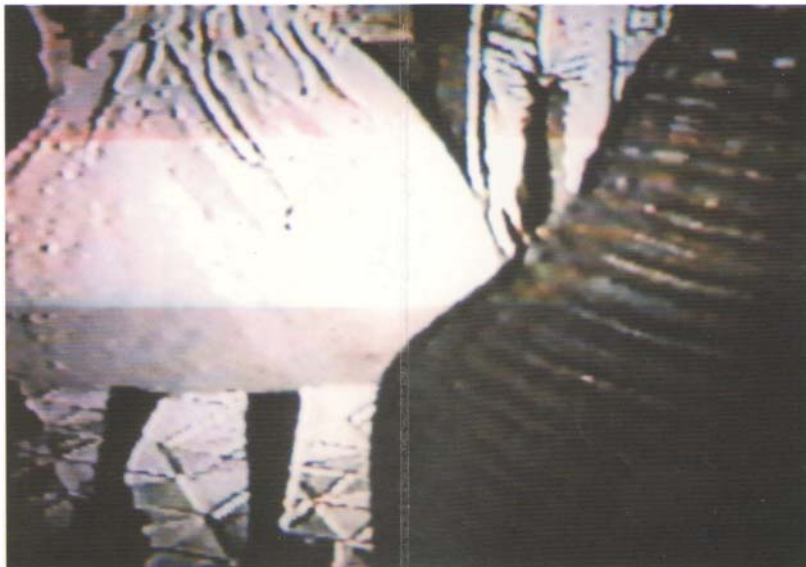
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Jean Shin *Alterations* 1997-98 Fabric (pant scraps) and wax Overall: 12' x 12' x 1'

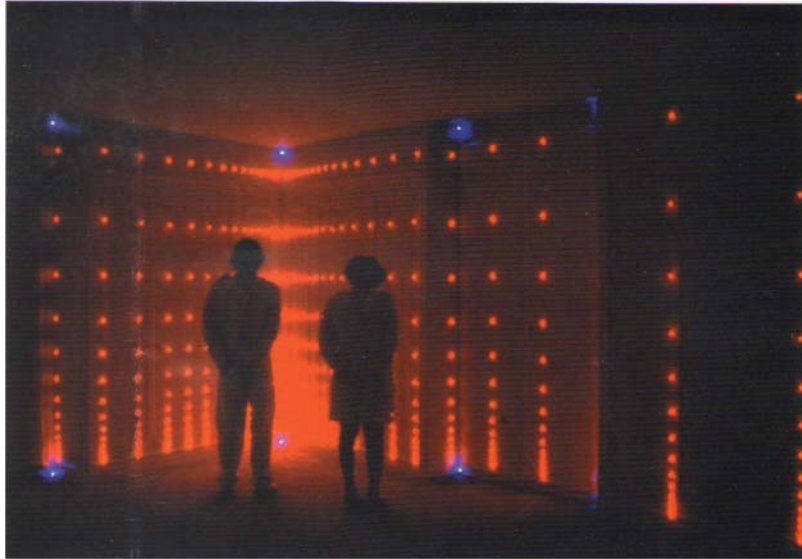


Sometimes an image has a way of lingering in the mind. It remains while shifting position, opening a series of associations, memories and constructs which turn over into thoughts in the loveliest way. Such is the profound encounter I have had with the work of Sergio Muñoz-Sarmiento. Muñoz is among a younger generation of artists who take conceptualism's idea of art as a philosophical proposition and thicken it with a mixture of subjective and material elements, broadening the possibilities of interpretation. Using photography, language, drawing and sculpture Muñoz investigates the poetic potential in Wittgenstein's quarry. He deconstructs the everyday experience of language to reintroduce the uncanny and the magical. His work allows us to see the excess that remains after communication in the constant passing between material and idea.

Carol Greene
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Sergio Muñoz-Sarmiento *Elipses, #17* 1999 Digital C-print 20" x 30"



Erwin Redl *Shifting, Very Slowly* 1998 Light installation Hotel Duchesse Anne, Nantes, France

In a brilliant first novel, *The Intuitionist*, author Colson Whitehead sets up a dichotomy among elevator inspectors in a dystopian metropolis. The Empiricists inspect the elevators the old-fashioned way: nuts-and-bolts fact-finding. The Intuitionists "feel" their way through the process. There is something coolly autocratic and benignly new-age about the work of Erwin Redl which makes the viewer question the space in between empirical knowledge and elegiac intuition. Redl's use of Art-101 basics (light and color most obviously) distances him from others in the burgeoning new-media field. Slipping into the cracks between high and low tech, Redl's LED spatial interventions (as well as other works which don't fit into that not necessarily neat box) may evoke Tatsuo Miyajama to those who theoretically find themselves bound and tied by a medium-based approach to work. Other precedents that came up for me during a marathon studio visit were Fred Sandbeck, Cecilia Vicuña and, of course, Donald Judd. Redl's work is as much about technology and the way the search for a cyberutopia is its own metaphor. By going so decidedly low-tech, Redl's work elevates.

Christian Haye
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Four *Curators*

Four *Artists*

Four *Weeks*

Spencer Brownstone- *Anthony James*

June 7 - 10

Susan Harris- *Jean Shin*

July 14 - 17

Carol Greene- *Sergio Muñoz-Sarmiento*

July 21 - 24

Christian Haye- *Erwin Redl*

July 28 - 31

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Cover: **Anthony James** *Same Old Ground* 1999
Photograph of detail from light projection 18.5" diameter

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Thank you: Norman Cody and Jeff Gleitsch